

*:: ministry toolbox ::*

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# **What Do Teachers Need To Know?**



# How Can You Aid Your Students In Ministry?

## Word Wisdom

You will see on the next page that, although your rights are limited as a teacher, you can still help and inspire your students in ministry.

\* 1 Cor 10:33–11:1  
...For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

### READ

Many Christian students have a hard time standing up for their faith in high school...having a "cool" teacher that loves Jesus and supports them is a great encouragement to them!

In respect to student ministries, many student leaders are new at this, especially at the start-up stage, and are overwhelmed by all that is required and all that must be done. Knowing that they have the support of at least one teacher on staff is a big deal!

### Story Time:

One fearless Christian teacher on campus can make all the difference in the world. One such instructor, Joe Sackett, teaches government and economics at an inner-city school in Long Beach, CA. He coaches his students to stand up for Christ in the classroom. He is an outstanding teacher whose students excel because he spends time with them: on the track team, on ROTC, and in other campus groups (other than the Christian Club that he sponsors). He is careful to obey the law and spends time making sure that he understands the law for both students and teachers on campus. His example has inspired other Christians, both young and old, on his campus to show courage for Christ!

### THINK

An important point to always remember about your rights as a teacher: The First Amendment may prohibit you from establishing religion in any way, but it is also intended to protect your free speech and exercise of your beliefs!

### Do

**It's easy to feel overwhelmed by all of the restrictions you face as a Christian teacher, so let's take some time to focus on all the ways you can support and help your students!**

- Sponsor their ministry and give them a room to hang out and meet in.
- As Paul modeled in 1 Corinthians, walk closely with Christ and live out your faith. It will be a powerful influence and example to your students. Let's not forget the impact that it will also have on your non-Christian students!
- Make yourself available to them as a known resource outside of class time.
- Foster a spirit of inquisitiveness and open-discussion in your classroom.
- Get involved in sports or extracurricular activities to have more time with students outside of the classroom.
- Help them to know and understand their legal rights.
- Encourage the on-campus ministry in which they participate.
- Help direct them to the right people whether they are looking for approval for an event or permission to use a room, etc.
- Be in their lives! Be available and willing to "be there" and spend time with your students. Consider having an "open door" policy so that they can come ask you questions or even just hang out.
- Be committed to their growth in Christ!



# What Are YOUR Rights??

So that you know what you may and may not do in respect to student-led campus ministries.

Remember: You do not give up your Constitutional Rights at the school gate!

## MAY

- If you present all facets of a subject objectively, you may discuss religion in its relationship to a specific topic as long as the information is related to the curriculum and you remain neutral. For example: When discussing evolution, you may also mention other debated theories such as Creation or abrupt appearance. However, in many of these issues, school administration has the final say.
- You may act as the advisor to a student group (acting as a "custodian" who monitors the group, but not a "sponsor" who participates). You may, however, participate in religious activities/meetings outside of contract time.
- You may instruct students in virtues, values, and morals as long as you do not teach them as part of a specific religious belief system.
- You may pray silently on your own as long as it is out of sight of students and not on official school time.
- Religion may be taught from an objective academic standpoint, but you may not influence the students to accept one set of beliefs over another.
- Although you may not wear overtly religious or evangelistic clothing, you may wear modest personal jewelry (such as a cross necklace).

## MAY NOT

- You must be neutral and objective in all things. You must be fair and present all sides of a subject, secular and religious.
- You must teach evolution as a scientific theory even if it violates your beliefs.
- You may advise a student group but you may not participate in or lead/control any religious activities or Christian clubs.
- You may not encourage or discourage religious activities in the classroom, such as prayer, and may not take part in such activities. You also may not delegate a student to do it in your place.
- You may not initiate the start-up of a Christian club. Clubs must be student-initiated.
- You may not teach religion with any sort of bias. You must teach it fairly. For example, you may not solely teach one religion's impact on history.
- You may not display overtly religious or evangelistic symbols or messages in your classroom. You also may not wear clothing with blatant evangelistic messages.

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## What Are YOUR Rights??

So that you know what you may and may not do in respect to student-led campus ministries.

### MAY

- Released time religious education programs are allowed if school officials participate as little as possible.
- You are allowed to have bible studies with other teachers outside of official school hours (lunch, before/after school) and outside of your teaching role. You may also share your religious views when communicating with other teachers.
- In regards to holidays, art, music, drama, etc., you must mix the secular with the religious. For example, you must display a nativity scene along with a secular symbol like Santa Claus, and you may sing "Silent Night" as long as you also include a song like "Here Comes Santa Claus."
- You may invite speakers to your classroom to present their view on a specific topic as long as you are careful not to only invite speakers with a specific viewpoint. It may be a good idea to invite two speakers to present contrasting ideas in a debate format.

### MAY NOT

- You may not show preference to religious speakers in speaking to a public audience or select a speaker specifically because they favor religious speech.
- Depending on school administration, you may not be able to read your Bible silently during class time and you may not be able to display your Bible on your desk. You may also not be permitted to include religious books in your classroom book collection.
- You may not distribute religious literature to students and should not make religious literature available in the classroom unless it is objectively being used as part of the class curriculum.
- During school hours, schools may not allow outsiders to give religious instruction to students on school grounds. There is a difference between a speaker presenting a viewpoint and giving religious instruction to students.





## Need Help??

So that you know where to go for help with your questions and concerns.

### Legal and Religious Expression Resources

- Christian Educators Assoc. International  
Name: Finn Laursen, Executive Director  
Name: Forrest Turpen, Chief Operating Officer  
Address: P.O. Box 41300  
Pasadena, CA 91114  
Phone: (626) 798-1124 Fax: (626) 798-2346  
Email: info@ceai.org  
Web site: <http://www.ceai.org>
- American Assoc. of School Administrators  
Name: Paul Houston  
Address: 801 N. Quincy St. Suite 700  
Arlington, VA 22203  
Phone: (703) 528-0700 Fax: (703) 528-2146  
Web site: <http://www.aasa.org>
- National PTA  
Name: Nancy Segal  
Address: 1090 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (202) 289-6790 Fax: (202) 289-6791  
Web site: <http://www.pta.org>
- Christian Legal Society  
Name: Greg Baylor  
Address: 4208 Evergreen Lane, #222  
Annandale, VA 22003  
Phone: (703) 642-1070 Fax: (703) 642-1075  
Email: legalaid@clsnet.org  
Web site: <http://www.clsnet.org>
- National Association of Evangelicals  
Name: Jennifer Haglof, Legislative Counselor  
Address: P.O. Box 23269  
Washington, DC 20026  
Phone: (202) 789-1011 Fax: (202) 842-0392  
Web site: <http://www.nae.net>
- National School Boards Association  
Name: Laurie Westley  
Address: 1680 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone: (703) 838-6722 Fax: (703) 683-7590  
Email: info@nsba.org  
Web site: <http://www.nsba.org>
- Freedom Forum  
Name: Charles Haynes  
Address: 1101 Wilson Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Phone: (703) 528-0800 Fax: (703) 284-3770  
Email: news@freedomforum.org  
Web site: <http://www.freedomforum.org>
- American Center for Law and Justice  
Name: Jay Alan Sekulow, Chief Counsel  
Address: P.O. Box 64429  
Virginia Beach, VA 23467-4429  
Phone: (757) 226-2489 Fax: (757) 226-2836  
Web site: <http://www.aclj.org>
- The National Legal Foundation  
Name: Steven W. Fitschen, President  
Address: P.O. Box 64427  
Virginia Beach, VA 23467-4427  
Phone: (757) 463-6133 Fax: (757) 463-6055  
Email: nlf@nlf.net  
Web site: <http://www.nlf.net>
- The Rutherford Institute  
Name: John Whitehead, President  
Address: P.O. Box 7482  
Charlottesville, VA 22906-7482  
Phone: (434) 978-3888 Fax: (434) 978-1789  
Email: tristaff@rutherford.org  
Web site: <http://www.rutherford.org>
- Pacific Justice Institute  
Name: Brad Dacus  
Address: P.O. Box 276600  
Sacramento, CA 95827-6600  
Phone: (916) 857-6900 Fax: (916) 857-6902  
Email: pji@pacificjustice.org  
Web site: <http://www.pacificjustice.org>
- Name: Joe Sackett, Long Beach Poly High School  
Local Teacher and Legal Rights Informant  
Email: joesackett@yahoo.com
- Pro-Family Law Center (Abiding Truth Ministries)  
Name: Richard Ackerman, Scott Lively  
Address: 41690 Enterprise Circle North, Suite 210  
Temecula, CA 92590  
Phone: (951) 308-6454