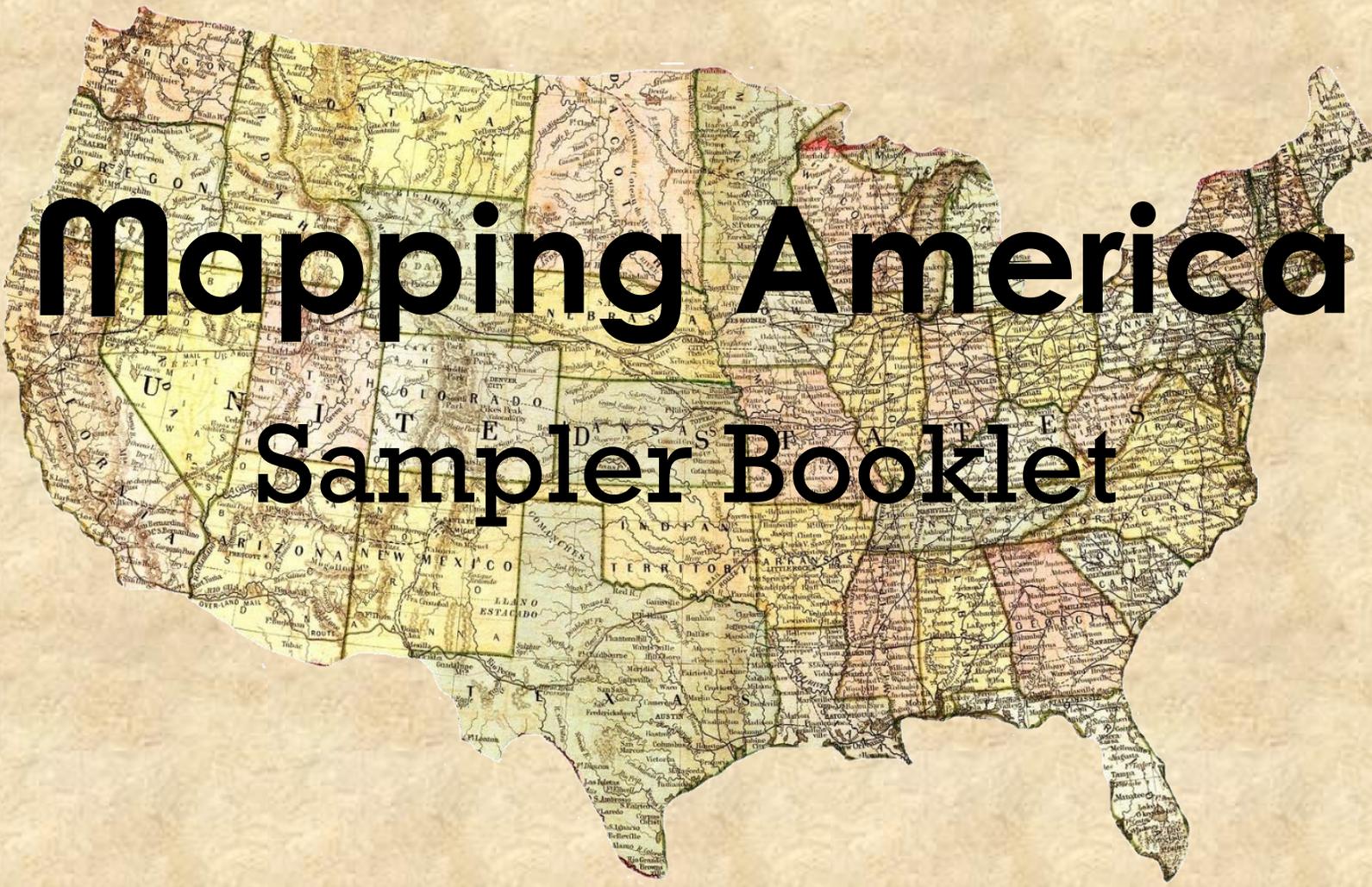




# Mapping America Sampler Booklet



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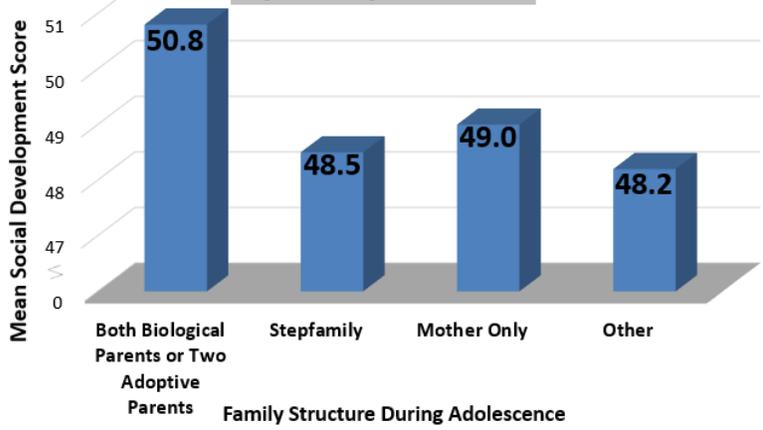
## About the Mapping America Project

The *Mapping America Project* of the Marriage and Religion Research Institute (MARRI) draws data from federal surveys to map the demographic behaviors of Americans based on their family structure, frequency of religious practice, and a combination of the two. The federal surveys used to graph these national behaviors include the General Social Survey, the Adolescent Health Survey, the National Survey of Children's Health, the National Survey of Family Growth, and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth.



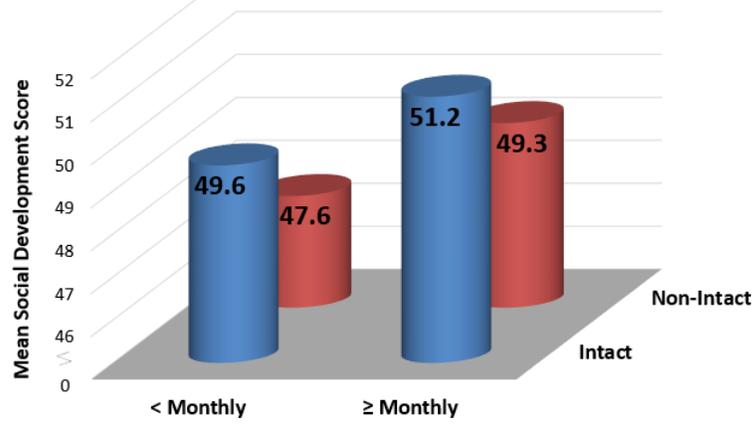
## Children's Positive Social Development By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Children's Positive Social Development  
By Family Structure



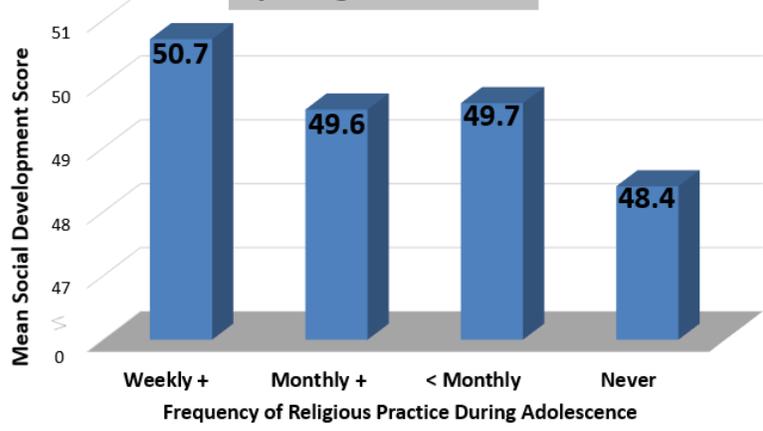
Source: National Survey of Children's Health (2003)

Children's Positive Social Development  
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Children's Health (2003)

Children's Positive Social Development  
By Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Children's Health (2003)

*This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).*

*The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.*

*The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.*

These charts draw on data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics in the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) in 2003. The data sample consisted of parents of 102,353 children and teens in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. 68,996 of these children and teens were between six and 17 years old, the age group that was the focus of the study. The survey sample in this age range represented a population of nearly 49 million young people nationwide.

## Children’s Social Development by Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Family Structure:** Children who lived with both biological parents or two adoptive parents scored higher on the social development scale (50.8) than children who lived within other family configurations (48.2), such as with their father only or foster parents.<sup>2</sup> In between were those who lived in a stepfamily (48.5) and those who lived with single mothers (49.0).<sup>3</sup>

**Religious Practice:** Children who attended religious services at least weekly scored higher on the social development scale (50.7) than children who never attended religious services (48.4). In between were children who worshipped one to three times a month (49.6) and children who attended religious services less than once a month (49.7).

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** Children who worshipped frequently and lived with both biological parents or with two adoptive parents had a higher score (51.2) than those who worshipped less than monthly and lived in single-parent or reconstituted families (47.6). In between were those who lived in intact families and worshipped less than monthly (49.6) and those who lived in non-intact families who worshipped at least monthly (49.3). The data were taken from the National Survey of Children’s Health.

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Jerry Trusty of Texas A&M University and Richard Watts of Baylor University reported that high school seniors who frequently participated in religious activities were more likely to have involved parents and less likely to exhibit delinquent behavior.<sup>4</sup>

John Bartkowski of Mississippi State University and colleagues also found that both parents’ frequent worship corresponded to several positive outcomes in their children, including greater social skills, greater interpersonal skills at school, protection “against internalizing problem behaviors,” protection against loneliness/sadness, and protection from overactive and impulsive behaviors in the home.<sup>5</sup> As the evidence shows, children who live with both parents in a religiously active family are more likely to develop positive social behavior.

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Nicholas Zill, Ph.D.

*Nicholas Zill is a research psychologist, former Vice President of Westat, and Founding President of Child Trends.*

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<sup>2</sup> “Other family configurations” also include children living with grandparent or other relatives.

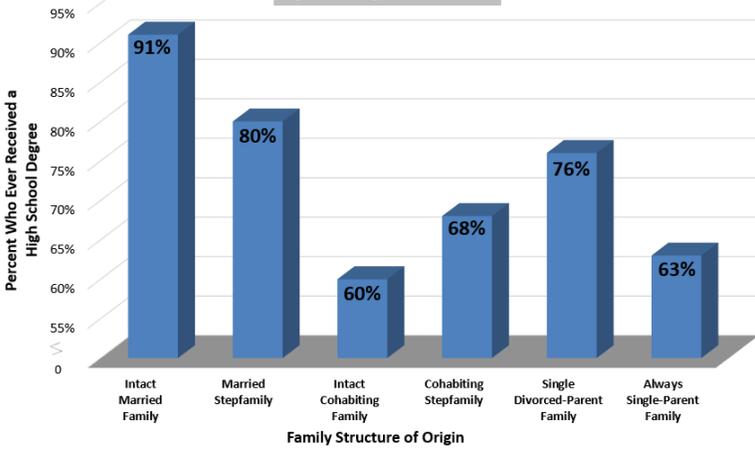
<sup>3</sup> Most of the parents in the “biological parent and a stepparent” category are married.

<sup>4</sup> Jerry Trusty and Richard E. Watts, “Relationship of High School Seniors’ Religious Perceptions and Behavior to Educational, Career, and Leisure Variables,” *Counseling and Values*, vol. 44 (1999): 30-40.

<sup>5</sup> John P. Bartkowski, et al., “Religion and Child Development: Evidence from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study,” *Social Science Research*, vol. 37 (2008): 18-36.

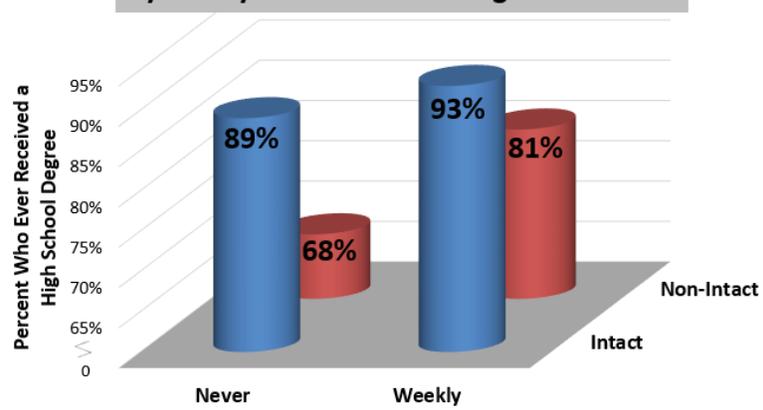
## Received a High School Degree By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Received a High School Degree  
By Family Structure



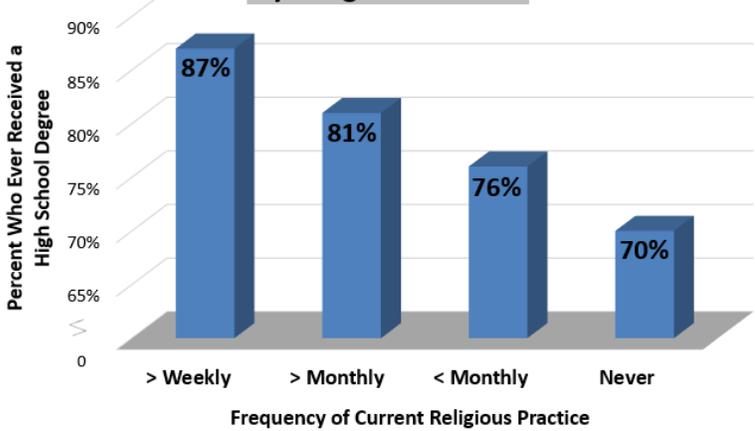
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

Received a High School Degree  
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

Received a High School Degree  
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

This chart looks at adults who have received a high school degree at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. non-intact\*) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;
- The always-intact married family that never worships;
- The non-intact family\* that worships weekly;
- The non-intact family\* that never worships.

(\* The non-intact group consists of women in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)

## Received a High School Degree by Family Structure and Religious Practice

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that students who worshipped at least once a week and grew up with two married parents were most likely to have received a high school degree.

**Family Structure:** Ninety one percent of individuals who grew up with married biological parents received a high school degree. They were followed by those who grew up in a married stepfamily (80 percent), those who grew up with a single, divorced parent (76 percent), those who grew up in a cohabiting stepfamily (68 percent), those who grew up with an always-single parent (63 percent), and those who grew up in an intact cohabiting family (60 percent).

**Religious Practice:** Eighty seven percent of students who attended religious services at least weekly received a high school degree. In contrast, only 70 percent of those who never worshipped received a high school degree. Between these two extremes were those who attended at least monthly (81 percent) and those who attended less than monthly (76 percent).

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** Ninety three percent of students who grew up in intact married families and who attended weekly religious services had ever received a high school degree. Only 68 percent of students from all other family structures who never attended religious services received a high school degree. Eighty-nine percent of those who never worshipped but grew up in intact families and 81 percent of those who attended religious services weekly but came from other family structures received high school degrees.

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** Nan Marie Astone and Sarah S. McLanahan, then of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, found that children from single parents and stepfamilies completed high school at lower rates than children from intact married families.<sup>1</sup> Another study found that two-parent families were conducive to children's academic achievement.<sup>2</sup> Another study affirms the importance of religious attendance for education. One study found that the more frequently youths attended religious activities, the more likely they were to give recognition to good grades, spend more time on homework, and have a positive attitude toward academics.<sup>3</sup>

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

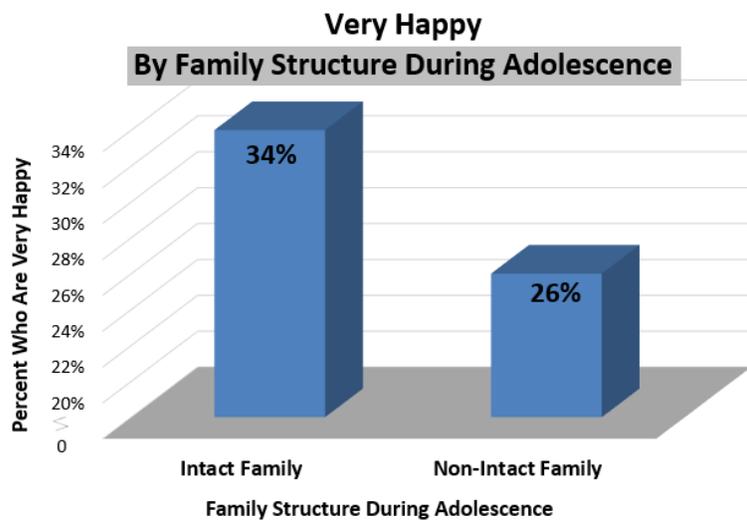
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<sup>1</sup> Astone, Nan Marie & Sarah S. McLanahan. "The Effects of Family Structure on High School Completion," (1989).

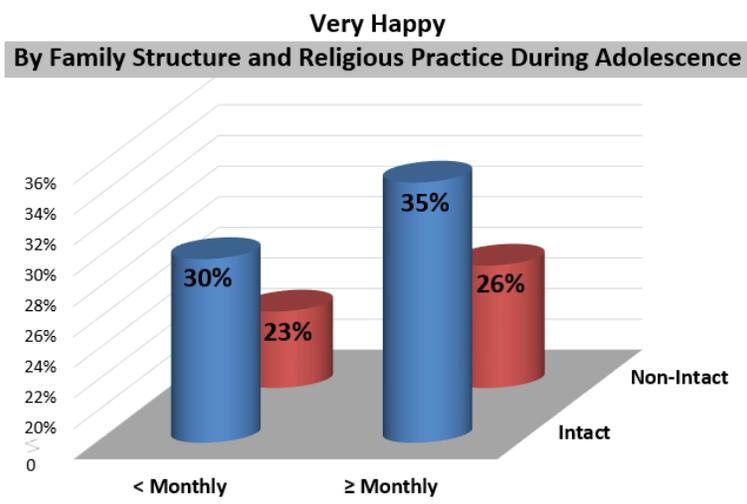
<sup>2</sup> Milne, Ann M. "Family Structure and the Achievement of Children," *Education and the American Family*, (1989): 32-65.

<sup>3</sup> Trusty, Jerry. "Relationship of High School Seniors' Religious Perceptions and Behavior to Educational, Career, and Leisure Variables." *Counseling and Values* Vol 44, No. 1 (October 1999) pp. 30-40.

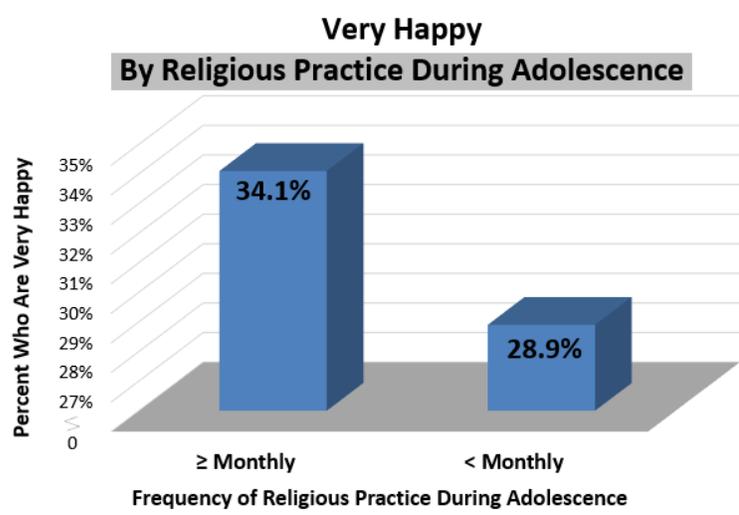
## Happiness By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006.



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006.



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006.

*This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).*

*The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.*

*The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.*

These charts draw on data collected by the General Social Survey, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

## Happiness by Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Family Structure:** According to the General Social Survey, 34 percent of adults who lived in an intact family as adolescents considered themselves very happy, compared to 26 percent of those who lived in a non-intact family.

**Religious Practice:** The 1972-2006 General Social Survey shows that 34.1 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly as adolescents considered themselves very happy, compared to 28.9 percent of adults who attended worship less than monthly as adolescents.

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** About 35 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family through adolescence considered themselves very happy, compared to 23 percent of adults who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in a non-intact family as adolescents. In between were those who had attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (26 percent) and those who lived in an intact family but attended religious services less than monthly (30 percent).

The combination of frequent religious attendance during adolescence and an intact family background clearly increases the likelihood of being very happy in adulthood. The data indicate, however, that family structure may have a more pronounced effect than religious attendance.

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** Very few studies have examined contemporaneous effects of both religious attendance and family structure on happiness, let alone intergenerational effects, but these studies generally support the direction of these findings. Arthur Brooks of Syracuse University reported that while “practicing a religion makes people very happy, on average,” married people are “nearly twice as likely as singles” to report being very happy.<sup>1</sup>

In a study of Caribbean adolescents, Robert Blum of the University of Minnesota and colleagues found that adolescents who report having religious beliefs and connectedness with their parents are less likely to experience rage.<sup>2</sup>

Though the evidence demonstrates that an intact family may have a greater influence than religiosity on the likelihood of being very happy, the combination of frequent religious attendance and an intact family yields the highest proportion of very happy people, as adolescents and adults.

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

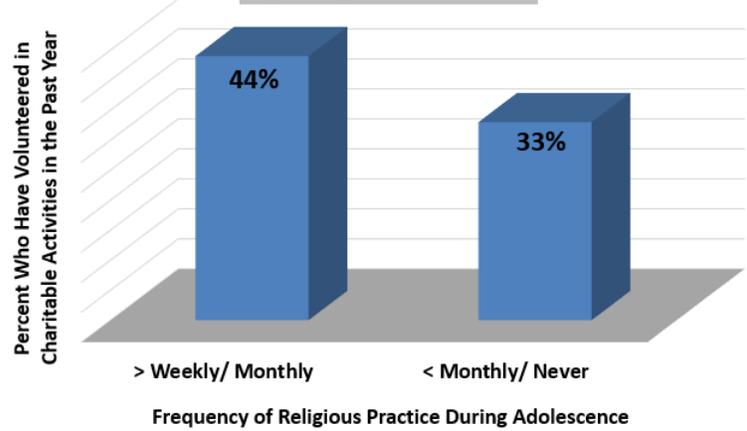
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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Brooks, *Gross National Happiness* (New York: Basic Books, 2008): 28, 30, 217, 227.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Blum, et al., “Adolescent Health in the Caribbean: Risk and Protective Factors,” *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 93 (2003): 456-460.

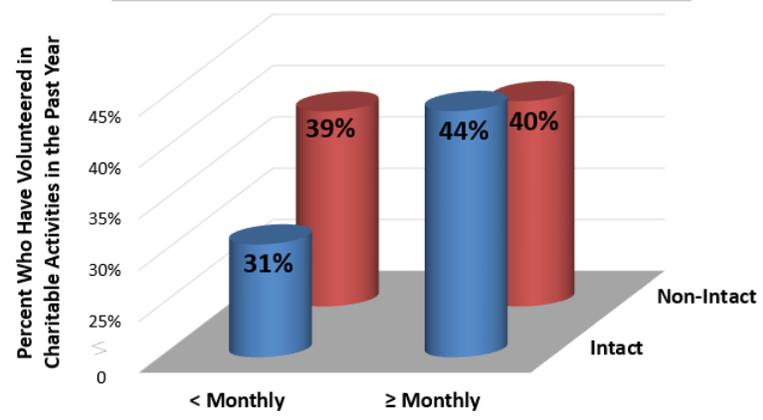
## Volunteered in Charitable Activities By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Volunteered in Charitable Activities  
By Religious Practice



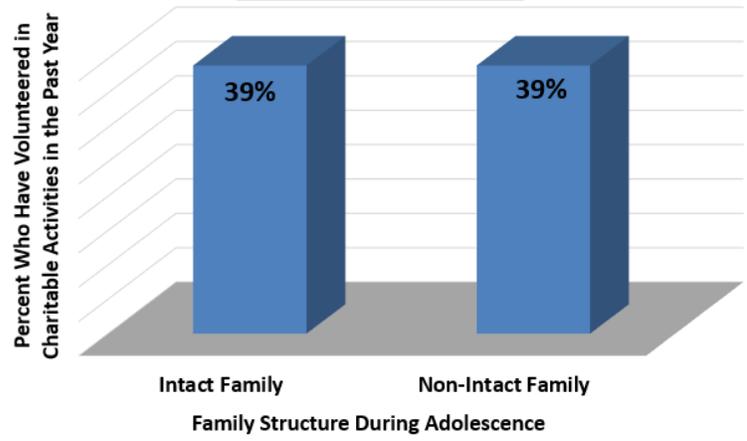
Source: General Social Survey (1998)

Volunteered in Charitable Activities  
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: General Social Survey (1998)

Volunteered in Charitable Activities  
By Family Structure



Source: General Social Survey (1998)

*This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).*

*The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.*

*The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.*

## Volunteered in Charitable Activities by Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Religious Practice:** According to the 1998 General Social Survey, 44 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly as adolescents had volunteered in a charitable activity in the last year, compared to 33 percent of adults who attended worship less than monthly as adolescents.

**Family Structure:** Adolescent family structure background makes little statistical difference in levels of adult volunteering for charitable activities. According to the General Social Survey, 39 percent of people from both intact and non-intact families volunteered in charitable activities in the past year.

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** Based on the General Social Survey 44 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family as adolescents had volunteered in a charitable activity in the last year, compared to 31 percent of adults who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in an intact family as adolescents. In between were those who lived in a non-intact family and attended religious services less than monthly (39 percent) and those who had attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (40 percent). As the findings show, family structure during adolescence has no effect on adult volunteerism, but when combined with adolescent religious attendance, large differences emerge in the patterns of volunteering in charitable activities as adults.

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** To the best of our knowledge, no other studies have correlated adolescent religious attendance and family structure with adult volunteerism in charitable activities, but some studies have correlated adolescent religious attendance and family structure with contemporaneous volunteerism.

Daniel Lichter of the Ohio State University and colleagues found that “religious attendance increases the likelihood of volunteerism” for males and females in late adolescence and that single-parent families “are negatively associated with later prosocial behaviors,” especially for boys.<sup>1</sup>

Judith Smetana and Aaron Metzger of the University of Rochester also reported that “middle class African American adolescents’ spirituality and religiosity had a significant influence on their civic involvement” and that their intended involvement in future civic activities was predicted by positive communication with their mothers and fathers.<sup>2</sup>

As the evidence indicates, adolescents who frequently attend religious services and live in intact families are most likely to volunteer in charitable activities, both now and in the future, while their less religious counterparts are least likely.

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

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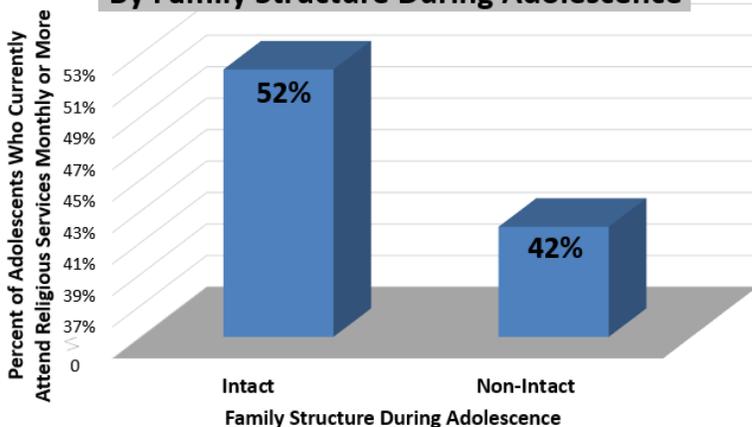
<sup>1</sup> Daniel T. Lichter, et al., “Helping Others?: The Effects of Childhood Poverty and Family Instability on Prosocial Behavior,” *Youth Society*, vol. 34 (2002): 89-119.

<sup>2</sup> Judith G. Smetana and Aaron Metzger, “Family and Religious Antecedents of Civic Involvement in Middle Class African American Late Adolescents,” *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, vol. 15 (2005): 325-352.

## Adult Religious Attendance By Family Structure and Religious Practice During Adolescence

Adult Religious Attendance

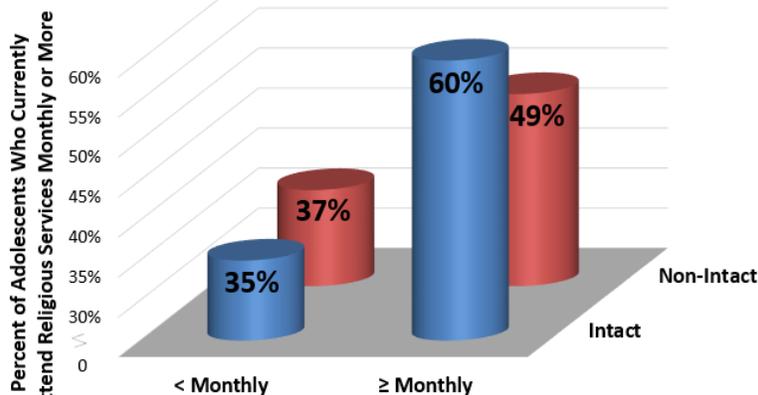
By Family Structure During Adolescence



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006

Adult Religious Attendance

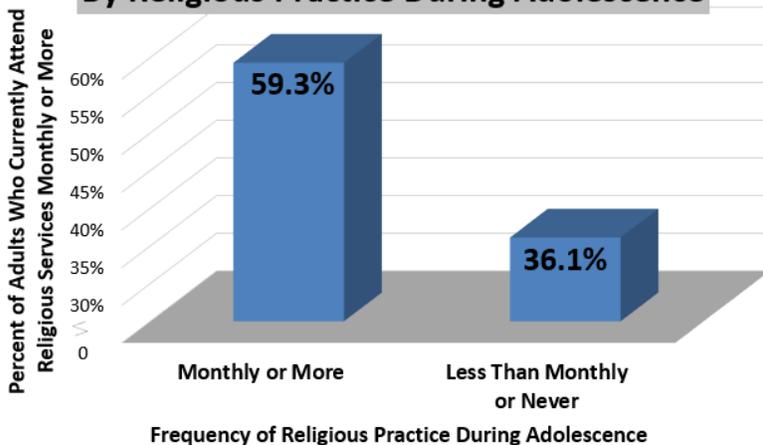
By Family Structure and Religious Practice During Adolescence



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006

Adult Religious Attendance

By Religious Practice During Adolescence



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006

*These charts group the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more frequently vs. less than monthly or never) and family structure (intact vs. non-intact).*

*The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.*

*The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.*

These charts draw on data collected by the General Social Survey, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

## **Adult Religious Attendance by Family Structure and Religious Practice During Adolescence**

**Family Structure:** According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 52 percent of adults who grew up in an intact family as adolescents (i.e., lived with both biological parents) now attend religious services at least monthly, compared to 42 percent of adults who grew up in a non-intact family.<sup>1</sup>

**Religious Practice:** According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 59.3 percent of adults who worshiped at least monthly as adolescents now worship at least monthly as adults. In contrast, 36.1 percent of adults who worshiped less than monthly as adolescents now worship monthly or more frequently as adults.

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 60 percent of adults who grew up attending religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family (i.e., lived with two biological parents) attend religious services once a month or more as adults; 49 percent of adults who grew up in a non-intact family but attended religious services at least monthly also attend religious services at least monthly as adults; 37 percent of adults who lived in a non-intact family and attended religious services less than monthly attend religious services at least monthly as adults; and, 35 percent of adults who grew up in an intact family but worshiped less than monthly as adolescents attend religious services at least monthly as adults.

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** Several other studies both corroborate and contradict the direction of these findings. Marjorie Gunnoe of Calvin College and Kristin Moore of Child Trends reported that church attendance during childhood was a significant predictor of religiosity in young adulthood.<sup>2</sup> Michael McCullough of the University of Miami and colleagues also found a correlation between religious upbringing and "religiousness in early to mid-adulthood."<sup>3</sup>

Jeffrey Arnett of the University of Maryland and Lene Jensen of the Catholic University of America, however, found "little relationship between childhood religious socialization and religious beliefs in emerging adulthood." They conclude, based on Arnett's earlier research, that

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<sup>1</sup> These statistics draw on data from the General Social Surveys, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 per year. No survey was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS was conducted only in even-numbered years, with two samples per survey, totaling approximately 3,000 respondents. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

<sup>2</sup> Marjorie Lindner Gunnoe and Kristin A. Moore, "Predictors of Religiosity among Youth Aged 17-22: A Longitudinal Study of the National Survey of Children," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41 (2002): 613-22.

<sup>3</sup> Michael E. McCullough, Jo-Ann Tsang, and Sharon Brion, "Personality Traits in Adolescence as Predictors of Religiousness in Early Adulthood: Findings from the Terman Longitudinal Study," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 29 (2003): 980-91.

"young people view it as both their right and responsibility to form their beliefs and values independently of their parents."<sup>4</sup>

Despite Arnett and Jensen's findings, the GSS data seem to indicate that parental and family patterns of religious attendance in childhood have a significant correlation with adult practice.

Though little additional research has correlated family structure in adolescence with adult religious attendance, several other studies indicate the value of family structure in transferring religious beliefs and practices from one generation to the next. Scott Myers of the Pennsylvania State University reported that adults "raised in households characterized by high marital happiness and with both biological parents present are more likely to resemble their parents in religious beliefs."<sup>5</sup>

Reed Larson of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and colleagues also found that children whose parents had divorced spent less time in religious activities in the three years following the divorce.<sup>6</sup> As these available data indicate, adolescent family structure has a significant effect on religious practice, both in adolescence and adulthood.

A number of studies have also considered the effect of religious practice and family structure combined. Scott Myers of the Pennsylvania State University reported that "parents' religiosity is the primary influence on the religiosity of their adult offspring" and that adults "raised in households characterized by high marital happiness and with both biological parents present are more likely to resemble their parents in religious beliefs."<sup>7</sup>

Darren Sherkat of Vanderbilt University also found that childhood religious participation along with strong parental religious participation helps sustain religious adherence in adults and counteracts secularizing influences.<sup>8</sup> As the evidence shows, children who grow up in intact families that attend religious services frequently are more likely to worship frequently as adults.

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<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Jensen Arnett and Lene Arnett Jensen, "A Congregation of One: Individualized Religious Beliefs among Emerging Adults," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 17 (2002): 451-67.

<sup>5</sup> Scott M. Myers, "An Interactive Model of Religiosity Inheritance: The Importance of Family Context," *American Sociological Review* 61 (1996): 858-66.

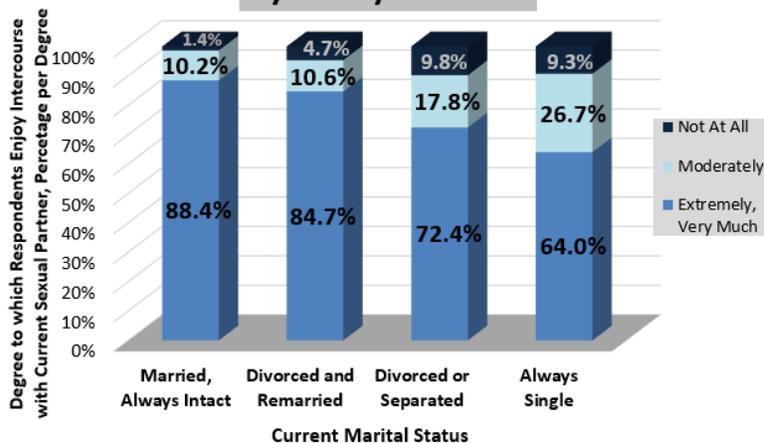
<sup>6</sup> Reed Larson, Jodi Dworkin, and Sally Gillman, "Facilitating Adolescents' Constructive Use of Time in One-Parent Families," *Applied Developmental Science* 5 (2001): 143-57.

<sup>7</sup> Scott M. Myers, "An Interactive Model of Religiosity Inheritance: The Importance of Family Context," *American Sociological Review* 61 (1996): 858-66.

<sup>8</sup> Darren E. Sherkat, "Counterculture or Continuity? Competing Influences on Baby Boomers' Religious Orientations and Participation," *Social Forces* 76 (1998): 1087-1115.

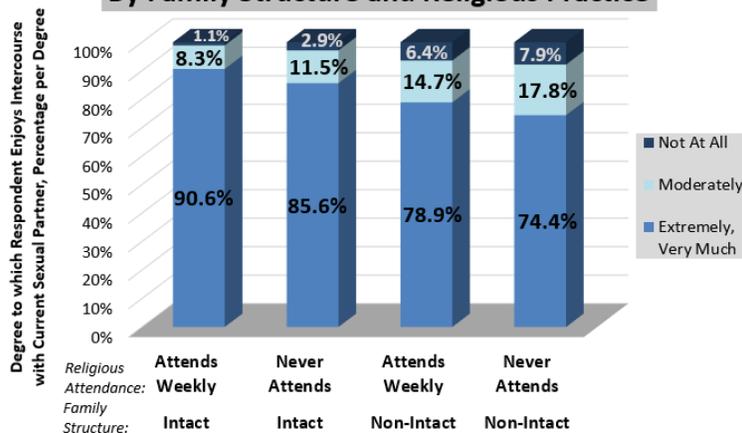
## Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

### Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure



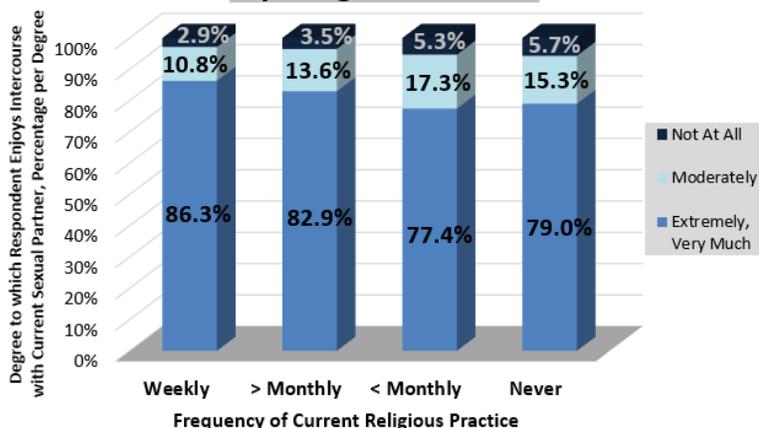
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

### Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

### Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at the degree to which adults enjoyed intercourse with their current sexual partner, based on the percentage reporting a given degree of enjoyment, at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (always-intact vs. non-intact\* and singles) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are

- The always-intact married individual that worships weekly;
- The always-intact married individual that never worships;
- The non-intact\* or single individual that worships weekly;
- The non-intact\* or single individual that never worships.

(\* The non-intact group consists of divorced or separated and divorced and remarried individuals.)

## Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were most likely to report enjoying intercourse “extremely” or “very” much with their current sexual partner, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

**Family Structure:** Those in always-intact marriages had the largest percentage of persons reporting that they “extremely” or “very” much enjoyed intercourse with their current sexual partner (88.4 percent). This enjoyment decreased in non-intact structures and among singles: 84.7 percent of those who were divorced and remarried; 72.4 percent of those who were divorced or separated; 64 percent of those who were always single report “extremely” or “very” much enjoying intercourse with their current sexual partner.

**Religious Practice:** Those who worshiped weekly were most likely to report that they “extremely” or “very” much enjoyed intercourse with their current sexual partner (86.3 percent). As worship decreased, so did a couple’s enjoyment of intercourse: 82.9 percent of those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly; 79 percent of those who never worshiped; 77.4 percent of those who worshiped less than monthly reported enjoying “extremely” or “very” much enjoying intercourse with their current partner.

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** Those who were in intact marriages and worshiped weekly were most likely to report that they “extremely” or “very” much enjoyed intercourse with their current sexual partner (90.6 percent), followed by those in intact marriages who never worshiped (85.6 percent), those in non-intact family structures or who were single and who worshiped weekly (78.9 percent), and those in non-intact family structures or who were single and who never worshiped (74.4 percent).

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** One survey of 797 married men and women found that sexual satisfaction within their marriages was not linked just to their sexual interactions but was strongly associated with the other nonsexual aspects of their relationship as well. These included the couple’s religious life, mutual participation in recreational activities, and the sharing of thoughts, dreams and feelings.<sup>1</sup>

Another study examined the link between religiosity and sexual gratification in the middle years of marriage and found that even where sexual gratification may be lacking, religiosity reduced the impact of the lack of sexual gratification on overall marital satisfaction.<sup>2</sup>

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

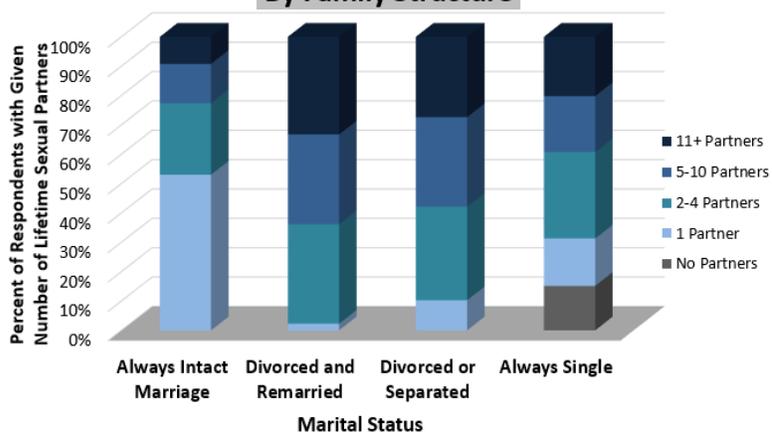
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<sup>1</sup> Michael Young, George Denny, Raffy Luquis, and Tamera Young, “Correlates of Sexual Satisfaction in Marriage,” *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 7, no. 2 (1998): 116, 120.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Wallin, “Religiosity, Sexual Gratification, and Marital Satisfaction in the Middle Years of Marriage,” *Journal of Social Forces* 42, no. 3 (1964): 303-309.

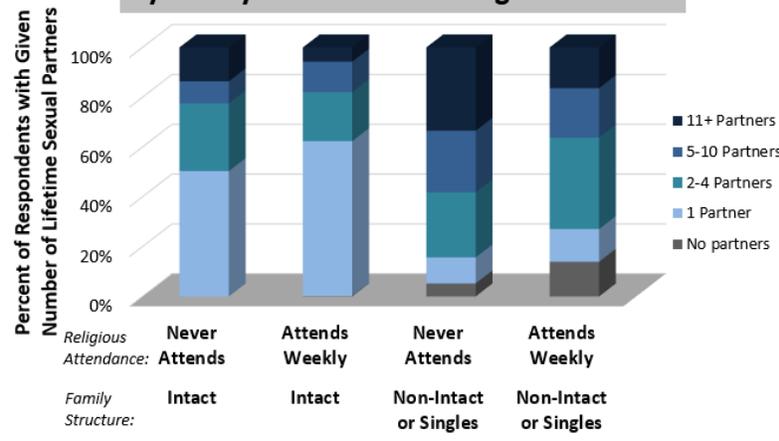
## Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime  
By Family Structure



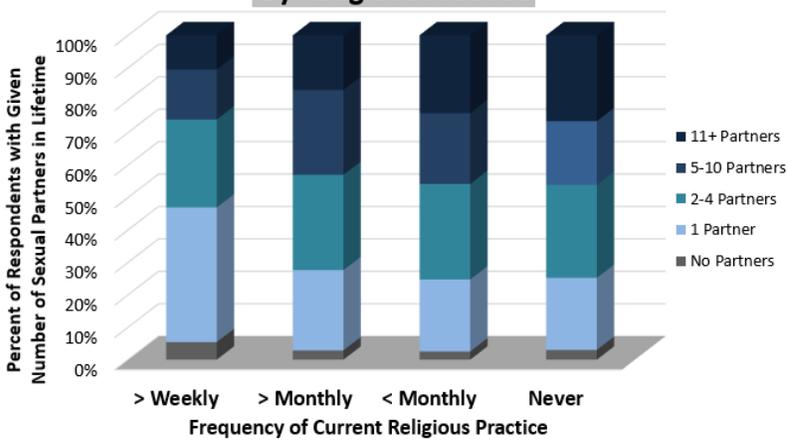
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime  
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime  
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (always-intact vs. non-intact\* and singles) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:  
 The always-intact married individual that worships weekly;  
 The always-intact married individual that never worships;  
 The non-intact\* or single individual that worships weekly;  
 The non-intact\* or single individual that never worships.

(\* The non-intact group consists of divorced or separated and divorced and remarried individuals.)

## **Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime by Family Structure and Religious Practice**

The 1992 National Health and Social Life Survey shows that, of adults aged 18 to 59, those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly had the lowest number of lifetime sexual partners.

**Family Structure:** Those in always-intact marriages were most likely to have been monogamous/ abstinent. Fifty-three percent of individuals in intact marriages had only one sexual partner over the course of their lifetime. Just over 16 percent of always-single individuals had only one sexual partner, and 15.1 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 31.3 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Over 10 percent of those who were divorced or separated had only one sexual partner, and 2.3 percent of those who had divorced and remarried had only one sexual partner. (Zero percent of those in always-intact marriages, those who were divorced or separated, or those who were divorced and remarried had no lifetime sexual partners.)

Those in always-intact marriages also had the smallest percentage of persons with 11 or more lifetime sexual partners: 9.2 percent had 11 or more sexual partners, compared to 20.2 percent of those who were always single, 27.4 percent of those who were divorced or separated, and 33.3 percent of those who were divorced and remarried.

**Religious Practice:** Those who worshipped weekly were most likely to have been monogamous/ abstinent. Approximately 42 percent of those who worshipped weekly had only one lifetime sexual partner, and 5.4 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 46.9 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Among those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly, 24.7 percent had only one lifetime sexual partner, and 2.9 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 27.6 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons); among those who never worshipped, 22.2 percent had only one lifetime sexual partner and 3 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 25.3 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons); and among those who worshipped less than monthly, 22.2 percent had only one lifetime sexual partner and 2.5 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 24.8 percent of monogamous/ abstinent persons).

Those who worshipped weekly also had the smallest percentage of persons with 11 or more lifetime sexual partners: 10.6 percent had 11 or more sexual partners, compared to 16.8 percent of those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly, 24 percent of those who worshipped less than monthly, and 26.5 percent of those who never worshipped.

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** Those who worshipped weekly and were in intact marriages were most likely to have been monogamous/abstinent. Approximately 62 percent of those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly had only one lifetime sexual partner, and .2 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 62.4 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Over 50 percent of those in intact marriages who never worshipped had only one lifetime sexual partner (zero percent reported no lifetime sexual partners). Just over 13 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who

worshipped weekly had only one lifetime sexual partner, and 13.9 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 27.1 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Approximately 11 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped had only one lifetime sexual partner, and 5.2 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 15.7 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons).

Those who worshipped weekly and were in intact marriages also had the smallest percentage of persons with 11 or more lifetime sexual partners: 5.7 percent have had 11 or more sexual partners, compared to 13.6 percent of those in intact marriages who never worshipped, 16.4 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who worshipped weekly, and 33.4 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped.

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** Analysis of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study, a longitudinal study in New Zealand of a cohort of over one thousand, showed a strong relationship between religious involvement and lifetime sexual abstinence at age 21. Over 11 percent of males and 8.1 percent of females reported never having sexual intercourse.<sup>1</sup> Abstinence was nearly four times as likely among those who reported religious involvement both at age 11 and at age 21 as among those who reported weak or no involvement at either age 11 or age 21,<sup>2</sup> though the authors found that religion may independently influence men's choice to abstain more strongly than women's.<sup>3</sup>

Study of 1,334 young, heterosexual urban adults in the 1990-1991 National AIDS Behavioral Surveys found that single persons were eight times as likely as married persons to have multiple sexual partners in the year prior to the survey.<sup>4</sup> Whereas 94.8 percent of married respondents had one sexual partner in the previous year, 86.6 percent of those who were cohabiting and 48.5 percent of those who were single had only one sexual partner. Among single persons, 21.5 percent had not had a sexual partner in the previous year, and 25.2 percent had had two to five partners. Nearly 5 percent had had six or more sexual partners in the previous year.<sup>5</sup>

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

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<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Paul, Julie Fitzjohn, Jason Eberhart-Phillips, Peter Herbison, and Nigel Dickson, "Sexual Abstinence at Age 21 in New Zealand: the Importance of Religion," *Social Science and Medicine* 51 (2000): 3.

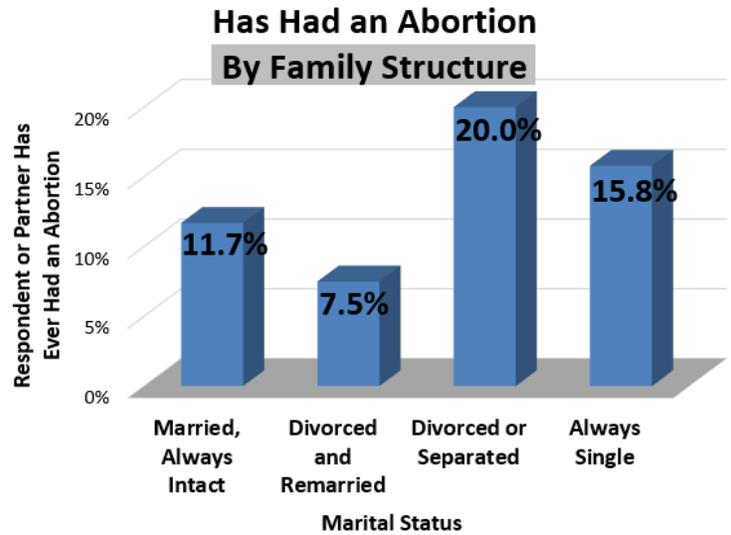
<sup>2</sup> Charlotte Paul, Julie Fitzjohn, Jason Eberhart-Phillips, Peter Herbison, and Nigel Dickson, "Sexual Abstinence at Age 21 in New Zealand: the Importance of Religion," *Social Science and Medicine* 51 (2000): 7.

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Paul, Julie Fitzjohn, Jason Eberhart-Phillips, Peter Herbison, and Nigel Dickson, "Sexual Abstinence at Age 21 in New Zealand: the Importance of Religion," *Social Science and Medicine* 51 (2000): 9.

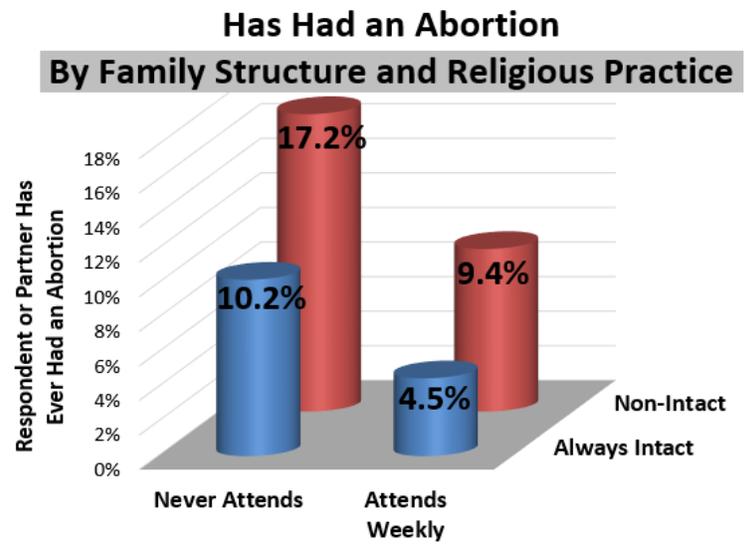
<sup>4</sup> Diane Binson, M. Margaret Dolcini, Lance M. Pollack, and Joseph A. Catania, "IV. Multiple Sexual Partners among Young Adults in High-Risk Cities," *Family Planning Perspectives* 25, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1993): 270.

<sup>5</sup> Diane Binson, M. Margaret Dolcini, Lance M. Pollack, and Joseph A. Catania, "IV. Multiple Sexual Partners among Young Adults in High-Risk Cities," *Family Planning Perspectives* 25, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1993): 271.

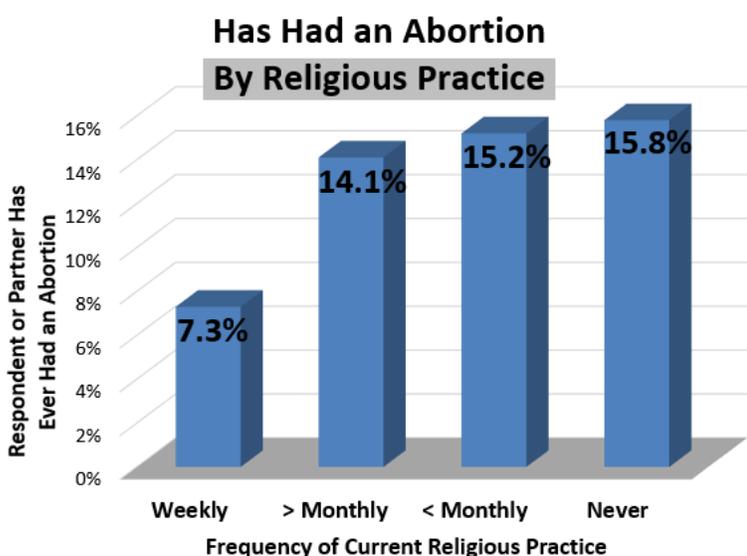
## Has Ever Had an Abortion By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

This chart looks at the number of adults and their partners who have ever had an abortion at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (always-intact vs. non-intact\* and singles) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married individual that worships weekly;
- The always-intact married individual that never worships;
- The non-intact\* or single individual that worships weekly;
- The non-intact\* or single individual that never worships.

(\* The non-intact group consists of divorced or separated and divorced and remarried individuals.)

## **Respondent or Partner Has Ever Had an Abortion by Family Structure and Religious Practice**

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages (and their partners) who worshiped weekly were least likely to have ever had an abortion, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

**Family Structure:** Individuals in always-intact marriages were least likely to have ever had an abortion or had a partner who had an abortion (7.5 percent). Abortion is more prevalent among non-intact family structures and among singles: 11.7 percent of those (or their partner) who were always single procured an abortion, followed by 15.8 percent of those (or their partner) who were divorced or separated, and 20 percent of those (or their partner) who were divorced and remarried.

**Religious Practice:** Individuals (or their partner) who worshiped weekly were least likely to have procured an abortion (7.3 percent). Of those (or their partner) who worshiped less than weekly, 14.1 percent have procured an abortion, followed by those (or their partner) who worshiped less than monthly (15.2 percent) and those (or their partner) who never worshiped (15.8 percent).

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** A smaller proportion of those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly had ever procured an abortion or had a partner who procured an abortion (4.5 percent), followed by those (or their partner) in non-intact family structures or who were single and who worshiped weekly (9.4 percent) and those (or their partner) in intact marriages who never worshiped (10.2 percent). Those in non-intact family structures or who were single who never worshiped (or their partner) were most likely to have ever had an abortion (17.2 percent).

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** A study of over 500,000 pregnancies showed that a woman's likelihood to choose abortion increases as her education increases, but this is only the case only for unmarried women. Women with a high school education or less and no prior children are least likely to abort, compared with college-educated women with no prior children, who are most likely to abort.<sup>1</sup>

Data from the 1990 Latino National Political Survey (a sample of over 2,700 U.S. Hispanics) found that Hispanic Protestants who regularly attend church are more strongly pro-life than any other part of the Latino population and tended to support a total ban on abortion.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Katherine Trent and Eve Powell-Griner, "Differences in Race, Marital Status, and Education Among Women Obtaining Abortions," *Journal of Social Forces* 69, no. 4 (1991): 1121-1141.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Ellison, Samuel Echevarria, and Brad Smith, "Religion and Abortion Attitudes Among U.S. Hispanics: Findings from the 1990 Latino National Political Survey," *Social Science Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (March 2005): 192-208.

A study of Catholic Mexican-American women from Los Angeles County found that among survey respondents raised in Mexico, education had a “liberalizing effect on their attitudes” toward abortion. This trend persisted among U.S.-raised respondents, with the exception of the most devout Catholics. Among this group, education had the opposite effect: it made Catholic Mexican-American women’s attitudes toward abortion more conservative.<sup>3</sup>

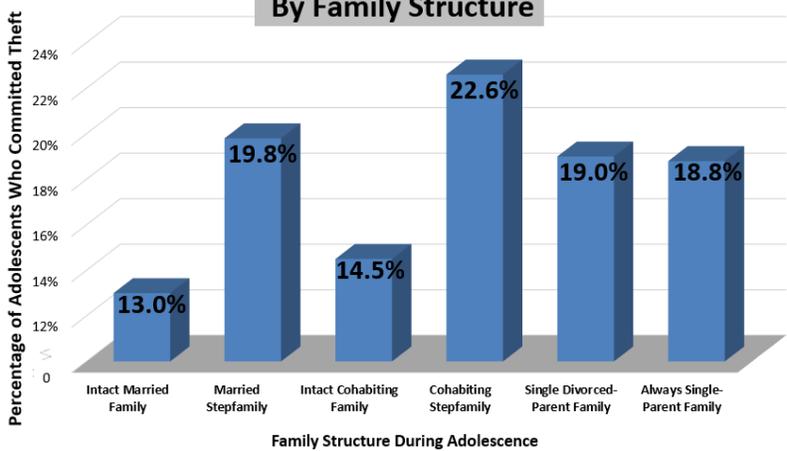
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

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<sup>3</sup> Sandra Rosenhouse-Persson and Georges Sabagh, “Attitudes Toward Abortion Among Catholic Mexican-American Women: The Effects of Religiosity and Education,” *Journal of Demography* 20, no.1 (1983): 87-98.

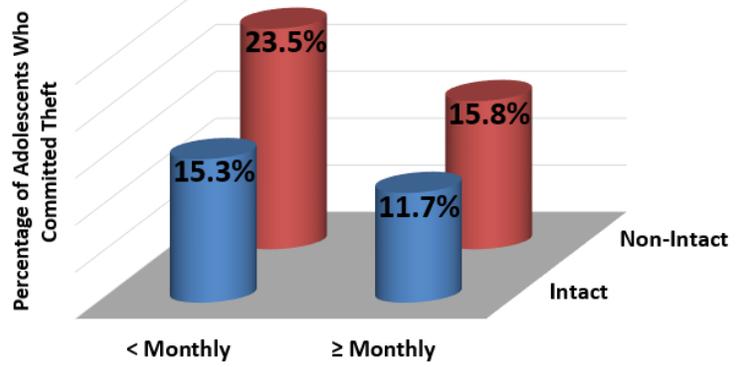
## Theft Among Adolescents By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Theft Among Adolescents  
By Family Structure



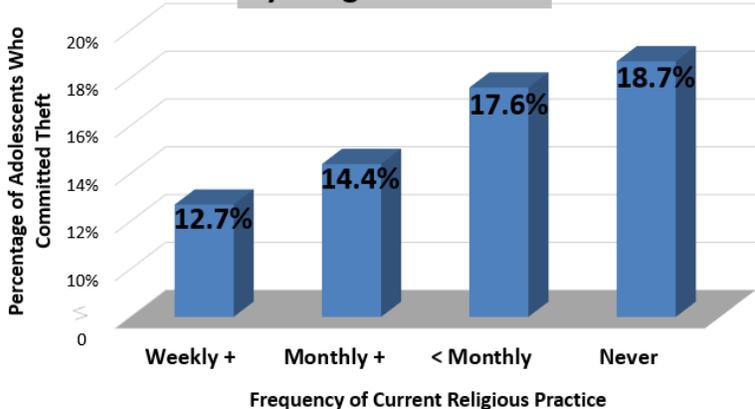
Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Adolescents Grades 7-12.

Theft Among Adolescents  
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Adolescents Grades 7-12.

Theft Among Adolescents  
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Adolescents Grades 7-12.

This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

These charts depict the percentage of adolescents in Grades 7-12 who have ever stolen more than \$50 worth of goods, correlated with religious attendance and family structure.

These charts draw on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. This work was done by the author in cooperation with former colleagues at The Heritage Foundation.

## Theft Among Adolescents by Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Family Structure:** According to a confidential survey conducted as part of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, 13 percent of children who lived in intact married families admitted to having stolen at least \$50 worth of goods. By comparison, 18.8 percent of children whose parents never married, 19 percent of those whose parents were divorced, 19.8 percent of those living with a step-parent, 14.5 percent of those living with cohabiting biological parents, and 22.6 percent of those living in cohabiting stepfamilies had stolen at least \$50 worth.

**Religious Practice:** The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health showed that 12.7 percent of students in Grades 7-12 who attended religious services at least weekly admitted to having stolen at least \$50 worth of goods. By comparison, 18.7 percent of those who never worshipped, 14.4 percent of those who worshipped one to three times a month, and 17.6 percent of those who attended religious services less than once a month had committed similar thefts.

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** Only 11.7 percent of adolescents who lived with both biological parents and worshipped at least monthly had ever stolen at least \$50 worth of goods. By contrast, 23.5 percent of adolescents who worshipped less than monthly and came from single-parent or reconstituted families had stolen similar amounts. In between were those in non-intact families who worshipped at least monthly (15.8 percent) and those who lived with both biological parents and worshipped less than monthly (15.3 percent).

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** Though little additional research has been done that correlates these three measures, what studies exist corroborate the direction of these findings. Wendy Manning of Bowling Green State University and Kathleen Lamb of the University of Wisconsin reported that adolescents who were more religious were less likely to be delinquent, as were adolescents who lived with their married parents.<sup>2</sup>

Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin and Glen Elder of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that adolescents who attended religious services at least weekly and adolescents who are satisfied with their family were less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Wendy D. Manning and Kathleen A. Lamb, "Adolescent Well-Being in Cohabiting, Married, and Single-Parent Families," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 65 (2003): 876-893. The delinquency measures included stealing something worth more than \$50 and stealing something worth less than \$50.

<sup>3</sup> Mark D. Regnerus and Glen H. Elder, "Religion and Vulnerability among Low-Risk Adolescents," *Social Science Research*, vol. 32 (2003): 633-658. The delinquency measures included stealing something worth more than \$50 and stealing something worth less than \$50.

In another study, Regnerus reported that family satisfaction and religiosity were strong protective factors against adolescent delinquency, although religiosity affected adolescent boys only indirectly through higher levels of family satisfaction.<sup>4</sup>

The available evidence indicates that the dual influence of religious attendance and an intact married family prove to be effective in reducing theft by adolescents.

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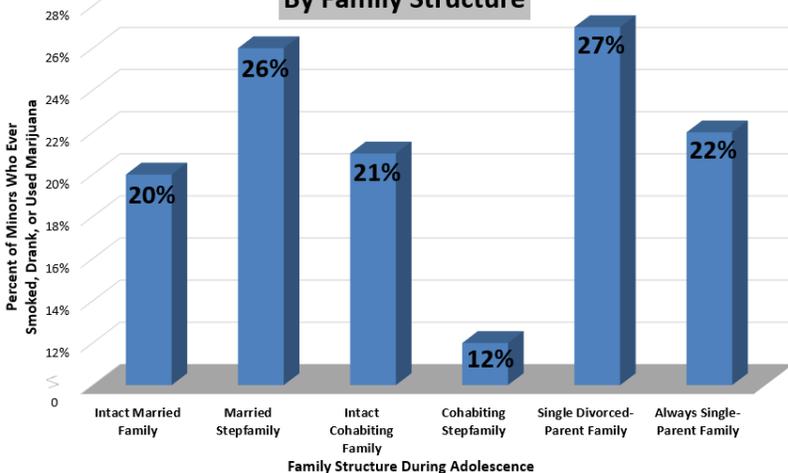
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<sup>4</sup> Mark D. Regnerus, "Linked Lives, Faith, and Behavior: Intergenerational Religious Influence on Adolescent Delinquency," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 42 (2003): 189-203. The delinquency measures included stealing something worth more than \$50 and stealing something worth less than \$50.

## Smoked, Drank, or Used Marijuana as a Minor By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Smoked, Drank, or Used Marijuana as a Minor

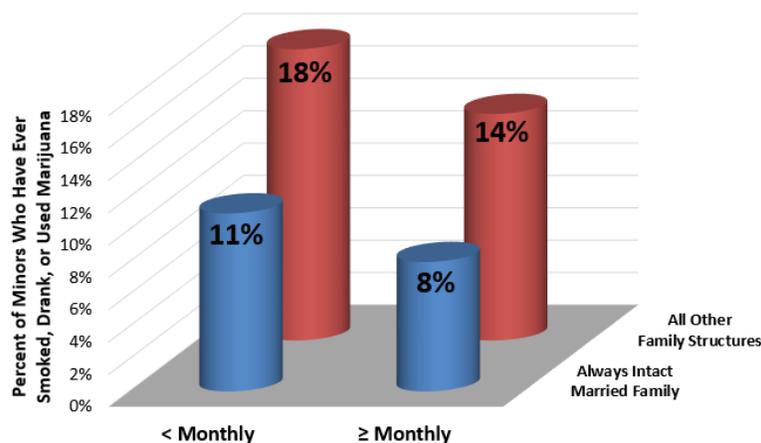
By Family Structure



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

Smoked, Drank, or Used Marijuana as a Minor

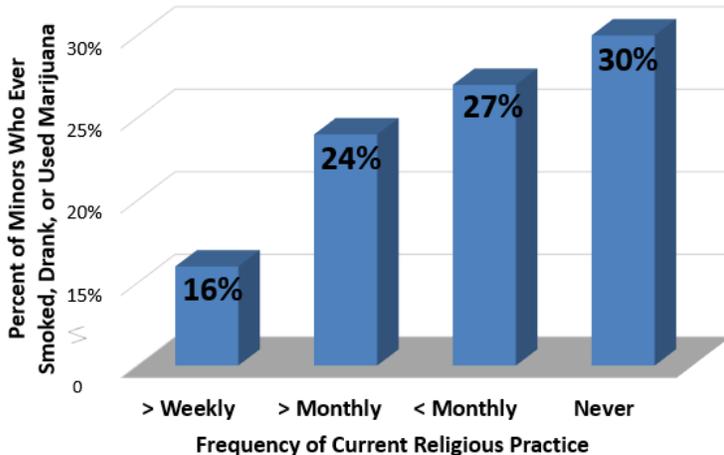
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

Smoked, Drank, or Used Marijuana as a Minor

By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

*This chart looks at minors who smoked, drank or used marijuana at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.*

*These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. all other family structures\*) and two sets of religious attendance (less than monthly vs. monthly or more).*

*The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:*

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- All other family structures\* that worship weekly;*
- All other family structures\* that never worship.*

*(\*The non-intact group consists of individuals in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always-single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)*

## Smoked, Drank, or Used Marijuana as a Minor by Family Structure and Religious Practice

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that minors who grew up in always-married families and who attend religious services weekly at the time of the survey were least likely to have used tobacco, alcohol, or marijuana.

**Family Structure:** 12 percent of adolescents who grew up in a cohabiting stepfamily smoked, drank, or used marijuana as minors, followed by adolescents from intact married families (20 percent), intact cohabiting families (21 percent), always-single parent families (22 percent), married stepfamilies (26 percent), and divorced single-parent families (27 percent).

**Religious Practice:** 16 percent of adolescents who worshipped at least weekly at the time of the survey smoked, drank, or used marijuana under age, followed by those who attended religious services at least once a month (24 percent), those who attended less than once monthly (27 percent), and those who never attended religious services (30 percent).

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** 8 percent of adolescents who worshipped weekly and grew up in always-married families smoked, drank, or used marijuana as minors. By contrast, 18 percent of adolescents who never attended religious services and came from non-intact family backgrounds used substances under age. Between these two extremes were those who never worshipped and grew up in always-married families (11 percent) and those who attended religious services weekly but grew up in non-intact families (14 percent).

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** A study of 1,760 young adults found that those from two-parent families were at a lower risk for substance use. Even after controlling for race, “respondents from such families report lower levels of problematic substance use than their peers from single-parent families.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, a large sample of almost 15,000 youths revealed that those from two-parent families were far less likely to ever have used marijuana or to have friends who use marijuana. Youths from two-parent families, even from families with high levels of tension, have lower levels of marijuana usage than youths from low- or high-conflict homes in which one or both of the biological parents are gone.<sup>2</sup>

Religion also influences substance abuse by minors. One study examined 1,760 young adult women recovering from drug use. Those women who participated in religious rituals,

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<sup>1</sup> Anne E. Barrett and R. Jay Turner, “Family Structure and Substance Use Problems in Adolescence and Early Adulthood: Examining Explanations for the Relationship,” *Addiction* 101 (2006): 118.

<sup>2</sup> Dusten R. Hollist and William H. McBroom, “Family Structure, Family Tension, and Self-Reported Marijuana Use: A Research Finding of Risky Behavior Among Youths,” *The Journal of Drug Issues* (2006): 975.

particularly church attendance with their families, were significantly less likely to use drugs.<sup>3</sup> There was a strong negative correlation between frequency of church attendance and drug use.

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Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

*Scott Talkington has been Research Director for the National Association of Scholars and Senior Research Fellow at George Mason University School of Public Policy since 1998.*

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<sup>3</sup> John E. Fife, Micah McCreary, Tashia Brewer, and Adekunle A. Adegoke, "Family Rituals, Religious Involvement, and Drug Attitudes among Recovering Substance Abusers," *North American Journal of Psychology* 13, no. 1 (2011): 87-98.