

Teacher to First-Grader: 'Jesus Is Not Allowed in School'

On Dec. 13, first-grader Isaiah Martinez took Christmas gifts intended for his teacher and classmates to Merced Elementary in the West Covina Unified School District in California. Each gift consisted of a traditional candy cane with a message attached that recited the legend of the candy cane. The legend references a candy maker who created the candy cane to symbolize the life of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah's older sister told him about the legend of the candy cane, and Isaiah asked if he could share it with his teacher and his classmates. Isaiah and his sister then purchased candy canes, printed the candy cane message and tied a copy to each candy cane.

When Isaiah brought his Christmas gift to school, his teacher took possession of the candy canes. After conferring with the school principal, she told Isaiah that "Jesus is not allowed in school" and, at the apparent direction of her principal, ripped the candy cane message from each candy cane, threw the messages in the trash and handed the candy canes back to Isaiah for delivery to his classmates. Isaiah then nervously handed the candy canes to his classmates in fear he was in trouble for trying to bring a little Christmas cheer and "good tidings" to class.

Advocates for Faith and Freedom sent a demand letter to the West Covina Unified School District, demanding a written apology and further demanding that a new policy be adopted to prohibit school officials from bullying and intimidating Christian students and religiously affiliated students.

A copy of the demand letter can be requested (write to info@),

which provides more depth to the facts as asserted by the Martinez family along with relevant legal arguments.

Robert Tyler, lawyer and general counsel, says, "Advocates for Faith and Freedom has experienced a surge in phone calls from students and their parents across the country who are victims of religiously motivated bullying—not bullying by other students, but bullying by teachers and school officials."

"The pendulum has swung so far in the opposite direction that public schools are becoming a place of hostility toward Christian and other religiously based worldviews," Tyler continues. "It's time to push the pendulum back in the right direction, where kids can experience true tolerance without religiously motivated hostility from their teachers and school officials."