

POLICY

Spencerport Central School District

1999

8333
Page 1 of 1

Instruction

SUBJECT: TEACHING ABOUT AND/OR REFERENCES TO RELIGION

The U.S. Supreme Court has stated (in Abington v. Schempp and Murray v. Curtlett) that education without the study of religion is incomplete and that such study is not prohibited by the First Amendment. The following statements distill the essence of the Court's decisions as to what constitutes legal and illegal religion studies in the public schools:

- 1) The school may sponsor the study of religion, but may not sponsor the practice of religion.
- 2) The school may expose students to all religious views, but may not impose any particular view.
- 3) The school's approach to religion is one of instruction, not one of indoctrination.
- 4) The function of the school is to educate about all religions, not to convert to any one religion.
- 5) The school's approach to religion is academic not devotional.
- 6) The school should study what all people believe, but should not teach a pupil what he/she should believe.
- 7) The school should strive for student awareness of all religions, but should not press for student acceptance of any one religion.
- 8) The school should seek to inform the student about various beliefs, but should not seek to conform him to any one belief.

“Public Education Religion Studies: Questions and Answers.” Public Education Religion Studies Center, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio, Copyright, 1974.

Religious influences and practices are a part of literature and history and, as such, can and should be an appropriate subject of study. Teachers may emphasize moral and ethical principles of religions, and may provide information and the opportunity for students to study the forms and practices of various religions, and the various printed documents that embody the beliefs of different religions. However, any such activity should present information about religions and shall not teach or seek to establish these beliefs.

In accordance with the New York State Curriculum in the Social Studies, students when exposed to information concerning religions and religious beliefs, will not be subjected to an advocacy, either openly or covertly, or by subtlety, of a particular religion or of religious beliefs.

Adopted: 6/22/99