



# Jesus is Good for Teens

Editorial Comment by Warren Krug

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**R**eligion is good for teenagers. This was the message of an article that showed up recently in our local newspaper.

After years of ambitious child-rearing with Discovery toys, piano lessons, conflict-avoidance classes, SAT prep classes, driver ed sessions, and educational tours to other lands, the report says teens might have benefited just as much by attending services at the local “church, temple, or mosque.”

A commission convened by Dartmouth Medical School and others studied years of research on kids including brain-imaging studies. The commission concluded that religious young people are significantly better off than their secular peers.

Religious teens are less likely to smoke and drink, more likely to eat well, less likely to commit crimes, more likely to wear seat belts, less likely to be depressed, and more likely to be satisfied with family and school.

And Child Trends, a research organization, says that a larger proportion of teenagers than a decade ago claims that religious is important to them. The biggest jump occurred among young achievers who anticipated finishing four years of college. The number of high school Bible clubs, now estimated to be about 15,000, has been growing for over a decade.

But one is tempted to smile at the reasons given by this secular organization for the social benefits seen in religious activity. “Religion or spirituality may influence young people’s brain circuits, reducing their levels of the stress hormone cortisol, and personal devotion is twice as likely to protect them from risky behavior as it would adults.”

That may or may not be true, but it is like focusing on the crumbs and ignoring the loaf. We certainly hope and pray that many teens are achieving the peace of mind that only a relationship with Jesus as their Savior can bring.

A sincere faith in the Savior will bring about the benefits of religion as listed in the article, and that may have nothing to do with cortisol. In the end, it will be eternally more beneficial than the generic religion considered by the researchers. *LSI*

—Warren Krug, editor