

SECTION TWO

Adolescents Today

Understanding how adolescents grow and develop is the first step in building an effective ministry with youth. If youth ministry is to succeed, it must tailor its programming to the needs and interests of adolescents and their families. If leaders are to be effective in their ministry with youth, they must understand the developmental needs of adolescents and be able to respond appropriately.

This section proposes a model of healthy adolescent development which describes the internal growth of the adolescent – the unique developmental needs of adolescence and the internal assets necessary for adulthood (positive commitments, values, attitudes, and social competencies). It also describes the external supports necessary for positive growth – family, school, church, and community. This model provides the basis for developing a comprehensive model of ministry with youth, and more effective, more responsive programming. As you will see, the model of youth ministry presented in **Section Three** is ideally suited to responding to the challenges of promoting healthy adolescent development and faith growth.

A MODEL OF HEALTHY ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

In his landmark work, *The Troubled Journey: A Profile of American Youth* and more recently in his book *All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents* Dr. Peter Benson of the Search Institute suggests a very helpful way to view adolescent development.¹ *The Troubled Journey* reveals two important groups of factors that promote healthy development and reduce the likelihood of adolescents' participation in behavior that puts them at risk. One group identifies *assets external to the adolescent*, but present in family and community. Another group identifies *strengths to be found within the adolescent*. Benson writes,

When children are growing up, the kind of help they most need is usually supplied by a combination of the family and the surrounding community. The family provides rules, discipline, encouragement, and caring. The community makes available such things as educational experiences, community rules and expectations, friends, recreational experiences, and spiritual nurture. These are the external assets.

These external assets, taken together, form a kind of temporary scaffold around a child in order to support and encourage while the growing child is developing an internal system of supports that will see him or her safely into adulthood. Their function is much like that of the scaffolds built around buildings during erection or repair to provide a temporary stability until the building is ready to stand on its own. They are there to do what needs to be done while young people are developing their own internal supports – until they develop *backbone*. (April 1991 *Source 1*)

In a perfect world young people's internal strengths would develop gradually throughout adolescence, while external supports were being removed at the same gradual rate. The research shows, however, that while some internal strengths increase during the teen years, too often the external assets are being removed before adequate internal strength development occurs.

The images of *scaffold* and *backbone* go a long way toward capturing the dynamics of growth during adolescence. Promoting healthy growth involves providing a supportive community for youth – external support and care, *and* assisting young people to develop their identity, values, and faith life – internal assets or strengths.

In light of this we would like to propose a model for viewing adolescent development which builds upon the interplay of external support and structure – supplied by family, school, church, and responsive community organizations – and the development of an internal system of assets – competencies, skills, values and faith that will see the adolescent safely into adulthood.

At the center of the model is our understanding of the growth characteristics of adolescents which comes to us from psycho-social, moral, and faith development research. These *life changes* and *developmental needs* give us insights into the internal dynamics of growth during adolescence. They permeate the adolescent experience, providing clues into the what and how of positive development. They give us the basis of responding effectively to the needs and interests of adolescents. Challenging us to create developmentally-appropriate strategies and programs. While this research is extremely helpful in describing the journey and providing direction for ministry, it must be remembered that the adolescent is far more complex and mysterious than these descriptions of life tasks and needs.

To summarize: Drawn from our understanding of the developmental needs of adolescents are specific *internal assets*. These include positive commitments, values, attitudes, and social competencies necessary for healthy growth into adulthood. Religious faith is a central aspect of these internal assets. The development of these internal assets are dependent to a large degree on the *external supports* of family, church, school, and community organizations. They provide networks of care, support, and structure for the young person as he or she develops internal strengths throughout adolescence.

We turn our attention first to the developmental tasks and needs of young and older adolescents. Using the Search Institute's research that began in 1989 and was first published in 1990 in the *Troubled Journey* and *Healthy Communities; Healthy Youth* studies and using the updated results of that research made available in 1997 in *All Kids Are Our Kids* we will then identify the internal assets and external supports necessary for healthy growth.

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS AND NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS

Our focus in *YouthWorks* is on ministry with youth in their high school years. During the high school years, young people grow through the developmental tasks of young adolescence into the world of older adolescence. An effective ministry with high school youth means understanding both stages of development and the important developmental needs that must be addressed in youth ministry. In general young people in the early years of high school reflect a mix of young and older developmental tasks and needs. Young people in the later years of high school are working through the older adolescent tasks.

This mix of developmental needs and tasks leads to several important implications for youth ministry. ***First, we must make clear the differences in developmental needs and tasks of young and older adolescents by adopting different ministry styles, and program content and process that include different formats and schedules for each stage of adolescence.*** Section Four in *YouthWorks* provides a planning process to help you provide the program variety that is necessary to address the two developmental stages of adolescence.

Second, effective ministry with youth tailors program content and processes to the unique needs and interests of its target audience. This is done by developing each program in such a way that we respect their developmental and social needs. For example, in organizing a program for young adolescents we make sure that we build-in time for physical activity, activities which provide creative expression,

positive social interaction, structure and clear limits. The developmental needs can be used as a checklist to assess how developmentally appropriate our programs are.

Third, we use the developmental needs of each stage of adolescence to direct us to the kinds of issues that need to be addressed in our youth programming. For example, we would organize a program for older adolescents on preparing for the future (career, lifestyles) or on developing a personal value system and decision-making skills. The developmental research provides clues into the interests of young people which can be used in creating programs.

To assist you in understanding high school youth and plan your ministry accordingly, we have described the developmental tasks and needs of young and older adolescents.

Young Adolescent Growth

With the exception of infancy, no time in life compresses more physical, intellectual, social, emotional, moral and faith development into so brief a span. Briefly summarized, the key changes of young adolescence (10 – 14/15 year-olds) involve:

- experiencing rapid physical growth including the development of secondary sex characteristics and the capacity to reproduce
- moving from concrete thinking (what is) to abstract thinking (what might be true if...)
- constructing a consistent self-image and discovering who they are as unique persons
- engaging in more complex decision-making
- redefining their relationship with family and moving toward limited autonomy while still looking to family for affection and guidance in setting values
- identifying more strongly with the peer group for belonging and deepening friendships
- establishing a set of religious beliefs, attitudes and values grounded in family *and* in a caring faith community

Appendix 1 presents a more extended overview of the developmental changes that take place during early adolescence.²

The developmental needs of young adolescents arise out of these changes. They provide a very useful framework for understanding the positive possibilities of early adolescence, thereby providing a solid basis upon which to build ministry strategies and programming. The following chart describes the eight key developmental needs of young adolescents.

The Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents

Opportunities for Self-Definition

- opportunities to better understand, define, and accept who they are as individuals
- opportunities to explore their widening social world and to reflect upon the meaning of new experiences, so that they can consider themselves participants in society
- opportunities for young adolescents of ethnic cultures to achieve a positive orientation toward their own culture and white American culture; to affirm their ethnicity through observation of ceremonies, retention of native language, and reinforcement of specific attitudes, beliefs, and practices

Competence and Achievement

- opportunities to find out what they are good at doing and to know what they do is valued by others whom they respect
- opportunities that encourage the practice of new skills, public performance and recognition, and reflection on personal and group accomplishments

Positive Social Interaction with Adults and Peers

- opportunities to develop interpersonal skills
- opportunities to learn how to develop a relationship with their parents that is reflective of their growing autonomy and utilizes new patterns of communicating
- opportunities to form positive peer relationships and support, especially through structured programs
- opportunities for caring relationships with adults who like and respect them, who share their own experiences, views, values, and feelings, and who serve as role models and advisors

Physical Activity

- opportunities to utilize their energy and growing bodies through activities that require physical movement or expression

Meaningful Participation in Families, Schools, Churches and Community Organizations

- opportunities to participate in making decisions about activities that shape their lives *and* as active leaders or participants who can make a viable contribution to the success of those activities
- opportunities to participate as valued members of the faith community and as leaders in church ministries and programs
- opportunities for exposure to situations in which they can use their skills to solve real life problems and affect the world around them, such as community service programs

Creative Expression

- opportunities to express to the external world who they are on the inside (feelings, interests, abilities, thoughts) through a variety of activities, e.g. music, writing, sports, art, drama, cooking
- activities that enable them to experience and test out new and different forms of self-expression

Personal Religious Experience

- opportunities to explore “the big questions” in life, questions whose answers can only be comprehended within the context of faith and religion
- opportunities for a deeper and more personal relationship with God

Structure and Clear Limits

- provision of structure and guidance for young adolescents in making decisions about their behavior that involve them in the process of decision-making
- provision of structure that helps them stay focused on a task, persevere in their various efforts and succeed, which leads to an increase in self-esteem
- provision of structure and clear limits that helps them feel safe in their activities, which can empower them to live with joy and confidence

Older Adolescent Growth

Older adolescent growth must be seen as an ongoing process beginning around the first years of high school and culminating in the years after graduation. Briefly summarized, the key changes of older adolescents, aged 15-18/19, involve:

- reaching adult physical and sexual maturity
- developing the ability to engage in reflective thinking about what they know, value, and believe (“what do I think?” and “why do I think that?”)
- beginning the process of establishing a personal identity, a meaningful self-concept, which includes an acceptance of one’s sexuality, vocational goals, and philosophy of life
- shifting from inherited authority (especially the family) to self-chosen authority (eventually oneself), often by establishing an identity that is powerfully shaped by significant others (peers and adults)
- reevaluating the moral values received from family, church, and significant others (adults, peers) and searching for a moral code which preserves their personal integrity and provides the basis for developing an internalized moral value system that can guide their behavior
- moving toward greater personal intimacy and adult sexuality; developing the capability for more mutual, trusting, deep, and enduring personal friendships with members of the same sex and opposite sex
- expanding their perspective to encompass the motives, feelings, and thought patterns of individuals and groups of people outside their personal experience
- exploring and questioning the faith handed down by family and church as they search for a style of faith and belief which is more personal to them

Appendix 2 presents a more extended overview of the developmental changes that take place during older adolescence.³ The following chart describes several of the central developmental needs of older adolescents.

Developmental Needs of Older Adolescents

Exploration and Experimentation

- opportunities to experiment with a wide array of behaviors, roles, attitudes, relationships, ideas, and activities as they develop their own identity and faith identity
- opportunities to explore who they are and who they can become by reflecting on self in relation to others
- opportunities for youth of ethnic cultures to achieve a positive orientation toward their own culture and white American culture; to affirm their ethnicity through observation of ceremonies, retention of native language, and reinforcement of specific attitudes, beliefs, and practices

Adult Sexuality

- opportunities to understand their sexual growth and integrate their sexuality into their own personality in a holistic way
- opportunities to develop healthy values and attitudes regarding their own sexuality

Interpersonal Relationships

- opportunities to form positive relationships and experiences with peers in a comfortable and secure environment and to develop friendship-making and friendship-maintaining skills
- opportunities to learn how to develop a relationship with parents that is reflective of their growing autonomy and utilizes new patterns of communicating

Adult Mentors

- opportunities to develop relationships with adult Christians who affirm their journey and struggles, explore sensitive issues with them, listen to their stories and questions, share their own faith journey, and ask questions that encourage critical thinking and reflection

Meaningful Roles in the Community and Society

- opportunities to participate with other older adolescents as full members and leaders in the community, society and church
- opportunities to explore, discuss, and act on local and global justice issues; to develop an active responsibility for what happens in their community and world, and to be involved in meaningful community service
- opportunities to be involved in the decision-making, planning, and implementation of programs that serve them

Preparing for the Future

- opportunities to acquire the competencies necessary for adult roles, such as goal setting, problem solving, time management, and decision making
- opportunities to explore life options and plan their futures (education, career) and to help them acquire the skills, knowledge and experience for their chosen fields; to link more closely the worlds of school and work

Personal Value System and Decision-Making Skills

- opportunities to discuss conflicting values and formulate their own value system
- opportunities to gain knowledge and experience in making decisions and to apply Christian moral values in making moral judgments

Personal Faith

- opportunities to explore and question the faith they have been given by their family and the faith community and develop their own faith identity
- opportunities to explore what it means to be and live as a person of faith today
- opportunities to develop a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ

Family Changes

It is important to remember that all of these developmental changes of adolescents profoundly impact the family. The changes within the adolescent and within the parent cause changes in family interaction. For example, both adolescents and parents experience physical, intellectual, and emotional changes during this stage of life, which results in temporary disruptions in family interaction as relationships shift between parent and adolescent. Intellectually, adolescents begin to think abstractly, to question and test adults' statements and evaluate adults' values. Their world expands with new possibilities, ideas, and dreams. This new ability to think abstractly can improve family communication, but there is often tension because the adolescent is questioning parental authority and testing parental values. Socio-emotionally, many adolescents are more self-conscious and sensitive to criticism. At the same time many parents are feeling less in control of their child which can result in a more critical attitude toward their adolescent. Parents and adolescents both have a mutual need for respect, reassurance, and approval. This can be threatened by the changes at this stage of the life cycle.

Throughout this stage parent-child relationships move from greater to less control, with adolescents gradually given more independence – with limits. There is often a conflict between “letting go” too early or “hanging on” too late. The task for most families with adolescents – and it is by no means an easy one – is to maintain *emotional* involvement, in the form of concern and caring, while gradually moving toward a relationship characterized by greater *behavioral* autonomy.

DEVELOPING THE INTERNAL STRENGTHS OF ADOLESCENTS

We now turn our attention to the internal assets or strengths that we want to promote in the lives of young people. The national research project of the Search Institute, *The Troubled Journey: A Profile of American Youth*, begun in 1989 and continued through the nineties originally identified fourteen essential elements of the internal supports that make positive growth possible for teenagers. As the research has continued, the fourteen have become twenty that are grouped in four sub-categories: commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity. This listing of values, attitudes, and skills are attributes that caring adults hope young people develop during their adolescent years.

Internal Assets: Educational Commitment

The first essential component of internal support is enthusiasm for the educational process, now and well into the future. Five elements were identified in the study:

1. **Achievement Motivation** – young person is motivated to do well in school
2. **School Performance** – young person has a B average or better
3. **Homework** – young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day
4. **Bonding to School** – young person cares about her or his school
5. **Reading for Pleasure** – young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week

Internal Assets: Positive Values

The second essential component of internal support is positive values – values that center on caring about others as well as oneself. Six elements were identified in the study:

6. **Caring** – young person places high value on helping other people
7. **Equality and Social Justice** – young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty
8. **Integrity** – young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs
9. **Honesty** – young person “tells the truth even when its not easy”
10. **Responsibility** – young person accepts and takes personal responsibility
11. **Restraint** – young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs

Internal Assets: Social Competence

The third essential component of internal support is social competence and social skills – success in interacting with others, in learning how to work in groups, in “holding your own” against opposition, and in anticipating what is coming. Five elements were identified in the study:

12. **Planning and Decision-Making** – young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices
13. **Interpersonal Competence** – young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills
14. **Cultural Competence** – young person has knowledge or and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds

15. **Resistance Skills** – young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations
16. **Peaceful Conflict Resolution** – young person seeks to resolve conflict non-violently

Internal Assets: Positive Identity

The fourth essential component of internal support is positive identity. This set of assets focuses on young people's views of themselves: their own sense of power, purpose, and promise. Four elements were identified in the study:

17. **Personal Power** – young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me”
18. **Self-Esteem** – young person reports having a high self-esteem
19. **Sense of Purpose** – young person reports that “my life has a purpose”
20. **Positive View of Personal Future** – young person is optimistic about her or his personal future

If we focus on positive values and social competence, and the elements associated with each of these components, it should be clear that churches can play a very important role in developing these assets through programs and activities. It should also be clear that the Christian faith is a tremendous resource in promoting healthy development. The Christian faith provides a value base from which young people can develop the positive values outlined above, such as valuing sexual restraint, prosocial or helping behaviors, and caring about others. The Christian value system also provides a basis for developing social competence, especially in responsible decision-making and developing a positive view of the future. Youth who decide not to engage in negative behaviors often do so because of their value system.

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY EXTERNAL SUPPORTS

To this point we have focused primarily on the growing adolescent and the assets necessary for growth into adulthood. It is time to focus our attention on the broader community and its role in providing the external supports for the growth process. The fourteen internal characteristics combine with sixteen external assets to make up a network of interior and exterior strengths that has remarkable power to *shield* adolescents against at-risk behaviors and *promote* positive teenage development. They equip adolescents to make wise choices.

One of the major contributions of *The Troubled Journey: A Profile of American Youth* and its follow-up study, *Healthy Communities; Healthy Youth* is that they identify those

elements in the family and in the community that appear, in effect, to protect teenagers against the kinds of trouble most feared by parents, teachers, and others who work with adolescents. The more assets a teenager reports being present in his or her life, the fewer the at-risk behaviors that teenager displays.

The twenty external assets provide the kind of interest, care, and structure that are essential if an adolescent is to progress through the teenage years relatively untroubled. They are divided into four categories: *support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations and constructive use of time*. They supply a necessary network of support while adolescents develop internal supports firm enough to carry them successfully into adult life. Families, schools, neighborhoods, community organizations, and religious institutions have a role in providing these assets. They must be supported by the larger network of community institutions, including government, health care, law enforcement, civic organizations, community foundations, and others. Thus it is evident that neither the community nor the family can assume the entire responsibility for the support of adolescents. They must work together.⁵

External Assets: Support

The first essential component of external assets is support: creating an atmosphere of appreciation and encouragement that provides young people with experiences of being loved, successful, and worthwhile. Thus equipped, one can survive the inevitable temporary failures and defeats of daily life.

21. **Family Support** – family life provides high levels of love and support
22. **Positive Family Communication** – young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek parent(s) advice and counsel
23. **Other Adult Relationships** – young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults
24. **Caring Neighborhood** – young person experiences caring neighbors
25. **Caring School Climate** – school provides a caring, encouraging environment
26. **Parent Involvement in Schooling** – parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school

External Assets: Empowerment

The second essential component of external assets is empowerment. A key developmental need is to be valued and valuable. Empowered young people feel good about themselves and their skills. They grow up feeling treated with respect to circumstances largely beyond family control:

27. **Community Values Youth** – young person perceives that adults in the community value youth
28. **Youth as Resources** – young people are given useful roles in the community
29. **Community Service** – young person serves in the community one hour or more per week
30. **Safety** – young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood

External Assets: Boundaries and Expectations

The third area of external assets is boundary and expectation assets. Important here are the messages given about what is in and what is out of bounds. These assets aid young people to develop the appropriate socialization skills and to learn how to better communicate with the world they live in.

31. **Family Boundaries** – family has clear rules and consequences; and monitors the young person’s whereabouts
32. **School Boundaries** – school provides clear rules and consequences
33. **Neighborhood Boundaries** – neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior
34. **Adult Role Models** – parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior
35. **Positive Peer Influence** – young person’s best friends model responsible behavior
36. **High Expectations** – both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well

External Assets: Constructive Use of Time

The fourth essential component of external assets is the development of a disciplined structure – working at a task to meet given deadlines, not at one’s own convenience or whim. Four elements fit into this category of external assets. All of them, though partly dependent on family decision, largely depend on activities provided and supervised for youth by adult members of the community.

37. **Creative Activities** – young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts
38. **Youth Programs** – young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations
39. **Religious Community** – young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution
40. **Time at Home** – young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week

Based on our review of the Search Institute studies, it is quite clear that healthy communities are essential for positive youth development. More than this, these studies challenge us to move beyond a narrow focus on single problems and to look at youth issues through the wide-angle lens of community. By concentrating our efforts on the daily activities, facilities, and events that help develop young people's capacities we can make a difference in the lives of youth. Many of the contributing factors identified in the Search Institute studies are well within a community's control. This is good news for all who work with youth.

The Significant Role of Families

Adding to the importance of external support is another recent research study by the Search Institute on the significant role that families have in promoting the faith maturity of adolescents.⁶ In a national study of Christian education in churches, the Search Institute was able to identify the five key factors that nourish faith maturity in families:

- Family faith conversations – talking about faith at home
- Family devotions and worship – prayer, rituals, celebrations, Scripture reading
- Family service projects – family involvement in helping others
- Promoting family education – parent education, family-centered or intergenerational catechesis
- Parental relationships and parental faith

The study also identified eight factors that congregations must address if they are to contribute significantly toward strong, life-shaping families for young people:

- Nurturing close parental relationships
- Using good communication in the family
- Understanding diverse family dynamics (different types of families)
- Developing parental faith
- Communicating moral values
- Using wise parental control
- Participating in shared helping activities (service)
- Sharing one's faith in the family

The findings add increased importance to the need for churches to develop plans for ministering with parents, parents and teens, and the whole family. Ministry with families is an essential component of ministry with young people.

CONCLUSION

The model of adolescent development proposed in this section provides the foundation in research we need to “make a case” for a *comprehensive* approach to ministry with youth. No one strategy, activity or program is adequate to the task of promoting healthy adolescent development and faith growth. We need a ministry with youth which:

- Provides developmentally-appropriate programs and activities;
- Cultivates the internal assets of youth;
- Strengthens family life;
- Incorporates young people into all aspects of church life; and
- Partners with families, schools, churches, and community organizations in a common effort to promote positive youth development.

Section Three of *YouthWorks* describes a model of youth ministry which is built upon these five characteristics.

End Notes

- ¹ The *Troubled Journey* study reports on more than 46,000 young Americans in grades 6 through 12 and yields information of great significance to all those who are interested in providing youth with a chance to grow up healthy. The students included in this research come mainly from the Midwest; most of them live in communities under 100,000 in population. Ninety percent of them are white. However, in spite of this sample, on key indicators for which representative national data are available (e.g. alcohol use, tobacco use, sexual abuse, involvement in extracurricular activities, and exposure to television), percentages in this study are remarkably similar to those of national data on in-school youth. Material in this essay is drawn from *Source 6.3* (December 1990) and *Source 7.1* (April 1991) published by the Search Institute, 122 W. Franklin, Suite 525, Minneapolis, MN 55404. Additional material is drawn from *The Troubled Journey: A Profile of American Youth* developed by Peter Benson of the Search Institute and published by RespectTeen, Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis, MN 55415. You can order an overview of *The Troubled Journey* by calling 1-800-888-3820. You can have this survey administered in your school system. It is available through RespecTeen at no charge and will highlight important issues for community discussion and action. There is no better way to raise the community’s consciousness about youth than through current information about your community’s own youth.
- ² Some of the material for the developmental changes and developmental needs of young adolescents is drawn from the following sources: *A Portrait of Young Adolescents in the 1990s* by Peter Scales (Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence, 1991), *Director’s Manual for the Discovering Program* by Michael Carotta

- (Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1989), and *Access Guides to Youth Ministry: Early Adolescent Ministry* edited by John Roberto (New Rochelle, NY: Don Bosco Multimedia, 1991).
- ³ Some of the material for the developmental changes and developmental needs of older adolescents is drawn from *Adolescent Spirituality* by Charles Shelton (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1983).
 - ⁴ Material in this section is drawn from "Backbone: Essential for Survival on the Troubled Journey" *Source* 7.1 (April 1991).
 - ⁵ Material in this section is drawn from "The Troubled Journey: New Light on Growing Up Healthy" *Source* 6.3 (December 1990).
 - ⁶ The results of the research studies are published in *The Teaching Church* by Eugene Roehlkepartain (Abingdon Press, 1993) and *Rethinking Christian Education* edited by David Schuller (Chalice Press, 1993).

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- "The Troubled Journey: New Light on Growing Up Healthy." *Source* 6.3 (December 1990).

Appendix 1

The Changes of Young Adolescence

Physical Development

- developing secondary sex characteristics and the capacity to reproduce
- being sensitive about physical changes and confused about their emerging sexuality
- incorporating their bodily changes into their own self image as male or female

Intellectual Development

- beginning to move from concrete thinking (what is) to abstract thinking, “formal operations,” (what might be true if...)
- questioning and testing adults’ statements and evaluating adults’ values
- being painfully self-conscious and critical, idealistic, argumentative, self-centered
- expanding interests; intense, short term enthusiasm

Identity Development

- requiring time to reflect upon the new reactions they receive from others and to build a consistent self-image from the different mirrors in which they see themselves
- discovering who they are as unique persons with abilities, interests and goals
- seeking limited independence and autonomy from parents and adults

Moral Development

- engaging in more complex decision-making process
- resolving moral dilemmas in terms of the expectations of someone or something other than themselves, which can be (a) family, friends or other significant persons or (b) what the law or the system of good order calls for in a given situation

Interpersonal Development

- relying on parents and families in setting values and giving affection
- identifying more strongly with the peer group for belonging and friendships
- entering a broader social world of middle school, peer groups, and activity groups
- developing the ability to consider the feelings and needs of others in a relationship
- learning how to relate to the opposite sex (what to say and how to behave)

Faith Development

- deriving their faith from parents and family
- developing their faith and identity, establishing a set of religious beliefs, attitudes and values, through the experiences of participation and belonging in a caring faith community where they are valued

Appendix 2

The Changes of Older Adolescence

Intellectual Development

- developing the ability to engage in reflective thinking (“what do I think?” “why do I think that?”), making it possible to develop a personal identity, personal value system, and personal faith
- thinking about and planning for the future

Identity Development

- beginning the process of establishing a personal identity, which includes an acceptance of one’s sexuality, decision-making regarding the future, and a commitment to a personally-held system of values and religious beliefs
- shifting from the authority of family to self-chosen authority (oneself), often by establishing an identity that is shaped by significant others (peers and adults)
- experiencing a period of questioning, reevaluation, and experimentation
- developing increasing autonomy in making personal decisions, assuming responsibility for oneself, and regulating one’s own behavior

Moral Development

- exercising moral judgments in matters of much greater complexity as they seek to establish a more personal form of moral reasoning
- reevaluating the moral values received from family, church, and significant others
- searching for a moral code which preserves their personal integrity and provides the basis for developing an internalized moral value system that can guide their behavior

Interpersonal Development

- moving toward greater personal intimacy and adult sexuality
- developing the capability for more mutual, trusting, deep, and enduring personal friendships with members of the same sex and opposite sex that provide acceptance, love, affirmation, and the opportunity to honestly share their deepest selves
- expanding their social perspective to encompass the larger world

Faith Development

- exploring and questioning the faith handed down by family and church as they search for a style of faith and belief which is more personal to oneself
- beginning the process of taking responsibility for one’s own faith life, commitments, lifestyle, beliefs and attitudes
- exploring a personal relationship with God who knows, accepts and confirms them, and with Jesus Christ through his teaching, example, and presence in one’s life