



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Prayer and the First Amendment**

Protection of the right to pray, as well as protection from coerced forms of prayer, are First Amendment issues that often create controversy in schools. With a partner or in a group of three, read and discuss the following scenarios. How do these relate to freedom of religion? Whose rights, if anyone's, are being threatened or violated?

1. Nina wrote a report on what it means to be an evangelical Christian. She ended her report with a prayer. Her teacher stopped her, saying that the prayer was not appropriate for school. Do you agree with the teacher's action?
2. John does not say the "under God" part of the Pledge of Allegiance. Other students have noticed and are calling him names, like "atheist." How does John's situation relate to the First Amendment? What do you think should be done?
3. A seventh grade English teacher read a poem with his class that was written in the form of a prayer. A parent complained about prayer being in the classroom. Do you think the reading of this poem is justifiable? Explain.
4. A group of parents complained about the prayers that are offered before athletic events. They say such prayers violate the boundaries between church and state. Do you agree? Why or why not?
5. A group of students has asked permission to form an after-school prayer group that meets in the school. The principal says this is religious activity and does not belong in school. What do you think?