



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Part 2: The Twelve Rules of Christmas®

Compiled by attorneys for The Rutherford Institute www.rutherford.org and <http://bit.ly/1TNKSQb>

Each year there are complaints, threats, and lawsuits over the public mention of Christmas, displays of manger scenes and even of Christmas trees, traditional sacred music included in school, students wearing Christmas messages and jewelry. Please share these facts:

6. Public schools may not require students to sing Christmas songs whose messages conflict with the students' own religious or nonreligious beliefs.

7. Public school students may not be prohibited from distributing literature to fellow students concerning the Christmas holiday or invitations to church Christmas events on the same terms that they would be allowed to distribute other literature that is not related to schoolwork.

8. Private citizens or groups may display crèches or other Christmas symbols in public parks subject to the same reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions that would apply to other similar displays.

9. Government entities may erect and maintain celebrations of the Christmas holiday, such as Christmas trees and Christmas light displays, and may include crèches in their displays at least so long as the purpose for including the crèche is not to promote its religious content and it is placed in context with other symbols of the Holiday season as part of an effort to celebrate the public Christmas holiday through its traditional symbols.

10. Neither public nor private employers may prevent employees from decorating their offices for Christmas, playing Christmas music, or wearing clothing related to Christmas merely because of their religious content so long as these activities are not used to harass or intimidate others.

11. Public or private employees whose sincerely held religious beliefs require that they not work on Christmas must be reasonably accommodated by their employers unless granting the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the employer.

12. Government recognition of Christmas as a public holiday and granting government employees a paid holiday for Christmas does not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Permission has been granted to Catholics for Freedom of Religion (www.CFFOR.org) to distribute these guidelines.

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From the Board of Directors and founding members of Catholics for Freedom of Religion to Americans of all faiths, we send our wishes that your Christmas will be filled with joy, gladness and hope at the birth of our Savior, Christ the King. We pray together with you for strength and guidance for all Americans to understand and guard the religious freedom that protects our rights to choose our faith, to worship openly and fearlessly, to share our faith freely and to make the choice for life. **Venite adoremus Dominum.**