**Introduction**

- It was decided to carry out a statistical investigation into teenagers' attitudes towards religion.
- This topic was chosen as the group shared a common interest in religion. Religion is a frequent area of debate and discussion in the media at the moment. The group believed that it would be a topical and engaging subject to investigate in more detail.
- Before the investigation was carried out, the group already knew that statistics indicated that there were changing attitudes towards religion amongst Irish students. A survey from 'Central Ireland' showed that students from college considered 'looking good' (5th) as being more important than 'religious beliefs' (6th). The results were so alarming that it was decided to carry out a similar survey on teenagers in the school.
- The group hoped to gain an insight into the importance of religion amongst teenagers and aimed to discover...
  1. What religion, if any, the family of the person completing the survey belongs to?
  2. If the person completing the survey believes in and practises the religion they were brought up with?
  3. What attitude teenagers have towards religion and how this compares to their parents' attitude.

**Method**

**Who was surveyed?**

- A random sample of 91 students from the school was surveyed. A mixture of first, second, third, fourth and fifth year students ranging from 12-17 years old were given the questionnaire. Random sampling was used to select the sample.

**How was the survey carried out?**

1. Ideas for the statistical investigation were discussed and topics to investigate were brainstormed. It was decided to carry out a survey into teenagers' attitudes towards religion.
2. A draft of the questionnaire was drawn up and a trial survey was completed. This trial survey was carried out to identify any flaws in the questionnaire. A number of changes were made to the questionnaire based on the results of this trial survey.
3. The questionnaire was distributed to a random sample of students from the school. The group visited a number of classes and handed out the surveys.
4. The results from the surveys were compiled and the findings were analysed.

**Do You Believe in and Follow your Family Religion?**

- Students were asked to state whether or not they believed in their family religion, regardless of whether they formally practised it.
- In general, the older the age group the lower the percentage of Yes answers. The results indicate that as teenagers get older, they begin to stop believing in their family religion.
- However, across all age group the percentage of people who believe in their family religion is higher than the percentage of the same age group that practise their family religion.
- This indicates that although many teenagers do not practise their religion regularly, they still believe in its principles.

**Importance Continued...**

- The average importance of religion on a scale of 1-10 to each of the age groups and their parents was also calculated. The chart below displays these averages.
- The results indicate that on average teenagers across all age groups put less importance on religion than their parents. The importance teenagers place on religion also decreases as they get older.

**Conclusion and Evaluation**

Main Findings:

1. The majority of teenagers (85%) surveyed were born into a Roman Catholic family. This result fits in with existing statistics available and was not surprising considering the school surveyed has a Catholic ethos.
2. As teenagers get older, there is a significant drop in the percentage that practise their family religion, e.g., 100% of 12 year olds practise their family religion compared to 66% of 17 year olds.
3. As teenagers get older, there is a general drop in the percentage that believe in their family religion. However, across all age groups the percentage of teenagers that believe in their family religion is higher than the percentage of the same age group that practice their family religion.
4. The influence the importance parents place on religion on their teenager's attitude towards religion diminishes as they get older.
5. On average teenagers value religion less than their parents and the importance teenagers place on religion diminishes as they get older.

Sources of Error:

- Some possible sources of error include that only schools with a Catholic ethos were surveyed and that the sample size was too small.
- The group plans to expand the investigation and improve its accuracy by increasing the sample size and surveying teenagers from non-Catholic as well as Catholic schools so as to improve the diversity of the data. An online comparison survey will also be carried out and young adults will be surveyed to see whether the identified trend of reducing religious practice and reducing importance of religion continues into adulthood.