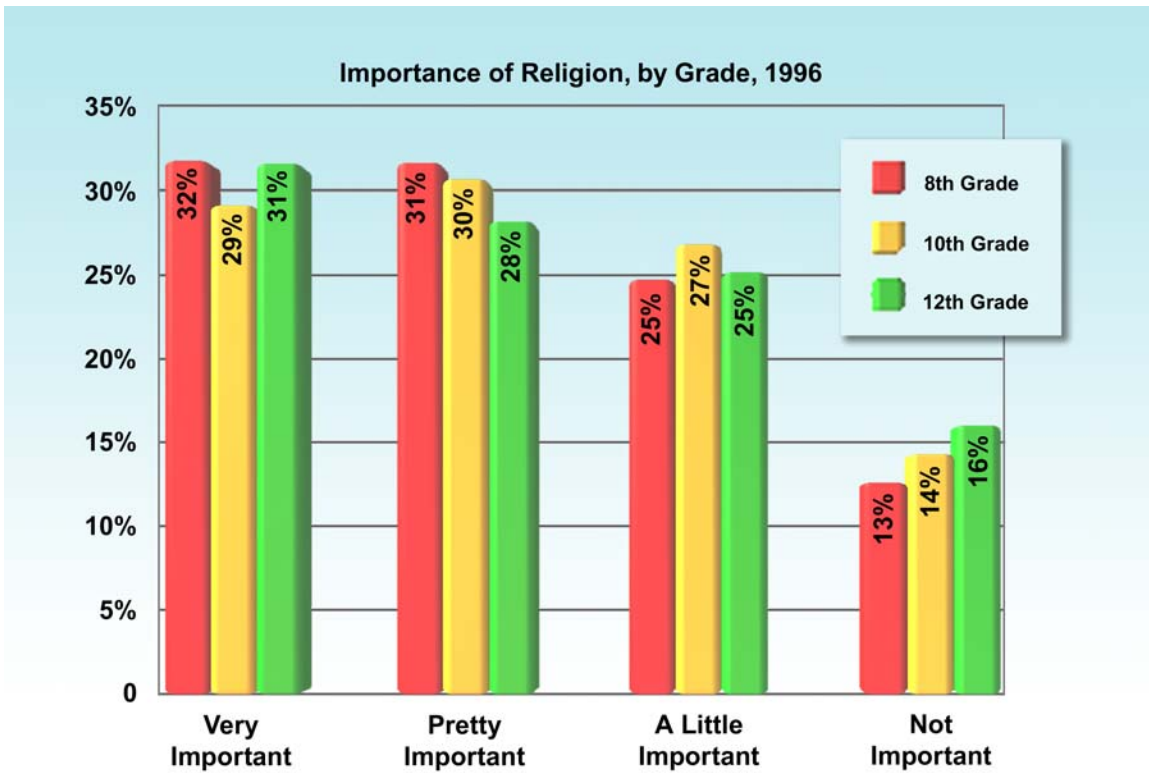


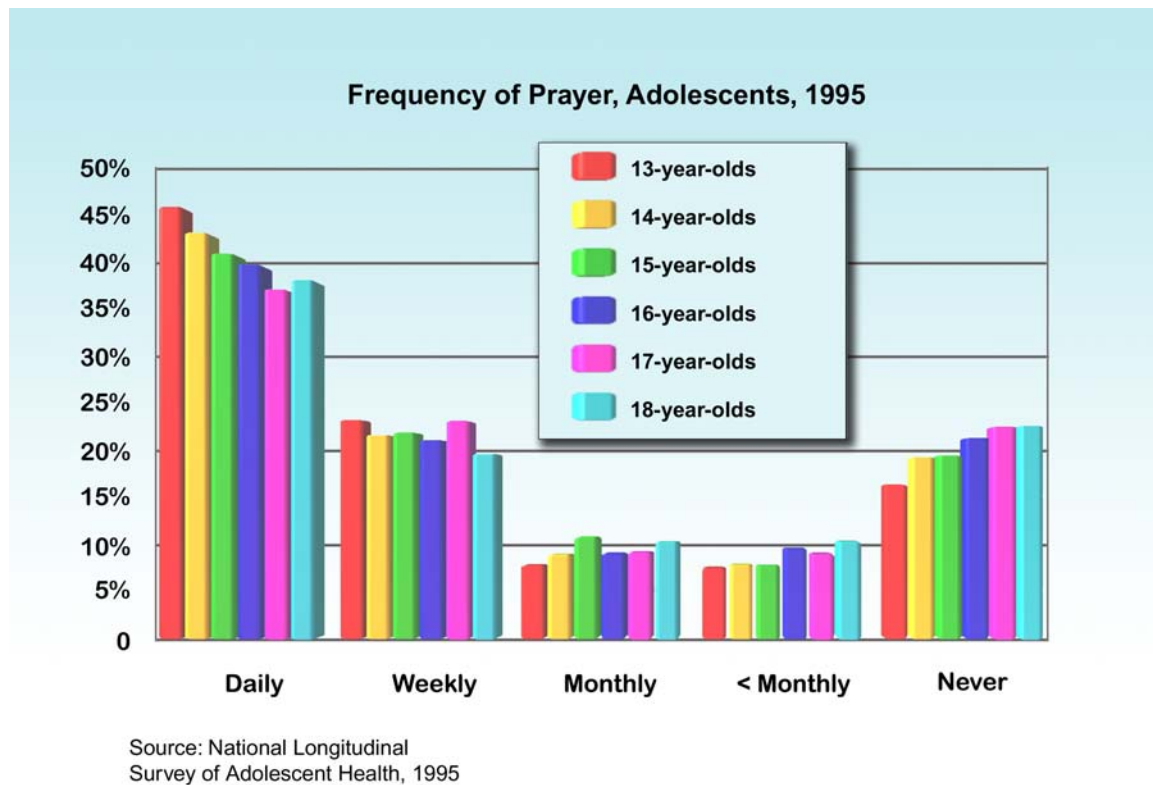
### How Does Age Affect Religiosity?

Despite the significant physical, psychological, and social changes that occur as teens mature, there appears to be very little change in the importance of religion in the lives of American adolescents between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Analysis of these data, gathered by the Monitoring the Future Survey in 1996, seems to indicate that the importance of religion for youth remains stable among youth as they mature.



Source: Monitoring the Future, 1996

According to the 1995 National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, however, frequency of prayer appears to decline somewhat between age 13 and 18, although the decline is not especially pronounced. Eight percent fewer 18-year-olds pray daily than 13-year-olds; and 6 percent more 18-year-olds never pray than 13 year olds. Even so, the larger pattern suggests more stability than change.



*Analysis of data was completed by Christian Smith, Melinda Lundquist Denton and Mark Regnerus. Christian Smith is Professor and Associate Chair of Sociology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Melinda Lundquist Denton is a Ph.D. graduate student in sociology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Mark Regnerus is Assistant Professor of Sociology University of Texas at Austin.*

*The Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey is a nationally representative survey of American high school students, administered to 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders since 1975. By design, MTF data does not include school dropouts and home-schooled youth. The MTF survey includes the following religion question analyzed here: “How important is religion in your life?”*

*Johnston, Lloyd D., Jerald G. Bachman, Patrick M. O'Malley, and John Schulenberg. MONITORING THE FUTURE: A CONTINUING STUDY OF AMERICAN YOUTH (8<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup>- AND 12<sup>TH</sup>- GRADE SURVEYS), 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.*

*The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health is a nationally representative school-based study of adolescents focusing on the social context of healthy behavior. Eighty eligible high schools—both public*

*and private—were drawn from a national sampling frame of high schools. The recruitment rate of the originally sampled high schools was over 70 percent. The Adolescent Health survey was administered in school, from the Fall of 1994 to the Spring of 1995, to all students grades 7 to 12 present on the survey date, and was completed by over 90,000 students. Note that by design, Add Health data do not include school drop-outs and home-schooled youth.*