

Should Public School Teachers Lead Prayer in Jesus' Name?

The majority of Americans support “allowing public school teachers to lead their classes in prayers that refer to Jesus,” according to the Pew Research Center, a respected data and research firm.

Invocations in public schools have long been a source of debate and consternation, with the drama intensifying after two Supreme Court cases – *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963) – essentially banned school-sanctioned prayers.

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The first case found that nondenominational school-sponsored prayer violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. And the second similarly found that reciting the Lord's Prayer and Bible readings couldn't be sponsored by schools.

But more than 60 years later, Pew noted that Americans are deeply divided over Christian prayers in schools. Even with that division, though, the Pew Research Center's 2023-24 Religious Landscape Study found that the majority seems to support it.

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“Just over half of U.S. adults (52%) say they favor allowing public school teachers to lead their classes in prayers that refer to Jesus: 27% say they strongly favor this, and 26% say they favor it,” Pew reported. “[And] 46% of adults oppose allowing public school teachers to lead their classes in prayers that refer to Jesus: 22% say they strongly oppose this, and 24% say they oppose it.”

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