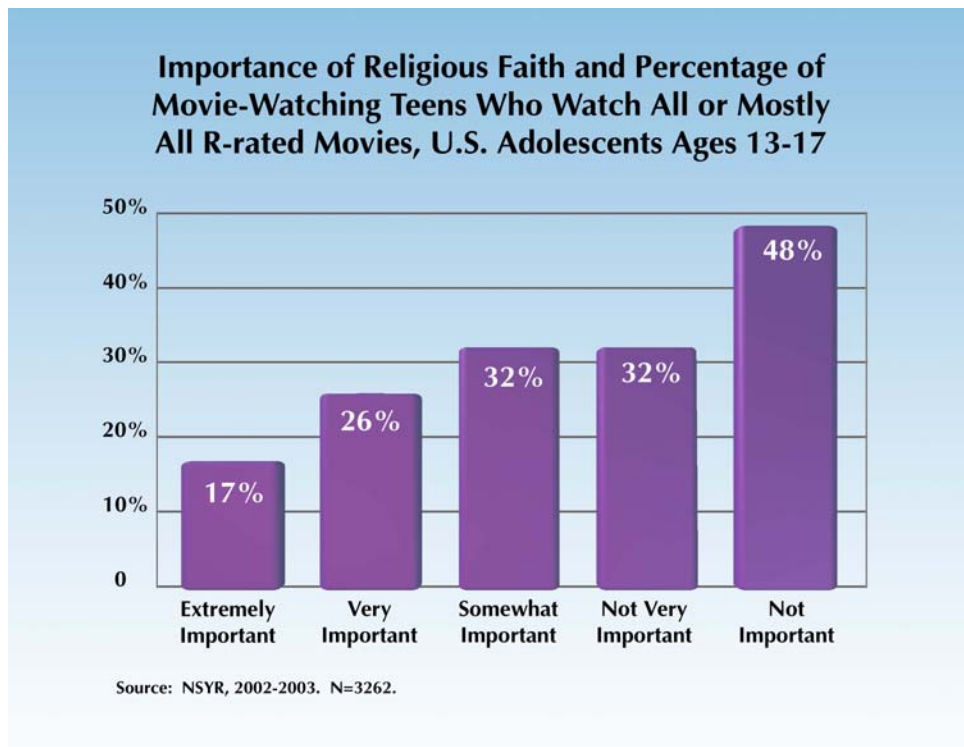


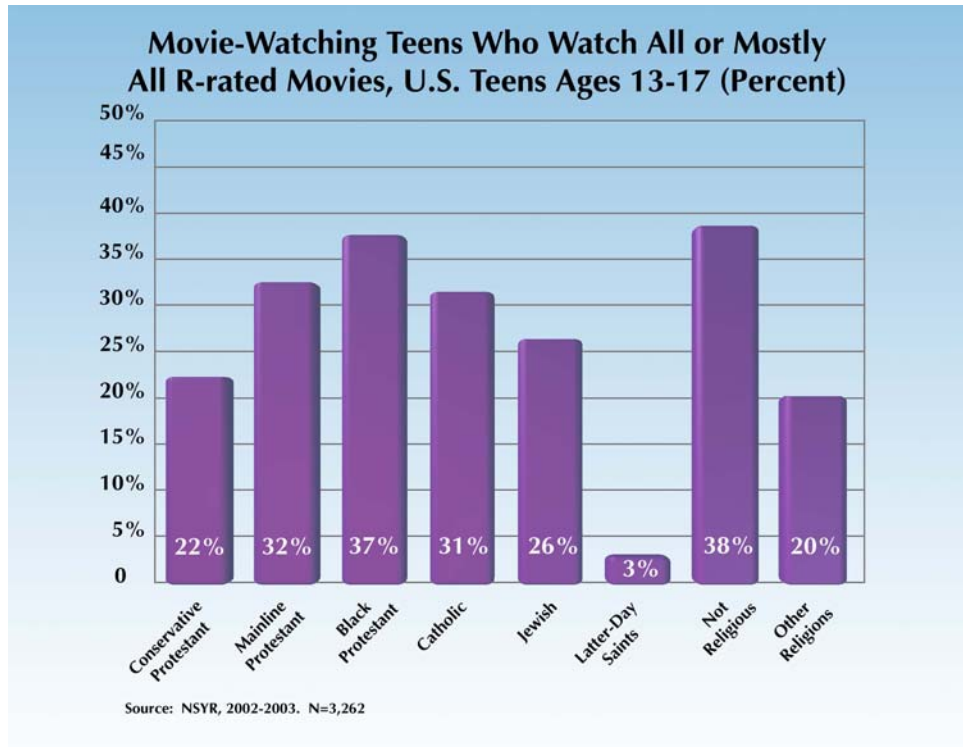
Does Religion Shape Movie Viewing Habits for Teens?

According to researchers with the National Study of Youth and Religion, religious tradition appears to have some relationship to the movie viewing habits of U.S. teenagers. Only 17 percent of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 who say their religious faith is *extremely important* in shaping how they live their daily lives report that all or most of the movies and videos they watch are R-rated. In addition, 26 percent of those who say their religious faith is *very important* in shaping how they live their daily lives report that all or most of the movies and videos they watch are R-rated. In contrast, 48 percent of teens who say that religious faith is *not important* at all in shaping how they live their daily lives report that all or most of the movie and videos they watch are R-rated. Less than 1 percent of teens surveyed reported watching no movies. Analyses show these importance-of-faith differences to be statistically significant even after controlling for differences in teen sex, age, race, region of residence, mother’s education and family income.



Comparisons of different religious traditions show that Mormon teens report the lowest frequency of watching all or mostly all R-rated movies (3 percent). Among conservative Protestant teens, 22 percent reported watching all or mostly all R-rated movies. Twenty-six percent of Jewish teens reported watching all or mostly all R-rated movies. In contrast, 31 percent of Catholic teens, 32 percent of teens in mainline

Protestant traditions and 37 percent of teens from black Protestant churches watch all or mostly all R-rated movies. Among teens who report no religious affiliation, 38 percent watch all or mostly R-rated movies.



There are limitations to what these data reveal, cautioned Dr. Christian Smith, principal investigator of the study. “The survey did not ask which specific R-rated movies teens viewed, and our analysis does not imply value judgments about the content or value of all R-rated movies,” Smith stated. “Clearly, different kinds of religious teens are more or less likely to consume R-rated movies. This could mean that certain religious traditions, congregations or parents are more successful in having their teens avoid R-rated movies generally. It could also mean that certain ones are better at teaching their teens to be more discerning consumers, to watch more worthwhile R-rated movies and avoid the more problematic ones.” Smith is Stuart Chapin Distinguished Professor and associate chair of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Different religious traditions also hold different positions on movie watching, Smith observed, complicating evaluative comparisons across religious types on these measures. Leaders and parents of different religious traditions are advised to consider these findings primarily in light of their own expectations and standards.

The National Study of Youth and Religion is currently reporting findings about religion and media usage because of popular interest in the subject. Media usage, however, is not the central focus of the study and future analyses and reports will focus on other topics.

The National Study of Youth and Religion is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. More than 3,350 teens along with one of their parents participated in the random-digit-dial telephone study of U.S. parent-teen pairs. 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 to encourage sustained reflection about and rethinking of our cultural and institutional practices with regard to youth and religion.