

## Faith and Developmental Assets™

Emerging research shows links between young people's asset levels and their faith commitments. Analysis of data from 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade public school youth surveyed by Search Institute<sup>SM</sup> during the 1999–2000 school year offers these findings:

### **Average number of assets reported (out of 40)**

All youth: 19.3 assets

Involved in a congregation each week: 21.4 assets

Inactive/not involved in a congregation: 15.9 assets

### ***Relationship between assets and religion***

**Importance of religion:** The more Developmental Assets young people experience, the more likely they are to believe that being religious or spiritual is extremely important.

- Of youth experiencing 1-10 assets, 9% believe that being religious or spiritual is extremely important.
- Of youth experiencing 11-20 asset, 22% believe that being religious or spiritual is extremely important.
- Of youth experiencing 21-30 assets, 38% believe that being religious or spiritual is extremely important.
- Of youth experiencing 31-40 assets, 52% believe that being religious or spiritual is extremely important.

**Religious involvement:** The more Developmental Assets young people experience, the more likely they are to spend an hour or more each week in religious programs or worship services.

- Of youth experiencing 1-10 assets, 34% spend an hour or more each week in religious programs, groups, or worship services.
- Of youth experiencing 11-20 assets, 57% spend an hour or more each week in religious programs, groups, or worship services.
- Of youth experiencing 21-30 assets, 74% spend an hour or more each week in religious programs, groups, or worship services.
- Of youth experiencing 31-40 assets, 88% spend an hour or more each week in religious programs, groups, or worship services.

In summary:

- **Youth that attend church typically report having more Developmental Assets than those who do not attend church.** In the above sample of young people, those who participate in church activities at least one hour per week have, on average, five more assets than those who don't. It's likely that some of these additional assets are cultivated or strengthened through a young person's involvement in a congregation.
- **Young people who report having more Developmental Assets are more likely to say that faith or spirituality is important. The more assets young people experience, the more likely they are to be active in a congregation.** For many youth, experiencing higher levels of assets seems to go hand in hand with being active in a congregation. And there are some good reasons to believe that they are cultivating assets through involvement in their congregations.

- **Part of the power of faith and congregation involvement may come from the combination of Developmental Assets that are nurtured.** Youth experience a combination of many Developmental Assets as they participate in a congregation and as they live out their own faith commitment.
- **Congregations are asset-building resources.** Congregations provide constructive, enriching activities for youth; a safe place for youth; ongoing support for families; intergenerational community; opportunities for youth to serve, lead, and contribute; and guidance for youth in shaping their identity, values, beliefs, and commitments.

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