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| *Landmark Supreme Court Case Critical Lesson* **Engel v. Vitale!!** | *Landmark Supreme Court Case Critical Lesson*  |

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| My brother (preacher) and I (teacher) have had an agreement since the landmark Supreme Court ruling, Engel v. Vitale (1962). Reverend Milner won’t lead my public school students in prayer and I won’t lead his congregation in a lesson on federalism - although at the occasional Wednesday night supper I just can’t help myself but busting out with an in-depth analysis of the dealignment of American political parties. Is this what the Framers of the Constitution had in mind? Today, is the wall of separation between church and state too high or too low? Do you and your siblings’ occupations rhyme? (Are you a nurse, does she drive a hearse? Are you an attorney, does he push a gurney? I once knew a grocer with a sister composer.)   But even in this divided age, we brothers agree that there should be a separation of church and state. Like Mama always said, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”  So teachers, open up your time machine app and head back to New York state in 1961. You are a public high school teacher and you are going to start your school day by leading your students in the following prayer:  “Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our **teachers** and our Country.”  Okay, I sort of like the idea of my students begging blessings on teachers, but goodness gracious, I’ve got to get through an entire unit on political culture today and I’m not sure about leading my Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, and atheist students (yes, I've taught students of these religions, and more) in prayer. Here’s what Justice Hugo Black had to say about school sponsored prayer in his ruling: “…in this country, it is no part of the business of government to compose official prayers for any group of the American people.” In his opinion, Justice Black hearkened back to the very origins of the United States, writing that, “It is a matter of history that this very practice of establishing governmentally composed prayers for religious services was one of the reasons which caused many of our early colonists to leave England and seek religious freedom in America.”Not So Fun Fact: Did you know that [Justice Hugo L. Black](https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/hugo-black-unabashed-partisan-for-the-constitution%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) never graduated from high school and was once a member of the Ku Klux Klan!  |

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| **Landmark Supreme Court Case Lesson**We've put together a great lesson on Engel v. Vitale, (he’s more like a pastor, not a sportscaster!) and it’s a whizbanger, complete with:* A online survey on prayer in school!
* A Freedom From/Of Religion Court Cases Scavenger Hunt!
* A picture of a little public school student praying!
* Audio recordings of Supreme Court oral arguments from way back in 1962! (Did they really have recordings way back then???? Yes Suzie, but that was so long ago that there was no electricity and the internet was powered by draft horses!) #fakenews
* A smattering of expert opinions for and against prayer in public school
* A visit from the ghost of Justice John Marshall
* A First Amendment fishbowl!!!!
* And much, much more!

And use as little or as much of our lesson as you like. And look out for more great lessons and content on [Landmark Supreme Court Cases](https://www.gopopro.com/landmark-court-cases-1/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). Engel v. Vitale is just one of the [19 cases](https://www.gopopro.com/top-ten-landmark-supreme-court-cases%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)\* that will be on the 2018 AP Government redesign!  |

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| **[The Lesson](https://www.gopopro.com/landmark-court-cases-1/2017/11/16/engle-v-vitale%22%20%5Co%20%22The%20Lesson%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self)**  |

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| While it’s true that: *As long as there are tests in school there will be prayer in school.*It’s also true that:*As long as there are tests in church there will be low attendance.* |

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| If you like our lesson on Engel v. Vitale,you'll love our [Civil Rights and Liberties Unit](https://www.gopopro.com/lessons/unit-6-civil-rights-liberties%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)! |

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