



# A Portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews

31/01/2014 | Pew Research Center

**American Jews overwhelmingly say they are proud to be Jewish and have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people, but Jewish identity is changing in America, where one-in-five Jews (22%) now describe themselves as having no religion.**

The changing nature of Jewish identity stands out sharply when the survey's results are analyzed by generation. Fully 93% of Jews in the aging Greatest Generation identify as Jewish on the basis of religion (called "Jews by religion" in this report); just 7% describe themselves as having no religion ("Jews of no religion"). By contrast, among Jews in the youngest generation of U.S. adults – the Millennials – 68% identify as Jews by religion, while 32% describe themselves as having no religion and identify as Jewish on the basis of ancestry, ethnicity or culture.

Intermarriage rates seem to have risen substantially over the last five decades. Among Jewish respondents who have gotten married since 2000, nearly six-in-ten have a non-Jewish spouse.

Reform Judaism continues to be the largest Jewish denominational movement in the United States. One-third (35%) of all U.S. Jews identify with the Reform movement, while 18% identify with Conservative Judaism, 10% with Orthodox Judaism and 6% with a variety of smaller groups, such as the Reconstructionist and Jewish Renewal movements. About three-in-ten American Jews (including 19% of Jews by religion and two-thirds of Jews of no religion) say they do not identify with any particular Jewish denomination.

Though Orthodox Jews constitute the smallest of the three major denominational movements, they are much younger, on average, and tend to have much larger families than the overall Jewish population. This suggests that their share of the Jewish population will grow. In the past, high fertility in the U.S. Orthodox community has been at least partially offset by a low retention rate: Roughly half of the survey respondents who were raised as Orthodox Jews say they are no longer Orthodox. But the falloff from Orthodoxy appears to be declining and is significantly lower among 18-to-29-year-olds (17%) than among older people. Within all three denominational movements, most of the switching is in the direction of less-traditional Judaism.

These are among the key findings of the Pew Research Center's survey of U.S. Jews, conducted on landlines and cellphones among 3,475 Jews across the country from Feb. 20-June 13, 2013, with a statistical margin of error for the full Jewish sample of plus or minus 3.0 percentage points.

The full report can be downloaded or viewed online accompanied by a lot of graphics, here:

[American Jewry PEW-Report](#)