

Portraits of Protestant Teens

A Report on Teenagers in Major U.S. Denominations

Phil Schwadel and Christian Smith

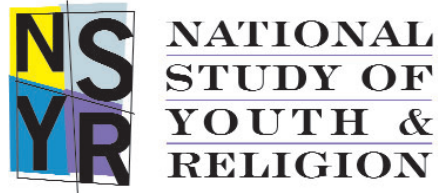


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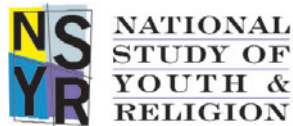
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by
Phil Schwadel
and
Christian Smith



**NATIONAL
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YOUTH &
RELIGION**

The National Study of Youth and Religion, funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and under the direction of Dr. Christian Smith, professor in the Department of Sociology, is based at the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The purpose of the project is to research the shape and influence of religion and spirituality in the lives of U.S. adolescents; to identify effective practices in the religious, moral, and social formation of the lives of youth; to describe the extent to which youth participate in and benefit from the programs and opportunities that religious communities are offering to their youth; and to foster an informed national discussion about the influence of religion in youth's lives, in order to encourage sustained reflection about and rethinking of our cultural and institutional practices with regard to youth and religion.

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by Phil Schwadel and Christian Smith

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Executive Summary

This report examines the religious beliefs and practices of American Protestant teenagers using new, nationally representative survey data from the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR). The NSYR is a major study of the religious and spiritual lives of contemporary American teens, which recently produced a book on its major findings entitled, *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (by Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, Oxford University Press, 2005). In addition to broadly describing the religious outlook of Protestant teenagers today — and as a more detailed, descriptive follow-up to that book — this report highlights several positive and negative experiences and evaluations of teenagers in different Protestant denominations and groupings of denominations. In brief, this report presents the following findings in these areas of interest:

- ◆ **Religious Participation:** Protestant teenagers are relatively active in religious organizations and activities, both within and beyond their churches. About one-half of all Protestant teens attend church weekly, participate in Sunday school or in a religious youth group, pray and attend a religious summer camp or retreat, though less than one-third read the Bible each week. This also means, however, that substantial numbers of Protestant teens are not actively participating in their religious traditions. Teens from conservative denominations such as Southern Baptist Convention and Assemblies of God are especially likely to regularly attend church and participate in other religious activities.
- ◆ **Theological Beliefs:** Protestant teenagers are likely to hold many traditional Christian religious beliefs. The majority of Protestant teens say they believe in God, the afterlife, angels, demons, miracles, judgment day and they view God as a personal being involved in the lives of people today. Sizable numbers of Protestant teens, on the other hand, do not hold these traditional

Christian religious beliefs. Teens from conservative and black Protestant denominations are more likely than mainline Protestant teens to hold these religious beliefs.

- ◆ **Importance of Faith:** The majority of Protestant teenagers report that their religious faith is very important in their lives. Most of them also say that their families talk about religion together, that they have shared their faith with someone not of their faith and that they have had a powerful worship experience. A large minority of all Protestant teenagers, and in the case of some denominations a majority of teenagers, do not report that religious faith is very important in their lives. Teens from conservative and black Protestant denominations are particularly likely to report that faith is important in their lives.
- ◆ **Evaluations of Churches:** The majority of Protestant teenagers express relatively positive views of their churches and fellow church members. They typically report that they would continue to attend church if it were totally up to them, that they would attend a similar church if given the choice and that their current church is generally warm and welcoming. Protestant adolescents, however, do have some reservations about and problems with their churches and fellow church attendees, as spelled out in the following pages, particularly with other teenage attendees.

The majority of Protestant teenagers express relatively positive views of their churches and fellow church members.



Introduction

This report shows that religion appears to be a significant aspect of many U.S. Protestant teenagers' lives, and that teenagers in different religious traditions in the United States reflect different levels of religiosity in their lives. These include differences between teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative, mainline, and black Protestant denominational families; differences between teens from diverse, specific Protestant denominations; and differences between Protestant teenagers and all U.S. teenagers. The goal of this report is to follow up on a book recently published on NSYR findings, *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, in order to help denominational and congregational leaders and religion scholars and observers better understand the religious situations of Protestant adolescents in the United States. Among other outcomes, we hope this information will provide insights into what Protestant religious communities might do to improve their work with adolescents.

Religious Participation

Many, but not all, Protestant teenagers are quite active in church and in other religious activities:

- ◆ Sixty-five percent of Protestant teens report attending church at least once a month.
- ◆ Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations are especially likely to regularly attend religious services.
- ◆ Denominational differences are also pronounced when it comes to other church activities, such as Sunday school.

A large minority of Protestant teenagers are active in other organized religious activities:

- ◆ Slightly less than 50 percent of Protestant teens report current activity in a religious youth group, having ever been to a religious summer camp and having gone on a religious retreat.

The goal is to help denominational and congregational leaders and religion scholars and observers better understand the religious situations of Protestant adolescents in the U.S.

- ◆ Teens with parents who are affiliated with conservative denominations are especially likely to participate in these activities, while teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations are less likely than most other Protestant teens to participate.
- ◆ Teens who report regularly attending religious services (at least two to three times a month) are more likely to participate in these religious activities than are teens who do not regularly attend religious services.

Religious Beliefs

Most Protestant teens are at least somewhat religious in their beliefs. The majority of Protestant teens appear to hold to the most basic Christian beliefs:

- ◆ Ninety percent say they believe in God.
- ◆ Forty-four percent say they feel very or extremely close to God, meaning that more than half of Protestant teens do not feel this close to God.
- ◆ Almost three-quarters of Protestant teens report that God is a personal being involved in the lives of people today.
- ◆ The majority of Protestant teens say they believe in the afterlife, angels and other religious doctrines.
- ◆ Regularly attending Protestant teens are especially likely to report believing in God, the afterlife, angels, demons, miracles and judgment day.

There are sizable differences between denominations and groupings of denominations in belief in God and other standard religious beliefs:

- ◆ Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative or black Protestant denominations are generally more likely to believe in God than are teens from mainline denominations.
- ◆ Teens whose parents are affiliated with the Assemblies of God, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Church of God in Christ and the Southern Baptist Convention are especially likely to say they believe in the afterlife.
- ◆ Teens whose parents are affiliated with the United Methodist Church or the Episcopal Church in the USA are less likely than most other Protestant teens to claim belief in the afterlife.
- ◆ These denominational differences also apply to other standard belief measures.

Religious Faith and Experiences

Religious faith and religious experiences appear to play an important part in the lives of many Protestant teenagers:

- ◆ Sixty percent of Protestant teens say that religious faith is very or extremely important in shaping their daily lives, 59 percent report having a prayer answered by God, 62 percent recall having had a powerful experience of worship and 69 percent say they have committed to live their life for God.
- ◆ Teens who regularly attend religious services report a greater importance of religious faith in their lives and are especially likely to report having religious experiences.

There are substantial denominational differences in how highly teens evaluate the importance of faith in their lives:

- ◆ Faith plays a particularly important role in the lives of teens with parents who are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations.
- ◆ Conservative Protestant teens are also highly likely to report having personal religious experiences.

Religious Practices

The moderate level of religious activity among Protestant teenagers persists outside of the purview of their churches in their personal religious devotions, as does the higher level of activity among conservative Protestant teens. A large minority of Protestant teenagers are active in personal religious devotions and other non-organized religious activities:

- ◆ Sixty percent of Protestant teens say they pray alone a few times a week or more, 47 percent of Protestant teens report praying with their parents in the last year and 32 percent of Protestants report reading the Bible at least once a week.
- ◆ Protestant teens who regularly attend church are more likely to pray and read the Bible than are teens who attend sporadically or do not attend at all.

Teens from different Protestant traditions differ in their personal religious devotions:

- ◆ Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative or black Protestant denominations are more likely than mainline Protestant teens to report regularly reading the Bible and praying.

Sharing Faith

Protestant teens report sharing their religious faith in multiple ways:

- ◆ Fifty-three percent say they express religious beliefs at school some or a lot, 41 percent report publicly speaking about their religion, 54 percent say they

Teens who regularly attend religious services report a greater importance of religious faith in their lives and are especially likely to report having religious experiences.

shared their faith with someone not of their faith and 23 percent are members of a religious group that meets at school.

- ◆ Regularly attending Protestant teens are somewhat more likely to share their faith in these ways than teens who do not regularly attend religious services.
- ◆ Conservative Protestant teens are more likely than mainline teens to share their religious faith with others.

Evaluations of Church

Protestant teenagers who attend church generally have positive views of their churches:

- ◆ Seventy-nine percent of attending Protestant teens say that church is usually warm and welcoming.

Protestant teens, however, do have some problems with their churches:

- ◆ Twelve percent of attending Protestant teens say their church is usually boring.
- ◆ Only 49 percent of attending Protestant teens say that church is a good place to talk about serious issues.

Regarding fellow congregation members, attending Protestant teens have mostly positive views with some reservations, particularly when it comes to other teenage members:

- ◆ Eighty-one percent of attending Protestant teens report that adults at their church are very or somewhat easy to talk with or get to know.
- ◆ On the negative side for attending Protestant teens, 7 percent report that most or all of the adults in their church are hypocrites and 12 percent say that most or all of the teens in their church are hypocrites.

Protestant teenagers are generally approving of the role for teens in their churches and their parents mostly believe their churches are supportive in the raising their teens:

- ◆ Eighty-six percent of attending Protestant teens say there are opportunities for teen involvement in their church.
- ◆ If given the choice, 87 percent of attending Protestant teens say they would choose to attend the same church.
- ◆ When it comes to parents' views, 62 percent of attending parents say their church has been very or extremely helpful in raising their teen and 73 percent report that ministry to teenagers is very important in their church.
- ◆ Mainline Protestant parents are less likely than conservative and black Protestant parents to view their congregations in such a positive light.

Morality, Risk Behaviors and Civic Participation

The NSYR survey includes a variety of other measures that allow an examination of denominational differences in, among other areas, morality, risk behaviors and civic participation. Conservative Protestant teens appear to have the clearest moral vision among Protestant teens, though they are not less likely to take part in risk behaviors:

- ◆ Nineteen percent of Protestant teens report sometimes being confused over right and wrong, 41 percent agree that morals are relative and 63 percent say that people should wait for marriage before having sex.
- ◆ Mainline and black Protestant teens are more likely than conservative teens to agree that morals are relative and less likely to say people should wait for marriage before having sex.
- ◆ Conservative teens, however, are not any less likely than other Protestant teens to report smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, using marijuana, cheating in school and lying to their parents.

The teenagers of mainline Protestant parents are often more likely than most other Protestant teens to participate in civic activities:

- ◆ Mainline teens as a whole are somewhat more likely than conservative and especially black Protestant teens to report they volunteer in the community and participate in political activities though conservative and especially black Protestant teens are more likely to say they helped the needy.

Nineteen percent of Protestant teens report sometimes being confused over right and wrong.



Note on Data and Methods

This report is based on data from the NSYR telephone survey. The NSYR is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. under the direction of Professor Christian Smith at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It is a comprehensive study of the religious lives of American teenagers. The NSYR provides a baseline, descriptive map of the religious character of adolescents in the United States. A major component of the NSYR is a telephone survey conducted from the summer of 2002 to early 2003.

The National Study of Youth and Religion provides a baseline, descriptive map of the religious character of adolescents in the United States.

Random-digit-dialing (employing a sample of randomly generated telephone numbers representative of all households in the United States) and in-home randomization methods (selecting the teen in each household with the most recent birthday) were employed to achieve a random sample of Americans age thirteen to seventeen. A Spanish language version of the survey ensured that non-English speakers were not overlooked. Survey questions were administered to the randomly chosen teen in the household and to one of his or her parents. The completed, unweighted survey provides data on 3,290 teenagers and their parents, 1,988 of whom are Protestant. All analyses are weighted to correct for variations between the NSYR data and national variations in income and geographic distribution. For most measures, the few teenagers who answered "don't know" or refused to answer the question were treated as "missing cases," which means they are not included in the analysis. For the few measures where a large proportion of teenagers did not answer the question or where the "don't know" category is meaningful, all teenagers were included in the analysis (e.g., belief in God, views of God, and belief in judgment day). Question wording reflects the versions of the questions posed to Protestant teens. For more information on the NSYR data, see Christian Smith and Melinda Denton's "Methodological Design and Procedures for the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR)," published in 2003 by the National Study of Youth and Religion in Chapel Hill, N.C. (available at the National

Study of Youth and Religion web site — www.youthandreligion.org). Readers should note that answers to religion survey questions are typically subject to social desirability biases, so survey reports may overestimate actual religiosity. Normally, it is helpful to set survey answers in the context of in-depth interview data, as the NSYR did in its research, reported in Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, Oxford University Press, 2005.

This report compares the religious activities and religious views of teens whose parents report affiliation with mainline Protestant, conservative Protestant, and black Protestant denominations. Parents' religious affiliation is defined as the religious tradition, denomination, or church they most closely identify with (affiliation reflects identification with a religious group, not necessarily attendance at a specific church). The denominational categories are based on a standard categorization of Protestant denominations (see Appendix A for a list of denominations within each tradition). Note that affiliation with the black Protestant category does not necessarily mean the teen is black, but rather that his or her parent(s) affiliate with a historically black Protestant denomination. This report also focuses on the differences between Protestant teenagers whose parents affiliate with a variety of specific denominations. Specific denominations each fall under a larger religious tradition, meaning that the denominational and religious tradition categories are not mutually exclusive. Based on parents' denominational affiliation, nine denominations provide a large enough sample of teens for reliable denominational analyses. In addition to differences between all Protestants, mainline Protestants, conservative Protestants, black Protestants, and all teenagers, differences between the following nine denominations are also highlighted (number of sampled teens in parentheses):

- ◆ Assemblies of God (56)
- ◆ Disciples of Christ (35)
- ◆ Episcopal Church in the USA (45)
- ◆ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (50)
- ◆ Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (40)
- ◆ Presbyterian Church (USA) (36)
- ◆ Southern Baptist Convention (311)
- ◆ United Methodist Church (184)
- ◆ Church of God in Christ (23)

Traditionally black Protestant denominations have sample sizes too low for reliable analyses. In order to include teens whose parents are affiliated with black Baptist denominations, three historically black Baptist denominations are combined — National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., National Baptist Convention of America and National Missionary Baptist. Thirty-two teens are considered black Baptists. The black Baptist category and Church of God in Christ denomination, a traditionally black Protestant denomination, have smaller sample sizes than the other denominations included in the report. They are included, however, despite the relatively small sample sizes.

Where appropriate, teens whose parents affiliate with each denomination are compared to the regularly attending teens in the same denomination. Though not shown in the graphs, the text also refers to comparisons between all Protestant teens and Protestant teens who regularly attend church as well as between all teens in groupings of denominations, such as conservative or mainline, and teens in those groups who regularly attend church. Regular church attendance is defined as at least two to three times a month. Fifty-nine percent of Protestant teens report regular church attendance. Among the highlighted denominations, 75 percent of Assemblies of God, 66 percent of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 65 percent of Southern Baptist and 52 percent of United Methodist teens attend church regularly. For denominations with small sample sizes, comparisons between all teens and regularly attending teens are not possible.

The NSYR survey data reveals distinctions in family characteristics between the denominations and between different Protestant traditions (see Appendix B for table of demographic characteristics by denomination). As a whole, families who are affiliated with mainline denominations are less likely than families who are affiliated with other Protestant denominations to have incomes below \$30,000.

Assemblies of God teens are particularly underrepresented in urban areas, and Southern Baptist, Missouri Synod Lutheran and Assemblies of God teens are overrepresented in rural areas. Families who are affiliated with conservative denominations are generally more likely to live in rural areas than are other Protestants. Compared to other predominately white denominations, the Southern Baptist Convention has a higher percentage of black teens.

The remainder of this report focuses on teens' accounts of their religious beliefs and actions, specifying how all Protestant teens, teens from three broad Protestant traditions, teens from nine Protestant denominations, black Baptist teens, unaffiliated teens and all teens view various aspects of religion. Readers should keep in mind that since the majority of teens are Protestant (57 percent), the "all teens" category is largely driven by Protestant teens. The unaffiliated category consists of teens whose parents say they do not identify with any religion. The main body of the report contains a graph for each measure of religious activity, religious belief and views of religion and church, presenting the percent of teens in each religious tradition and denomination who participate in the

specified activity or hold to the religious belief in question. This report aims to lay out the religious views and activities of contemporary Protestant teens in different Protestant traditions to provide religious leaders and parents with facts about the role of religion in the lives of Protestant adolescents.

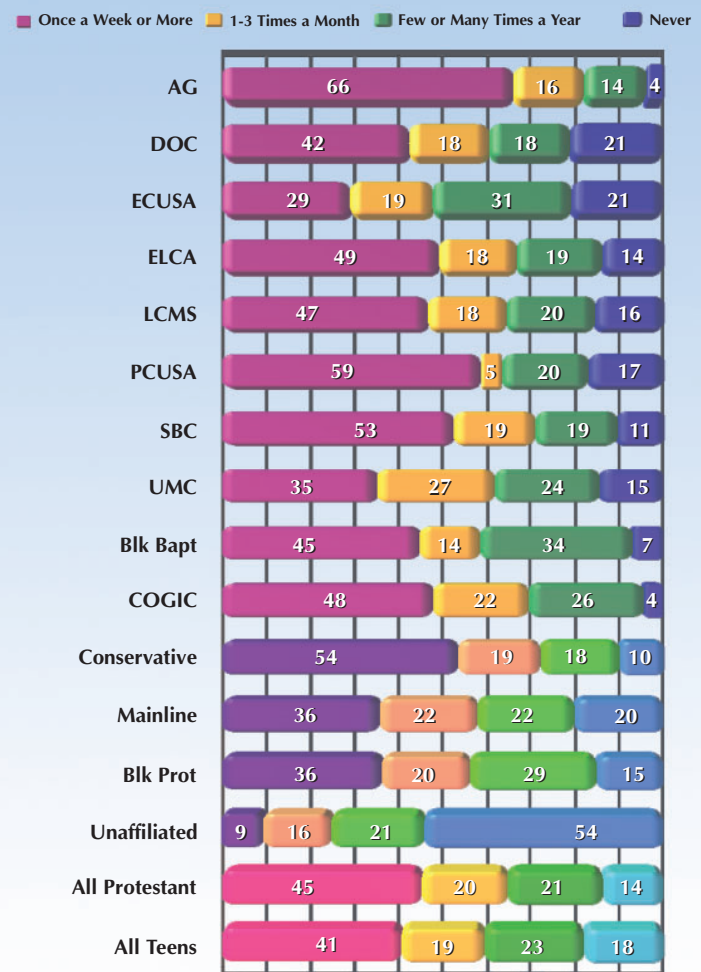
This report aims to provide religious leaders and parents with facts about the role of religion in the lives of Protestant adolescents.

Church Attendance

Most Protestant teenagers are at least somewhat active in worship services in their churches, though less than half are highly active. Forty-five percent of Protestant teens report attending church at least once a week. Forty-one percent of all teens report attending church at least once a week, and only 9 percent of unaffiliated teens say they attend at least once a week.

Conservative teens are more likely to attend church regularly than are other Protestant teens. Among the highlighted Protestant denominations, at least 65 percent of teens whose parents affiliate with the Assemblies of God, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Church of God in Christ say they attend church at least once a month. At the low end of church attendance, less than half of the teens with Episcopalian parents report attending church once a month or more. Teens whose parents affiliate with main-line denominations are more likely than other Protestant teens to say they never attend church.

Church Attendance, U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Do you attend religious services more than once or twice a year, NOT counting weddings, baptisms, and funerals? About how often do you usually attend religious services?

Religious Youth Groups

Almost half of Protestant teens (47 percent) say they are currently in a religious youth group, while only 38 percent of all teens and 12 percent of unaffiliated teens say the same. Conservative teens are more likely than mainline teens to report participation in a religious youth group, and mainline teens are more likely than black Protestant teens to say they are in a youth group.

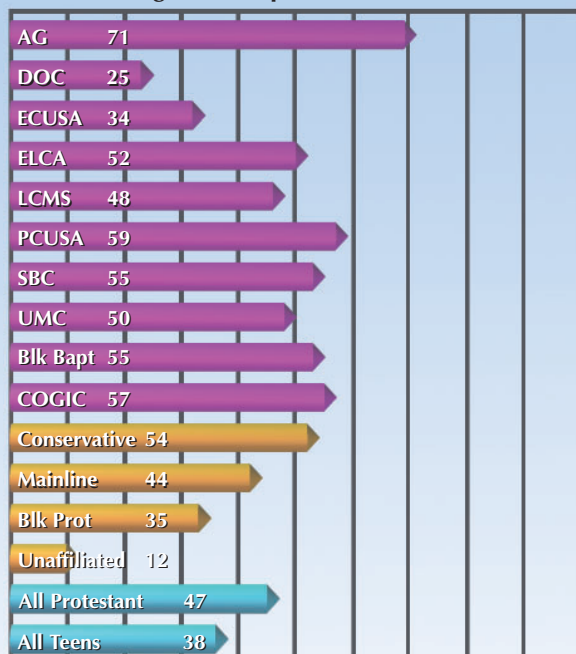
The differences among the specific denominations generally follow the conservative/mainline differences. Seventy-one percent of Assemblies of God teens, for example, report youth group activity while only 25 percent of Disciples of Christ and 34 percent of Episcopalians say they are currently in a youth group.

Regular church attendance is associated with a greater likelihood of youth group participation, especially for mainline Protestants. Among all mainline Protestants, 44 percent report being in a religious youth group and 70 percent of the regular church attendees say they are in a youth group. The specific mainline denominations reflect the importance of church attendance, with 50 percent of all United Methodist teens saying they are in a religious youth group and 77 percent of the regular church-attending United Methodists reporting youth group participation.

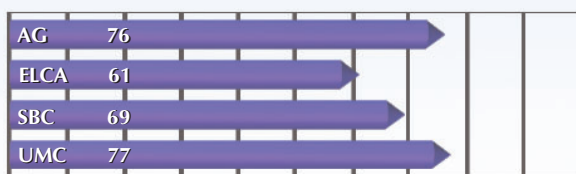
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Currently Involved in Any Religious Youth Group

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Are you *CURRENTLY* involved in *ANY* religious youth group?

Sunday School

Slightly more than one-half of all Protestant teens (55 percent) report going to Sunday school at least a few times a month in the last year. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations are more likely than mainline Protestant teens to regularly participate in Sunday school.

At the high end of Sunday school participation, more than three-quarters of teens whose parents affiliate with the Assemblies of God or the black Baptist denominations report regularly attending Sunday school. Conversely, only 38 percent of teens whose parents are affiliated with the Disciples of Christ and 23 percent of teens whose parents are Episcopalian report regular Sunday school participation.

Regular church attendance leads to higher rates of Sunday school participation for most but not all Protestant groups. For instance, 55 percent of teens whose parents affiliate with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America say they participate in Sunday school at least a few times a month compared to 58 percent of the regularly attending Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens.

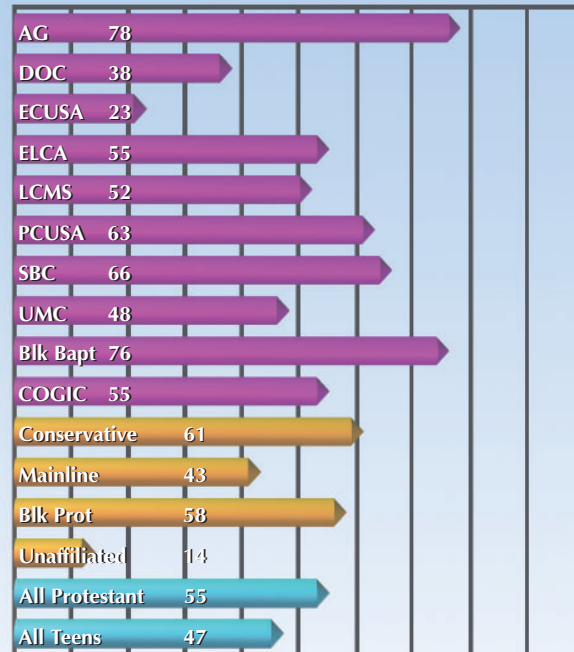
On the other hand, the effect of regular attendance is fairly large for Southern Baptist teens, despite the fact that these teens were already highly likely to attend Sunday school regardless of church attendance. The largest jump is among the United Methodist teens, with about half of all United Methodist teens and almost three-quarters of the regular attendees reporting going to Sunday school at least a few times a month.



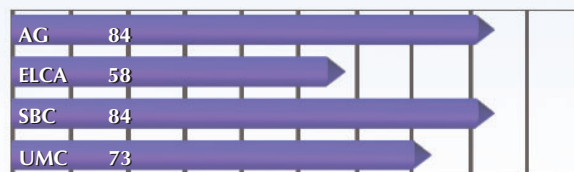
In the last year, how often, if at all, have you attended a religious Sunday school or other religious education class?

Attended Sunday School a Few Times a Month or More in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



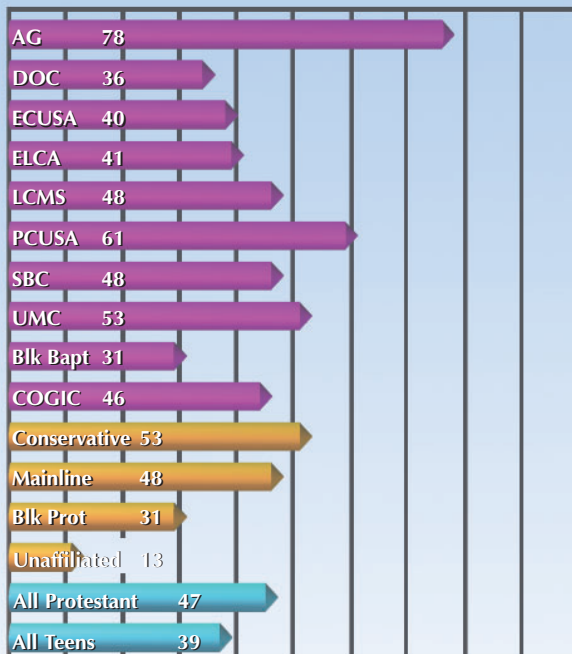
Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Religious Camps

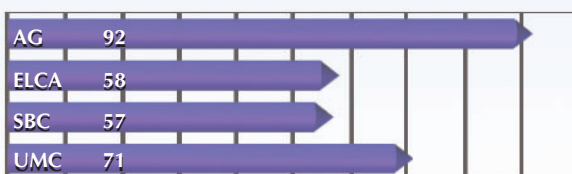
As with religious youth groups, almost half of all Protestant teens (47 percent) report ever having been a camper at a summer camp run by a religious organization with religious teachings or songs in its program. Teens whose parents affiliate with the Assemblies of God are again more likely than other teens to participate in this religious activity.

Ever Attended a Summer Camp Run by a Religious Organization

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Other conservative teens, however, such as those from the Southern Baptist Convention, are not necessarily more likely than most other Protestant teens to report attending a religious summer camp. While conservative teens as a whole are only a little more likely than mainline teens to have attended a religious summer camp, conservative and mainline teens are both far more likely than black Protestant teens to have gone to a religious summer camp.

Regular church attendance increases summer camp participation among Protestant teens, though the effect varies among the different denominations and Protestant traditions. For instance, 48 percent of mainline Protestant teens report summer camp activity, and 67 percent of the regularly attending mainline teens say the same. The large effect of attendance for mainline Protestants is evident among the United Methodist and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens shown in the graph. Conversely, church attendance appears to have little effect on summer camp participation among teens whose parents affiliate with black Protestant denominations.



How many TOTAL times, if any, have you been a camper at a summer camp run by a religious organization with religious teachings or songs in its program?

Religious Youth Retreats, Conferences, Rallies or Congresses

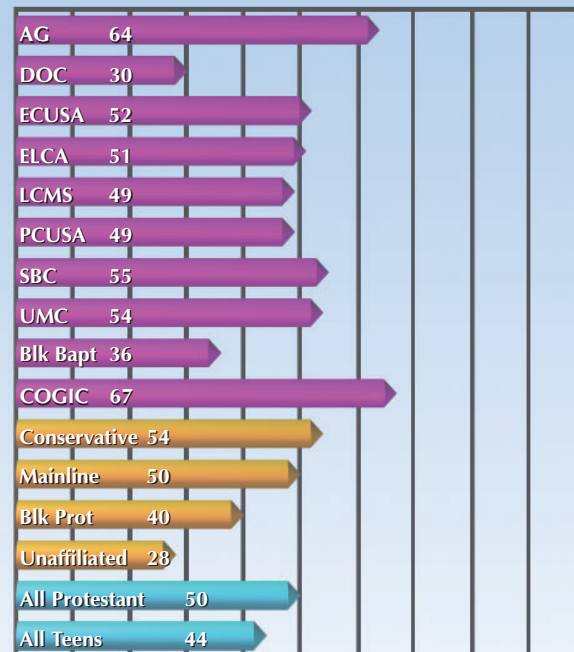
Half of the Protestant teens report participating in a religious youth retreat, conference, rally or congress. Conservative teens are slightly more likely to participate than are mainline teens, who are more likely to participate than are teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations.

Assemblies of God teens are among the most likely of the selected denominations to report attending a religious youth retreat, conference, rally or congress, just as they are the most likely to regularly attend church and participate in Sunday school, youth groups and summer camps.

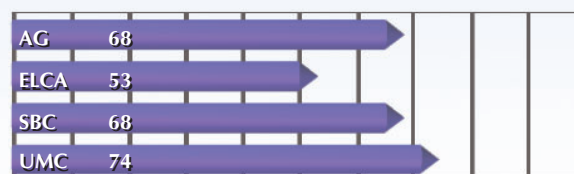
While half of the Protestant teens say they have been to a religious youth retreat, conference, rally or congress, 62 percent of the Protestant teens who regularly attend church say the same. Regular church attendance again has more of an effect on mainline and conservative teens' religious participation than on black Protestant teens' religious participation. Among United Methodist teens, for example, 54 percent say they attended a retreat and 74 percent of the regular church attendees report involvement in a religious retreat.

Ever Participated in a Religious Youth Retreat, Conference, Rally or Congress

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



How many, if any, religious youth retreats, conferences, rallies, or congresses have you ever participated in?

Religious Music Group or Choir

A large minority of Protestant teens (42 percent) report playing or singing in a religious music group or choir in the last year. Teens whose parents affiliate with black Protestant denominations, for whom choir may substitute for youth group participation, are considerably more likely than teens whose parents affiliate with conservative

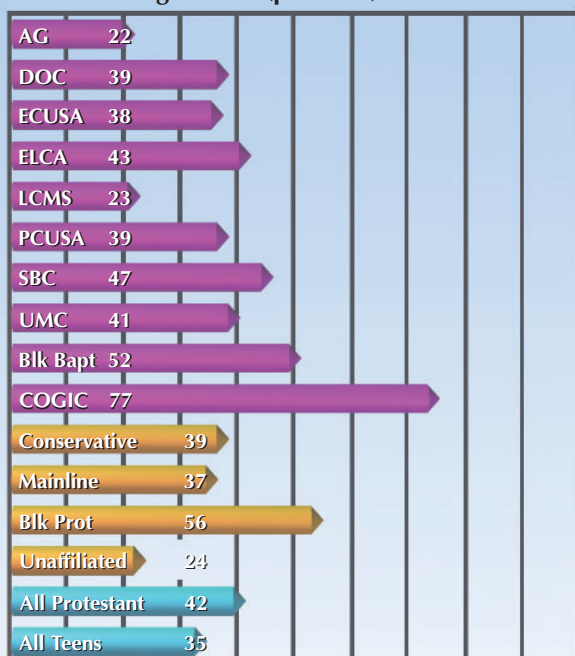
and mainline Protestant denominations to say they were or are in a choir.

This patterns is also evident among the specific denominations examined, with Church of God in Christ and black Baptist teens being the most likely to report religious music group or choir participation. Teens from some of the conservative denominations, such as the Assemblies of God and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, have particularly low rates of choir participation.

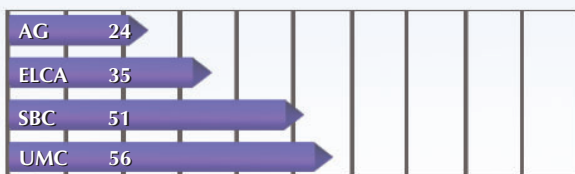
Among most Protestant groups, the teens who regularly attend church are moderately more likely to say they were in a choir or music group; the effects of church attendance are most pronounced for mainline and unaffiliated teens. For instance, 41 percent of United Methodist teens report choir activity, compared to 56 percent of the regularly attending United Methodist teens.

Played or Sung in Religious Music Group or Choir in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



In the last year, have you played or sung in a religious music group or choir?

Belief in God

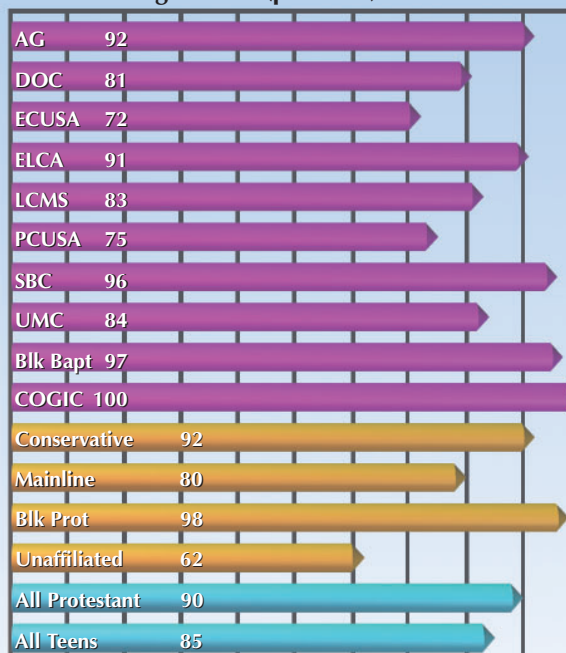
Ninety percent of Protestant teenagers report believing in God. Belief in God appears widespread among teenagers generally, with 85 percent of all teens and even 62 percent of unaffiliated teens saying they believe in God.

Teenagers whose parents are affiliated with conservative or black Protestant denominations are especially likely to report belief in God. For instance, 92 percent of Assemblies of God teens, 96 percent of Southern Baptist teens, 97 percent of black Baptist teens and 100 percent of Church of God in Christ teens report believing in God. The lower levels of belief in God among mainline Protestants, however, may be because mainline teens are more unsure about God, rather than denying the existence of God, as the next graph shows (see p. 22).

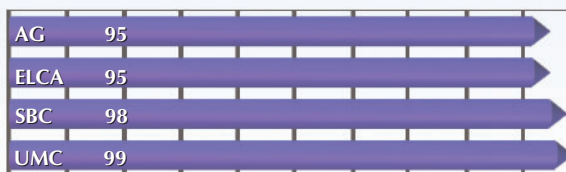
Protestant teens who regularly attend church are somewhat more likely to report belief in God though the high levels of belief among all Protestant teens does not leave much room for increase. Among denominations with lower levels of belief in God, however, church attendance has a larger effect. To illustrate, while 84 percent of United Methodist teens report belief in God, 99 percent of the regularly attending United Methodist teens say they believe in God.

Believe in God: Yes

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Do you believe in God, or not, or are you unsure?

Unsure About Belief in God

Although very few Protestant teenagers say they do not believe in God, 8 percent say they are unsure about God. Mainline teens are more likely to express uncertainty about God than are teens whose parents affiliate with conservative or black

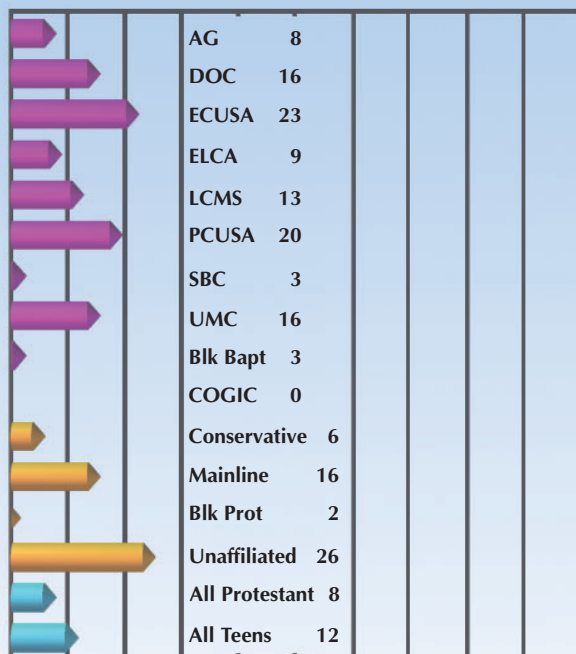
Protestant denominations, who are highly likely to say they definitely believe in God (see p. 21).

There are relatively high levels of uncertainty about God among some of the mainline denominations' teens, such as 20 percent of the Presbyterian Church (USA) teens and 23 percent of the Episcopalian teens.

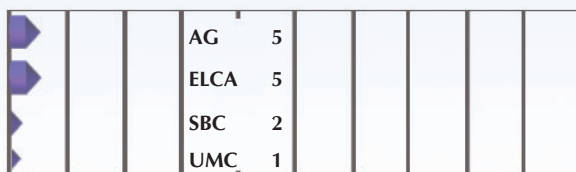
Regular church attendance generally leads to lower levels of uncertainty about God, especially for mainline teens. Among United Methodist teens, for example, 16 percent say they are unsure about God, while only 1 percent of the regular church attendees report being unsure about God.

Believe in God: Unsure

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



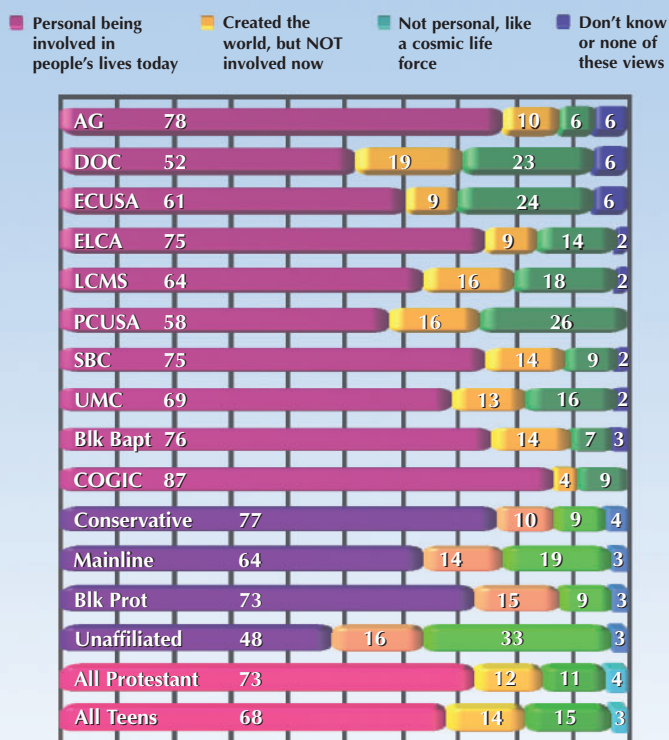
Do you believe in God, or not, or are you unsure?

Views of God

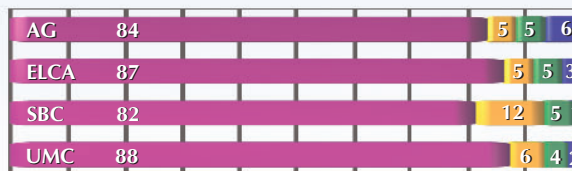
Almost three-quarters of Protestant teens agree that God is a personal being involved in the lives of people today, while 12 percent say God created the world but is not involved in the world now, and 11 percent say God is not personal but something like a cosmic life force. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations report viewing God as a personal being involved in the lives of people at a higher rate than teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations. On the other hand, mainline teens are more likely than conservative and black Protestant teens to say God is not personal but something like a cosmic life force.

For many Protestant groups, especially those who are less likely to say God is a personal being, regular church attendance means higher rates of viewing God as a personal being involved in the lives of people today. For instance, 69 percent of United Methodist teens and 75 percent of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens say God is a personal being involved in the lives of people today, while 88 percent of regularly attending United Methodist teens and 87 percent of regularly attending Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens say the same.

Views of God U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Q

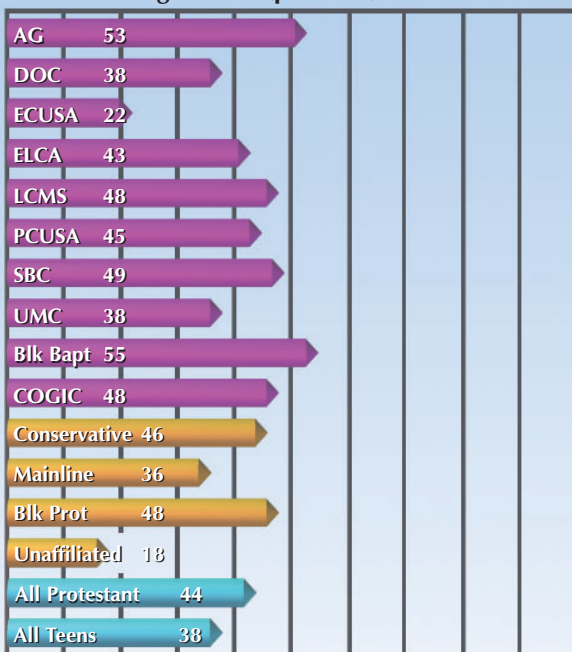
Which of the following views comes closest to your own view of God? God is a personal being involved in the lives of people today, or God created the world, but is NOT involved in the world now, or God is not personal, but something like a cosmic life force.

Closeness to God

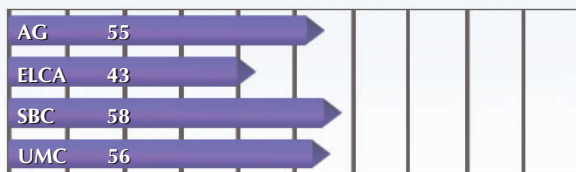
Forty-four percent of Protestant teens say they feel very or extremely close to God, which means the majority of Protestant teens do not feel close to God. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative or black Protestant denominations are generally more likely than mainline teens to report feeling close to God.

Feel Very or Extremely Close to God Most of the Time

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Among the highlighted denominations, teens whose parents are affiliated with the black Baptist denominations and the Assemblies of God are particularly likely to report feeling close to God, while less than a quarter of Episcopalian teens say they feel close to God.

Teens who report regular church attendance are generally more likely to feel close to God than are all teens. For instance, 49 percent of Southern Baptist teens say they feel very or extremely close to God, compared to 58 percent of the regularly attending Southern Baptist teens.

Q How distant or close do you feel to God most of the time? Would you say extremely distant, very distant, somewhat distant, somewhat close, very close, or extremely close?

Belief in the Afterlife

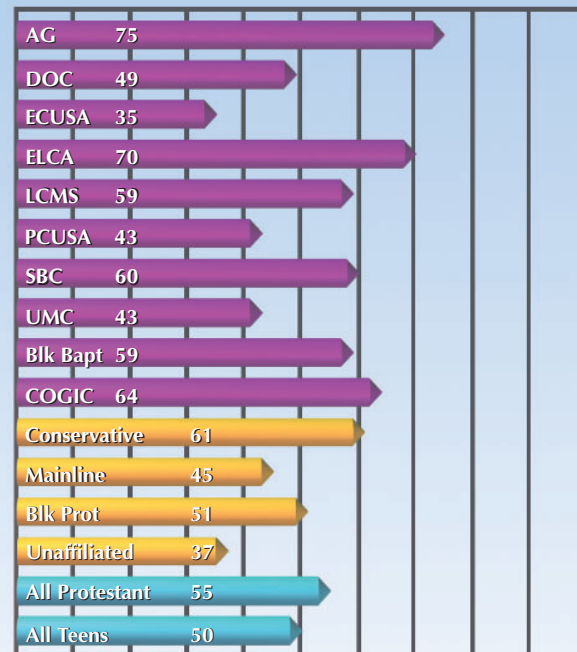
The majority of Protestant teenagers report definitely believing in life after death, though a large minority (45 percent) say they do not definitely believe in life after death. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations are generally more likely than black Protestant and especially mainline Protestant teens to say they believe in the afterlife.

Assemblies of God teens are more likely than most other teens to report belief in the afterlife. On the other hand, teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations such as the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) are less likely than most other Protestant teens to say they definitely believe in life after death.

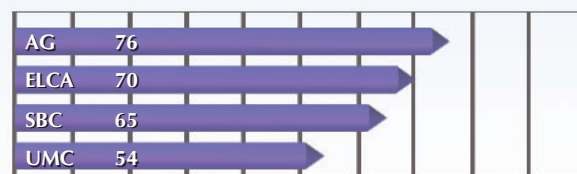
Belief in the afterlife is fairly widespread among American teenagers, as even 37 percent of the unaffiliated teens report definitely believing in life after death. Regular church attendance appears to moderately increase belief in the afterlife, though the effect varies for different Protestant denominations. Church attendance has a large effect for some groups, such as the United Methodists, with 43 percent reporting belief in life after death and 54 percent of the regular church attendees saying they believe in life after death. For other denominations, such as the Assemblies of God and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, church attendance has little effect.

Definitely Believe in Life After Death

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Do you believe that there is life after death?

Belief in Angels

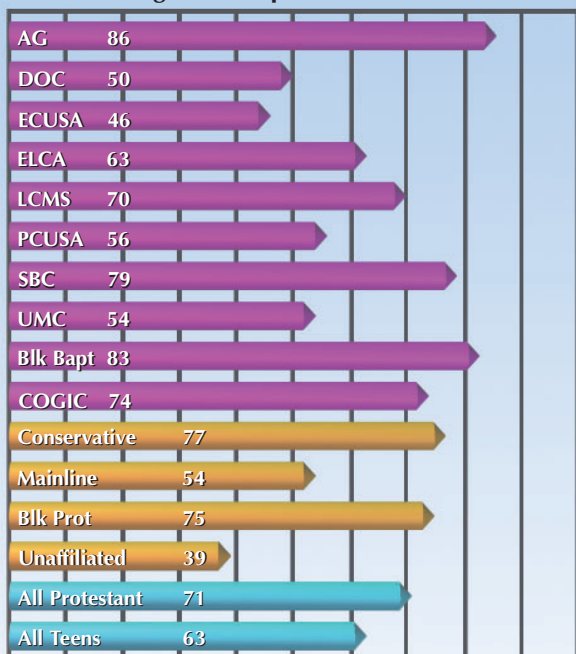
Seventy-one percent of Protestant teenagers report definitely believing in the existence of angels. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations are considerably more likely to say they believe in angels

than are mainline Protestant teens. For instance, 86 percent of teens whose parents are affiliated with the Assemblies of God and 83 percent of teens whose parents are affiliated with black Baptist denominations say they believe in angels. Conversely, teens whose parents are affiliated with the Episcopal Church, the Disciples of Christ and the United Methodist Church are less likely than most other Protestant teens to say they definitely believe angels.

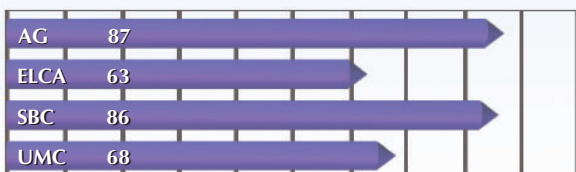
Regular church attendance seems to increase belief in angels, predominantly in denominations with lower levels of belief in angels, such as the United Methodist Church.

Definitely Believe in Existence of Angels

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Do you believe in the existence of angels?

Belief in Miracles

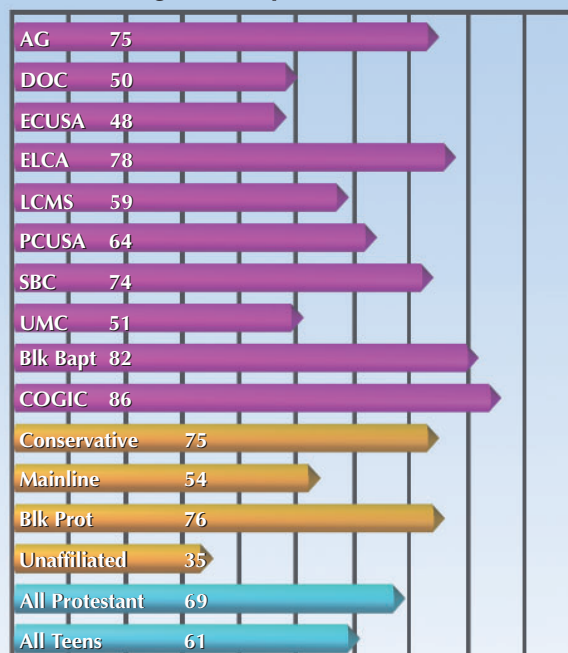
Sixty-nine percent of Protestant teens report definitely believing in the possibility of divine miracles from God. There are substantial differences between denominations, with teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations generally being more likely to believe in miracles.

Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations such as the Assemblies of God, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Church of God in Christ and black Baptist denominations report higher than average levels of belief in miracles, each with well over 70 percent saying they believe in miracles. Teens whose parents are affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a mainline denomination, are also highly likely to report believing in miracles. Disciples of Christ teens, Episcopalian teens and United Methodist teens report lower than average levels of belief in miracles, each with about 50 percent saying they definitely believe in the possibility of divine miracles from God.

Regular church attendance generally increases conservative and mainline Protestant teens' likelihood of believing in miracles (Assemblies of God teens are an exception), but it has little or no effect on black Protestant teens' belief in miracles.

Definitely Believe in the Possibility of Miracles

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



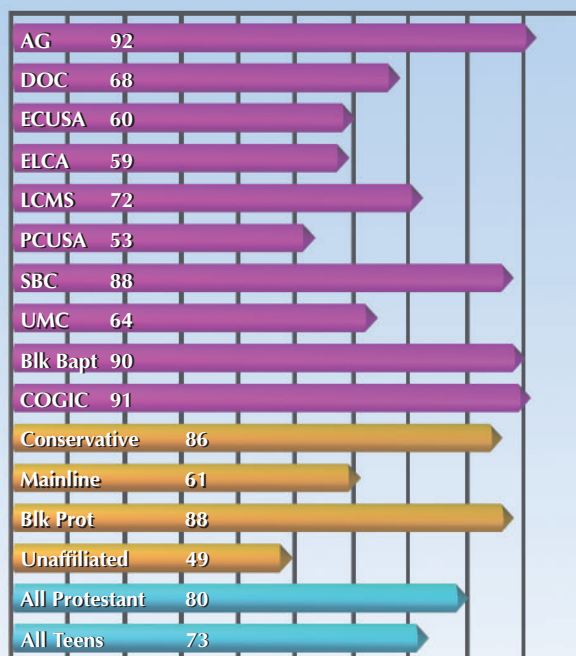
Do you believe in the possibility of divine miracles from God?

Belief in Judgment Day

Four out of five Protestant teens agree that there will come a judgment day when God will reward some and punish others. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations are far more likely than mainline teens to report believing in judgment day.

Believe in Judgment Day

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist, black Baptist and Church of God in Christ teens report higher than average levels of belief in judgment day. Episcopalian, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Methodist teens report lower than average levels of belief in judgment day.

Regular church attendance is associated with a greater likelihood of believing in judgment day, even for the denominations where a high proportion of teens already believe in judgment day. For instance, 92 percent of all Assemblies of God teens agree that there will come a judgment day when God will reward some and punish others, and 100 percent of the regularly attending Assemblies of God teens say the same.



Do you believe that there will come a judgment day when God will reward some and punish others, or not?

Importance of Faith

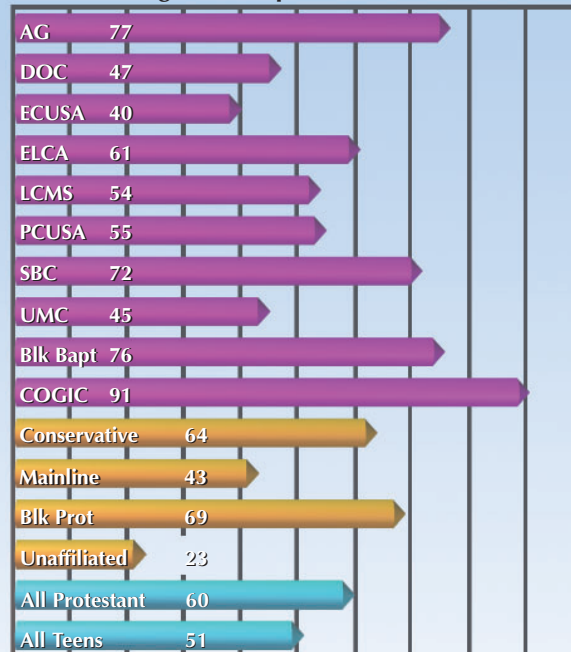
Religious faith plays an important role in the lives of the majority of Protestant teenagers. Sixty percent of Protestant teens say faith is very or extremely important in shaping how they live their daily lives. This of course leaves 40 percent who do not think faith plays a very important role in their daily lives. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations are especially likely to say faith is important in shaping their daily lives.

For instance, 72 percent of Southern Baptist teens, 77 percent of Assemblies of God teens, 76 percent of black Baptist teens and 91 percent of Church of God in Christ teens say faith is important in shaping their daily lives. Less than half of the teens from some mainline Protestant denominations, such as the United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church, say faith is very or extremely important in shaping their daily lives.

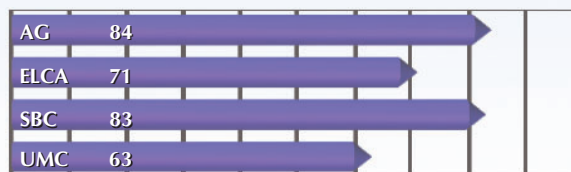
Church attendance tends to increase feelings that faith is very or extremely important in shaping how teens live their daily lives, especially for mainline Protestants. For instance, 61 percent of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens say faith is important in shaping their daily lives though 71 percent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens who regularly attend church report that faith is important in shaping their daily lives.

Faith Is Very or Extremely Important in Shaping Daily Life

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping how you live your daily life?

Committed to Live Life for God

About seven in 10 Protestant teens report that they have made a personal commitment to live their lives for God, while only 27 percent of the unaffiliated teens report having made such a commitment. There are large denominational differences

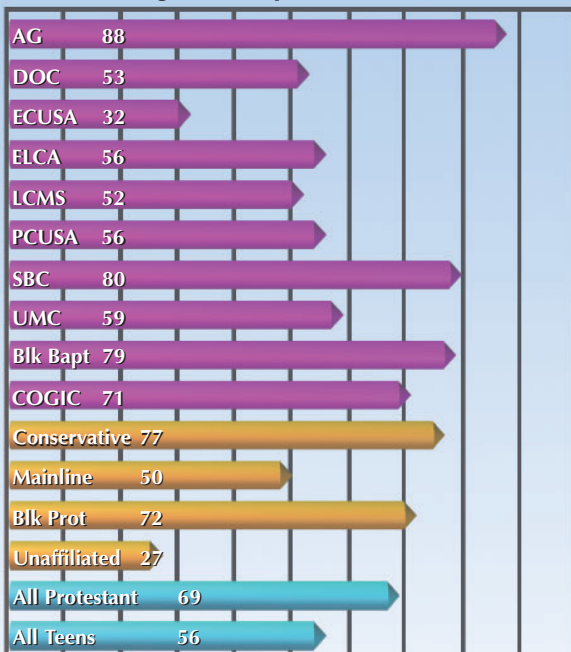
in reporting a personal commitment to live life for God, with conservative Protestant teens being more likely than black Protestant and especially more likely than mainline Protestant teens to make a commitment to live life for God. For instance, 88 percent of Assemblies of God teens and 80 percent of Southern Baptist teens say they made a commitment to live their lives for God, while only 32 percent of Episcopalian teens say the same.

Church attendance increases the likelihood of committing to live life for God, again especially for mainline Protestants. Among mainline Protestant teens as a whole, 50 percent report making a commitment to live their lives for God, and 70 percent of the regular church attendees say they committed to live their lives for God.

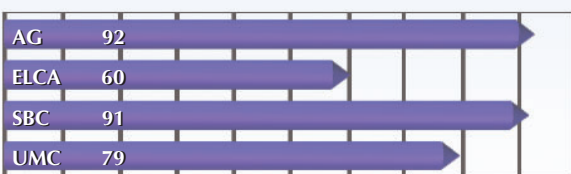
Not all mainline denominations, however, are equally affected by church attendance. For instance, the effects of church attendance on commitment to live life for God are sizable for United Methodist teens but not very large for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens.

Made a Personal Commitment to Live Life for God

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Have you ever made a personal commitment to live your life for God?

Reading the Bible

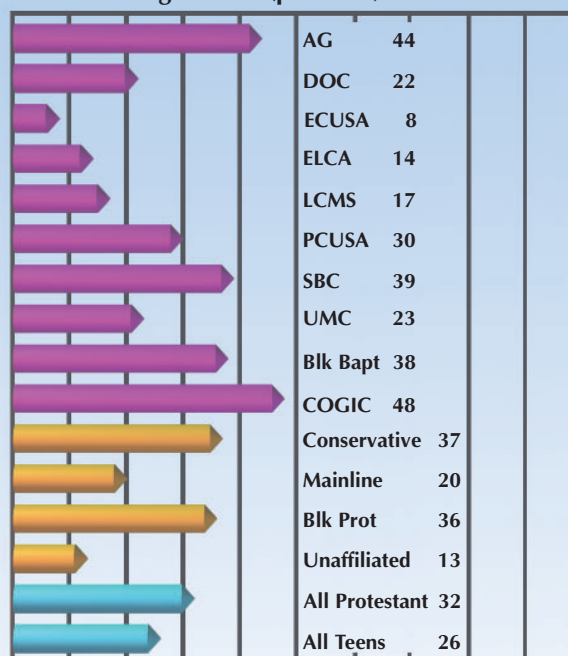
About one-third of Protestant teens (32 percent) report reading the Bible by themselves once a week or more. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations are more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations to report reading the Bible at least once a week.

Well over 40 percent of Assemblies of God and Church of God in Christ teens say they read the Bible alone at least once a week while only 22 percent of Disciples of Christ and 8 percent of Episcopalian teens say they read the Bible alone at least once a week.

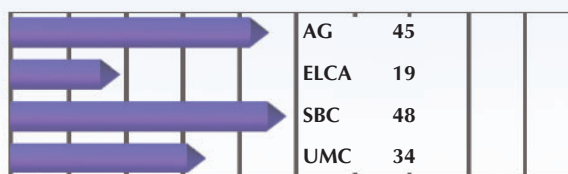
Regular church attendance increases the likelihood of reading the Bible alone for mainline and conservative Protestant teens, but it has little or no effect for black Protestant teens. Among United Methodist teens, for example, 23 percent report reading the Bible alone once a week or more, and 34 percent of the regular attendees report reading the Bible alone at least once a week. Similarly, 39 percent of Southern Baptist teens say they read the Bible alone at least once a week, and 48 percent of the regularly attending Southern Baptist teens say the same.

Read the Bible Alone Once a Week or More

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



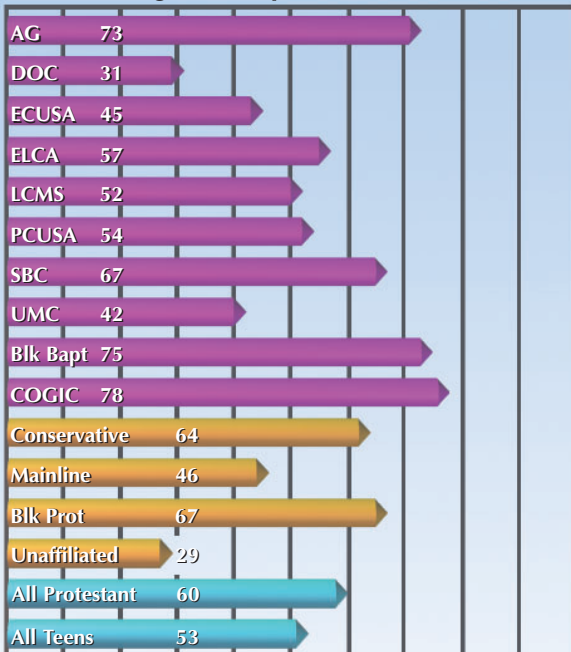
How often, if ever, do you read from the Bible to yourself alone?

Prayer

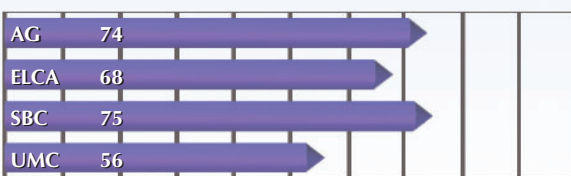
Sixty percent of Protestant teens report praying alone at least a few times a week while only 29 percent of unaffiliated teens report praying alone a few times a week or more. Although Protestant teens report regular prayer far more often than unaffiliated teens, fully 40 percent of Protestant teens say they do not pray alone at least a few times a week.

Pray Alone a Few Times a Week or More

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations are considerably more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations to pray alone at least a few times a week. Among the highlighted denominations, 73 percent of Assemblies of God teens, 75 percent of black Baptist teens and 78 percent of Church of God in Christ teens report praying a few times a week or more. When it comes to mainline denominations, only 42 percent of the United Methodist teens and 31 percent of the Disciples of Christ teens say they pray at least a few times a week.

Regular church attendance tends to increase reporting praying alone at least a few times a week, though once more the effect of church attendance is more pronounced for mainline teens. Church attendance has little effect on reporting praying alone for Assemblies of God teens and only a moderate effect for Southern Baptist teens, though it has a strong effect for United Methodist teens.



How often, if ever, do you pray by yourself alone?

Prayer with Parents

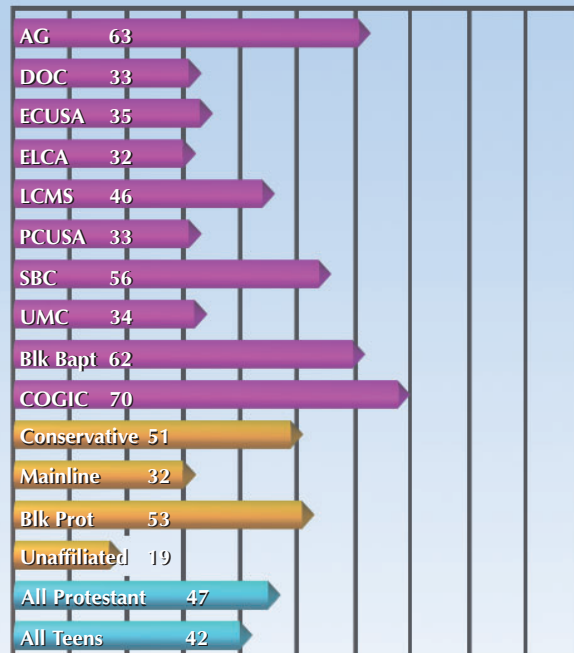
Almost half of all Protestant teens (47 percent) report praying with their parents other than at mealtimes during the last year, leaving a slight majority who did not pray with their parents. Protestant teenagers do not differ much from all teenagers in their likelihood of praying with their parents.

Denominational differences are quite pronounced, with teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations being far less likely to report praying with their parents than teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative or black Protestant denominations. More than 60 percent of the Assemblies of God, black Baptist and Church of God in Christ teens remember praying with their parents in the last year, compared to 35 percent or less of the Episcopalian, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Methodist teens.

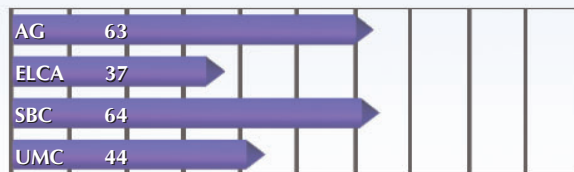
Regular church attendance appears to moderately increase praying with parents for three of the four mainline and conservative highlighted denominations compared in the figure.

Prayed with Parents Other Than at Mealtimes in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



In the last year, have you prayed out loud or silently together with one or both of your parents, other than at mealtimes or at religious services?

Prayer Answered or Guidance from God

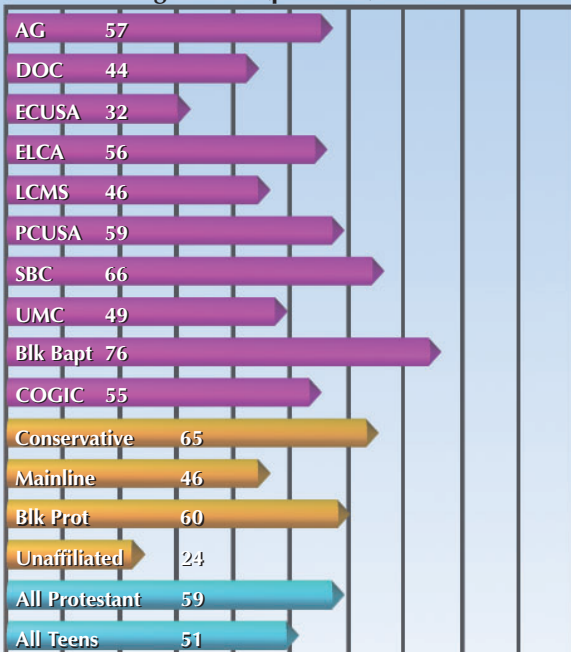
Fifty-nine percent of Protestant teens say they experienced a definite answer to prayer or specific guidance from God. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative Protestant denominations are more likely than most other Protestant teens to report having a prayer answered by God or receiving guidance from God.

Teens whose parents are affiliated with certain black Protestant denominations, however, are also highly likely to report having a prayer answered, such as 76 percent of the black Baptist teens. On the other hand, only 32 percent of Episcopalian teens say they definitely had a prayer answered or received guidance from God.

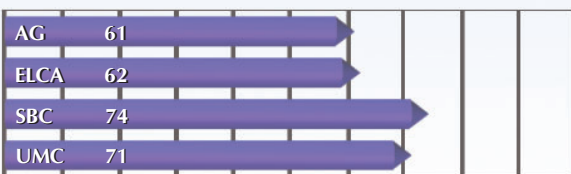
Church attendance increases the likelihood of reporting having a prayer answered, especially for mainline Protestant teens. For instance, 49 percent of United Methodist teens say they experienced a definite answer to prayer or specific guidance from God though 71 percent of the regularly attending United Methodist teens say the same.

Ever Experienced a Definite Answer to Prayer or Specific Guidance from God

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Have you ever experienced a definite answer to prayer or specific guidance from God?

Experience of Spiritual Worship

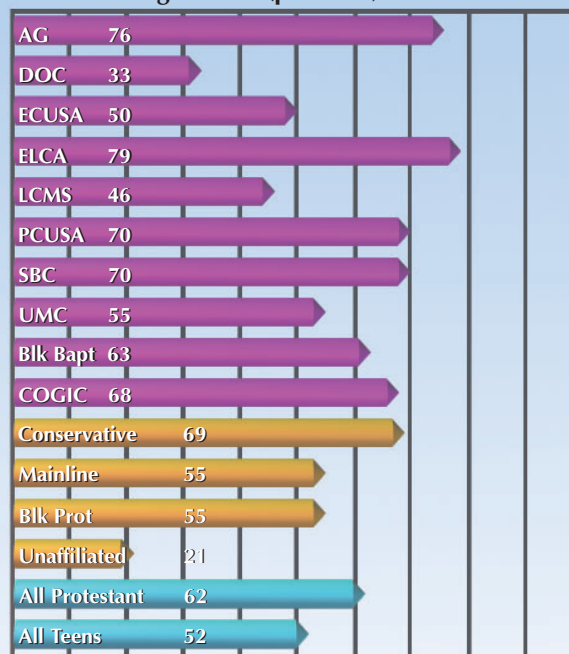
Sixty-two percent of Protestant teens say they had an experience of spiritual worship that was very moving and powerful, leaving over one-third who have not had a powerful worship experience. In general, conservative teens are more likely than both mainline and black Protestant teens to report having an experience of spiritual worship that was very moving and powerful, though not every denomination follows this pattern.

Assemblies of God teenagers are more likely than most teens to report having had a powerful worship experience, while Disciples of Christ teens are less likely than most other Protestant teens to say they had an experience of spiritual worship that was very moving and powerful. Presbyterian Church (USA) and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens, however, resemble conservative teens by being more likely than most other teens to report having a powerful worship experience.

Church attendance increases the likelihood of reporting experiences of spiritual worship, again for the mainline teens more than the other Protestant teens. For instance, while only 55 percent of United Methodist teens say they had an experience of spiritual worship that was very moving and powerful, 74 percent of the regularly attending United Methodist teens say they had a powerful worship experience.

Ever Had an Experience of Spiritual Worship that Was Very Moving and Powerful

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



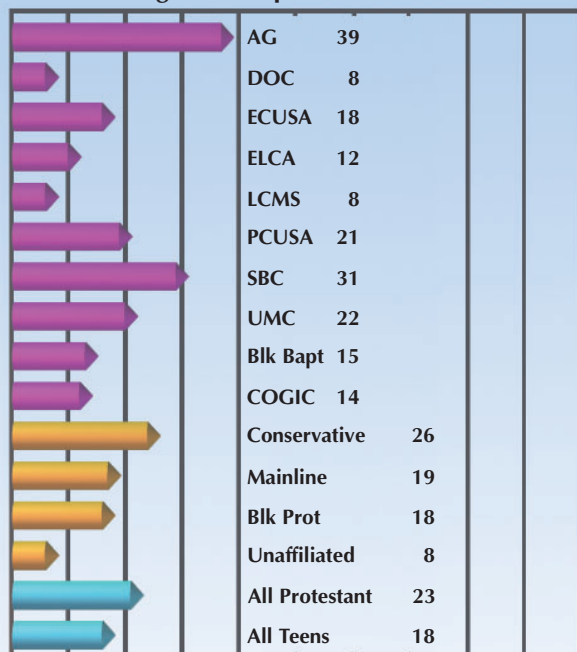
Have you ever had an experience of spiritual worship that was very moving and powerful?

Religious Group at School

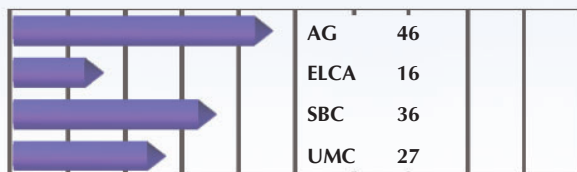
Almost a quarter of Protestant teens (23 percent) report participating in a religious support or evangelism or prayer group that meets at school in last year, leaving over three-quarters of Protestant teens who do not participate in school-based religious groups.

Participated in a Religious Group that Meets at School in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative Protestant denominations are moderately more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline or black Protestant denominations to say they were in a religious group at school in the last year. For instance, 39 percent of Assemblies of God teens and 31 percent of Southern Baptist teens report school-based religious group activity, compared to 12 percent of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens, 8 percent of Disciples of Christ teens, 15 percent of black Baptist teens and 14 percent of Church of God in Christ teens.

Church attendance appears to moderately increase activity in religious groups at school for mainline and conservative teens.



In the last year, have you been a part of a religious support or evangelism or prayer group that meets at school?

Express Religious Beliefs at School

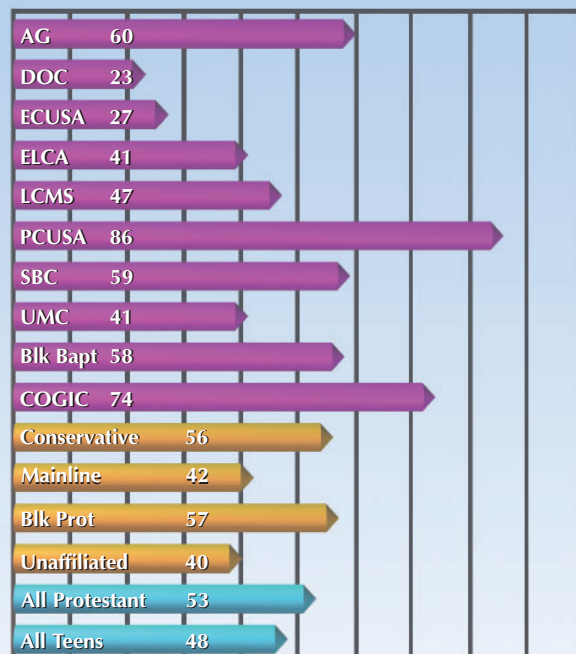
Slightly over one-half of all Protestant teens (53 percent) report expressing their religious beliefs at school some or a lot, which suggests that almost one-half of Protestant teens do not talk about their religious viewpoints at school. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations are more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations to say they express religious beliefs at school some or a lot.

About 60 percent of Assemblies of God teens, Southern Baptist teens and black Baptist teens say they express religious beliefs at school, and almost three-quarters of Church of God in Christ teens report expressing religious beliefs at school. On the other hand, only 23 percent of Disciples of Christ teens and 27 percent of Episcopalian teens say they express religious beliefs at school some or a lot. Presbyterian Church (USA) teens differ from most other mainline teens, with 86 percent reporting expressing religious beliefs at school some or a lot.

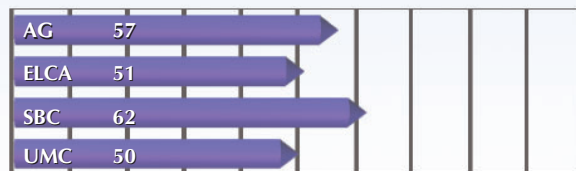
Regular church attendance moderately increases the likelihood of expressing religious beliefs at school for mainline teens, but it has little effect for conservative and black Protestant teens.

Express Religious Beliefs at School Some or A Lot

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



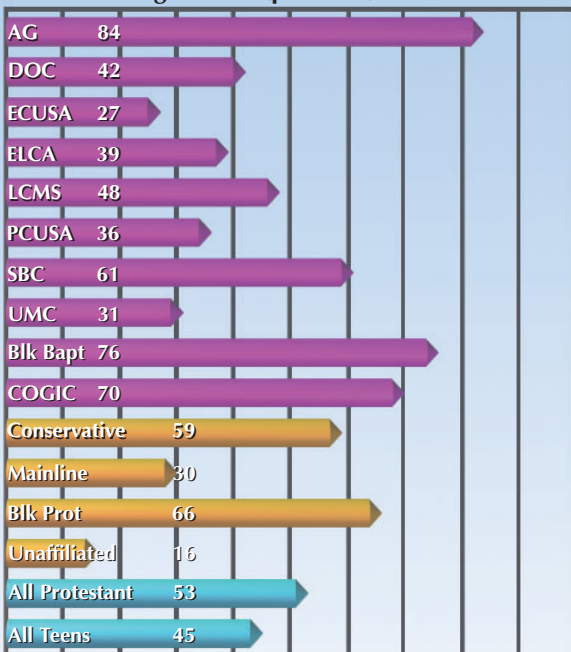
How much, if at all, do you openly express your religious beliefs at school?

Family Talks About Religious Things

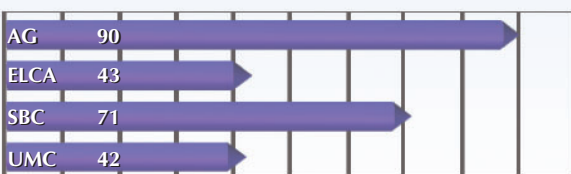
A little over half of all Protestant teens (53 percent) report that their families talk about God, the scriptures, prayer or other religious or spiritual things together once a week or more, leaving almost half of Protestant teens who do not regularly discuss spiritual things with their families. Protestant teens are, however, far more likely than unaffiliated teens to discuss religious or spiritual matters with their families.

Family Talks About Religious Things Once a Week or More

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant denominations are about twice as likely as teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations to report talking about spiritual things with their families. For instance, 84 percent of Assemblies of God teens and 76 percent of black Baptist teens say they talk about spiritual things with their families at least once a week, compared to only 31 percent of United Methodist teens.

Church attendance tends to increase the likelihood of discussing spiritual things with one's family. While 53 percent of Protestant teens report discussing spiritual things with their families once a week or more, 66 percent of regularly attending Protestant teens say the same. Among the highlighted denominations, the effect of church attendance is fairly strong for Southern Baptist and United Methodists teens but only moderate for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Assemblies of God teens.



How often, if ever, does your family talk about God, the scriptures, prayer, or other religious or spiritual things together?

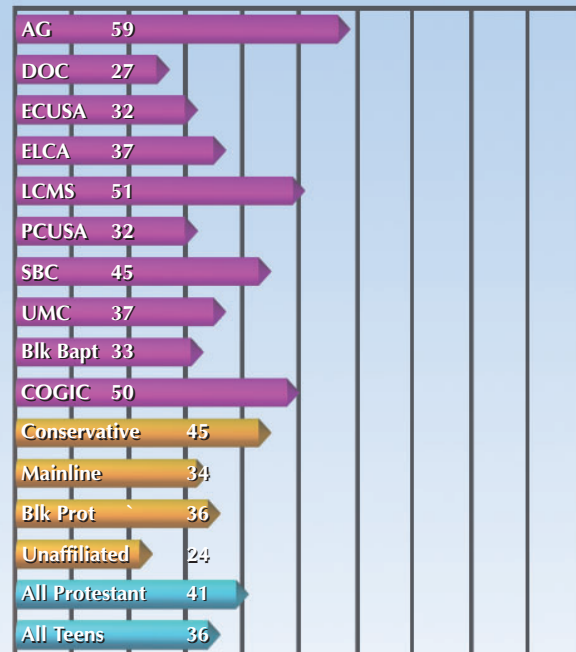
Publicly Spoken About Faith in Religious Service or Meeting

Less than half of all Protestant teens (41 percent) say they publicly spoke about their faith in a religious service or meeting in the last year. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations are more likely to report speaking about faith in a religious service than are teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline or black Protestant denominations. For instance, 59 percent of Assemblies of God teens say they spoke about their faith in a religious meeting in the last year, compared to 33 percent of black Baptist teens, 32 percent of Episcopalians and Presbyterian Church (USA) teens and 27 percent of Disciples of Christ teens.

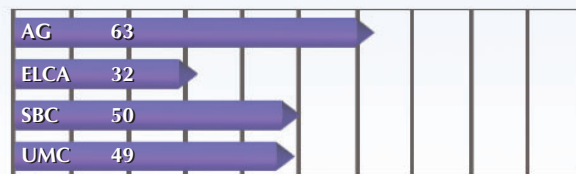
Regular church attendance only slightly increases the likelihood of speaking publicly about faith for most conservative teens, but it moderately increases the likelihood for most mainline teens. Thirty-seven percent of all United Methodists and 49 percent of the regularly attending United Methodists, for example, say they spoke about their faith in religious services or meetings, yet the effect of church attendance is small and inconsistent for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Southern Baptist teens.

Publicly Spoken About Faith in Religious Service in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



In the last year, have you publicly spoken about your faith in a religious service or meeting?

Shared Faith with Person not of their Faith

A slight majority of Protestant teens (54 percent) report having shared their religious faith with someone not of their faith in the last year. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and mainline denominations are more likely than

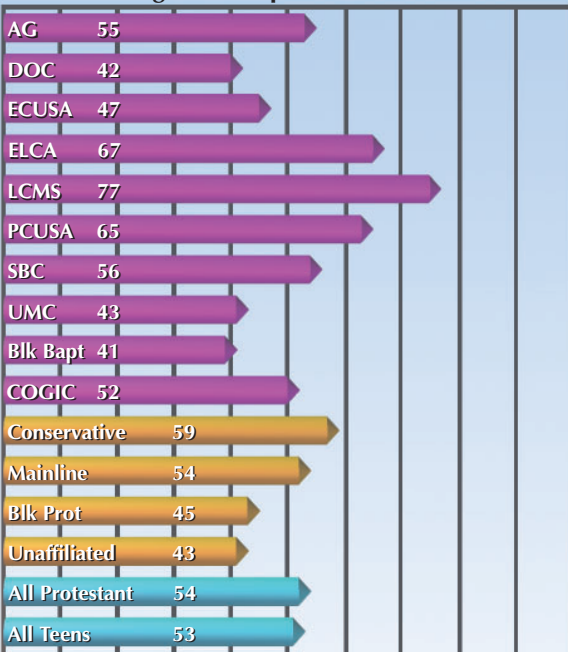
teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations to report sharing their faith.

Seventy-seven percent of the Missouri Synod Lutheran teens, 67 percent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens and 65 percent of the Presbyterian Church (USA) teens report sharing their religious faith with someone, compared to only 41 percent of the black Baptist teens.

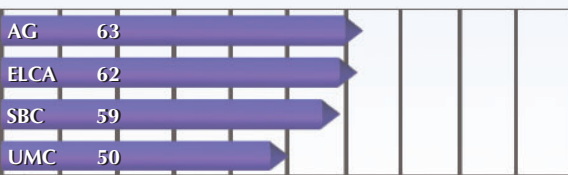
Regular church attendance appears to slightly increase the likelihood of sharing faith with someone for most Protestant teens though it slightly decreases the likelihood of sharing faith for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens.

Shared Faith with Person not of their Faith in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



In the last year, have you shared your own religious faith with someone else not of your faith?

Church Is Usually Warm and Welcoming

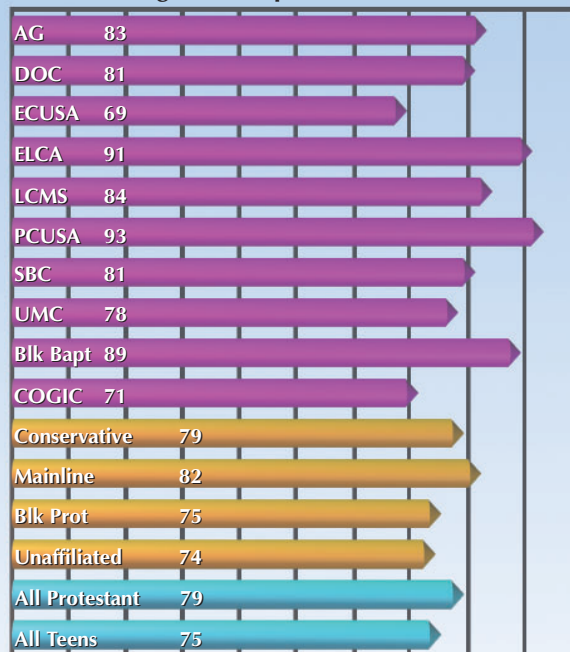
Seventy-nine percent of Protestant teens who report attending religious services more than a few times a year (not counting weddings, baptisms, funerals and youth group meetings) say their churches usually feel warm and welcoming for them. Note that this measure, and most other measures of how teens evaluate their churches, was only asked of teens who report attending church (or synagogue, temple, mosque, etc.) more than a few times a year.

Apparently, most teens who attend religious services more than a few times a year feel that their congregations are warm and welcoming; even 74 percent of teens with unaffiliated parents say so. There is not much difference between teens in the different Protestant traditions in viewing their churches as warm and welcoming. Among the specific denominations, however, there is some variation. For instance, while 93 percent of Presbyterian Church (USA) teens and 91 percent of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens report that their churches usually feel warm and welcoming, only 69 percent of teens whose parents are Episcopalian say the same.

Protestant teens who regularly attend church (at least two or three times a month) are slightly more likely than other Protestant teens to say that their churches are usually warm and welcoming.

Church Usually Feels Warm and Welcoming

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,223.



Does your church feel like a warm and welcoming place for you, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never?

Church Is Usually Boring

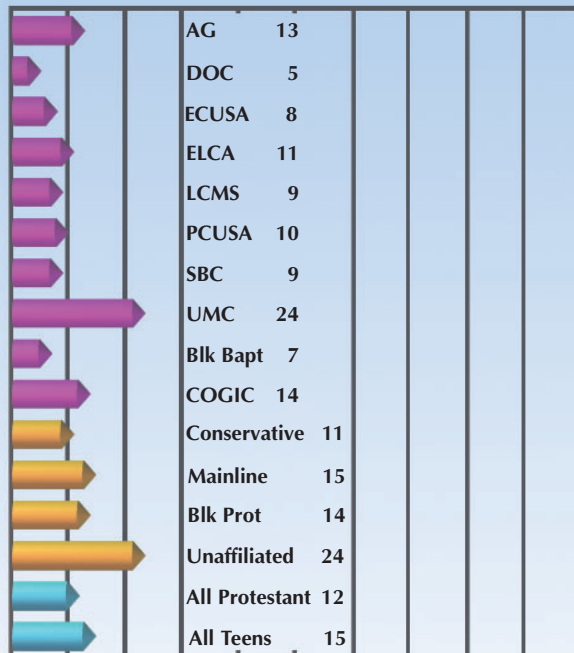
Twelve percent of Protestant teens who attend religious services more than a few times a year say that church is usually boring. The differences between Protestant traditions are not too large, though teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative Protestant denominations are somewhat less likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline and black Protestant denominations to report that church is usually boring.

At the high end among the specific denominations, 24 percent of United Methodist teens say that church is usually boring. At the low end, only 5 percent of Disciples of Christ teens report that their churches are usually boring.

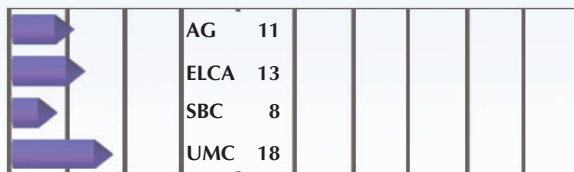
Protestant teens who regularly attend church are slightly less likely than other Protestant teens to report that their churches are usually boring. For instance, while 24 percent of United Methodist teens say their churches are boring, 18 percent of the regularly attending United Methodist teens say their churches are boring.

Church Is Usually Boring

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,223.



Is your church boring to you, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never?

Church Usually Makes Teen Think About Important Things

About two-thirds (65 percent) of Protestant teens who attend church more than a few times a year say that church usually makes them think about important things, leaving over a third of Protestant teens who do not think that church usually makes them think about important things.

On the whole, teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations are somewhat more likely than most other Protestant teens to report that church usually makes them think about important things. Among the highlighted denominations, Assemblies of God and Presbyterian Church (USA) teens who attend church more than a few times a year are the most likely to say that church usually makes them think about important things, each with over 80 percent. On the other hand, less than one-half of Episcopalian teens who attend church more than a few times a year (46 percent) say that church usually makes them think about important things.

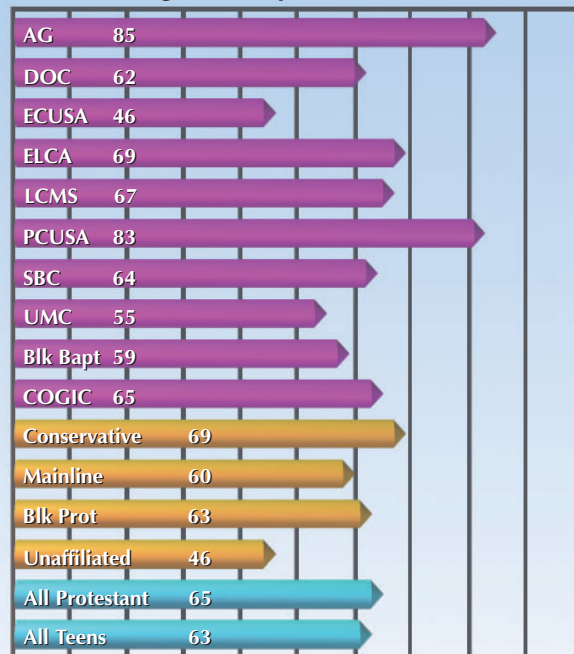
The effect of regular church attendance on teens saying that church usually makes them think about important things varies between denominations. While United Methodist teens who regularly attend church are moderately more likely than other United Methodist teens to say church usually makes them think about important things, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens who regularly attend church are slightly less likely than all Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens who attend more than a few times a year to say that church makes them think about important things.



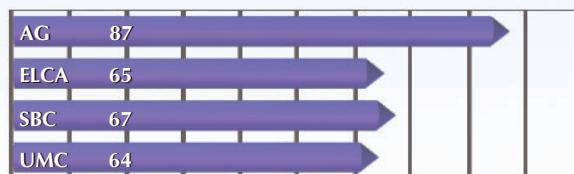
Does your church make you think about important things, usually, sometimes, rarely or never?

Church Usually Makes Teen Think About Important Things

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,223.

Church Is a Very Good Place to Talk About Serious Issues

Only one-half of Protestant teens who attend church more than a few times a year (49 percent) say church is a very good place to talk about serious issues like family

problems, alcohol or troubles at school.

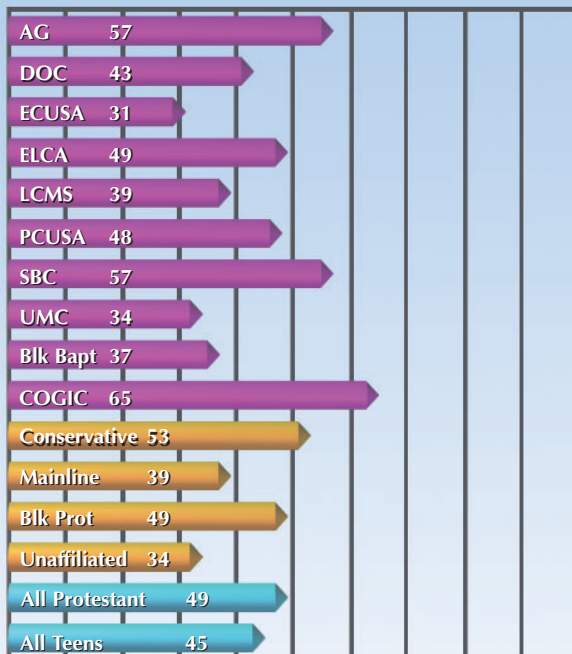
Teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant and especially conservative Protestant denominations are generally more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations to say that church is a very good place to talk about serious issues.

Among the specific denominations, 65 percent of Church of God in Christ teens and 57 percent of both Assemblies of God and Southern Baptist teens say that church is a very good place to talk about serious issues, while only 31 percent of Episcopalian and 34 percent of United Methodist teens agree that church is a very good place to talk about serious issues.

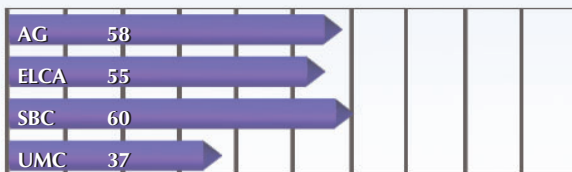
Regular church attendance slightly increases the chances of teens saying that church is a very good place to talk about serious issues like family problems, alcohol or troubles at school.

Church Is a Very Good Place to Talk About Serious Issues

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,223.



How good or not good a place is your church to go if you wanted to talk about serious issues like family problems, alcohol or troubles at school?

Adults in Teen's Church Are Somewhat or Very Easy to Talk with and Get to Know

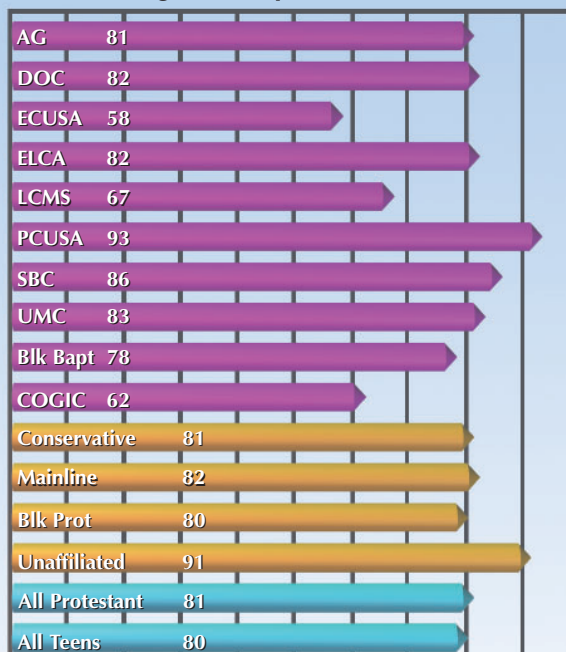
Eighty-one percent of Protestant teens who attend church more than a few times a year report that adults in their churches are somewhat or very easy to talk with and get to know. There is little variation between the Protestant traditions in teens' likelihood of saying that adults in their churches are somewhat or very easy to talk with and get to know.

There are, however, differences between the specific denominations. At the high end, 93 percent of Presbyterian Church (USA) teens report that adults in their churches are easy to talk with and get to know. At the low end, only 58 percent of Episcopalian teens say that adults in their churches are somewhat or very easy to talk with and get to know.

Protestant teens who regularly attend church are generally not any more likely than other Protestant teens to report that adults in their churches are somewhat or very easy to talk with and get to know.

Adults at Church Are Somewhat or Very Easy to Talk with and Get to Know

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,223.



When you think about most of the adults in your church, how easy or hard are they to talk with and get to know?

Adults in Congregation Are Hypocrites

Seven percent of Protestant teens who attend church more than a few times a year say they think of most or all adults in their congregations as hypocrites. On the whole, teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations

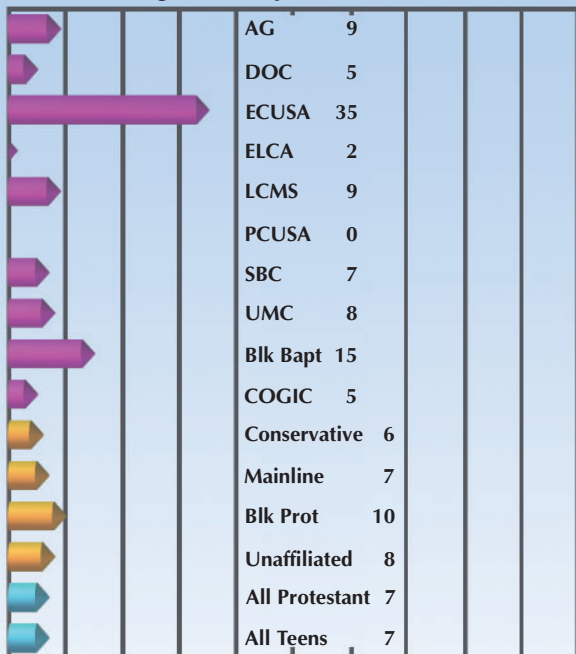
are somewhat more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative and mainline denominations to report that most or all adults in their congregations are hypocrites.

Among the highlighted denominations, 15 percent of black Baptist teens and 35 percent of black Baptist teens who attend church more than a few times a year say that most or all adults in their congregations are hypocrites while only 2 percent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens and none of the Presbyterian Church (USA) teens in the NSYR sample agree that most or all adults in their congregations are hypocrites.

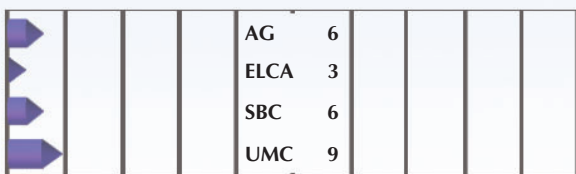
Regular church attendance has little effect on reporting that most or all adults in the teens' congregations are hypocrites.

Most or All Adults in Congregation Are Hypocrites

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,223.



About how many, if any, of the adults in your church do you tend to think of as hypocrites?

Teens in Congregation Are Hypocrites

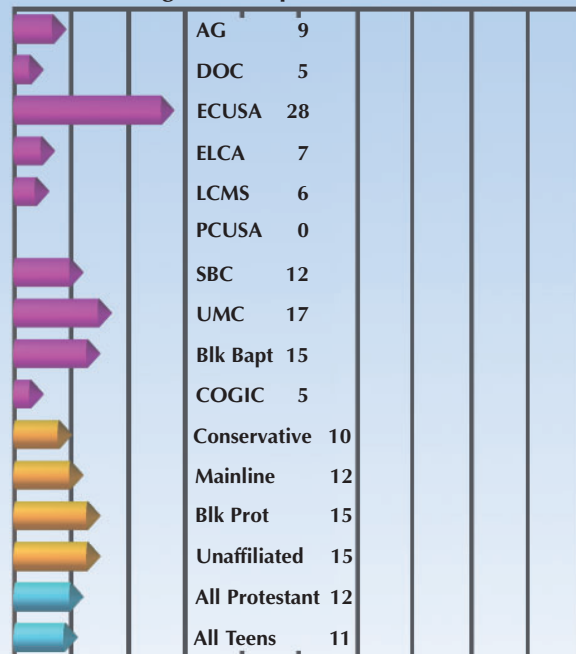
Twelve percent of Protestant teens who attend church more than a few times a year say they think of most or all teens in their congregations as hypocrites. In general, teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations are somewhat more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations to report that most or all teens in their congregations are hypocrites.

There are also sizable differences between the specific denominations. None of the Presbyterian Church (USA) teens in the NSYR sample say that most or all teens in their churches are hypocrites, just as none of them reported that adults in their churches are hypocrites. On the other hand, 28 percent of teens whose parents are Episcopalian say they think of most or all teens in their congregations as hypocrites.

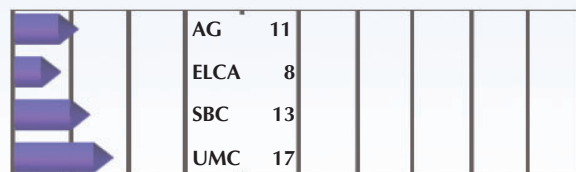
Similar to viewing adults as hypocrites, regular church attendance has little effect on whether teens view other teens in the church as hypocrites.

Most or All Teens in Congregation Are Hypocrites

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,223.



About how many, if any, of the teenagers in your church do you tend to think of as hypocrites?

Opportunities for Teen Involvement in Church

Eighty-six percent of Protestant teens who attend church more than a few times a year say there are regular opportunities in their churches for teenagers to get

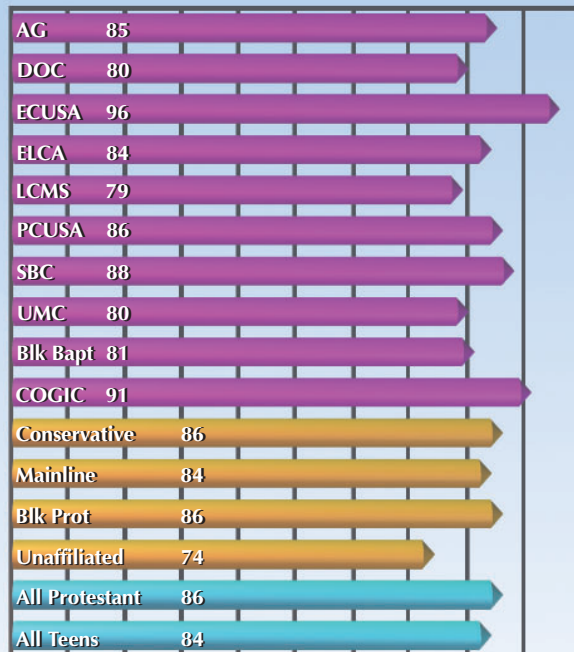
involved in religious services, such as reading scripture or praying out loud. Most teenagers who attend church more than a few times a year agree that there are regular opportunities for teen involvement in their churches, with 84 percent of all teens agreeing and even 74 percent of teens with unaffiliated parents agreeing.

There is little variation among the Protestant traditions in teens' views that there are opportunities for teen involvement in church. Among the specific denominations, at the high end 96 percent of teens whose parents are Episcopalian say that there are regular opportunities in their churches for teenagers to get involved in religious services while at the low end, 79 percent of Missouri Synod Lutheran teens say the same.

Regular church attendance has almost no effect on a Protestant teen's likelihood of saying that there are opportunities in his or her church for teenagers to get involved in religious services, such as reading scripture or praying out loud.

Regular Opportunities for Teens to Be Involved in Religious Services

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,223.



Are there any regular opportunities in your church for teenagers to get involved in religious services, such as reading scripture or praying out loud?

Would Attend the Same Church

Eighty-seven percent of Protestant teens who attend religious services more than once or twice a year report that they would go to the same church if it were totally up to them, rather than go to a different church or not go to church at all. Teens in general appear fairly satisfied with their congregations in this sense, with 84 percent of all teens who attend religious services more than once or twice a year saying they would go to the same congregation if it were totally up to them.

Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations are somewhat more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations to say they would like to attend the same church if it were up to them. Among the highlighted denominations, 90 percent or more of teens whose parents are affiliated with the Assemblies of God, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Church of God in Christ report that they would go to the same church if it were totally up to them. Conversely, only 67 percent of all Presbyterian Church (USA) teens say they would go to the same church if it were totally up to them.

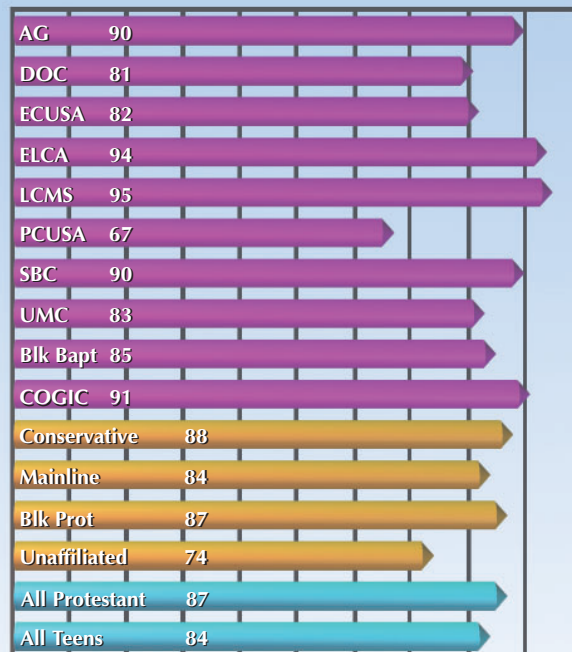
For most, though not all, Protestant denominations, regular church attendance has little effect on teens saying that they would go to the same church if it were totally up to them. For United Methodist teens, however, regular church attendance does lead them to be somewhat more likely to report that they would like to attend the same church if given the choice.

Q

If it were totally up to you, would you go to the same church that you go to now, a different religious congregation, or would you not go to religious services at all?

Would Go to the Same Church if it Were Totally up to Teen

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,223.

Parent's View that Church Has Been Very or Extremely Helpful in Raising their Teen

Sixty-two percent of Protestant parents who attend church at least a few times a year say that their churches have been very or extremely supportive and helpful for them

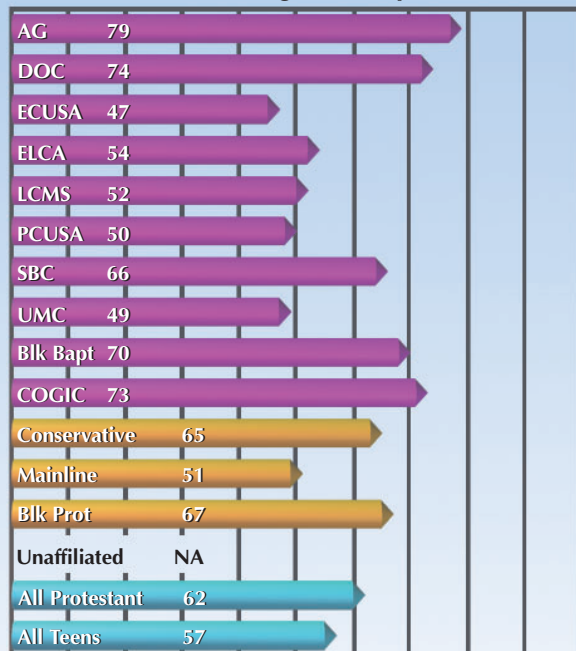
as parents trying to raise their teens. This, of course, means that over a third of Protestant parents who attend church at least a few times a year think that their churches have not been helpful in raising their teens.

Parents who are affiliated with conservative and black Protestant traditions are considerably more likely than mainline parents to report that their churches have been very or extremely helpful in raising their teens. Seventy percent or more of Assemblies of God, Disciples of Christ, black Baptist and Church of God in Christ parents who attend church at least a few times a year say that their churches have been very or extremely helpful in raising their teens. Conversely, 50 percent or less of Episcopalian, Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Methodist parents who attend church at least a few times a year report that their churches have been very or extremely helpful in raising their teens.

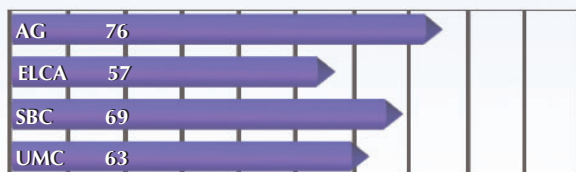
Protestant parents, particularly mainline parents, with teens who regularly attend church are often more likely than other Protestant parents to report that their churches have been very or extremely supportive and helpful for them as parents trying to raise their teens. In other words, if the teen does not participate in church much, then the parents are less likely to see the church as helpful.

Church Has Been Very or Extremely Helpful for Parent Trying to Raise Teen

Parents of U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Parents of Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,845.



How supportive and helpful would you say your church has been for you as a parent trying to raise [teen's name]?

Parent's View that Ministry to Teens Is a Very Important Priority in their Church

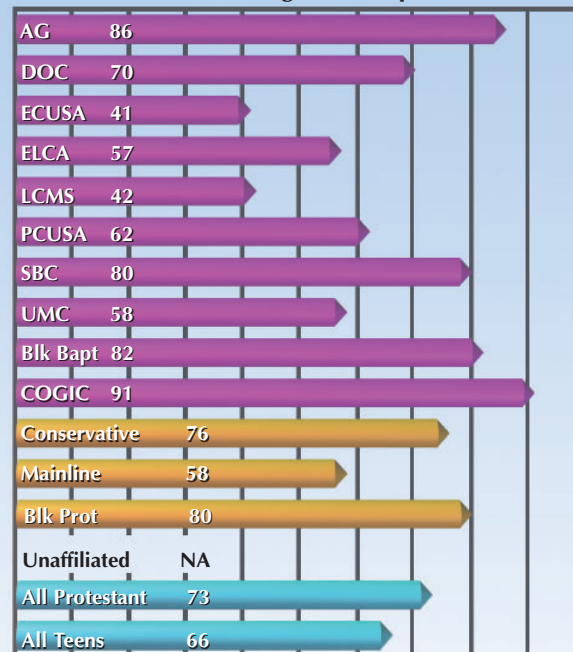
Almost three-quarters of Protestant parents who attend church at least a few times a year (73 percent) say that ministry to teens is a very important priority in their churches, suggesting that over a quarter of Protestant parents feel that their churches are not placing a high priority on ministry to teens. Parents who are affiliated with conservative and especially black Protestant denominations are generally far more likely than mainline parents to report that ministry to teens is very important in their churches.

Eighty percent or more of Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist, black Baptist and Church of God in Christ parents who attend church at least a few times a year say that ministry to teens is a very important priority in their churches. On the other hand, only 41 percent of Episcopalian parents and 42 percent of Missouri Synod Lutheran parents report that ministry to teens is a very important priority in their churches.

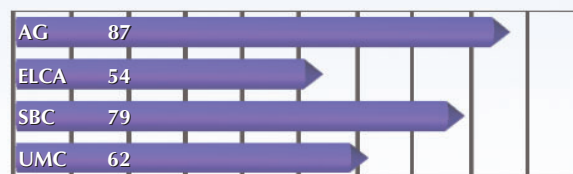
Teens' church attendance appears to have little effect on their parents' view that ministry to teens is a very important priority in their churches.

Ministry to Teens Is a Very Important Priority in Parent's Church

Parents of U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Parents of Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=2,845.

Q

Would you say that at your church, ministry to teenagers is a very important priority, a fairly important priority, a somewhat important priority, a low priority, or not a priority at all?

Moral Relativism

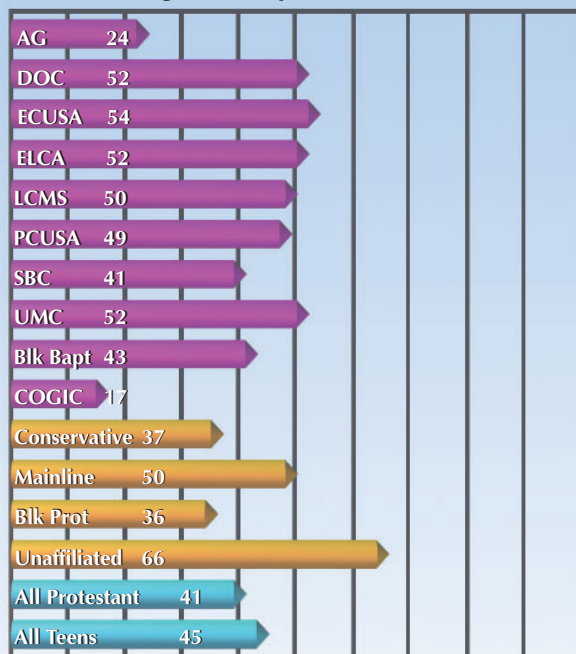
Forty-one percent of Protestant teenagers say they agree that morals are relative, that there are no definite rights and wrongs for everybody. Half of all teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations agree that morals are relative, while 37 percent of teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations and 36 percent of teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations agree that morals are relative.

With 66 percent agreeing that morals are relative, unaffiliated teens are more likely than Protestant teens to be moral relativists. Among the specific denominations, only 17 percent of Church of God in Christ and 24 percent of Assemblies of God teens agree that morals are relative while at least half of all Disciples of Christ, Episcopalian, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Missouri Synod Lutheran and United Methodist teens agree that morals are relative.

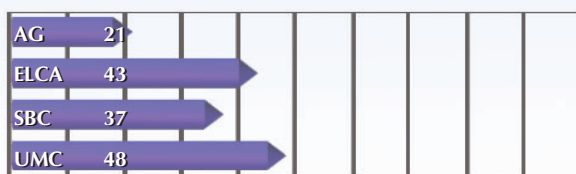
Regular church-attending Protestants are somewhat less likely than all Protestant teens to agree that morals are relative.

Agree that Morals Are Relative, that there Are No Definite Rights and Wrongs for Everybody

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Some people say that morals are relative, that there are no definite rights and wrongs for everybody. Do you agree or disagree?

Confusion over Right and Wrong

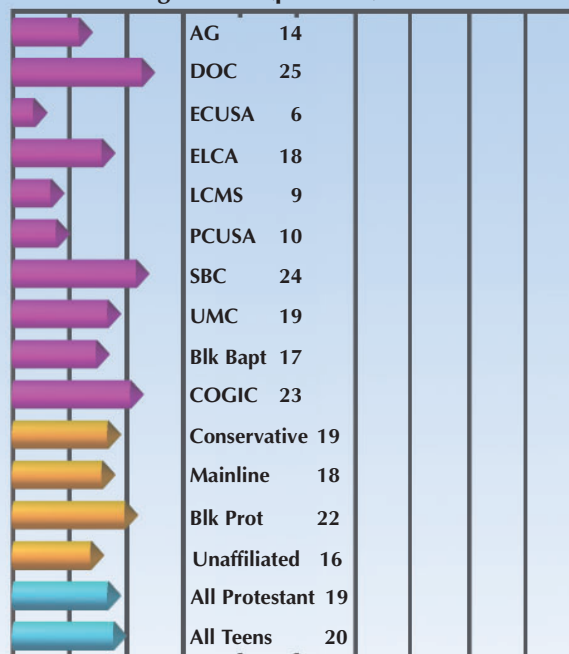
Fewer than one in five Protestant teens say they sometimes feel confused about what is right and wrong, as opposed to usually having a good idea of what is right and wrong in most situations. There is little difference in moral clarity between the different major Protestant traditions, and there is little difference between Protestant teens, unaffiliated teens and all teens.

There are, however, some differences between the specific Protestant denominations. Only 6 percent of Episcopalian teens and 9 percent of Missouri Synod Lutheran teens say they sometimes feel confused about what is right and wrong. On the other hand, 23 percent of Church of God in Christ teens, 24 percent of Southern Baptist teens and 25 percent of Disciples of Christ teens report that they sometimes feel confused about what is right and wrong.

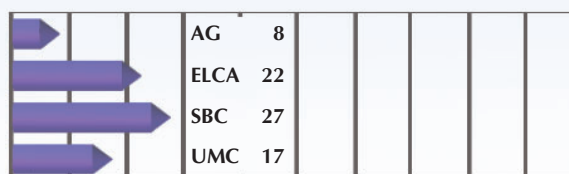
Regular church attendance appears to have little effect on stemming confusion over right and wrong; in fact, for some denominations, the regularly attending teens are slightly more likely to express feeling confusion over right and wrong. Perhaps some attending teens are paying more attention to issues of right and wrong.

Sometimes Feel Confused About What Is Right and Wrong

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Q

Do YOU YOURSELF sometimes feel confused about what is right and wrong, or do you usually have a good idea of what is right and wrong in most situations?

Sexual Abstinence before Marriage

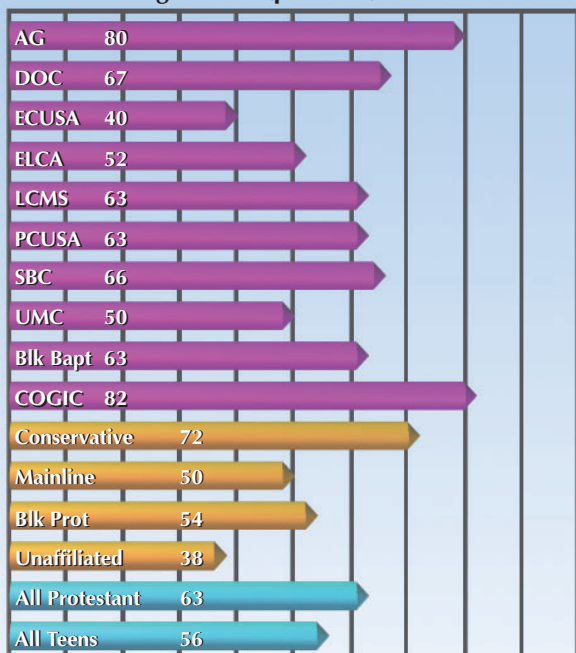
Sixty-three percent of all Protestant teens say they think that people should wait to have sex until they are married while only 38 percent of unaffiliated teens believe in sexual abstinence before marriage. Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative Protestant denominations are particularly

likely to say that people should wait to have sex until they are married. Eighty-two percent of Church of God in Christ teens and 80 percent of Assemblies of God teens report supporting sexual abstinence before marriage, compared to half of the United Methodist teens and only 40 percent of the Episcopalian teens.

For mainline and conservative Protestant teens, regular church attendance appears to increase support for sexual abstinence before marriage. For instance, while 66 percent of all Southern Baptist teens say they think that people should wait to have sex until they are married, 76 percent of the regularly attending Southern Baptist teens say they support sexual abstinence before marriage.

People Should Wait to Have Sex until They Are Married

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Do you think that people should wait to have sex until they are married, or not necessarily?

Sexual Intercourse

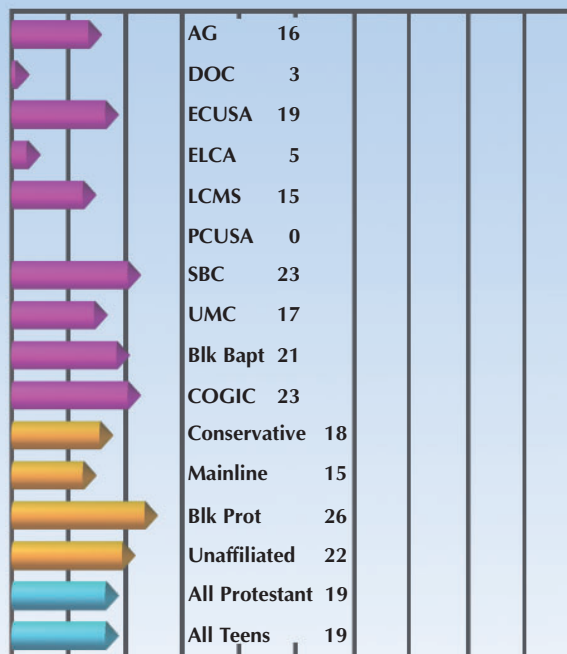
Almost one-fifth of Protestant teenagers report engaging in sexual intercourse in the last year. Mainline teens appear slightly less likely to have had sex in the last year than conservative teens, though black Protestant teens are more likely than both mainline and conservative teens to have engaged in sexual intercourse. More than 20 percent of Southern Baptist, black Baptist and Church of God in Christ teens report having sex in the last year.

On the other hand, five percent or less of Disciples of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Presbyterian Church (USA) teens report engaging in sexual activity in the last year. Factors such as race, social status, age and gender normally play a role in affecting teen sexual activity. For instance, race influences the denominational differences — teens who are affiliated with denominations that have a greater than average proportion of black adherents are more likely to report engaging in sexual intercourse.

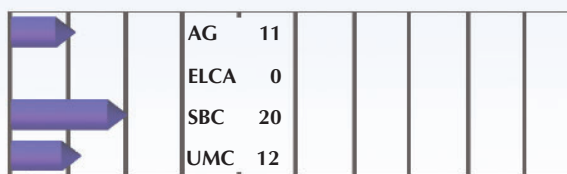
Regularly attending Protestant teens are generally less likely to have sex than are all Protestant teens. Additionally, the view that people should wait for marriage before having sex appears to be related to whether or not teens actually have sex, but there is still some discrepancy. Church of God in Christ teens, for example, are more likely than most teens to say that people should wait until marriage before having sex, but they are also more likely than most other teens to report having sex.

Engaged in Sexual Intercourse in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



When was the last time you had sexual intercourse? (Asked only of those teenagers who said they have ever engaged in sexual intercourse.)

Cheating in School

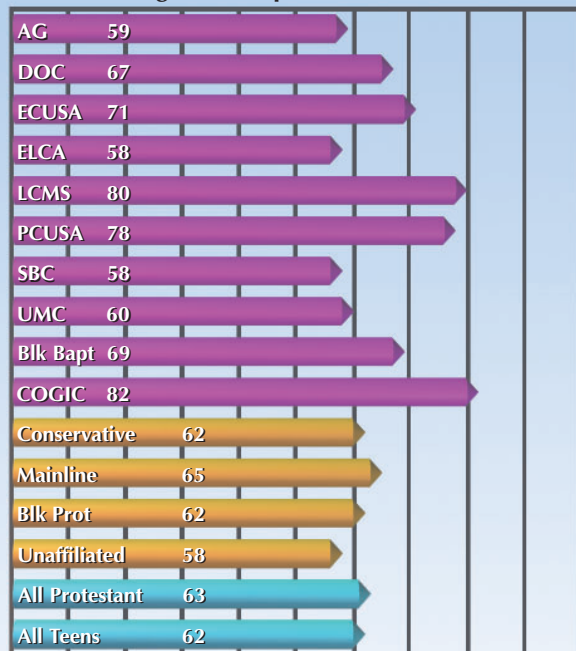
Sixty-three percent of all Protestant teens say they cheated in school in the last year, making them somewhat more likely than unaffiliated teens to report cheating in school. There is little variation in cheating between the different major Protestant traditions.

There is, however, a fair amount of variation between the specific denominations. At the high end, 80 percent of Missouri Synod Lutheran teens and 82 percent of Church of God in Christ teens report cheating in school in the last year. At the low end, 60 percent or less of Assemblies of God, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Southern Baptist and United Methodist teens say they cheated in school in the last year.

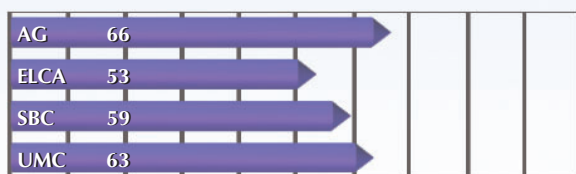
Regular church attendance has varying effects on cheating. For instance, regular attendance tends to increase cheating for Assemblies of God teens and it tends to decrease cheating for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens.

Cheated in School in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



In the last year, how often, if ever, did you cheat on a test, assignment, or homework in school?

Lying to Parents

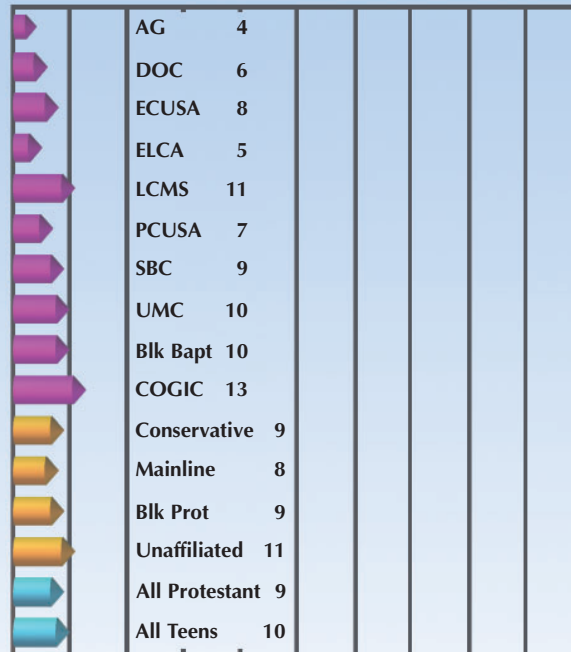
Nine percent of Protestant teens say they lied to their parents fairly often or very often in the previous year. There is little variation between the major Protestant traditions in lying to parents, though there are some differences between the specific denominations.

For instance, 13 percent of Church of God in Christ teens report lying to their parents in the last year while only four percent of Assemblies of God teens say they lied to their parents.

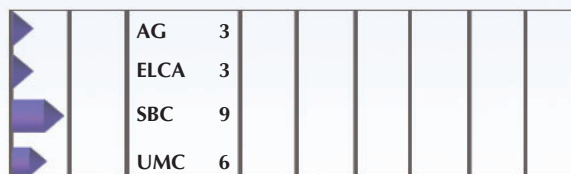
Regular church attendance appears to have little effect on lying to parents for many Protestant teens though it moderately decreases lying among United Methodist teens.

Lied to Parents Fairly or Very Often in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



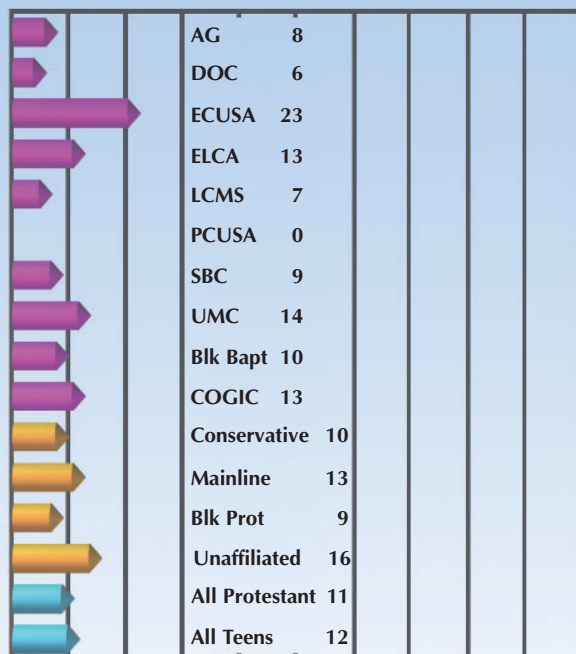
In the last year, how often, if ever, did you lie to your parents?

Drinking Alcohol

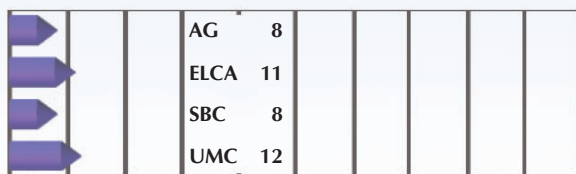
Eleven percent of Protestant teens report drinking alcohol a few times a month or more, compared to 16 percent of unaffiliated teens. Teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations are somewhat more likely than other Protestant teens to say they drink alcohol at least a few times a month.

Drink Alcohol a Few Times a Month or More

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Twenty-three percent of teens whose parents are Episcopalian, for example, say they drink alcohol a few times a month or more.

Nevertheless, teens whose parents are affiliated with the mainline Presbyterian Church (USA) are the least likely to drink alcohol, with none of the Presbyterian Church (USA) teens in the NSYR sample saying they drink alcohol a few times a month or more.

Regular church attendance appears to lead to slightly less alcohol consumption among Protestant teenagers.



How often, if at all, do you drink alcohol, such as beer, wine or mixed drinks, not including at religious services?

Smoking Cigarettes

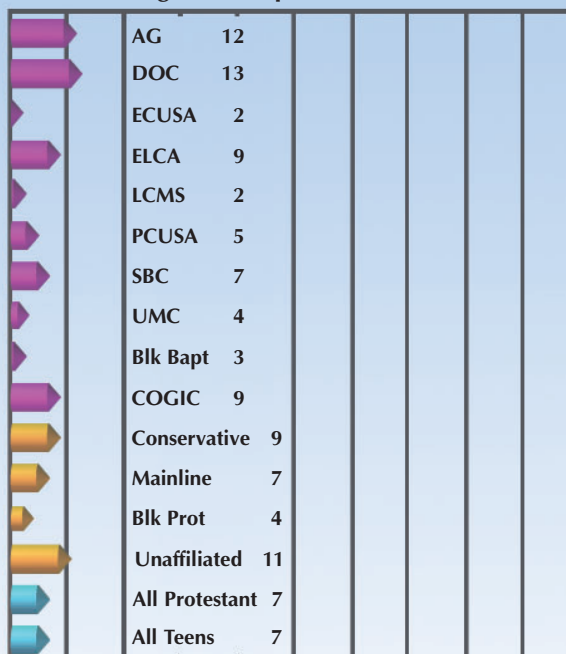
Seven percent of Protestant teens say they smoke at least one cigarette a day. Teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations are less likely than most other Protestant teens to report smoking cigarettes.

Among the specific denominations, 2 percent of Episcopalian and Missouri Synod Lutheran teens and 3 percent of black Baptist teens say they smoke at least one cigarette a day while 12 percent of Assemblies of God and 13 percent of Disciples of Christ teens report doing so.

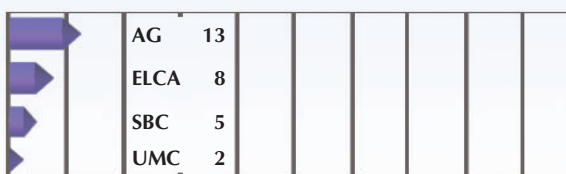
Regular church attendance for specific denominations appears to have little effect on teens' likelihood of smoking cigarettes.

Smoke at Least One Cigarette a Day

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



Do you smoke cigarettes regularly, that is, at least one cigarette a day, or not?

Using Marijuana

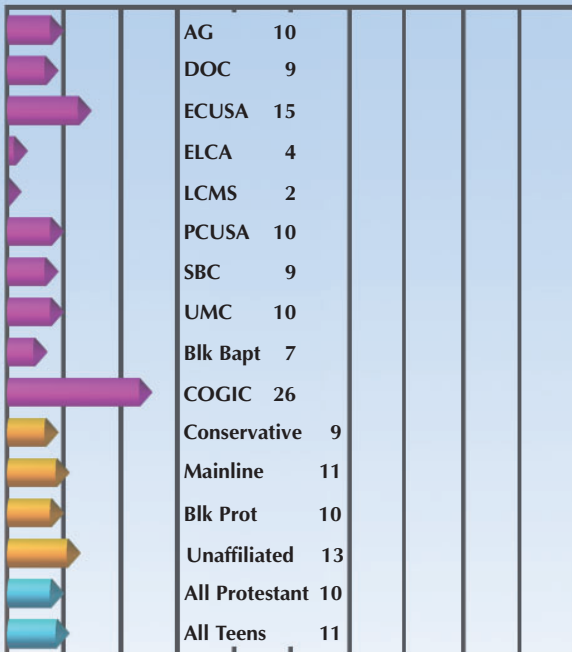
Ten percent of Protestant teens report that they use marijuana occasionally or regularly. There is little variation in smoking marijuana among the major Protestant traditions, though there are differences among the specific denominations.

Twenty-six percent of Church of God in Christ teens and 15 percent of Episcopalian teens say they use marijuana at least occasionally.

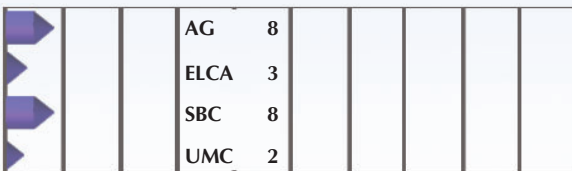
Conversely, only 4 percent of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens and 2 percent of Missouri Synod Lutheran teens report using marijuana occasionally or regularly. Regular church attendance tends to decrease the likelihood of smoking marijuana for United Methodist teens, but it has little effect for most other Protestant teens.

Use Marijuana Occasionally or Regularly

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



How often, if ever, have you used marijuana?

Volunteering and Community Service

Thirty percent of Protestant teens say they did organized volunteer work or community service at least occasionally in the previous year, slightly less than the percent of all teenagers reporting volunteering at least occasionally in the previous year.

Teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations are somewhat more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations to say they volunteered in the last year while both mainline and conservative teens are more likely than teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations to report doing organized volunteer work or community service.

The highlighted denominations range from 14 percent of the black Baptist teens saying they volunteered to 45 percent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens reporting that they volunteered at least occasionally in the last year.

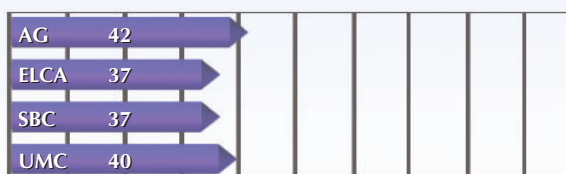
Regular church attendance appears to have small uneven effects on volunteering for Protestant teens. While regular church attendance increases the chances of doing community service for Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist and United Methodist teens, it decreases the chances of community service activity for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens.

Did Organized Volunteer Work at Least Occasionally in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



In the last year, how much, if at all, have you done organized volunteer work or community service?

Helping Needy People

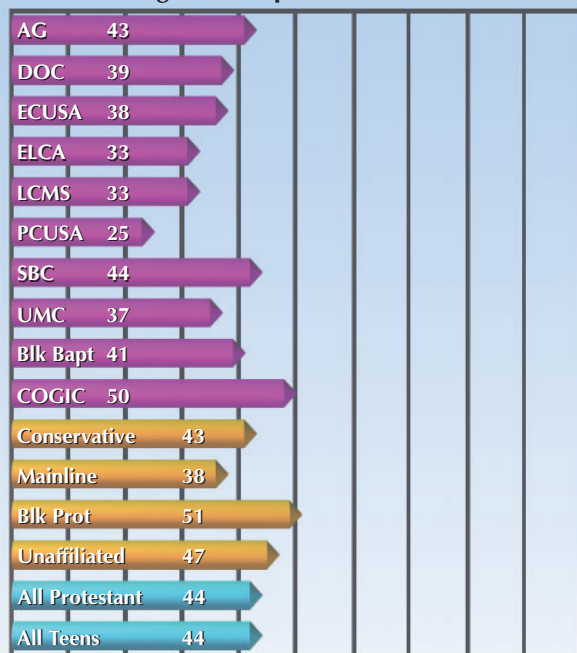
Forty-four percent of Protestant teens report helping homeless people, needy neighbors, family friends or other people in need, directly — not through an organization — some or a lot. This is the same percent for all U.S. teenagers. Teens whose

parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations are particularly likely to say they help needy people informally. Half of the Church of God in Christ teens, for example, report helping needy people some or a lot, compared to a quarter of the Presbyterian Church (USA) teens.

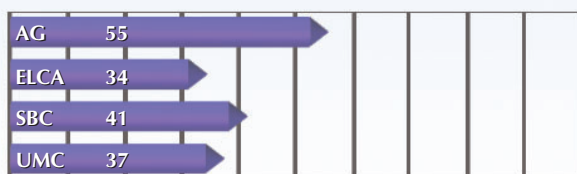
Regular church attendance has inconsistent effects on helping needy people for Protestant teens. For instance, though regular church attendance increases the likelihood of informally helping the needy for Assemblies of God teens, it has little or no effect for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, United Methodist and Southern Baptist teens.

Helped Needy People Some or A Lot in the Last Year

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.

Q *In the last year, how much, if at all, did you help homeless people, needy neighbors, family friends, or other people in need, directly, not through an organization?*

Political Activity

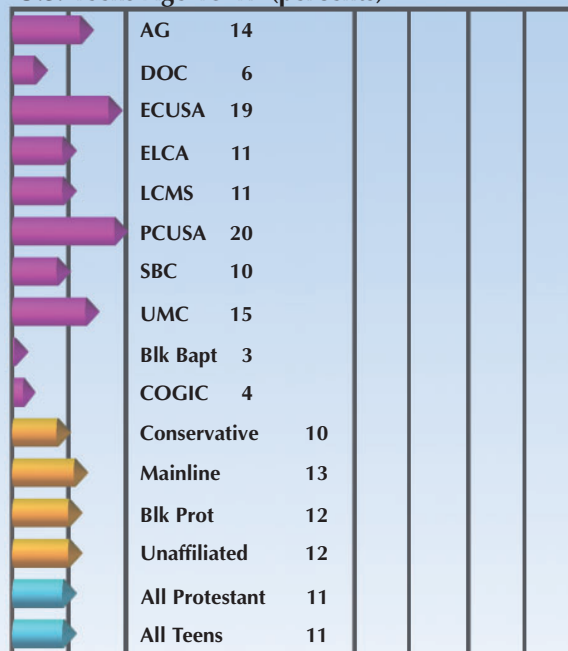
Eleven percent of Protestant teens say that in the last two years they have been involved in political activities, not including student government, such as signing a political petition, attending a political meeting or contacting an elected official.

Teens whose parents are affiliated with certain mainline Protestant denominations are somewhat more likely than most other Protestant teens to report participating in political activities. For instance, 20 percent of Presbyterian Church (USA) teens and 19 percent of Episcopalians say they were involved in political activities in the last two years. On the other hand, Assemblies of God teens also surpass the Protestant average.

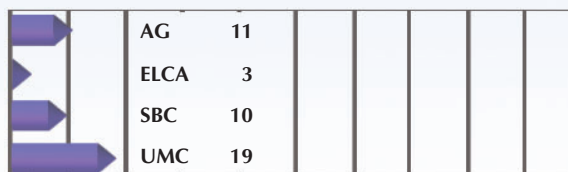
Regular church attendance seems to have little consistent effect on teenagers' likelihood of participating in politics. For instance, regular attendance considerably decreases political activity for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens, though it leads to slightly more political activity for United Methodist teens.

Involved in Political Activities in the Last Two Years

U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Attending U.S. Teens Age 13-17 (percents)



Source: National Survey of Youth and Religion 2002-2003, N=3,290.



In the last TWO years, have you been involved in any political activities, not including student government, such as signing a political petition, attending a political meeting or contacting an elected official, or not?



Conclusions

This report employs the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) survey data to examine the religious beliefs and practices of U.S. Protestant teenagers, as a more denomination-specific follow-up to the recent NSYR-based book by Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. For many but certainly not all measures, teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations are more likely to believe and participate religiously than are teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations. Teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations are often highly likely to hold religious beliefs but not as likely to participate.

Teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative denominations are more likely to believe and participate religiously than are teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations.

The picture for mainline denominations is not entirely dim. Church-attending mainline teens report viewing fellow church members just as positively as conservative teens view their fellow church members. In fact, the Presbyterian Church (USA) teens report the most positive views of adults and teens in their churches. Attending mainline teens are also just as likely as conservative teens to report opportunities for youth involvement in church, with Episcopalian teens being the most likely to report opportunities for teen involvement. Additionally, mainline teens do not report greater levels of risk behaviors than conservative teens, and they report moderately higher levels of voluntary and political participation than do conservative teens. Church-attending mainline Protestant teens are also almost as likely as other Protestant teens to say they would attend the same church that they do if given the choice. While the mainline teens and their parents express somewhat lower levels of satisfaction with religion and their churches than do conservative teens and parents, mainline Protestant teens also report many positive views of religion and church.

For many of the religious measures, Protestant teens who attend church at least two or three times a month are more likely than all Protestant teens

to believe and participate religiously. The effects of church attendance, however, are often more pronounced for teens whose parents are affiliated with mainline denominations than for teens whose parents are affiliated with conservative or black Protestant denominations. For instance, when it comes to belief in life after death, angels, miracles and judgment day, church attendance has the largest effect on mainline teens. Additionally, the effects of church attendance are sometimes noticeably weak or absent for teens whose parents are affiliated with black Protestant denominations, such as among the measures of belief in life after death, angels, miracles and judgment day. The effect of church attendance on mainline teens' religious beliefs and activities is probably partially due to their lower overall levels of belief and religious activity. In other words, church attendance has a greater effect on those groups of teens who have the most room for improvement.

Although conservative teens generally report higher levels of religious belief and participation, the patterns between denominations often vary, and these variations do not always make sense from the viewpoints of traditional theological differences. For instance, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America teens are significantly less likely than many other teens to report belief in a judgment day but more likely than many other teens to say they believe in miracles and the afterlife. Theological coherence does not seem to be a hallmark of Protestant teens in general. For instance, 55 percent of Protestant teens report belief in an afterlife yet 80 percent report belief in a judgment day.

The NSYR data reveal that a minority of Protestant teens say that church is a very good place to talk about serious life issues. Specifically, less than one-half of Protestant teens say church is a very good place to talk about serious issues in their lives. The mainline teens are especially unlikely to say church is a very good place to talk about serious issues. Many Protestant churches do not seem to be giving their teen members the impression that they can safely discuss important life issues in their churches.

Although this report repeatedly points out differences between mainline, conservative, and black Protestant teens, some denominations break that pattern. The Presbyterian Church (USA) teens, in particular, often do not behave like other mainline teens, despite the status of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as a mainline denomination. For instance, Presbyterian Church (USA) teens are the most positive about talking to adults in their church, are the least likely to say adults in their church are hypocrites, look very positively upon fellow congregation members in general, are the most likely to express religious beliefs at school, are highly partici-

Less than half of Protestant teens say that church is a very good place to talk about serious life issues.

patory in Sunday school and religious summer camps and are highly likely to report having a powerful experience of worship. Regardless of these positive views of church and high levels of religious activity, only two-thirds of Presbyterian Church (USA) teens say they would attend the same church if it were up to them. This suggests that there may be more to retaining teenage members than having approachable adults and an active Sunday school program.

Church-attending Protestant teens in general do not always equate their views of church with their views of fellow congregation members. While most attending Protestant teens have positive views of church, they do not always have positive views of fellow congregation members. Many Protestant teens think that at least some teens in their church are hypocrites. Episcopalian teens are especially likely to say most or all teens and adults in their church are hypocrites.

Like their children, the parents of NSYR teens are generally positive toward their churches although they express some concerns, too. A sizable minority of Protestant parents report that their churches are not helpful in raising their teens. The distinction between mainline, conservative and black Protestant parents on this point is quite evident. Mainline parents are by far the least likely to say that their churches are helpful in raising their teens. Many mainline congregations thus do not appear to be meeting the needs or expectations of parents with teenagers.

Most Protestant teens report relatively high levels of moral clarity. Despite their moral clarity, however, they take part in a variety of risk behaviors.

The findings above reveal little connection between morality and risk behaviors. Along these lines, most Protestant teens report relatively high levels of moral clarity. Less than one-fifth, for example, report ever being confused about what is right and what is wrong. Almost two-thirds say people should wait until marriage before having sex. Despite their moral clarity, however, Protestant teens take part in a variety of risk behaviors. Eleven percent say they drink alcohol a few times a month or more, 9 percent report lying to their parents fairly or very often in the last year and almost two-thirds report cheating in school in the last year. Moral awareness thus does not always produce moral actions. Furthermore, the risk behaviors themselves do not always vary consistently by denomination. For instance, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod teens are the least likely of the denominations to say they use marijuana and some of the least likely to report smoking cigarettes, but they are some of the most likely to say they cheat in school and lie to their parents.

Mainline teens report somewhat higher levels of civic activity than do conservative and especially black Protestant teens. Mainline Protestant teens volunteer and participate in political activities more than conservative and black Protestant teens. Black Protestant teens, however, are the most likely to report help-

ing needy people not through organized means. In the U.S., many often think of religion as what takes place in church or what transpires between a person and their God. It is possible that for many mainline Protestant teens, however, religion also involves a believer's activity in this world helping their fellow humans.

This report is intended, among other things, to help Protestant leaders better understand the adolescent members of their religious organizations. Protestant teens report relatively high levels of religious belief and participation, they generally say they place a high importance on faith and most of them say they have positive views of their churches and fellow church members. In most cases, Protestant teens participate more, are more likely to believe, place a greater importance in faith and more highly value their churches than do non-Protestant teens. Such numbers should be interpreted cautiously, however, since NSYR teen interview findings — as reported in the book by Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* — also show, for instance, that many U.S. religious teens understand and embrace very little of the theological substance of their own faith traditions. Readers should also keep in mind that, considering all measures of religious participation and views of religion in this report, there are some Protestant teens who choose not to participate in, believe the teachings of or positively evaluate their churches. For instance, the fact that about four-fifths of Protestant teens report that adults in their churches are at least somewhat easy to talk to and get to know also means that about one-fifth do not feel comfortable talking to adults in their congregations. Thus, the results from the NSYR survey not only point to what appears to be the important role churches play in the lives of Protestant teenagers, but also perhaps to ways those churches may need to work more effectively with the teenage members of their churches.

Protestant teens participate more, are more likely to believe, place a greater importance in faith, and more highly value their churches than do non-Protestant teens.

Appendix A: Religious Traditions

Conservative Protestant Denominations

Adventist/Seventh-Day Adventist	Independent Baptist
American Baptist Association	Inter-Denominational
American Baptist Churches in the USA	Just Protestant
Apostolic Pentecostal	Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
Assemblies of God	Lutheran Church Wisconsin Synod
Baptist Missionary Association	Mennonite
Bible Church	Missionary Baptist
Calvary Chapel	Missionary Church
Charismatic	National Missionary Baptist Convention of America
Charismatic Baptist	Nazarene
Christian and Missionary Alliance	Non-Denominational
Christian Reformed Church	North American Baptist Conference
Church (Churches) of Christ	Other Baptist
Church of God International	Other Brethren
Church of God of Anderson, Indiana	Other Church of God
Church of God of Cleveland, Tennessee	Other Church (Churches) of Christ
Church of God of Prophecy	Other Lutheran
Church of God, General Conference	Other Methodist
Church of the Brethren	Other Pentecostal
Church of the Nazarene	Other Presbyterian
Conservative Baptist Association of America	Pentecostal
Evangelical	Pentecostal Church of God
Evangelical Covenant Church	Pentecostal Holiness Church
Evangelical Free Church	Plymouth Brethren
Evangelical Presbyterian Church	Presbyterian Church in America
Four Square	Reformed Presbyterian Churches of North America
Free Methodist	Southern Baptist Convention
Free Will Baptist	Spanish Pentecostal
Full Gospel	United Pentecostal Church International
Fundamentalist	Vineyard Fellowship
Fundamentalist Baptist	Wesleyan Church
General Association of Regular Baptists	Wesleyan Methodist
General Baptists	Worldwide Church of God
Grace Brethren Church	
Holiness	
Independent	

Note: **Bold** denotes denominations highlighted in the report.

Mainline Protestant Denominations

Congregationalist

Disciples of Christ

Episcopal Church in the USA

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Just Lutheran

Just Methodist

Just Presbyterian

Just Protestant

Moravian Church in America

Northern Baptist

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Quaker/Friends

Reformed Church in America

United Brethren in Christ

United Church of Christ

United Methodist Church

Black Protestant Denominations

African Methodist Episcopal

African Methodist Episcopal Zion

American Baptist Association (if black)

American Baptist Churches in the USA (if black)

Apostolic Pentecostal (if black)

Charismatic Baptist (if black)

Christian Methodist Episcopal

Church (Churches) of Christ (if black)

Church of God in Christ

Church of God in Christ, International

Church of God of the Apostolic Faith

Church of God, Holiness

General Baptists (if black)

Holiness (if black)

Independent Baptist (if black)

Inter-denominational (if black)

Just Protestant (if black)

Missionary Baptist (if black)

National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.*

National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.*

**National Missionary Baptist Convention of
America (if black)***

Non-Denominational (if black)

Other Baptist (if black)

Other Church of God (if black)

Other Methodist (if black)

Pentecostal (if black)

Pentecostal Church of God (if black)

Pentecostal Holiness Church (if black)

Reformed Baptist

Southern Baptist Convention (if black)

United Baptist

Note: **Bold** denotes denominations highlighted in the report.

* Denotes denominations in black Baptist grouping.

Appendix B:

Demographic Characteristics by Protestant Denomination (percents)

	Family Income Below \$30,000	Urban	Rural	African- American Teens	Latino Teens
Assemblies of God	23	14	29	4	4
Disciples of Christ	31	44	19	7	7
Episcopal Church in the USA	13	29	23	11	2
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	7	16	27	0	0
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	14	20	30	2	4
Presbyterian Church (USA)	7	25	10	0	0
Southern Baptist Convention	24	21	32	25	3
United Methodist Church	10	19	23	6	4
Black Baptist	25	54	25	90	0
Church of God in Christ	55	57	22	87	0
Conservative Protestant	22	19	31	4	8
Mainline Protestant	15	24	23	5	3
Black Protestant	45	47	16	94	1
All Protestants	25	26	25	23	6
Unaffiliated	29	29	24	7	13
All Teenagers	24	27	22	16	12



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