



**Copies of *St Augustine's Sin* were made available to club**  **members free of charge.  Here's what they thought.**

Review by [**Gavice V**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3813152&sid=c3192314d3c074548e531b388a2000d4) » 19 Oct 2022, 07:35 – **Top Rating**

[**Link to Original OnlineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=258697)

St. Augustine's Sin: Why Child Abuse Bedevils Christianity by Joseph Baker is a book about how British children are taught religion in schools. It focuses on the teachings of Catholics and the Church of England and how this makes children chastise themselves for being sinful and encourages self-blame. In addition, this book carefully analyzed Augustine of Hippo's fourth-century teaching about infants being born with original sin and how it had fostered a negative mindset in people. The author elucidates how Augustinian indoctrination has impacted his life and the lives of others. He recounts his own childhood experience and tells that of others.

While reading this book, I learned and relearned a lot of things. If I am being truthful, some of the things in this book do not sit well with me and my beliefs, but that is on a personal level. The book in itself is the outpouring of the author's heart based on his past experiences and because he sees how the same things will affect future generations.

The author presented his arguments with proof and analyzed them to the best of his knowledge, feelings, and experience. Therefore, I will rate this book 4 out of 4 stars. The book was also exceptionally well edited, as I did not encounter any errors."

Note:

OnlineBookClub official reviewers can award from one star to a maximum of four stars. This reviewer awarded four stars after reading St Augustine’s Sin



Review by [**Bianca Morano**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=4012198) » 22 Mar 2023, 13:31 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=296864&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

*St Augustine's Sin: Why Child Abuse Bedevils Christianity* by Joe Baker and co-author Lorna Graham made a controversial book in opposition of Roman Catholic religion. From St Augustine of Hippo, Catholic guilt and sin, to the rise of the report about cCSA (clerical child sexual abuse.) The emphasis of the book focuses on St Augustine of Hippo and his sin. From the analysis of his teachings and how it influences a generation to be brainwashed and made inhumane acts such as sexual abuse.

Based in the UK, a brief book containing 13 chapters, it consists of discussions about Christian indoctrination, cCSA, faith schools, and much more. Although narrated from their perspective and personal experience, I think it was balanced by supporting comprehensive facts and studies. It is strongly believed that one of main causes of the rise of clerical child sexual abuse, is the influence of the teachings of St Augustine on its perpetrators. We will come to know that religious indoctrination not only happens in their home and community such as the church. But also extends in their schools as well, as it teaches RE or Religious Education as a subtle form of indoctrination.

I liked how he informed the differentiation between pedophiles and sexual abusers, as mentioned that not all pedophiles are sexual abusers and not all sexual abusers are pedophiles. It’s informative to learn the psychology behind their behaviors and understand such things. I had learned that indoctrination and education were the first steps in child exploitation. A child's self-esteem and mental health will suffer if they are brainwashed to believe that they are intrinsically evil and sinful.

I think the book is interesting coming from his opposing perspective against the Catholic church. Though filled with dark topics in each chapter, it's enough to make you engaged and involved with the reality of cCSA. Reading it made me realize that there’s a dark side in a religion. I had encountered some unfamiliar and difficult words like sodomy, sacrosanctity, perfunctory, and etc. it interrupted my reading experience and comprehension, but it was worth it that updated my vocabulary.

I rate the book a **5 out of 5 stars** because I enjoyed its overall format, from the writing and the message. The authors have made elaborative explanations and evidence enough to prove and make their points valid. Some points have truth in them and agreeable, but some are not. Although I may not agree with some, I sympathize with him and anyone who has had a bad experience with religious indoctrination. I also did not find anything to dislike about the book. Aside from that, it was professionally edited as there weren't any spotted errors, which adds to its good rating as well.

I recommend this book for open-minded individuals of mature age, preferably of ages 18 and above. As it contains dark themes not suitable for young readers, such as pedophilia, pederasty, and other forms of sexual abuse. However, if dark themes are not a problem for the reader, then it’s still advised to read it with precaution. It’s a necessary read for Christians and Non-Christians alike. I believe it was made to help us see the reality of cCSA, and persuade everyone to act on putting an end to the cycle of suffering and abuse.



Review by [**Kelvin Ndambuki 1**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=4421486) » 23 Feb 2023, 06:27 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=287727&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

*St Augustine's Sin* is a non-fiction book written by Joe Baker. St. Augustine is a respected saint and is also considered a role model by the Christian community, the Catholic Church to be exact. Mr. Baker argues with this and says that the Saint is mentally disturbed and has his own issues with infant sexuality. St. Augustine says that all children from birth are guilt from the original sin. Mr. Baker, suggests that this is a both bad and dangerous belief.

This book presents a detailed review of Augustine's life, publications, and historical background, evaluating the soundness of his philosophies. Mr. Baker, who was raised by a devout Catholic mother, attended Catholic boarding schools and had encounters with Catholic priests, argues why these Augustinian doctrines are toxic and should not be mandatorily passed down to infants against their will, as they negatively affect them mentally and psychologically. He also opines that the state should be separated from religion because the state's funding of faith schools creates a bias in the process of school selection among the children and prejudice against non-believing teachers looking for employment in faith schools in Britain.

This book explains how British children are taught religion in their schools. Mr. Baker focuses on the teachings of Catholics and the Church of England and how this makes the British children look down on themselves for being sinful, and this leads to them feeling ashamed for no good reason. Mr. Baker also went a step further and keenly analyzed Augustine of Hippo's fourth - century teaching of infants born with original sin and how it had left a bad mindset to the people.

The amount of research in this book is remarkable and needs to be appreciated, not forgetting the time that comes with the research. Mr. Baker presents his arguments with proof, and analyzed them to the best of his knowledge, feelings and experience. Many of his points are backed by facts from both well-conducted researchs and surveys, which can be easily accessed and verified through the many links provided. I also love Mr. Baker's explanations and storytellings, like when narrating his life with his parents and his experience with the clergymen at school. To the best of my knowledge, the original sin for which Christians baptize is the sin of disobedience by Adam and Eve, but the author says that the original sin is Augustine's mark of guilt for concupiscence. This was him analyzing what Augustine of Hippo.

I must also say that I liked how Mr. Baker shares his personal experience of life encounters with the clerics. I believe that this will inspire many to read this book. I rate this book **5 out of 5 stars.**

There was nothing I disliked about the book. I recommend this book to all Christians, especially Catholics.



Review by [**Phoebe Awuor 1**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=4004409) » 10 Dec 2022, 14:38 -5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=267501&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

Children are the greatest gifts that God could have ever given us adults. The tiny angels are refreshingly beautiful to look at and, in addition, they are our future generation. However, in the eyes of one Saint Augustine of Hippo, infants are innately evil and full of sin from the very moment they are born. This notion completely baffles both the author and me, since infants at birth are inherently helpless and do not have a sense of what is wrong and right. Unfortunately for us, this Augustinian notion has been the bedrock of our church and education systems, whereby the clerics enforce the implications of the original sin on young minds and also imbue in them the unfair need for constant guilt and repentance. Worse still, it is in the “safe” hands of the church elders that the young generation is sexually assaulted and forced to live with the consequences of trusting in the sheep in wolf clothing.

Joseph Baker, the author of *St Augustine’s Sin*tries to illuminate everything that is wrong with religion based on the Augustinian principles. Having been a victim himself of indoctrination, he embarks on a well-researched journey of educating modern-day parents and guardians in correctly raising their progenies. As earlier pointed out, the book is well researched with tons of citations and references for a more curious reader to peruse at their own time. The author enhances the book's originality by using real-life situations and his own experiences. The book also contains well-documented examples and statistical data that give real-time information on the ground concerning clerical child sexual abuse. Despite the austere tone of the book, it is very encouraging to see the use of emotional communication by the author to reach his audience.

The book is composed of 23 well-discussed chapters. The monotonous nature of the book is countered by the anecdotes littered around in the story. The book appears to be exceptionally well-edited as there were no errors present. Nevertheless, I did not find anything to dislike about *St Augustine’s Sin*.

The book is worthy of the rating **five out of five stars**. There may be mentions of inhumane actions taking place in various anecdotes within the book that are not appropriate for some people. *St Augustine’s Sin* is an interesting view on how child abuse is worryingly associated with Christianity.

I would recommend this book to an audience of religious and secular scholars, parents, and guardians as they are the individuals who are directly concerned with child-rearing.



Review by [**Hazel Mae Bagarinao**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3262999) » 05 Dec 2022, 19:31 - 4 out of 5 stars

[**Original**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=266787) [**OnLineBookClub Pre-publication**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=266787) **Review**

Christianity is the largest religion in the world which speaks to one-third of the global population. And based on statistics, Catholic Church is the largest Christian Church. The book, *St Augustine's Sin: Why Child Abuse Bedevils Christianity*by Joseph Baker, talks about the dark side of this religion. With over 13 chapters, the book consists of major topics like the indoctrination of the Catholic Church, Systems of the Church of England, Statistics on Child Abuse, and sub-topic such as sex, sin, guilt, lust, and shame. Joseph Baker openly discussed his opinion about Christianity, especially in the UK.

Growing up as a Christian, Joseph knows all the teachings of the Catholic Church; observed how it is run by the clergy; and how it is being influenced by the government, especially in the UK. The author shares the systems of faith schools in the UK, and how the government supports them. I noticed in the author's tone that indoctrination in the UK is more mandatory than voluntary. And in his case, it takes a toll on him. Though it changed his perspective, I do believe that we should respect each other's beliefs and opinions, and the author deserved it.

There are some aspects that I like about the book. I like the book's simple format, and I like that the title chapters are clear and concise. I like that the author honestly expresses his thoughts and opinions about Christianity. I felt sorry that he was a victim of clerical child sexual abuse, and I think this is one of the reasons why he changed the way he sees Christianity. Writing a book that a wider audience might dislike, insult or oppose the content needs great effort and bravery, and I appreciate what the author did. In the book, I agree with some of the author's writing. For example, the Catholic Church promotes anti-family planning agenda and inculcates generations of children with the view that same-sex relationships and women who control their reproduction are shameful and wrong (page 197). Even these days, these beliefs are still practiced by some people. One of them is my family. Some statistics were jaw-dropping. For instance, chapter 11 talks about the reports of clerical child sexual abuse, and the numbers were shocking.

On the other hand, some of the author's opinion doesn't sit well with me, but that is only on a personal level. Even if I disagree with some opinions, I do respect the author's discussion about the topic. He has a point for all he discussed. Moreover, the book has some pictures which add to the book's originality.

However, there were a few drawbacks to my reading experience. I observed that the book contains some difficult words which distract my reading comprehension because I need to check their meaning before I can fully understand the whole point. Words like proselytisation, concupiscence, casuistry, and pedantry. It appears many times in the book which affects my reading enjoyment. I appreciate it if the author wrote the book more simply.

Furthermore, the book was exceptionally well-edited, as I found no spelling or grammar errors. The book deserved **4 out of 5 stars**. I deducted one star because of the issues I previously mentioned.

I recommend *St Augustine's Sin: Why Child Abuse Bedevils Christianity*to open-minded people. I would aware that some content might sound insulting to some Christians. But, this is an informative book that needs to be read by many.



Review by [**Mary Maj**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3193855) » 06 Dec 2022, 14:07 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=266912)

*St Augustine's Sin* is a nonfiction book written by Joe Baker. The book talks about St Augustine, bishop of Hippo, and his sophisticated beliefs about the Christian faith and the negative implications his doctrines could cause to people who believed and followed them. It also gives an insight into his perceptions of newborn babies and a brief biography of St Augustine.

*St Augustine's Sin* starts with a little on the early life of St Augustine which was a captivating way to begin a book because it left no room for any form of confusion on who he was and why he believed in what he did. I adored the illustrations which were added to the book. Instead of just reading and trying to picture the descriptions on my own, the illustrations made understanding every single detail very easy and stress-free.

I also admired how Joe Baker tried to make this nonfiction book very factual. His use of citations; both in-text citation and end-text citation, made it more interesting as I got the privilege to read further into the book and got an in-depth clarification of what was being discussed in each chapter. The references certainly helped in satisfying my curiosity and answering some unanswered questions I had about the book.

I also liked how he gave the origins of some new words used in the book and specific dates were allocated to some events mentioned in the book. It made me picture how and when those events took place. There was absolutely nothing I disliked about the book.

*St Augustine's Sin* which was written from the author's perspective also made me understand the book from his perspective. He gave examples from his experience as a kid who grew up in a Christian home and could not ask some questions he felt he should have asked due to him trying to believe all they made him believe about Christianity as a kid. Putting myself in his shoes made me also start asking rhetorical questions about my beliefs as well.

I, therefore, rate *St Augustine's Sin* **five out of five stars** because it was incredibly well-edited and the choice of words used in the book was very plain and direct.

I recommend this book to adults both young and old who enjoy reading nonfiction books that are very factual and detailed. It might also not be appropriate for kids or people who stand firmly on their Christian faith, as it might make them begin to question their beliefs.



Review by [**Una Pajalic**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=4013065) » 11 Dec 2022, 08:56 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=267594&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

“*St Augustine's Sin*” by Joseph Baker and Lorna Graham is a psychological novel that revolves around the religious teaching of St Augustine and the dark truth that lies beneath it. They discovered the effects of religious indoctrination on modern-day Briton young minds and the aftermath. Authors have decided to share their stories and opinions they have experienced living in a Christian society and later teaching in one. From problems like the majority of the schools being faith schools (one-third) in England and Wales, pupils learning ancient sex education (teachings like coitus is a sin), reports of clerical sex abuse of children wildly increasing every year, and the mistreatment of unmarried young mothers-to-be in care homes by nuns, to the government funding the Church and repressing official reports. The repetitive question is: how to safeguard children from the influences of the Church?

According to Augustine, and his oddly questionable teachings, we are all born sinful. Repeating that every day to oneself is damaging as it is, but also not accurate - bringing light on this is commendable. Child abuse, racism, sexism and paedophilia might all share a common link in these teachings derived from Augustine's dark psyche. Bringing light to the government silencing the assaulted parties and covering up the abuse reports that are stacking up is a sharp move by the author. I applaud the authors for stating their courage and intelligence about the issues in modern-day, generally Christian society obviously gravely affecting the young.

A few stories mentioned relating to abuse would be the negative aspects. People refrain from debating clerical abuse since clerics receive special treatment from the government. Although negative, still of grave importance to the topic. Authors show us the other side of the story kept secret for decades.

Nevertheless, I rate this book **5 out of 5 stars**. The book tackles problems in life that we all face sooner or later. It deserves a recommendation. Furthermore, I am supporting it in hopes that more people will read it. The novel does not contain spelling mistakes or errors.

I recommend this book to young adults (18+) and older audiences. The book reaches into a diversity of problems in the world. Children have a right to learn contemporary sexual education, consent, and unbiased and unprejudiced opinions on other religions. These problems should be a matter of discussion by the people in power and not be a topic of debate.



Review by [**John Kay Kilo**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3979014) » 20 Nov 2022, 15:22 - 4 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=264528)

*St Augustin's Sin* by Joseph Baker is a non-fiction book giving personal views on religious education indoctrination has caused suffering concerning children's sexual abuse. The arguments are based on the flawed theories of St Augustine of Hippo, a bishop and one of Christianity's foremost saints. His teachings are held to date and incorporated into faith-based lessons offered to schoolchildren across Britain and the entire world, causing guilt and moral confusion. The sinfulness has been ingrained into children's minds, making them prone to sexual abuse by clericals. In his formal writings of the ancient days, he advocated for a dubious moral code: mock culpability and secretive disengaged justice, which conflicts with the principles of fairness. Again, he wrote disgusting tracts about children's sexuality which contradicts his reputation as bishop of Hippo. Being an influential theologian in history, he lured many to adopt his view concerning children being born predisposed to wickedness, evil, lust, and wrongdoings.

It is an insightful, thought-provoking, and mind-opening book to read. First, being a first-person narration account, the author presents a heart-touching narration on the sorts of punishment religious education indoctrination caused him, making him denounce religion at some time in his life. Secondly, the author presents a well-researched formulation supported by facts, statistics, and recorded evidence on the instances where minors have been assaulted sexually by members of the clergy and other senior members of the church governing council. Thirdly, the author exposes the wickedness of the church being silent on issues about children being used as sex objects by the priests. Instead of the church opposing these evildoings, they seem to sympathize with the sexual offenders. Finally, the author strongly challenges the Christian society's tolerance to the compromisation of children's sexuality by newly formed organizations.

Some of the author's views are exceedingly polemical. For instance, the argument that religion and Christian values of compassion, truthfulness, tolerance, respect, responsibility, generosity, and justice are tribal and divisive is contradictive. Other contradictions in doctrines regarding the guilt of newborns and the association with the original sexual sin pose unending debates and uncertainties. There is a dilemma, confusion, and lack of clarity on if Augustine was mistaken in his views, then what is the cause of evil?

I rate this book **four out of five stars**. The book editing is exceptionally done. Again, there is harmony concerning the role of religion in the character development, shaping, nurturing, and upbringing of newborns. However, the negative aspects above result in deducting a rating star.

I recommend this book to scholars of religion. There is much to learn from the author's viewpoint on the history and evolution of religion.



Review by [**Brian John Wanjiru**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3700163) » 20 Jan 2023, 13:32 - 3 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=278364)

The book, *St Augustine's Sin*, by Joe Baker, is about examining the life of St Augustine and his theology about sin. The author questions Augustine's doctrine, pointing out how harmful it is to children. He claims that religious indoctrination is a form of punishment. According to him, Augustinian theology is the basis of christian faith in the western church. It instills a belief of personal guilt and sin. As children are growing up, they are taught to accept this theology and they are told to admit their mistakes and are made to ask for forgiveness. The author is against this ritual of self-guilt, which is passed on to young generations through a creed that gives a perception of self-blame. The author claimed that this practice has been passed with time and that many years ago it was used to publicly shame the dull students. The same practice is still carried out in school today to guilt shame children through the St Augustine's contrived guilt. The author laments for being one of the victims of the negative Augustinian indoctrination and that he is afraid it is still in faith schools even today and the state is supporting it.

The author is skillful in writing. He has great ability to explain his ideas clearly. He has also used many styles in writing. I love how the author has used simple language which makes the book friendly to read. I also love how the author has done a great research and quoted other sources in support of his ideas. He has also looked at the St Augustine's books and keenly determine his faults. I also loved the author's personal story about what he has gone through in life which he intended to add more weight in support of his ideas.

What I dislike about the book is how the author has openly condemned other people's ideas, for example he has opposed Saint Augustine's theology and has not shown us the positive side of Augustine. The book also contains many typing errors.

I rate the book **three out of five stars**. This is because, the author is skillful in writing. The book is also enjoyable reading and opens one's mind. However, the book only majors on the negative which also includes attacking some groups of people who might be reading this book. The book is also not professionally edited.[[1]](" \l "_ftn1)

I recommend this book to anybody interested in theological studies. The book has historical events of some theological pioneers like Saint Augustine.



Review by [**Nicole Adam**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3417566) » 26 Dec 2022, 16:04 - 4 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=270959)

Children are to be viewed not as the property of their parents, but as independent rights holders. The idea that children are sinful, and that they need instructions to follow the correct path, is rather absurd.

Joe Baker in his book *St Augustine's Sin*shows how Augustine's sin-centered teaching stimulated and sustained a negative mental impact that he endured for much of his life. In his autobiographical works, Augustine wrote of filth and the itch of lust in infants, declaring that babies are born stained with guilt from original sin, the sin of sexual lust. Joe compared Augustine's ideas with recent scientific discoveries, and then reviewed compelling evidence that the attitude of adults towards children is shaped by Augustine's unsafe teachings. This book reveals some of the disturbing ideas and images infants are being exposed to in faith schools.

Getting infants to feel bad about explicit wrongdoing can motivate them in a good way. Getting them to persistently repeat their culpability when they believe themselves to be blameless is liable to make them super sensitive to feelings of toxic guilt later in life. Telling children that they are born wicked and are predisposed to evil is not only potentially harmful, but it is also dishonest. What I liked about this book is Joe's goal to show how teachings in certain schools can disadvantage children who are imaginative and impressionable. His drive alone is inspiring.

The only part of this book I strongly disagree with is chapter 2. In chapter 2, Joe said that the Bible tells that Adam and Eve were unmarried when God commanded them to be fruitful and multiply. I disagree because after God made Eve, Adam referred to Eve as the bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. This alone claims that they were already one. The author's statement is rather misleading. I also disagree with another point he made in chapter 2. I believe sex is originally meant for married couples. It shouldn't be seen as an urge similar to hunger and thirst. Although he was trying to make a point, I found those words misleading.

Noting that clerical child sexual abuse (cCSA) continues to bedevil church institutions today, we consider whether instructions in Augustine's theology might play a big role in it. With all being said, I rate this book **4 out of 5 stars.**I took one star because of the misleading words I found. I couldn't rate it any less because it's exceptionally well-edited and inspiring. Readers interested in the well-being of children would like this book. I also recommend it to lovers of nonfiction books and those familiar with Augustine's teachings. You be the judge.



Review by [**Macha M M**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=2264733&sid=77037c056928cb3f173d224e89131c13) » 23 Jan 2023, 04:23 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=279092)

In this provocative book titled *St Augustine's Sin*, Joe Baker explores the influence that St Augustine had on modern-day Christianity. He dissects how St Augustine's life works infiltrated how Christians view sin, and how this view has created an unhealthy outlook on life for many people across the world. Joe Baker shares with us his experiences in Catholic schools, and he dives into the controversial topic of child sexual abuse in the church. The last two chapters were written by Lorna Graham, whose expertise as a teacher gives her a unique insight into the effects that religion has on children.

One of the most important issues the authors deal with in the book is the prevalence of religious (Christian) education in Britain. Several public schools in Britain still teach children religion. Many issues arise from this, and the authors make comments against this practice. They outline how this negatively affects children of all faiths and non-faiths, and they outline how a more secular approach to education should be universally adopted instead.

A big chunk of the chapters deals with the difficult topic of sex and the sexual abuse of children in religious schools. Joe Baker makes a correlation between these topics and St Augustine's teachings. I found these chapters to be incredibly difficult to read, but I understood their significance. The Catholic Church has been mired in child sex scandals for decades, and these scandals have been largely swept under the rug to protect the image of the institution.

The book is against religious teachings in schools. The book isn't anti-religion, which I should make clear. Although the authors aren't religious in the traditional sense of the word, they aren't opposed to religion as an institution. What they are opposed to is Britain's relentless need to uphold Christian values in a largely secular society. Religious education in schools infringes on other people's rights. The authors are also against the Indroctination of children. They are also against the sexual abuse that the Catholic Church has been unable to handle for decades. I thought that the book was written as fairly as possible, which couldn't have been particularly easy. I loved every little thing I read, and it's for that reason that I'll rate the book **5 out of 5 stars**.

I recommend this book to readers who also believe that religion shouldn't be part of any school's curriculum. I don't think that this thought is necessarily unique to non-religious people. I think that some religious people also hold these opinions and ideas. The book contains sexual abuse themes that could be triggering. I wouldn't recommend it to sensitive readers.



Review by [**Blackstenius**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=4041551) » 09 Feb 2023, 07:29 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=280360)

*St Augustine's Sin* is a non-fiction book written by Joseph Baker. Saint Augustine is highly regarded as a role model by the Christian community, especially the Catholic Church. However, Baker strongly disagrees with this common public impression of Augustine. He believes that Augustine was a tormented, mentally disturbed man with a sick perception of infant sexuality. Augustine believed that children, even day-old infants, are stained with guilt from 'the original sin,’ contaminated by their parents’ lust in conceiving them. Baker believes this is an outrageous and dangerous belief, and he links this belief, which is one of the Catholic doctrines taught to aspiring priests, to the numerous cases of child sexual abuse reported among clergymen.

This book presents an in-depth examination and review of Augustine's life, publications, and historical background, evaluating the soundness of his philosophies. Baker, who was raised by a devout Catholic mother, attended Catholic boarding schools and had encounters with Catholic priests, argues why these Augustinian doctrines are toxic and should not be mandatorily passed down to infants against their will, as they negatively affect them mentally and psychologically. He also opines that the state should be separated from religion because the state's funding of faith schools creates a bias in the process of school selection among the children and prejudice against non-believing teachers looking for employment in faith schools in Britain.

Although I disagree with some of the author's opinions, I was deeply impressed by the amount of research that was put into the creation of this book. The majority of Baker's points are backed by facts from well-conducted research and surveys, which can be easily accessed and verified through the countless links provided. This was my favorite part of the book. I also loved the author's meticulous explanations and storytelling, especially when narrating his life with his parents and his experience with the clergymen at school.

I liked the author's objectivity. I must also appreciate Baker for being bold enough to share his personal experience of life encounters with the clerics. I believe that this, coupled with the shared experiences of other people mentioned in the book, will (in one way or another) benefit others who underwent or are undergoing similar struggles.

There was nothing I disliked about the book. I did not agree with some of the author's perspectives, but that does not mean I dislike the book. However, I noticed several typographical errors. I believe the editing of the book was professional because of the few minor typographical errors. Because of the commendable editing and the author's excellent articulation of his points, I rate this book **five out of five stars**. I recommend this book to all Christians, especially Catholics. Any open-minded non-Christian will also enjoy reading this book.



Review by **[Jungmin Raphael](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=2466512)** » 18 Jan 2023, 04:03 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=277636)

*St. Augustine's Sin*reminds me of a statement in the Bible that goes like "new wines must be put in new wineskins." The book only asserts this statement. The book clearly explains how Saint Augustine's laws are still in effect and that people feel that they are misleading. The author also explains how the aforementioned sins are gradually infiltrating young minds legally as they are openly taught to them. The book shows how these not only distort young minds but also make them deviate even further from religion.

The Bible seems to have been put aside, and people seem to be grabbing what works for them and their pleasures, as the said Augistinian rules don't apply anywhere close to the Bible, yet vast groups are being taught and made to consume that gibberish. The Christian religion is entirely rooted in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and only in his words can Christians thrive, so it is so unfortunate that people who haven't played significant roles in the development of Christianity are being given all the credit.

The book shows the miserable state of religion, especially Christianity. As if that wasn't enough, the same muck is being fed to our youngsters, who are supported by their parents, making it hard for them to smell a rat or reject the same traditions early in life. I really appreciate the author spilling the beans on this and assisting Christians in seeing what is wrong. The book has been exceptionally well edited, with no errors. The book provides a reader with sufficient information that can enable them to find the best way of handling this crisis.

The book also opens up about child abuse in churches. Catholics are seen as the main masterminds in this case, and our children seem to be under attack from the place we are expecting them to get help from. The author has made use of great grammatical skills. Don't even get me started on the way the referencing has been done; it's just great. A lot of emphasis has been placed on training a child when they are young, and once they are old, they'll never depart from those ways.

I give the book **5 out of 5 stars**for the shocking statistics it has for us in matters of Christianity as well as the exceptional editing. The score can also be attributed to the expose the author, Joseph Baker, has done. I definitely recommend the book to parents as a way of saving their estranged children.



Review by [**Dani Strayer**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=4256921) » 22 Jan 2023, 15:56 - 3 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=278943)

*St. Augustine’s Sin* by Joseph (Joe) Baker explores clergy child sexual abuse (cCSA) in Christianity and why it occurs so frequently. Lorna Graham authored the last two chapters and both explored their individual experiences growing up in the UK and attending faith schools. The book starts out detailing the historical figure, Saint Augustine and his writings. There is evidence presented that the idea of the original sin being sexual was not considered until it was proposed by Augustine in his series of books *Confessions* which were written before AD 398. Augustine’s ideas about the original sin that Adam and Eve committed was sexual and that every child is stained with that sin, is proposed to be the reason for baptism. Baker explains how baptism is meant to wash infants of their sin, the original sin, and that despite the fact that he was baptised as a child, he was still indoctrinated with the idea that he was still stained.

Christian guilt is also a major point in *St. Augustine’s Sin*. Baker describes his internal struggle with guilt and shame despite the fact that he did not do anything inherently wrong. The book includes many UK statistics on the religious population which has been shrinking in the last couple of decades despite Christian teachings still being a legal requirement in the UK. In the UK, religious leaders have a lot of say in the decisions that the government makes and Baker argues that this is not right. Government and Religion should be separated. High percentages of British people reject religion once they are out of school and no longer being shamed into it. Graham describes her perspective as a teacher in various schools over the course of her career. She was not baptised and experienced alienation from many of her religious coworkers because of this.

I will say that I agree with much of what Baker and Graham discuss in this book in regards to religion as an institution. Many of the arguments that they make, I have thought to myself, and this book has put many of my thoughts and feelings into words backed with evidence. The authors are well informed and the “End Notes” of the book includes 392 citations from various types of sources including but not limited to government websites and surveys as well as many academic articles from sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists. This provides hard evidence for the arguments and Baker and Graham make throughout the book. Baker brings many of his own personal experiences to light in this book which helps readers to understand that the points he is making are not just based on statistics and research but what he himself experienced. The resources used in this book also prove that these experiences are not just his but are commonplace among children who grew up in church sanctioned spaces. There are also a lot of acronyms but each one is well explained and fully written out the first time it is used throughout the book.

One of the most notable negative points in the book is the switch from Baker’s writing to Graham’s. Chapter 12 and 13 are the only chapters that Graham writes but there isn’t anything to indicate the switch. When she started discussing teaching I was confused because it hadn’t been mentioned before and I had forgotten that chapter 12 and 13 were written by a different person. Another negative I found, is some of the language is very specific to Christianity and church, and because I hadn’t been raised christian, I often had to use a dictionary to really understand the context. It became easier as I continued to read through the book and learned what more of the words had meant but the confusion was still there in the beginning.

Overall, I would rate this book **3 out of 5 stars**. I did like the book and it was quite informative but there were parts that were repetitive especially in the later half of the book. I would recommend this book to people who are questioning their religious upbringings or experiences as well as to people pretend like clergy child abuse does not exist. This book is for more mature audiences because of the nature of many of the topics discussed. There should be a content warning for mention sexual abuse, physical abuse, verbal abuse, violence, and detailed descriptions of certain experiences from both authors.



Review by [**tanui026**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3428740) » 13 Jan 2023, 05:13 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=276157)

Society is plagued by various ills that make living itself complicated. There is talk of teenage pregnancies, drugs, and child sexual abuse, just to mention a few. *St. Augustine’s Sin*details the vices that the so-called St. Augustine stood by, which have been trickling down from ages ago and have established themselves in modern Britain. The book depicts sexual abuse, pederasty, as well as the issue of homosexuality, which has started gaining prominence in the twenty-first century. Various research papers have been incorporated by the author as a point of reference for the reader. the book systematically provides a serious critique of Augistinian views.

Joseph Baker bravely strips the Christian religion, exposing the reader to what has occurred and continues to occur in the Christian religion. Child abuse, blasphemy, and sexual immorality are among the social vices wrapped in the Christian sect. This then begs the question, "Why the quest for religion?" Unsuspecting parents recruit their children to various religious activities and programs expecting them to be transformed, but to the reader's bewilderment, this doesn't seem to be the case. The doctrine's big names are often idolized to the point of overshadowing the true spiritual leaders.

The book questions the reality and authenticity of the Christian doctrine that is readily and constantly taught to the young, unsuspecting children of this generation. The author provides us with statistics, statistics that speak volumes about the type of clergy we have in our churches.The author in the book is pushing for a reform in the said Augustine principles, which corrode whatever small, young children have and, apart from embarrassing them, expose them to how filthy the world can get for even young people.

I liked the author's brave nature since detailing such heavy content needs a whole lot of courage and all that. The book has been exceptionally edited, with no errors whatsoever; almost no profane words have been used in this publication. The book has also been able to seamlessly provide references without affecting the reading of the book. I disliked the filth the author has unearthed in the book that somehow thrives in established churches.

I rate the book **5 out of 5 stars**and am unable to go anywhere below this score because, given the current turn of events, we need to know where there is a disconnect, and I must say this book serves us right in knowing where the problem lies in our churches. I would recommend the same to parents so that they may be informed and know the best way to raise their children when it comes to religion.



Review by **[Maruo Moitheyi](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3329756)** » 24 Jan 2023, 03:29 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=279427)

*St Augustine's Sin* by Joe Baker was written by a man who sees little value in faith-based education in schools. He says, "In England three in ten live in areas with little or no choice but a faith school and every year 20,000 pupils are assigned faith schools against their families’ preferences." This fact is troubling since it means that some impressionable young mind is forced to learn a faith that doesn't necessarily align with their background or upbringing. The book tackles what this means for the future of these children, and the author uses his experiences of attending a Catholic school to show how he was affected by that type of education. St Augustine's view on sin and sexuality is the basis of the book. I must mention that Lorna Graham contributed to the book by authoring the 13th and 14th chapters.

It's fascinating that religious education still exists in some parts of the world. I understand the existence of faith-based schools, but I feel that these should only cater to those students whose parents see it as a viable alternative. The author of this book doesn't share this thought, however. He believes that faith-based education should be done away with because of several underlying issues that arise from being taught Augustinian theology at a young age. St Augustine believed that every child is born a sinner, and faith-based schools hammer this idea into the minds of children until they believe it. The author explains why this is a huge problem.

The book also focuses on clerical child sexual abuse. Many are aware of the sexual abuse that countless children have suffered at the hands of church elders in institutions like Catholic schools, and the author believes that certain cultures within those institutions promote these deplorable acts. And these cultures are dealt with in the book.

Personally, I found the book to be informative. I understood the author's stances, some of which were informed by his personal experiences. I don't agree with everything he says because I feel that faith-based schools have a place in our societies. Of course, these issues that mar these sorts of institutions should be dealt with and eradicated, but I know that some religious parents still see value in religious education. I rate the book **5 out of 5 stars** because I couldn't find any points to criticise. It's a book that was written very well. The author made his case and gave enough reasons to make his points valid. I found no errors in the book, which means that it was edited phenomenally well, and this helped with my rating as well.

I would recommend the book to those people who want to see faith-based education from the eyes of someone who is against it. As people, we often consume materials that align with our beliefs, but I believe that we learn more when we challenge our beliefs and look at them from a completely different perspective. This book could give religious people something to ponder, and it could give them a perspective they don't have yet.



Review by **[Rizia Solomons](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=2419855)** » 10 Jan 2023, 12:02 - 4 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=275322&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

*St. Augustine's Sin* by Joe Baker is very engaging and educational. The focus of the book is St. Augustine, a significant figure in Christian history who lived more than 1600 years ago, and how his views on sex and sin continue to influence Christianity today. It also examines clerical child abuse and the brainwashing of religion in UK schools.

I was completely shaken by *St. Augustine's Sin*since it revealed the foundations of many Christian practices and beliefs. I could see how the text was factually accurate as it consistently cited its sources. I thought Baker's point of view was refreshing as someone who is interested in religion and it revealed a lot about the UK educational system.

It is a bit slow and challenging to read, despite the fact that it is quite informative. Each of the highlighted themes is covered in great detail by Baker, who also uses a large vocabulary. I discovered that having a dictionary nearby was beneficial when reading. The book also tends to drag a little and starts off at a very slow pace because of how in-depth he is.

I was impressed by this book's exceptional editing, which is free of any errors. Because of its impact on my understanding of the history of Christianity and my opinion of it, I give this book a rating of 4 out of 5 stars. It raised a number of fresh issues and facts regarding the function of religion in education and its impact on children's developing minds.

I recommend this book to individuals who are open-minded and have a desire to learn more about Christianity and its influence on contemporary culture. Devout Christians shouldn't read this book because it can be a little sensitive.



Review by **[SirKoech](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3428499)** » 11 Jan 2023, 23:56 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=275784&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

*St. Augustine’s Sin*justifies a statement that the Bible holds dear. The statement reads, "Not all that profess my name shall I recognize, but those that do as I require of them." The book by Joseph Baker gives us the underlying factor of such a study and goes ahead to list the Augustine way of thinking and thereafter critique the same, giving a clear explanation of how the said laws are to be regarded as sin and nothing else. The author also shows how the same belief system has infested so many Christians and only seems to make Christ-hood more unfathomable.

I liked the book since it mocks the church, which is so focused on the process of restoring people, supposedly, yet the wrongs within the same entity are unspeakable. Clerics are a major concern in the book, and the author questions the Christian's faith and trust in them instead of the true God, which allows them to do whatever they want. Human beings are all susceptible to what the flesh desires, and no matter how hard they try, it is difficult to separate so-called priests and nuns from the same.

The book provides a reader with a lot of information and leaves it to the reader to decide their own course of action given that the world is so engrained in what other people have come up with so far. It isn't a mistake to do so, but the Bible also says people shall be known by their fruits, and if the fruits aren't sweet, there isn't the goodness we so desire in the venture. In a way, the book tends to prove that those who believe in nothing at all are better placed than those who say they believe in some code of ethics and do not withhold the same.

Given that human life is but a drop in the ocean, as they say, human beings should focus on listening to their innermost selves in order to be able to discern good from bad, or rather refrain from infringing upon others. That can work as a way of living this short life since various myths and theories or certain ways of living may not conform to whoever is professing them, ultimately leaving an innocent follower confused. I found nothing to dislike, apart from learning how filthy our church altars can get.

I rate the book **5 out of 5 stars**for the exceptional editing and general layout, which includes the font and spacing. The book also covers a very significant topic that is very relevant at the moment since so much change is taking place and people seem to grab whatever comes their way as long as it works for them. I would recommend the book to Christians to enable them to question their faith and maybe better align themselves with their Creator.



Review by **[Gracy Williams](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3721587)** » 22 Feb 2023, 00:38 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=287312&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

*St Augustine's Sin*, nonfiction by Joe Baker talks about St Augustine, bishop of Hippo, and his beliefs about the Christian faith with his biography briefly described; especially his childhood. The book also discusses the prevalence of religious education in British schools and how it affects young minds. It shows how St Augustine perceived newborn babies and how he considered them to be born of sin and faith-based schools instilled this into the young minds. The book depicts clergy sexual abuse of children. The sexual abuse by church elders that many children have suffered in Catholic schools. The author has written about certain cultures in institutions which enable such heinous deeds and that these should not be allowed. He has described the correlation between such acts and the teachings of St Augustine. The author also shares his experience in Catholic schools and how the people around him made him believe all the things about Christianity; because he grew up in a Christian household, he could not question the doctrines even out of curiosity. The book focuses on the teachings of Catholics and how this makes children blame themselves for being sinful and how those same children grow up hanging onto those teachings and view their children as sinners. Not to mention some of the teachers and spiritual leaders who believe in Augustine’s teachings go on to commit atrocities against helpless innocent children. These reasons have led the author to believe that faith-based education should be prohibited at educational institutions and that secular education should be adopted and encouraged because it allows children the freedom to form their beliefs and opinions.

I enjoyed reading this book since I learnt a lot of new things and found an explanation for some of my personal questions. It is no news that the Catholic Church has been involved in child sex scandals on countless occasions which have been mostly overlooked by the church to guard its repute. This fact also played a role in my picking up this book. The author used illustrations instead of plain boring text which made it easier to understand the message that was being conveyed. I also got to know that Augustinian rules are nowhere close to what the Bible says. Yet people, including young impressionable youngsters, are being taught these inefficient teachings. While the childhood of St Augustine explains his way of thinking, it does not justify it. The author has utilised citations throughout the chapters including at the end which shows that he has done his research and has information to back up his arguments. The citations also suggest reading options for the reader to use if they want to further investigate the topics. It must be mentioned here that Lorna Graham contributed to the book by writing the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, respectively.

Even though I do not quite agree with everything that is mentioned in the book; there is absolutely nothing I disliked about the book because the author has presented the material to the best of his knowledge and experience. I do not believe that religious education should be abolished since it helps the child acquire good morals. However, the author and I do share a dislike towards St Augustine and his teachings. I think that we should not always blindly trust our beliefs; sometimes listening to opposing views might give us a fresh perspective and clarity. Perhaps even altering established beliefs.

I rate this book **5 out of 5 stars** as the book was exceptionally well edited which added to my reading experience.

The book describes sensitive topics such as paedophilia though not graphically. Religious people, especially Christians, might not like the ideas mentioned in the book. I recommend this book to open-minded liberals and people who like to challenge their beliefs. I consider this book to be a must-read.



Review by [**Damilola A 7**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=2970656&sid=1239f4b59dc81e12910ca2bcd01c978c) » 12 Feb 2023, 04:34 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=284609)

*St. Augustine's Sin* is a nonfiction Christian book written by Joe Baker about the Catholic leader St. Augustine. The book demonstrates that St. Augustine's views on newborn guilt are heresy and incorrect, damaging to a person's existence, by examining his early life and religious ideologies. The book is divided into 13 chapters, the first of which is a biography of St. Augustine, who is hailed as the most influential theologian in history and is best known for works like Confession. He was born in Thagaste, Numidia, to a Christian mother and a pagan father. He taught rhetoric and studied grammar. Although Augustine was brought up as a Christian, he turned to Manichaeism when he was a teenager. As a result, he was able to get a job as a rhetorical professor in Milan, where pederasty was prevalent. Around the time of the Confessions, in 382, the Roman emperor Theodosius I issued a death sentence for all Manichaean monks. This seems to be a more plausible reason for Augustine's quick acceptance of Christianity. Augustine claimed that children are cursed with sin and lust in his book Confession, where he defined sexual desire as a disease, agonizing over the evil of carnal passion. This puts the author on the scene, who claims that his writings and indoctrinations are false and deceptive. Read the book to learn more about St. Augustine's ideas and ideologies, as well as the background and justifications for why most religious authorities consider him to be wrong.

On the positive side, the book is well-written, and the author thoroughly clarified his views with examples. The book discusses St. Augustine's view that sex has a sinful nature, how he held that children are also guilty of sin, and how Catholics stood with him in rejecting "Pelagianism". His conception of sex is derived from Adam and Eve's account of their rebellion against God, using the snake as an example and their erroneous consumption of the forbidden fruit as a metaphor for sex. And the author disproves St. Augustine's claim that this sin is generational, of human nature, and that children are most prone to suffer as a result of it.

Additionally, I appreciate the fact that the author discussed "Catholic guilt" in his discussion of how Augustine's theology caused harm rather than only focusing on the harm it caused. It has to do with unhealthy interpersonal guilt. It talks about the "Confiteor", who describes how the recitation destroyed his feeling of respect for himself and his value as a person. He makes mention of the use of "autosuggestion" or "autogenous" training as a substitute that aids in the constructive development of the mind. He mentions the mantra as another way to maintain a happy outlook. Chanting is an incantation that literally translates as "tool" or "instrument of the mind" in Sanskrit, and there is scientific evidence to support this claim. Also, the book was exceptionally well edited, as no errors were cited while reading it.

On the negative side, there was nothing I disliked about this book; the writer did a fantastic job overall, and I applaud his courage in sharing his research even if most people won't agree with his opinions. Despite this, the book is a nice read for individuals who are open-minded and curious about the Catholic way of life.

I rate this book **4 out of 4 stars** because it's a good read, the author backs up his claims with numerous studies in science, literature, and history, and the book is well written and edited. I rate this book **5 out of 5 stars** because he clearly expressed his ideas so that they were understood. He supported his remarks with both personal experience and his prior involvement with the Catholic community. I recommend Christians read this book, and anyone who appreciates history will also enjoy it.



Review by [**Rodgers may**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3115264) » 11 Jan 2023, 04:08 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=275534&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

Religion has played a great role in our lives and continues to do so in many ways, thank you so much. The author poses the question: is religion positive, or is it being used by selfish individuals to further their agendas and personal gratification? *St. Augustine's Sin*devotes more than ten chapters to St. Augustine's laws that are taught to children. The book walks us through various research materials the author has provided in justification of the claims that children are being wasted following the statements of the saint.

The book begins with the wickedness of St. Augustine and how his sexual behaviors were explicit, with clear detail of the derogatory behavior the said saint engaged in, which from a neutral point of view can be considered unlawful and one that require judicial intervention. Joseph Baker bases his research in the United Kingdom, which explains clearly how he believes the system not only intoxicates young minds but also allows them to be sexually and mentally abused. The author proceeds to unravel more claims, of which he is a victim and is very affected.

The book is professionally edited with little to no errors. The author has provided a reader with proof just in case the content shared in the book seems unreal. The book depicts the rot in religion, with Christianity as the primary perpetrator of such immoral deeds. The author shares his story that made him take the approach he took in his life. The book makes the world appear strange because religion is what most of us cling to in the hope of finding some place in the spiritual world and making it to heaven at the very least.

I liked every aspect of the book, in terms of the expose, since the acts being perpetrated are unlikable. The book entirely mocks the Christian religion, and it is portrayed as a whitewashed tomb. I strongly believe religion is like money, in that it is a vital point in life that shouldn't be assumed but, if misused, turns out to be despicable.

I rate the book **5 out of 5 stars**since it is quite knowledgeable and revealed to me a lot of truths I knew so little about before I read it. I must confess that the book has made me question religion's authenticity. The book is fit for clerics just to show them how their dirty tricks have come to light.



Review by **[Ayorinde Joseph](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3554578)** » 13 Feb 2023, 04:56 - 4 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=284894&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

*St Augustine's Sin* is a non-fiction book written by Joe Baker. Joe examines the effect of St Augustine's doctrines on modern-day Christianity. He dissected the teachings of St Augustine and how they relate to the prevalent sexual lust among Catholics. The book expands on why sexual scandals are now rampant in Catholic schools, the factors behind them, and how they can be combated. According to several reports, the defilement of the under-aged is now rampant in religious institutions due to a lot of factors. Joe believed that this sin originated from Adam and Eve, and that disobedience was not in fact, the first sin committed on Earth. Adam and Eve were unmarried yet went ahead to procreate. Thus, even infants are stained with this sin from birth. Joe was raised by a Catholic mother and was made to attend Catholic boarding school in his early years. He had a series of encounters with Catholic priests which breeds his opinion that Augustine's teachings were toxic and should not be passed down to the younger generation. He also highlights various factors responsible for the high rate of sexual abuse in religious institutions, especially Catholic schools, and how best to combat these factors.

*St Augustine's Sin* is informative, and I find the author's thoughts and opinions fascinating. I was deeply impressed by the amount of research the author put into writing this book. He was able to back up his opinions with publications and research which added more credibility to his book. A lot of links are also provided in the book for readers to verify some facts stated in the book. I also like the detailed introduction at the start of the book. It gives the readers what to expect, and the details in each chapter of the book.

I commend the thoughts and resources put together in writing *St Augustine's Sin*. However, I dislike some things about the book. The writing style is too chaotic and incoherent, especially in the first couple of chapters. Some readers might even misunderstand the message being passed across. I also found fault with some of the author's opinions. For instance, in chapter 2, he said that Adam and Eve were unmarried before they started procreating. This is false because God specifically referred to Eve as Adam's bone of bones and the flesh of flesh. This means both have been joined together. I also found some errors while reading.

The book was informative, and the author's points are well backed up with well-conducted research and surveys. However, due to the faults stated above, I will rate this book **4 out of 5 stars**. The faults are too significant to deduct a star.

I would recommend *St Augustine's Sin* to Catholic Christians. People who are familiar with St Augustine's teachings will also find the book interesting.



Review by **[Shanmuga Priya M](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=2258685)** » 12 Feb 2023, 11:39 - 5 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=284688&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

Joe Baker is the author of the nonfiction book *St Augustine's Sin*. The Christian community, particularly the Catholic Church, holds Saint Augustine in high esteem as a role model. Baker, however, vehemently disputes this widely held perception of Augustine. He thinks Augustine had a warped conception of baby sexuality and was a tortured, emotionally troubled guy. Augustine held that even newborn babies are tainted by "the original sin," which was caused by their parents' desire to conceive them. This notion, which is one of the Catholic tenets taught to aspiring priests, is, in Baker's opinion, ridiculous and dangerous, and he connects it to the countless instances of clergy members being accused of sexually abusing children.

The writers' discussion on the prominence of religious (Christian) education in Britain is one of the book's most significant themes. In a number of British public schools, religion is still taught to students. This poses a number of problems, and the writers comment negatively on the practice. They discuss how this harms kids of all religions and none, and they suggest that a more secular approach to education should be widely embraced in its place.

The novel has several elements that I find appealing. The book's straightforward layout and the title chapters' clarity and succinctness both appeal to me. I appreciate that the author is open and honest about his views on Christianity. I felt bad for him because he was a victim of clergy child sexual assault, and I believe this is why he altered his opinion on Christianity. Writing a book with topics that a larger audience would find offensive, demeaning, or opposing requires a lot of courage, and I admire what the author accomplished. I concur with part of the author's writing in the book.

I discovered the book to be educational. I could understand the author's opinions, some of which were based on his own life. I gave the book a rating of **5 out of 5 stars** since I had no complaints. It's a novel that was superbly written. The author presented his position and provided sufficient evidence to support it. The fact that I discovered no faults in the book indicates that it was edited really well, which also influenced my ranking.

Adults of all ages who appreciate reading really accurate and in-depth nonfiction novels should read this book, in my opinion. It might not be acceptable for children or those who are adamantly Christian since it might cause them to start doubting their convictions.



Review by **[sayuriii](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=1863626)** » 12 Feb 2023, 13:16 - 4 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=284722&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

*St Augustine’s Sin* written by Joseph Baker is a non-fiction book dealing with the indoctrination associated with religion in Britain, particularly in the field of education. He discusses the issues and immorality that take place in faith-based schools. This book advocates for the separation of religion and state. For context, the teachings of the Church are based on St Augustine and his claim that humans are sinful from birth. The author discusses how his ideas, perpetuated by the Church, impact young minds as well as how religious schools disadvantage children. The final chapters of *St Augustine’s Sin* are written by the editor, Lorna Graham. These chapters comprise the proselytisation of infants and the lack of connection between the state and religion, among various other topics.

*St Augustine’s Sin* is well-researched and raises valid, thought-provoking points. The author offers personal insights and encounters to support his arguments. All arguments are well-explained and based on logical, statistical and scientific reasoning. This shows that he speaks from a basis of humanity and is not blatantly disregarding religion. In addition to this, the book is eloquently written and professionally edited. I found the novel quite interesting as it illuminates a different and certainly less spoken of subject, religion. This book is progressive, promoting a modern way of thinking and prioritizing the mental health of youth.

The level of language in addition to the Christian terminology used may be found difficult to comprehend by some readers. The book also has a limited target audience.

The book is intended for a British audience as it references the schooling system in England. It is also applicable to people with open mindsets regarding religion. The book does paint the Church in a negative light, which Christian readers may not agree with. There are also mentions of child sexual abuse which may be triggering.

Overall, *St Augustine’s Sin* is an insightful read. It addresses various topics concerning religion and education. The author is extremely thorough and writes with thought and conviction. He feels passionately about this topic which translates to his writing. The book is rooted in logic and paints religion in a different view, especially since it can sometimes be viewed as a ‘taboo’ subject. I would rate *St Augustine’s Sin* **four out five stars** and highly recommend it to open-minded readers researching Christianity. Many of the topics discussed are eye-openingly shocking! It poses the following question: do we follow beliefs blindly and if so, what are the repercussions of this?



Review by [**Kurt Williams 1**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3839031) » 16 Feb 2023, 05:05 - 4 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=285662&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

*St Augustine's Sin* by Joe Baker is a non-fiction book about how Augustine contributed to many crimes happening in the church. The author discusses how indoctrination in religion is a punishment. Augustine wrote a book named *Confessions*, which the author criticizes, saying he wanted to show his beliefs were of Christianity, but his actions weren't. Augustine connects the original sin to sex when he says people are born with it because of the sexual lust between Adam and Eve. Some churches have formalized his idea saying that sexual sin, which was the original sin because of Adam and Eve's sexual lust, is transferred from generation to generation. Augustine's ideas have misled Christians to believe sex is bad; and that they should be ashamed of it. Even though most British people are not religious, the teachings of Augustine have affected them, and many people follow his teachings. He claims that government should stop financing and promoting religion in education.

I don't think the author is a believer, but I think his criticisms are constructive to some people since religion should be something the government gives children a chance to make their own choices. When the government forces religion into education, it does not give children a chance to make choices for themselves. They should be given a chance to decide whether they want to learn it. I liked that he provides websites containing more information on what he talks about. It helps readers find more information if they need to. I liked how the author provided examples to verify his claims; for instance, a priest in Pennsylvania forced a nine-year-old to give him oral sex and rinsed his mouth with purified water to purify him. He provides examples to show how Augustine has affected the world.

What I criticize in this book is how the author is against religion. He talks about it as if it is a bad thing, and according to his claims, he shows his desire to lure people out of their religions. He was abused, but he thinks religion contributed to that; he should inspire change and not destroy other doctrines just because of his claims.

I rate *St Augustine's Sin*, written by Joe Baker, **four out of five stars**. The book was explicitly edited because I wouldn't discover any errors. There are several things I liked in this book that makes the book deserve a perfect rating, but I deducted a star because of the author's unconstructive criticism of religion. He makes the matter look like a joke and wants people to be like him.

I recommend this book to anyone not offended by some serious issues about Christianity. Christians may get offended by Baker's criticisms since they don't seem to build a Christian but to destroy their beliefs. He shows them how their beliefs are built on Augustine's book, *Confessions*.



Review by [**Stephen Muthini**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=1355281) » 10 Feb 2023, 03:34 - 3 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=284094&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

The abuses related to religion in the UK's educational system are made public in the book. It establishes a connection between the abuses and St. Augustine's teachings by tracing their origin to those ideas. The book is educational and compels the reader to consider some challenging issues.

This book challenges the reader to think critically about the place of religion in education, particularly in the UK. Such queries include: Should religious education be required in schools for all students? What happens when religion and science disagree? What good is it to educate kids about religious principles they will almost certainly reject? What should religious education cover? Should it be sectarian or should it expose students to a variety of worldviews so they can make educated decisions? Does children's religious education—particularly the Christian religious education that is so common in the UK—promote their mental health and well-being or does it put them in more danger? The book also draws attention to potential risks linked with religious education and promotes open discussion regarding religion's place in the UK educational system. The book has been carefully edited and is error-free.

It's bad because Chapter 1 serves as the book's foundation and was not persuasive. Instead of providing a strong defense of his beliefs and reasoning, I thought the author tried to persuade the reader by making outrageous statements. Additionally, the author has made statements that are untrue or, at the very least, are taken out of context. The sense of guilt and inadequacy that the author attributes to original sin can be adequately explained by Adlerian theory, which would be more convincing given that the same phenomena have been observed in regions that do not follow any Abrahamic faith. Other, more compelling psychological theories can also explain some of the things that the author claims are explained by the teachings of St. Augustine. Also, from his argument, it is not clear if the original sin tenet of the Christian faith originated with Augustine or if it existed before him. It seems to me that the author implied each of the above scenarios when it suited his argument. If the latter is accurate, some of the criticism he leveled at St. Augustine is unjustified as well. I also discovered a discrepancy between the author's assertions and the data he used to support them. For instance, the author claims that the Catholic guilt associated with original sin makes people feel bad about themselves, but he then goes on to say that Catholic adherents feel less guilty than members of other Christian sects. I also identified instances of bias in the way the evidence was presented. For instance, he harshly criticized the research that appeared to support religion and religious education without doing the same for the evidence that supported his position. Readers of this review should be aware that, despite my best efforts, I might have a bias against his points of view.

I give Joe Baker's *St. Augustine's Sin* a **3 out of 5** stars. This rating can be justified by the fact that the author brought up significant issues that are frequently disregarded regarding the importance and risks of religious education in the UK's educational system, but it strikes me as more of a defense of his beliefs and opinions than an objective examination of the place of religion in the educational system.

The book is a good choice for parents who are thinking about how religion will be incorporated into their children's education. It is unsuitable for Christian book lovers because it has a strong bias against the place of religion in the educational system and considers it to be a risk to children.



Review by **[kingwriter](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=3997170)** » 17 Dec 2022, 11:56 - 4 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=268858&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

How do you explain the situation when law enforcers turn lawbreakers or housebuilders turn destroyers? *St Augustine's Sin: Why child abuse bedeviles Christianity* by Joe Baker is the epitome of this statement. The author, who was a product of St Augustine's teaching, gave a detailed account of Augustine's life, education, and teaching. The writer, through his personal experience, deep research, and other people's opinions, questioned the sensitivity, credibility, and accuracy of Augustine's teaching.

He believed that a child's future was usually shaped by the teaching he received, either from home or school. Being a product of a faith school that adopted Augustine's teaching, he pointed out some negative effects the teaching had on him and his friends, especially in areas of child sexual abuse, children's moral code, secret disengagement from justice, and arbitrary retribution. The author also noted that the teaching did not only affect students spiritually but also morally, emotionally, physically, and so on. He also noted, through evidence, that Augustine's teaching and his instructor's lifestyle were paradoxical.

There are many positive aspects to this book. The first thing I admired about this book was that the writer drew not only from deep research but also from his personal experience about issues that concern children. Without a doubt, children are the future. Whatever harms them harms the future of the nation. So, the fact that he writes boldly about an idea that could negatively affect the future called for commendation.

Another thing I liked about this book was that the writer provided some clarification of some terms, such as "child grooming," "child molestation," "child sexual abuse," and "child exploitation." He also gave valid reasons why the government's intervention in religion in the areas of finance and promotion should stop and end the church's outdated and unprofitable involvement in education. Additionally, he gives a detailed account of ancient Roman customs and traditions regarding sexual abuse as well as some historical pictures to substantiate and complement the story. Undoubtedly, this book has been great and interesting to read. However, there was one thing I disliked about it.

The writer's overconcentration on Augustine's negative side of teaching and life was unappreciative. I agree that every lesson, no matter how good, must always have some element of the bad side. I believe the bad side of Augustine's life and his teaching must possess some positives too. The writer would have been fair to write little about Augustine's positive side. Also, I encountered some errors, which means the book was professionally edited.[[2]](" \l "_ftn2) Given this, I rate *St Augustine's Sin: Why child abuse bedeviles Christianity* by Joe Baker **4 out of 5 stars**. The reason for my rating was the negative aspect mentioned. I recommend the book to young adults and those whose minds are searching for truth.



Review [**Fola M**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=1783239) » 12 Feb 2023, 17:39 - 3 out of 5 stars

[**Original OnLineBookClub Pre-publication Review**](https://forums.onlinebookclub.org/viewtopic.php?f=114&t=284809&hilit=St+Augustine%27s+Sin+Joe+Baker)

*St Augustine’s Sin* by Joe Baker is a critique of the Roman Catholic Church and Church of England based on a medieval theologian’s allegedly flawed literature. It is focused primarily on the purported " imposition of religion" in schools, which is a primary contributing factor to child abuse.

A difficult topic indeed, but it has to be said. Child abuse statistics in our churches have skyrocketed over the years, and according to this book, it can be traced to a doctrine by St Augustine of Hippo. He was a medieval theologian who helped lay the foundation that formed the thought of the modern church. He believed that all human beings are born sinful and must constantly strive to avoid lustful urges for the rest of their lives. According to the book, however, this doctrine has a terrible impact on children raised in the church or those who attended faith schools. It makes them more susceptible to abuse from people meant to teach and guide them.

I like how the author backed up his claims with facts and figures. His background research on St Augustine was detailed and informative. I found myself researching further on the medieval theologian. He also used his experiences to drive home his points about the worrying statistics of child abuse in churches.

However, there were a couple of things that didn’t sit well with me. Firstly, I believe the author’s attack on Christianity is pure vitriol. While I’m completely horrified by the trauma he suffered during his childhood and the shocking child abuse statistics, outright condemnation of an entire religion seems over the top, in my opinion. It got to the point where he was citing malicious information just to prove a point. For example, he gave examples of prolific child abusers, and Michael Jackson, the famous pop star, was one of them. In the author's words:

"Michael Jackson, who was raised a Jehovah’s Witness (he reportedly dropped out in 1987) was credibly accused of persistent child abuse".

I find this ludicrous as the late singer was never convicted of such crimes. A simple google search would show he was acquitted of all charges in 2015. Knowing he was acquitted but still involving his name in these heinous crimes is simply despicable.[[3]](" \l "_ftn3)

Secondly, I believe campaigning for a reformation in faith schools would have been better than calling for an outright ban. The author seemed to deliberately focus on the ugly side of religious upbringing in children rather than on how instilling faith in young minds has helped shape them into upstanding citizens with moral compasses.

Overall, I would rate the book**3 out of 5 stars** because I found it utterly contemptuous and mocking of the Christian faith. I did not spot any errors, so I can say it was professionally well-edited. Christians would do well to steer clear of this book as it is sacrilegious. I wouldn’t also recommend it to a younger/sensitive audience as the graphic descriptions of child abuse can be very triggering. I would recommend this book to parents or those who have young wards and might need to decide which schools their children would attend. If you are willing to keep an open mind, perhaps you can have a go at this book.

**Author's notes:**[*[1]*](#_ftnref1)*I can confirm that my book was professionally copy edited, line edited and proof read.  However, mistakes can occur despite my care, and I regret any errors that may have slipped past my team.*

*[[2]](" \l "_ftnref2)  Several reviewers have mentioned how competently my book was edited.  Please let me know of any errors so that they can be corrected for future editions.*

*[[3]](" \l "_ftnref3)  Further credible accusations of child abuse came to light after 2015, but Michael Jackson died before charges could be brought.*