



Lesson Plan: Freedom of Religion

Activity Steps:

Purpose	Teacher	Students
<p>Hook (20 Minutes)</p>	<p>Teacher asks students following questions one at a time.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why aren't students allowed to bring weapons to school? 2. Are there ever times when students should be allowed to carry weapons? 3. Could prohibiting weapons in school ever be a violation of someone's rights? <p>Teacher asks students to respond to questions on paper and then discuss with a partner. Teacher calls on students to answer and takes a quick survey (thumbs up/down) on questions #2 and #3.</p> <p>Teacher passes out "Settlement Reached in Lawsuit Concerning Rights of Baptized Sikh Students to Wear Symbolic Ceremonial Knives to School Thursday, June 12, 1997"</p> <p>Teacher asks students to think about and respond to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the extending of religious freedom to Sikh children deny others their rights? Why or why not? • Was our democracy strengthened or weakened by this decision? 	<p>Students respond to questions on their paper and when called on by teacher.</p> <p>Students read "Settlement Reached in Lawsuit Concerning Rights of Baptized Sikh Students to Wear Symbolic Ceremonial Knives to School Thursday, June 12, 1997".</p> <p>Students write their responses to the question.</p>



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<p>Through (60 Minutes)</p>	<p>Teacher will ask the students what rights are protected in the first amendment. Teacher will review the first amendment protections (speech, assembly, press, petition and religion).</p> <p>Teacher will review the historical context of the Freedom of Religion from colonization to the beliefs of the founding fathers (Madison, Jefferson, and Henry.)</p> <p>Teacher asks students if debate on religious freedom still relevant today. Teacher asks students to consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What rights do parents have when making medical decisions for their children? • Should a parent be prosecuted if they deny medical treatment to their children? • What if a procedure was medically unnecessary, yet the parents performed procedure for religious purposes? <p>Teacher passes out "San Francisco's Circumcision Ban: An Attack on Religious Freedom?"</p>	<p>Students will answer "what rights do citizens have under the first amendment?"</p> <p>Students take notes on historical context.</p> <p>Students respond to questions and think, pair, and share with neighbor.</p> <p>Students read article.</p>
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	<p>Teacher calls on groups share their responses for each case and teacher reveals the “answers” based on the Supreme Court decisions.</p>	<p>Student groups share their responses and discuss whether the Supreme Court got it “right.”</p>
<p>Beyond (20 Minutes</p>	<p>Teacher passes out last case, “To Pledge, or Not To Pledge.” Students are asked to read the case.</p> <p>Teacher explains that they are going to be acting as attorneys for the Religious Liberty Foundation. It is an organization established to ensure that our religious freedoms are protected. They have been asked to represent the Foundation and write an <i>amicus curiae</i> brief to the US Supreme Court who has just agreed to hear this case.</p> <p>Teacher explains that an <i>amicus curiae</i> brief is written by a person or an organization that is not directly affiliated with a case but has an interest in the case. The brief is intended to convince the court to rule in favor of one party or the other. The students will research the case and prepare a written response to the question:</p>	<p>Students read and annotate case as they read.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Does the reciting the pledge of allegiance, which includes the words “under God,” in school violate a student’s first amendment rights?</i> <p>The teacher explains that if they answer yes they will be writing their brief on support of the respondent, Michael Newdow. If they do not believe it is a violation, they will write their brief in support of the petitioner, Elk Grove School District.</p> <p>Teacher passes out guidelines for preparing brief and reviews with students.</p>	
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Special Needs of students are considered in this lesson:

- Students with special needs are considered by assigning students to work with heterogeneous groups. The online polling is another strategy as it is anonymous.
- The written assignment can be modified to meet each student’s needs, both in length and format.
- GATE students can be required to research and include prior Supreme Court rulings to cite in their brief as precedents.

Extension Ideas:

Have students research current religious freedom cases.

Have students prepare a guide for school administrators on protecting students’ freedom of religion while at school.