



An Introduction to Asset Building in Congregations

What Are *Developmental Assets*?

Search Institute has identified 40 building blocks of healthy development that all of us have the power to bring into the lives of children and teenagers. These *40 developmental assets* have grown out of extensive research on positive relationships, experiences, opportunities, and personal qualities that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. They are organized into eight categories:

- **Support** – Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, appreciate, and accept them.
- **Empowerment** – Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.
- **Boundaries and Expectations** – Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences, and encouragement to do their best.
- **Constructive Use of Time** – Young people need opportunities –outside of school– to enjoy themselves, develop new skills, and build positive relationships with other youth and adults.
- **Commitment to Learning** – Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.
- **Positive Values** – Young people need to develop strong guiding values or principles to help them make healthy life choices.
- **Social Competencies** – Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others and cope with new situations.
- **Positive Identity** – Young people need a sense of their self-worth, power, purpose, and promise.

For more information on assets, visit <http://www.search-institute.org/assets>.

Many congregations use the asset framework as a guide for strengthening their congregation. Asset building can be a resource and strategy for many aspects of congregational life, including opportunities for *children, youth, and families, intergenerational opportunities and relationships*, and connections to the *broader community*.

Why Build Assets? Why should congregations focus attention on building assets *with* and *for* children and youth? Here are six reasons:

1. **Asset building is consistent with the tenets and beliefs of faith communities** – People from many faith traditions see the assets as consistent with and connected to their beliefs, sacred writings, and practices.
2. **Asset building helps young people grow in faith** – Research shows that young people who experience more assets are more likely to place a high importance on being religious or spiritual.
3. **Asset building helps young people make healthy choices** – The more assets young people have, the more likely they are to avoid negative behaviors and engage in positive behaviors.
4. **Asset building fosters a congregation-wide commitment to young people** – People of all backgrounds and all generations tend to see asset building as a motivating, hopeful approach for working with children, youth, and families – both within the congregation and in the community.
5. **Asset building gives congregations a concrete, fresh way to use their gifts** – Congregations are in a great position to nurture intergenerational relationships; encourage young people to contribute; provide constructive, enriching activities; support families; and advocate for children, youth, and families in the community.
6. **Asset building opens opportunities to link with others in the community** – Because building assets takes a whole community, an asset-building approach can open doors to new relationships and opportunities for congregations and the broader community.

Web Site Visit <http://www.search-institute.org/congregations/> for additional information on asset building in congregations. From this page you can:

- Sign up for our free, quarterly e-newsletter for congregations
 - Download free research reports
 - Get tips for incorporating asset building throughout your congregation
 - Learn how to start a network of congregations and link up with other sectors engaged in asset building
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Training Search Institute offers a training session called *Integrating Assets into Your Congregation* via Vision Training Associates. The workshop is designed for individuals and teams from congregations of all faith traditions who want to learn how to re-envision congregational life from an asset-building perspective. The training session ranges from 4 hours to 3 days and can accommodate groups of 15-40. Visit <http://www.search-institute.org/training/sessions/congregation.htm> or call (800) 294-4322 for more information.

Search Institute Resources For a complete listing of Search Institute publications please visit <http://www.search-institute.org/catalog/> or call (877) 240-7251 to speak to a customer service representative. The following resources are great for congregations engaged in all levels of asset building or those just beginning.

Building Assets, Strengthening Faith: An Intergenerational Survey for Congregations

This new, web-based survey allows congregations of all faith traditions to find out how they are doing in nurturing faith and building assets in children, youth, and families. The 70-item survey can be completed in 15 minutes or less by youth and adults of all ages. The survey package includes an administration manual and detailed report of your congregation's results.

#255-C83 \$295.00 *Coming Fall 2003*

Building Assets in Congregations: A Practical Guide for Helping Youth Grow Up Healthy

This book is a great resource for youth workers, clergy, and volunteers in congregations of all faiths. It contains strategies for introducing assets into your congregation and ideas for integrating assets in youth, family, intergenerational, and community programs and relationships.

#113-C33 \$23.95

Asset Building: A Foundation for Effective Youth Ministry

This booklet provides an overview of applying asset building to Christian youth ministry. It contains a guide linking the 40 developmental assets to Biblical passages, recent Search Institute data sets on religious behavior and attitudes, and quick asset-building ideas for congregations.

#207-G03 packet of 20 \$9.95

Prescription for a Healthy Church: Ministry Ideas to Nurture Whole People

This book supplies hundreds of practical asset-building ideas, resources, and strategies for Christian congregations of all types and sizes. It gives ideas for many areas of congregational life, including preschool programs, education, intergenerational, and community outreach.

#421-G03 \$17.99

Get on Board! Presentations and Activities for Introducing Asset Building in Congregations

With five workshop/presentation outlines and numerous reproducible activities, handouts, and overheads, this booklet provides a treasure of tools you can use to build interest in asset building in your congregation.

#168-W00 \$18.95

Search Institute's vision is...

A world where all young people are valued and thrive.

Search Institute's mission is...

To provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities.
