

# Three teens out of 10 took part in missions, ministry\_110804

November 5, 2004

Posted: 11/05/04

## Three teens out of 10 took part in missions, ministry

**By Jonah King**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—About three U.S. teenagers in 10 have gone on at least one religious mission trip or participated in a religious service project, a new study says.

In a random telephone survey of 3,290 teens age 13 to 17 conducted by The National Study of Youth and Religion, 29 percent said they have participated in an organized religious service project or mission trip.

Among teens who participated in such an activity, the survey found 43 percent attend church once a week or more, 25 percent once or twice a month and 21 percent less than once a month. Nine percent of teens who said they participated in religious service projects “never” attend church.

Seventy percent of Church of the Latter-day Saints teens reported religious service involvement, the most among all religious groups. Even though they have not yet embarked on their traditional two-year mission by the age of 17, Mormons are taught the importance of service early on, said Latter-Day Saints spokesman Dale Bills.

“We involve our youth in service opportunities of many kinds to give them firsthand experience in the joy of helping others,” Bills said. “We teach them that God will often meet the needs of others through us—that when we are in the service of others, we are in the service of God.”

Among other religious groups, 43 percent of mainline Protestant teens said they participated in service projects and missions, while Catholic and Jewish teens reported the least involvement, at 23 percent each.

The study also found that mothers with college degrees are more likely to have teenagers involved in religious service projects. One-fifth of teens whose mothers have less than a high school education said they participated in service projects, compared with 37 percent of the children of women with master's degrees.

The percentages drop, however, among children of women with doctorates or professional degrees. Only 13 percent of those teens said they participated in religious projects. The study did not mention a correlation between fathers' education and religious service.

“In terms of the effect of religion on service, education can boost the effect up to a point, and then among your most highly educated you tend to have less investment in religion,” said Melinda Denton, project manager for the study. “There's some relationship between increased religion and decreased religiosity at those higher levels of education.”

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.