



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

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

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