

## Article

# Secrets and Lies: Adolescent Religiosity and Concealing Information from Parents

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**Abstract:** There is very little research on the relationship between adolescent religiosity and concealing information from parents, although research on religiosity and family life is plentiful. Therefore, I used the second wave of the National Study of Youth and Religion to examine the relationship between adolescent religiosity and lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents. The results suggest that adolescents who attend religious services more often are less likely to keep secrets from parents, whereas adolescents who believe that religion is important are both less likely to lie to parents and keep secrets from parents. Being spiritual, but not religious, is not related to lying to parents or keeping secrets from parents. Results also suggest that primarily alcohol use, substance using peers, and morality mediate the effect of adolescent religiosity on lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents. Adolescents who attend religious services often and believe that religion is important are less likely to use alcohol, less likely to have friends that use substances, and are more likely to believe that moral rules should not be broken, which helps to explain why they are less likely to lie to parents and keep secrets from parents.

**Keywords:** information management; lying; secrets; adolescents

## 1. Introduction

Parental knowledge of adolescent activities, such as knowing what adolescents are doing, where they are going, and whom they are with, has been linked to many beneficial outcomes for adolescents, including lower rates of delinquency and substance use (Soenens et al. 2006; Yun et al. 2016). Parental knowledge is also related to several aspects of subjective well being, such as depression, low self-esteem, and stress (Frijns et al. 2005). Research suggests that parents can increase their knowledge of adolescent activities by fostering loving relationships with their children (Smetana 2009; Yun et al. 2016). Other aspects of parenting, such as parental control, authority, solicitation, and trust, may also facilitate greater parental knowledge of adolescent activities (Hawk et al. 2013; Smetana 2009; Soenens et al. 2006; Tilton-Weaver 2014).

Although parental monitoring can increase parental knowledge, recent studies have determined that parental knowledge depends more on the willingness of adolescents to disclose information than on the efforts of parents (Kerr and Stattin 2000; Darling and Tilton-Weaver 2019; Stattin and Kerr 2000). For example, one longitudinal study regarding parental monitoring found that adolescent disclosure was significantly related to parental knowledge, but neither parental control nor parental solicitation contributed to greater parental knowledge (Kerr et al. 2010). As Grigoryeva (2018, p. 227) argues, “child disclosure and secrecy—not parental attempts at monitoring and supervision—generate the knowledge that parents require to discipline children and prevent them from engaging in delinquency”. Therefore, in contrast to a passive view of adolescents, recent research suggests “adolescents actively contribute to their own socialization by choosing how much information to share with and keep from their parents” (Darling and Tilton-Weaver 2019, p. 9).

Given the importance of adolescent information management strategies (i.e., full disclosure, omitting details, lying) for parental knowledge and the beneficial effects of parental knowledge on a host of adolescent outcomes, researchers have attempted to identify the conditions under which adolescents are more likely to disclose or conceal information from their parents. In contrast to the parent-adolescent relationship, which has been the focus of much research, with the exception of sex and age, few studies have examined the effect of individual characteristics (or “individual differences”) on adolescent information management. Given religious teachings regarding the authority of parents (e.g., “honor thy father and mother”) and the importance of honesty (e.g., “thou shall not bear false witness”), religious adolescents should be less likely to conceal information from their parents by lying and keeping secrets. Despite decades of research on religion and family life, we know very little about the relationship between adolescent religiosity and concealing information from parents. Are religious adolescents less likely to conceal information from their parents by lying and keeping secrets? Furthermore, if religious adolescents are less likely to conceal information from their parents, what are the mechanisms that help to explain the relationship between religiosity and lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents?

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Adolescent Information Management

Although parental monitoring is an important concept in many theories of adolescent development, [Stattin and Kerr \(2000\)](#) observed that parental monitoring is often measured while using items that assess parental knowledge (i.e., where is the adolescent, who is the adolescent with, what is the adolescent doing). It was traditionally assumed that parental knowledge was the byproduct of parental behaviors, such as direct supervision or asking questions to gain greater knowledge. From this perspective, a lack of parental knowledge was considered to be the result of neglectful parents. In contrast, [Stattin and Kerr \(2000\)](#) argued that parental knowledge also depends on how willing adolescents are to disclose information to their parents (see also [Kerr and Stattin 2000](#)). The results of their study confirmed the importance of child disclosure to parental knowledge. [Stattin and Kerr \(2000\)](#), p. 1072) concluded that “tracking and surveillance is not the best prescription for parental behavior and that a new prescription must rest on an understanding of the factors that determine child disclosure”.

Following the publication of [Stattin and Kerr \(2000\)](#) influential study, researchers have focused on developing a greater understanding of adolescent information management ([Smetana 2009](#)). Adolescents use a variety of passive and active strategies to manage the information that their parents have about their activities, such as full disclosure, omitting details, avoiding the issue unless asked, keeping secrets, and lying ([Laird et al. 2013](#); [Smetana et al. 2009](#); [Tasopoulos-Chan et al. 2009](#)). Research suggests that disclosing and concealing should be considered to be two separate (but related) concepts, rather than two ends of a continuum ([Darling and Tilton-Weaver 2019](#); [Frijns et al. 2010](#); [Jaggi et al. 2016](#)). As [Darling and Tilton-Weaver \(2019\)](#), p. 1) argue “revealing and concealing strategies are conceptually distinct from one another: an adolescent can reveal a great deal of information to parents about school activities while concealing their drinking”. Previous research also suggests that the relationship between information management and adolescent outcomes is primarily the result of concealing strategies ([Frijns et al. 2010](#); [Jaggi et al. 2016](#)). In other words, concealing strategies have a strong negative effect on adolescent outcomes, whereas disclosing strategies have a weak positive effect on adolescent outcomes. Therefore, the disclosure-adjustment link may primarily be the result of a concealment-maladjustment link ([Frijns et al. 2010](#)).

Previous research suggests that the domain of behavior (routine, personal, prudential, moral, and/or multifaceted) influences disclosing and concealing. Adolescents are less willing to accept parental authority, and they are most willing to engage in deception, when it comes to personal activities ([Gingo et al. 2017](#)), but more willing to accept parental authority for prudential activities

(Perkins and Turiel 2007). Adolescents also conceal information from their parents for a variety of reasons. Adolescents engage in deception in order to avoid punishment or restrictions that might be imposed by parents (e.g., can't associate with certain friends), but also because they want to maintain their autonomy or avoid upsetting their parents (Marshall et al. 2005).

## 2.2. Religiosity and Concealing Information from Parents

Although the parent-adolescent relationship has an important influence on whether adolescents disclose or conceal information from their parents, several authors have called for more attention to individual characteristics among adolescents that might also be related to disclosure and concealment. Previous research suggests that adolescent religiosity influences many aspects of the parent-adolescent relationship (Pearce and Axinn 1998; Stokes and Regnerus 2009). Most relevant to this study, Desmond and Kraus (2012) found that adolescents who believe that religion is important less often lie to their parents, but the more frequently adolescents attend religious services, the more often they lie to their parents.

Why might religious adolescents be less likely to conceal information from their parents? In addition to a direct effect of religiosity on concealing information from parents, previous research suggests that the effect of religiosity could be mediated by self-control, morality, peer behaviors, and adolescent substance use. First, although adolescents may be very strategic in what they conceal from their parents, research suggests that lying and secrecy may also be the result of low self-control (Frijns et al. 2005; Grigoryeva 2018). In other words, rather than being the product of "rational decision-making or future planning on the part of children (i.e., agency)", lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents is the result of impulsivity, an inability to delay gratification or consider long-term consequences, and/or a tendency to engage in spontaneous, and often risky, behavior (Grigoryeva 2018, p. 226). Research suggests that religiosity helps adolescents to develop stronger self-control (McCullough and Willoughby 2009). Therefore, in addition to a direct effect, religiosity may also indirectly contribute to less lying and secrecy by fostering greater self-control.

In addition to self-control, religiosity may also reduce lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents by encouraging a strong sense of morality. Judgements regarding the acceptability of lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents are influenced by moral considerations (Perkins and Turiel 2007). Adolescents with a strong sense of morality may find it harder to rationalize or justify lying to their parents or keeping secrets from their parents. In support of this argument, research suggests that adolescent religiosity contributes to a strong sense of morality (i.e., adolescents are more likely to believe that certain behaviors are wrong), which partially explains the effect of religiosity on adolescent misbehavior (Desmond et al. 2009).

In addition to monitoring their adolescents, parents try to gain information about their adolescents' friends. The most common source of information about adolescents' friends is the adolescents themselves (Bourdeau et al. 2011). Obtaining information from their children is also the most frequent strategy that is used by parents to obtain information about the substance use of their adolescents' friends (Bourdeau et al. 2011). One important part of adolescent friendships is trust, however, and in order to maintain the trust of friends, adolescents may have to keep their substance use private by lying to parents or by keeping their substance use a secret. Given that religious adolescents are less likely to associate with substance using peers (Desmond et al. 2011), they may have fewer reasons to lie to parents to cover up the misbehavior of their friends.

Finally, previous research suggests that adolescent substance use contributes to concealing information from parents (Marshall et al. 2005). Darling and Tilton-Weaver (2019), for example, found that adolescents who used more alcohol kept more secrets from their parents. Adolescents are more likely to conceal information that they consider to be personal. In contrast to parents, research suggests that adolescents are more likely to consider substance use a personal issue than a prudential issue, and this is especially the case for adolescents who more often use drugs (Nucci et al. 1991, p. 847). Research suggests that religious adolescents are less likely to engage in substance use, so they should

have fewer reasons to lie to their parents and keep secrets from their parents. Consistent with this argument, [Desmond and Kraus \(2012\)](#) found that adolescents who believe that religion is important are less likely to lie to their parents, because they are less likely to drink alcohol and smoke marijuana.

Although research shows that religiosity is consistently related to more honesty, several studies also suggest that some measures of religiosity, perhaps under certain conditions, may contribute to greater dishonesty ([Desmond and Kraus 2012](#)). Research suggests that some attempts at parental control may be experienced as intrusive, because they are interpreted by adolescents as infringing on their autonomy or as an invasion of their privacy. If adolescents feel that they are being coerced to engage in religious activities by their parents, then attending religious services and/or religious classes may lead to greater dishonesty. Additionally, adolescents are less willing to accept parental interference and are most willing to engage in deception, when it comes to personal activities ([Gingo et al. 2017](#)). If attending religious services and/or religious classes is considered by adolescents to be a matter of personal choice, then adolescents may consider parental authority in this area to be illegitimate, which tends to be related to more deception ([Gingo et al. 2017](#)).

### 2.3. Present Study

Given the lack of research on individual characteristics that might contribute to adolescents concealing information from their parents, in this research, I examine the effect of religious service attendance and importance of religion on adolescent information management. Because previous research suggests that the relationship between information management and adolescent outcomes is primarily the result of negative consequences from concealing strategies, rather than the positive effect of disclosing strategies ([Frijns et al. 2010](#)); in this research, I focus on two concealing strategies, lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents. Based on previous research, I expect that importance of religion will reduce lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents. The relationship between religious service attendance and lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents is harder to predict, given that previous research suggests that religious service attendance might be related to increased lying to parents ([Desmond and Kraus 2012](#)). In addition to examining the direct effects of adolescent religiosity on lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents, I also examine the indirect effects of adolescent religiosity on lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents through self-control, morality, substance using and delinquent peers, and adolescent substance use. For the analysis, I use the second wave of the National Study of Youth and Religion.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Data

The National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) is a nationally representative survey of American youth. The NSYR began in 2002 with telephone surveys of randomly selected English and Spanish speaking adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age. There were a total of 3370 parent-child respondents who participated in the study (81% response rate). In 2005, English speaking adolescents who participated in wave 1 were contacted during a second wave of data collection. Of the eligible wave 1 participants, 2581 respondents completed wave 2 of the study (78% response rate). Because some of the questions that were used for the analysis were not included in wave 1 of the NSYR (e.g., risk taking), I used the 2581 wave 2 survey respondents (age 16–20).

### 3.2. Measures

#### 3.2.1. Lying and Keeping Secrets from Parents

For the dependent variables, I used two items to measure concealing information from parents, lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents. First, adolescents were asked: “In the last year, how often, if ever, did you lie to a parent (0 = never to 5 = very often)?” Although the majority of

adolescents (86.3%) reported lying to a parent in the last year, adolescents did not report lying to their parents frequently (37.9% reported “rarely” lying to a parent, which was the most common response). Second, adolescents were asked: “In the last year, how often, if ever, did you do things that you hoped your parent would never find out about (0 = never to 5 = very often)?” Similar to the results for lying to a parent, the majority of adolescents kept secrets from their parents (90.2%), but not frequently (32.3% reported rarely keeping secrets from parents).

### 3.2.2. Religiosity

The first measure of religion, religious affiliation, consisted of nine categories: Evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Latter-day Saints (LDS), other religion, indeterminate religion, and no religion (contrast category). To measure public religion, I used a measure of religious service attendance. Adolescents were asked, “About how often do you attend religious services?” The responses ranged from 0 = never to 6 = more than once a week. I used a question about the importance of religion in daily life to measure private religiosity. Adolescents were asked “How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping how you live your daily life?” Responses ranged from 0 = not important at all to 4 = extremely important. Finally, to measure spirituality, the adolescents were asked, “Some people say that they are ‘spiritual but not religious’. How true or not would you say that is of you?” Responses were coded as 2 = very true, 1 = somewhat true, 0 = not true at all (contrast category)?

### 3.2.3. Mediating Variables

In addition to testing the direct effects of religious service attendance and importance of religion on concealing information from parents, I also tested the indirect effects of religious service attendance and the importance of religion on concealing information from parents through self-control, morality, substance using and delinquent peers, and adolescent substance use. First, self-control was measured using an item regarding risk taking. Adolescents were asked to agree or disagree (strongly agree = 0 to strongly disagree = 4) with the statement “you like to take risks” (higher scores indicate greater self-control or less willingness to take risks). Second, adolescents were asked about the permissibility of breaking moral rules: “Some people believe that it is sometimes okay to break moral rules if it works to your advantage and you can get away with it” (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). Third, peer associations were measured using two different items, one for substance use and the other for delinquency. Associating with substance using peers was measured using an item that asked young people how many of their five closest friends “do drugs or use a lot of alcohol?” Delinquent peers was measured using a similar item that asked how many of their five closest friends “have been in trouble for cheating, fighting, or skipping classes” (0 = no friends and 5 = all five friends). Finally, adolescent substance use was measured using three separate items. The adolescents were asked how often they drank alcohol, used marijuana, and smoked cigarettes (0 = never to 6 = once a day or more).

### 3.2.4. Control Variables

Previous research suggests that sex, race, age, education, family structure, and close relationships with parents are significantly related to lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents (Desmond and Kraus 2012; Jensen et al. 2004; Keijsers et al. 2010; Smetana et al. 2009; Tasopoulos-Chan et al. 2009). Accordingly, I included these variables as controls. Sex was measured as a dichotomous variable (1 = female and 0 = male). Race was measured using a series of dummy variables: White, African American, Hispanic, and other race (contrast category). Age was an interval-level variable that ranged from 16–20. Education was measured as a series of dummy variables: some college, high school graduate (no college), currently in high school, and high school dropout (contrast category). Family structure was also measured as a series of dummy variables: biological/adoptive parents, stepfamily, single-parent family, and other family structure (contrast category). Finally, I included a measure of closeness to mother and closeness to father, both of which combined two items: “How close or not



do you feel to [mother/father]?” and “In general, how well do you and [mother/father] get along?” Table 1 includes the descriptive statistics for all variables that were included in the analysis.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics.

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Sex	0.51	0.50	0.00	1.00
White	0.66	0.48	0.00	1.00
African American	0.17	0.38	0.00	1.00
Hispanic	0.11	0.32	0.00	1.00
Other	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
Age	17.70	1.36	16.00	20.00
College	0.22	0.42	0.00	1.00
High School Graduate	0.27	0.45	0.00	1.00
In High School	0.46	0.50	0.00	1.00
High School Dropout	0.04	0.21	0.00	1.00
Biological Family	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00
Stepfamily	0.14	0.35	0.00	1.00
Single Parent Family	0.22	0.41	0.00	1.00
Other Family Structure	0.16	0.37	0.00	1.00
Close to Mother	7.35	2.27	0.00	10.00
Close to Father	5.37	3.53	0.00	10.00
Evangelical Protestant	0.28	0.45	0.00	1.00
Mainline Protestant	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00
Black Protestant	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
Catholic	0.17	0.38	0.00	1.00
Jewish	0.03	0.18	0.00	1.00
LDS	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00
Other Religion	0.03	0.16	0.00	1.00
Indeterminate	0.04	0.19	0.00	1.00
No Religion	0.25	0.43	0.00	1.00
Religious Attendance	2.55	2.22	0.00	6.00
Importance of Religion	2.27	1.23	0.00	4.00
Very Spiritual	0.12	0.32	0.00	1.00
Somewhat Spiritual	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00
Not Spiritual	0.40	0.50	0.00	1.00
Self-control	1.13	0.68	0.00	3.00
Break Moral Rules	2.08	0.95	1.00	5.00
Substance Using Peers	1.78	1.80	0.00	5.00
Delinquent Peers	1.32	1.62	0.00	5.00
Drink Alcohol	1.79	1.77	0.00	6.00
Marijuana Use	0.74	1.61	0.00	6.00
Smoke	1.26	2.25	0.00	6.00
Lied to Parents	1.84	1.37	0.00	5.00
Secrets from Parents	2.17	1.46	0.00	5.00

### 3.3. Analytic Strategy

Three conditions must be met in order to establish mediation or an indirect relationship (Baron and Kenny 1986): (1) the independent variables (religious service attendance and importance of religion) must have a significant effect on the mediating variables (self-control, morality, peers, and substance use), (2) the independent variables must have a significant effect on the dependent variable (lying to parents and keeping secrets), and (3) the mediating variables must have a significant effect on the dependent variable. Given the three conditions for establishing mediation, I started by examining the relationship between religious service attendance and the mediating variables, self-control, morality, substance using and delinquent peers, and adolescent substance use. Second, I examined the relationship between religious service attendance and the importance of religion and the first dependent variable, lying to parents. After modeling the direct effect of religious service

attendance and importance of religion on lying to parents, in subsequent models I determined whether the effect of religious service attendance and importance of religion on lying to parents is mediated by self-control, morality, substance using and delinquent peers, and adolescent substance use. Finally, I replicated the analysis (direct effects and mediation) for the second dependent variable, keeping secrets from parents.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Intervening Variables: Self-control, Morality, Peers, and Substance Use

Religious adolescents might be less likely to conceal information from their parents because they have greater self-control, a stronger sense of morality, associate with fewer substance using and delinquent peers, and/or engage in less substance use. If these hypotheses are accurate, then adolescent religiosity should be significantly related to each intervening variable. The results for the analysis of adolescent religiosity and the hypothesized intervening variables are depicted in Table 2.

First, the results for religiosity and self-control suggest that religious service attendance and the importance of religion are not significantly related to self-control. Therefore, contrary to expectations, adolescents who reported greater religious service attendance and importance of religion do not have greater self-control. Additionally, adolescents who identified as being spiritual, but not religious, had lower self-control.

Second, both religious service attendance and the importance of religion were significantly related to morality. Adolescents who reported greater attendance at religious services, and adolescents who considered religion more important, indicated that it was less acceptable to break moral rules. In contrast, adolescents who identified as being spiritual, but not religious, indicated that it was more acceptable to break moral rules.

Third, adolescents who reported attending religious services more often were significantly less likely to associate with substance using peers, but religious service attendance was not related to associating with delinquent peers. On the other hand, the importance of religion was significantly related to associating with both substance using and delinquent peers. Therefore, adolescents who believe that religion is important are less likely to have friends that use substances and/or engage in delinquency. Adolescents who identified as being spiritual, but not religious, were no more likely to associate with substance using peers, but they were more likely to associate with delinquent peers.

Finally, adolescents who reported greater attendance at religious services were less likely to use alcohol, marijuana, and smoke. On the other hand, adolescents who believed that religion was more important were less likely to use alcohol. Adolescents who considered themselves spiritual, but not religious, were more likely to use marijuana, but they were not more likely to use alcohol or smoke.

These results suggest that, if attending religious services reduces concealing information from parents, then it is most likely the result of morality, having fewer friends that use substances, or less adolescent substance use, since religious service attendance was unrelated to self-control and associating with delinquent peers. In contrast, the importance of religion was significantly related to morality, associating with substance using and delinquent peers, and adolescent drinking. Finally, adolescents who identified as being spiritual, but not religious, reported lower self-control, a greater willingness to break moral rules, more delinquent peers, and more frequent marijuana use.

**Table 2.** OLS Regression of Potential Mediators on Religion (Standard Errors).

	Self-Control	Morality	Substance Using Peers	Delinquent Peers	Alcohol	Marijuana	Smoking
Sex	0.162 (0.032) **	−0.196 (0.042) **	−0.416 (0.083) **	−0.442 (0.076) **	−0.316 (0.077) **	−0.351 (0.074) **	−0.346 (0.100) **
Age	0.030 (0.021)	−0.040 (0.029)	0.100 (0.054)	0.048 (0.053)	0.075 (0.053)	0.029 (0.052)	0.315 (0.071) **
White	−0.048 (0.064)	−0.037 (0.097)	0.054 (0.185)	−0.074 (0.173)	0.276 (0.165)	0.199 (0.141)	0.568 (0.186) **
African American	0.065 (0.086)	0.060 (0.120)	−0.249 (0.228)	0.477 (0.222) *	−0.334 (0.215)	0.123 (0.185)	−0.120 (0.233)
Hispanic	−0.078 (0.085)	0.077 (0.126)	−0.195 (0.225)	0.016 (0.214)	−0.112 (0.209)	0.093 (0.178)	0.016 (0.244)
College	0.204 (0.080) *	−0.146 (0.137)	−0.378 (0.214)	−1.274 (0.242) **	0.258 (0.256)	−0.525 (0.267) *	−2.308 (0.357) **
High School Graduate	0.131 (0.081)	−0.122 (0.135)	−0.449 (0.201) *	−0.676 (0.239) **	−0.070 (0.251)	−0.429 (0.269)	−1.335 (0.352) **
In High School	0.155 (0.090)	−0.065 (0.151)	−0.633 (0.207) *	−0.670 (0.250) **	−0.520 (0.271)	−0.543 (0.290)	−1.492 (0.368) **
Biological Family	0.110 (0.044)	−0.014 (0.066)	−0.249 (0.129)	−0.320 (0.115) **	−0.492 (0.129) **	−0.285 (0.118) *	−0.735 (0.164) **
Stepfamily	0.101 (0.060)	−0.132 (0.075)	−0.305 (0.150) *	−0.121 (0.146)	−0.547 (0.141) **	−0.138 (0.150)	−0.285 (0.197)
Single Parent Family	0.102 (0.052) *	−0.012 (0.077)	−0.263 (0.140)	−0.246 (0.134)	−0.497 (0.138) **	−0.277 (0.145)	−0.308 (0.193)
Close to Mother	0.009 (0.007)	−0.022 (0.010) *	−0.067 (0.018) **	−0.054 (0.017) **	−0.056 (0.017) **	−0.036 (0.017) *	−0.063 (0.024) **
Close to Father	0.001 (0.006)	−0.023 (0.008) **	−0.020 (0.014)	−0.028 (0.013) *	−0.022 (0.014)	−0.033 (0.013) *	−0.023 (0.018)
Evangelical Protestant	0.068 (0.063)	−0.019 (0.089)	0.042 (0.163)	−0.106 (0.155)	0.101 (0.164)	−0.139 (0.164)	0.249 (0.209)
Mainline Protestant	0.066 (0.075)	0.0716 (0.099)	0.702 (0.199) **	−0.267 (0.159)	0.549 (0.179) **	0.008 (0.173)	0.208 (0.237)
Black Protestant	−0.047 (0.094)	0.164 (0.129)	0.087 (0.229)	0.002 (0.237)	0.298 (0.226)	−0.110 (0.208)	−0.106 (0.252)
Catholic	0.042 (0.056)	0.178 (0.083) *	0.216 (0.157)	0.072 (0.142)	0.507 (0.148) **	−0.038 (0.157)	0.149 (0.196)
Jewish	−0.068 (0.125)	−0.064 (0.212)	0.171 (0.358)	−0.524 (0.202) *	0.058 (0.312)	−0.112 (0.313)	−0.786 (0.257) **
LDS	0.072 (0.108)	−0.219 (0.115)	−0.179 (0.257)	0.032 (0.249)	−0.643 (0.229) **	−0.198 (0.226)	−0.431 (0.289)
Other Religion	0.104 (0.139)	0.203 (0.175)	0.364 (0.296)	0.302 (0.283)	0.520 (0.303)	0.021 (0.296)	0.640 (0.371)
Indeterminate	0.053 (0.066)	0.084 (0.088)	0.152 (0.167)	0.097 (0.157)	0.202 (0.157)	−0.033 (0.174)	0.021 (0.201)
Religious Attendance	−0.005 (0.010)	−0.036 (0.013) **	−0.105 (0.026) **	−0.040 (0.024)	−0.102 (0.026) **	−0.105 (0.022) **	−0.145 (0.033) **
Importance of Religion	0.034 (0.017)	−0.132 (0.023) **	−0.224 (0.046) **	−0.096 (0.045) *	−0.228 (0.046) **	−0.082 (0.045)	−0.082 (0.060)
Very Spiritual	−0.218 (0.051) **	0.164 (0.077) *	0.122 (0.139)	0.336 (0.132) **	0.260 (0.134)	0.435 (0.152) **	0.357 (0.183)
Somewhat Spiritual	−0.089 (0.034)	0.052 (0.045)	0.003 (0.090)	0.154 (0.080)	−0.007 (0.084)	−0.002 (0.076)	−0.060 (0.108)
<i>R-Square</i>	0.051	0.119	0.147	0.128	0.209	0.102	0.168
<i>N</i>	2468	2476	2462	2449	2477	2466	2477

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .



#### 4.2. Lying to Parents

Table 3 depicts the results for the analysis of adolescent religiosity and lying to parents. The results suggest that adolescents who believe that religion is important are significantly less likely to lie to their parents (model 1). In contrast, religious service attendance is not significantly related to lying to parents. Being spiritual, but not religious, is also not related to lying to parents.

Self-control has a significant, negative effect on lying to parents (model 2). Adolescents with high self-control are less likely to lie to their parents. When self-control is added to the model the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents is reduced by 8% (from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.142$ ). Given that the importance of religion was not significantly related to self-control, and including self-control in the model does not reduce the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents by much, the results suggest that self-control does not explain the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents.

Similar to self-control, morality is significantly related to lying to parents (model 3). Adolescents who have a strong sense of morality are less likely to lie to their parents. When morality is added to the model, the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents is reduced by 25% (from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.116$ ). The importance of religion had a significant effect on morality, and including morality in the model leads to a noticeable reduction in the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents. Therefore, the results suggest that adolescents who believe that religion is important are less likely to lie to their parents, in part, because they are more likely to believe that moral rules should not be broken.

Both associating with substance using and delinquent peers are significantly related to lying to parents (model 4). As expected, when adolescents have more friends who use substances and engage in delinquency, they are more likely to lie to their parents. When peer associations are added to the model, the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents decreases by 23% (from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.119$ ). Supplemental analysis (not shown) suggests that substance using friends (coefficient change from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.124$ , a 19% reduction) does more to mediate the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents than delinquent friends (coefficient change from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.136$ , a 12% reduction), perhaps because substance use is far more common than delinquent activities (such as theft and violence) or is more difficult than delinquent activities to conceal.

Drinking alcohol, using marijuana, and smoking are all significantly related to lying to parents (model 5). Therefore, adolescents who engage in substance use are more likely to lie to their parents. Including substance use in the model reduces the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents by 27% (from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.113$ ). Supplemental analysis (not shown) suggests that alcohol use (coefficient change from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.111$ , a 28% reduction) mediates the effect of private religiosity on lying more than marijuana use (coefficient change from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.143$ , a 19% reduction) or smoking (coefficient change from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.146$ , a 6% reduction). The importance of religion was significantly related to adolescent alcohol use, and including alcohol use in the model reduces the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents more than any other variable (28%). Therefore, the results suggest that adolescents who believe that religion is important lie to their parents less often, in part, because they are less likely to use alcohol.

All of the potential intervening variables were included in the final model (model 6). The results suggest that adolescents with greater self-control and a stronger sense of morality are less likely to lie to their parents, whereas adolescents who associate with delinquent peers, drink more alcohol, and use more marijuana are more likely to lie to their parents. With all of the intervening variables in the model, the effect of importance of religion is considerably diminished (from  $-0.154$  to  $-0.079$ , a 49% reduction) and it is no longer significantly related to lying to parents.

**Table 3.** OLS Regression of Lying to Parents on Religion and Mediators (Standard Errors).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Sex	−0.004 (0.063)	0.043 (0.064)	0.053 (0.063)	0.100 (0.063)	0.083 (0.063)	0.177 (0.062) **
Age	−0.088 (0.044) *	−0.079 (0.044)	−0.077 (0.043)	−0.102 (0.043) *	−0.110 (0.042) **	−0.089 (0.041) *
White	−0.081 (0.120)	−0.093 (0.119)	−0.072 (0.119)	−0.080 (0.114)	−0.163 (0.115)	−0.140 (0.112)
African American	0.018 (0.166)	0.029 (0.165)	0.001 (0.163)	−0.026 (0.161)	0.055 (0.156)	−0.003 (0.153)
Hispanic	0.179 (0.160)	0.159 (0.159)	0.156 (0.159)	0.180 (0.156)	0.198 (0.157)	0.151 (0.155)
College	−0.083 (0.185)	−0.015 (0.185)	−0.042 (0.185)	0.134 (0.201)	0.023 (0.205)	0.176 (0.209)
High School Graduate	0.067 (0.181)	0.106 (0.181)	0.102 (0.181)	0.207 (0.192)	0.168 (0.200)	0.245 (0.199)
In High School	0.011 (0.194)	0.063 (0.193)	0.027 (0.192)	0.174 (0.200)	0.207 (0.213)	0.266 (0.208)
Biological Family	0.204 (0.101) *	0.228 (0.100) *	0.209 (0.099) *	0.270 (0.101) **	0.317 (0.099) **	0.321 (0.098) **
Stepfamily	0.069 (0.119)	0.095 (0.119)	0.104 (0.117)	0.111 (0.117)	0.149 (0.115)	0.162 (0.114)
Single Parent Family	−0.277 (0.118) *	−0.253 (0.118) *	−0.275 (0.117) *	−0.206 (0.119)	−0.178 (0.115)	−0.170 (0.116)
Close to Mother	−0.098 (0.015) **	−0.095 (0.015) **	−0.092 (0.015) **	−0.085 (0.015) **	−0.083 (0.014) **	−0.077 (0.014) **
Close to Father	−0.058 (0.012) **	−0.059 (0.012) **	−0.052 (0.012) **	−0.051 (0.012) **	−0.051 (0.012) **	−0.044 (0.012) **
Evangelical Protestant	0.140 (0.129)	0.154 (0.127)	0.140 (0.127)	0.163 (0.128)	0.113 (0.127)	0.139 (0.124)
Mainline Protestant	0.095 (0.143)	0.107 (0.139)	0.072 (0.141)	0.076 (0.142)	−0.001 (0.141)	0.045 (0.139)
Black Protestant	0.105 (0.192)	0.100 (0.191)	0.054 (0.185)	0.092 (0.193)	0.075 (0.187)	0.024 (0.184)
Catholic	0.163 (0.116)	0.166 (0.114)	0.110 (0.114)	0.147 (0.112)	0.079 (0.112)	0.065 (0.110)
Jewish	−0.127 (0.236)	−0.152 (0.230)	−0.135 (0.226)	−0.054 (0.234)	−0.093 (0.225)	−0.070 (0.221)
LDS	−0.183 (0.206)	−0.171 (0.201)	−0.126 (0.205)	−0.162 (0.192)	−0.066 (0.191)	−0.063 (0.185)
Other Religion	0.176 (0.251)	0.199 (0.240)	0.114 (0.238)	0.105 (0.224)	0.061 (0.228)	0.041 (0.213)
Indeterminate	0.195 (0.131)	0.203 (0.132)	0.165 (0.129)	0.169 (0.127)	0.164 (0.129)	0.144 (0.126)
Religious Attendance	−0.020 (0.020)	−0.021 (0.020)	−0.009 (0.020)	−0.002 (0.020)	0.011 (0.020)	0.017 (0.020)
Importance of Religion	−0.154 (0.036) **	−0.142 (0.036) **	−0.116 (0.036) **	−0.119 (0.035) **	−0.113 (0.034) **	−0.079 (0.035)
Very Spiritual	0.130 (0.109)	0.071 (0.107)	0.083 (0.105)	0.076 (0.106)	0.047 (0.103)	−0.016 (0.100)
Somewhat Spiritual	0.053 (0.067)	0.029 (0.067)	0.036 (0.066)	0.038 (0.065)	0.058 (0.065)	0.025 (0.065)
Self-control		−0.294 (0.049) **				−0.164 (0.048) **
Morality			0.283 (0.035) **			0.202 (0.036) **
Substance Using Peers				0.092 (0.021) **		0.005 (0.024)
Delinquent Peers				0.143 (0.024) **		0.106 (0.026) **
Alcohol Use					0.140 (0.022) **	0.100 (0.024) **
Marijuana Use					0.083 (0.025) **	0.055 (0.027) *
Smoking					0.049 (0.017) **	0.030 (0.017)
<i>R-Square</i>	0.088	0.107	0.121	0.138	0.151	0.191
<i>N</i>	2479	2468	2476	2442	2466	2418

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Desmond and Kraus (2012) tested for an interaction effect between religious service attendance and importance of religion on lying to parents. The results of their study suggested that religious service attendance was related to more lying to parents, but only when adolescents did not believe that religion was important. In supplemental analysis (not shown), I also tested for an interaction effect between religious service attendance and importance of religion, but the interaction term was not significant.

#### 4.3. Keeping Secrets from Parents

Table 4 depicts the results of the analysis for keeping secrets from parents. In contrast to the results for lying to parents, when none of the intervening variables are included in the model (model 1), both religious service attendance and the importance of religion are significantly related to keeping secrets from parents. Adolescents who report greater religious service attendance, and adolescents who believe that religion is important, are significantly less likely to keep secrets from their parents. Being spiritual, but not religious, is not related to keeping secrets from parents. Given that spiritual, but not religious, was also unrelated to lying to parents, it appears that forms of spirituality, as separated from religion, are not related to concealing information from parents.

Consistent with the results for lying to parents, self-control is significantly related to keeping secrets from parents (model 2). Adolescents with higher self-control are less likely to keep secrets from parents. When self-control is included in the model, the effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents is not reduced, whereas the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents is reduced by 9% (from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.126$ ). Similar to the results on lying to parents, since religious service attendance and importance of religion were not significantly related to self-control, and including self-control in the model reduces the effect of religious service attendance and importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents very little, it is unlikely that self-control explains the effect of adolescent religiosity on keeping secrets from parents.

Morality is also significantly related to keeping secrets from parents (model 3). Adolescents who have a strong sense of morality are less likely to keep secrets from parents. When morality is included in the model, the effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents is reduced by 17% (from  $-0.066$  to  $-0.055$ ), and the effect of importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents is reduced by 29% (from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.098$ ). Given that both religious service attendance and the importance of religion were significantly related to morality, and including morality in the model reduces the effect of both religious service attendance and importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents, the results suggest that adolescents are less likely to keep secrets from their parents in part because they have a strong sense of morality.

Adolescents who associate with substance using peers and delinquent peers are both more likely to keep secrets from parents (model 4). When peer relationships are included in the model, the effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents is reduced by 41% (from  $-0.066$  to  $-0.039$ ) and it no longer has a significant effect on keeping secrets from parents. In comparison, when peer relationships are included in the model, the effect of importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents is reduced by 37% (from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.087$ ), but it still has a significant effect on keeping secrets from parents. Supplemental analysis (not shown) suggests that substance using friends (coefficient change from  $-0.066$  to  $-0.040$ , a 39% reduction) does much more to mediate the effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents than delinquent friends (coefficient change from  $-0.066$  to  $-0.059$ , an 11% reduction). Substance using friends (coefficient change from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.091$ , a 35% reduction) also mediates more of the effect of importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents than delinquent friends (coefficient change from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.119$ , a 14% reduction). Religious service attendance and the importance of religion both had a significant effect on associating with substance using peers, and including substance using peers in the models reduces the effect of both measures of religiosity considerably (and much more than associating with delinquent peers), suggesting that one main reason that religious adolescents are less likely to keep secrets from their parents is because they are less likely to have friends who use drugs and alcohol.

**Table 4.** OLS Regression of Keeping Secrets from Parents on Religion and Mediators (Standard Errors).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Sex	−0.147 (0.067) *	−0.097 (0.067)	−0.088 (0.066)	−0.003 (0.065)	−0.020 (0.063)	0.073 (0.063)
Age	−0.069 (0.045)	−0.058 (0.044)	−0.056 (0.044)	−0.089 (0.042) *	−0.094 (0.041) *	−0.070 (0.041)
White	0.075 (0.139)	0.058 (0.138)	0.081 (0.134)	0.068 (0.133)	−0.028 (0.129)	−0.008 (0.126)
African American	0.137 (0.178)	0.154 (0.180)	0.120 (0.174)	0.127 (0.174)	0.185 (0.166)	0.162 (0.166)
Hispanic	0.128 (0.171)	0.108 (0.171)	0.104 (0.167)	0.153 (0.167)	0.146 (0.165)	0.122 (0.162)
College	0.475 (0.191) *	0.540 (0.190) **	0.514 (0.194) **	0.713 (0.194) **	0.586 (0.212) **	0.710 (0.212) **
High School Graduate	0.304 (0.189)	0.342 (0.188)	0.338 (0.193)	0.474 (0.188) *	0.439 (0.208) *	0.509 (0.205) *
In High School	0.244 (0.203)	0.301 (0.202)	0.262 (0.209)	0.468 (0.199) *	0.511 (0.221) *	0.589 (0.218) **
Biological Family	0.014 (0.109)	0.048 (0.108)	0.021 (0.109)	0.090 (0.106)	0.171 (0.100)	0.171 (0.101)
Stepfamily	−0.073 (0.129)	−0.030 (0.127)	−0.043 (0.129)	0.008 (0.125)	0.049 (0.116)	0.085 (0.117)
Single Parent Family	−0.361 (0.125) **	−0.323 (0.124) **	−0.361 (0.125) **	−0.284 (0.122) *	−0.213 (0.116)	−0.210 (0.117)
Close to Mother	−0.090 (0.015) **	−0.087 (0.015) **	−0.085 (0.015) **	−0.069 (0.015) **	−0.069 (0.014) **	−0.060 (0.014) **
Close to Father	−0.042 (0.012) **	−0.042 (0.012) **	−0.036 (0.012) **	−0.035 (0.012) **	−0.032 (0.012) **	−0.027 (0.012) *
Evangelical Protestant	0.271 (0.138) *	0.288 (0.136) *	0.264 (0.135)	0.288 (0.134) *	0.263 (0.129) *	0.280 (0.128) *
Mainline Protestant	0.383 (0.152) *	0.398 (0.151) **	0.355 (0.151) *	0.298 (0.141) *	0.264 (0.136)	0.275 (0.136) *
Black Protestant	0.470 (0.210) *	0.426 (0.213) *	0.413 (0.205) *	0.428 (0.202) *	0.439 (0.194) *	0.328 (0.194)
Catholic	0.317 (0.126) *	0.314 (0.126) *	0.261 (0.124) *	0.270 (0.121) *	0.219 (0.114)	0.185 (0.114)
Jewish	−0.152 (0.259)	−0.177 (0.256)	−0.136 (0.238)	−0.109 (0.243)	−0.121 (0.225)	−0.105 (0.216)
LDS	−0.066 (0.236)	−0.051 (0.224)	−0.017 (0.234)	−0.026 (0.228)	0.110 (0.210)	0.102 (0.208)
Other Religion	0.169 (0.230)	0.195 (0.228)	0.102 (0.221)	0.063 (0.223)	0.048 (0.226)	0.018 (0.222)
Indeterminate	0.256 (0.136)	0.268 (0.138)	0.217 (0.134)	0.208 (0.130)	0.230 (0.125)	0.197 (0.125)
Religious Attendance	−0.066 (0.021) **	−0.067 (0.021) **	−0.055 (0.021) *	−0.039 (0.021)	−0.024 (0.021)	−0.015 (0.021)
Importance of Religion	−0.139 (0.038) **	−0.126 (0.038) **	−0.098 (0.038) *	−0.087 (0.037) *	−0.077 (0.035) *	−0.045 (0.036)
Very Spiritual	0.068 (0.117)	0.005 (0.115)	0.022 (0.114)	0.000 (0.113)	−0.065 (0.108)	−0.109 (0.107)
Somewhat Spiritual	−0.004 (0.072)	−0.033 (0.072)	−0.023 (0.071)	−0.023 (0.070)	−0.006 (0.068)	−0.038 (0.067)
Self-control		−0.331 (0.051) **				−0.155 (0.049) **
Morality			0.282 (0.040) **			0.167 (0.039) **
Substance Using Peers				0.188 (0.021) **		0.065 (0.024) **
Delinquent Peers				0.133 (0.025) **		0.085 (0.025) **
Alcohol Use					0.202 (0.024) **	0.148 (0.026) **
Marijuana Use					0.163 (0.026) **	0.122 (0.028) **
Smoking					0.033 (0.018)	0.014 (0.018)
<i>R-Square</i>	0.069	0.091	0.098	0.157	0.191	0.226
<i>N</i>	2478	2467	2475	2441	2465	2417

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Similar to the results for lying to parents, drinking alcohol, and using marijuana (but not smoking) is significantly related to keeping secrets from parents. Adolescents who drink alcohol and use marijuana are more likely to keep secrets from parents. When adolescent substance use is added to the model (model 5), the effect of religious service attendance is reduced by 64% (from  $-0.066$  to  $-0.024$ ) and it no longer has a significant effect on keeping secrets from parents. When adolescent substance use is added to the model the effect of importance of religion is reduced by 45% (from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.077$ ), but the importance of religion still has a significant effect on keeping secrets from parents. Supplemental analysis (not shown) suggests that alcohol use (coefficient change from  $-0.066$  to  $-0.038$ , a 42% reduction) and marijuana use (coefficient change from  $-0.066$  to  $-0.039$ , a reduction of 41%) mediate more of the effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents than smoking (coefficient change from  $-0.066$  to  $-0.049$ , a 26% reduction). Additionally, alcohol use (coefficient change from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.076$ , a 45% reduction) mediates much more of the effect of importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents than marijuana use (coefficient change from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.118$ , a 15% reduction) or smoking (coefficient change from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.128$ , an 8% reduction). Both religious service attendance and the importance of religion had significant effects on alcohol use (only religious service attendance was significantly related to marijuana use and smoking) and including alcohol use in the model diminishes the effect of religious service attendance and importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents. Therefore, similar to the results for substance using peers, the results suggest that religious adolescents are less likely to keep secrets from their parents, in part, because they are less likely to use substances, especially alcohol.

All of the potential intervening variables—self-control, morality, peer associations, and adolescent substance use—were included in the final model (model 6). Consistent with the results for lying to parents, adolescents with greater self-control and a stronger sense of morality are less likely to keep secrets from parents. Adolescents who associate with substance using and delinquent peers and adolescents who drink alcohol and use marijuana are more likely to keep secrets from parents. When all of the potential intervening variables are included in the model, the effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents is reduced by 77% (from  $-0.066$  to  $-0.015$ ) and no longer has a significant effect on keeping secrets from parents. Similar to the results regarding religious service attendance, the effect of importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents is reduced by 68% (from  $-0.139$  to  $-0.045$ ) and it no longer has a significant effect on keeping secrets from parents, when all of the intervening variables are included in the model.

Given that previous research (Desmond and Kraus 2012) revealed a significant interaction between religiosity service attendance and the importance of religion on lying to parents, I tested for an interaction between religious service attendance and importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents. Similar to the results for lying to parents in supplemental analysis (not shown), the interaction between religious service attendance and the importance of religion was not significant. Therefore, the effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents does not seem to depend on beliefs regarding the importance of religion (and vice versa).

## 5. Discussion

Although parental knowledge of adolescent activities has traditionally been considered to be the product of efforts by parents to monitor their children, such as direct supervision or soliciting adolescents for information about their activities, research suggests that parental knowledge is primarily the result of adolescents' willingness to disclose or conceal information (Kerr and Stattin 2000; Kerr et al. 2010; Stattin and Kerr 2000). Previous research has focused on how the parent-adolescent relationship contributes to more adolescent disclosing and less concealing. The results of this research suggest that individual characteristics, such as adolescent religiosity, may also influence adolescent disclosing and concealing of information from their parents. In particular, consistent with previous research (Desmond and Kraus 2012), the results suggest that adolescents who believe that religion is important are less likely to lie to their parents. Building on previous research, the results also suggest

that adolescents who attend religious services more often, and adolescents who believe that religion is more important, are less likely to keep secrets from their parents. Being spiritual, but not religious, is not related to lying to parents or keeping secrets from parents either.

Why do adolescents who believe that religion is important lie less often to parents and keep fewer secrets from parents? Based on the mediation analysis, adolescents who believe that religion is important are less likely to lie to parents and to keep secrets from parents primarily because they are less likely to drink alcohol. The effect of importance of religion on lying to parents was reduced by 28%, and the effect on keeping secrets from parents by 45%, when alcohol use was added to the model. Other forms of substance use, such as using marijuana and smoking, did not mediate as much of the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents. Therefore, amongst adolescent misbehaviors, the results suggest that drinking alcohol is the most likely to lead adolescents to lying and keeping secrets from parents, perhaps because drinking alcohol is more common than other delinquent activities (such as violence and theft) and alcohol use is harder to conceal (trying to hide the smell of alcohol or the effects of being drunk).

Although the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents is explained primarily by adolescent alcohol use, morality and peer associations may also mediate part of the effect of importance of religion on concealing information from parents. In particular, morality reduced the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents by 25% and the effect of importance of religion on keeping secrets from parents by 29%. In addition to concealing their own alcohol use, adolescents may also lie to their parents and keep secrets from parents in order to conceal the substance use of their friends. Substance using peers reduced the effect of importance of religion on lying to parents by 19% and keeping secrets from parents by 35%.

Unlike the importance of religion, religious service attendance was only significantly related to keeping secrets from parents. Similar to importance of religion, adolescents who attend religious services often are less likely to keep secrets from parents, primarily because they are less likely to use substances, associate with substance using peers, and have a strong sense of morality. The effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents was reduced by 42% when alcohol use was added to the model. Marijuana use also mediated more of the effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents (reduced 41%) than the importance of religion (reduced 15%). In addition to substance use, the effect of religious service attendance on keeping secrets from parents was reduced by 39% when substance using peers was added to the model and 17% when morality was added to the model. As a whole, the results suggest that adolescents who attend religious services often and believe that religion is important are less likely to lie to their parents and keep secrets from their parents, primarily because they engage in less substance use (especially drinking alcohol) and associate with fewer friends who use substances.

Unlike much previous research on religion and adolescent behavior, I also examined the effect of spirituality (spiritual, but not religious) on lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents. The results suggest that spirituality, absent religiosity, is not related to lying to parents or keeping secrets from parents. When compared to religiosity (especially importance of religion), being spiritual, but not religious, had a very different relationship with the intervening variables that were used in the analysis. Adolescents who reported being spiritual, but not religious, had lower self-control, thought that it was more acceptable to break moral rules, were more likely to associate with delinquent peers, and were more likely to use marijuana. Therefore, spirituality, absent a religious foundation, may not have the protective effects of religiosity. It is also possible that the item for spiritual, but not religious is a better measure of “not religious” than being spiritual.

Although this study contributes to existing research on adolescent information management, there are several limitations that suggest directions for future research. First, previous research suggests that many of the variables that were included in the model are reciprocally related (Tilton-Weaver 2014). For example, adolescent substance use and delinquency contributes to concealing information from parents (Jaggi et al. 2016), but a tendency to conceal information from parents



also seems to be significantly related to further substance use and delinquency (Frijns et al. 2005; Jaggi et al. 2016). Adolescents who have low self-control may conceal more from their parents, but (based on the “muscle” or “strength” model of self-control) concealing information from parents may also reduce the capacity for self-control (Frijns et al. 2005). Also, lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents may depend on different domains of behavior (Perkins and Turiel 2007; Smetana et al. 2009) and the items that are used to measure lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents do not differentiate between these domains (e.g., private, prudential). Finally, previous research suggests that adolescents have different relationships with their mothers and fathers (Tasopoulos-Chan et al. 2009), but the items that were used to measure lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents do not distinguish between mothers and fathers.

In conclusion, previous research has revealed that parental knowledge of adolescent activities is determined more by adolescents’ willingness to disclose or conceal information than parental monitoring (i.e., parental knowledge is determined more by the behavior of adolescents than the behavior of parents). Previous research has primarily focused on characteristics of the parent-adolescent relationship that influence adolescent disclosing and concealing. Although the parent-adolescent relationship provides an important context for information management strategies, the results of this study suggest that adolescent disclosing and concealing can also be influenced by individual characteristics, such as adolescent religiosity. In particular, religious service attendance and importance of religion can reduce lying to parents and keeping secrets from parents by reducing the acceptability of concealing information from parents (morality) and the necessity to conceal information from parents (peers and substance use).

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