

INSTRUCTION

Religion

The guidelines are based upon a written statement issued by the office of the attorney general in December, 1976. Staff should recognize that the Washington State Constitution contains some of the "most restrictive provisions" to be found in the Constitution of any state. Therefore, observance and promotion of the religious significance of Christmas or any holiday must be limited in order to avoid an unconstitutional promotion of, or indoctrination in, religion.

The following guidelines shall be in effect:

1. Symbols of Christmas as a traditional holiday are permissible, e.g., Christmas trees, reindeer, wreaths, Santa Claus, etc.
2. Christmas carols with a religious connotation (e.g., contain the Lord's name) are permissible if they have been part of the traditional non-church observance of the Christmas season and are presented with traditional non-religious Christmas carols such as "White Christmas," "Frosty the Snowman," "Jingle Bells," etc.
3. A religious Christmas carol which has a particular musical virtue may be presented when accompanied by a non-religious carol.
4. Schools will avoid displaying symbols which depict the religious nature of Christmas, e.g., nativity scenes.
5. Schools should avoid singing parodies of traditional Christmas carols.