



NORTHEAST COMMUNITY CHALLENGE COALITION COMMUNITY-WIDE ASSET INITIATIVE



Asset Building Ideas for Congregations

Congregations of all faiths are in a unique position to not only nurture and support the faith and spiritual development of young people but also to build developmental assets. Congregations have the potential for intergenerational relationships; they provide opportunities for youth to grow and understand themselves; they reach and work with parents; and they have a public presence with the potential for leadership, advocacy, and service. Here are some asset-building tips for congregations:

- Integrate asset building into worship in ways that fit with the specifics of your faith tradition. Create worship experiences for entire families. Think about how to include children and youth.
- Provide a variety of educational opportunities for all ages. Create interactive, intergenerational sessions that encourage younger people to connect with older people.
- Provide opportunities for young people to volunteer in the community. Afterward, discuss the experience from your faith perspective.
- Reinforce positive values and morals. Talk with young people about why these are an important part of your faith tradition.
- Plan ways for families and other intergenerational groups to spend time together, such as having a weekly or monthly meal, picnics, dances, concerts, or sports tournaments.
- Promote and support clear boundaries, positive values, high expectations and healthy behaviors for all children and youth.
- Collaborate with other congregations and youth-based organizations to learn about and build assets.
- Provide responsible, meaningful roles for youth. These could include being teaching assistants for young children, volunteering for child care, and pledging financial support from their allowances and part-time jobs, as well as worship activities, such as handing out bulletins, serving as readers or lay liturgists, and being involved in music or other aspects of worship.
- Encourage members of your congregation to be mentors or reading tutors outside of their jobs.
- Educate congregational staff and lay leaders-in addition to the congregation at large-about asset building. Discuss the implications that asset building has for your congregation, and brainstorm ideas together.
- Make your facility as asset-building place. Rent or provide free space for children and youth clubs to use when your building is typically empty. Create a homework room for children and youth to hang out in after school, particularly if many are going home to empty houses. Host a neighborhood child-care center.
- Create a book study group that gives children, youth, and adults opportunities to read and reflect on books with asset-building teams.

Permission given by Search Institute to use Search Institute's materials to develop the Northeast Community Challenge Coalition Community-Wide Asset Initiative.