

# Summary of California State Standards Regarding Teaching about the Bible and Christianity

What follows are excerpts from the current academic standards published by the California Department of Education highlighting some of the areas where educators can, and in some cases are expected to, teach about the influence of the Bible and Christianity. While some standards may not specifically mention the Bible or Christianity, they reference topics that are relevant and provide legitimate academic opportunities. For an article on how to use this information, search for *Keeping the Faith* on our News & Articles page at [www.gtbe.org](http://www.gtbe.org).

## National Common Core State Standards for ENGLISH 2013

*46 States, the District of Columbia and four territories have adopted the English Common Core State Standards. (Texas, Alaska, Nebraska, Virginia have opted out.)*

### Writing Standards – Research to Build and Present Knowledge

#### Grade 8

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.9a** – Apply *grade 8 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new”).

#### Grades 9 – 10

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9a** – Apply *grades 9–10 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).

### Reading Standards for Literature – Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

#### Grade 8

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.9** – Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

#### Grades 9 – 10

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9** – Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

## HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE Framework for California Public Schools

**14) This framework acknowledges the importance of religion in human history.** “When studying world history, students must become familiar with the basic ideas of the major religions and the ethical traditions of each time and place. Students are expected to learn about the role of religion in the founding of this country because many of our political institutions have their antecedents in religious beliefs.” (Pg. 7)

### KINDERGARTEN – Learning and Working Now and Long Ago

#### **K.1 Students understand that being a good citizen involves acting in certain ways.**

- K.1.2. Learn examples of honesty, courage, determination, individual responsibility, and patriotism in American and world history from stories and folklore.
- K.1.3. Know beliefs and related behaviors of characters in stories from times past and understand the consequences of the characters' actions.

#### **K.6 Students understand that history relates to events, people, and places of other times.**

- K.6.1. Identify the purposes of, and the people and events honored in, commemorative holidays, including the human struggles that were the basis for the events (e.g., Thanksgiving ...).

### GRADE ONE – A Child’s Place in Time and Space

#### **1.1 Students describe the rights and individual responsibilities of citizenship.**

- 1.1.2 Understand the elements of fair play and good sportsmanship, respect for the rights and opinions of others, and respect for rules by which we live, including the meaning of the "Golden Rule."

#### **1.3 Students know and understand the symbols, icons, and traditions of the United States that provide continuity and a sense of community across time.**

- 1.3.2 Understand the significance of our national holidays and the heroism and achievements of the people associated with them.
- 1.3.3 Identify American symbols, landmarks, and essential documents, such as the flag, bald eagle, Statue of Liberty, U.S. Constitution, and Declaration of Independence, and know the people and events associated with them.

# Summary of California State Standards Regarding Teaching about the Bible and Christianity

## **GRADE ONE – (Continued)**

### **1.5 Students describe the human characteristics of familiar places and the varied backgrounds of American citizens and residents in those places.**

1.5.3. Compare the beliefs, customs, ceremonies, traditions, and social practices of the varied cultures, drawing from folklore.

## **GRADE TWO – People Who Make a Difference**

**2.5. Students understand the importance of individual action and character and explain how heroes from long ago and the recent past have made a difference in others' lives.** “Members of children’s families can be invited to tell about the experiences of their families...their religious practices; and the dress, manners, and morals expected of family members at that time.” (Pg. 44)

## **GRADE THREE – Continuity and Change**

### **3.3 Students draw from historical and community resources...**

3.3.1. Research the explorers who visited here, the newcomers who settled here, and the people who continue to come to the region, including their cultural and religious traditions and contributions.

## **GRADE FOUR - California: A Changing State**

**4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the Pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.** “One reason for the Spanish settling in California was to bring Christianity to the native peoples. Students should understand how the introduction of Christianity affected native cultures.”(Pg. 58)

## **GRADE FIVE - United States History and Geography: Making a New Nation**

### **5.4 Students understand the political, religious, social, and economic institutions that evolved in the colonial era.**

5.4.3. Describe the religious aspects of the earliest colonies (e.g., Puritanism in Massachusetts, Anglicanism in Virginia, Catholicism in Maryland, Quakerism in Pennsylvania).

5.4.4. Identify the significance and leaders of the First Great Awakening, which marked a shift in religious ideas, practices, and allegiances in the colonial period, the growth of religious toleration, and free exercise of religion.

## **GRADE SIX - World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations**

“One of the principal roots of Western civilization can be found in the enduring contributions of the ancient Hebrews to Western ethical and religious thought and literature, most notably by the Old Testament. To understand these traditions, students should read and discuss Biblical literature that is part of the literary heritage and ethical teachings of Western civilization; for example, stories about the Creation, Noah, the Tower of Babel, Abraham, the Exodus, the Ten Commandments, Ruth and Naomi, David, and Daniel and the Lion’s Den; selections from the Psalms and Proverbs; and the Hebrew people’s concepts of wisdom, righteousness, law, and justice.” (Pg. 77-78)

### **6.3 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the Ancient Hebrews.**

6.3.1. Describe the origins and significance of Judaism as the first monotheistic religion based on the concept of one God who sets down moral laws for humanity.

6.3.2. Identify the sources of the ethical teachings and central beliefs of Judaism (the Hebrew Bible, the Commentaries): belief in God, observance of law, practice of the concepts of righteousness and justice, and importance of study; and describe how the ideas of the Hebrew traditions are reflected in the moral and ethical traditions of Western civilization.

6.3.3. Explain the significance of Abraham, Moses, Naomi, Ruth, David, and Yohanan ben Zaccai in the development of the Jewish religion.

### **6.7 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the development of Rome.**

6.7.6. Note the origins of Christianity in the Jewish Messianic prophecies, the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as described in the New Testament, and the contribution of St. Paul the Apostle to the definition and spread of Christian beliefs (e.g., belief in the Trinity, resurrection, salvation).

6.7.7. Describe the circumstances that led to the spread of Christianity in Europe and other Roman territories.

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## **GRADE SEVEN – World History and Geography: Medieval and Early Modern Times**

### **7.6 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of Medieval Europe.**

- 7.6.2. Describe the spread of Christianity north of the Alps and the roles played by the early church and by monasteries in its diffusion after the fall of the western half of the Roman Empire.
- 7.6.6. Discuss the causes and course of the religious Crusades and their effects on the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish populations in Europe...
- 7.6.8. Understand the importance of the Catholic Church as a political, intellectual, and aesthetic institution (e.g., founding of universities, political and spiritual roles of the clergy, creation of monastic and mendicant religious orders, preservation of the Latin language and religious texts, St. Thomas Aquinas's synthesis of classical philosophy with Christian theology, and the concept of "natural law").

### **7.8 Students analyze the origins, accomplishments, and geographic diffusion of the Renaissance.**

- 7.8.1. Describe the way in which the revival of classical learning and the arts fostered a new interest in humanism (i.e., a balance between intellect and religious faith).
- 7.8.4. Describe the growth and effects of new ways of disseminating information (e.g., the ability to manufacture paper, translation of the Bible into the vernacular, printing).

### **7.9 Students analyze the historical developments of the Reformation.**

- 7.9.2. Describe the theological, political, and economic ideas of the major figures during the Reformation (e.g., Desiderius Erasmus, Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Tyndale).
- 7.9.3. Explain Protestants' new practices of church self-government and the influence of those practices on the development of democratic practices and ideas of federalism.
- 7.9.6. Understand the institution and impact of missionaries on Christianity and the diffusion of Christianity from Europe to other parts of the world in the medieval and early modern periods; locate missions on a world map.

## **GRADE EIGHT – United States History and Geography: Growth and Conflict**

### **8.1 Students understand the major events preceding the founding of the nation and relate their significance to the development of American constitutional democracy.**

- 8.1.1. Describe the relationship between the moral and political ideas of the Great Awakening and the development of revolutionary fervor.
- 8.1.2. Analyze the philosophy of government expressed in the Declaration of Independence, with an emphasis on government as a means of securing individual rights (e.g., key phrases such as "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights").

### **8.2 Students analyze the political principles underlying the U.S. Constitution and compare the enumerated and implied powers of the federal government.**

- 8.2.5. Understand the significance of Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom as a forerunner of the First Amendment and the origins, purpose, and differing views of the founding fathers on the issue of the separation of church and state.

## **GRADE NINE – Elective Course on a Survey of World Religions**

"In this course students are introduced to...Christianity's continuity with Judaism; its belief that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled Old Testament expectations of the Messiah; and its faith that in His Crucifixion and Resurrection, Jesus Christ reconciled the world to God so that, through forgiveness of sin, the eternal life of God could now flow into the lives of human beings." (Pg. 121)

## **GRADE TEN – World History, Culture, and Geography: The Modern World**

### **10.1 Students relate the moral and ethical principles in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, in Judaism, and in Christianity to the development of Western political thought.**

- 10.1.1 Analyze the similarities and differences in Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman views of law, reason and faith, and duties of the individual.

**10.8 Students analyze the causes and consequences of World War II.** "They should discuss abortive revolts such as that which occurred in the Warsaw Ghetto, and they should discuss the moral courage of Christians such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Raoul Wallenberg, who risked their lives to save Jews." (Pg. 129)

# Summary of California State Standards Regarding Teaching about the Bible and Christianity

## **GRADE ELEVEN – United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century**

“They should understand Dr. King’s philosophical and religious dedication to nonviolence by reading documents such as his ‘Letter from a Birmingham Jail,’ and they should recognize the leadership of the black churches in the movement.” (Pg. 147)

### **11.1 Students analyze the significant events in the founding of the nation and its attempts to realize the philosophy of government described in the Declaration of Independence.**

- 11.1.2. Analyze the ideological origins of the American Revolution, the Founding Fathers' philosophy of divinely bestowed unalienable natural rights, the debates on the drafting and ratification of the Constitution, and the addition of the Bill of Rights.
- 11.2.7. Analyze the similarities and differences between the ideologies of Social Darwinism and Social Gospel (e.g., using biographies of William Graham Sumner, Billy Sunday, Dwight L. Moody).

### **11.3 Students analyze the role religion played in the founding of America, its lasting moral, social, and political impacts, and issues regarding religious liberty.**

- 11.3.2 Analyze the great religious revivals and the leaders involved in them, including the First Great Awakening, the Second Great Awakening, the Civil War revivals, the Social Gospel Movement, the rise of Christian liberal theology in the nineteenth century, the impact of the Second Vatican Council, and the rise of Christian fundamentalism in current times.
- 11.3.5. Describe the principles of religious liberty found in the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of the First Amendment, including the debate on the issue of separation of church and state.

## **GRADE TWELVE – Principles of American Democracy**

### **12.1 Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.**

- 12.1.4. Explain how the Founding Fathers' realistic view of human nature led directly to the establishment of a constitutional system that limited the power of the governors and the governed as articulated in the *Federalist Papers*.

### **12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.**

- 12.2.1. Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy).

### **12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.**

- 12.3.3. Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity.

## **California State Laws**

### **Education Code (State Law) 51511:**

“Nothing in this code shall be construed to prevent, or exclude from the public schools, references to religion or references to or the use of religious literature, art, or music or other things having a religious significance when such references or uses do not constitute instruction in religious principles or aid to any religious sect, church, creed, or sectarian purpose and when such references or uses are incidental to or illustrative of matters properly included in the course of study.”

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*For a complete list of CA academic standards go to: [www.cde.ca.gov/ci](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci). To order a printed copy of the CA History-Social Studies Framework, call (800) 995-4099.*

*Based on the current state standards adopted 1998. Senate Bill 70 (Chapter 7, Statutes of 2011) extended a suspension on the process and procedures for adopting instructional materials, including framework revisions until the 2015-16 school year.*