

- Lower anxiety and stress
- A stronger relationship with parents
- More friends who are positive influences
- More respect for yourself and others
- Greater success in life
- Experiencing a feeling of hope, even during hardships

All of these benefits can help you find the answers to the important questions in life because they help you develop better relationships with others and lead you to make healthy choices.

How can you promote spirituality in your life?

- Don't be afraid to discuss spiritual questions with your parents or other trusted adults.⁴ Open up to someone whom you believe you can talk to and who will not judge you for asking some of the "tough" questions.
- Express your spirituality through journals, music, and other forms of self-expression.⁴ Spirituality really flows through self-discovery.
- Surround yourself with positive friends who strengthen your spiritual growth.⁴ Your values are influenced by those around you, so pick your friends wisely.

If you already attend a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque:

- Learn more about your own religious beliefs by reading sacred books, praying or meditating, or attending religious activities.
- Ask questions of your religious or spiritual leaders and share personal experiences with adults you trust.⁴
- Get involved in religious activities just for teens. Participation in these activities will give you the opportunity to develop friendships with people who share similar values.

Whether you are religious or not, anyone can develop spirituality. Developing spirituality promotes

self-discovery so that you can better understand your own values, competencies, and strengths. It helps to establish meaningful relationships with others you can count on to be there when times get tough. And it allows you to see the "big picture" and to make decisions in life that will benefit you in the long run. Spirituality can be formed and practiced in a variety of different ways. No matter which path you choose, a positive and healthy spirituality will provide you with a sense of meaning and purpose and help you to navigate the obstacles in life.

For additional information

The Center for Spiritual Development:
<http://www.search-institute.org/spiritual-development>

Youth Spirituality: <http://youthspirituality.com/>

National Study of Youth and Religion:
<http://www.youthandreligion.org/>

You can also visit your religious organization's website.

References

1. Richard Lerner, Robert W. Roeser, and Erin Phelps (eds.), *Positive Youth Development and Spirituality*, (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2008).
2. Christian Smith and Robert Faris, *Religion and American Adolescent Delinquency, Risk Behaviors, and Constructive Social Activities: A Research Report of the National Study of Youth and Religion, Number 1*. Accessed May 9, 2011. <http://www.youthandreligion.org/sites/youthandreligion.org/files/imported/publications/docs/RiskReport1.pdf>.
3. Eugene Roehlkepartain, Pamela Ebstyn King, Linda Wagener, and Peter L. Benson (eds.), *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006).
4. "How your child may be developing spirituality: Ages 10-14," *The Search Institute*. Accessed May 9, 2011. <http://www.search-institute.org/csd/articles/nurturing/10-14>.