

The German Federal President's History Competition
Results of the 25th German History Competition in 2016/2017

Report

In the 25th competition, students aged under 21 were asked to conduct their own research on the topic of »God and the world. Religion makes history.«

5,064 students took part and submitted 1,639 contributions.

Does interest in religion fade because of secularization? Or is it on the contrary more important to determine one's identity? The understanding of faith and religion are constantly changing. Religions want to create purpose, stability and community; they interact between politics and state, voice opinions on value discussions and determine history. But what kind of understanding do young people have of the topic of religion? Which significance do faith and religion have in their families or place of residence? How did people practice faith and religion? Where and why did conflicts arise because of faith issues?

The participants approached family members for their research, interviewed experts, conducted research in museums or archives. Often places like the mosque in their city or Martin Luther's monument as well as inter-denominational marriages in their family biography inspired the participants for their research topic. They asked questions on how the personal faith influenced the person's behaviour and values in Nazi- or GDR-time or which role the church played in the Middle Ages. In many of the sent in contributions the participants deal with the topic of exclusion and persecution based on religion, the relationship between the state and the church or religious traditions and customs. Mostly they paid attention to Christianity and also referred to the reformation jubilee of 2017.

They presented their results in many different forms. Some of them wrote an essay, others created film or audio data and others curated little exhibitions. At the centre of their projects the participants located questions on values and tolerance in society's everyday life. The participants discovered how faith and religion could be understood as a moral compass and give stability and orientation in life and therefore are a key element in our society.

Further information on the competition round 2016/2017 can be found [here](#), including short videos on the competition results. (in German only)