



Faithful Nation:

What American Adults and Teens
Think About Faith, Morals, Religion,
and Teen Pregnancy

A National Survey
September 2001

www.teenpregnancy.org



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Introduction

From its inception, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy has argued that faith, faith leaders, and faith communities have a central role to play in helping teens avoid too-early pregnancy and childbearing. This is because both adults and teens make decisions about sexual behavior based, in part, on their values about love, commitment, marriage, and family, which are so often informed by their faith.

In an effort to gauge the nation's views about faith institutions, morals, and values — and the role they should play in helping prevent teen pregnancy — the National Campaign commissioned International Communications Research, a Pennsylvania-based polling firm, to conduct nationally-representative surveys of both adults (age 18 and over) and teens (age 12-17). The survey work was conducted in September 2001. This survey — *Faithful Nation: What American Adults and Teens Think About Faith, Morals, Religion, and Teen Pregnancy* — is being released in conjunction with two other reports, *Keeping the Faith: The Role of Religion and Faith Communities in Preventing Teen Pregnancy* and *Snapshots from the Front Line III: Lessons From Faith-Based Efforts to Prevent Teen Pregnancy*.

The survey makes clear that morals, values, and religious beliefs play an important role in teens' decisions about sex and that a clear majority of adults and teens believe that churches, synagogues, and other houses of worship should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy. Highlights from the survey include:

- **Religion is important.** More than eight out of ten adults (86 percent) and teens (84 percent) say that religion is important in their lives. Of those, 48 percent of teens and 61 percent of adults say religion is a "very important" part of their lives. Moreover, half of teens surveyed (51 percent) said they attend religious services weekly.

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- **Morals, values, and religious beliefs are important influences on teens, but religious leaders are less so.** When asked what *factors* most affect their decisions about whether to have sex, teens — by a wide margin — cited morals, values, and/or religious beliefs more than any other source. When asked *who* most influences their decisions about sex, teens cited parents, again by a very wide margin. Only 6 percent of teens surveyed said ministers, rabbis, or other religious leaders.
 - **Americans want more involvement from churches and other houses of worship in teen pregnancy prevention.** The overwhelming majority of adults (75 percent) and teens (72 percent) believe that churches and other houses of worship should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy. Even those adults (62 percent) and teens (65 percent) who say they attend religious services infrequently, if at all, believe that houses of worship should be more involved.

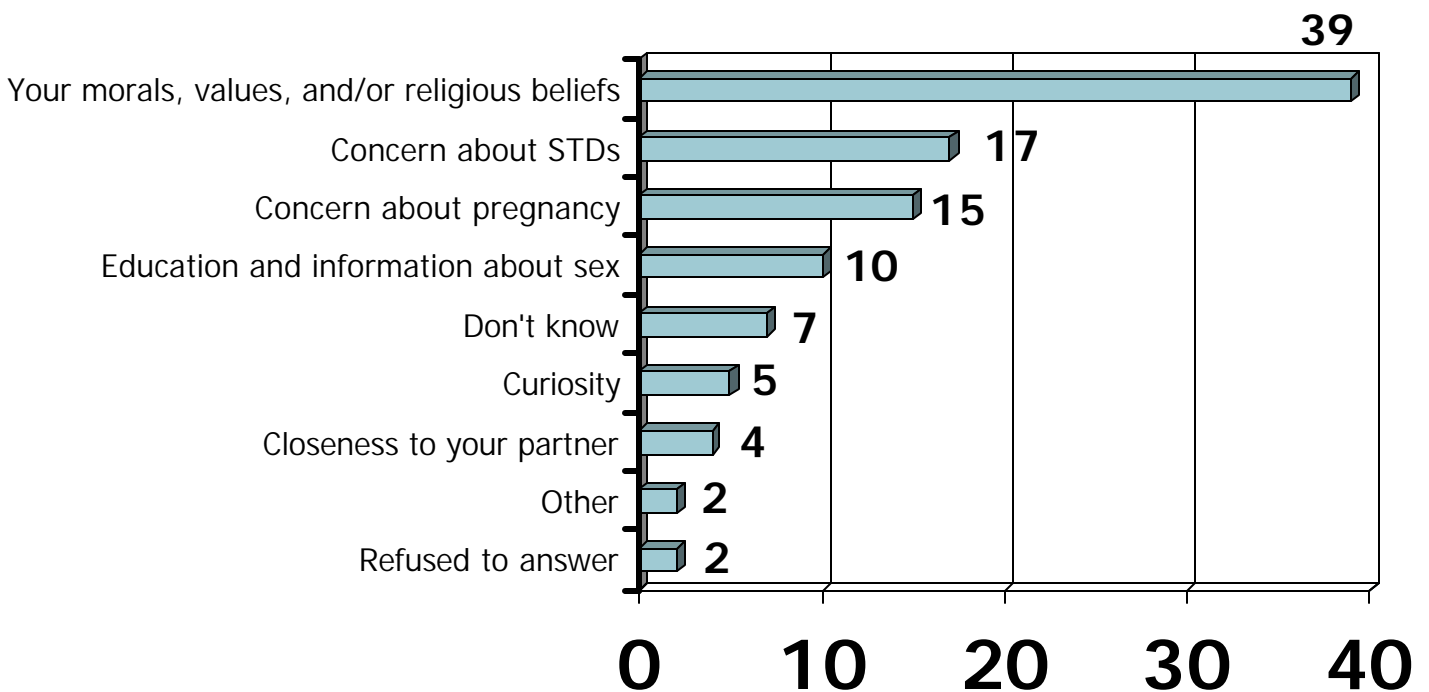
Faithful Nation is the latest in a series of ongoing survey work conducted by the National Campaign. (Previous polling results can be found on the Campaign's website: www.teenpregnancy.org/polldata.htm.) We hope that the results of this survey help shed light on the critical role that faith, morals, and values play in preventing teen pregnancy.



Question #1

Which one of the following factors most affects your decisions about whether to have sex?

Percentage of teens who answered



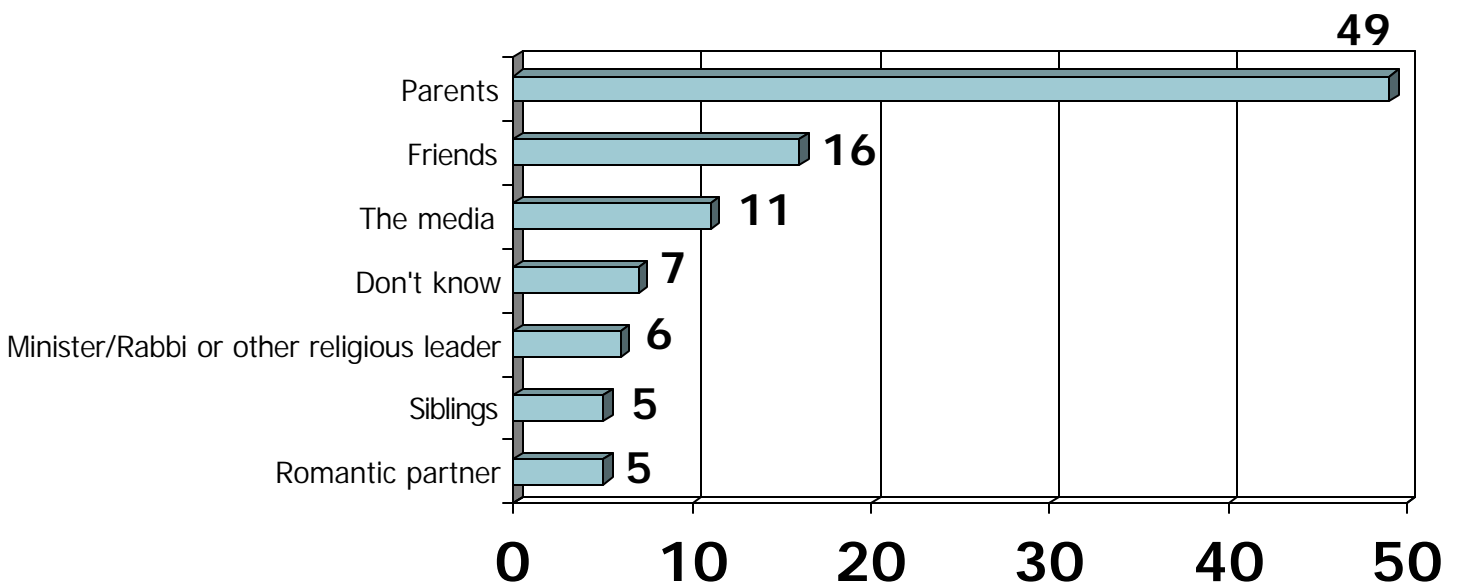
Even among those teens who say they only attend religious services “a few times a year, almost never, or never” 26 percent identify “morals, values, and/or religious beliefs” as the factor that *most* affects their decisions about whether to have sex.



Question #2

When it comes to your decisions about sex, who is most influential?

Percentage of teens who answered

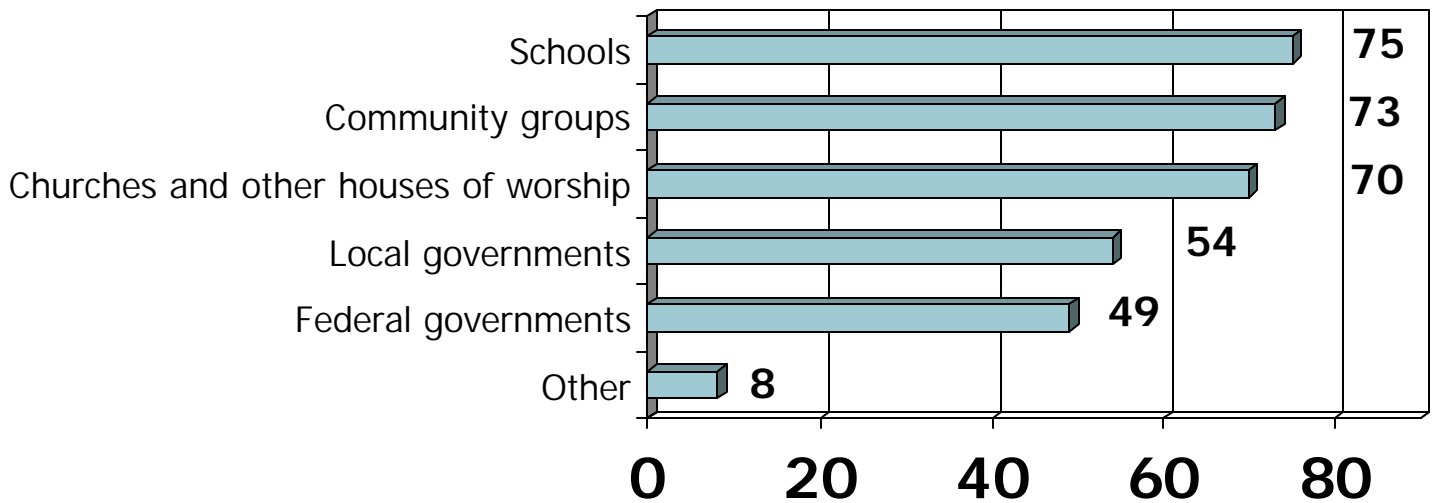




Question #3

In your opinion, which of the following institutions should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy?

Percentage of *adults* who answered "yes"



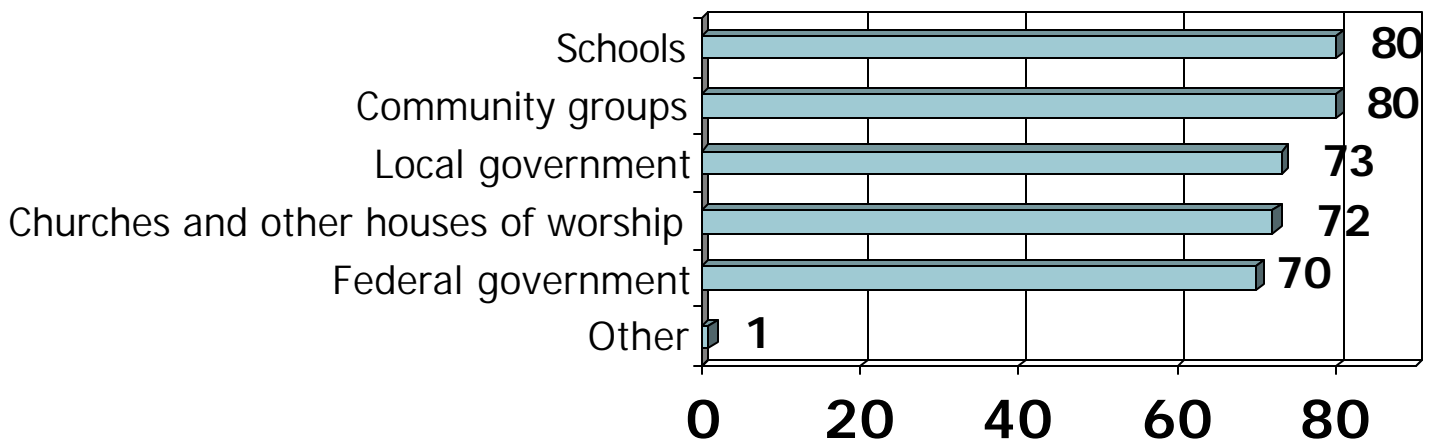
Even among those adults who say they attend religious services "a few times a year, almost never, or never," 62 percent believe that churches and other houses of worship should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy.



Question #3, continued

In your opinion, which of the following institutions should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy?

Percentage of *teens* who answered "yes"

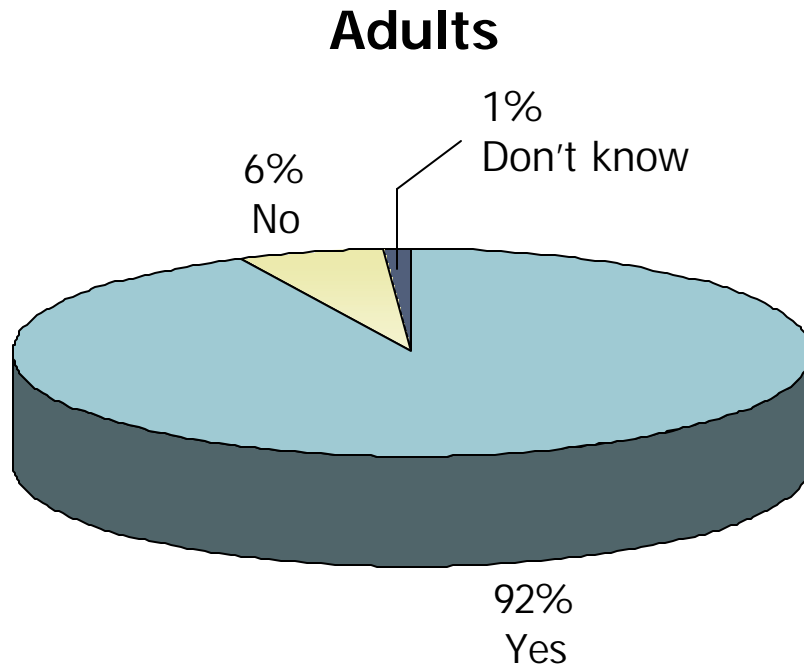


Even among those teens who say they attend religious services "a few times a year, almost never, or never," 65 percent believe that churches and other houses of worship should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy.



Question #4

Do you think morals and values should play a major role in efforts to prevent teen pregnancy?



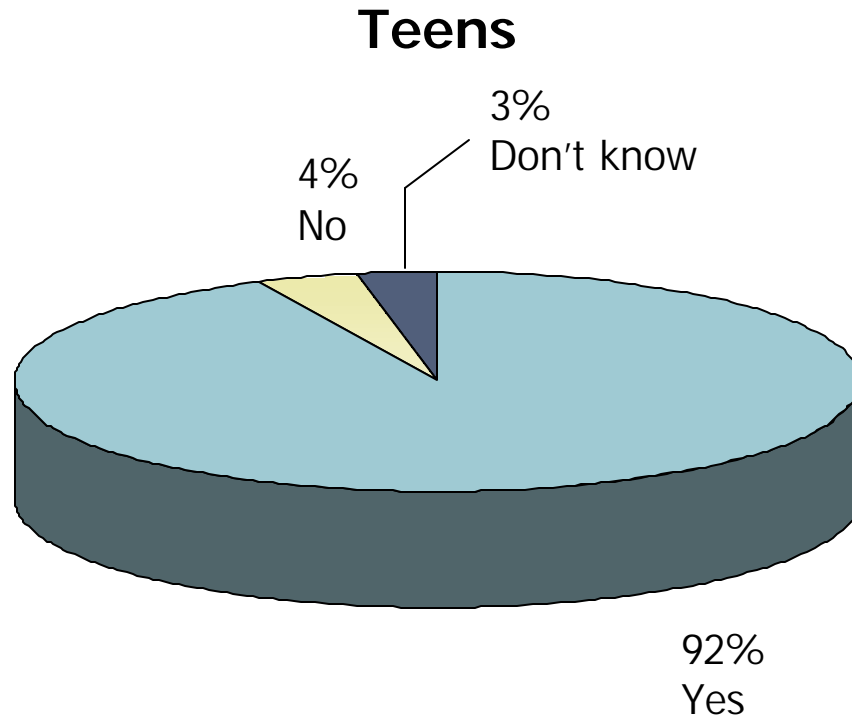
If you break out responses by frequency of attendance at religious services...

Attend religious services...	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
Weekly	96	3	1	-
Weekly or monthly	95	4	1	-
A few times per year/almost never/never	89	9	2	1



Question #4, continued

Do you think morals and values should play a major role in efforts to prevent teen pregnancy?



If you break out responses by frequency of attendance at religious services...

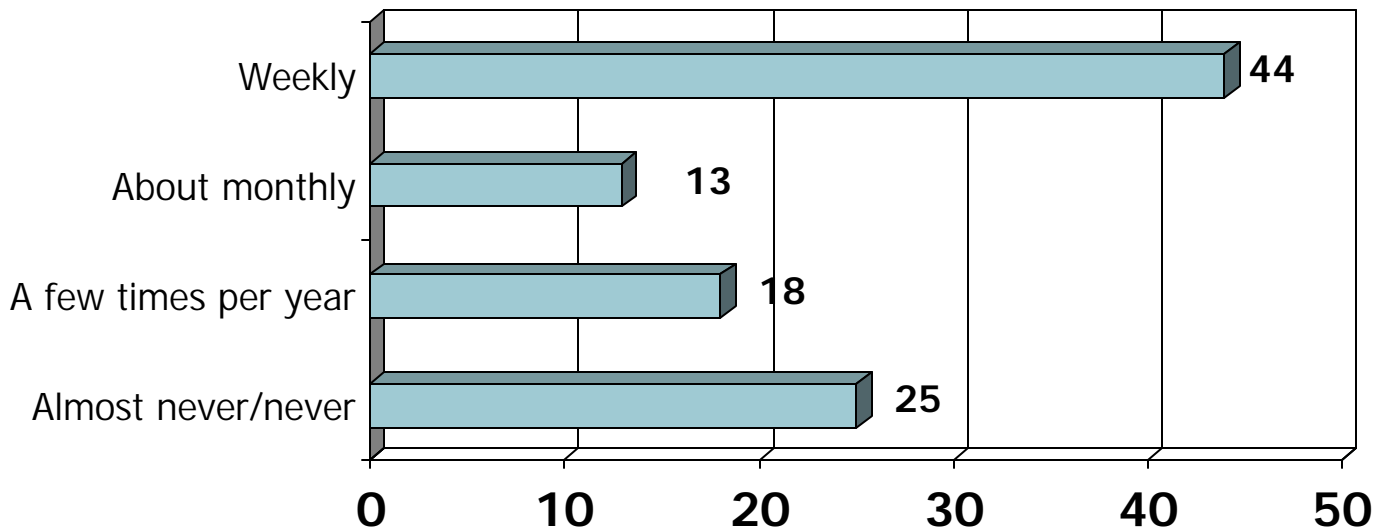
Attend religious services...	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
Weekly	96	3	1	-
Weekly or monthly	94	4	2	-
A few times per year/almost never/never	89	5	6	1



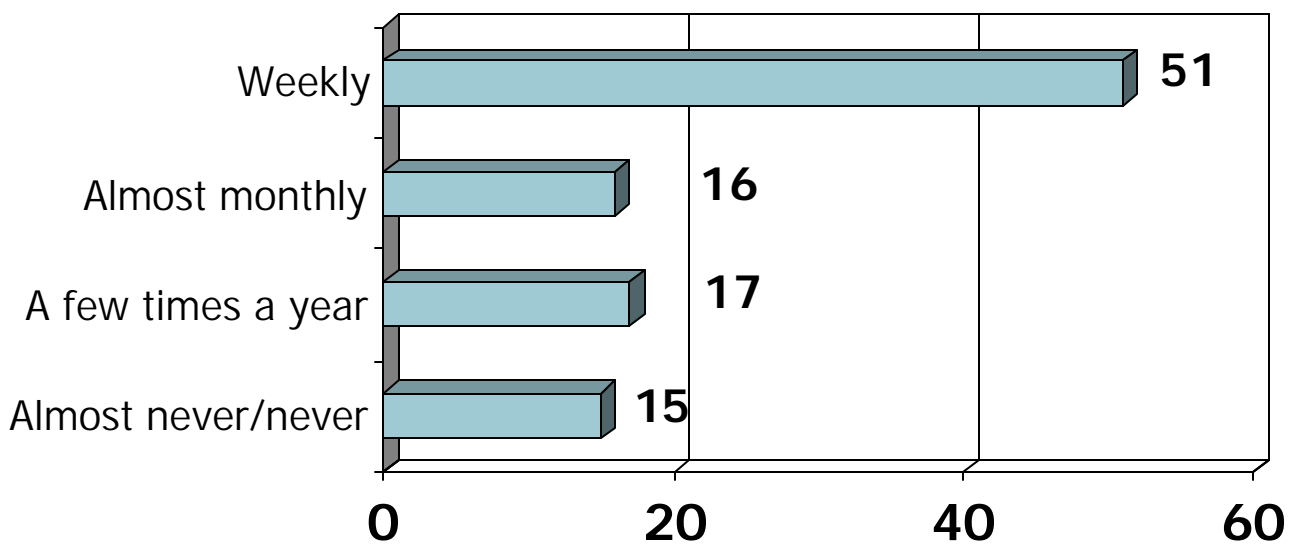
Question #5

On average, how often do you attend religious services?

Percentage of adults



Percentage of teens (aged 12-17)

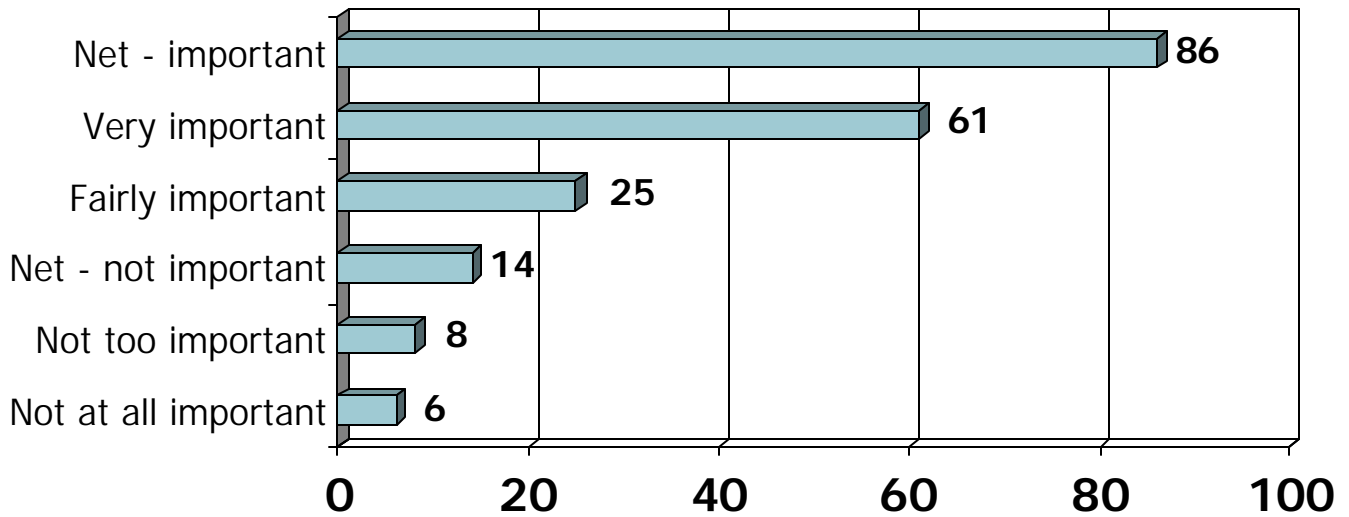




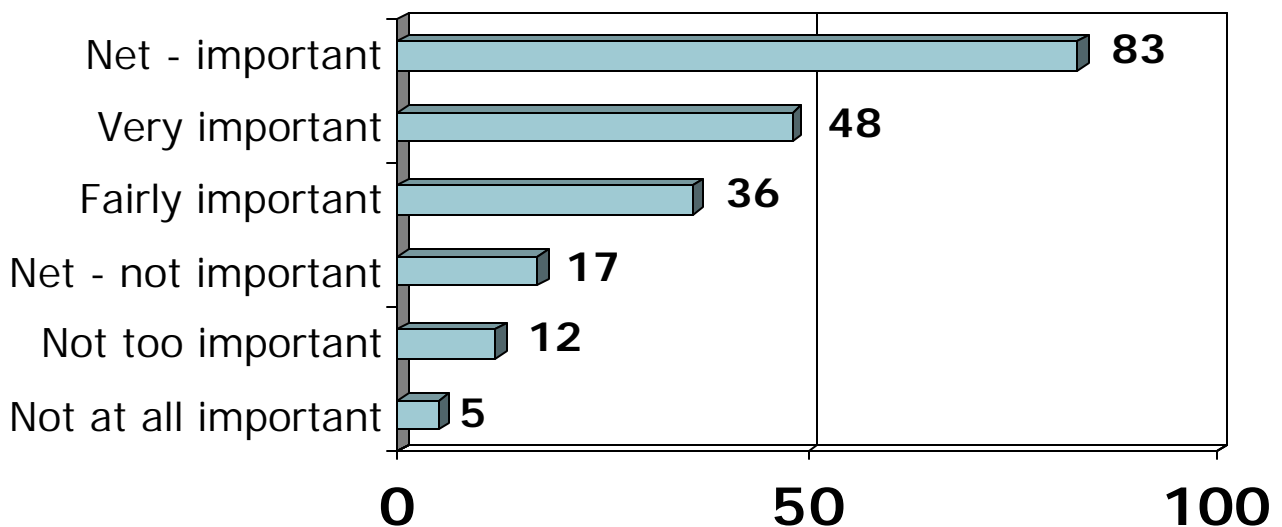
Question #6

How important is religion in your life?

Percentage of adults who answered:



Percentage of teens who answered:





Methodology and Sample

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy's survey, *Faithful Nation: What American Adults and Teens Think About Faith, Morals, Religion, and Teen Pregnancy*, is based on two national surveys, one of young people aged 12-17 and the other of adults age 18 and over. The survey was designed by the National Campaign with assistance from International Communications Research (ICR).

The teen survey is weighted to provide nationally representative estimates of young people aged 12-17. Field work for this survey was conducted from September 5 through September 9, 2001. Telephone interviews were conducted by ICR with 502 teens. The adults survey is also weighted to provide a nationally-representative estimate of the adult population 18 years and older. Field work for this survey was conducted between September 5 and September 9, 2001. Telephone interviews were conducted by ICR with 1011 adults. Both of the surveys were part of a national telephone omnibus survey.

The overall margins of error are +/- 3.59% for adults and +/- 5% for teens. Some responses to various questions do not total 100 percent. This is because respondents could choose more than one answer.