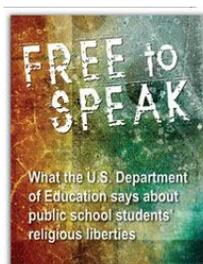


Free to Speak: The Religious Liberties Guaranteed to Public School Students

The men who drafted the U.S. Constitution established the guarantee of religious freedom through the First Amendment. Today that protection is as important as ever. In too many instances, public school educators do not have a clear understanding of the freedom of religious expression guaranteed to students in the United States. Sadly, they often end up telling students they cannot include their faith in their homework assignments or classroom discussions.



Student Initiated Flagpole Prayer Gatherings, Sept 24
See You at the Pole at www.SYATP.com



Staple Pamphlet Here

Everyone needs to know what their religious liberties are at school. As a student, you can play an important part in spreading freedom to those around you. When you understand the religious liberties of all students, you can be an example to friends and classmates of how to live and express your faith responsibly. In other words, never exercise your freedom in a disruptive way, and respect the rights of others to express their faith.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued guidelines explaining students' religious liberties. Learning about these religious liberties will clarify to students and their parents that schools need not be religion-free zones. The main message students need to hear is that they shouldn't feel like they have to be undercover about their religion... that somehow they have to be hush-hush about their family's beliefs.

It is also important to realize that neglecting your freedom is like not having the freedom at all. So, as it is appropriate to the situation in class and at school, try exercising your religious expression. For example, if it's relevant to the assignment, you can mention your religious beliefs in a homework assignment or write about a religious person you admire. So, go ahead! Take a step to exercise a little of your freedom.

The Religious Liberties of Public School Students

Freedom of expression can take different forms. It includes what students say to others as well as their freedom to speak to God in prayer; it includes what they write in school assignments or the words they give to a friend either by speaking or in writing. The information below comes from the U.S. Department of Education's document.

Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools (February 7, 2003)

- **Students can pray, read their Bible or other religious books, and talk about their faith at school during school hours.**
- **Students can organize prayer groups and religious clubs and announce their meetings.**
- **Students can express their faith in their classwork and homework.**
- **Teachers can organize prayer and Bible study groups with other teachers.**
- **Students may be allowed to go off campus for religious studies during school hours.**
- **Students can express their faith at a school event.**
- **Students can express their faith at their graduation ceremony.**

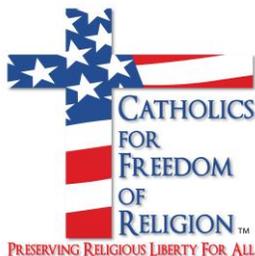


*Celebrate Religious Freedom Sunday on January 11, 2015 &
Religious Freedom Day on January 16, 2015*

Religious Freedom Day has been proclaimed by our presidents every year since 1993

ReligiousFreedomSunday.com is an initiative of Gateways to Better Education

Compiled and distributed by
Catholics for Freedom of Religion
at www.cffor.org



For more information go to
Gateways to Better Education
at www.gtbe.org

