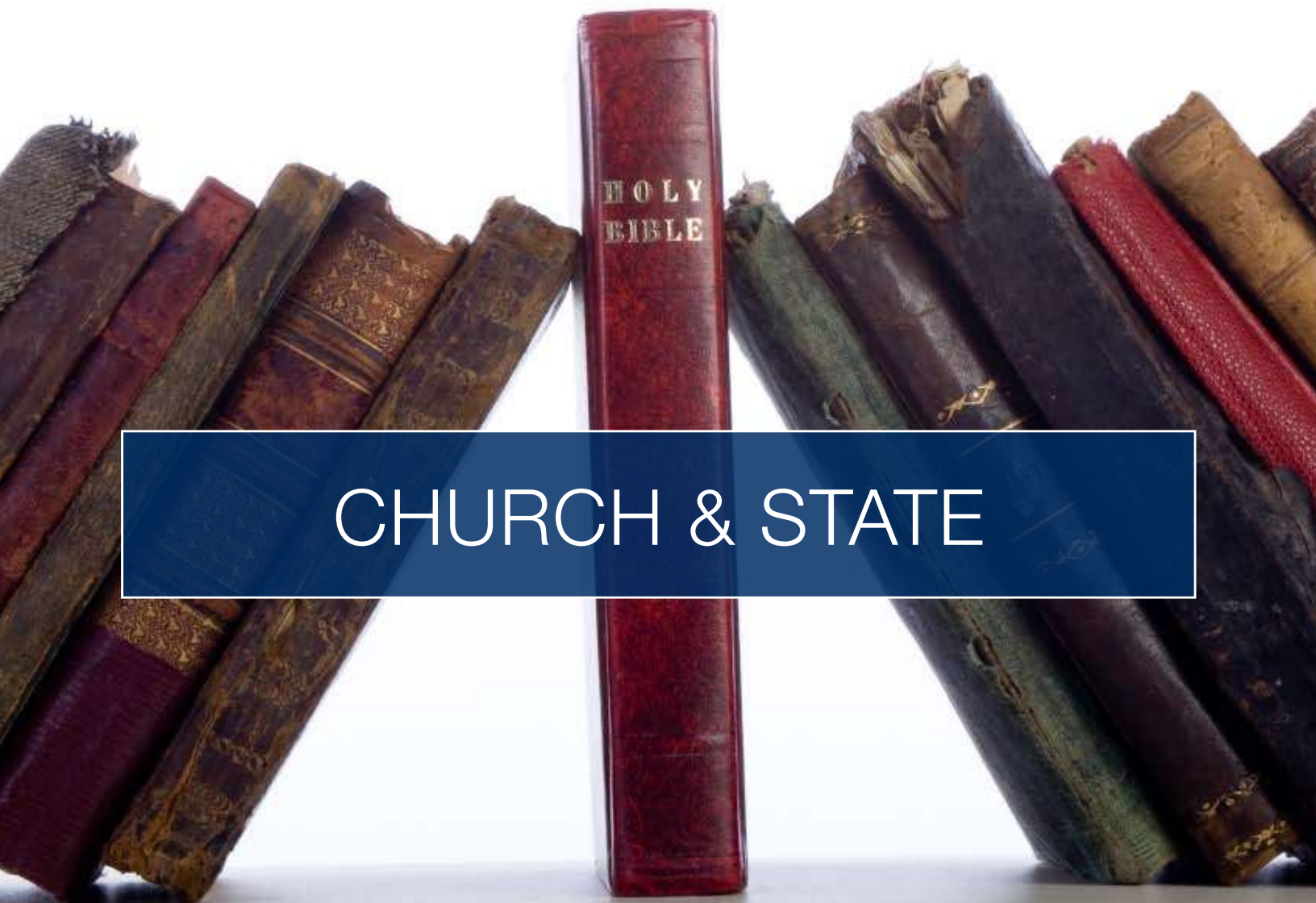


PARENT / TEACHER LESSON PLANS



# CHURCH & STATE



### Summary

In this lesson, students look at a comparison of Canadian Law and God's Law after having an opportunity to give their thoughts on the meaning of the separation between church and state. These different roles between church and state are God-given roles. Students conclude by examining different news articles and writing their own letters to the editor of a newspaper.

## Essential Question

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*How can we best respect the different roles between church and state while still being a salt and light?*

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This question is intended to get students thinking about the different roles between church and state. This concept is often misunderstood.

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## Engage the Students with a discussion of Church and State

- Write the phrase "Separation of Church and State" on the board. Provide students with a short time to write down what they know about it, and what they wonder about it.

## Explore what the Bible teaches

- Lead a class discussion on the following Bible chapters.
- Read Romans 13: 1-7. Who institutes civil authorities (government)? What is the task given to civil government? How does this compare with the role that government now plays in society (providing child care, welfare, flood relief etc.)?
- Read Matthew 22:15-22. Who is "Caesar" today? What does this tell us about our relationship with civil government?
- Read Titus 1:6-9. What does this tell us about different roles for the institution of the church and the institution of the state? What are some examples of situations where one institution may be tempted to interfere in the authority of another institution?
- Students should write a paragraph summarizing what they have learned about the biblical relationship between church and state

## Extend the learning to analyzing news articles

- Distribute *Handout 3 – news articles* and read news article #1. Lead a class discussion on the following points:
  - What does Minister Pettigrew think the separation of church and state is about?
  - How would he be correct in his comments?
  - How would he be wrong?
  - He explains that promoting same-sex "marriage" is his principled decision. What might his principles be? How are they formed?

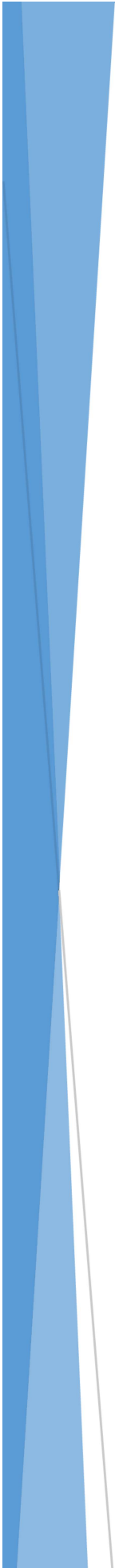
- Read news article #2: the response to Minister Pettigrew by Ted Byfield. Lead a class discussion on the following points:
  - What are some other laws in our society that come from the Bible?
  - Ted Byfield's argument can be taken one step further. Keeping religion out of politics would not only exclude all the laws that are based on the Bible, it will also exclude the laws that are based on other religions/worldviews. If Minister Pettigrew is basing his decision on principle, and that principle isn't the Bible, then what is it?

## Class Discussion

- Encourage students to try think of examples of new laws and policies that are being promoted that are not based on the Bible.
  - What are they based on?
  - What is the new authority?
  - Who are we expected to look to for help, for guidance, for determining right from wrong?
- Focus the discussion to the underlying issue:
  - So what is really going on? Is the question really about the separation of church and state?
  - Or is it the battle of one worldview against the other? A new worldview (secular humanism, which looks to the state for authority) is fighting to push the old worldview (Christianity) away.
- Encourage the students to think of ways to present Christian principles to someone who doesn't believe in God or the authority of Scriptures.
  - How do we respond?
  - May we promote the Christian Worldview in a country that is no longer Christian?
  - How do we do this?

## Task: Letter to the Editor

- Distribute *Handout 4 – sample letters to editor*.
- Have students write a short letter to the editor on a topic of their choice in which they argue for Biblically-based position. (See two sample letters below) Encourage them to think through the eyes of a secular reader. This requires presenting arguments which someone else would consider, even if they are not a Christian. The Bible can be used (though it is not necessary), but students should attempt to show why it should matter to someone who does not believe in the Bible as well.
- ARPA's EasyMail website has numerous letter ideas and topics to use.



# Teacher Overview – Separation of Church and State

The concept of the separation of church and state is often misunderstood, even by Christians, to mean the separation of religion from politics. Christians are often told to keep their religious views private and away from political issues. But God calls us to be a light in our world and to be prophets, priests and kings. How do we respond when our society tells us to keep our faith private?

Separating the institutions of the church and state is necessary for a free society. God has given different responsibilities to the church and the state. He has also set up different authorities in each institution. Though they are separate institutions, God remains sovereign over everything, including the state. As a result, our faith cannot be separated from politics. In fact, despite popular claims to the contrary, there is always a faith-based worldview behind all political decisions, even in our secular society. Behind the scenes there is a battle of worldviews competing to rule our nation. These worldviews are often hidden in an attempt to make the decisions seem to be “value neutral.”

Christians must courageously hold up the Christian worldview in the public square and demonstrate how it is best for all Canadians. At the same time, we must respect the different responsibilities given to the church and the state.