



Facilitator's Opening Remarks to "Students of Faith" Video

Hello and good evening/afternoon. My name is _____
and for the next half hour I will be teaching the many ways students
may bring their faith with them into their public school.

You are now learning what it is to be fully initiated in our beautiful Catholic faith as you prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation. You are being taught with great love and care the truths and practices of our faith, so it is fitting that you learn of the freedom to practice and share your faith in public schools; to be a witness to your Catholic faith and to the victory of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Most parents, teachers and students have been told our schools are God-free zones, which they certainly are not! The Constitution, Supreme Court and U.S. Dept. of Education have made it clear that students do not lose their rights to religious expression when they enter the schoolhouse door. Students have protected rights to express their faith in appropriate ways often during the school day.

I have a few questions to help us begin to understand students' rights to religious expression:

- Do you think public school students may read their Bible during the school day? Please raise your hand if you think so.
- Do you think students may sing Christmas songs and say "Merry Christmas" at school? Please raise your hand if you think so.
- May public school students evangelize...or teach other students about their faith? Please raise your hand if you think they may.
- May students speak or write about their faith as part of classroom work? Please raise your hand if you think they may.

All of these questions are examples of ways students in public schools may share their faith during the school day, as long as they are not disruptive and choose appropriate times.

The video we will watch right now will teach us more about these facts as they are listed by the U.S. Dept. of Education. You might be interested to know this video was filmed on Long Island, NY, at St. Elizabeth's parish center in Melville and that the students in the video are from St. Anthony's H.S. and St. Matthews and Christ the King parishes. The filmmakers are from Telecare TV of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Optional for facilitators: We will take questions and comments after the video and also provide a handout of useful information.