

...but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. -Ephesians 6:4

Parents have the right to opt their children out of school activities that violate their religious beliefs:

Parents have the right and the responsibility to direct their children's education. Even when the children are in a public school, parents have the right to prevent their children from being taught material or participating in activities that would negatively impact or burden their family's sincerely held religious beliefs. If the school does not have a compelling reason to require the participation, the school must allow the student to "opt out" of the activity, class, or assignment at the parent's request. It is helpful if the parent can also suggest an alternative activity for the child to use, such as a similar alternative reading assignment that would not violate the family's religious beliefs.

It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate. This has been the unmistakable holding of the Supreme Court for almost 50 years.



For more than 40 years the Christian Law Association has protected the rights of students to express their faith. Please contact the Christian Law Association for more information.

**CIA**  
CHRISTIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

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What rights do  
Christian students  
have in  
**AMERICA'S  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS** 

**CIA**  
CHRISTIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

# Christian STUDENTS CAN...



## BRING THEIR BIBLE TO SCHOOL AND PRAY

Students have the right to pray, take Bibles to school, and read their Bibles at appropriate times:

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. -Psalm 119:105*

Prayer that is student initiated is still permitted in public schools. The First Amendment does not prohibit a student's personal expression of prayer in school. Rather, the Free Exercise Clause protects a student's right to pray, even in public schools!

Because a student's speech, selection of reading material, or other activities cannot in any way establish a religion, a student's right to read the Bible in school cannot be denied on the basis of the Establishment Clause. As long as students are permitted to bring other non-curriculum related books to school and are permitted to read those books in school, a school may not deny a student the right to bring his or her Bible to school. Students may also read their Bibles, whenever they are permitted to read other non-curriculum related books.

## FORM BIBLE CLUBS

Students have the right to have Bible clubs in school:

*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. -Matthew 18:20*

If a school receives federal financial assistance, the Federal Equal Access Act requires the school to permit access to Christian students—from elementary to high school—who wish to form a Bible club. The clubs must be student initiated and student led. Along with the right to start the Bible clubs, students also have the right to:

- Advertise the club
- Have their picture in the yearbook
- Participate in school fairs
- Do everything that any other school club may do

## CHOOSE RELIGIOUS TOPICS

Students have the right to choose a religious topic to complete a class assignment, when a choice is given.

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. -II Timothy 3:15*

When teachers give their students a choice of subject matter for an assignment, the students may express their own beliefs about religion in the form of:



- Homework
- Artwork
- Written Assignments
- Oral Assignments

as long as the assignment otherwise meets the teacher's academic objectives and requirements.

Students must also be permitted to make religious choices when choices are given for things such as school talent show performances.