

Good afternoon. My name is Margaret Perlstein and my daughter is an 8th grader at Davidson. I would like to give you a personal account of this books' negative impact on our family.

When she was in 3rd grade, one of my daughter's friends asked her if she knew that the Jews killed Jesus. She was devastated and understandably upset. It took us several weeks to get past this spiritual crisis as a family and, in the end, her trust in others was shattered. She realized there were people out there who believed that hatred towards Jews, and therefore toward her, was justified. This is a hard lesson at any age, and its common for Jewish kids.

When she began reading the Bronze Bow in Ms. Logan's class, she was appalled and upset by the prejudice against Judaism and the completely favorable view of Christianity presented in the book. I read it and was speechless. How could I explain to my daughter why she was reading this book in a public school class? How could I reassure her that the anti-Semitic attitudes in the book were not accurate reflections of her teacher's beliefs when I wasn't sure that was true? Rather, we proceeded into the year assuming Ms. Logan probably WAS anti-Semitic. From that point on, we were trying to figure out how to motivate her while she navigated what seemed like hostile waters.

When assigned the question "How do you think the people became healed by Jesus?" She and several of her other Jewish friends were confused. Should they answer the question according to their own belief system and maintain their own integrity at the risk of alienating their teacher and sticking out in class?

The story of my daughter and Ms. Logan has a happy ending. Ms. Logan was an excellent teacher, we discovered. But, it took us approximately 3 months to realize that the prejudice portrayed in Bronze Bow was not shared by Ms. Logan.

This is our story. But you will never know how many families went through similar experiences and never said a word to their teachers. They're out there. We've all spoken to them in the last few months. When I hear no one has ever complained before, I want to say - "maybe not to you". It has been extremely hard for us to get this far. Without the support of our group, we might also be licking our wounds in silence.

Every single parent I have spoken to, no matter what their religious background, has told me that they support our position and appreciate our efforts to remove this book as a required text.

One former Davidson family who are active Catholics discussed this book after I expressed my concerns to the parent. One of her children who had also read this in 7th grade raised an interesting point which I had not considered before. In his opinion, this book was at least as damaging to Christians as it was to Jews since it promotes an attitude of Christian superiority in an increasingly intolerant world.

While I do agree that comparative religion is a vital area for our children to explore and understand, we should not be using materials that promote one faith over others. As my colleagues have already said, The Bronze Bow crosses a line.