

# Pointers For Parents

## Faith Communities Can Help Keep Teens Drug-Free *Faith.TheAntiDrug*

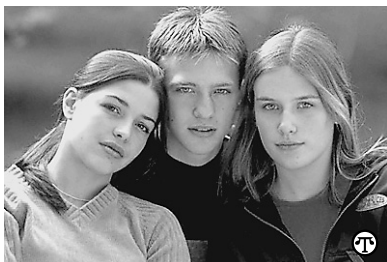
(NAPSA)—Faith plays a major role in the lives of teens and can be a powerful factor in preventing teen substance abuse. Youth who consider religion an important part of their lives are only half as likely to try marijuana as kids who don't, according to recent research.

“Youth often turn to their faith communities to seek spiritual guidance about issues such as peer pressure and drugs,” said John P. Walters, Director of National Drug Control Policy. “Faith communities can help parents instill anti-drug values and shape teens’ decisions not to use marijuana and other drugs.”

Churches, temples and mosques are well-positioned to cultivate anti-drug values and teach effective coping skills for dealing with peer pressure and stress. Instilling strong values, rooted for many in religious faiths, helps prevent teen marijuana use and other risky behaviors.

A recent study by the American Psychological Association found that religion buffered the impact of life stress for teens, such as having an unemployed parent, and reduced the likelihood of teens turning to drugs and alcohol during stressful times. Religious teens may also be less likely to use substances due to choosing friends with anti-drug values and having a sense of belonging and a connection with a higher power that provides hope and strength.

More teens use marijuana than all other illicit drugs combined. Research shows that marijuana can lead to a host of health, social,



learning and behavioral problems at a crucial time in young lives. Marijuana can be addictive and teens using marijuana are also more likely to take risks, such as having sex, engaging in violence, riding with someone who's driving high or using alcohol or other drugs.

To help reach youth in religious settings the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is offering new multi-denominational resources including a drug prevention activity guide (*Pathways to Prevention: Guiding Youth to Wise Decisions*), the [www.TheAntiDrug.com/Faith](http://www.TheAntiDrug.com/Faith) Web site, and an e-mail newsletter. These materials, in conjunction with the existing *Four Ways to Include Drug Prevention in Your Religious Programs* brochure, are available for ordering or viewing online at: [www.TheAntiDrug.com/Faith](http://www.TheAntiDrug.com/Faith). Free copies can also be ordered by calling 1-800-788-2800.

Parents can also help keep their kids drug-free by knowing where they are, who they are with, and how they are spending their time. Additional information for parents on how to help keep their teens free from marijuana and other drugs is available at <http://www.TheAntiDrug.com>.