Adolescents from intact families who worship frequently are least likely to get into a fight.

This chart depicts the percentage of adolescents in Grades 7-12 who have ever been in a fight, correlated with religious attendance and family structure. Only 27.1 percent of adolescents who live with both biological parents and worship at least monthly have ever been in a fight. By contrast, 43.5 percent of adolescent students who worship less than monthly and come from single-parent or reconstituted families have ever been in a fight. In between are those in non-intact families who worship at least monthly (34.3 percent) and those who live with both biological parents and worship less than monthly (32.1 percent). The data are taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II.

**Other Sources**

Many other studies confirm the direction of these findings. Wendy Manning and Kathleen Lamb of Bowling Green State University reported that teens who were more
religious had less behavioral problems than other teens. They also found that adolescents living with married biological parents were less delinquent than those living within any other family structure.²

Michelle Pearce of Yale University and colleagues found that “a greater level of parent involvement and private religious practices were associated with a decrease in conduct problems over a 1-year period.”³

Lela McKnight and Ann Loper of the University of Virginia also reported that residing in a single-parent household was one of only two significant risk factors associated with delinquency in female adolescents. Degree of religious belief was one of five significant resilience factors.⁴

Christian Smith of the University of Notre Dame found that adolescent children whose parents attended church regularly were more likely to expect their parents to be upset if they discovered their children had been fighting.⁵

When it comes to keeping children from getting into fights, the intact married family that worships regularly is the most effective peacekeeping force.

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