

Single Mothers' Religion and Child Behavior

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Single Mothers' Religious Participation and Early Childhood Behavior

Using data on 1,134 single mothers from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, this study examined trajectories of religious participation among single mothers and whether these trajectories were associated with early childhood behavior. Results suggested that single mothers experienced diverse patterns of religious participation throughout their child's early life; some mothers maintained a consistent pattern of religious participation (or non-participation), and other mothers increased their participation. Results also suggested that religious participation was associated with greater involvement with children, reduced parenting stress, and a lower likelihood of engaging in corporal punishment. Young children raised by mothers who frequently attended religious services were less likely to display problem behaviors, and this relationship was partially mediated by increased child involvement, lower stress, and less frequent corporal punishment. Overall, religious participation may provide resources for single mothers that encourage them to engage in parenting practices that promote positive child development.

Keywords: early childhood; Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing; low-income families; mothers; religiosity; single motherhood;

Family scholars have increasingly focused on fragile families in recent years, as these families have an increased risk of experiencing poverty and family dissolution and often consist of unmarried parents and their children (Carlson, McLanahan, & England, 2004). Because family instability and economic hardship may have negative social and behavioral consequences for children, it is important to examine factors that may strengthen fragile families (Amato, 2005; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

Religion may be one factor that strengthens fragile families by providing access to social capital (Coleman, 1988; Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2008). Social capital can be defined as a set of resources stemming from shared norms and group membership that may be beneficial to families (Furstenberg, 2005); religious institutions may be a source of social capital by providing shared beliefs and values as well as a social network that provides support, parenting guidance, and resources for building healthy relationships (Abbott, Berry, & Meredith, 1990; Edgell, 2006; Ellison, 1991). The social capital gained from religious participation may help to increase the use of supportive parenting practices (Brody & Flor, 1998; Wiley, Warren, & Montanelli, 2002) and improve children's well-being (Bartkowski, Xu, & Levin, 2008). Although research has begun to examine the role of religion within fragile families (e.g., Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2008), little is known about patterns of religious participation among single mothers (i.e., mothers who are not married or residing with a cohabiting partner) and the influence of religious participation on young children's well-being (Mahoney, 2010). This question is important to consider because single mothers may benefit from social capital due to hardship, and religion may be one of the few institutions that single mothers have access to (Foley, McCarthy, & Chaves, 2001).

To benefit from the social capital that religion may provide, single mothers may need to acquire connections within religious institutions; by attending services frequently and over a

period of time, mothers may gain access to a greater number of resources (Iannaccone, 1990). Thus, although religion is a multidimensional construct that includes a variety of attitudes and behaviors (often labeled *religiosity*), this study focuses on whether participation in the social institution of religion may provide access to social capital for single mothers and their children.

The aim of this study is to use longitudinal data to explore the relationship between single mothers' religious participation and early childhood behavior. Three research questions guide this study. First, what patterns of religious participation do single mothers experience during the first few years of their child's life? Second, how does single mothers' religious participation influence the behavior of their young children? Third, is the relationship between single mothers' religious participation and child behavior mediated by family characteristics such as maternal involvement, father supportiveness, and parenting stress? It is possible that the social capital gained by attending religious services may directly influence children's behavior. Alternatively, mothers' religious participation may influence children indirectly by encouraging single mothers to be more involved in their children's lives or by reducing parenting stress.

Four waves of data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCW) were used for this study. Mothers were interviewed after the birth of a child and then again when the child was 1, 3, and 5 years old, allowing for a longitudinal analysis of single mothers' religious participation. Although other indicators of mothers' religiosity were not included in each wave, focusing on religious participation provides needed insight into whether and how the social capital acquired by attending religious services may influence single-parent families. This study also extends previous research suggesting that religious attendance may be especially beneficial to disadvantaged groups (e.g., minorities) by exploring whether religious participation also provide benefits to single mothers (Bierman, 2006; Ellison, Musick, & Henderson, 2008).

Religious Participation and Child Behavior

Religious participation may provide access to social capital in a number of ways. For example, attending religious services may provide individuals with a set of guidelines for how to live one's life, helping them to feel a sense of purpose (Ellison, 1991). Religious participation may also provide access to other like-minded individuals that reinforce values, act as agents of social control, and promote positive behavior among children (Abbott et al., 1990; Edgell, 2006). Indeed, religious mothers may have larger support networks than nonreligious mothers (Hill, Burdette, Regnerus, & Angel, 2008; Kelley, Power, & Wimbush, 1992). Moreover, religious institutions encourage parents to develop quality family relationships, and provide family activities to help foster these relationships (Abbott et al., 1990; Mahoney, Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Murray-Swank, 2003). Overall, the social capital gained from religious participation may equip and encourage single mothers to better provide for their children (Sullivan, 2008).

Although some studies have found no relationship between parents' religiosity and children's behavior (Strayhorn, Weidman, & Larson, 1990), other research suggests that parents' religious beliefs and behaviors are associated with higher well-being among young children. For example, research on two-parent families has shown that parental religiosity increases the likelihood that young children develop a moral conscience (e.g., feeling empathy towards others, being apologetic), and frequent religious participation is negatively associated with problem behavior (Bartkowski et al., 2008; Volling, Mahoney, & Rauer, 2009). Furthermore, one study provided evidence that parental religiosity may also be beneficial for children in nontraditional families; religious participation among adolescent mothers was associated with lower levels of problem behavior among children ten years later (Carothers, Borkowski, Lefever, & Whitman, 2005). Nevertheless, more research on the link between religion and children's behavior within nontraditional families is needed. Specifically, single mothers state that attending religious services is important for improving their child's well-being (Sullivan, 2008), but research has yet

to examine whether this belief is supported by empirical evidence (Mahoney, 2010). Given the increase in nonmarital childbearing in the U.S. (Ventura, 2009), the current study aims to better understand whether the association between religious participation and early childhood behavior found in previous research is consistent for children raised by single mothers.

Trajectories of Religious Participation among Single Mothers

Having a child is an important event that may encourage parents to reevaluate their priorities and focus on meeting the needs of their child. As part of this transition, mothers may increase their religious participation to gain access to social capital from a religious institution (Edgell, 2006; Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, & Waite, 1995; Sullivan, 2008). New mothers may also want to provide their children with the opportunity to participate in religious rituals, even if they themselves are not religious (Sullivan, 2008). Attending religious services once or twice may not provide full access to these resources, however. Instead, single mothers may need to acquire religious capital. Iannaccone (1990) defines religious capital as skills and experiences that are specific to one's religion; acquiring these skills increases access to religious resources and the benefits received from these resources. One primary way to build religious capital is by attending religious services. Thus, examining longitudinal trajectories of religious participation may help to identify mothers with varying levels of religious capital to assess whether religious (and social) capital is associated with early childhood behavior.

Single mothers who frequently attend religious services are likely to have high levels of religious capital. By attending services weekly, they may have a support network that they can rely on for help (Hill et al., 2008; Kelley et al., 1992). These mothers may also be more likely to internalize religious teachings by being exposed to them frequently (Mahoney et al., 2003). Similarly, single mothers who increase their religious participation after having a child may also accrue religious capital. Because single mothers often state the importance of exposing their child to religion, they may increase their participation for their child's benefit (Sullivan, 2008).

Thus, they may be focused on gaining the skills and experiences needed to access religious benefits and improve their child's well-being (Sullivan, 2008).

In contrast, many single mothers may find it difficult to attend religious services. Raising a child is time consuming, and single mothers may face challenges to attending religious services such as transportation to church and inflexible work schedules (Smith, 2001; Sullivan, 2008). As a result, some single mothers may decrease their participation or attend religious services infrequently. Although these mothers may have acquired religious capital prior to the birth of their child, declining or infrequent participation may limit their exposure to a support network and religious teachings (Edgell, 2006). Furthermore, many single mothers do not feel welcome at religious services due to the stigma of single parenthood in these institutions (Smith, 2001; Sullivan, 2008); most religious institutions promote the traditional family as ideal, and may ignore the needs of other families (Ruether, 2000). Thus, many single mothers may not attend religious services (Smith, 2001; Sullivan, 2008). Mothers who stop attending religious services after having a child (or who did not attend services prior to becoming a parent) probably do not have access to the social capital that religious institutions may provide.

The above discussion suggests that trajectories of religious participation may influence mothers' access to social capital within religious institutions, which may be associated with children's behavior. Specifically, I expect that (a) *young children raised by mothers who frequently attend religious services will experience the fewest behavior problems*, (b) *children raised by mothers who never attend religious services will experience the most behavior problems*, and (c) *children raised by mothers following trajectories of decreasing or infrequent participation will display more problem behavior than children raised by frequently attending mothers, but less than children raised by mothers who never attend religious services*.

Mediating Factors

Young children may benefit from being raised by a religiously active mother, but the relationship between religious participation and children's behavior may also be mediated by involvement with children, father supportiveness, parenting stress, and the use of corporal punishment. First, religious teachings may encourage mothers to be active in their child's life, as most religious institutions promote strong family bonds (Edgell, 2006; Wilcox, Chaves, & Franz, 2004). As a result, religious participation may increase the likelihood that mothers sanctify the parent-child relationship (i.e., view this relationship as having spiritual character and significance) and feel more connected to their families (Mahoney et al., 2003). This form of social capital may increase the likelihood that mothers interact with their children, which may result in fewer behavioral problems (McNeal Jr., 1999; Wenk, Hardesty, Morgan, & Blair, 1994). Thus, I expect that *frequent involvement with children may partially mediate the relationship between single mothers' religious participation and children's behavior.*

Religious participation may also help to sanctify the coparental relationship, encouraging mothers and fathers to place a greater value on their roles as parents (Mahoney et al., 2003). Stronger coparenting relationships, or relationships in which parents support one another on how children should be raised, may lead fathers to become more active in family life and increase children's well-being (Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Frosch, & McHale, 2004; Sobolewski & King, 2005). Although single mothers may limit fathers' involvement with children by acting as gatekeepers, religious participation may encourage mothers to work together with the father to develop a strong coparenting relationship (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Indeed, religious participation is associated with lower relationship conflict among low-income parents (Lichter & Carmalt, 2009; Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2008). Therefore, I expect that *single mothers' religious participation may be indirectly associated with fewer problem behaviors among children by strengthening coparental relationships with fathers.*

Raising a child can be stressful, and single mothers may be especially likely to experience parenting stress (Chang & Fine, 2007). Parenting stress can increase the likelihood that children display problem behavior by limiting the quality and quantity of time that parents spend with children (Thomson, Hanson, & McLanahan, 1994). Religious participation may help single mothers to deal with parenting stress by providing a support network to rely on and a broader perspective for understanding life stresses (Kelley et al., 1992; Pargament, 1997; Wiley et al., 2002). Indeed, single mothers believe that religion is useful in helping them to understand difficulties in life (Sullivan, 2008), although empirical research on the link between religion and parenting stress among disadvantaged mothers has been mixed; Hill and colleagues (2008) found that religious participation was associated with fewer parenting demands and less parenting distress, whereas Cain (2007) found no relationship between religious participation and parenting stress. Nevertheless, I hypothesize that *single mothers' religious participation may be associated with fewer problem behaviors among young children by reducing mothers' parenting stress.*

Finally, religious participation may influence single mothers' parenting style. Corporal punishment is associated with an increased risk of behavior problems among young children, and low-income parents are more likely to use physical punishment as a method of discipline (Baumrind, 1991; Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995). A number of studies suggest that conservative Protestants are more likely to use authoritarian parenting practices such as corporal punishment (Ellison, Bartkowski, & Segal, 1996; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993), and religiosity may also increase the likelihood of engaging in authoritative parenting (Gunnore, Hetherington, & Reiss, 1999). Nevertheless, attending religious services may also encourage mothers to focus on child-oriented discipline strategies that are nurturing and responsive to children instead of focusing primarily on obedience (Kelley et al., 1992). Thus, I hypothesize that *the relationship between trajectories of religious participation and children's problem behavior will be partially mediated by less frequent use of corporal punishment.*

Other Factors

Although this study focuses on religious participation, other aspects of religion may also influence children's behavior. For example, single mothers who do not attend religious services may still rely on internalized religious beliefs for support, which may encourage them to engage in supportive parenting practices (Brody & Flor, 1998; Kelley et al., 1992; Sullivan, 2008). In contrast, mothers with strict religious beliefs (e.g., literal interpretations of religious texts) may emphasize obedience in order to teach children to be submissive to divine (as well as human) authority (Ellison et al., 1996; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993), which may limit children's opportunities to develop self-control and increase the likelihood that they engage in problem behavior (Simons, Simons, Burt, Brody, & Cutrona, 2005). Finally, the social capital available to single mothers may vary by religious denomination; conservative Protestant churches may offer more programs to nontraditional families than other denominations (Wilcox et al., 2004).

A number of other factors may also influence the relationship between religious participation and child behavior. Socioeconomic status is a strong predictor of children's well-being, and may explain much of the disadvantage within single-parent families (Brody & Flor, 1998; McLahahan & Sandefur, 1994). Having a greater number of children may also increase the risk of financial disadvantage and stress. Moreover, mothers' age and race are associated with religion, parenting, and children's behavior (Brody & Flor, 1998; D'Onofrio et al., 2009; Stolzenberg et al., 2005). Parenting practices and behavior problems may also vary by child's gender (Lundberg, 2005; Rubin, Burgess, Dwyer, & Hastings, 2003). Finally, mothers may receive social capital from non-religious social institutions (Coleman, 1988; Furstenberg, 2005).

Method

Data

Four waves of data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCW) were used for this study. This is a longitudinal, birth cohort study that followed 4,898 children born

between 1998 and 2000. The FFCW is an urban study that is representative of all nonmarital births in cities with populations of over 200,000 when weights are applied. Each parent was interviewed shortly after the child's birth (W1) and then again approximately one (W2), three (W3), and five years later (W4). A subset of families also participated in additional studies focusing on the child's health and well-being at W3 and W4. In particular, 4,898 mothers and 3,830 fathers were interviewed for the baseline survey, and retention rates at each follow-up interview were over 80% (Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, & McLanahan, 2001).

Single-parent households are diverse; these families can be formed as a result of the dissolution of a relationship or a nonmarital birth, and may or may not contain other adults residing in the home (e.g., the child's grandparents). For this study, single motherhood was defined as mothers who resided with their child and were neither married nor residing with a cohabiting partner at W3. The sample was also restricted to single mothers who completed the W4 child survey in order to assess children's behavior. To account for this diversity, controls were included to indicate mothers who dissolved a marital or cohabiting relationship prior to W3 and mothers who formed a marital or cohabiting relationship at W4. Of the 4,231 families in the data at W3 (86% retention from W1), 1,601 (38%) were single mother families. Of these single mother families, 467 (30%) were excluded because they did not participate in the W4 child survey, resulting in a final sample size of 1,134 single mother families. 38% of these households contained other adults (such as grandparents or other relatives), but controlling for the presence of other adults in supplementary models did not alter the results of this study.

Because of the nature of the data and the sample restrictions used, the data are not generalizable to all single mother families; single mothers in this sample were more likely to be Black and be on welfare than single mothers excluded from the sample. To account for selection bias, Heckman's (1979) two-stage method was used. I first used a probit model to predict whether mothers remained in the sample at W3 based on baseline characteristics (age, race,

education, etc.). The model estimates were used to create a lambda term (lambda 1) that represents the effects of characteristics associated with attrition prior to W3. I then repeated this process to predict whether mothers participated in the W4 child survey based on W3 attributes, and used the estimates to create a second lambda term (lambda 2). Both lambda variables were included in all models to account for selection bias.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables were taken from the W4 child survey. Children's behavior was measured using indicators from the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000) and the Adaptive Social Behavior Inventory (Hogan, Scott, & Bauer, 1992). For each indicator, mothers reported whether the statement is true of the child's behavior (ranging from 0 = *not true* to 2 = *very/often true*).

Externalizing problem behavior. Externalizing problem behavior was taken from mothers' responses to the aggressive and delinquency scales ($\alpha = .86$). The aggressive scale consisted of 20 items about whether the child boasts, bullies others, destroys things, threatens people, gets into fights, demands a lot of attention, and is unusually loud. The delinquency scale consisted of 10 items that assess whether the child cheats, hangs around with others who get into trouble, steals, swears, and runs away from home. Responses to all 30 items were summed.

Internalizing problem behavior. Internalizing problem behavior was taken from mothers' responses to the withdrawn and anxious/depressed scales included in the survey ($\alpha = .76$). The withdrawn scale consisted of 9 items that assess whether the child would rather be alone, is secretive, is shy, is unhappy, is withdrawn, and stares blankly. The anxious/depressed scale consisted of 14 items about whether the child complains of loneliness, cries a lot, feels inferior, feels guilty, worries, and feels no one loves him/her. Responses to these 23 items were summed.

Independent Variables

Religious participation. How often mothers attend religious services was coded as a scale with the following values: 0 = *never*; 1 = *hardly ever*; 2 = *several times a year*; 3 = *several times a month*; 4 = *once a week or more*. The indicator of religious participation was taken from each of the four waves of the survey to assess changes in religious participation over time.

Religious affiliation. A modified version of the coding scheme developed by Steensland and colleagues (2000) was used to indicate religious affiliation (some of the categories were collapsed due to small sample sizes). Religious affiliation was based on two questions at W3. Mothers first indicated a general affiliation (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, etc.). All Protestant mothers were then asked to identify as mainline Protestant, conservative Protestant, Black Protestant, or other (specific denominations were not available). Responses were used to create five indicators of religious affiliation: evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Catholic, other religious affiliation, and no religious preference (used as the reference category). Mothers were classified as evangelical Protestant if they identified as conservative or Black Protestant. Mothers who identified as other Protestant or Christian and who (a) attended religious services at least a few times a month and (b) agreed that the Bible is the literal word of God were also classified as evangelical Protestant (Steensland et al., 2000). A dummy variable was also included to indicate mothers who changed their religious affiliation between W1 and W3.

Religious attitudes. Two W3 variables were used to indicate mothers' religious attitudes. Religious family environment indicates the degree (0 = *strongly disagree* to 3 = *strongly agree*) that mothers used their religious faith as a guide for the way they treat their family. Strict religious beliefs indicates whether mothers agreed (0 = *strongly disagree* to 3 = *strongly agree*) with a belief associated with their denomination. Protestants were asked whether they believe that the Bible is the word of God and should be read literally. Catholics were asked whether they believe that the Eucharist is the real body and blood of Jesus Christ. Muslims were asked

whether they believe that the Koran is the inspired word of God and should be read literally. Jewish mothers were asked whether keeping kosher is an important part of being Jewish.

Mediating Variables

Mother involvement. Mother involvement was indicated by the number of days per week that mothers spent participating in thirteen activities with the focal child at W3 ($\alpha = .65$): sing songs or nursery rhymes, hug or show physical affection, tell child that you love him/her, let child help with simple chores, play imaginary games, read stories, tell stories, play inside with toys, tell child that you appreciate something he/she did, visit relatives, go to a restaurant, assist child with eating, and put child to bed. Responses ranged from 0 to 7 days a week, and the mean for the thirteen activities was used as the scale score.

Father supportiveness. Mothers responded to six statements about their relationship with the birth father at W3. Mothers were asked how frequently (0 = *never* to 3 = *always*): (a) the father acts like the father you want, (b) you can trust the father to take care of the child, (c) the father respects schedules and rules that you make, (d) the father supports the way you want to raise the child, (e) you and the father talk about problems that come up in raising the child, and (f) you can count on the father for help when you need someone to look after the child for a few hours ($\alpha = .91$). The mean score was used as the measure of father supportiveness.

Parenting stress. Mothers were asked about their level of agreement (0 = *strongly disagree* to 3 = *strongly agree*) to four statements at W3: (a) being a parent is harder than I thought it would be, (b) I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent, (c) taking care of my child is more work than pleasure, and (d) I often feel tired/worn out from raising a family ($\alpha = .64$). The mean score was used as the measure of parenting stress.

Corporal punishment. Corporal punishment was indicated by the frequency (0 = *never* to 4 = *every day or nearly every day*) that the mother spanked her child in the month prior to W3.

Control Variables

Mothers' age at W3 was measured in years. Variables were included to indicate the gender of the child (1 = *female*) and the number of additional children that the mother has. Four dummy variables were used to indicate mothers' race: White (reference group), Black, Latino, and other racial group. SES was indicated by whether mothers received welfare benefits (1 = *yes*), hours worked per week, and educational attainment at W3, which was categorized as (a) less than high school (reference group), (b) high school diploma, (c) some college (or trade school), and (d) four-year college graduate. Finally, a variable was included to assess mothers' participation in the following organizations over the previous year: service clubs, political/civic groups, labor unions, community organizations, groups working with children, and political demonstrations. Responses (1 = *yes* for each organization) were summed to indicate the number of organizations that mothers were involved in at W3.

Analytic Strategy

The analysis for this study was conducted in a number of stages. First, group-based trajectory modeling was used to obtain estimates of single mothers' religious participation from W1-W4. This methodology assumes that there are groups of individuals that follow similar patterns of behavior (i.e., trajectories) over time, and uses maximum likelihood techniques to estimate each group's trajectory (Jones, Nagin, & Roeder, 2001; Nagin, 1999, 2005). This method also estimates the probability of following each identified trajectory (based on each mother's responses) to identify the most accurate trajectory for each mother (Nagin, 2005). For example, Mother X reported attending services monthly at W1 and W2 and weekly at W3 and W4. If the model identified four trajectories – never, moderate, increasing, and frequent attendance – Mother X may be assigned the following probabilities: 0, .10, .30, and .60. This indicates that she would be identified as a frequent attender, as her pattern of attendance has the highest probability of being associated with the frequent attender trajectory.

This approach is useful for uncovering longitudinal patterns of mothers' religious participation without making arbitrary group cutoffs (e.g., high vs. low religious participation). Although the trajectory groups are only approximations, they are helpful in illustrating the patterns of religious participation that single mothers may experience after the birth of a child.

A censored normal model was used to estimate the trajectories. A censored normal model assumes that the dependent variable (i.e., religious participation) is normally distributed, but also allows for clustering at the scale maximum and minimum. This model is appropriate for this study because mothers' reports of religious participation were skewed in W3 and W4 (over one-third of mothers attended religious services weekly). The basic model to estimate each trajectory specifies the link between interview year and religious participation as a polynomial function:

$$y_{it}^j = \beta_0^j + \beta_1^j \text{YEAR}_{it} + \beta_2^j \text{YEAR}_{it}^2 + \beta_3^j \text{YEAR}_{it}^3 + \varepsilon_{it}$$

In this model, y is the predicted rate of religious participation for person i in trajectory group j at time t , β_0 , β_1 , β_2 , and β_3 are parameters that determine the shape of each trajectory, and ε is an error term for each group. Because a unique set of parameters are used to estimate each trajectory, the shapes of the trajectories can vary by group (Nagin, 2005). Trajectory estimates were obtained using a procedure in SAS (PROC TRAJ), and these estimates were used as the indicators of religious participation in the second stage of the analysis (Jones et al., 2001).

For the second part of the study, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models were used (survey weights were not applied to maintain sample size). Regression models were run to assess whether religious participation predicted each of the mediating factors, whether religious participation predicted children's behavior, and whether the relationship between religious participation and children's behavior was mediated by parenting practices (Baron & Kenny, 1986). All mediating variables were included in a final model to reduce space (additional results can be found on the *Journal of Marriage and Family (JMF)* website in Appendix A). Formal

tests of mediation were also conducted using the bootstrapping method (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Analyses were run using 5,000 bootstrap samples for each dependent variable, and all religious, control, and mediating variables were included in the same model to test the influence of each mediating variable while accounting for the others. Significant mediating effects were determined using 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

To preserve sample size, multiple imputation was used to account for missing data. Specifically, the *ice* and *micombine* commands in STATA were used for the analyses (Royston, 2005). Missing values for predictor variables were imputed using all available data. For the dependent variables, missing values were due to mothers not answering a few (or less) of the items for each scale. In order to increase sample size, values on the missing items were imputed using the information provided on the other scale items. Results from models that excluded cases with imputed dependent variables were consistent with those presented here.

Results

The first step in group-based trajectory analysis is to specify the number of groups and the order of each trajectory (linear, quadratic, etc.) prior to estimating the models (Nagin, 2005). Researcher judgment and BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion) statistics are used to determine the optimal number of groups and the correct form of each trajectory. The overall goal is to find the model that conveys all of the features of the data but remaining parsimonious (Nagin, 2005).

----- Insert Figure 1 About Here -----

Using BIC statistics and model parameters as a guide, groups were added individually to find the optimal number. BIC statistics increased as groups were added: BIC = -6,852 for a four-group model, -6,820 for a five-group model, and -6,809 for a six-group model. BIC then decreased when a seventh group was added (-6,816) and no other unique trajectories appeared. Thus, a six-group model emerged as the best-fitting model; four of the groups followed quadratic trajectories and two groups followed a linear trajectory. Other diagnostic tests suggested that this

was a good-fitting model. For example, Nagin (2005) suggests that the average posterior probability (the average probability that each individual assigned to that group actually belong to the group based on their pattern of religious participation) for each group should be at least .70. The average posterior probabilities in this trajectory model were .88, .71, .80, .87, .77, and .85.

Trajectories from this model are presented in Figure 1. Results suggest that two groups of mothers increased their religious participation at W3 and W4. Specifically, 11% of single mothers (high increasing attenders) increased their religious involvement from hardly ever attending when their child was born (W1) to attending services weekly when their child was five years old (W4). In addition, 7% of mothers (low increasing attenders) increased from never attending religious services to attending several times a year.

Although there is some fluctuation in religious participation within the remaining groups, the other four trajectories are characterized by fairly stable rates of religious participation. Frequent attenders (21% of mothers) experienced a slight increase in religious participation at W2, and then attended religious services weekly at W3 and W4. In contrast, 8% of single mothers (monthly attenders) experienced a slight decrease in religious participation each year, but still attended religious services at least monthly in the years following a birth. In addition, most mothers were classified as moderate attenders (45% of mothers). These mothers slightly increased their religious attendance at W2 and W3, but only attended religious services several times a year (on average) throughout this period. Finally, 8% of mothers were classified as non-attenders, as most of the mothers in this group never attended religious services from W1-W4.

Overall, results in Figure 1 suggest that patterns of religious participation among single mothers were fairly diverse; some single mothers increased their religious participation (or maintained high involvement) after the birth of a child, but others experienced slight declines in religious participation or attended infrequently. The next part of the analysis explores whether these patterns of religious participation were associated with children's behavior.

----- Insert Table 1 About Here -----

Table 1 includes mean values within each trajectory group for all variables. These results provide some insight into the differences between mothers in each of the trajectory groups. On average, frequent attenders were more likely to believe that religion is important to family life, reported lower levels of parenting stress, were more involved with their children, and had children who displayed fewer problem behaviors than other mothers. In contrast, non-attenders had children who displayed more problem behaviors (on average) than mothers in other trajectory groups. To further analyze whether single mothers' religious participation benefits children, the remaining analyses focus on whether children raised by single mothers following a trajectory of moderate, increasing, monthly, or frequent attendance display fewer problem behaviors than children raised by non-attending single mothers. Non-attenders were used as the reference category to assess whether various rates of religious participation are beneficial to children relative to not attending.

----- Insert Table 2 About Here -----

Results exploring the relationship between single mothers' religious participation and the mediating factors are presented in Table 2. As expected, mothers who attended religious services frequently were more likely to be engaged in their children's lives; high increasing ($b = 0.34, p < .05$), monthly ($b = 0.35, p < .05$), and frequent attenders ($b = 0.44, p < .001$) were all more likely to be involved in their children's lives than non-attenders. There was also evidence to suggest that attending religious services was associated with support from the birth father; high increasing ($b = 0.36, p < .05$), low increasing, ($b = 0.49, p < .001$), moderate ($b = 0.27, p < .05$), monthly ($b = 0.44, p < .01$), and frequent attenders ($b = 0.30, p < .05$) were more likely to report receiving support from nonresident fathers than non-attenders. Also as expected, attending religious services at least monthly was associated with decreased stress among single mothers; monthly ($b = -0.28, p < .05$) and frequent attenders ($b = 0.33, p < .001$) were less likely to

experience parenting stress than non-attenders. Finally, religious participation was associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in corporal punishment; high increasing ($b = -0.71, p < .01$), moderate ($b = -0.58, p < .01$), monthly ($b = -0.65, p < .05$), and frequent ($b = -0.70, p < .01$) attenders were all less likely to use corporal punishment than non-attending single mothers.

Results examining the relationship between single mothers' religious participation and children's externalizing problem behavior are presented in Table 3. In support of my hypothesis, results in Model 1 suggest that children raised by high increasing ($b = -3.39, p < .01$), moderate ($b = -2.72, p < .01$), monthly ($b = -3.08, p < .05$), and frequent attenders ($b = -4.85, p < .001$) were less likely to display externalizing problem behaviors than children raised by single mothers following a trajectory of non-attendance. For the most part, these relationships persisted when control variables were added in Model 2. Although the sizes of the coefficients were reduced, the coefficients for trajectories of religious participation remained significant with the exception of monthly attenders.

----- Insert Table 3 About Here -----

Mediating variables were introduced in Model 3, and as expected, parenting stress ($b = -0.34, p < .001$) and the use of corporal punishment ($b = 0.21, p < .001$) were positively associated with externalizing problem behavior. Furthermore, there was some evidence that each of these variables partially mediated the relationship between religious participation and children's externalizing problem behavior. Specifically, the coefficients for trajectories of religious participation were reduced when parenting stress and corporal punishment were added to the model, and trajectories of religious participation were associated with both parenting stress and corporal punishment (Table 2). Results using the bootstrap method provided additional support for mediation, showing that parenting stress was a significant mediator of the relationship between high increasing ($b = -0.23, p < .05$), moderate ($b = -0.18, p < .05$), and frequent attendance ($b = -0.39, p < .05$), and externalizing behavior. Similarly, corporal

punishment significantly mediated the relationship between high increasing ($b = -0.27, p < .05$), moderate ($b = -0.23, p < .05$), and frequent attendance ($b = -0.26, p < .05$) and externalizing problem behavior (detailed results can be found on the *JMF* website in Appendix B). Thus, part of the reason for why children of frequently attending single mothers were less likely to exhibit externalizing problem behavior is because these mothers were less likely to experience parenting stress and less likely to use corporal punishment.

----- Insert Table 4 About Here -----

Results examining the relationship between single mothers' religious participation and children's internalizing problem behavior are presented in Table 4. Results in Model 1 suggest that children raised by moderate attenders ($b = -1.02, p < .05$) and frequent attenders ($b = -1.38, p < .01$) were less likely to display internalizing problem behaviors than children raised by non-attenders. When controls were added in Model 2, only one significant difference remained; children raised by single mothers who attended religious services frequently were less likely to display internalizing problem behavior than children raised by mothers who never attended religious services ($b = -1.02, p < .05$).

Mediating variables were added in Model 3. Mother involvement ($b = -0.33, p < .01$) and parenting stress ($b = 0.49, p < .001$) were related to children's internalizing problem behavior in the expected direction. Once these variables were included, the coefficient for frequent attendance was no longer significant, suggesting that children raised by frequently attending mothers were less likely to display internalizing problem behavior because these single mothers were more likely to be involved in their child's life and less likely to experience parenting stress than non-attenders. Results using the bootstrap method provided additional support for mediation, showing that parenting stress ($b = -0.23, p < .05$) and mother involvement ($b = -0.17, p < .05$) significantly mediated the relationship between frequent attendance and internalizing problem behavior (detailed results can be found on the *JMF* website in Appendix B).

Discussion

Previous research suggests that religion may be a source of social capital that helps to encourage parents to engage in supportive parenting practices and promote positive child development (Abbott et al., 1990; Bartkowski et al., 2008; Edgell, 2006). Unfortunately, most of the research to date has ignored family diversity and focused on religion, parenting, and children's well-being within heterosexual two-parent families, as this is the family structure promoted by most religious institutions (Edgell, 2006; Mahoney, 2010). This gap in the literature is important to consider because nonmarital childbearing has increased in recent decades, and qualitative work on single mothers suggests that these mothers believe that religion is an important parenting resource (Sullivan, 2008; Ventura, 2009). The goal of this study was to build on the literature to identify patterns of religious participation among single mothers, and then examine whether and how these trajectories were associated with early childhood behavior.

Prior studies suggest that single mothers rarely attend religious services, perhaps due to the stigma placed on single motherhood within many religious institutions (Edgell, 2006; Sullivan, 2008). Consistent with this research, approximately 60% of the single mothers in this study attended religious services several times a year or less throughout the first five years of their child's life. These mothers may indeed feel unwelcome in a religious institution due to the stigma placed on single motherhood (Sullivan, 2008). Alternatively, these mothers may be unable to attend due to time constraints associated with raising a child as a single parent.

Despite the high percentage of single mothers who attend infrequently, results from this study showed that patterns of religious participation among single mothers may be more diverse than previous research suggests; 8% of mothers attended religious services at least monthly, 21% of mothers attended services weekly (on average) throughout their child's early life, and 11% of mothers significantly increased their religious participation as their child got older. Thus, even though many religious institutions promote the traditional family model and may have difficulty

accepting and addressing the needs of diverse families, a sizeable percentage of single mothers attend religious services despite these barriers (Edgell, 2006; Ruether, 2000).

Although these numbers seem surprising, they may not be specific to the low-income, urban, largely minority sample used for this study. Estimates from the 2008 General Social Survey (GSS) are fairly consistent with those found in this study; 26% of single mothers attended services weekly in the previous year and 16% attended monthly (results not shown). Furthermore, a parallel trajectory analysis of 1,356 married mothers from the FFCW showed that 20% of married mothers attended services weekly and 9% attended monthly, percentages which are comparable to the trajectories for single mothers (results can be found on the *JMF* website in Appendix C). These results raise a number of questions for scholars of religion and family (as well as religious leaders) about how the experiences of single mothers within religious institutions may differ from those of married parents, and how religious institutions can better address the needs of single mothers who appear to be attending services. Moreover, if a sizeable percentage of single mothers are utilizing religious institutions as a resource, future research should continue to explore how and why religious participation may influence these families. Although this study focused primarily on benefits associated with religious participation, assessing the disadvantages associated with religious participation for single mothers will help to provide a more complete understanding of the role that religion may play in these families' lives.

A social capital framework was adopted for this study as a way to understand whether and how single-parent families may benefit from participation in a religious institution, focusing specifically on the link between patterns of religious participation and early childhood behavior. The first set of hypotheses stated that frequent religious participation will increase the likelihood that single mothers have access to social capital and decrease the likelihood that their children engage in problem behavior. Results provided some support for this hypothesis; children raised by mothers who frequently attended religious services were less likely to engage in externalizing

and internalizing problem behavior than other children, and results also suggested that moderate attendance was associated with a lower likelihood of externalizing problem behavior among children than non-attendance. Single mothers who attend religious services frequently may have acquired religious capital, providing them with access to the social capital that religious institutions may provide (Iannaccone, 1990). As a result, frequently attending single mothers may have access to a support network that may help to deter children from engaging in externalizing problem behavior by providing additional social control such as moral guidance, supervision, and the strength to avoid peer pressure (Sullivan, 2008). This support may be especially beneficial to single mother families; children raised by single mothers receive less supervision, and exposure to supportive adults in religious institutions may help to offset some of this disadvantage for children (Kelley et al., 1992; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

Results from this study also provided some support for the second set of hypotheses, which argued that religious participation may indirectly influence children's behavior by increasing mother involvement and nonresident father support, as well as reducing parenting stress and the use of corporal punishment. Specifically, results suggested that mother involvement, parenting stress, and corporal punishment partially mediate the relationship between single mothers' religious participation and early childhood behavior. These findings shed some light on the specific ways that social capital may be beneficial to single mothers. Religious teachings, services, and activities that promote strong family relationships may encourage (and provide opportunities for) single mothers to be actively involved in their child's life (Abbott et al., 1990; Mahoney et al., 2003). Moreover, by sanctifying family relationships, single mothers may be more likely to engage in supportive parenting practices and avoid harsh forms of discipline (Kelley et al., 1992; Mahoney et al., 2003). Involvement in a religious institution may also help mothers to deal with the stresses involved in raising a child. Religious teachings may help single mothers to understand and cope with difficulties in life (Pargament,

1997; Sullivan, 2008), and mothers may have a network of supportive individuals to rely on when help is needed (Kelley et al., 1992; Wiley et al., 2002), both of which may help to reduce parenting stress and allow single mothers to be more focused on meeting the needs of their child.

Previous research has explored the role of religious attitudes and beliefs within single-parent families, and results from this study advance this research by suggesting that institutional involvement is also important to consider. The idea that religion may help to strengthen single-parent families by providing single mothers with social capital is a plausible one, as religion may be one of the few social institutions that provide resources to disadvantaged populations. Overall, despite the stigma that single mothers may face from religious institutions, these institutions may be an important source of social capital for single mothers; religious participation may provide support and guidance to single-parent families, helping to reduce some of the disadvantages that children in these families may face. Yet, there are many questions left unanswered. For example, are frequent attenders joining religious institutions that are accepting of single parents, or is access to social capital within religious institutions more likely to be dependent on one's character or strength of religious beliefs than family structure (Pargament, Silverman, Johnson, Echemendia, & Snyder, 1983)? Also, does access to social capital within religious institutions vary by other factors such as race and religious affiliation? This study provides an initial exploration of how and why religious participation may be beneficial for single parents and their children, but future studies should extend this research to further examine barriers and opportunities for single-parent families in religious institutions.

Despite the numerous strengths in this study, there are also some limitations. Unfortunately, the data used for this study are not generalizable to all single mother families. The FFCW is an urban sample that includes a high percentage of minority families and low-income families, and whether these findings would be similar in other single mother populations (middle class, rural, White, etc.) is unclear. Supplementary analyses using GSS data provide some

evidence that rates of religious participation may be similar in a national sample, but other research suggests that African-American communities may be more accepting of single motherhood than White communities (Brody & Flor, 1998; Hill et al., 2008). Future research should continue to explore the role of religion in nontraditional families to better understand the ways that religion may be beneficial (or detrimental) to these families.

This study is also limited by the questions that are available at each wave. Ideally, it would be useful to analyze measures of private and public religious involvement to more fully understand whether and how religion may be associated with young children's development. Unfortunately, religious participation is the only religion question that is asked of mothers in each wave; all other questions about religion are only asked at W3. This study contributes to the literature by examining how participation in the social institution of religion may provide access to social capital for single mothers, but future research should examine the ways that private religious practices may provide a similar or different set of resources to single parent families.

This study is also unable to examine single mothers' experiences within religious institutions, specifically in regard to why single mothers may (or may not) remain involved in a religious community. More in-depth research is needed to uncover how these mothers may overcome the stigma of single motherhood, or whether religious communities are reaching out to these mothers to provide assistance. Congregation-level data would be useful to explore whether acceptance of single parenthood within congregations is an important predictor of whether single mothers attend religious services and what resources may be available to them.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the literature on family and religion by using longitudinal data to explore how single mothers' religious participation may be associated with early childhood behavior. This study identified six trajectories of religious participation that single mothers experience after the birth of a child, suggesting that single mothers experience diverse patterns of religious participation. Furthermore, attending religious services frequently

increased the likelihood that single mothers were involved in their children's lives and reduced the likelihood that they experienced parenting stress and used corporal punishment as a form of discipline. Moreover, frequent religious participation (and the corresponding increase in positive parenting practices) decreased the likelihood that young children engaged in problem behavior. Future research should continue to explore how involvement in religious institutions may provide access to resources for nontraditional families.

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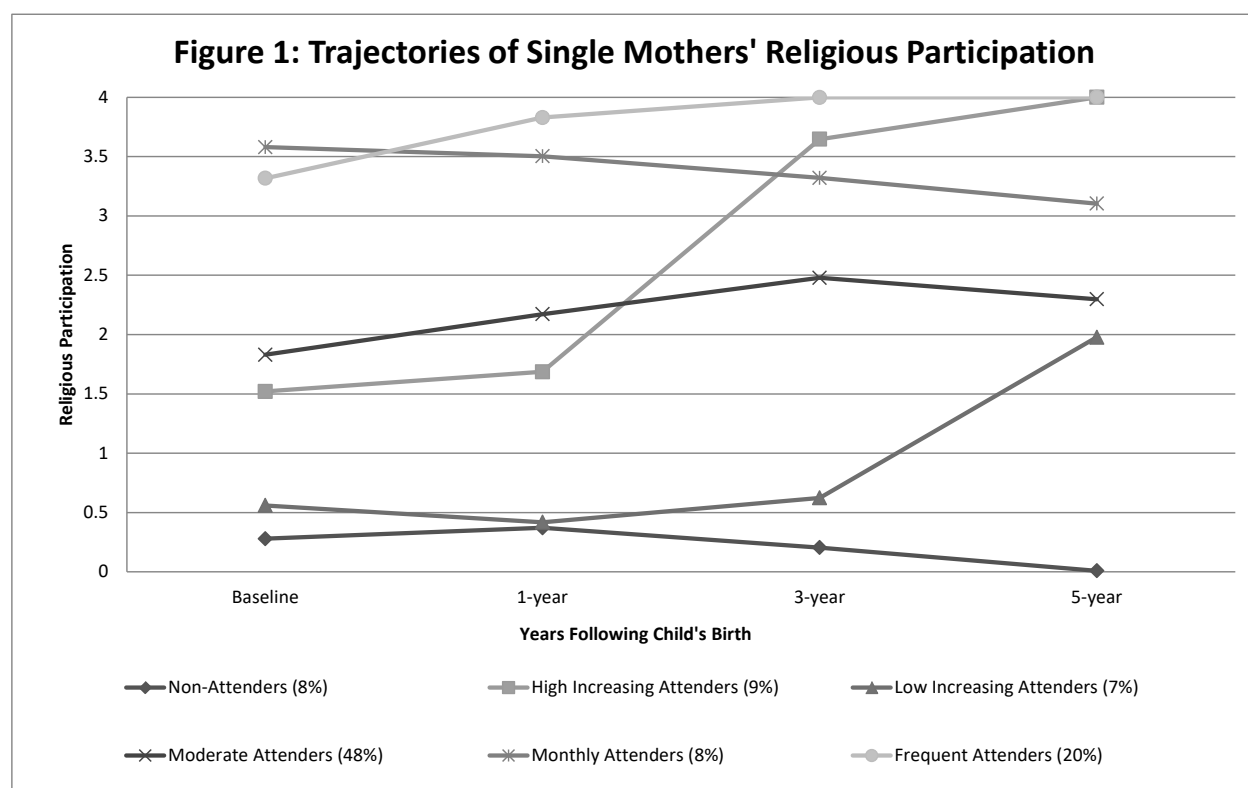


Table 1
Mean Values of Variables by Trajectory Group of Single Mothers' Religious Participation (N = 1,134)

	Trajectories of Religious Participation					
	Non- attenders _a <i>n</i> = 92	High increasing attenders _b <i>n</i> = 128	Low increasing attenders _c <i>n</i> = 74	Moderate attenders _d <i>n</i> = 514	Monthly attenders _e <i>n</i> = 92	Frequent attenders _f <i>n</i> = 234
<u>Child behavior</u>						
Externalizing problem behavior	16.51 _{b,d,e,f}	13.16 _a	14.84 _f	13.96 _{a,f}	13.87 _{a,f}	12.03 _{a,c,d,e}
Internalizing problem behavior	7.03 _{b,d,f}	5.64 _a	6.30 _f	5.66 _a	5.71	5.11 _{a,c}
<u>Mothers' religious characteristics</u>						
Evangelical Protestant	0.17 _{b,d,e,f}	0.61 _{a,c,d}	0.24 _{b,d,e,f}	0.46 _{a,b,c,e,f}	0.65 _{a,c,d}	0.71 _{a,c,d}
Mainline Protestant	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.02
Catholic	0.14	0.19	0.15	0.21	0.21	0.18
Other religious affiliation	0.05 _c	0.03 _{c,d}	0.18 _{a,c,e,f}	0.11 _{c,f}	0.07 _{c,f}	0.02 _{c,d,e}
Change in religious affiliation	0.30 _{b,d}	0.55 _{a,d,f}	0.41	0.41 _{a,b}	0.41	0.38 _b
Religious family environment	1.82 _{b,d,e,f}	2.63 _{a,c,d,f}	1.86 _{b,d,e,f}	2.34 _{a,b,c,e,f}	2.52 _{a,c,d,f}	2.80 _{a,b,c,d,e}
Strict religious beliefs	2.06 _{b,d,e,f}	2.59 _{a,c,d}	2.24 _{b,e,f}	2.36 _{a,b,f}	2.53 _{a,c,f}	2.70 _{a,c,d,e}
<u>Mediating variables</u>						
Mother involvement	4.77 _{e,f}	5.03	4.92 _f	4.94 _f	5.06 _a	5.15 _{a,c,d}
Father supportiveness	1.82 _c	2.07	2.21 _{a,d}	1.99 _c	2.02	1.98
Parenting stress	1.31 _f	1.21	1.31 _f	1.22 _f	1.19	1.07 _{a,c,d}
Corporal punishment	1.21	0.91	0.98	0.99	0.99	0.94
<u>Controls</u>						
Mothers' age	25.74 _f	26.96	26.95	26.76 _f	27.10	28.10 _{a,d}
Child is female	0.54 _f	0.46	0.50	0.46	0.50	0.41 _a
Black	0.58 _{b,f}	0.73 _a	0.68	0.65	0.63	0.72 _a
Latino	0.23	0.19	0.16	0.20	0.20	0.19
Other race	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.02
High school education	0.30	0.33	0.35	0.28	0.35	0.32
Some college	0.18 _{d,e,f}	0.27 _f	0.23 _{d,e,f}	0.36 _{a,c}	0.38 _{a,c}	0.40 _{a,b,c}

College degree	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.06
Received welfare	0.26 _c	0.23 _c	0.41 _{a,b,d,e,f}	0.25 _c	0.16 _c	0.21 _c
Organizational involvement	0.33 _f	0.45 _{c,f}	0.22 _{b,d,e,f}	0.46 _{c,f}	0.52 _c	0.71 _{a,b,c,d}
Number of additional children	1.52	1.80 _{d,e,f}	1.64	1.33 _b	1.34 _b	1.43 _b
Hours worked	17.67 _{d,e,f}	19.98 _e	17.24 _{d,e,f}	22.07 _{a,c,e}	27.04 _{a,b,c,d}	22.86 _{a,c}
Previously married or cohabiting	0.38	0.44 _e	0.38	0.46 _e	0.30 _{b,d,f}	0.47 _e
Transition out of single parenthood (W4)	0.08	0.16 _c	0.07 _b	0.13	0.11	0.14

Note: Two-tailed t-tests used to determine differences between group means. Subscripts indicate significant differences between trajectory groups at the $p < .05$ level.

Table 2
Results from OLS Regression Models Predicting Mediating Factors at W3 (N = 1,134)

Variable	Mother involvement		Father supportiveness		Parenting stress		Corporal punishment	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>
<u>Trajectories of religious participation</u>								
High increasing attenders	0.34	0.14*	0.36	0.15*	-0.19	0.10	-0.71	0.27**
Low increasing attenders	0.19	0.14	0.49	0.15***	-0.13	0.11	-0.57	0.29
Moderate attenders	0.21	0.11	0.27	0.12*	-0.16	0.08	-0.58	0.22**
Monthly attenders	0.35	0.14*	0.44	0.16**	-0.28	0.11*	-0.65	0.29*
Frequent attenders	0.44	0.13***	0.30	0.15*	-0.33	0.10***	-0.70	0.25**
<u>Other religious characteristics</u>								
Evangelical Protestant	-0.23	0.08**	-0.28	0.09***	0.06	0.06	0.39	0.17*
Mainline Protestant	-0.16	0.20	-0.41	0.22	-0.12	0.15	0.24	0.41
Catholic	-0.05	0.11	-0.27	0.12*	-0.00	0.08	0.05	0.22
Other religious affiliation	-0.20	0.12	-0.27	0.14	-0.01	0.09	0.55	0.24*
Change in religious affiliation	-0.04	0.06	0.05	0.07	-0.02	0.04	-0.07	0.12
Religious family environment	0.09	0.04*	-0.04	0.04	0.04	0.03	-0.04	0.08
Strict religious beliefs	-0.02	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.03	-0.03	0.08
<u>Controls</u>								
Mothers' age	-0.01	0.01*	-0.01	0.01*	-0.01	0.00	-0.03	0.01**
Child is female	0.01	0.05	-0.04	0.06	-0.05	0.04	-0.13	0.11
Black	-0.08	0.13	0.36	0.15*	0.01	0.10	-0.40	0.27
Latino	-0.24	0.11*	-0.00	0.15	0.01	0.08	-0.27	0.22
Other race	-0.61	0.24*	-0.01	0.32	-0.00	0.18	-0.62	0.52
High school education	0.03	0.07	-0.09	0.08	-0.10	0.05	0.33	0.15*
Some college education	0.12	0.08	-0.07	0.08	-0.12	0.06*	0.24	0.15
College degree	-0.45	0.17**	-0.22	0.18	-0.13	0.13	0.85	0.34*
Received welfare	0.40	0.12***	0.06	0.12	0.01	0.09	-0.31	0.24
Organizational involvement	0.12	0.03***	0.04	0.03	-0.05	0.02*	-0.04	0.07
Number of additional children	-0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.02*	-0.01	0.05
Hours worked	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00
Previously married or cohabiting	-0.39	0.19*	0.01	0.20	-0.08	0.14	0.95	0.39*
Transition out of single parenthood (W4)	0.01	0.08	0.27	0.09**	-0.05	0.06	-0.25	0.17
Lambda 1	-0.16	0.17	-0.27	0.18	0.11	0.13	-0.31	0.34
Lambda 2	0.75	0.31*	0.79	0.33*	-0.04	0.23	-1.21	0.65
<i>R</i> ²	0.08		0.07		0.07		0.03	

Note: Ordered logistic regression is used for the model with corporal punishment as a dependent variable.

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Table 3
Results from OLS Regression Models Predicting Externalizing Problem Behavior among Children at W4 (N = 1,134)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>
<u>Trajectories of religious participation</u>						
High increasing attenders	-3.39	1.17**	-3.13	1.15**	-2.39	1.14*
Low increasing attenders	-2.31	1.26	-2.19	1.23	-1.61	1.22
Moderate attenders	-2.72	0.95**	-2.24	0.94*	-1.64	0.93
Monthly attenders	-3.08	1.24*	-2.31	1.22	-1.44	1.21
Frequent attenders	-4.85	1.08***	-4.25	1.08***	-3.32	1.07**
<u>Other religious characteristics</u>						
Evangelical Protestant	-0.35	0.70	-0.57	0.69	-0.94	0.69
Mainline Protestant	3.06	1.73	3.16	1.73	3.08	1.71
Catholic	0.47	0.87	0.45	0.91	0.37	0.90
Other religious affiliation	1.59	1.00	2.14	1.00*	1.75	0.99
Change in religious affiliation	-0.53	0.51	-0.49	0.50	-0.43	0.49
Religious family environment	-0.57	0.35	-0.49	0.35	-0.52	0.34
Strict religious beliefs	0.99	0.34***	0.76	0.34*	0.74	0.33*
<u>Mediating variables</u>						
Mother involvement					-0.29	0.25
Father supportiveness					-0.28	0.25
Parenting stress					1.27	0.34***
Corporal punishment					0.87	0.21***
<u>Controls</u>						
Mothers' age			0.02	0.05	0.03	0.05
Child is female			-2.02	0.46***	-1.88	0.46***
Black			-3.55	1.12**	-3.28	1.11**
Latino			-0.58	0.91	-0.56	0.90
Other race			3.54	2.05	3.56	2.03
High school education			-0.12	0.62	0.04	0.61
Some college education			-1.21	0.63	-1.16	0.62
College degree			0.56	1.42	0.09	1.40
Received welfare			-2.12	0.98*	-1.91	0.97*
Organizational involvement			0.28	0.27	0.40	0.27
Number of additional children			0.43	0.20*	0.38	0.20
Hours worked			-0.07	0.02***	-0.06	0.02***
Previously married or cohabiting	1.98	0.90*	6.93	1.61***	6.41	1.59***
Transition out of single parenthood (W4)	-0.64	0.71	-0.62	0.70	-0.37	0.69
Lambda 1	1.07	1.14	-1.10	1.42	-1.28	1.40
Lambda 2	-2.07	1.06	-11.69	2.65***	-10.50	2.62***
<i>R</i> ²		0.05		0.10		0.13

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001

Table 4
Results from OLS Regression Models Predicting Internalizing Problem Behavior among Children at W4 (N = 1,134)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>
<u>Trajectories of religious participation</u>						
High increasing attenders	-0.92	0.50	-0.79	0.49	-0.55	0.49
Low increasing attenders	-0.55	0.54	-0.49	0.53	-0.36	0.53
Moderate attenders	-1.02	0.41*	-0.73	0.41	-0.56	0.40
Monthly attenders	-1.04	0.54	-0.55	0.53	-0.28	0.53
Frequent attenders	-1.38	0.47**	-1.02	0.47*	-0.67	0.47
<u>Other religious characteristics</u>						
Evangelical Protestant	-0.32	0.30	-0.37	0.30	-0.48	0.30
Mainline Protestant	0.86	0.75	1.23	0.75	1.26	0.74
Catholic	0.23	0.38	0.05	0.39	0.06	0.39
Other religious affiliation	0.11	0.43	0.26	0.43	0.16	0.43
Change in religious affiliation	0.01	0.22	0.04	0.22	0.04	0.21
Religious family environment	-0.12	0.15	-0.09	0.15	-0.07	0.15
Strict religious beliefs	0.34	0.15*	0.20	0.15	0.19	0.15
<u>Mediating variables</u>						
Mother involvement					-0.33	0.11**
Father supportiveness					0.07	0.12
Parenting stress					0.49	0.15***
Corporal punishment					0.18	0.09
<u>Controls</u>						
Mothers' age			-0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02
Child is female			-0.60	0.20**	-0.55	0.20**
Black			-0.46	0.48	-0.48	0.49
Latino			0.47	0.39	0.40	0.39
Other race			1.02	0.89	0.87	0.88
High school education			-0.40	0.27	-0.37	0.27
Some college education			-0.88	0.27***	-0.80	0.27**
College degree			-0.40	0.61	-0.55	0.61
Received welfare			-0.55	0.42	-0.40	0.42
Organizational involvement			0.07	0.12	0.13	0.12
Number of additional children			0.24	0.09**	0.21	0.09*
Hours worked			-0.03	0.01***	-0.03	0.01***
Previously married or cohabiting	-0.45	0.40	0.70	0.70	0.53	0.69
Transition out of single parenthood (W4)	-0.14	0.31	-0.14	0.31	-0.11	0.30
Lambda 1	0.92	0.53	1.06	0.62	0.99	0.61
Lambda 2	-0.29	0.57	-2.42	1.15*	-2.08	1.14
<i>R</i> ²		0.05		0.09		0.11

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001