



**CCSESA**

**California Three Rs  
Advisory Committee**

**Robert F. Kane, Esq.**

Americans United for Separation  
of Church and State

**Michelle Deutchman**

Anti-Defamation League

**Kathy Northington**

Association of California School  
Administrators

**Wayne Jacobsen**

BridgeBuilders

**TBA**

California Council of Churches

**Avi Black**

California Council for the  
Social Studies

**Julian Crocker**

California County Superintendents  
Educational Services Association

**Kenneth McDonald**

California Department of Education

**Beth Slutsky**

California History-Social Science Project

**Connie DeCapite**

California International Studies Project

**TBA**

California PTA

**Brian Rivas**

California School Boards Association

**Cheryl Brown**

CA Senator Gloria Negrete McLeod

**Jay Fiene**

California State University San Bernardino

**Sally Todd**

Catholic Diocese of Orange

**David Richmond**

Center for Civic Education

**Nancy Martin**

Chapman University

**Forrest Turpen**

Christian Educators

Association International

**Marshall Croddy**

Constitutional Rights Foundation

**Gary Dei Rossi**

Curriculum & Instruction Steering Com.

**Rob Williams**

First Amendment Schools Project

**Shabbir Mansuri**

Institute on Religion and Civic Values

**Maha ElGenaidi**

Islamic Networks Group

**Jackie Berman**

Jewish Community Relations Council

**Mynga Futrell**

Objectivity, Accuracy, and Balance in

Teaching about Religion

**D. Keith Naylor**

Occidental College

**Judith Lessow-Hurley**

San Jose State University

# California Three Rs

## Rights, Responsibility, and Respect

*A Project of the California County Superintendents Educational  
Services Association and The First Amendment Center*

**Volume 8, Number 3**

**February 2011**

### Worldview Education Guidelines for Classroom Teachers in Public Schools

Margaret Hill, Director, CA Three Rs Project

The democratic uprisings in the Middle East remind us how lucky Americans are to have the civic guidelines of the Constitution to help us negotiate our deepest difference with justice. Freedom of conscience, the basic inalienable right founded on the inviolable dignity of each person is the lynchpin. Ever expanding pluralism has made the First Amendment's guarantees of conscience and expression the precious tool that protects this right in American society and the mainstay of civil society.

Public schools were founded for the purpose of educating all American youth, no matter their creed, race, or culture, to be the next generation of citizens. The pluralistic reality of public education today makes it the laboratory where tomorrow's citizens must learn to apply Constitutional principles to resolve inevitable disagreements and conflicts resulting from differing understandings and beliefs.

True to its purpose of providing resources to help schools in this daunting task, the last California Three Rs Bulletin featured the American Academy of Religion's **Guidelines for Teaching About Religion in K-12 Public Schools** <http://www.aarweb.org/Publications/>. Another valuable resource **Worldview Education Guidelines for Classroom Teachers in Public Schools** <http://www.worldvieweducation.org>, aims for a somewhat broader understanding of freedom of conscience. "Worldview" refers to the overall perspective from which a person or group sees and interprets the world. This set of views leads to a collection of beliefs about life and the universe. The Guidelines remind educators that public schools are for students of all worldviews whether religious or nonreligious, and that they have a professional responsibility to exercise a scrupulous neutrality in regard to imposing their own views on youngsters.

Worldview authors have come up with a practical list of "Dos" and "Don'ts" to guide educators in thinking through teaching about religion with a view to diversity. The goal of the list is to encourage educators to seek objectivity, accuracy, and balance in their teaching as part of their responsibility to protect the freedom of conscience of their students.

#### Dos

1. As the teacher, do abide by the First Amendment's requirement that you be neutral in statement and conduct regarding whatever religious or nonreligious ways of understanding the world that youngsters in your class may hold arising out of their home environment and upbringing.

#### Don't's

1. Within your classroom, do not permit actions or statements (e.g., ostracism or disrespect) that erode the liberty of conscience or undermine the social circumstance of any youngster on account of the individual's profession of religious or nonreligious belief (or associated attire or customs).

2. Do live up to your moral and intellectual obligation to be fair and unbiased in your handling of the varied worldviews, be they nonreligious or religious.

3. In teaching about religions and belief systems, teach your students the academic way of understanding events, movements and venerated texts (while conceding that nonreligious and religious pathways of human understanding may yield interpretations at variance).

4. When making curricular and instructional decisions, acknowledge the existence and place of human belief systems within the important cultural developments of human history. Recognize worldview stances that underlie conduct of major players (the nonreligious notables as well as the diverse religious players).

5. Show sensitivity to children who come from unfamiliar or unpopular religious traditions and also to those who recognize no religion or disavow religious faith. Use your position as the teacher to assure that your classroom environment supports liberty of conscience for all children.

**6. When dealing with any important matter of controversy, live up to your obligation to be equitable and just in your treatment of the holders of these perspectives, be they nonreligious or religious.**

7. For highly controversial matters, seek the institution and support of legal school policies, so that you can establish within your own classroom a justifiable excusal policy that makes clear how and when youngsters may be exempted from lessons (informing parents of the general course of action).

8. Recognize that, with respect to matters of ultimate belief and faith adherence, each student is in a process of cognitive and emotional development, and that it is presumptuous to attribute to a child a worldview congruent with that of his/her parents.

2. Do not treat your own worldview as “official” in statements or actions, or stereotype or disparage religious or nonreligious worldviews not your own.

3. Do not abdicate your responsibility to teach your discipline in an academically sound secular manner despite advocacy (e.g., from students, parents, or administrators) that you dilute or avoid subject matter that is at odds with religious or nonreligious beliefs but which rightfully belongs in a thorough academic program.

4. Do not select curricular materials based on, or advocate or seek students’ acceptance of, your own worldview (whether religious or nonreligious) or advance any given worldview (or associated texts, customs and traditions) as being more or less praiseworthy than another.

5. In your classroom, do not direct or engage students in costuming themselves in religious attire, in assuming religious names, or in role-playing any of the worship activities or other conduct associated with following a particular worldview tradition.

6. Do not in any way seek or require student agreement with you on worldview beliefs (religious or nonreligious), or make any child feel an outsider in the classroom learning environment that you provide.

7. Do not involve youngsters in discussing or evaluating matters that are beyond their level of maturity and/or their cognitive ability to confront.

8. Do not label youngsters by their parental affiliation (e.g., “Mormon child”); instead, use referents that acknowledge the individuality and nascent belief status of the maturing youngster (e.g., Sylvia has Catholic parents” or “Raheel is from a Muslim family”).

The Worldview Education website has a more fleshed out list of Dos and Don’ts as well as teaching resources and links to lessons plans, a mini course in how to teach in a pluralistic classroom, and information about a broad range of religious and non religious worldviews. Many of you are probably saying that this list is not much different in substance from others that you have seen in California Three Rs Project publications. However, many find that using the word “worldview” rather than “belief” somehow makes their discussion more academic and a little more in keeping with the 3Rs of Rights, Responsibility and Respect.



San Joaquin COE, Orange CDOE, San Bernardino CSS, CSU San Bernardino,  
 CRF, and the California 3Rs Project  
 Invite 4-12 Educators to

# One Nation: Many Faiths – How Ideas of Religious Liberty Shaped America

THE MODERN ERA - A TAH PROJECT

**July 18-22, 2011**

**Online and face-to-face follow-up activities during the year TBA**  
**Orange County Department of Education – 200 Kalmus Drive**  
**Costa Mesa, CA 92628**

It is not surprising that religious liberty was considered one of the four fundamental freedoms in America during World War II when this Norman Rockwell painting was done. Why was the U.S. unique in the world in supporting religious liberty through its constitution when many other places, notably Nazi Germany, did not? How did faith communities, religious minorities, and the Enlightenment philosophies of the Founders guide the nation to support freedom of conscience, arguably America's first liberty? What roles have religious communities played in American political and social reform movements, American foreign policy, protection of minority rights, and freedom of expression? This largely ignored story is fundamental to teaching America history and must be done in a balanced, academic manner. All participants receive books and resources, scholar sessions, lesson materials, and instructional strategy demonstrations designed to address the needs of all students and enhance the quality of H-SS instruction. Special support and additional stipend consideration provided for teacher teams from the same school.

- TIME:** 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- STIPEND:** \$500 after summer session  
 \$250 after follow-up meetings and assessments
- BONUS:** \$300 in resources for the project evaluation

### TOPICS

Ideas of Religious Liberty at the Time of the Constitution; Religious Freedom in the Constitution – No Religious Test & First Amendment; Religious Influences on Politics and Reform in 19<sup>th</sup> c.; Know Nothings and the Religious Sides of Discrimination Against Irish and Chinese Immigrants; Utopian Societies, Manifest Destiny and the Mormons; Religion and Modernity 1880s-1920s, the KKK and Scopes Trial; Religious Liberty in Flag Salute Cases and FDR's Four Freedoms; Religion's Influence During the Cold War and Civil Rights Movements; Increasing Diversity of Religion in America after the Immigration Act of 1965; 20<sup>th</sup> c. Court Interpretations and Their Influence on Understanding the First Amendment; Current Issues Related to Religion and Public Education

**CONTACT:** Margaret Hill, (909) 537-5459 [mhill@csusb.edu](mailto:mhill@csusb.edu)

----- **One Nation Institute - Modern** -----

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

School Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell/Home Phone:( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax:( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email (required) \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Mail or fax completed registration coupon to: CSU San Bernardino, Ed Leadership and Curriculum,  
 Attention - Margaret Hill, Director CA 3Rs Project and One Nation: Many Faiths Institute,  
 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397 Fax (909) 537-7173 **DEADLINE: May 15, 2011**

### **Common Ground Resources:**

*Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public Schools* by Charles C. Haynes and Oliver Thomas. First Amendment Center, 2007.

This book has guidelines on how to handle a wide range of issues related to religious liberty and public schools.

**First Amendment Center: Religious Liberty** [http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel\\_liberty/index.aspx](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel_liberty/index.aspx)

This is an up-to-the-minute resource with current issues and court cases. A PDF version of *Finding Common Ground* is available here.

#### **For California Three Rs program information, contact...**

Dr. Margaret Hill, California 3Rs Project Lead, Department of Educational Leadership & Curriculum, California State University San Bernardino, 5500 University Pkwy., San Bernardino, CA 92407  
(909) 537-5459, [mhill@csusb.edu](mailto:mhill@csusb.edu)

#### **For First Amendment religious liberty information, contact...**

Dr. Charles C. Haynes, Senior Scholar, Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington D.C. 20001 Tel: 202/292-6293 [chaynes@freedomforum.org](mailto:chaynes@freedomforum.org)

#### **For information on teaching about world religions, contact...**

Dr. Bruce Grelle, Director, Religion and Public Education Resource Center, Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Chico, 400 West First Street, Chico, CA 95929-0740,  
(530) 898-4739, [bgrelle@csuchico.edu](mailto:bgrelle@csuchico.edu)

Sign up to receive the **Three Rs Bulletin** and program announcements electronically at [mhill@csusb.edu](mailto:mhill@csusb.edu) or see <http://ca3rsproject.org/> for the CA3Rs Project Bulletin archive.

Dr. Peg Hill, Director  
California 3Rs Project  
Dept. of Educational Leadership & Curriculum  
California State University, San Bernardino  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino, CA 92407