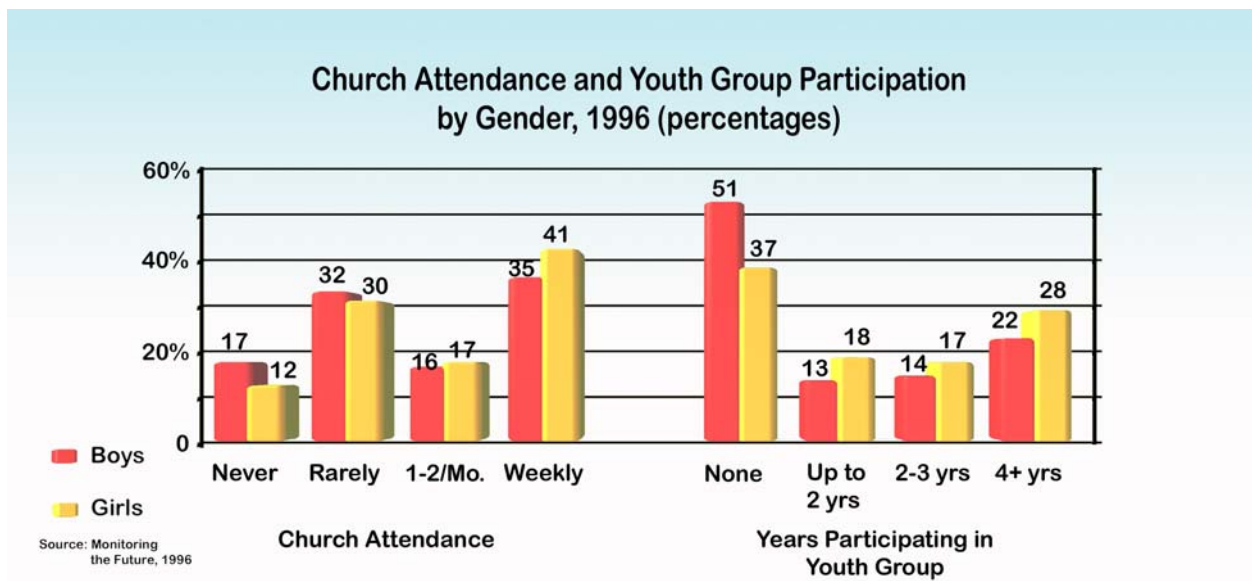


Gender Influences on Church Attendance and Youth Group Participation

Gender influences religious participation in America, with 55 percent of adolescent girls claiming religious affiliation, compared to 45 percent of adolescent boys. This also translates into differences in church attendance and youth group participation among boys and girls, according to the Monitoring the Future survey, a nationally representative survey of American 8th, 10th and 12th grade students. Among them, 6 percent more American adolescent girls than boys attend church services weekly; on the other hand, 5 percent more boys than girls never attend church.

Fully 14 percent more 12th grade boys than girls have never participated in a religious youth group. By contrast, 28 percent of 12th grade girls, compared to only 22 percent of 12th grade boys, have been involved in a religious youth group for four years or more. Clearly, using these measures of religious participation, American adolescent girls are more involved in religious activities than are boys. Further research is needed to explain this gender gap in religiosity.



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, 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.

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The Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey is a nationally representative survey of American high school students, administered to 8th, 10th and 12th graders since 1975. By design, MTF data does not include school dropouts and home-schooled youth. The MTF survey includes these religion questions on its questionnaire analyzed here: 1) “How often do you attend religious services?” and 2) “During how many years (if any) have you participated in church youth groups?”

Johnston, Lloyd D., Jerald G. Bachman, Patrick M. O'Malley, and John Schulenberg. MONITORING THE FUTURE: A CONTINUING STUDY OF AMERICAN YOUTH, 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.