



Research report

Virtues of Faith

A Better Conversation

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THE
JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

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Good research requires good data, and we are incredibly grateful for the thousands of individuals who gave their time and thoughts to this project. From our expert interviews and focus group participants to survey respondents, each piece of information helped us create a clearer picture and led to a stronger report. We thank every individual who passed the survey link on to a friend, opened a door for us to a new community and gave us guidance on how best to reach particular populations.

Over the last two years, we have lived out a number of virtues delivering this project. Curiosity brought into the opening stages, and again as we transitioned from interviews to the survey. The Critical Thinking required as we analysed data and worked to draw out key findings. The Openness that is required for any piece of research, whether by sitting in an interfaith focus group or visiting a Gurdwara. Neighbourliness from all of those who welcomed us into their place of worship and communities. We were struck by the Humility displayed by the team every step of the way – consistently elevating the voices of those contributing to our project and putting others first. Thank you to Andrew, Esther, Liz, Mariyum, Dan and Mohammed for all that you brought to this piece of work. We extend special thanks to Andrew Peterson for his input drafting the section on education and his wisdom shared throughout the duration of the project.

This is not simply *our* report to present but a report is for everyone to live out.

In that spirit, we give this report to you. Read it with Curiosity and Openness and do not shy away from the Critical Thinking required to make the next stage – in whatever form it may take – even better. We hope this report will open the door to better conversations throughout our shared society.

Foreword

We live in a moment in time when trust, collaboration, and cohesion are desperately needed and yet many feel more disconnected from their neighbours than ever before. Nearly two thirds of Britons say the UK feels divided¹. Still, we know that social cohesion is key to a society where everyone can live well and contribute to one another's flourishing.

As Mayor for the West Midlands Combined Authority, I had the privilege of collaborating with a vast array of communities, to see the sustainable flourishing of our region. One of the notable dimensions of our lives in the West Midlands is the way people bring their beliefs into everyday life. From my first months as Mayor, I convened a broad range of faith and belief voices to tackle common issues and build a stronger region. Our communities need strong civic leadership – reflective of all faiths and beliefs – and I am pleased to be able to continue to champion this through my current role on the Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion.

If we want to meaningfully respond to the need for social cohesion and the complexity of challenges that face us today, we need to find practical, sustainable solutions that are informed and owned by fellow citizens. These solutions and their tools must reflect the reality of everyday life through allowing for difference without division, and dedication to one's own beliefs without dismissing those of others. Genuine diversity of thought and belief is a strength, and we must have the tools to ensure inclusion is authentic and not simply a buzzword. As this report shows, virtues have proven to be a powerful tool.

By their nature, virtues are lived and put into practice. *Virtues of Faith* applies the work of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues to the largest faith and belief groups in the UK. In doing so, this report enables us to better understand more deeply how these groups live out their beliefs. As a result, the findings illustrate points of commonality and difference that can take us beyond discussions of doctrine.

This report bolsters the case for the role virtues can play in promoting participation in civil society and cohesion. Yet beyond this, it provides practical recommendations on facilitating collaboration across our neighbourhoods, regions and nations in a way that can be a framework for living well together. A framework for living *with* our differences – not imagining them away.

I look forward to seeing this work integrated into interfaith programmes, social cohesion policy, public service provision and education in the months and years to come.



Sir Andy Street CBE

¹ <https://www.moreincommon.org.uk/research/the-state-of-social-cohesion-in-2026/>

Introduction

Virtues of Faith is a Templeton Religion Trust funded project run by the Good Faith Partnership, with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham as a research partner.

The project began with a Jubilee Centre-funded pilot survey in 2023 exploring how virtues resonate across the United Kingdom's five largest faith groups (Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism) alongside a Humanist/non-religious comparison cohort. This expanded phase, running October 2024 to October 2026 and generously enabled by the Templeton Religion Trust, adds a substantial qualitative layer of expert interviews, intra- and interfaith focus groups and a larger quantitative survey.

The project's founding premise, taken from its messaging strategy, is that "understanding virtues opens the door to new possibilities" for relationships, cohesion and belonging, at community and national levels. In an increasingly diverse country, these possibilities are incredibly urgent.

"Virtues do not require agreement about ultimate questions in the way doctrine does."

Echoing the work of the Jubilee Centre (2017), this report takes an Aristotelean view of virtues – namely that they are the cultivation of positive character traits that help lead to a flourishing life. Virtues are not innate but rather are developed through habitual practice. Nor are virtues independent of one another – they are inherently interconnected. Virtues do not require agreement about ultimate questions in the way doctrine does. They offer a shared vocabulary, without the burden of being perfectly crafted *as well as* being contested. Virtues do not quickly evoke disagreements about the nature of God (or whether God exists at all) yet people can still recognise something of moral commitment in one another. This report explores that possibility in greater depth than the pilot did.

Virtues also matter because they sit at the core of human behaviour, not merely human knowledge. At a moment of heightened debate about what artificial intelligence means for human identity, this distinction is worth holding on to: AI can describe or instruct on virtue, but it cannot be virtuous, because virtue is not information to be rehearsed but *character* formed through lived choices, relationships and consequences.

This phase of the project lands in an evolving policy environment compared to the Pilot in 2023. In March 2026 His Majesty's Government published *Protecting What Matters: Towards a more confident, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom*, its national social cohesion strategy. The strategy is built around three pillars that map onto the project's own concerns more closely than anticipated when this research was commissioned: confident communities, cohesive communities and resilient communities.

The strategy contains commitments that speak directly to what this project uncovers. The government has pledged to "boost faith and belief literacy" in response to a recommendation from the 2023 *Bloom Review*, to grow Inter Faith Week into something more grassroots and youth-led and to build more consistent metrics for tracking cohesion at a local level. The questions this research is asking – how virtues are actually formed and transmitted, and what connects and divides us – now have a live audience in government looking for exactly this kind of evidence. Moreover, they are questions that have come to the forefront in British society following subsequent years of faith and social tensions.

Key findings

1

The report's central finding is a modest but important one: virtues offer Britain's communities the possibility of a better conversation. People do not need to agree on theology to recognise moral seriousness in one another, and it is that recognition – not consensus – that makes it possible to live well together across real and ongoing difference.

2

Kindness and Honesty are the only two virtues to appear in every cohort's top eight – genuine convergence – but this sits alongside unresolved disagreement, most clearly on personal autonomy, showing that a shared vocabulary need not erase difference.

3

Breadth and depth diverge: widely selected virtues like Kindness and Humility are often held less intensely, while less frequently chosen virtues – such as Devotion – appear to be held with greater conviction once selected.

4

Honesty is unique in being both broadly selected and deeply held.

5

Inward conviction and outward civic orientation rise together, not apart: Devotion, Citizenship and Civility are the three biggest risers from frequency to intensity, challenging the assumption that religious depth means social withdrawal.

6

Virtue is formed through practice and narrative, not just doctrine – transmitted through family, ritual and communal service across every cohort, with direct and specific implications for cohesion policy and programme design.

Executive summary

Virtues of Faith is a Templeton Religion Trust funded project, run by the Good Faith Partnership with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham. Following a 2023 pilot survey of 3,038 respondents, this expanded phase combines a nationwide quantitative survey of 5,167 respondents across six cohorts – Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Non-Religious – with a substantial qualitative layer of expert interviews, intra- and interfaith focus groups and open-ended surveys.

5,167

respondents in the national survey

6

faith and belief cohorts

2

virtues in every cohort's top eight

Central finding

**Virtues make a
different kind of
conversation possible.**

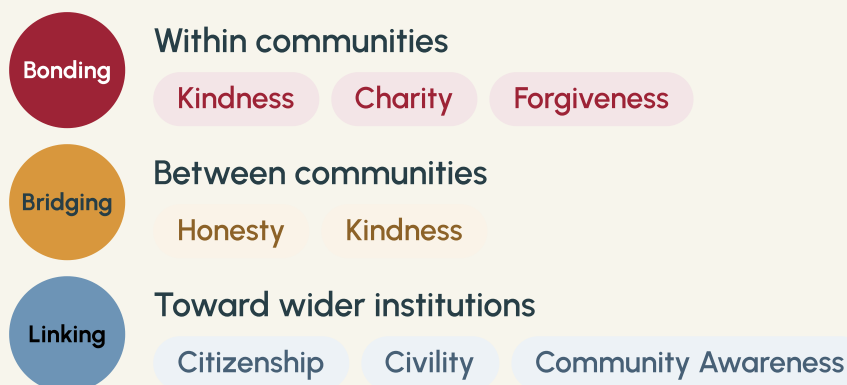
The report's central finding runs through everything that follows: virtues make a different kind of conversation possible. Doctrine asks for agreement about ultimate questions – the nature of God, or whether God exists at all – that may never be resolved. A shared vocabulary of virtue does not. Two people who disagree completely about theology can still recognise Devotion, Honesty or Justice in each other, and can talk about what those things demand of a life without first settling what they believe. This is a deliberately modest claim, but it is the report's most important one: not that Britain's faith and belief communities agree more than they realise, but that they have more practical ground than the current, often adversarial, public debate about identity and belief would suggest.

Two people who disagree completely about theology can still recognise Devotion, Honesty, or Justice in each other.

The evidence for this is stronger than the pilot could offer. Kindness and Honesty are the only two virtues to appear in the top eight, by selection frequency, across all six cohorts, which is precisely what makes them usable as genuine connective tissue. But this is not a report about convergence alone. Comparing which virtues are broadly selected against which are held with the greatest conviction once chosen reveals that breadth and depth frequently diverge: Kindness is the most widely selected virtue in the study yet among the sharpest fallers in intensity, while Devotion is held far more intensely than its selection rate alone would suggest.

This distinction between breadth and depth leads to a further significant finding. Devotion, an inward and spiritually-rooted virtue, rises in intensity alongside Citizenship and Civility, two outward, civic-facing virtues – the three largest risers in the entire dataset. In the qualitative material, inward disposition and outward service are repeatedly described as a single concept rather than two (*khidmah, seva, chesed*, "love in action"). This suggests that religious depth and civic withdrawal do not travel together in this data. If anything, respondents most deeply committed to their own tradition appear, on this evidence, to be among those most invested in the wider civic fabric.

Three kinds of social capital



Mapped onto Putnam (2000) and Woolcock's (2001) distinctions between bonding, bridging and linking social capital, the data suggests a coherent structure: relational virtues (Kindness, Charity, Forgiveness) build bonding capital within communities; Honesty and Kindness, claimed by all six cohorts, function as bridging capital between them; and the civic cluster (Citizenship, Civility, Community Awareness) – narrowly held but intensely so – represents an emerging, if minority, linking capital toward the institutions of wider society.

None of this amounts to a claim of underlying consensus, and the report is careful not to let the possibility of better conversation slide into a claim of easy agreement. Personal autonomy – e.g. on sexuality, gender, abortion and assisted dying – remains a genuine, unresolved fault line between Humanist and several faith-cohort respondents, and the report is explicit that a shared virtue vocabulary should not be used to paper over this; its value lies in helping communities disagree well, not in making disagreement disappear. There is also a live terminological divide: Sikh and Christian respondents were most comfortable with "virtue" itself, while Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and especially Humanist respondents more often reached for "values" as a more helpful term. Although the term has Aristotelian roots, "virtue" terminology is neither universally used nor necessarily understood by the broader public – a limitation worth addressing.

The policy implications are substantial and specific. The findings connect directly to the United Kingdom government's March 2026 cohesion strategy, *Protecting What Matters*, and the report argues that shared service and joint practice be prioritised – the mechanism through which the qualitative data shows virtue is built and transmitted – over discussion-only formats. On the strategy's commitment to boost faith and belief literacy, the report cautions that a comparative-doctrine model (facts about the Five Pillars or the Ten Commandments) misses what actually shapes how a community thinks and behaves.

It recommends literacy programmes built instead around each tradition's wider worldview, exemplars, formative stories and communal practices. On local delivery, the report argues that local faith and belief organisations could be seen as a practice-based infrastructure that programme designers should treat as delivery partners with a head start. This also reflects a wider interconnectedness between the global, national and local: conflicts abroad can reshape local relationships with striking immediacy, which is why localism is central to future work on cohesion. Where the new cohesion strategy frames integration as alignment with a broad set of values, this report adds a modest but perhaps more durable suggestion: cohesion is built on recognising virtue in one another, not only agreeing on it in advance.

Three further points sharpen this for policymakers. First, the prominence of Justice among Jewish and Muslim respondents plausibly connects to those communities' disproportionate experience of religious hate crime, meaning a cohesion strategy that treats all communities as starting from the same footing risks under-serving those for whom the conversation is least abstract. Second, Christianity's historically civic profile should not be read as evidence that Christian theology is uniquely suited to public life; interview respondents suggest it may instead reflect the Church of England's established status and history, a caution against using any one tradition's vocabulary as a template for reading the others. Third, given that Honesty and Kindness are the two virtues found across every cohort, the report suggests a shared civic emphasis on truthfulness could plausibly anchor cross-sector work on public trust, misinformation and institutional integrity in a way a specifically religious or specifically secular framing could not manage alone. The report also raises implications for religious and moral education in schools: the data reaffirms a shared commitment to virtues such as Kindness and Honesty as a basis for Religious Education and character education, while cautioning that current provision is experienced unevenly by pupils and that more work is needed on how virtue, distinct from the broader and more contested language of "values," is actually taught.

"Conflicts abroad can reshape local relationships with striking immediacy, which is why localism is central to future work on cohesion."

Taken together, the report's contribution is not a discovery that Britain's faith and belief communities are more alike than assumed, but a more calibrated and precise account of where their common ground actually lies, and of what it is good for. It is not a route to agreement on ultimate questions, but a route to speaking honestly across real difference – which, on this evidence, is what allows communities to go on living well alongside one another.

Section one

The data

Virtues offer a way of talking about faith and identity that does not require anyone to agree on theology, cosmology or the existence of God. They are, as one of the Humanist interviewees put it, “found in all the great religious and belief traditions.” This is not because everyone means the same thing by them. Every tradition consulted has built an elaborate internal architecture for cultivating good character and guiding how that is lived out, and that is where the real texture of this research resides.

Building on the concept of covenantal pluralism developed by the Templeton Religion Trust, this research recognises that virtue cultivation fits into a larger framework which seeks to foster a deeper form of genuine pluralism. Virtues are one part of the puzzle, and the propensity to draw on them as meaningful nodes of connection across difference also relies on structures to safeguard global religious freedom and promote religious literacy. The focus of this research most naturally lies with the third enabling condition of covenantal pluralism: character virtues. Nevertheless, as this report will put forward, the findings below have implications for the wider framework, speaking into the policy structures that promote cohesion and methods to improve religious literacy.

Templeton Religion Trust’s three enabling conditions for covenantal pluralism

Global Religious Freedom

Religious Literacy

**This report’s focus
Character Virtues**

Source: Templeton Religion Trust, Covenantal pluralism (templetonreligiontrust.org/areas-of-focus/covenantal-pluralism).

The primary focus of the survey was to replicate the pilot, capturing the frequency with which people viewed a virtue as important to them, as a person of a particular faith or belief system. Just as in 2023, respondents were invited to select a specific number of virtues from a longer list, each virtue accompanied by a short, carefully worded definition.

The top eight virtues, by cohort

Kindness Honesty The only two virtues in every cohort's top eight.

	Christianity		Hinduism		Islam	
1	Love	49%	Kindness	51%	Charity	50%
2	Kindness	40%	Honesty	45%	Kindness	49%
3	Integrity	36%	Love	40%	Honesty	48%
4	Forgiveness	35%	Integrity	36%	Forgiveness	43%
5	Humility	34%	Gratitude	36%	Justice	38%
6	Charity	34%	Charity	32%	Gratitude	36%
7	Devotion	33%	Forgiveness	30%	Humility	34%
8	Honesty	32%	Humility	29%	Devotion	32%

	Judaism		Sikhism		Non-Religious	
1	Kindness	47%	Kindness	56%	Kindness	62%
2	Integrity	40%	Charity	47%	Honesty	53%
3	Justice	39%	Forgiveness	47%	Critical Thinking	52%
4	Love	36%	Love	47%	Tolerance / Openness	49%
5	Honesty	35%	Honesty	44%	Integrity	44%
6	Charity	35%	Courage	42%	Love	38%
7	Gratitude	31%	Humility	36%	Justice	35%
8	Tolerance / Openness	30%	Gratitude	31%	Curiosity	29%

Percentage of each cohort selecting the virtue. [Source: Virtues of Faith survey, 5,167 respondents]

Where the cohorts overlap

Every virtue that appears in at least one cohort's top eight, and which cohorts chose it. Honesty and Kindness are the only two in every cohort's top eight.

● In the cohort's top eight ● Not in the top eight

	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	Sikhism	Non-Religious	Cohorts
Honesty	●	●	●	●	●	●	6 of 6
Kindness	●	●	●	●	●	●	6 of 6
Charity	●	●	●	●	●	●	5 of 6
Love	●	●	●	●	●	●	5 of 6
Forgiveness	●	●	●	●	●	●	4 of 6
Gratitude	●	●	●	●	●	●	4 of 6
Humility	●	●	●	●	●	●	4 of 6
Integrity	●	●	●	●	●	●	4 of 6
Justice	●	●	●	●	●	●	3 of 6
Devotion	●	●	●	●	●	●	2 of 6
Tolerance / Openness	●	●	●	●	●	●	2 of 6
Courage	●	●	●	●	●	●	1 of 6
Critical Thinking	●	●	●	●	●	●	1 of 6
Curiosity	●	●	●	●	●	●	1 of 6

Two virtues are chosen by all six cohorts, two by five and four by four. The remaining six appear in three cohorts or fewer.

Source: Virtues of Faith survey, 5,167 respondents.

Examining the top virtues across each cohort, most groups have a clear leader (Islam is the exception, which has a notably small difference across the top eight). 49% of Christians selected Love; 50% of Muslims chose Charity. Kindness was chosen by 51% of Hindus, 47% of Jews, 56% of Sikhs and 62% of Non-Religious respondents.

2 Kindness and Honesty are the only virtues in every cohort's top eight.

The key finding concerns which virtues make it into every cohort's top eight: Kindness and Honesty.

A key component of this research used findings from the qualitative data to revise the virtue list for the survey (there is more on this later). Kindness emerged as a virtue that clearly resonated across all cohorts. In fact, Kindness was in the top two places of every cohort, demonstrating both a remarkable point of connection across faith and belief and a broadly held virtue. Despite the uptick in religious tension, aggravations and attacks, the survey finds that Kindness is not merely lip service but a common thread that weaves through these cohorts. In the qualitative research it was described under many names, which also touched on service as well: *chesed* in Judaism, *seva* in Sikhism, *khidmah* in Islam, "love in action" in Christianity and a compassion linked to *ahimsa* in Hinduism. Non-Religious respondents preferred "giving of time" over "giving of money," opting for Kindness over Charity. This is less a single virtue than a shared instinct that virtue has to be embodied and enacted, not merely believed. It is one of the most consistent threads across every piece of qualitative data reviewed, and the survey reflects this.

One instinct, many names

<i>chesed</i> Judaism	<i>seva</i> Sikhism	<i>khidmah</i> Islam
<i>"love in action"</i> Christianity	<i>ahimsa</i> Hinduism	<i>"giving of time"</i> Humanist

Honesty, the virtue that clearly emerged from the Pilot, is once again ubiquitous in the data. It resurfaces constantly in the qualitative data under different names and different theological justifications: *emet* (divine truth) in Judaism, *satya* in Hinduism, *sat* in Sikhism and a recurring emphasis on transparency and "living in truth" across the Christian and Muslim material. Non-Religious respondents anchored it differently again, in critical thinking and rational inquiry, with a real discomfort around "uncritical commitment." But the cohorts arrived somewhere strikingly similar. This leads to a cross-cutting finding: whatever else divides these six groups, a shared premium on truthfulness brings them together. This matters at a time of growing anxiety around artificial intelligence and dishonesty in political and public life.

There are, of course, unique attributes to each of the cohorts. The qualitative research found that Christians often spoke about Love, Sikhs spoke of Humility being at the core of many virtues, and the Muslim focus group interrogated the virtue of Charity at great length. The Non-Religious focus group discussed the importance of Critical Thinking in their worldview. Hinduism's focus group largely focused on virtues in the context of relationship with others and the environment, so it is no surprise that Kindness was the most selected. Jewish participants often cited Justice as core to their faith. Unsurprisingly, these virtues were frequently selected among adherents of these communities.

Moving beyond particular virtues, there are striking findings as it relates to similarities and differences when comparing and contrasting the cohorts as a whole.



The greatest overlap was found between Christianity and Hinduism (Charity, Forgiveness, Honesty, Humility, Integrity, Kindness, Love) and Hinduism and Sikhism (Charity, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Honesty, Humility, Kindness, Love), each with seven virtues in common. The greatest differences were between Sikhism and the Non-Religious cohort, sharing only three virtues (Honesty, Kindness, Love), and Islam and Non-Religious, also with three (Honesty, Justice, Kindness).

As mentioned above, Christianity shared more virtues with Hinduism than any other cohort and shared the least with the Non-Religious cohort. Hinduism shared seven with both Christianity and Sikhism, while only sharing four with the Non-Religious. Islam shared six with both Hinduism and Sikhism while only sharing three with Non-Religious. Judaism has no clear outlier, sharing six virtues with Hinduism and Non-Religious each at the top end, but five virtues with Christianity, Islam and Sikhism at the bottom. Sikhism shared seven with Hinduism and three with Non-Religious, as explained above. Finally, the Non-Religious cohort shared six virtues with Judaism but only three with Islam.

Taking the Jubilee Centre's broad categories of virtues – Moral, Civic, Intellectual and Performance – there is strong commonality among the moral virtues.² Divergences occur around the civic and intellectual virtues, although at a much lower rate than what is shared. None of these findings suggest that differences are too great, nor the cohorts too different. Rather, it suggests a narrower, yet equally powerful, set of virtues which could be utilised to bridge difference and find common ground. The sharpest divergence between cohorts sits not in moral (or theological) virtues, where agreement runs deep, but at the civic and intellectual edges. This suggests theology may play a smaller role than often assumed in shaping how a community relates to wider society.

The Jubilee Centre's four categories



Strong commonality sits among the moral virtues; divergence appears at the civic and intellectual edges.

² For this report, the research team crafted the virtue list based on findings and feedback from the pilot and insights gained during the qualitative phase, and creating four equally weighted categories was not deemed a priority. Therefore, there is an uneven distribution of virtues across the four categories, and there is not enough consistency across virtues and categories to draw helpful comparisons to the Pilot, or to categorise a faith of belief more or less civically or intellectually-minded, for example. Nevertheless, these broad categories help to illustrate some wider trends discussed later in the report.

Section one, continued

Contesting commonalities & contrasts

One divergence sits underneath all of this, and it deserves naming directly. Cohorts disagree, sometimes sharply, about whether “virtue” is even the right word. Sikh respondents were markedly comfortable with virtue language. Virtue is, as one put it, “the cornerstone” of how Sikhi is understood. Christian respondents defended the term robustly too. But Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and especially Humanist respondents kept reaching for “values” instead. Several Humanist participants called “virtue” old-fashioned, problematic, or simply “not our word.” This is not a minor terminological point and could shape how each cohort engages with the research.

It is also worth registering how this lines up against the government’s own language. *Protecting What Matters* does not use “virtue” framing at all. Its vocabulary throughout is “values”: shared values, national values, British values, integration based on values. That is the same word most cohorts reached for instinctively, for different reasons than government’s, but the same word all the same. There is academic justification for using “virtues”, and virtues understandably fit more firmly within the concept of covenantal pluralism as an *application* of values. Therefore, this research does not seek to provide commentary on “British values” per se, but rather to shed light on the lived embodiment of particular values.

“Virtues fit more firmly within covenantal pluralism as an application of values.”

Alongside the areas of considerable convergence, the qualitative data flags virtues where agreement looks partial or contested and where the survey might be expected to show greater divergence.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the clearest case. A Christian focus group participant claimed it outright as "a uniquely Christian virtue...a core part of the narrative of the faith," rooted in the doctrine of grace. A Jewish participant offered a parallel through repentance (*teshuvah*) and the idea that "nothing is final, that everything can be put right." This was framed more around a relationship with the divine rather than interpersonal pardon, and it was held with less intensity than the Christian focus group. Forgiveness, new to the survey list, was expected to score highly across cohorts, and it did. Unsurprisingly, it was seen as a top virtue in four of the cohorts, and notably higher in Christianity than in Judaism, confirming the discussions in the focus groups.



4 of 6 cohorts placed Forgiveness in their top eight: Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism.

"A uniquely Christian virtue...a core part of the narrative of the faith."

– Christian focus group participant, on Forgiveness

Humility

Humility is a partial overlap, with once again four cohorts selecting it as a top virtue. Sikhism was the only cohort to place it in the pilot top six, where *nimrata* is one of five foundational virtues, yet it surfaces as aspirational or under-recognised amongst others. Christian respondents felt it deserved more recognition than the pilot data suggested: "Humility is essential because Jesus Himself modelled it." Muslim respondents named *tawadu* as central to spiritual growth. Hindu respondents linked it to the absence of ego, *abhiman*, as a precondition for other virtues.



4 of 6 cohorts placed Humility in their top eight: Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism.

Justice

Justice was one of the most textured virtues in both the pilot and qualitative research. It was the single most-selected virtue among Jewish and Sikh respondents in the pilot and featured prominently for Muslims and Humanists too. What the qualitative data adds is a plausible explanation. Several interviewees connected the salience of justice to the lived experience of being a religious or ethnic minority in the United Kingdom. Sikh respondents traced it back to a history of caste discrimination and religious persecution. Jewish respondents described *tzedakah* as "an ongoing responsibility" rather than a one-off act of kindness. Humanist respondents framed justice as structural: a matter of legal systems, equal treatment and the removal of bias from societal systems rather than an individual disposition. In the survey, Justice once again emerged as a top virtue among some of the smaller faiths, notably Judaism and Islam, but also among the Non-Religious cohort. However, it is interesting to note, despite the qualitative data from the focus groups and interviews, Justice was not highly selected among Sikhs.



3 of 6 cohorts placed Justice in their top eight: Judaism, Islam and the Non-Religious.

Civic Virtues

Civic and community-oriented virtues – Citizenship, Civility, Community Awareness and Neighbourliness – were expected to be contested. In the pilot, these featured heavily in the Christian top six, and this was widely read as evidence of a "civic" Christian ethic. But the qualitative data appears to push back on this. Christian focus group participants insisted these were "British virtues rather than Christian ways of living." One cited Jesus overturning the tables in the temple as evidence that "plenty of examples in the Bible" show virtuous people behaving in ways that are anything but civil. Given the Pilot was conducted during the Coronation, an exceptional fusion of civic identity and largely Christian imagery, this survey, conducted three years later, was expected to differ. It did, with these civic-minded virtues failing to crack the top eight. However, as discussed below, the intensity with which they are held tells a more nuanced story.

Charity

There is a subtler divergence in how different cohorts relate to Charity itself, which was described as an “entanglement” in the qualitative research. In the qualitative phase, there was significant overlap in the ways focus groups and interviewees discussed Charity, Service and Justice. Regarding Charity specifically, Non-Religious respondents were often uneasy with the term, calling it “transactional,” “paternalistic” and even tied to guilt. This cohort preferred structural, Justice-oriented language, and preferred the giving of time over the giving of money, as evidenced by Kindness over Charity in the survey. Jewish respondents made a similar move from a different direction, reframing charitable giving almost entirely through the lens of tzedakah, Justice or Righteousness, rather than voluntary generosity. This suggests a cross-cutting pattern that a simple virtue-selection survey may struggle to capture. It is not that some cohorts value charity and others do not. Several traditions may be quietly redefining Charity as an obligation of Justice rather than an act of Kindness.

“Several traditions may be quietly redefining Charity as an obligation of Justice rather than an act of Kindness.”



5 of 6 cohorts placed Charity in their top eight, despite very different accounts of what it means.

Nevertheless, despite the nuanced perspectives on the virtue, Charity emerged in five of six cohorts' top eight – all except Non-Religious, which is unsurprising given the criticism of the concept and preference towards systemic Justice or acts of Kindness in the qualitative data.

Examining the top eight virtues across the cohorts reveals remarkable similarities that provide not only further lines of inquiry but strong suggestions on how the diversity of Britain can best be understood, whether from a policy, interfaith or educational perspective – each of which is explored later in this report. Yet the research did not set out to examine a broad appeal of virtues alone but to also investigate how *deeply* these virtues are held.

Section one, continued

Breadth & depth

Similar to the pilot study, respondents were invited to select their top six virtues from a list of 24, found in Appendix A. This question gives us a sense of *breadth*, or the widespread acceptance of a particular virtue across faith or belief traditions.

Unlike the pilot, the following question took the six that were selected and asked respondents to rank them: "Please rank your 6 selected virtues, with the one you consider most important to you at the top of the list, and the one you consider least important at the bottom of the list." This question gave us a sense of *depth*, or the conviction with which the respondent held a particular virtue as a person of faith or belief. To achieve this, a point value was assigned to each of the virtues selected. The highest ranked virtue received six points, the second highest received five, and so on until the lowest rank among the six received one point. These were totalled and divided by the number of respondents who ranked the virtue, giving a mean score.

Frequency How many people chose the virtue at all — how broadly it is held.	Mean score How highly those who chose it ranked it — how deeply it is held.
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Examining the data, we find distinct differences between the frequency, or breadth (percentage of respondents that chose a particular virtue as part of the former question), and the "mean score", or depth (the average ranking of particular virtues). The tables below outline the frequency of the top eight virtues for each group studied, as well as the mean score of the top eight virtues after ranking.³

³ Note, the rank scores with low confidence, owing to a relatively low number of respondents who chose and therefore ranked the virtue, is indicated by a single pale dot (●), medium confidence by two mustard dots (●●) and high confidence by three red dots (●●●). This was calculated by the average number of responses per virtue within each faith and how far that deviated from the average (standard deviation). Due to the varying confidence levels, the data is not suited to make precise claims about the particular virtues within specific faith communities, but rather examine trends and identify areas for further investigation.

Broadly held, or deeply held?

Top eight by frequency beside top eight by mean score. Mustard marks a virtue that holds its place on both measures.

Christianity

By frequency (%)		By mean score	
Love	49	Love	4.28 ●●●●
Kindness	40	Charity	3.94 ●●
Integrity	36	Devotion	3.94 ●●
Forgiveness	35	Curiosity	3.90 ●●●
Humility	34	Citizenship	3.89 ●●●
Charity	34	Courage	3.88 ●●
Devotion	33	Forgiveness	3.88 ●●
Honesty	32	Excellence	3.83 ●●●●

Hinduism

By frequency (%)		By mean score	
Kindness	51	Devotion	4.27 ●●●
Honesty	45	Honesty	4.17 ●●●●
Love	40	Love	4.01 ●●●●
Integrity	36	Civility	3.98 ●●
Gratitude	36	Charity	3.89 ●●●●
Charity	32	Citizenship	3.85 ●●●
Forgiveness	30	Integrity	3.82 ●●●●
Humility	29	Critical Thinking	3.80 ●●●

Islam

By frequency (%)		By mean score	
Charity	50	Devotion	4.54 ●●●●
Kindness	49	Honesty	4.03 ●●
Honesty	48	Courage	4.02 ●●
Forgiveness	43	Citizenship	3.90 ●●
Justice	38	Civility	3.80 ●●
Gratitude	36	Gratitude	3.77 ●●
Humility	34	Curiosity	3.72 ●●
Devotion	32	Charity	3.71 ●●●

Judaism, Sikhism and Non-Religious follow overleaf. Confidence: ● low, ●● medium, ●●● high (note 3, p.23).

Judaism

By frequency (%)		By mean score	
Kindness	47	Charity	4.13 ●●●●
Integrity	40	Devotion	4.12 ●●●●
Justice	39	Love	4.03 ●●●●
Love	36	Courage	4.00 ●●●●
Honesty	35	Kindness	3.95 ●●●●
Charity	35	Civility	3.87 ●●●●
Gratitude	31	Honesty	3.81 ●●●●
Tolerance / Openness	30	Excellence	3.76 ●●●●

Sikhism

By frequency (%)		By mean score	
Kindness	56	Charity	4.40 ●●●●
Love	47	Citizenship	4.39 ●●●●
Charity	47	Honesty	4.10 ●●●●
Forgiveness	47	Devotion	4.07 ●●●●
Honesty	44	Courage	3.89 ●●●●
Courage	42	Love	3.79 ●●●●
Humility	36	Kindness	3.71 ●●●●
Gratitude	31	Integrity	3.60 ●●●●

Non-Religious

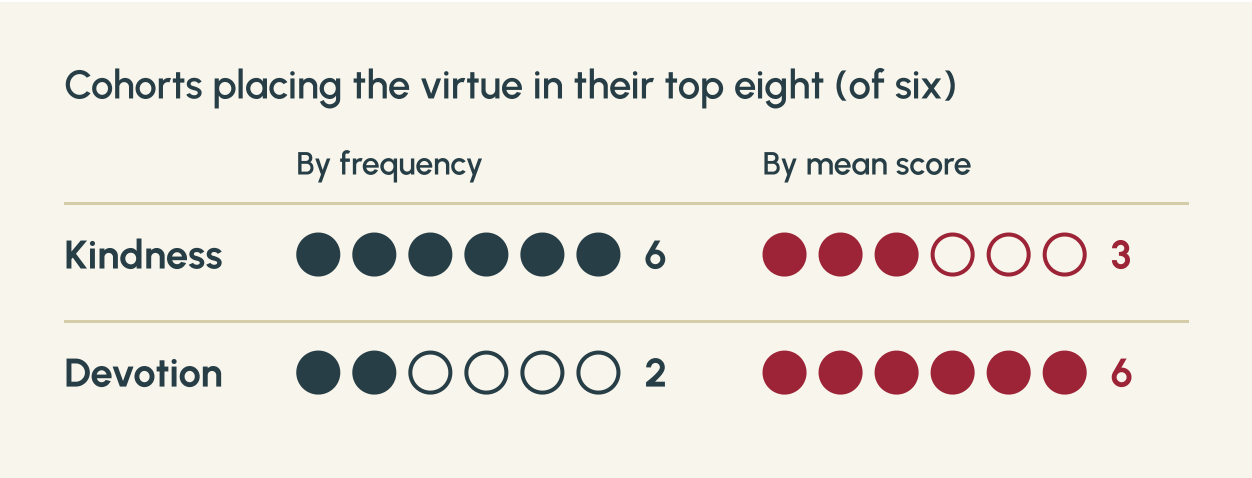
By frequency (%)		By mean score	
Kindness	62	Kindness	4.31 ●●●●
Honesty	53	Love	4.25 ●●●●
Critical Thinking	52	Honesty	4.06 ●●●●
Tolerance / Openness	49	Integrity	3.96 ●●●●
Integrity	44	Critical Thinking	3.92 ●●●●
Love	38	Courage	3.52 ●●●●
Justice	35	Devotion	3.52 ●●●●
Curiosity	29	Citizenship	3.47 ●●●●

Confidence: ● low, ●● medium, ●●● high (note 3, p.23).

This data shows remarkable findings. Breadth and depth are clearly related, with at least 50% overlap across each group. However, there are notable differences. Kindness is a virtue that is in the top eight of every group in terms of frequency but only cracks the top eight in terms of mean score in three. This suggests that Kindness was consistently ranked nearer the bottom of the six when prompted. Yet the mean score shows a divergence. Unlike Kindness, Honesty persists, found in five of six cohorts top mean score virtues.

Conversely, some virtues that were not frequently chosen emerge as deeply held virtues. Devotion, for example, only appears in frequency across two cohorts (Christianity and Islam) but regarding mean score it is present in all. Those who selected Devotion ranked it highly. This aligns with the intra-faith focus groups, where much of the discussion focused on devotion as a *deeply* held tenet of a faith or belief system.

"Breadth and depth are clearly related, with at least 50% overlap across each group."



50.8% of all respondents chose Kindness as a top six virtue.

“Frequency alone does not show which virtues are most deeply held.”

Frequency alone does not show which virtues are most deeply held. Many of these broadly held virtues move down the list of the mean score, or fall out of the top eight altogether. The most notable one is Kindness – shared across all groups in frequency, but only among three in the mean score (Judaism, Sikhism, Non-Religious). Only among the Non-Religious does Kindness retain its spot – in Judaism and Sikhism it moves down the rankings. We find a similar drop with Humility and Justice. This finding does not diminish the importance of these virtues, but it suggests that they are not virtues that may be passionately defended, or ones that come with a substantial amount of conviction.

The mean score indicates, with varying degrees of confidence, which virtues are deeply held and rooted in conviction. Upward shifts appear for Citizenship, Civility and Devotion. These virtues may not be chosen as frequently, but when they are, respondents ranked them very highly. Citizenship, for example, is on five of these lists but never cracks the top eight in frequency.

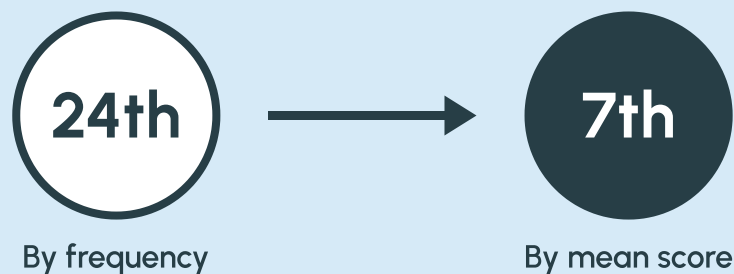
The table below outlines the shift in ranking between frequency and mean score.

Moving down: broadly, but less deeply, held	Moving up: less common, held with conviction
Average shift in ranking (of 24)	Average shift in ranking (of 24)
Humility -8.7	Civility +11.0
Patience -7.8	Citizenship +9.5
Kindness -7.0	Devotion +9.2
Justice -6.2	Curiosity +7.5
Tolerance / Openness -5.8	Excellence +7.3
Gratitude -4.3	Courage +6.3
Wisdom -3.7	Community Awareness +2.2

Devotion demands a particular note. Having only been chosen in two cohorts as it concerns frequency, it rises considerably in the mean score and is prevalent among all cohorts. Devotion considerably shifts up the rankings, moving an average of 9.2 spots across each faith or belief group. As the qualitative data show, this is no surprise. For example, several Christian respondents questioned whether Devotion is really a virtue at all, or just a description of what it means to be a person of faith. Yet to others, it was an integral building block of faith.

What is surprising, however, is that Devotion rises among the Non-Religious cohort with medium confidence. Regarding frequency, it came last (24th), catapulting to 7th on the mean score. Among the small contingent that selected Devotion, they considered it extremely important – a fascinating finding. The non-religious focus group spoke extensively of the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and shared human values (United Nations General Assembly 1948). This, perhaps, could be a framework to which Non-Religious adherents feel devoted. An alternative could be Humanist Values which identifies “three important aspects” of “thinking clearly, being good, [and] living well” that help define the worldview (Humanists UK, n.d.). Nevertheless, the data can say only so much and more investigation on this point is needed.

Devotion in the Non-Religious cohort

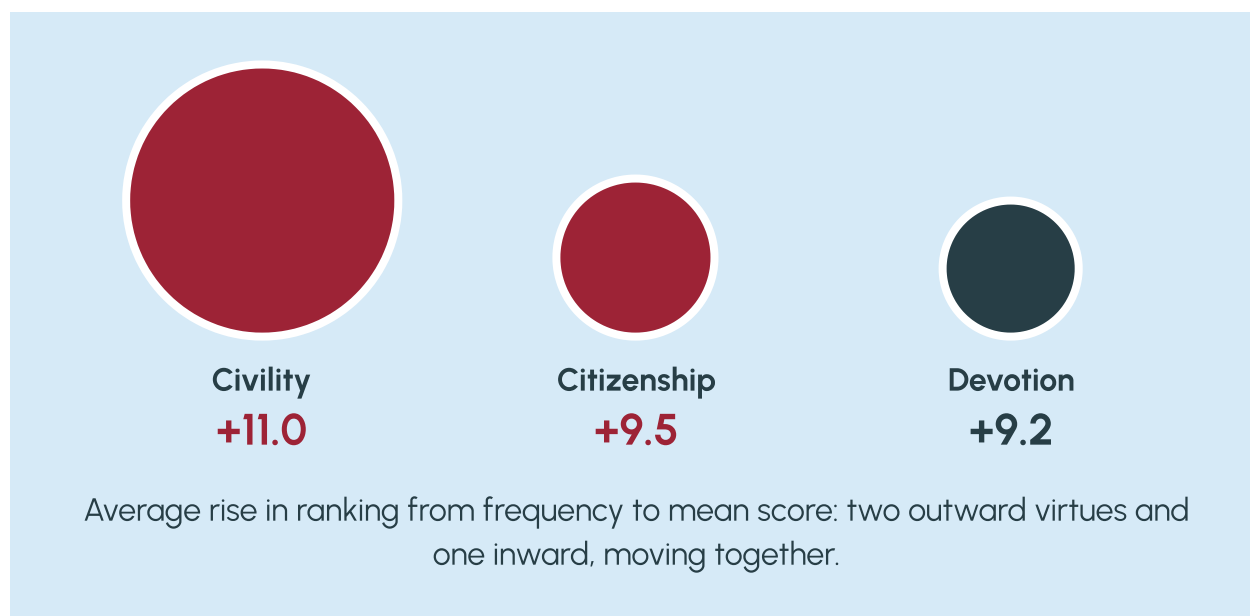


When looking at the shift, the focus is once again on overall trends across the cohorts. What immediately stands out is the fall in the interpersonal virtues (Humility, Kindness, Gratitude). Despite being frequently chosen, they are less intensely held. Humility is particularly noteworthy, falling among all six cohorts. On the other hand, civic-oriented virtues saw a considerable increase across most of the cohorts, with Civility and Citizenship the top risers. Perhaps related to the communal transmission and understanding of virtues, respondents most fervently identify with the virtues focused on the collective – a remarkable finding when considering how to foster a more robust pluralism.

Inward & outward facing

It would be easy to analyse a survey that asks people to name their most important virtues as a study in introspection: a snapshot of private conviction, perhaps cordoned off from how respondents actually live alongside their neighbours. But the findings are more complex than that. Read together, the frequency and mean-score tables suggest something closer to the opposite: for most cohorts, the virtues held with the deepest conviction are not a retreat from the wider world but could be seen as enabling engagement.

The clearest evidence sits in the “Moving Up” table above. Devotion, an unambiguously inward and spiritually-rooted virtue, is a notably strong riser, climbing an average of 9.2 places once frequency gives way to mean score. It does not rise alone. Citizenship (+9.5) and Civility (+11.0), the two most outward-facing, civic-registered virtues on the list, rise even further. These three virtues, one facing inward toward the formation of the self, two looking outward toward participation in a shared society, occupy the same cluster of the data: not the first virtue a respondent reaches for, but among the most fiercely held once selected. If depth of faith and depth of civic commitment were at odds with one another, they would be expected to move in opposite directions. Instead, in this data, they move together indicating a possible synergy.



Beyond the quantitative observation, this also echoes what respondents said directly in focus groups and interviews. For example, the Christian interviewee insisted that Justice was not an abstract commitment but something “integrally linked to my faith” — a claim that only makes sense if the inward (faith, or more specifically Devotion) and the outward (Justice, a fundamentally other-regarding virtue) are understood as flowing from the same source rather than competing for the same limited attention. These are not two separate virtues in translation, a private one and a public one. They are single concepts that refuse the inward/outward distinction altogether, which may be precisely why a survey instrument built on that distinction struggles to capture them cleanly under a single English word.

“These are not two separate virtues in translation, a private one and a public one.”

Kindness offers a useful contrast, and a caution against treating “outward-facing” as a single category. It is the most broadly selected virtue in the entire study, the only one of two to appear in every cohort’s top eight by frequency, and yet it is also one of the sharpest fallers in the shift from frequency to mean score, dropping an average of 7.0 spots. Kindness looks outward, in the sense that it is enacted toward another person, but it could be a more private kind of outwardness: about interpersonal dealings rather than the outwardness of civic participation – which is why this report treats it as a tool for both bonding and bridging capital. The data suggests respondents hold this form of relational virtue broadly but not with the same level of intensity as civic participation. Citizenship and Civility, by contrast, are held by far fewer people but with far greater conviction. This is worth dwelling on and interrogating: is the virtue most likely to be endorsed across difference (Kindness) the same virtue most likely to be fiercely defended (Devotion, Citizenship, Civility)?

None of this licenses a simple conclusion that going deeper into a tradition straightforwardly produces better citizens, and the confidence levels attached to several of these figures (Citizenship and Civility both carry only low-to-medium confidence levels in most cohorts) mean the pattern should be read as suggestive rather than settled. What the data does support, cautiously, is a rejection of the opposite and more common assumption: that religious depth and social withdrawal go together, or that a community looking into its own tradition is automatically turning its back on the wider society around it. Respondents who reported an intense, deeply held commitment to Devotion were, in the same breath, part of cohorts whose most intensely held virtues also included Citizenship and Civility. Whatever else divides the six cohorts in this study, none of them show a pattern in which inward conviction and outward orientation are opposed to each other. If anything, the strongest signal in the data points the other way: the people going deepest into their own tradition appear, on this evidence, to be among the same people most invested in the civic fabric that can hold a plural and diverse society together.

"Whatever else divides the six cohorts in this study, none of them show a pattern in which inward conviction and outward orientation are opposed to each other."

Virtues & social capital

If the previous section established that depth and outward orientation go together rather than in competition, the question this raises for policy and practice is why that pairing should matter at all. The most honest answer is also the most modest one: virtues matter, in the first instance, because they make a better conversation possible. Doctrine asks for agreement. A shared vocabulary of virtue does not. Two people who could not agree on the nature of God, or whether God exists, can still recognise Devotion, Honesty or Justice in one another, and can talk about what those things demand of a life without first resolving questions that may never be resolved. This is a modestly framed claim, deliberately so, but it is not a small one. In a policy environment explicitly organised around confident, cohesive and resilient communities, a vocabulary that lets people recognise moral seriousness across difference, without requiring theological convergence first, is close to a precondition for the kind of conversation cohesion work depends on.

"Virtues matter, in the first instance, because they make a better conversation possible."

But "a better conversation" is not one thing; it happens, or fails to happen, at different scales, and the data offers a way of distinguishing them. Putnam's (2000) distinction between bonding and bridging social capital, with Woolcock's (2001) addition of linking social capital, offers a more precise vocabulary than "community" alone, and this survey's virtue clusters map onto it with a clarity that seems worth taking seriously rather than dismissing as a forced analogy. Bonding capital, the trust and mutual support that holds people together within a group of similar background, sits closest to the relational virtues discussed above: Kindness, Charity and Forgiveness. These are the virtues that are broadly held, rarely the object of the fiercest conviction and doing exactly the work bonding capital is meant to do: sustaining the everyday texture of a community's internal life.

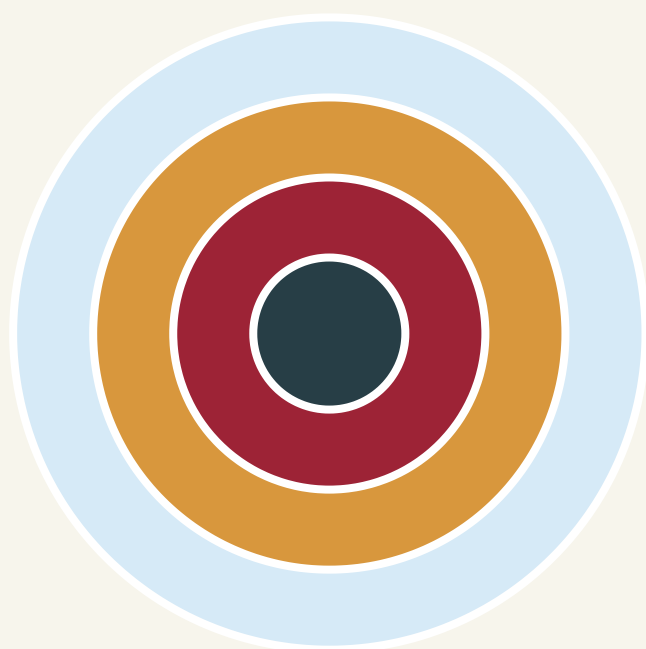
Bridging capital, the trust that reaches across lines of difference is a harder thing to build and a rarer thing to find, which is exactly why Honesty's performance in this data is so notable. It is one of only two virtues to appear in the top eight by frequency in all six cohorts, and it recurs under different names and different theological justifications in the qualitative material: *emet*, *satya*, *sat* or simply "living in truth." A virtue that six otherwise very different cohorts converge on, independently and for their own internal reasons, is close to a textbook description of a bridging resource: not imposed from outside as a lowest common denominator, but arrived at from six different directions, which is what makes it usable as connective tissue rather than a compromise. This, of course, also applies to Kindness. Tolerance/Openness could also belong in this same category, on the evidence of the Humanist cohort's use of the term.

"A virtue that six otherwise very different cohorts converge on, independently and for their own internal reasons, is close to a textbook description of a bridging resource."

Linking capital, the connection between communities and the more formal institutions of wider society (the state, civic infrastructure, public office) maps onto the civic cluster examined in the previous section: Citizenship and Civility above all, with Community Awareness also rising. This is the layer the "Moving Up" data speaks to most directly. These are not the virtues most people reach for first. But among those who do reach for them, conviction runs deep, deeper on average than for almost anything else in the survey. If linking capital depends on a body of people who feel civic participation is not merely useful but important, a matter of conviction rather than obligation, this is meaningful evidence that such a body exists within several of these cohorts, even where it is not yet the majority position.

Read together, these three layers are not competing claims on a person's moral attention but a structure that this data suggests can reinforce itself from the inside out. Devotion supplies something like the wellspring: an inward, self-directed conviction that, on the evidence of its movement along with Citizenship and Civility, does not stay contained within the self. Once again Kindness, as well as Honesty (and Tolerance/Openness), creates the bridge: a virtue independently arrived at by six different traditions, doing bridging work precisely because it is internalised and not a compromise. And the civic cluster supplies the link outward to the institutions a plural society depends on. As a description of where this project's central premise – that virtues open a door to new possibilities for relationship, cohesion and belonging – actually shows up in the numbers, the bonding, bridging and linking frame is a considerably more precise account than "shared values" alone, and one the data appears, tentatively, to support. It is also far more imaginative than asking people to reflect on their religious / theological differences and similarities.

Read from the inside out



- **Linking**
 - Citizenship Civility
 - Community Awareness
- **Bridging**
 - Honesty Kindness
 - Tolerance / Openness
- **Bonding**
 - Kindness Charity
 - Forgiveness
- **Devotion**

The wellspring: inward conviction that does not stay within the self

Section two

Implications

Interfaith

There is a note of urgency worth carrying into this section. Interfaith dialogue has been fraught in the United Kingdom in recent years, notably through the closure of the Inter Faith Network, rising tensions across faith communities after 7 October 2023 and decreased feelings of safety (HL Deb. 2024; More in Common 2024). This has occurred at precisely the moment when demographic change (a falling Christian share of the population, a rising share of both minority faiths and the non-religious) and concerns about immigration make cross-community understanding more, not less, necessary (HOPE not hate 2024). Many of the interfaith structures of the recent past may not be robust enough to address the severity of the challenges currently faced. This report suggests that the answer lies less in *what* is believed, but more in *how* those beliefs are embodied.

"This report suggests that the answer lies less in *what* is believed, but more in *how* those beliefs are embodied."

One of the most consistent findings across every cohort in the qualitative phase is that virtues are not primarily transmitted through doctrine, sermons or formal instruction. They are transmitted through community structures (particularly families across generations) and stories, embodied through repeated practice. When examining interfaith relationships through the lens of virtues, *practice* is a more promising conduit than *doctrine*, and *stories* serve as better points of connection and education than *scripture*.

How virtues are passed on



The diagram is titled "How virtues are passed on" and is set against a light blue background. It features three circular icons arranged horizontally. The first icon is dark blue with the word "Family" in white. Below it, the text "across the generations" is written in a smaller, dark blue font. The second icon is maroon with the word "Stories" in white. Below it, the text "the Gurus, the epics, parables" is written in a smaller, dark blue font. The third icon is orange with the word "Practice" in white. Below it, the text "shared ritual and service" is written in a smaller, dark blue font.

Family

across the generations

Stories

the Gurus, the epics,
parables

Practice

shared ritual and
service

This intergenerational point up was frequently voiced. The Christian expert interviewee explained that grandparents often have more influence on spiritual development than parents do. Sikh respondents described learning the stories of the Gurus "from a young age" through grandparents rather than formal religious education. Hindu respondents pointed to family and grassroots community, "especially grandparents," as the primary channel for moral formation, alongside the epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, which one expert described as "practically soap operas" that embed virtue in narrative rather than rule. Jewish respondents described something similar through the practice of prayer said together by parent and child before the child can even speak, building association and habit long before comprehension arrives. In the Humanist cohort, where formal religious structures are absent by definition, family and, distinctively, moral education in schools were named as the main transmission channels. One participant noted that Humanists UK's decades-long campaign to include humanism in religious education reflects "very strongly, the importance of education" as an alternative to the family-and-congregation model available to faith communities.

The power of narrative is the second consistent thread. Beyond the epics already mentioned, respondents kept pointing to the Gurus' lives in Sikhism, the parables and Old Testament / Hebrew Bible narratives in Christianity and Judaism and, in a Humanist register, the role of children's literature in building empathy by inviting children to "imagine themselves in a whole variety of situations," as our Humanist interviewee put it. This has a direct, practical implication for anyone doing cross-faith programme design. Narrative-based formats, storytelling exchanges, shared story circles and oral history projects are likely to travel across faith and belief boundaries far more easily than doctrinal ones. Every cohort in this study already uses story as its primary vehicle for virtue formation. It is a shared method even where the underlying content often and clearly diverges.

Third, and perhaps most actionable for practitioners: virtue is consistently described as something built through communal, embodied practice rather than individual willpower. A Christian expert interviewee put this plainly. When virtues are practised communally, saying grace before a meal, for instance, the norm "becomes very difficult to act otherwise," and gratitude or generosity can spread from one person to an entire community through repeated ritual. Jewish respondents described Shabbat in almost identical terms: a practice that forces people to "literally face one another" and, through shared time and constrained activity, teaches hospitality and care by doing rather than telling. Sikh respondents pointed to *seva* and the *langar*, the free communal kitchen open to anyone regardless of faith, as the practice through which compassion, humility and love "get through" to others. Virtues are not cultivated in the abstract but rather through performance, repeatedly, in public, alongside strangers. While similar to interfaith social action, this research suggests that a virtue-oriented approach may provide a powerful, yet gentler, way of bridging divides. Rather than campaigns of Justice, these examples are of Kindness and Service.

"Virtues are not cultivated in the abstract but rather through performance, repeatedly, in public, alongside strangers."

Muslim respondents described similar dynamics through *khidmah*, service without expectation of return such as feeding the homeless or giving to aid organisations. This convergence of embodied, communal practice as the engine of virtue formation, rather than private conviction, is an important finding for policymakers and interfaith practitioners alike. Shared service, not shared doctrine, is where virtue actually gets built, and where different communities are most likely to recognise something of themselves in each other. Two people who disagree completely about God can often still recognise a shared commitment to Honesty, Justice or Service in each other's traditions, even while disagreeing about why those things matter, and precisely what they are.

"Two people who disagree completely about God can often still recognise a shared commitment to Honesty, Justice or Service in each other's traditions."

The focus on communal and embodied practice does not negate the importance of interfaith discussions as a starting point. Rather, it provides a blueprint for fruitful discussions that challenge thinking and behaviour. Simply put, doctrine may not be as helpful of a starting point as the action-orientated topic of virtues. Focused, multi-faith conversations on virtues that are widely shared (Kindness and Honesty) and deeply held (Honesty and Devotion) among adherents of different faiths and beliefs may pave the way for more fruitful discussions than scripture.

A covenantal pluralism, as developed by the Templeton Religion Trust, requires cooperative and constructive engagement. These conduits of better conversation and action are the framing the report recommends policymakers and communities adopt from this research. This is not a claim that Britain's faith communities agree more than they think, but evidence that they have more shared practical ground to build on than the current, often adversarial, public conversation about religion and identity would suggest. This is about providing the hopeful, practical tools for ongoing engagement, in the midst of real and significant challenges and differences.

Section two

Social policy

This research has an immediate, practical hook into the government's own cohesion strategy, which is currently funding exactly this kind of work and is still formulating evidence on what is measuring success. The strategy committed support via the Common Ground Resilience Fund (up to £5 million for 2026/27), explicitly earmarked for things like interfaith programmes, community events and neighbourhood-led volunteering. It also points to Near Neighbours, the Church of England-led initiative that brings people together in religiously and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, as a model worth continuing. The data offers a fairly direct steer for anyone designing or funding programmes of this kind: put the emphasis on shared service and shared practice (joint volunteering, food provision, disaster response, the kind of activity described above).

"Put the emphasis on shared service and shared practice."

The strategy's commitment to "boost faith and belief literacy" is a second obvious point of contact. The government has said it wants to gauge current levels of faith literacy within its own ranks and improve the quality of policymaking as a result. Most faith literacy training that already exists in the public sector tends toward a comparative-doctrine model: potted facts about the Five Pillars, the Ten Commandments and the Guru Granth Sahib. This is useful as very first steps, but the interviews suggest it misses what actually matters for understanding how a community behaves.

"Government has said it wants to gauge current levels of faith literacy within its own ranks and improve the quality of policymaking as a result."

Regarding local communities, the strategy leans hard on bottom-up models, Neighbourhood Boards, the Community Right to Buy and Pride in Place; it also echoes covenantal pluralism's bottom-up approach, as articulated by Stewart et al. (2020). This lines up well with what the data shows about how virtue is actually transmitted, through family, grandparents and community structures that already exist, rather than through anything centrally instructed. Local faith and belief organisations, on this evidence, are not simply one stakeholder among many to be consulted on Pride in Place-style processes. They are, in many neighbourhoods, the pre-existing infrastructure for exactly the kind of intergenerational, practice-based transmission the government's own strategy is trying to recreate from scratch elsewhere. Programme designers should treat them as delivery partners with a head start, not as one more community group to be consulted.

There is a further, more pointed implication buried in the Justice finding discussed above, and it is worth surfacing directly for policymakers rather than leaving it implicit. As discussed earlier, Justice was the top-selected virtue among Jewish and Sikh respondents in the pilot and featured prominently among Muslim respondents too. Although less prevalent in this study, Justice remained a top virtue among the Muslim and Jewish cohorts. The qualitative data offers a plausible account of why: Jewish and Muslim communities experience, by some distance, the highest rates of religious hate crime in England and Wales (2,873 recorded incidents against Jewish people and 4,478 against Muslims in the year to March 2025, on Home Office figures) (HM Government 2025). Hate crime statistics tell government how often these communities are attacked. They do not tell government how those communities make sense of that experience in their own moral vocabulary. That is precisely the gap such research can help to fill, and it carries a direct implication for cohesion policy design: a strategy that treats all sectors of society as starting from the same place, engaging with a shared "cohesion conversation", risks under-serving exactly the communities for whom that conversation is least abstract. This nuanced – albeit more complex approach – to programme design is a more effective and honest starting point. None of this happens in a vacuum.

Recorded religious hate crime, year to March 2025

Muslim



Jewish



[Source: Home Office, Hate Crime England and Wales, year ending March 2025]

Conflicts abroad can reshape the texture of local relationships with unprecedented immediacy – which may be exactly why localism may be centrally relevant to a future approach to cohesion, treating hyper-local renewal and reconnection as a response to instability that is felt regionally, nationally and far beyond national borders.

A second point concerns how policymakers should read the apparent link between Christianity and civic virtue specifically. The pilot data showed a distinctively civic profile for Christian respondents, yet the more recent qualitative material adds to that picture and complicates it: several Christian focus group participants argued that this civic inflection reflects the historical position of the Church of England as an established church. In the recent survey, the more civic-oriented virtues did not appear among the most frequently selected virtues. This lined up with the interviews. Citizenship was a top virtue by mean score, but as discussed this is not something unique to Christianity in this data. This matters for any policy conversation about the role of the established Church and “faith and public life” more broadly. The cohorts researched here have very different historical trajectories in the context of their life in the United Kingdom. What looks like civic virtue may, in part, be an artefact of historical establishment and majority status, or a reflection of how that faith is presently represented in national discourse. It is a materially different policy story from one about theology, and a caution against using any one tradition’s vocabulary as the default template for reading the others.

A credible cohesion strategy also needs to be honest about where this research finds genuine, unresolved disagreement rather than mere difference of emphasis. The clearest fault line in the data sits around personal autonomy: several Non-Religious respondents named respect for individual autonomy, in matters of sexuality, gender, abortion and assisted dying, as close to a first-order commitment, and identified this as a recurring point of tension with religious positions; several faith-cohort respondents described a mirroring tension from the other direction. The virtue framework does not, and should not be sold as able to, dissolve disagreements of this kind. Its value is that it gives communities who disagree a shared vocabulary for continuing to disagree well, rather than a device for making the disagreement disappear. Policymakers reaching for “shared values” language should be precise about which kind of claim they are making.

“The virtue framework does not, and should not be sold as able to, dissolve disagreements of this kind.”

The clearest fault line

Personal autonomy — sexuality, gender, abortion, assisted dying — named by Humanist respondents as a first-order commitment, and mirrored as a point of tension from several faith-cohort respondents.

This is where the bonding, bridging and linking distinction introduced above earns its keep as more than an analytic frame; it points toward a concrete framework. Programmes that build bonding capital (shared service, joint volunteering, communal practice within a single tradition or a small interfaith group) and programmes that build bridging or linking capital (cross-community collaboration, engagement with civic institutions, building trust) are doing different things, on different timescales, but are valuable in creating an ecosystem that cohesion and pluralism require.

The connective tissue

The connective tissue between faith communities and the state, which the data suggests is held by a smaller group but with disproportionately strong conviction (Citizenship and Civility), is a distinct challenge. A cohesion strategy that wants to grow linking capital specifically may need a distinct programme strand aimed at that smaller, highly motivated, civic-minded constituency within each tradition, rather than assuming that bonding-capital investment will eventually generalise upward and outward on its own.

Given that Honesty and Kindness are the two virtues to appear in the top eight by frequency in every one of the six cohorts, a shared civic emphasis on these is worth investigating further. In a time of intense debate about fake news, AI, fact and fiction, public trust and institutional integrity, work to protect society and democracy could plausibly anchor cross-sector conversation in a way that a specifically religious or specifically secular framing could not manage alone.

None of this amounts to a claim that Britain's faith and belief communities completely agree. It is evidence, more modestly and more usefully, that they share more practical ground to build on than the current, often adversarial, public conversation about religion and identity would suggest. That is the frame the report recommends policymakers take. They should not search for consensus on ultimate questions, but the more achievable, and on this evidence realistic, possibility of a better conversation. This is a conversation conducted through a vocabulary that does not require anyone to resolve what they believe about God before they can recognise conviction, integrity and care for others in someone who believes something different.

"None of this amounts to a claim that Britain's faith and belief communities completely agree."

Education

The data set out in this report raises important considerations for learning within and beyond formal educational settings. In general terms, and perhaps most importantly, responses reaffirm the importance of virtue in people's lives – of all faiths and none. The commitment to virtues, such as Kindness and Honesty, suggests a common core that should, and often does, form the basis of educational settings across the United Kingdom. Taken together, the data also suggests that current approaches to religious education in schools have merit to the extent that they offer the opportunity for all pupils to engage in matters of values and morality, of identity and belonging and – crucially – of the relationship between religion, communities and society. In this way, the findings of this report add to the ongoing debates about the purposes of both religious and moral education in schools.

Where consistency still lags

This said, some caution must be exercised about how far these opportunities might be realised in practice for several reasons. It remains the case that religious education in schools across the United Kingdom's four nations is experienced inconsistently by children and young people. There is another reason for caution. While all schools seek to develop values, and many now explicitly and intentionally seek to cultivate *virtues*, more work is needed to shed light on how virtues relate to faith and religion, and vice versa, within educational settings specifically. The findings of this study suggest that a complex, yet vital, relationship exists between faith, virtues and life in a cohesive, plural society. When operating well, the focus on virtues in schools will incorporate explicit attention to faith and the way that faith commitments shape how virtues are valued, perceived and prioritised. This is clearest when that institution has a faith foundation. Nevertheless, all schools carry a responsibility to explore how virtues (or values) relate to the faiths and beliefs that make up this country, and how those worldviews influence one's understanding of virtues. Greater support needs to be given to schools to take account of how virtues are transmitted beyond schools, and how learning within the schools offers real diversity of understanding and engagement. Each school needs to consider for itself how such diversity can be achieved, but this study suggests that the forms of engagement pursued will be more educationally beneficial to the extent that they are action-focused, repeated rather than one-off and intergenerational.

Awareness and reflexivity

The search for greater understanding and dialogue underpins much of the positive work in the education sector. The relationship between how virtues are understood (including which are prioritised) and how they are lived through everyday relationships and experiences is relevant to all members of a healthy, pluralistic society. It is only through an awareness of that relationship, and the adoption of reflexivity it requires, that convergences and differences can be understood. This awareness, at its strongest, requires active attention, support and educational processes to occur, whether formal or informal.

Though formal initiatives certainly play a role, this awareness can also flourish when those of different faith commitments (including none) come together in spaces of civil and civic life to pursue a shared goal through action and activity. The data in this report underlines this – virtues are social and lived qualities most powerfully formed through communal practices.

Virtues, or values?

Yet there are also important differences between cohorts that speak to an educational need. Perhaps the most pressing of these, given the longstanding interest in shared or British values from successive governments in the United Kingdom, is the distinction between virtues and values. Clarity around these concepts is hard to achieve, but it matters. There is ample room for misunderstanding and disagreement when the terminology of “virtues” or “values” is used without clarity or precision. The finding that the concept of virtues spoke more directly to Sikh and Christian respondents, whereas Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Non-Religious respondents seemed to prefer the term values, warrants further research attention, not least concerning whether values was being used as a preferred term (which seems to be the case for Non-Religious respondents) or as a more everyday synonym for virtue. The educational relevance and implications of this are two-fold. First, existing research on character education has found that, although a range of virtues are made explicit, the concept of virtue itself offers a deeper and more embodied way of understanding and approaching moral education than the concept of values (Jubilee Centre 2017). Second, virtue makes clearer than values the cognition, emotion and action central to how one understands oneself and their place within wider society.

Preference for

“virtues”

Sikh respondents

Christian respondents

Preference for

“values”

Jewish respondents

Muslim respondents

Hindu respondents

Humanist respondents

So how, then, is this applied? This research does not claim that the six cohorts converge on a single, flattened set of universal virtues. The project's framing, borrowed from the Templeton Religion Trust's theory of covenantal pluralism, is explicit that this is neither the goal nor the reality. Covenantal pluralism calls communities not to tolerance but to "real, respectful engagement" across genuine differences (Templeton Religion Trust n.d.). It is clearly distinguished from relativism, which would blur those differences away. The practical implication for cross-faith work and education is not to search for a lowest common denominator, but to build partnerships around the practices different traditions already share, while being upfront that the theological reasoning behind those practices differs and matters.

"Covenantal pluralism calls communities not to tolerance but to "real, respectful engagement" across genuine differences."

The Templeton Religion Trust identifies three enabling conditions for covenantal pluralism: global religious freedom, holistic religious literacy and character virtues. The data presented throughout this report speaks most directly to the third. It suggests a fairly specific practical agenda. Holistic religious literacy, on this reading, does not primarily concern the Five Pillars of Islam or the Ten Commandments, as a child may study in the RE curriculum. Rather, it is about understanding how each tradition actually cultivates its people: who the moral exemplars are, what the formative stories are, what the communal practices look like and how a particular virtue may be embodied within that community.

A Christian who understands that Sikh Justice is inseparable from historical experiences of caste discrimination, or a Humanist who understands that Jewish Charity is experienced as an inescapable obligation rather than a discretionary kindness, has a richer and more usable form of religious literacy than one who can recite doctrinal facts. Programme design that builds this kind of literacy, through storytelling and shared-practice formats discussed above rather than lecture-format “faiths 101” sessions, is likely to do more for genuine cohesion than comparative theology alone.

Shared practice, different routes

Mosques used for Covid vaccinations

Sikh langars opening during oxygen shortages in India

Christian churches responding to homelessness

Structurally similar acts, arrived at through entirely different theological routes.

A concrete example from the data: several cohorts described the virtues Kindness and, when invited to reflect on the findings of the pilot, Service through moments of crisis as a defining, virtue-expressing act – mosques being used for COVID-19 vaccinations, Sikh *langars* opening during oxygen shortages in India and Christian church-based responses to homelessness. Each example mobilised community resources quickly in response to need, yet each arose through a different theological route. Interfaith and cross-belief literacy and collaboration are likely to be most durable when focused on this kind of shared practice, whether joint service days, disaster response partnerships or shared food provision.

Section three

Methodology

Qualitative

The qualitative component of this research deployed a series of interviews, open-ended online surveys and focus groups.

Expert interviews provided an in-depth understanding of virtues within a specific faith or belief tradition. Interviewees had a demonstrated track record of writing and thought leadership in both virtue ethics and the specific faith or belief tradition being investigated. These interviews were conducted between November 2024 and February 2025.

The team then used open-ended online surveys, curated for each of the cohorts. Surveys were disseminated through known contacts and institutions. The questions posed in these surveys can be found in Appendix C. 58 written responses were received, which invited respondents to reflect on particular virtues and identify those which were not included in the pilot. These surveys ran throughout Spring 2025. The research team suspected that some respondents used AI to generate their answers because of the consistent structure, tone and phrasing of some of them. The survey form was quickly adjusted to ask respondents not to use AI agents, but through consultation with academic partners we treated responses flagged as AI-generated as legitimate entries.⁴

From May to September 2025, the research team conducted six semi-structured intra-faith focus groups, primarily online but in person where geography allowed, each consisting of six to eight participants. A diversity of age, gender and denominational or sub-group affiliation was sought. Focus groups concluded in November 2025 with an interfaith focus group, drawing at least one participant from each intra-faith group to explore cross-faith understandings of virtues. The questions and structure of these focus groups can be found in Appendix B.

⁴ Inviting respondents through known networks and institutions helped to ensure that the respondent was, indeed, human. Those individuals chose to use an AI agent to shape their answer, hence the decision to treat their entries as legitimate. In turn, this flagged a new reality for the project. Over the course of its duration, there have been great advances in the capabilities and use of AI that were not foreseen at the start of the project. In response, the research team responded by setting more restrictive criteria for data in the nationwide survey, as discussed.

Quantitative

The data collected through the expert interviews, open-ended surveys and focus groups were analysed through thematic coding and led to the production of cohort-specific reports. These reports, in addition to supplementing the final findings as presented throughout this document, were the basis on which the research team finalised the list of virtues and relevant definitions for the quantitative survey (see Appendix A) and contributed to the survey design.

For the nationwide quantitative survey, the virtue list was altered. Reasons for this included “entanglements” – virtues that respondents found hard to distinguish and that were infrequently selected in the pilot. This included removing Compassion, Confidence, Piety, Resilience, Service and Teamwork, replacing them with virtues that emerged from the qualitative portion of the research, or merging with them those that were deemed highly similar. Those added were Courage, Excellence, Forgiveness, Love, Patience and Self-Control. This was not merely a cosmetic change but rather a direct output from the qualitative phase. The qualitative findings did not just interpret the pilot’s results; they revised the instrument, resulting in a better-calibrated version of the pilot.

“The qualitative findings did not just interpret the pilot’s results; they revised the instrument.”

Retired

Compassion

Confidence

Piety

Resilience

Service

Teamwork

Added

Courage

Excellence

Forgiveness

Love

Patience

Self-Control

The survey was designed and administered using Qualtrics online software, launched in February 2026. Respondents were recruited through national faith and belief organisations and networks, targeted social media campaigns, cohort-specific WhatsApp groups, community newsletters, faith-specific press and the online survey recruitment tool Prolific. In total, 8,994 responses were received, with notable variance across the cohorts. This sample is not considered to be reflective of the wider population. Online dissemination more readily reached people who are more active on the internet, and it likely attracted those already interested in virtues. A small incentive was given to encourage wider participation, but limitations still exist.

8,994

responses received

5,167

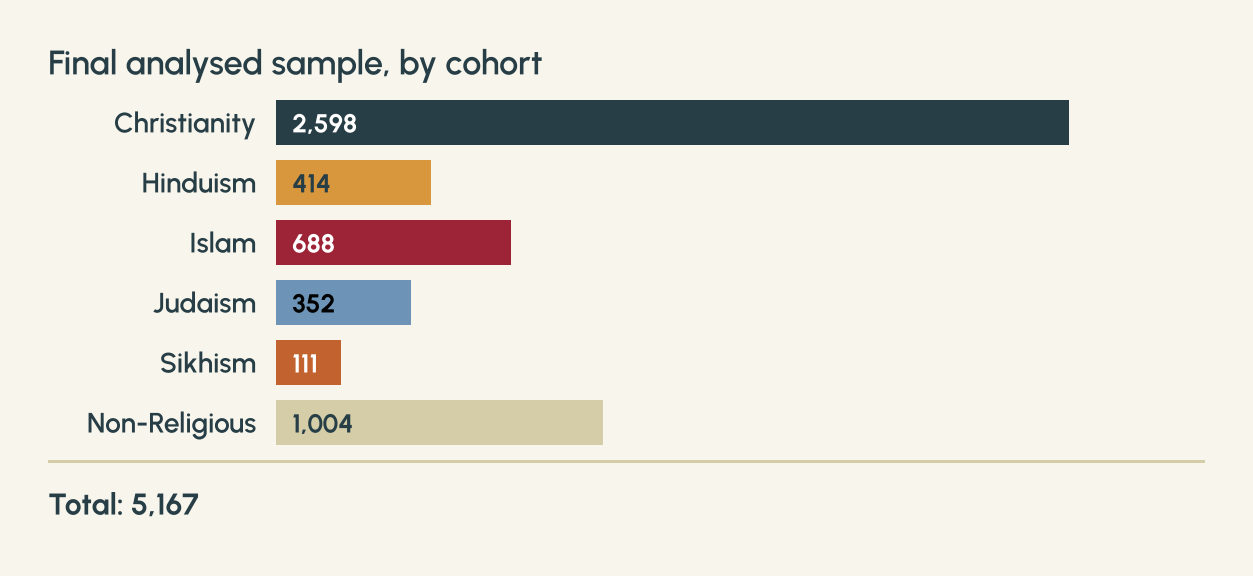
analysed after quality assurance

The research team took great care to validate the quality of the data, enabling reCAPTCHA technology in Qualtrics to filter out bots and took front-end measures to limit duplicate responses. Despite these measures, advances in AI tools that can complete surveys and bypass them impacted the data collection. To counter this, the team removed all responses completed in under 90 seconds. Furthermore, when responses had the same IP address, only the first response was kept. Further data cleaning was then undertaken.

The second wave of quality assurance examined the open-ended questions in the survey. Responses that gave a nonsensical answer to the question of "If applicable, what denomination do you identify with?" were deleted. These answers included a jumble of random letters or reference to a different religion from the one selected by the respondent earlier in the survey.

For the final open-ended question, we removed responses which on balance we thought were more likely to be from a bot than a human. This included the removal of clusters of responses which gave generic information comparing and contrasting different religions and which were all entered in quick succession of one another. We also deleted clusters of responses that gave identical answers or responded in a clearly uniformly formulaic way. Furthermore, we removed clusters of responses from the same operating system that named, as missing, virtues already included in the survey or used the same generic language and themes that we saw in other clusters of responses that we had already removed. Finally, we removed clusters in which every response said 'NO' or 'N/A' with identical capitalisation and punctuation, came from the same operating system, and selected identical demographic responses.

After these consecutive rounds of filtering to ensure the quality of the data, the following numbers of survey responses were analysed:



The research team is not in a position to speculate why some groups were disproportionately affected by suspected bots or fake entries compared to others. Sikh and Jewish responses, for example, had a higher percentage of entries flagged and removed than Non-Religious or Muslim entries. It is inevitable that some legitimate data points were lost through this process, but with the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence to access and complete surveys, our priority was ensuring the data analysed was robust, accurate and human.

The data presented throughout this report should not be used to make authoritative statements about a particular virtue within a particular faith. The relatively low

numbers among Sikh respondents, for example, should be treated with less confidence than those for Christianity. Instead, the data examines trends across the cohorts studied, identifying promising lines of inquiry for the virtues that are shared and the differences that lie therein.

Limitations

The research team is aware of a number of limitations that should be flagged.

Reach and uneven participation

Smaller faith communities in the United Kingdom are often less centrally organised than larger ones, with fewer shared communication channels and greater reliance on informal or local networks. All of this makes broad-based survey recruitment structurally harder, independent of how willing community members actually are to take part. Several communities in this study are also currently operating under real external and political pressures. As noted above, recent periods have been marked by rising hate crimes against particular religious communities. At the time of the survey, the Sikh community in the UK was the subject of significant political and media debates, including threats against prominent members of the community. Communities under this kind of pressure may understandably be more cautious about engaging with a research project or simply not have the bandwidth due to more immediate concerns. Smaller faiths, in this sense, are not just harder to reach logistically. They may also be more susceptible to shifting political winds affecting willingness to participate at all, and future research should plan for continued underrepresentation relative to population share even with a much larger overall sample. This also includes the possibility that findings could be more easily swayed by political waves bashing against said communities. There was also uneven participation among particular denominations or sub-groupings. Some respondents provided their denomination or relevant equivalent, but there were too few responses per denomination to support in-depth analysis. Further, denominationally-specific studies are needed.

Selection bias

Any findings about “what Christians value” or “what Muslims value” should be read as findings about the aggregate of a highly internally diverse population, not a unified doctrinal position. Furthermore, both the pilot and the current survey were opt-in. The pilot explicitly noted that its unexpectedly high response rate likely reflects a sample of people already interested in questions of faith, who would not seek to represent their communities more broadly. There is no reason to expect this to have changed for the current phase, and findings should be generalised with caution, even from a much larger sample, to “what British Hindus think” or “what British Jews think” as opposed to “what the Hindus and Jews who chose to take this survey think.”

Translation and definitional ambiguity

Respondents throughout the project raised this unprompted. A single English word like “Charity,” “Justice,” or “Devotion” carries very different connotations depending on whether it is read against *caritas* (Latin, Christian), *tzedakah* (Hebrew, Jewish), *khidmah* (Arabic, Muslim), *seva* (Punjabi/Sanskrit, Sikh/Hindu) or a secular English default. A forced-choice online survey then adds another layer to this. Two respondents selecting the same virtue from the same list may be describing meaningfully different concepts, despite carefully articulated definitions, and a purely quantitative survey has no mechanism for catching this. This is the gap the qualitative phase was designed to fill, and precisely why the report pairs the two data sources rather than relying on either alone.

Comparability with the pilot

Because six virtues were dropped from the original list of 24 and six new ones added, direct trend comparison between the 2023 pilot and the current survey will only be partial. Honesty, Devotion, Justice, Charity, Kindness and Gratitude, among others, are common to both lists and can be compared reasonably directly. But Compassion, a pilot top-six virtue for Hindu and Humanist respondents, has been retired in favour of Love, and Service, a pilot top-six virtue for Sikh respondents, has been retired with the new additions of Excellence and Self-Control. Any further analysis of the new findings will need to be explicit about which comparisons to the pilot are direct and which require an interpretive bridge, so as not to overstate continuity or change where the underlying instrument has itself shifted.

Researcher and consultant positionality

The qualitative data summaries were each produced by a named researcher working closely with community-specific religious consultants and inevitably carry something of each researcher's own framing and emphasis, notwithstanding a shared interview protocol and measures to ensure consistency across data capture. The wider research team included Christian, Muslim and Non-Religious members.

Timing and context sensitivity

Finally, this fieldwork period has coincided with a number of live and difficult geopolitical and domestic events that surfaced, unprompted, in the qualitative data. Attitudes toward virtues like Justice, Tolerance and Devotion may be shaped in part by the specific political moment in which respondents were surveyed, rather than reflecting a stable, timeless feature of each tradition. The report recommends treating this phase's findings as a snapshot of 2025–2026, useful for comparison against the 2023 pilot precisely because both are dated snapshots, rather than a definitive or permanent account of what each faith or belief community values.

Section four

Conclusion

This research set out to ask whether virtues could offer Britain's faith and belief communities a shared vocabulary. The evidence, across both the quantitative survey and the qualitative material gathered alongside it, answers that question more affirmatively than the pilot alone could. Kindness and Honesty function, in different ways, as genuine cross-cohort anchors. A shared vocabulary that six different communities reach for on their own terms is a far more durable basis for conversation than one handed down from outside.

But this is not a report about convergence alone, and it would misrepresent the data to present it as one. The more interesting finding, in some ways, is how divergence across the cohorts shows a fuller and more complex picture – it is not only the overlaps that matter, but the depth and breadth of choices too. Virtues broadly claimed, like Kindness, are often held less intensely than virtues claimed by fewer people but with real conviction, such as Devotion. Honesty is unique in being both broadly accepted *and* deeply held.

"Virtues broadly claimed, like Kindness, are often held less intensely than virtues claimed by fewer people but with real conviction, such as Devotion."

The data offers a genuine, if cautious, answer to a question that shadows most conversations about faith and integration: whether communities going deeper into their own tradition are thereby turning away from the wider society around them. On this evidence, they do not appear to be. The virtues held with the greatest conviction include outward, civic-facing ones *and* inward, spiritually-rooted ones, and they appear to rise together rather than trade off.

These findings carry weight beyond the survey itself. They speak directly to cohesion policy that is actively seeking evidence of what holds a diverse nation together, and to a wider public conversation that too often assumes faith and belief communities are either fully aligned or fundamentally opposed.

This assumption now extends well beyond government: in his recent account of global threats and domestic civic decline, Gordon Brown (2026) argues that the future will be decided not by declarations from world leaders but by what citizens choose to do together in their own communities – an argument that resonates strongly with the report's findings on shared practice and the civic virtues held most intensely once embraced.

What this report offers is a more nuanced, precise and usable account: real convergence on some things, legitimate disagreement on others and a practical basis – in shared practice and a shared vocabulary – for navigating both. Virtue terminology may not be ubiquitous in the vernacular of the United Kingdom today, but it provides a powerful tool to foster a plural, cohesive society, giving a vocabulary that underpins the aims of the government's cohesion strategy at home and the concept of covenantal pluralism more widely. Where *Protecting What Matters* frames integration as alignment with a broad set of (British) values, this report's evidence adds further insight pointing to a more modest but perhaps more durable alternative: cohesion is built on recognising virtue inherent in one another, not only agreeing on it in advance.

This project's working premise was that understanding virtues "opens the door to new possibilities" for relationship, cohesion and belonging. What this phase of research adds to that premise is a more precise account of where, specifically, that door opens: not in a flattened set of universal values that erases real difference, but in the more modest and more achievable possibility of a better conversation. It is one where communities can recognise moral seriousness in each other without first requiring theological agreement, and where honest disagreement is treated as something to navigate together rather than paper over. That, not consensus, is what this data suggests is actually on offer. It is about *speaking* well together, across differences, so that we all can *live* well together.

Speaking well, and living well

It is about *speaking* well together,
across differences, so that
we all can *live* well together.

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Appendix A: Virtues

The 24 virtues and definitions used in the quantitative survey.

Charity is the voluntary act of giving of money, goods, or time to those in need.

Citizenship is being a responsible and active member of one's community and wider society.

Civility is being polite and courteous in behaviour and speech.

Community Awareness is understanding, engaging with, and learning from different parts of the community.

Courage is acting despite fear and being able to face difficult challenges.

Critical Thinking is thinking rationally and coming to independent conclusions.

Curiosity is the eagerness to know or learn something new.

Devotion is dedication and commitment to one's faith or ideals.

Excellence is doing one's best and striving for high standards in actions and responsibilities.

Forgiveness is letting go of grudges or resentments.

Gratitude is being appreciative and thankful for what one has.

Honesty is being true to yourself and other people.

Humility is acknowledging one's limitations and mistakes without pride or arrogance.

Integrity is having and following strong moral principles in one's life.

Justice is having an understanding of what is right and to uphold it in society.

Kindness is being considerate and helpful to others.

Love is a disposition of care for the wellbeing of others and acting with compassion and commitment.

Neighbourliness is embodying a disposition to be friendly and helpful to those around you.

Patience is waiting calmly and without resentment in difficult situations.

Perseverance / Steadfastness is the steady persistence in a course of action, especially in spite of difficulties.

Reflection is thoughtfully examining one's experiences, beliefs, and actions before forming judgements.

Self-Control is regulating one's impulses, emotions, and actions in line with one's values and goals.

Tolerance / Openness is the willingness to accept differences without prejudice or hostility.

Wisdom is applying knowledge, insight, experience, and judgement to make sound and balanced decisions.

Appendix B: Focus group questions

Virtues of Faith: Enquire, Deepen, Expand

Focus Group Questions: Christianity (provided as example)

Introduction:

Virtues of Faith is a Templeton Religion Trust funded project, carried out by the Good Faith Partnership with the support of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham.

Following our pilot study in 2023, this next phase of our research seeks to delve deeper and to better understand the UK's faith communities through the lens of virtues.

The project will help to develop a new framework to understand what unites and differentiates the British public and identify the virtues that can help facilitate collaboration and understanding at community and national levels.

In this focus group we will present you with some of our initial findings and we want to explore these further with you, check them and see what you think. There are no wrong answers here, as we want to know your views.

All of the data we gather will be securely coded and analysed by the project team, which will feed into a report at the end of the project that will be launched in London and Birmingham. Data will be held securely complying with GDPR and Good Faith Partnership's Privacy Policy.

Any quotations in the final report will be anonymised.

After this session a member of our team will contact you regarding an honorarium for your time and participation.

Any questions?

(Note for facilitator: The purpose of the intra-faith focus groups is to generate discussion with adherents of specific faith traditions to discuss the virtues that resonate in their tradition. Using the top six virtues from the pilot study, explore similarities and differences between their tradition and others as well as explore denominational differences within their tradition.)

- What do you understand by the term 'virtue'? And can you think of any examples that come to mind – don't think too hard, we are looking for ideas that come 'off the top of your head'.
- Is this a helpful term? How does it relate to public discourse?

When we asked people in our pilot study, 2 years ago, we had a number of virtues listed by people. Below are the top six virtues, and their definitions, identified by adherents from the same group as you (Christian):

[list of virtues presented, modified to reflect Pilot findings for that particular cohort]

We would like to now explore this a bit further:

- Is anything missing from this list, that you would put high up in the top 6?
- Let us look at (the top 3? Or all 6?) and explore what we mean by these terms (unpack each term and see if there are differences in the group, even if subtle) – can you give examples of how this may be practiced?
- Thinking about other (Christians) who may not be here, can you imagine any different approaches / understanding?
- Do you have any other thoughts or reflections?
- Having thought about this a bit further would you change any of your answers that you gave at the beginning?

Probing the wider social context and relations – If time allows

- How do you think these virtues may affect the way your faith is practiced in Britain?
- How are these virtues passed down or manifested in your community? Through families, study, community, etc.
- How do you think other faiths may understand these virtues, are there differences or would they be the same?

Appendix C: Qualitative survey questions

General Questions for on Virtues and Faith

Below are the top six virtues identified by adherents of the faith you also identify with during our pilot study.

[modified to reflect the particular cohort]

- Which virtue resonates most with your faith and why?
- What is missing?
- What does "justice" mean to you and your tradition?
- What does "charity" mean to you and your tradition?
- What does "honesty" mean to you and your tradition?
- What does "devotion" mean to you and your tradition?
- How do virtues shape your worldview or actions as a person of faith?

Appendix D: Quantitative survey

Survey questions

Are you a resident of the UK?

What is your email address?

What faith or belief tradition (and denomination, if applicable), do you most closely identify with?

Christianity

Judaism

Islam

Hinduism

Sikhism

Non-religious

If applicable, what denomination do you identify with?

Open text

What is your gender?

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

What is your age?

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-63

65+

What best describes your ethnicity?

Asian

Black Caribbean or African

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

White

Other

What is your education level?

No qualifications

GCSE

A Levels

Apprenticeship

Bachelor Degree

Postgraduate Degree

Other

Which nationality best describes you?

Drop down box

The Virtues of Faith Team would like you to prioritise the importance of particular virtues to you, as someone who identifies with a particular faith or belief worldview. This list was selected following a Pilot Study, qualitative research, and through advice with experts within the virtue ethics tradition.

Please review this list of virtues and accompanying (short) definitions below: [See Appendix A]

- Using the list above as a reference, select the top six virtues you would consider most important to you as a person of faith or belief. You will rank the selected six on the next page. (Tick box is next to each virtue.)
- Please rank your 6 selected virtues, with the one you consider most important to you at the top of the list, and the the one you consider least important at the bottom of the list. (A drag and drop ranking system of the 6 selected virtues is generated.)
- Anything else you'd like to tell us? If you feel a virtue is missing or we should be aware of a religious or cultural nuance, we'd love to hear your thoughts.

Appendix E: Note on AI use

Following the advice of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE 2023) on the use of AI in scholarly research, the authors disclose that Large Language Models (namely Claude and ChatGPT) were used at specific stages and for defined purposes in the publication of this report. The authors take full responsibility for the data, analysis, and writing presented here. AI tools did not generate original text or analysis in the report, provide citations, or craft any findings independent of the authors.

AI tools were specifically used as a supplementary tool to:

- Transcribe interviews,
- Assist in coding of qualitative data,
- Organise quantitative data into tables, which were double checked for accuracy,
- Copy-editing text, including flagging redundant sections, identify areas to harmonise the voice, flag grammar and spelling errors and inconsistencies and suggest clearer phrasing, and
- Summarise key findings to feed into the draft of the executive summary.



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