



# Bible Classes in Public Schools

Any public school class dedicated solely to the Bible presents serious constitutional risks: In theory, the classes can meet constitutional demands, but in practice such classes frequently violate the Constitution and lead to costly litigation. Yet, state legislatures are increasingly debating bills that would require public schools to offer classes that teach the Bible. This uptick is not a surprise: these bills are one step in a coordinated effort across the country to impose Christianity on our public schools, known as Project Blitz.

## **Our public schools are open to all students regardless of religion and should not promote any one religion over others.**

Public schools are a unifying force in our society, and they educate the vast majority of students across the country. They are open to all students regardless of religion. Public schools must ensure that no student feels excluded in their own school because they are members of a minority faith or nonreligious.

## **The U.S. Constitution imposes strict requirements on public school Bible classes.**

Public schools may teach about religion, but they may not engage in religious instruction. The Constitution requires that Bible classes be taught from a secular, non-devotional, and objective perspective. For example, these classes cannot teach a particular religion's interpretation of the Bible or that the Bible is true. Public schools, however, struggle to meet the demands of the Constitution.

## **Many public school Bible classes become nothing more than Sunday school lessons.**

A long line of court decisions make it clear that public school Bible classes often promote Christianity. For example, an examination of Bible classes across Kentucky found that students were required to watch religious videos promoting Christianity and to memorize Bible verses, and classroom materials were taken from Sunday school websites.

## **Bible classes are a part of Project Blitz.**

Project Blitz is a nationwide campaign to impose far-right evangelical Christian views on everyone, including our public school students. The Project Blitz playbook initially focuses on public school students with Bible class bills and then escalates to promote bills that would misuse religious freedom to allow discrimination. This includes bills that allow taxpayer-funded agencies to turn away couples seeking to foster or adopt children in need of stable and loving homes because they are same-sex or the "wrong" religion. Ultimately, Project Blitz aims to transform religious freedom from a shield that protects to a sword that harms others.

**Religious freedom means that parents—not school officials or state legislatures—have the right to direct their children’s religious education.**

Parents should be able to trust that their children will not be taught someone else’s religious beliefs. Public schools should ensure that every student feels welcomed and included, regardless of their religion. Likewise, parents should be able to entrust their children to the public schools without the fear that their children will be proselytized or pressured into taking classes designed to promote a particular religion.

**Bible classes can lead to costly litigation.**

Families whose religious freedom has been violated by a Bible course often have no choice but to challenge them in court. This litigation can be costly to public school districts and taxpayers.

**Public schools should instead offer comparative religion courses.**

Comparative religion courses introduce students to many different religions and the nonreligious without creating the danger that one religion will be taught as truth.

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