



QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

A Resource for “Opposition to Places of Worship & Religious Practices in the U.S.”

1. In the history of the United States, what groups encountered difficulty in practicing their faith freely and establishing houses of worship?
2. What groups have recently encountered opposition in establishing houses of worship?
3. Why do you think that the Park51 proposal was particularly controversial? Why did it attract international attention?
4. What role do you think stereotyping has played in the opposition to places of worship in United States history? What role do you think stereotyping played in the past, and what role do you think it plays today? Do you think that the events of September 11, 2001 contributed to stereotyping against Muslims and opposition to mosques?
5. What reasons do opponents usually give for their opposition to the construction of certain houses of worship? What are the legal and political tactics that are used to oppose houses of worship? What are the legal and political tactics that are used to defend their right to exist? What differences can you find between the legal tactics and the political tactics employed by opponents? What differences can you find between the legal tactics and the political tactics employed by supporters?
6. Do you notice any trends in the history of opposition to places of worship and religious practices in the U.S.? Explain.
7. Do the cases presented (and others you may know about) challenge the notion of the United States as a land of religious freedom? Why or why not?