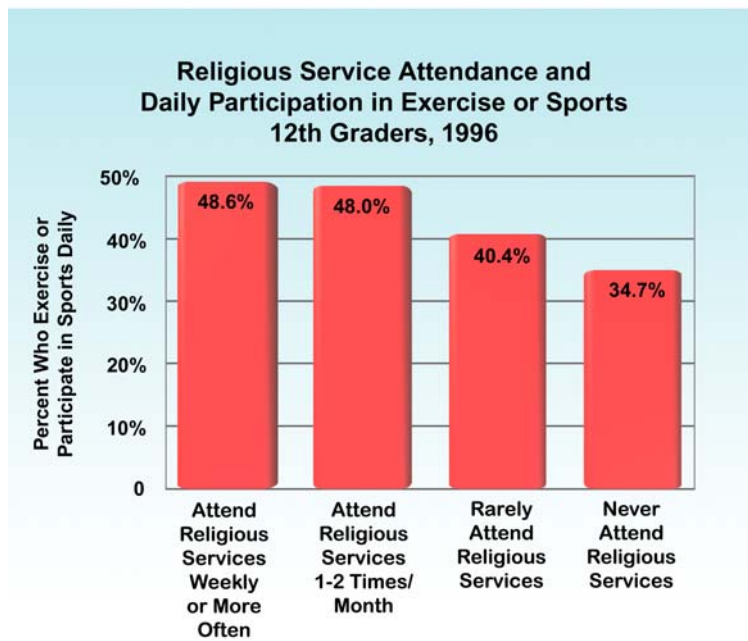


Religious 12th Graders Are More Likely to Exercise

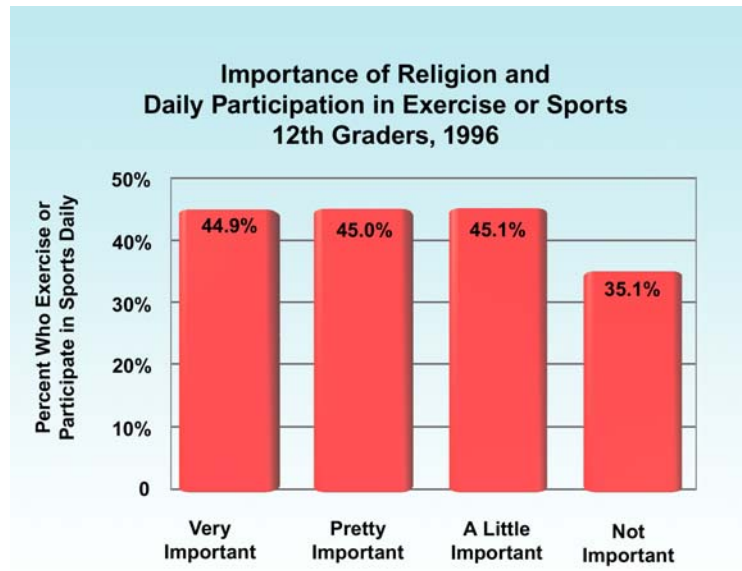
Every level of religious service attendance and every level of religiosity have been found to be positively related to active participation in sports, athletics and exercise among U.S. 12th graders, according to sociologists with the National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Nearly 49 percent of seniors who attend religious services weekly or more often say they actively participate in sports, athletics or exercise on a daily basis. The number remains high — 48 percent — for those who attend religious services once or twice a month and is statistically significant — at 40 percent — for those who rarely attend religious services. This compares to active participation in sports, athletics and exercise of 35 percent of 12th graders who never attend religious services.



Source: Monitoring the Future, 1996

In analyzing 1996 data from the Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey, a nationally representative survey of U.S. high school students, researchers also found that 45 percent of 12th graders who say religion is very important, pretty important or a little important in their lives participate in daily athletics or exercise. This compares to 35 percent of teens who say religion is not important.



Source: Monitoring the Future, 1996

This preliminary analysis is designed to provide baseline information that will aid in the development of a comprehensive survey of adolescents for the National Study of Youth and Religion, a four-year research project being conducted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill under the direction of Dr. Christian Smith. Funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc., this project is designed to enhance our understanding of the religious and spiritual lives of American adolescents. This analysis makes no claims about causality but simply reports statistically significant associations.

Analysis of the data was completed by Christian Smith and Robert Faris. Christian Smith is professor and associate chair of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Robert Faris is a Ph.D. graduate student in sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey is a nationally representative survey of U.S. high school students administered to eighth, 10th and 12th graders since 1975. This analysis focused on 12th graders. By design, MTF data does not include school dropouts and home-schooled youth. The MTF survey includes the following question: "How often do you actively participate in sports,

athletics or exercise?” Two questions regarding religion analyzed here are 1) “How often do you attend religious services?” and 2) “How important is religion in your life?”

These relationships are statistically significant controlling for race, age, sex, rural/urban residence, region, education of parents, number of siblings, whether the mother works and the presence of a father/male guardian in the household.

Bachman, Jerald G., Lloyd D. Johnston, and Patrick M. O'Malley. MONITORING THE FUTURE: A CONTINUING STUDY OF AMERICAN YOUTH (12TH-GRADE SURVEY), 1996 [Computer file]. Conducted by University of Michigan, Survey Research Center. ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1999. The original collector of the data, ICPSR, and the relevant funding agency bear no responsibility for use of the data or for interpretations or inferences based upon such uses.