Kindergarten

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Foundations of Religious Liberty: Understanding Faith, Freedom, and the Constitution

LITTLEPATRIOTS

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Key Themes

- The Legacy of Religious Freedom
- Religious Freedom vs. Religious Uniformity
- What is “Separation of Church and State”?
- Thomas Jefferson’s Role in Religious Liberty



Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Faith
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Recognize the phrase "One Nation Under God" and understand its meaning.
- Explain the concept of religious freedom and how it allows people to worship as they choose.
- Discuss the importance of faith and religious freedom in America’s history.
- Identify natural rights and explain that these rights are given by God and cannot be taken away.

Key Terms

01 **faith:** belief in someone or something even when it can't be seen.

02 **Founding Fathers:** the leaders who helped create the United States of America.

03 **honor:** to show great respect for something.

04 **natural rights:** special freedoms that belong to you just because you are a human being.

05 **religious freedom:** the right to practice your faith however you choose.

06 **unity:** working together and being strong as a group.

07 **worship:** showing respect and honor to God.

Introduction

TELL Students 📷🔑

Hello, little patriots! Today, we are going to start by talking about something very important that we recite each day. It is called the Pledge of Allegiance. When we say the Pledge, we stand up straight, put our right hand over our hearts, look at the American flag, and say the words together. We do this because we know that whenever anyone in the world sees the American flag, they think of the United States. We are thankful that we live here, so we put our hands on our hearts to show that we love America. We recite the words together to show everyone that we are all Americans! By saying these words and showing our love for our country together, we make it clear that America is a treasure in our minds and hearts, so we honor America when we say the Pledge of Allegiance. **Honor** means to show great respect for something. **[Reference Salute Image]** We honor our country because it's a special place where we live, learn, and grow together. We are going to learn about those freedoms today! Right now, let's show honor to our country and say the Pledge of Allegiance together. [Recite the Pledge of Allegiance with the class.]

ASK Students

Have you ever thought about what it means when we say we are "One Nation Under God"?

TELL Students 📷🔑

"One Nation Under God" means that our country is **united**, which means we come together as one, under God. People in our country work together, help each other, and care for one another, even though we might be different in some ways. Being united means we are stronger when we work together, just like a family or a group of friends who stick together and share the same goal. **[Reference United Image]** When we say "One Nation Under God," it also means we believe in something bigger than ourselves—or that we believe in God. Believing in God can be a reminder that we have a lot in common, and that belief helps us do the right thing, even when it is hard. Sometimes it is hard to be kind and to help others. Believing in something bigger than ourselves helps us to do the hard, but right things, even when we do not want to do so.

ASK Students

What does "One Nation Under God" mean?

Introduction

TELL Students 📷🔑

Today, we are going to talk about something called religious freedom. Faith and religious freedom are at the heart of who we are as Americans. **[Reference American Flag]** These two ideas are different, but they are closely connected. **Faith** is a belief in someone or something even when it can't be seen, like believing in God or following a certain religion. **Religious freedom** means that you have the right to practice your faith however you choose. This could be through prayer, going to church, or even reading a holy book like the Bible. **[Reference Bible Image]**

ASK Students

Can you think of a way you or your family show your faith or practice your religion?

TELL Students 📷🔑

Religious freedom is important. Imagine not being able to talk about what you believe. You would still believe in your heart, but it would be hard to practice your faith. Sadly, in some countries, people are not allowed to worship freely, but here in the United States, we are free to express what we believe. In the United States, we can talk about our beliefs and ideas in public places, and we can practice our faith as we like. The police won't stop us as long as we aren't harming anyone else! **Worship** means showing respect and honor to God, often by praying, singing, attending church, or visiting a synagogue or temple. **[Reference Worship Image]** This is one of the special freedoms, or natural rights, we have in our country! Remember from our last course that **natural rights** are special freedoms that belong to you just because you are a human being.

ASK Students

What are natural rights? Why are they important?

TELL Students

Remember, natural rights are special freedoms that come from God and can never be taken away by anyone. These are things like the right to speak freely, to be free, and to follow our faith. The United States was built on the idea that all of these rights are God-given, meaning they come from God. When rights come from God, then no person or government can take them away.

Introduction

ASK Students
Can natural rights be given or taken away?

TELL Students
A belief in a higher power, or God, was important to many of the Founding Fathers. Remember, the **Founding Fathers** were the leaders who helped create the United States of America. Some of the most well-known Founding Fathers include George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. **[Reference Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin Images]** These men worked together to build a country where people could be free to make their own choices and live the way they wanted.

ASK Students
Who are some of the Founding Fathers?

TELL Students
The Founding Fathers believed that faith and religious freedom were very important because they wanted everyone to be free, be able to make good choices, and be kind to others. They wanted people to worship God in their own way. Faith describes the feeling of trust and certainty in something or someone, usually powerful, that you can't see. Faith helps people feel hopeful and to do the right thing, and religious freedom means everyone can worship in the way that is best for them. Faith and religious freedom are still very important today. There is also something called "separation of church and state," which is related to religious freedom, but people sometimes misunderstand what it means. Let's watch a Star Spangled Adventures cartoon to help us learn more about it!

WATCH
Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 40: Thomas Jefferson/Religious Liberty

Lesson

TELL Students

Let's talk about what we saw in the cartoon today! At the beginning, we see some men called "elders" in a church. These men are leaders of the Danbury Baptist Church, which is just one type of church. There are many different kinds of churches and many ways people can worship. One of the elders in the cartoon says that Connecticut (a state) was closing churches, and another man says, "They act like America does not have freedom of religion." Remember what we learned earlier today: freedom of religion, or religious freedom, means that you have the right to practice your faith in your own way.

ASK Students

Why is freedom of religion important?

TELL Students

That is right! Freedom of religion lets you and your family worship in the way that is right for you. In the cartoon, one of the Danbury Baptist elders says, "It still irks me that every person in the state is required to pay money each year to the Congregationalist Church." The Congregationalist Church is another type of church that worships differently from the Danbury Baptist Church. The problem that the Danbury Baptist elders were discussing is that the state of Connecticut was making people give money to one type of church, even if they did not attend or worship there.

ASK Students

Do you think that was fair?

TELL Students

The Danbury Baptist elders in the cartoon didn't think this was fair either! One of the elders explains that the United States Constitution makes it clear that people should not be forced to follow a religion or pay money to a church. Since giving money to a church is considered a form of worship, the Danbury Baptists thought that the government was violating their freedom of religion by making them support a church they didn't belong to. They had to ask for permission from Connecticut to practice their religion or to not financially support another. This meant that they were not free to practice their own religion because it depended on the government to give them permission. Remember, we learned that freedom of religion is a natural right.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)
This means it is something everyone is born with and no one can take away.

ASK Students
What did the elders decide to do in the cartoon after they finished all the muffins?

TELL Students 📷
That is right! The Danbury Baptist elders decided to write a letter to the President of the United States at that time, Thomas Jefferson. **[Reference Thomas Jefferson Image]** Remember from our earlier lessons that Thomas Jefferson was a Founding Father and the main author of the Declaration of Independence. In their letter, the Danbury Baptist elders asked President Jefferson for help. They explained that Connecticut needed to follow the Constitution and allow them to practice their religion freely. Remember, the Declaration of Independence told the world that we wanted to be free, and the United States Constitution is the roadmap that shows us how to stay a free nation. If we want to remain free, we must follow the Constitution.

ASK Students
Why is the United States Constitution important?

TELL Students 📷
Next in the cartoon, we see President Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, another important Founding Father, talking about the letter from the Danbury Baptist elders. James Madison explains the Constitution's Bill of Rights. **[Reference James Madison Image]** The Bill of Rights is a special part of the Constitution that lists important rules to protect people's freedoms. One of these freedoms is freedom of religion.

ASK Students
What problem were the Danbury Baptist elders trying to solve?

TELL Students 📷
We also saw in the cartoon that President Thomas Jefferson explained that faith is something between a person and God, not between a person and the government.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Jefferson responded to the Danbury Baptist elders in a letter. In the letter, he said there is a "wall" that separates church and state. **[Reference Wall of Separation]** This means the government cannot tell people how to worship or make them go to a certain church. Jefferson and the other Founding Fathers knew that faith was very important, but they also wanted to make sure America did not create one church that everyone had to attend or support.

ASK Students

What did President Jefferson mean by a wall separating the church and the state?

TELL Students 📷

That is right! He meant that the government cannot make people attend or support one church, or that one church gets to dominate the government. Today, some people get confused and think this means faith has no place in public life—but that is not what Jefferson meant. Our Pledge of Allegiance says that we are "one nation under God," which shows that faith has always been important to Americans and to our Founding Fathers. **[Reference Founding Fathers Image]** Jefferson did not mean that faith was unimportant. He simply meant that the government cannot tell you how to worship.

ASK Students

Were the Founding Fathers people of faith?

TELL Students 📷

Remember, at the beginning of today's lesson, we talked about how America is "One Nation Under God." This means our country was founded on a belief in a higher power, or God. One of the most important things that makes America special is the freedom to worship in the way we choose. **[Reference American Flag]** Today, people in America can practice their religion openly and freely, without anyone telling them what to believe. This freedom to worship is an important part of what makes our country special. In America, we are free to worship in our own way, and this is something our Founding Fathers worked hard to protect.



Objective

Teach kindergarten students the value of unity, religious freedom, and the importance of working together as a community.

Materials Needed

- A large paper or whiteboard
- Markers or crayons
- A simple image of the United States flag (printed or drawn)
- Stickers or stamps (optional)

Instructions

1. Introduction to Unity

- Gather students in a circle and explain that today they will learn about being part of one big team, just like how the United States is one big team of people who help each other and work together.
- Ask the students to raise their hands if they've ever worked together with friends, family, or classmates to do something special.

2. Discussion

- Ask the question, "What does it mean to be part of a team?" and encourage students to share their thoughts.
- Explain that just like how a team works together, people in the United States come from different places and believe different things, but they should work together to make the country a good place.

3. Interactive Drawing

Show the students a simple image of the United States flag and ask them what they think it represents. Explain briefly that the flag stands for all the people in America, working together as one.

- Ask students to point out parts of the flag that look similar or different to/from each other. *There are many stripes. There are many stars. The stripes are all large. Some are white, and some are red. The corner is full of small stars and is blue.*



- Ask them if they would recognize a flag with just red stripes. What about a flag that was all blue with no stars? *The flag only symbolizes America when all the parts are placed together! If the flag is missing any part, it isn't recognizable as the American flag!*
- Ask the students to help you draw a big, simple version of the flag on the large paper or whiteboard, emphasizing that our flag represents all American people.

4. Sticker Time

- Give each student a sticker or stamp. Ask them to place their sticker on the "flag" you created together, symbolizing that they are part of the team and working together as one.

5. Wrap-Up

- End the activity by saying, "Just like our flag is made up of many stripes and many stars, our country is made up of many people. When we work together, we are strong and can help each other. America just isn't America without everyone! We can show respect for each other's beliefs and work together to make the world a better place!"
- Encourage the children to say, "We are one team!" as a group.

Extension

- You could continue the activity by asking students to draw a picture of something they do to help others, showing how they can contribute to the team.



Freedom to Believe Song

Objective

Kindergarten students will understand the concept of religious liberty and how it is a fundamental part of freedom in the United States. They will learn that their family has the freedom to worship in their own way.

Materials Needed

- A picture or symbol of the United States flag (for visual reference)
- Space to move around for the song

Introduction to Religious Liberty

Start by reviewing the concept of religious liberty: Religious liberty means we have the freedom to believe in and practice our faith the way we choose. It's a special freedom in the United States that lets us worship God or practice other beliefs freely. This freedom allows people to pray, sing, or go to church, and no one can stop them from doing so.

Song: "Freedom to Believe"

Introduce the song: Tell the students, "Now we are going to sing a song to help us remember that we are free to worship however we want in our country. The tune is the same as "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes." Ready to sing and move?"

Freedom to Believe
(Tune: Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes)

Verse 1:
We have freedom to believe,
To believe
We have freedom to believe,
To believe
In the USA we all agree
We have freedom to believe
To believe!
(As you sing, point to your head for "We," touch your chest for "freedom," and stretch arms out for "believe.")



Freedom to Believe Song

Verse 2:
We can pray and sing to God,
Sing to God
We can pray and sing to God,
Sing to God
'Cross the country, L.A. to Cape Cod
We can pray and sing to God
Sing to God
(Pretend to fold hands in prayer for "pray" and then mime singing for "sing to God.")

Verse 3:
We can choose the faith we want,
Faith we want
We can choose the faith we want,
Faith we want
We all love this country that we've got!
We can choose the faith we want
Faith we want
(Point to your heart for "faith" and show choosing something by pretending to pick from a selection.)

Verse 4:
We respect each other's choice,
Each other's choice
We respect each other's choice,
Each other's choice
Every person here has got a voice!
We respect each other's choice
Each other's choice!
(Give a respectful bow or wave to show respect for others' choices.)



Freedom to Believe Song

Verse 5:
We are free to live our way,
Live our way
We are free to live our way,
Live our way
Love this country each and every day!
Free and happy living
In the USA!
(Spread your arms wide for "live our way," and finish with a big jump to celebrate "in the USA!")

Discussion

After singing the song, ask the students the following questions to reinforce the lesson:

- "Why is it important that we can choose our own faith?"
- "How can we show respect for other people's beliefs?"
- "What can we do to help others feel free to believe in what they choose?"

Activity

Create a "Freedom to Believe" Banner:

- Provide students with markers or crayons and a large piece of paper.
- Ask them to draw symbols of faith or things that represent freedom to them.
- Discuss how each drawing represents their right to believe in their own way.

Conclusion

End by reminding students that religious liberty is one of the most important freedoms in the United States. It helps people feel free to practice their beliefs without fear. Everyone has the right to believe in their own way, just like we sing in the song!



Discovering "In God We Trust" on Money

Objective

Kindergarten students will learn about the phrase "In God We Trust" on U.S. currency and explore its meaning, history, and connection to the values of the United States.

Materials Needed

- Pictures of different U.S. currency with "In God We Trust" visible (or actual currency if available)
- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers or crayons
- Printable worksheets with images of U.S. coins and bills
- A small box or container (optional)

Introduction to "In God We Trust"

Begin by explaining the phrase: Start by asking the students if they've ever noticed the words "In God We Trust" on money. Show them pictures or actual currency, pointing out where the phrase is located. Explain: "In God We Trust" is a phrase that appears on U.S. coins and paper money. It was first added to U.S. currency in 1864 and became the official motto of the United States in 1956. This phrase shows that many Americans believe in God and trust in Him. It reminds people that the country was built on faith and values like freedom and trust in God.

Interactive Discussion

Ask students:

- "What do you think 'In God We Trust' means?"
- "Why do you think it is important to have this phrase on our money?"
- "How does having the phrase 'In God We Trust' on our money remind us of the country's values?"

Allow the students to share their thoughts and write down their ideas on the whiteboard or chart paper. This can lead to a discussion about how the phrase reflects faith, unity, and trust in God, especially in times of uncertainty.



Interactive Exploration of Money

Examining Currency and the Motto:

- Provide students with pictures of different U.S. currency (coins and bills), or if available, hand out real coins and bills for the students to examine.
- Show them the specific location of "In God We Trust" on each piece of money (e.g., on the back of the $1 bill, on coins like the penny, quarter, and nickel).

Activity Instructions

- Ask the students to look carefully at the currency and find the phrase "In God We Trust."
- Once they find it, have them trace it with their fingers and say the phrase aloud.
- Discuss the history of the phrase by showing them when and why it was first added to U.S. currency. You could also share that it became the official motto in 1956.

Optional Challenge: If you have a mix of bills and coins, challenge the students to see who can find the phrase on the most pieces of money in a given amount of time.

Resources

- https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-01-02-0057
- https://minio.la.utexas.edu/webeditor-files/coretexts/pdf/163020model20of20christian20charity.pdf
- https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205%3A13-15&version=KJ21
  https://www.history.com/news/pilgrims-puritans-differences
- https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/church-of-england-in-virginia/
- https://www.history.com/news/religion-13-colonies-america
- https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/gods-mosaic/
- Thomas Jefferson, "Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom," The Jefferson Monticello, https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/virginia-statute-religious-freedom/.
- United States Supreme Court, "Reynolds v. United States (1879)," Library of Congress, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/usrep/usrep098/usrep098145/usrep098145.pdf.
- James Madison, "From James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 22 January 1786," National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0249.
- Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Margaret Bayard Smith, 6 August 1816," National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-10-02-0186.

Images

Salute



Credit: Canva Pro

United



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

American Flag



Credit: Canva Pro

Bible



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Worship



Credit: Canva Pro

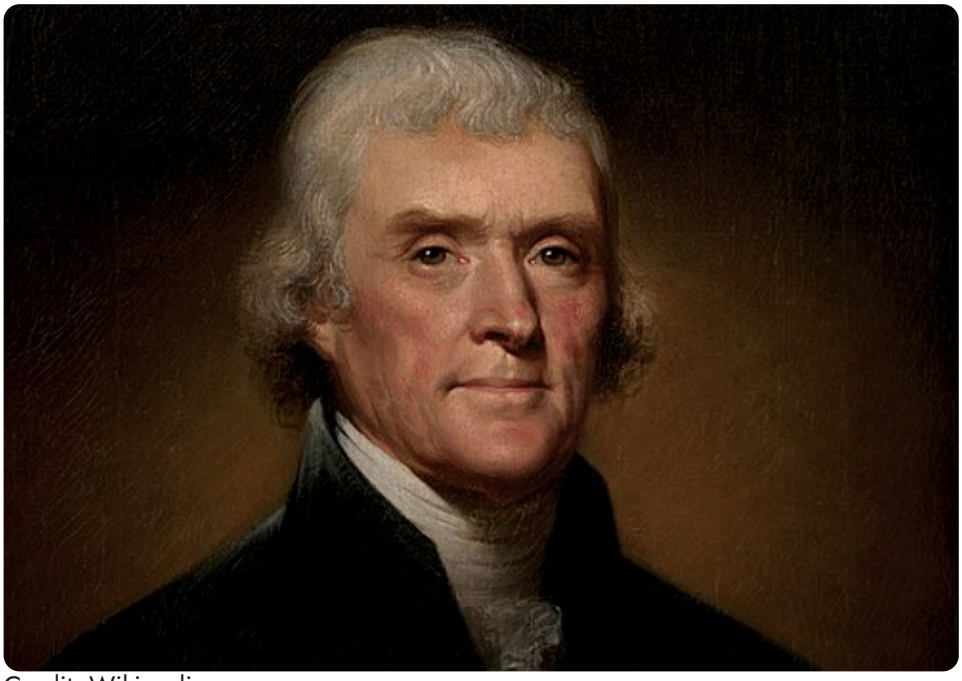
George Washington



Credit: Canva Pro

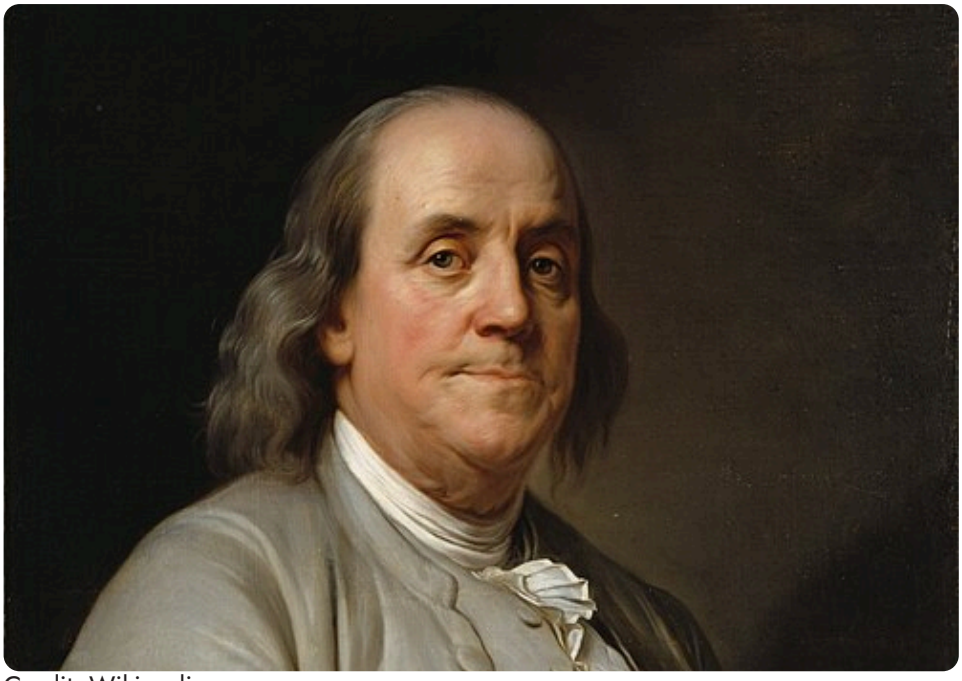
Images

Thomas Jefferson



Credit: Wikipedia

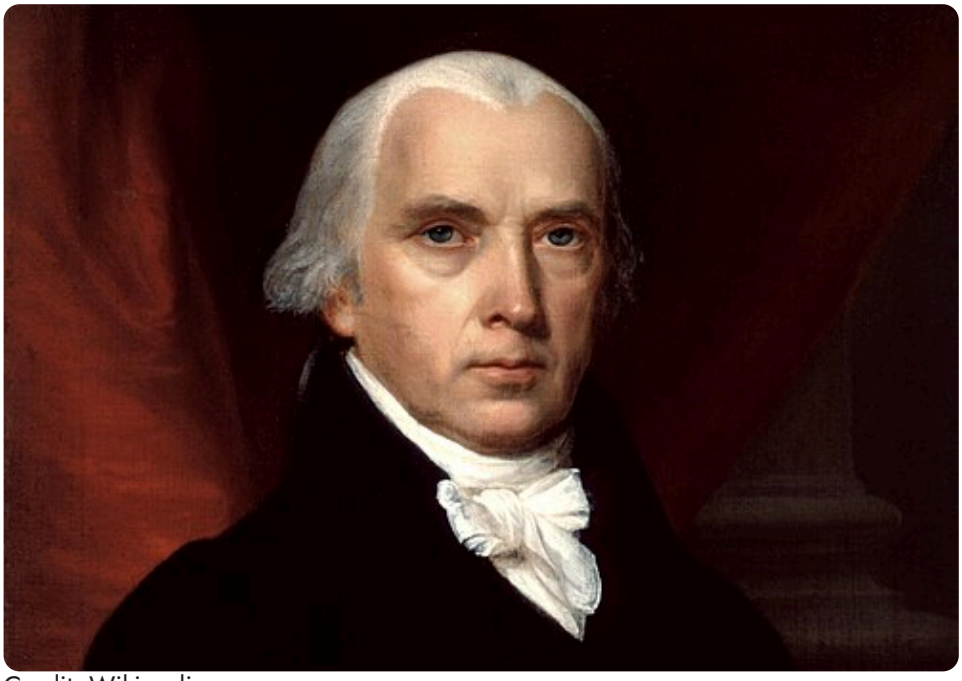
Benjamin Franklin



Credit: Wikipedia

Images

James Madison



Credit: Wikipedia

Wall of Seperation



Credit: Canva Pro

Notes