

# The History of the National Motto “In God We Trust”

- In September of 1814, during the British bombardment of Fort McHenry, Francis Scott Key composed the poem *The Star Spangled Banner*, of which the last line of the second and final stanza is, “and this be our Motto, in God be our Trust.”
- In 1861, Chief Justice Chase of the Supreme Court wrote the following in a letter to the director of the U.S. Mint: “No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins.”
- In 1866, Congress enacted legislation authorizing the inscription of the phrase “In God We Trust” to be placed on certain coins.
- In 1931, Congress passed the act officially designating the composition of the words and music of the *The Star Spangled Banner* as our National Anthem.
- In 1954, during the Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, Congress approved the words “Under God” to be added to our Pledge of Allegiance. In our pledge, the United States is described as “One Nation under God.”
- In 1955, Congress mandated the inscription of “In God We Trust” on all coins and paper currency.
- In 1956, during the Eisenhower Administration, Congress and the Supreme Court voted in favor of declaring “In God We Trust” as the national motto of the United States.
- The United States Code itself contains religious references. For example, Congress has directed the President to “...set aside and proclaim a suitable day each year as a National Day of Prayer, on which the people of the United States may turn to God in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups, and as individuals.”
- Our National Motto, “In God We Trust,” is prominently engraved on the wall above the Speaker’s dais in the Chamber of the House of Representatives and is reproduced on every coin minted and every dollar printed by the Federal Government.
- Our Judicial Branch acknowledges the central role of religion in our society. All federal courts open sessions requesting that “God save the United States and this honorable Court.”
- The Ten Commandments are posted in the U.S. Supreme Court Chambers directly above the bench where the nine Supreme Court Justices sit.

