

Asset-Building Ideas for Programs with Youth and Children

General Asset Building

- Lead activities that introduce children and youth to the 40 Developmental Assets™.
- Involve children and youth in planning and leading activities and programs.
- Engage people from many backgrounds and generations as child and youth program volunteers so that young people have opportunities to build relationships with many generations. Educate volunteers about asset building.
- Assess your child and youth programming through an asset-building lens. In what ways are you already building assets? What could be done to support the development of more of the assets?

Support

- Create a climate that is warm, friendly, welcoming, and accepting of all children and youth.
- In planning activities, plan ways to provide children and youth with lots of opportunities for building relationships with each other and with the adults involved.

Empowerment

- Provide frequent, ongoing opportunities for young people to engage in service to others and to reflect on their experiences in light of their faith.
- Ensure that young people are always safe in your activities by selecting responsible drivers and making certain that people who have lots of contact with individual children and youth have been carefully screened.

Boundaries and Expectations

- Establish clear expectations and ground rules for children and youth who participate in activities, including how they are to treat each other and the church facilities.
- Insist that all adult volunteers in child and youth programs and activities be positive role models.

Constructive Use of Time

- Provide enriching after-school or summer activities for young people. Encourage members of the congregation to volunteer to share their hobbies and interests with children and youth.
- Try to coordinate child and youth activities with school calendars so that young people aren't away from home too many nights of the week.

Commitment to Learning

- Sponsor a place to study after school for young people who can benefit from more structure while doing homework.
- Make reading a regular part of child and youth activities. If some young people struggle with reading and are interested in extra help, find congregation members who are willing to tutor.

Positive Values

- Regularly talk with youth people about their values and the values of their friends. Give them a chance to “talk it out” when they’re struggling with how to put their values into practice.
- Make religious education classes relevant by tying the biblical learning to their life experiences and emphasizing the values at stake.

Social Competencies

- Teach children and youth relationship skills, using approaches such as peer helping.
- When focusing on a project, teach specific skills for completing the project successfully.

Positive Identity

- As young people explore vocational and life questions, help them search for things that offer a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope.
- Help young people sort through their own sense of cultural heritage and identity.

This handout may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial uses only. From *Toolkit for Integrating Developmental Assets in Your Congregation*. Copyright © 2005 by Search Institute, 615 First Avenue NE, Suite 125, Minneapolis, MN 55413-2211; 800-888-7828; www.search-institute.org. All Rights Reserved.