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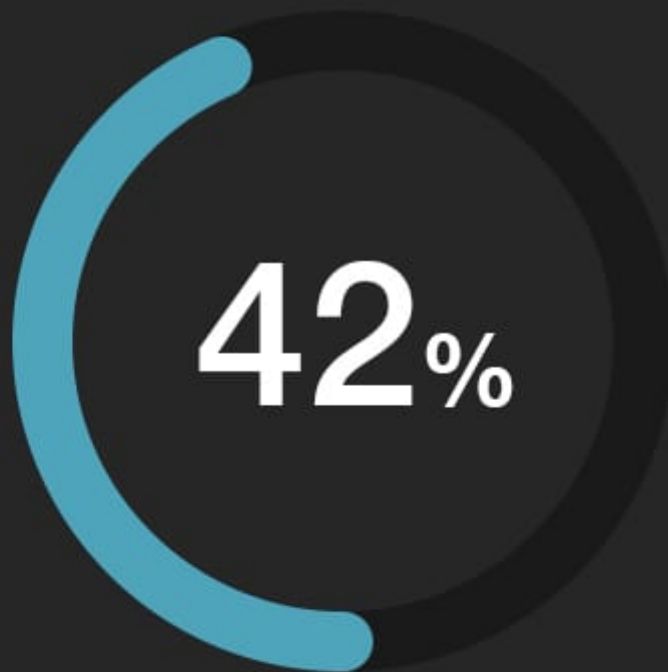
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The Myth of the Lazy Teen ^[1]

Barna Research Releases in **Family & Kids** ? September 2, 2016

There's been plenty of debate about teens and their social justice "slacktivism," but how much truth is there to the claim that young people are only taking action with 140 characters or less? A new study from Barna shows that teens are actively engaged in service and volunteer projects and youth ministry is a primary channel through which they serve. In partnership with Youth Specialties and YouthWorks, Barna conducted a major study on the state of youth ministry in the United States, which included a look at service and volunteering trends among teens. Here are some of the key findings:

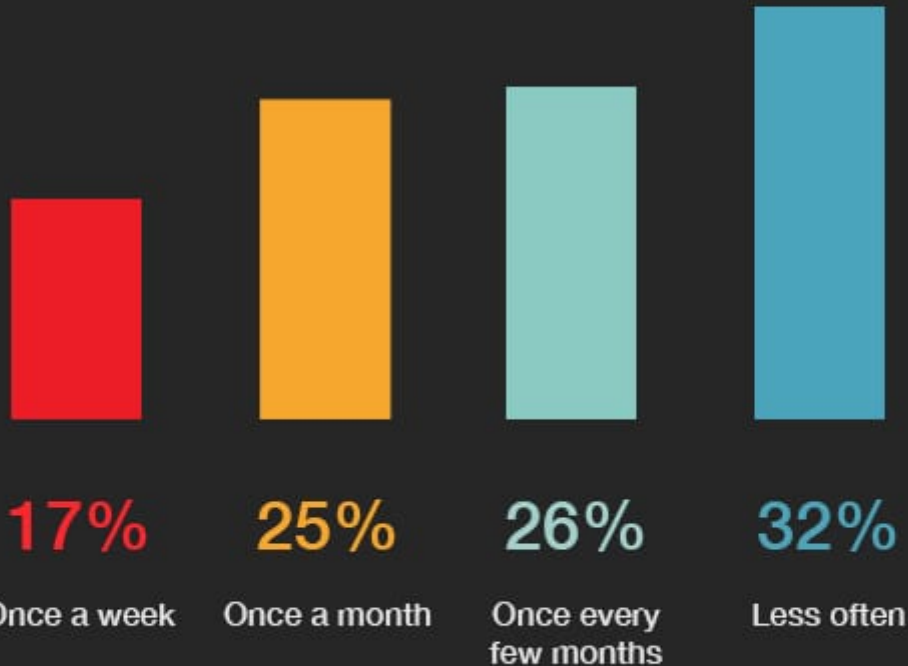
Percentage of teens who volunteer
with a church or ministry.



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Frequency of volunteering among teens.



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Teens Are Active Volunteers

Volunteer and service projects are a foundational element of youth ministry programs in churches across the country. According to their parents, a majority of teens (68%) are fairly active when it comes to volunteering at least once every few months: a little less than one fifth of teens (17%) volunteer once a week, one-quarter (25%) volunteer at least once a month, another one-quarter (26%) volunteer once every few months, and about one-third (32%) say they volunteer less often than that.

Other topics covered by the article:

- Teen Volunteering Focuses on Church Service and Poverty Alleviation
- The Church is Central to Teen Volunteering Efforts
- The Goals of Service Are to Love and Serve Others
- Debriefing and Follow-up are Important After a Trip

What the Research Means

“On the one hand, our society tells teens that service and volunteerism are important hallmarks of a well-rounded individual,” says Brooke Hempell, vice president of research at Barna Group. “College-bound teens know this is an important element of their school application portfolio, and social media reinforces the idea that social justice and activism are

?trendy.? On the other hand, each generation demonstrates an increasing self-absorption that runs counter to this trend?many Millennials say volunteering is more talk than action.

?The church, and youth groups in particular, have a unique opportunity to stand out as an authentic example of love through service by being the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need,? Hempell continues. ?Parents and Youth Pastors alike know the importance of this, and many find service and missions trips more engaging to youth than trying to compete for being ?the coolest place to hang out on a Friday night.? Further, through these experiences, teens learn first hand what the Gospel is and have tangible life lessons to reflect on in the weeks, months, or years that follow. It is clear that service is an important element to any successful teen discipleship effort.?

Read the article ^[2]

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Links

[1] <https://affirm.net.nz/content/myth-lazy-teen>

[2] <https://www.barna.com/research/teen-attitudes-toward-service/>