1st AMENDMENT: FREEDOM OF RELIGION

CASE SCENARIOS:

Case 1: Engel vs. Vitale, 1962
The New York state legislature has passed a law, which allows teachers to have a voluntary prayer at the beginning of each school day. A teacher in New York allowed a student to say a non-denominational prayer in his class to start the day. Another student, Jane, protested, saying that she should not have to listen to a prayer in a school supported by tax money.

* Were Jane's constitutional rights violated?
* Explain why there was or was not a violation of Jane's constitutional rights in this case.

Case 2: Westside Community Schools vs. Mergens, 1990
Meagan, a student at Island Trees High School, asked school officials for permission to form a Christian Club at Island Trees. Meagan told the school officials that membership would be voluntary and open to all students. The club's main purpose was to permit students to read and discuss the Bible, have fellowship, and pray together. School officials denied the request.

* Were Meagan's constitutional rights violated?
* Explain why there was or was not a violation of Meagan's constitutional rights in this case.

Case 3: Jacobsen vs. Massachusetts, 1905
The state law in New York requires that all students in public school must be vaccinated against polio. Jim is a student who is a member of a church which teaches that introduction of foreign substances into the body is morally wrong. Jim's parents refuse to allow him to be immunized, and the school drops Jim from school. Jim's parents sue the school for violation of Jim's rights.

* Were Jim's constitutional rights violated?
* Explain why there was or was not a violation of Jim's constitutional rights in this case.

Case 4: Reynolds vs. United States, 1879
The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints allows for the practice of polygamy within their church doctrine. Mr. Black, a practicing Fundamentalist, believes in this policy and therefore concludes that it is his right to have two wives. The federal government prohibits the practice of polygamy and brings charges against Mr. Black.

* Were Mr. Black's constitutional rights violated?
* Explain why there was or was not a violation of Mr. Black's constitutional rights in this case.