Researchers say that although many teenagers call themselves Christians, they often just go through the motions of religion. Professor Kenda Creasy Dean, author of *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*, says commitment is lacking. Her book, based on results of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), describes how young Christians often wear a façade of faith but aren’t “all in” for Christ.

Although most teenagers think faith is a “very nice thing,” Dean says, it doesn’t concern them much and isn’t durable enough to survive beyond high school. Parents, churches, and youth ministers all must work together to turn lackluster faith into “holy desire,” she says. “At issue is our ability, and our willingness, to remember our identity as the body of Christ, and to heed Christ’s call to love him and love others as his representatives in the world.”

After analyzing NSYR data, sociologist Patricia Snell found that youth group participants experience greater levels of adult support, have more connections to church, and show a stronger moral backbone. But, she adds, more is needed. “The congregation as a whole has a crucial role to play in helping [teenagers] navigate...into the adult ‘promised land.’”

A perk for adults, Dean notes, is that “tending the faith of young people may just be the ticket to reclaiming our own.”
More than 75% of U.S. kids between the ages of 13 and 17 call themselves Christians. About half of these teenagers say religion is important in their lives.

Although most U.S. teenagers view religion in a “benignly positive light,” it isn’t a big deal to them. It’s an accepted part of their lives that stays in the background and doesn’t merit much thought.

Churches that invest in their young people find that kids are more likely to invest in them.

National Study of Youth and Religion

Organized programs are important, but strong relationships between young people and mature, loving adults matter more.

Most kids long to relate to adults (even if they don’t realize it) whom they respect and who really love them. Simply being with kids through day-to-day life is key.

A youth group’s influence is tied to the importance of the relationships teenagers have with others in the group.

Life-change occurs when you can follow the “thread” of kids’ friendships back to the engine that drives their lives.

Teenagers’ parents need to be brought back into the youth ministry picture.

For better or worse, parents are the most important Christian “pastors” teenagers will ever have. Parents shouldn’t just check in their kids at youth group times and leave them there assuming all is well.

Quality matters as much as quantity when it comes to relationships.

Research shows that kids turn out best when parents combine three distinct approaches into an “authoritative” parenting style.
1) Express lots of warmth and affection.
2) Lay out clear expectations, boundaries, demands, and accountability.
3) Grant an appropriate amount of “mental space” so kids can develop their own take on important issues.

How would you describe your own faith and your relationship with Jesus?

What might increase your commitment to live out your beliefs daily?

How might you and your teenager be able to help strengthen one another’s faith?
The desire to be part of something big and meaningful is in our nature. The band Flobots has captured this in their song “Rise.” The lyrics include this call: “If you believe in redemption, I’m calling to you from another dimension.”

There actually is Someone calling to us from another dimension. He’s the One who started the original “cause” of all time. In fact, if people would rise up and join this cause, most (if not all) of the other causes out there would be taken care of.

The original movement I’m talking about is the church. No, not a building or a label but the cause Jesus started (see Matthew 16:18). Literally, the word church means “called out ones.”

Called out for what? Simple, Called out to completely change the world. Called out to share the good news about eternal life by trusting in Jesus for salvation. Called out to help people in need.

The bottom line is that the church is a group of sinners saved by grace gathering together so we can go out and be Jesus Christ in the world around us. Our job description—and really part of the motivation calling to us from another dimension—is found in Matthew 25:31-46.

I know that many people see the church as “the sitting down ones” instead of the “called out ones.” But our cause is not to complain or bail out. Our cause is to join the cause that Jesus Christ died to bring about. Our job is to not only go to church but to be the church.

I know that many folks are discouraged about the church, but that’s exactly what Satan likes to see. We’ll never find the perfect church, especially because the moment we join it, we add our own imperfections. The point is that if we take our eyes off the petty problems and fix our eyes on Jesus, the church he’s building can crash through the gates of hell and make an eternal difference in the world. Are you ready to rise?

- www.simplyyouthministry.com

Resource Source

*Sticky Faith* (Zondervan) by Dr. Kara Powell and Dr. Chap Clark is filled with everyday ideas for parents to help their kids build lasting faith. The easy-to-read guide offers strategies for actively encouraging young people’s spiritual growth so it lasts, or sticks, for a lifetime.

September 2011, 224 pages, $10.19 on Amazon

I will actually be teaching this curriculum in the Youth Barn on *Wednesday nights this summer.* You’re more than welcome to join us!
**MEDIA SPOTLIGHT**

**MAINSTREAM MUSIC**

**TENACIOUS D**

**Background:** Comedian/actor Jack Black and Kyle Gass formed this rock band in 1994. They’re a real band, although their songs are bombastic and rock opera-ish, dealing with obscure topics such as their sexual abilities and pot use. They’re like an incredibly vulgar Spinal Tap that’s toured with big-name acts (Beck, Foo Fighters, etc.) and has appeared on shows such as SNL.


**What Tenacious D Says:** The band favors legalizing marijuana. In a documentary, Black said, “They’re populating our prisons with people, you know, first-time drug offenders—single mothers that have a little bit of coke end up going to prison for 20 years or something. It’s just cruel and unusual punishment.”

**Explore:** Tenacious D’s albums are on Spotify—including “clean” versions of some songs. We don’t advise watching the band’s YouTube videos (even their current album art was too vulgar to use).

**THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH**

**Background:** These Canadian rockers, together since 1995, have been nominated for numerous awards. The band recently split with longtime label Tooth & Nail to release albums on their own via Kickstarter, a crowd-funding site.

**Albums:** *The End Is Where We Begin* (2012), *Welcome to the Masquerade* (2009)

**What TFK Says:** Singer Trevor McNevan says, “Writing a record is a spiritual experience for me. I always ask, ‘What do you want to say God, and how do you want to say it?’ We’ve never tried to preach through our music but want it to mean something and reflect who we are.”

**Explore:** TFK’s albums are available on Spotify. You can listen to their single, *Be Somebody*, from their newest album by hitting this link:: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DprXHr1xAdE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DprXHr1xAdE).

**POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE MUSIC**

**MOVIES**

**Movie:** *Brave*

**Genre:** Action, Adventure

**Rating:** PG

**Synopsis:** A young Scottish girl wants to go against what tradition says she “ought” to be and forge her own path and identity. Unfortunately, her actions might lead to war.

**Our Take:** This is the first time Pixar has featured a female lead character—it’s about time! No studio is better at telling a powerful story, so we can’t wait to see this one.

**Movie:** *Prometheus*

**Genre:** Sci-Fi, Horror

**Rating:** R

**Synopsis:** A team of explorers discover a clue to the origins of mankind on Earth, leading them on a journey to the darkest corners of the universe. There, they must fight a terrifying battle to save the future of the human race.

**Our Take:** Ridley Scott is back in the director’s seat with another science-fiction, horror film (he basically created the genre with *Alien*). We anticipate a compelling story with great special effects, intense, scary, and graphic scenes, and more than likely foul language.

**LEGO Batman 2: DC Heroes** (PC, PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, 3DS) — The very clever LEGO games are good, clean fun, while still offering a challenge for those venturing to collect everything in the game. Traditionally the LEGO games have not used voice acting, opting instead for their characters to pantomime classic scenes. However with this super hero sequel (and the upcoming LEGO Lord of the Rings!) the folks at Travellers’ Tales have finally given a voice to the charming LEGO characters. LEGO games are great fun for all ages. My boys and I can’t wait for this one!

**Electronic Entertainment Expo** — E3 is the giant annual convention for all things video games that will take place in Los Angeles the week of June 4-7. Game publishers will be showing off their newest software while the big three (Microsoft, Nintendo, and Sony) will try to 1-up each other at their respective press conferences. Check any number of websites during the week to see what hot new games your teens will be wanting to play this holiday season and beyond.
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NEWS and NOTES

Connect LIFEgroup
All 6th-12th graders are encouraged to join us for this all teen LIFEgroup! This will be our final gathering until the Fall, so bring your Bible and a friend and join us in the Youth Barn from 6:00 to 7:30pm.

After School Hang Time
Join us in the Youth Barn from 3:00 to 5:00pm for our last Hang Time of the school year!

Senior Baccalaureate Service
We weren’t able to have our Senior Service last month as planned due to some scheduling conflicts and poor planning on my part, so we’re going to give it another go this month. Join us at 5:00pm for this special time of honoring our Seniors and their families. We will have a short time of worship and dedication in the Large Auditorium followed by a Finger Food Fellowship and Reception in the Small Auditorium. Each Senior will have a table set up displaying their interests and accomplishments over the last several years. Come help them celebrate this great milestone!

DownTown Play & Pray
All of our teens are encouraged to join us as we challenge ourselves to step out of our comfort zones and begin building some new relationships for Jesus. Most Tuesdays this summer we’ll meet at the Youth Barn at 2:00pm then drive down to the City Park at Lake Coeur d’Alene to play some basketball, Frisbee, and soccer together while reaching out to new friends. After a couple of hours of play we’ll walk over to Java and the “upper room” for a time of Bible reading and prayer. Bring a few bucks if you’d like a drink or snack. Parents can pick their kids up downtown at 5:30pm, or back at the church building around 6:00pm (or just come hang out with us the whole time!).

The Place
Our girls only group is starting up again this summer! All 6th-12th grade girls (and Moms!) are encouraged to join Kara on Thursdays at 6:30pm in the Youth Barn for a great time of Bible study and fellowship… all without the boys!

Music Camp
A favorite of many teens in the Northwest, this weeklong camp focuses on learning new songs as a group and sharpening your skills as an individual musician. You don’t have to be a good singer to go, but having a love for singing sure helps. LOTS of singing… LOTS of powerful messages from scripture… LOTS of wonderful worship… LOTS of fun! We’ll be leaving on Sunday afternoon at 1:00pm and returning home on Saturday around noon.

Wild Side
Our guys group is back! All 6th-12th grade guys are invited to join us for some great outdoor fun during the summer months. We’ll meet at the Youth Barn most Monday afternoons at 1:00pm and be back at the building around 5:00pm. We’ll be doing things like hiking, biking, swimming, disc golf… basically fun stuff that you can invite your friends to. Listen up in class each week or check our Facebook page for the exact details of each week’s excursion.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Backpacking Trip : July 26 - 28
Bible Sports Camp : July 30 - August 1
Family Baseball Night : August 3
All Teen Camp : August 5 - 11
Pre Teen Camp : August 12 - 18
Silverwood/Boulder Beach : August 23