

One in five American adults raised in religiously mixed homes

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WASHINGTON (RNS)—In another sign indicating the United States is a diverse country, a new poll reveals one in five American adults grew up in a family with more than one religion.

The poll, conducted by the Pew Research Center, also found most of those raised this way had one Protestant or Catholic parent and one religiously unaffiliated—sometimes called a “None”—parent.

“To be sure, religiously mixed backgrounds remain the exception in America,” the report on the poll states. “But the number of Americans raised in interfaith homes appears to be growing.”

That’s because more Millennials—27 percent—are raised in religiously mixed homes than any other generation to date. And about the same number of young people—24 percent—say they were raised by at least one parent who did not have a religious affiliation.

The poll also revealed:

- People raised by at least one parent with no religious affiliation are more likely to be unaffiliated themselves (60 percent)—the same retention rate as those raised by Catholic parents.
- Children with two Catholic parents are more likely to remain Catholic (62 percent). But those raised with only one Catholic parent have a 50-50 chance of being Catholic as adults.
- Eighty percent of those raised in a Protestant-only home remain

Protestants—but that number drops to 56 percent if one parent is a religious None. In either case, there is a lot of “religious switching” in Protestant families, as only one-quarter of those raised by at least one Protestant parent remain in that parent’s denomination.

- More people say their mother, rather than their father, was mostly responsible for their religious upbringing, and those raised in mixed-faith homes are more likely to identify with their mother’s faith.

The study was conducted among 5,000 U.S. adults and has a margin of error of 2.0 percentage points.