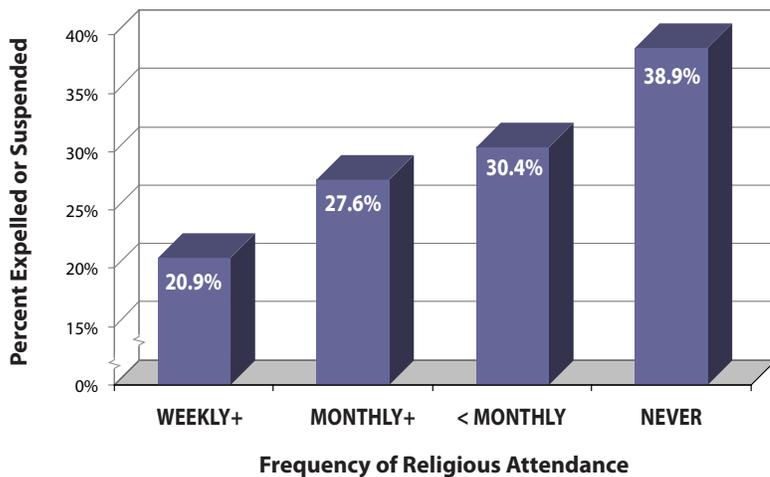




## Religious Attendance and Expulsion or Suspension from School

Expelled or Suspended from School by Religious Attendance <sup>1</sup>



Source: Adolescent Health Survey, Wave I. Adolescents grade 7-12.

<sup>1</sup>This chart draws 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, Washington, D.C.

Adolescents who worship at least weekly are least likely to be expelled or suspended from school.

According to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II, 21 percent of students in Grades 7-12 who worship at least weekly have ever been suspended or expelled. By contrast, almost 39 percent of adolescents who never worship have been suspended or expelled. In between are those who attend services one to three times a month (27.6 percent) and those who attend services less than once a month (30.4 percent).

### Other Studies

Very little research has been done on the correlation between religious attendance and suspension or expulsion from school, but what research exists corroborates the direction of these findings.

In a 2002 study, Christian Smith and Robert Faris of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that only 17.8 percent of high school seniors who attended religious services weekly or more had ever been expelled or suspended. By contrast, 31.8 percent of seniors who never attended religious services had been expelled or suspended. In between are those who attended services once or twice a month (23.4 percent) and those who attended “rarely” (27.9 percent).<sup>2</sup>

Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin and Glen Elder of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill also reported that religious attendance reduces the likelihood of expulsion or suspension.<sup>3</sup>

Jerry Trusty of Texas A&M University and Richard Watts of Baylor University examined religion and delinquency data in the National Education Longitudinal Study<sup>4</sup> and found that high school seniors who frequently attended religious activities were less likely to be delinquent than those who do not attend church frequently.<sup>5</sup>

As the evidence shows, students who spend more time in church are likely to spend more time in school.

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D.  
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2 Christian Smith and Robert Faris, *Religion and American Adolescent Delinquency, Risk Behaviors and Constructive Social Activities* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: National Study of Youth and Religion, 2002): 40-41.

3 Mark D. Regnerus and Glen H. Elder, "Staying on Track in School: Religious Influences in High- and Low-Risk Settings," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 42 (2003): 633-649.

4 The delinquency data included school suspensions, arrests, and time spent in juvenile centers.

5 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.



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