

Alabamians and Religion in the Schools

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Ask-Alabama Poll, Spring 2005
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Significant Findings

1. **96% of Alabamians profess themselves to be at least somewhat religious.**
 - a. 47% characterize themselves as *very religious*.
 - b. 49% consider themselves to be *somewhat religious*.
 - c. Only 3% consider themselves as *not religious*.

The data suggest that nearly all Alabamians profess a belief in God that impacts their personal behavior; and that nearly half of all respondents consider their religious beliefs to be very important in guiding their lives.

2. **86% of the respondents encourage or strongly encourage the practice of daily prayer in the public schools, 92% favor silent prayer or meditation at the opening of each school day, and 87% approve of beginning public school athletic events with a prayer.**

	Strongly Encourage	Encourage	Discourage
Opening School Prayer	62%	24%	11%
Silent Prayer or Meditation in School	57%	35%	6%
Prayer at School Athletic Events	58%	29%	10%

Almost all Alabamians would prefer to see organized daily prayer in their schools, and over half feel strongly about this. This indicates that the overwhelming majority of Alabama's residents perceive that the benefits of formal school prayer in the public schools far outweigh any potential harm or infringement on the beliefs of others and that court-imposed strictures on public prayer in schools should be relaxed.

- 3. Less than 8% of respondents believe that public school instruction on the origins of mankind should be restricted only to evolutionary theory. Sixty-two percent prefer that both evolution and religious explanations be taught in the public schools, and 12% feel that only religious explanations be taught.**

Many Alabamians seem to be uncomfortable about the separation of religious beliefs and science in the school curriculum. Most agree that religious-based explanations, such as Creationism or Intelligent Design, should be given a place in the public school classroom along with the theory of evolution. If given a choice, the data indicate that most Alabamians would prefer public school teachers be able to present both religious explanations and evolutionary theory in the classroom.

Poll Facts

Dates of Survey: April 6 - 18, 2005
Sample Size: 603 Alabama residents
Estimated Margin of Error: +/- 4%
Type of Survey: Random telephone survey of Alabamians 19 or older