

Bible Electives in Public Schools: A Guide



From the Society of Biblical Literature



Who We Are: The Society of Biblical Literature

The Society of Biblical Literature is an academic society, founded in 1880, whose mission is to foster biblical scholarship. Our membership includes college and university professors, as well as clergy and seminary faculty.

The SBL has already published a number of classroom resources and can help teachers to make decisions about appropriate types and sources of information about the Bible from a scholarly perspective. The SBL continues to develop resources for teachers, students, and administrators.

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Why study the Bible in public schools?

The Bible is an ancient document that continues to shape the world around us. It has influenced not only American culture and history, but cultures and histories throughout the world. A Bible course that teaches students to read the Bible, to understand its development and transmission, and its effects on peoples and cultures will equip students with a deeper understanding of this foundational text and the cultures that produced it.

This enterprise is based on an academic approach to the Bible and its effects. Done right, courses will encourage critical inquiry among students, teach them to read a text closely (and to enjoy it!), and offer them an appreciation for how the Bible has affected politics, history, democracy, literature, and the arts.

Goals of this guide

One goal of this guide is to encourage public school teachers to view teaching the Bible as an experience that has great pedagogical rewards and high academic relevance. Another goal is to provide teachers with some awareness of the legal, academic, and social issues to consider well before a Bible elective begins.

This guide offers a FAQ (frequently asked questions) format for teachers of Bible courses and their communities, school boards and administrators to consider prior to designing and offering a course. It also touches on the approaches and insights in biblical studies that are widely accepted among scholars, but that may be new to teachers, students, and parents alike.

Awareness of scholarly methods and goals and how they may differ from religious understandings will provide additional means to judge the content and legality of Bible electives.

Constitutional Requirements

The first thing that comes to mind for many about offering a Bible course in public schools is whether it is constitutional. No public school wants to create discord among parents or wrangle with costly lawsuits. Because of the high level of concern about legal issues, many other excellent resources are also available for schools on First Amendment issues. (See list at end.)

The United States Constitution provides in the First Amendment that:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

This provision sets forth both religion clauses of the Constitution. The Establishment Clause, or the first part of the amendment, covers not just Congress, but all state and local governments, and the officials in that government. For the purposes of this guide, public school teachers, whenever they are acting in their capacity as teachers are prohibited from establishing religion.

What this means in the public school classroom is that neither the teacher nor the school can either promote or discourage students from having religious beliefs. In particular:

- A school's approach to the Bible must be academic, not devotional; the teacher should teach about the Bible, not lead a "Bible study." The term that the U.S. Supreme Court has used to describe this is that teaching about religion must be "objective." When done in a way that neither promotes nor disparages particular religious beliefs, academic study is constitutional. Religious teaching, advocacy, indoctrination, proselytizing, or practice—whether intentional or unwitting—is unconstitutional.
- The school strives for student awareness of the Bible, but not acceptance of claims about the truth of or theological interpretations of the Bible in a religious sense.
- The school may introduce students to a diversity of religious views about the Bible, but may not impose, discourage, or encourage any particular religious view.
- The school may neither promote nor denigrate any religious understanding of the Bible.

(adapted from "The Bible & Public Schools: A First Amendment Guide")

Legal Issues and Precedents

Are there legal standards to evaluate course legality?

Yes. There are two primary tests courts use to determine the constitutionality of issues like Bible courses: the “Lemon Test” and the “Endorsement Test.” Though there is controversy about how these “tests” should be understood and applied in many areas, there are ways to ensure that a properly constructed Bible course will be constitutional and pass the necessary tests.

In the court case *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, a case about government reimbursement of religious schools, the Supreme Court came up with a set of questions that can also be applied to a public school Bible course to determine compliance with the Establishment Clause. This is now known as the “Lemon Test.”

If you can answer Yes, No, and No, accordingly, a course has passed the Lemon Test:

1. Does the course have a secular, academic purpose?
2. Does the course advance or inhibit religion?
3. Does the course foster excessive government entanglement with religion?

[see: *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602 (1971)]

To pass the endorsement test, ask:

Does the course have the purpose or effect of endorsing religion in general or particular religious viewpoints?

If the answer is No, then the course passes the endorsement test.

If that which is taught seeks either to disparage or to encourage a commitment to a set of religious beliefs, it is constitutionally impermissible in a public school setting.

–*Wiley v. Franklin*, 474 F. Supp. 525 (E.D. Tenn. 1979)

Families entrust public schools with the education of their children, but condition their trust on the understanding that the classroom will not purposely be used to advance religious views that may conflict with the private beliefs of the student and his or her family. Students in such institutions are impressionable and their attendance is involuntary.

–Edwards v. Aguillard, 482 U.S. 578, 584 (1987)

What do the terms “sectarian” and “nonsectarian” mean?

These terms often come up in legal discussions about Bible and religion courses. “Sectarian” means promoting adherence to a specific set of beliefs. To teach a Bible course from a sectarian perspective simply means a course that teaches the Bible from a religious (or even anti-religious) understanding, which would be unconstitutional in a public school.

“Nonsectarian” means not professing a particular set of beliefs. To teach a Bible course from the nonsectarian or religiously neutral perspective is legal in the public schools. Teachers may hold particular beliefs, but their teaching should not promote those beliefs.

How do I teach an unbiased course?

Teaching in an unbiased way requires close readings of the text, respect for student belief, knowing scholarly goals and approaches to literature, and an awareness of how some biblical interpretations are influenced by religious belief.

Many of the court cases surrounding Bible education in public schools relate to a teacher or public school having imparted bias. Sometimes the bias promotes certain religious beliefs—describing the Bible as the word of God, for example, or teaching Genesis 1 as an accurate historical account of creation. In others, the bias denigrates or disparages particular religious beliefs.

Recently in California, a teacher sparked a lawsuit when he told students that: “When you put on your Jesus glasses, you can’t see the truth.” It is important to remember that teachers and students have the protected right to hold beliefs about the accuracy or inaccuracy of any passage within the Bible or the

whole of the Bible. What is not permitted is for public-school teachers to impose their own religious or anti-religious beliefs on the students.

These are more obvious forms of bias, but subtle ones exist as well. Portions of the Bible have been read and interpreted for at least 3,000 years, and often those interpretations—rather than the text itself—have become part of our culture or ways of understanding the world.

Sometimes it is the interpretations we remember and pass on rather than what the Bible text actually says. For example, in Isaiah 53, Jews have associated the “suffering servant” with Israel, with Judaism in exile, and with a future messiah. Christians have interpreted Isaiah 53 as predicting Jesus. All of these are religious interpretations, but none of these should be taught in public schools as if they were the definitive or ultimate meaning of the text. A well-taught Bible course would look at Isaiah 53 in its original context, then at the ways in which later Jewish and Christian readers in different places and times interpreted the text and gave the original text new meanings.

Likewise, some denominations give added emphasis to some books of the Bible over others. If a public school Bible elective were to carry over that selective emphasis, it could bring a denominational preference or tradition into the classroom.

May a class on the Bible be paid for by general public funds?

Yes – provided that the course complies with the constitutional requirements described above.

Can outside associations and nonprofit organizations contribute (funds, publicity, or content) in part or in whole to this course?

Yes, as long as there are no “strings attached” and the school maintains control over the selection of the teacher and the curriculum. The legal requirements do not change when outside groups donate resources or fund courses. The courses still must be objective and must neither promote nor endorse religious beliefs. In particular, donated Bibles may not represent only one religious community—as Gideons Bibles do.

What role may outside organizations play in choosing, hiring, and supervising teachers?

The law is not settled on this, but if an outside organization—a church, synagogue, mosque or an association of religious organizations—were to be involved in teacher selection, the public school could open itself to legal action, particularly if selection was based on religious views.

What if teachers inadvertently pass on particular religious preferences or points of view in the classroom, but they believe they are being unbiased and sticking to “just the facts”?

Even if the intent is to neither promote nor denigrate religion, if the effect is to impart a particular religious view whether intentionally or not, then the course has crossed the line and can be challenged legally. Courts consider the effect as more important than the intent.

Can a teacher assign students to memorize scripture passages, such as Psalm 23 or the Lord’s Prayer?

Memorization can be an appropriate teaching technique, provided that it is not intended as a form of prayer or devotional exercise to promote particular religious viewpoints and sentiments. Some court cases have commented on scripture memorization as a devotional act. (See *Good News Club v. Milford Central Sch.* 533 U.S. 98, 119 [2001] and *Doe v. Porter* 188 F. Supp 2d 904, 912 [E.D. Tenn, 2002].)

Should a school require students to take the Bible course?

Many considerations weigh against requiring students to take a Bible course. Most importantly, students may believe that the very act of approaching the Bible from a critical or academic (rather than a religious) perspective violates their religious beliefs and practices. These students should not be required to take such a course.

Teacher Qualifications

What qualifications should a teacher have to teach a Bible course?

At a minimum, teachers should have taken course work in biblical or religious studies at an accredited undergraduate level or higher institution, including a course on Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and one on the New Testament. Courses in religious education, which prepare teachers to teach at religious institutions, do not meet these requirements.

If course work was taken at a religious institution, teachers should take care not to impart a particular religious or sectarian orientation in the classroom.

How can I get additional training?

Teacher training is a key priority. The SBL will offer regional teacher training workshops to supplement teacher knowledge of the subject along with lesson plans that will eventually become a textbook. Contact your Department of Education to find out what training your state offers.

Are schools allowed to consider a teacher's religious beliefs?

Schools should make hiring decisions based upon the qualifications of the teachers to teach the courses and the teachers' ability to teach the course academically, and not the particular religious beliefs of the teacher. Competence to teach should be judged by academic standards, the same as for any other subject, like English or History.

Can a teacher's religious beliefs make that candidate more qualified?

No. It is not teachers' beliefs that qualify them to teach, but their academic training. Some states require teachers of Bible electives to be state-certified in either Language Arts or Social Studies.

Can a teacher of a Bible course in the public schools also be an ordained clergy member?

Yes, if he or she meets all of the standards and qualifications of any other teaching position and state certification, if applicable. In other words, the fact of ordination must not be held as a prejudice against the person. While ordination does not disqualify a potential teacher, a clergy member should take extra care not to use his or her position to influence students' religious beliefs. Separate issues may also arise around whether a public school teacher can wear religious garb in schools and classrooms, or whether members of that person's congregation can be students in the class.

Teaching the Bible

What is the main difference between academic study of the Bible and devotional Bible study?

Scholars try to understand the Bible through the methods of comparative literature, archaeology, and historical study to determine what the text may have meant in its original context. They look at evidence for authorship, audience, and the ways in which that audience may have understood the text.

Religious or theological understandings of the Bible sometimes add on interpretations that would have been unfamiliar to the biblical authors, but which are meaningful to a religious community.

Academic views of the Bible accept the Bible as a set of writings with multiple authors written over a long period of time that provides rich insight into the world and cultures of ancient Israel, Second Temple Judaism, and early Christianity. Bible scholars are interested in the way the biblical texts raise moral, social, legal, and philosophical questions that resonate throughout subsequent history and influence our own culture and world today.

Religious views of the Bible accept that the text is divinely authored or divinely inspired, and so the goal of Bible study should be to determine what God wants from us in our lives today. That is not a question that an academic approach can answer.

These sets of goals and assumptions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but they are very different in their approaches.

What are some academic goals for a Bible course?

Bible courses can be taught like any other subject—by teaching a range of scholarly views and interpretations, and encouraging critical inquiry, open-minded curiosity, and enjoyment on the part of the students.

The academic goals of such a course are similar to the goals of any literature course. Some include:

- to teach students about selected books and passages of the Bible,
- to familiarize students with the themes, characters, plots, narratives, and structures of the Bible
- to enjoy and appreciate the rewards of reading a biblical text closely, with the aid of secondary materials
- to teach students about the formation of the Bible, oral tradition, textual transmission and translation, and canon formation
- to familiarize students with the social, cultural, and political aspects of life reflected in the biblical writings
- to appreciate the diverse interpretations of the Bible
- to understand the wide-ranging effects of the Bible on religions, culture, politics, and art
- to recognize different literary forms in the Bible
- to practice critical thinking skills

What gets lost in many guides or discussions about the Bible in public schools is that this collection of writings we call the Bible is rich in meaning and artistry, full of dramatic conflicts and narrative power, memorable characters, as well as metaphorical and moral creativity. Once teachers and students learn how to look, listen, and read the texts—guided by sound scholarship—they will be drawn into its complexity and beauty. They will remember their Bible course as one that prepared them well for college and for satisfying encounters with literature in general.

What kind of Bible course should be taught?

The SBL recommends courses that teach the Bible as ancient literature in its historical context and that recognize its contemporary relevance in the literary canon. Teaching the Bible as history is complex and not recommended as the course focus.

How might communities decide to offer a Bible elective?

Many communities considering a Bible course open up the decision-making process. Often the local school board creates a committee comprised of a broad range of participants including students, teachers, parents, and school administrators. The committee invites community responses to the electives, reviews curricular materials, and makes a recommendation to the board. The Society of Biblical Literature is able to put communities and their schools in touch with local Bible scholars to help guide their decision-making process, especially when it comes to evaluating teaching materials.

Many people will have concerns about a course focused on the Bible. Some will worry that school officials will attempt to persuade students to adopt biblically based religious beliefs; others will object to the idea that the Bible can be taught as a historical or literary text and can be approached through critical inquiry; while others may object to any approach to the Bible other than the one that promotes their specific beliefs.

What is the most appropriate grade level to teach a Bible course?

The state and/or local education departments will have established the answer to this question. In most states at the current time the courses are limited to high school. The SBL recommends Bible electives for students in grades 11–12 who have completed coursework on methods for the study of literature.

What should the course be called?

In most cases state departments of education will have given a name to the course(s). Introduction to Hebrew Bible or Introduction to the New Testament could be used, or simply Introduction to Bible I and Introduction to Bible II. To call the “Hebrew Bible” the “Old Testament”—though the latter term is very important for some people’s religious beliefs—is a way of promoting a particular interpretation of the Bible that discounts, for example, the beliefs of many devout Jews.

Bibles

What Bible should we use in class?

An academic course on the Bible should teach students about different forms of the Bible rather than simply assuming that one form is the norm. One practical way to do this is to offer several different Bibles as course texts.

There is in fact not one “Bible” but several “Bibles.” The Protestant Bible has 39 books. Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy include more books in their Bible. Jews do not regard the New Testament as scripture and do not include it in their Bible. They would also view “Old Testament” as an inappropriate name for their scriptures and would instead use Hebrew Scriptures, the Tanakh, the Bible, or the Hebrew Bible.

The Hebrew Bible contains the same contents as the Protestant Old Testament, but its writings are grouped into 24, rather than 39 books, and those books are arranged in a different order.

Which Bible translation should be used in class?

The choice of translation to use is a complex one; academically and legally. The courts have not spoken with great clarity on this issue, except to note on occasion that the choice of the King James Version seemed to reflect a bias towards certain forms of Protestant Christianity. However, it might be appropriate to assign the KJV in a Bible as Literature course, due to the significant literary influences of that translation.

The course should find ways to expose students to the variety of translations in use today—The New American Bible, The King James Version, The New International Version, The New Revised Standard Version, The Revised Standard Version and The New Jewish Publication Society Bible—all are possibilities if presented in combination, not exclusively.

A reader like the Hendrickson Parallel Bible would not be suited to the classroom, as it features only Protestant translations of the Bible. The Zondervan Comparative Study Bible also features only translations typically favored by Christian evangelical communities.

Can students use their own personal Bibles as their primary text?

Yes. But students should be expected to compare translations and read other translations for class assignments. This practice of comparing translations can provide a significant academic learning experience for students.

Can a school district mandate the use of one Bible translation and forbid others?

No.

May the Bible be the only textbook assigned for the class?

In part this is an issue that state school boards and legislatures will have to resolve. However, it is misleading to describe the Bible as a textbook. It was not written for the high school classroom by a panel of educators! We suggest using secondary literature or assigning several different translations of the Bible as the primary text and then supplementing with readings from various academic sources.

While it is appropriate to have different translations of the Bible used as texts, courses that use it as the only text could be problematic and subject to legal challenge.

The purpose of Bible courses should be to teach about the Bible and not to teach the Bible in a devotional manner. Reading the Bible without any critical resources or discussion treats the Bible as an inspired text and implies its historical accuracy and authority. To read the Bible this way may work well in a church Bible study, but it would not be appropriate in the classroom.

Resources

What textbooks and curricular resources can we use to teach such a class?

Many resources on the Bible are written for use in religious communities. Look for materials designed for use in a public school or undergraduate setting. Read the author's introduction and check their academic credentials.

Currently there are two curriculum guides on the market for Bible courses in public schools: *The Bible in History and Literature*, published by the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools (NCBCPS) and *The Bible and its Influence*, published by the Bible Literacy Project.

The constitutionality of the NCBCPS's *The Bible in History and Literature* has been challenged legally twice. In the first case, a federal judge issued an injunction against the teaching of its units on the New Testament in Fort Myers, Florida (M.D. Florida 1998). In 2008, a lawsuit against Ector County Independent School District in Odessa, Texas was dismissed when the school district agreed in a mediated settlement to discontinue use of the NCBCPS curriculum. Scholarly reviews of *The Bible in History and Literature* have repeatedly noted its low academic quality and its bias towards particular religious views.

The BLP's *The Bible and its Influence* has experienced a mixed reception from Bible scholars and legal commentators, but it has not been legally challenged. It remains to be seen how students and teachers will evaluate it.

The SBL hopes to produce specific lesson plans for high-school teachers, and to provide teacher training workshops. The SBL website contains some examples of teacher syllabi that are being used at the undergraduate level.

Are there any Study Bibles that we can use in class?

Three well-regarded Study Bibles are the *Oxford Annotated Bible*, the *Jewish Study Bible*, and the *Harper Collins Study Bible*.

Do not use study Bibles written for catechetical purposes as this may make it difficult to pass either the Lemon or Endorsement Tests.

Faith and Belief

What if parents are afraid that a Bible elective will change their child's faith?

Two academic studies have shown that students who are exposed to the academic study of religion learn to become critical thinkers and are enriched by the classroom experience.

A recent study by Professor Barbara Walvoord of the University of Notre Dame and the Institute for Educational Initiatives on College Introductory Religion Courses found that:

Contrary to some stereotypes, the introductory theology and religion course did not throw great numbers of its "secure Christian" students into struggle and doubt about their faith. Nor did it leave them untouched. By far the most common response to the course ... was a wide-ranging, often joyful exploration and change across multiple dimensions, including elements of critical thinking.

And a study of a world religions class in Modesto, California high school found that many students who had taken the class were able to:

... maintain their same views about the rightness of their religious tradition compared to others after taking the course.

How should a teacher respond to a student's direct question about what he or she believes?

It is up to each teacher to decide how to handle likely questions from students about personal belief. We recommend advising students to seek counsel from their parents or clergy. Questions about teachers' or students' religious beliefs should be avoided to the greatest extent possible consistent with sound teaching methods.

Teachers may answer students' questions about their religious beliefs outside of class as long as they neither attempt to persuade students to adopt particular beliefs nor otherwise create the appearance that the school endorses particular beliefs. Teachers must take extra care to ensure that their conversations with students do not lead students or others to believe that the Bible course is being used to promote particular religious beliefs.

What if scholarly views presented in class conflict with student belief?

A teacher may acknowledge student beliefs but those beliefs may not impede the class' reading and comprehension of the biblical text. In addition, students may not ask other students to affirm or deny a statement of faith.

Many students discussing the Bible with others of different—or nonexistent—faith backgrounds learn for the first time that other people read and understand the text very differently than they do, and if discussions are handled well, studying the Bible from an academic perspective in a diverse classroom environment can be an excellent way to foster respect and tolerance for the beliefs of others, and an appreciation for the relevance of scholarly views.

How can this be done?

Scholarly views respond to questions or problems that many readers have found in a text. Teachers can ask students to provide an alternative solution to those problems (for example, “Why are there four Gospels, and not just one?”) or ask whether students see these problems in the text as well. Historical interpretations of biblical passages are of use here because they also alert the reader to problems and questions about the text.

Another way might be to introduce historical interpretations of biblical passages, or contemporary literature or art that alludes to and interprets biblical texts, to show varied readings of the same passage. Ideally, this process frees students to become interpreters themselves.

Can student work and classroom participation include religiously derived responses?

Students may, as they may in other courses, include references to their religious beliefs in their classroom work as long as those references are responsive to the teacher's assignment. Even in a Bible course, however, assignments should only very rarely ask students to discuss their religious beliefs.

If you know the particular faith commitments of a student can you ask him or her to state the views of that particular religious community?

No. It is important not to ask students to speak as representatives of a particular faith—“Janet, you're

Jewish, how do Jews read this passage?” That type of question puts a student on the spot, exposes their religious views without their consent, and asks them to speak as a representative of a religious tradition. However, students are free to offer interpretations grounded in their faith tradition, provided that they address the subject at hand, without intentionally offending fellow students or attempting to persuade them.

Biblical Interpretation

Can teachers teach the Bible as history?

Scholars agree that the Bible is a valuable source of historical information, but their views on the extent of its accuracy vary widely. In addition, disagreement exists between and within religious groups about how much of the Bible is historically accurate.

The courts have recognized this variety of views and have argued that to teach the Bible as a statement of historical fact is to promote a particular religious belief and is an infringement of the First Amendment.

For both academic and legal reasons, teachers should not teach the Bible as a history book or source of scientific knowledge that accurately records past events. For example, it would be a breach of the teacher’s impartiality to teach Genesis as proof that the earth was created in six days or to use any related creation-science materials.

What do the letters CE and BCE refer to, and how are they different from BC and AD?

Traditionally, Western cultures have used the “Before Christ” (B.C.) and “Anno Domini” (A.D.) as historical time periods, especially when discussing ancient history. However, non-Christians may find this dating form biased, because of its use of Jesus Christ as a dividing point in time. Biblical scholars and many others now prefer the more neutral “Before the Common Era” (B.C.E.) and “Common Era” (C.E.); there is no difference in the actual dating method.

How should a teacher discuss negative depictions of other religions in the Bible?

Two concerns are important here. One is that the biblical texts can be read not only at “face value” but also with an eye to the times in which they were written. The other is that we cannot generalize from the text about modern religious groups today.

Indeed, the four Gospels contain several negative references to Jewish leaders, the Pharisees and temple priests, the temple, and Jewish law. There are variations between them, with John striking the most stridently critical tone. These critical views often reflect the tensions of the times, when early Christianity was still trying to work out its relationship with Judaism, its parent religion. Thus, the Gospel’s judgments about Jews and Judaism cannot be considered objective descriptions, as they were often polemical. There are numerous resources that discuss the times that Jesus lived in as well as books that discuss Jesus’ Jewish identity and early Christian communities’ relationship with Judaism, which was both familiar and critical. Teachers can encourage their students to look into the “world of the text” to understand why the Gospel writers may have chosen the words they chose.

Conclusion

Bible electives are unlike other public-school courses in that many are being taught for the first time. Appropriate teaching materials are scarce, as are teachers with academic training in the subject. The risks of a teacher imparting religious bias exist because of the lack of training and resources available to them.

Despite these challenges, the Society of Biblical Literature supports well-designed Bible electives. Our membership knows how rewarding classroom learning about the Bible can be. A well-taught Bible course can open students to understanding a familiar text in new ways and enrich their encounters with literature over a lifetime. The SBL actively seeks to assist teachers in learning to recognize and address the classroom issues that are unique to Bible electives. This guide is meant to be a first step in that direction.

Additional Resources

In Print:

Teaching and Learning in College Introductory Religion Courses, by Barbara E. Walvoord (Wiley-Blackwell 2008)

Teaching the Bible: Practical Strategies for Classroom Instruction, Mark Roncace and Patrick Gray, eds. (Society of Biblical Literature 2005)

Teaching the Bible through Popular Culture and the Arts, Mark Roncace and Patrick Gray, eds. (Society of Biblical Literature 2007)

The Dead Sea Scrolls, Society of Biblical Literature and Biblical Archaeology Society (2007)

Harper Collins Study Bible, Harold Attridge, General Editor with the SBL

Harper Collins Bible Dictionary, Paul Achtemeier, General Editor with the SBL

Harper Collins Bible Commentary, James Mays, General Editor with the SBL

Online:

The Council for America's First Freedom (www.firstfreedom.org/religiousfree/religfreedocs.html)

"The Constitution and Religion in the Classroom," published by the Council for America's First Freedom (www.firstfreedom.org/education/CRC-Introduction.html)

First Amendment Center (www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel_liberty/publicschools/topic.aspx?topic=bible_in_school)

"The Bible & Public Schools: A First Amendment Guide," published by the First Amendment Center (www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/BibleGuide.pdf)

The American Civil Liberties Union (www.aclu.org/religion/schools/index.html)

"Learning About World Religions in Public Schools," by Emile Lester and Patrick S. Roberts, 2006 (http://cisac.stanford.edu/publications/learning_about_world_religions_in_public_schools_the_impact_on_student_attitudes_and_community_acceptance_in_modesto_calif/)

Visit the SBL website for more teacher resources at: www.sbl-site.org/educational/teachingbible.aspx

The logo for the Society of Biblical Literature, featuring the letters 'SBL' in a highly decorative, flowing script font.

The Society of Biblical Literature

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