

No Praying in School?

A schoolteacher was being interviewed by the school administration, the eager teaching prospect said:

Let me see if I've got this right. You want me to go into that room with all those kids, and fill their every waking moment with a love for learning. And I'm supposed to instill a sense of pride in their ethnicity, modify their disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse and even censor their t-shirt messages and dress habits.

You want me to wage a war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, check their backpacks for weapons of mass destruction, and raise their self-esteem. You want me to teach them patriotism, good citizenship, sportsmanship, and fair play, how to register to vote, how to balance a checkbook, and how to apply for a job. I am to check their heads for lice, maintain a safe environment, recognize signs of anti-social behavior, offer advice, write letters of recommendation for student employment and scholarships, encourage respect for the cultural diversity of others, and oh, make sure that I give the girls in my class fifty percent of my attention.

My contract requires me to work on my own time after school, evenings and weekends grading papers. Also, I must spend my summer vacation at my own expense working toward advance certification and a Masters degree. And on my own time you want me to attend committee and faculty meetings, PTA meetings, and participate in staff development training. I am to be a paragon of virtue, larger than life, such that my very presence will awe my students into being obedient and respectful of authority. And I am to pledge allegiance to family values and this current administration.

You want me to incorporate technology into the learning experience, monitor web sites, and relate personally with each student. That includes deciding who might be potentially dangerous and/or liable to commit a crime in school. I am to make sure all students pass the mandatory state exams, even those who don't come to school regularly or complete any of their assignments.

Plus, I am to make sure that all of the students with handicaps get an equal education regardless of the extent of their mental or physical handicap. And I am to communicate regularly with the parents by letter, telephone, newsletter and report card. All of this I am to do with just a piece of chalk, a computer, a few books, a bulletin board, a big smile AND on a starting salary that qualifies my family for food stamps!

*You want me to do all of this and yet you expect me **NOT TO PRAY!**"*