

Religious Freedom and the Teaching of the Bible in a Public School curriculum.

1. Guaranteed under the **First Amendment of the Constitution**, that states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .”

- “establishment clause,” the government shall not endorse or promote a religion
- “free exercise clause,” the government shall not interfere with the free expression of religious belief

2. In the landmark **1963 Abington case**, the Supreme Court outlawed reading the Bible as part of morning prayers, but left the door open for **studying the Bible**.

- Writing for the 8-1 majority, Justice Thomas Clark stated that the Bible is "worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities," and added, "Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistent with the First Amendment."

3. **Pursue an academic, rather than a theological quest:**

Theology: the spiritual preparation of a practitioner for a religious vocation - to better practice one's own religion.

- A partisan approach, advocating a **particular path to the Truth**, in order to **realize that Truth** within yourself.
- The **ultimate goal** of a theological interpretation is to strengthen one's own personal relationship with the divine

Academic: the impartial scholarly study of religious beliefs and practices

- An impartial approach, seeking an **understanding and appreciation of the various paths religions** have used to reach the Truth, and of how each religion **defines Truth**. For non-practitioners, a heighten an understanding and appreciation of another religion; for practitioners, a heighten an understanding and appreciation of the historical and cultural context of their own religion.
- Rigorously apply a systematic methodology of interpretation, such as [Eye Juggling](#).
- But **not to advocate** embrace, endorse, promulgate, or convert others to a particular religion; and **not to debate** the merits or values of any particular religious doctrine over another religious doctrine.