

Asset-Building Ideas for Congregations

General Asset Building

- Lead a series of classes (or preach sermons) to introduce the 40 Developmental Assets™ to all adults and youth in the congregation.
- Regularly encourage all members of the congregation to think of themselves as asset builders for young people in their families, congregation, neighborhood, and community.
- Include a regular report on youth work and asset building on the agenda of the congregation board or council.
- Audit the activities in your congregation. Where are children and youth welcomed and included? Find places where you can be more intentional about strengthening relationships between adults and young people.

Support

- Be sure that people of all ages have opportunities to learn each other's names. Plan Name Tag Sundays and provide name tags for everyone. Or provide get-to-know-you activities during coffee hours and fellowship times.
- Plan games at picnics and other events that are appropriate for all ages, not just for children or those who are physically fit.

Empowerment

- Provide opportunities for youth to serve in leadership roles—serving on committees, providing leadership in worship and other activities, organizing serving projects or special events for the congregation, and/or assisting in programs for younger children.
- Plan for youth and adults to work side-by-side on service projects.

Boundaries and Expectations

- Set and communicate clear policies about how everyone in the church is expected to treat the facilities. Include the consequences for not respecting these policies.
- Teach parents and other adults skills in setting boundaries and in listening so that they're more comfortable discussing appropriate behavior with young people.

Constructive Use of Time

- Make facilities available on a regular basis for a youth “hangout” or homework center.
- When planning activities for the whole congregation, keep in mind the needs of young people who will participate. (If you don't know their needs, ask some young people to help plan!)

Commitment to Learning

- Publicly celebrate young people's progress and milestones in school.
- Support local schools by announcing upcoming school events in the congregation newsletter.

Positive Values

- In sermons, include illustrations of how faith can inform and shape the daily choices that young people make.
- Remind all congregation members that they are role models of positive values for children and youth in the congregation and beyond.

Social Competencies

- Form a partnership with a congregation of a different cultural, ethnic, or religious heritage. Plan activities that allow people of all ages to learn from and about each other.
- Draw on biblical teachings to highlight the importance of peaceful conflict resolution at home, in the community, and around the world.

Positive Identity

- Help children, teenagers, and adults discover and share their unique, God-given gifts.
- Encourage young people to create a computer presentation or scrapbook that tells what they think are signs of hope for the future. Have them share it with the whole congregation.

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