

## INDEPENDENCE DAY LESSON – YOUTH

### TEACHER PEP TALK

The Bible tells us that “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.” Our American forefathers knew this and reflected their beliefs in the LORD in our founding documents. It is important for our youth to learn that the blessings and freedoms we enjoy in America find their basis in God.

Additionally, in the Bible, God spoke to Abraham and told him that “all nations will be blessed through you.” This lesson will help the youth understand that this prophecy was fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ, through whom all of us may be free from sin and death.

### SCRIPTURES

**Psalms 33:12** – Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD...

**Genesis 18:18** – Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.

**Galatians 3:8** – The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."

**John 8:36** – So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

### SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

Selections from the Declaration of Independence (USA)

### MAJOR POINTS

- Our founding fathers showed their belief in God in the initial documents establishing the independence of the USA.
- The Bible says “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD”
- Our country is blessed by God directly and indirectly.
  - Directly because our forefathers honored Him in establishing our country.
  - Indirectly because our laws mirror God’s laws, and that helps us to treat others as He would have us treat them. This also brings blessings to us.
- God promised Abraham that “All nations will be blessed through you.”
- This scripture found its fulfillment in the coming of Christ, Jesus, through whom men and women from all nations may be blessed.
- Through Jesus anyone anywhere may be set free from sin and death.

**LESSON OUTLINE – (Please give the lesson in your own words.)**

You may wonder what we will study today on Independence Day in church... How about whether or not God provides the freedoms and blessings that we enjoy in our country?

Many of our founding fathers held strong personal beliefs in the LORD God. It is not, perhaps, politically correct to tell you so, but it is true nonetheless! In addition, many of the men and women who colonized America did so in an effort to find a safe new place to worship God as their consciences dictated, without hindrance from any established government religion. They found what they were looking for here.

When it came time for America to establish its independence from England, the Declaration of Independence was written. In it are some very strong words tying the rights of human beings to the existence of their Creator. **(Refer to Supplemental Reading sheet.)** Here are some of them...

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*

These words, and the words that accompany them, are some of the most amazing words ever written! They state that, just because God has created people, we have a set of certain rights, which belong to every person. Essentially it says that we have these rights just because God created us and gives them to us!

The Bible says that “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.” This is from the Old Testament and is found in Psalm 33:12. It referred originally to the nation Israel, but can refer to any nation whose God is the LORD. Our nation has been blessed by following the LORD God. God blesses our nation directly and indirectly. He blesses us directly because our country was founded by men and women who followed Him, and there are still many people here who worship Him and follow Him. He blesses us indirectly because the laws of our country were set up to reflect God’s Law which is given to us in the Bible. Following God’s laws, and His will for us, brings blessings.

Yes, our country is blessed. But the Bible speaks of another blessing as well. 4000 years ago God told His servant, Abraham, that “All nations will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 18:18) This promise was fulfilled 2000 years later when the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born! Jesus was a descendent of Abraham, and it is true that through Jesus all nations were blessed. Through Jesus anyone anywhere in the world may be set free of sin and death, because He paid the price for all our sins. John 8:36 tell us: So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

People from every nation all over the world have accepted Jesus as their Savior! God has truly blessed the whole world through His Son, Jesus Christ, and through Abraham, His ancestor. And God has truly blessed our country as well! **God bless America!**

### “WHAT DO YOU THINK?” QUESTIONS

Here are some examples of questions to ask in class, and some suggestions for how to arrive at some answers. Have fun with these. Allow the youth in your group to read and or answer the questions. What kind of questions might your Youth have?

- Did the people who wrote the Declaration of Independence really believe in God?

*(Read from the Declaration of Independence. Several large sections are provided for you in the Supplemental Readings page. Words in bold type show a reference to their belief and reliance upon God.)*

- If God didn't exist, or didn't create us, what rights would we have? Why?

*(If God didn't exist, we could essentially have no rights except for those that other people, who might be more powerful, decided to give us.)*

- Do our laws really reflect God's Law?

*(Take a look at the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. Can you think of any of our laws which reflect the teachings in the Ten Commandments? Name some of them.)*

- How did God bless people in all nations on earth through Abraham?

*(Abraham's descendant, Jesus, was the promised Messiah (the Christ) who was to take away the sin of the world. Many people all over the world and from every nation have accepted Jesus as their Savior!)*

- If we change the laws in our country so that they no longer reflect God's laws, do you think they will still bring us blessings?

*(Whenever you get away from God's laws, you get away from the blessings that come from them. For example: If we suddenly said that it was ok to tell lies in court, then that would not bring about blessings. People would lie in court and innocent people might go to jail, or guilty people might get away free. There would be no justice for anyone.)*

- What do you think we could do in America to help make sure that God continues to bless our great country?

*(Psalm 33:12 – Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.)*

**ACTIVITY – “Rights or Wrongs?”**

*Today’s lesson is fairly serious one with lots of Bible verses (and even a reading section from the Declaration of Independence!) You are going to need a fun activity of some kind for the teens to let off some steam! This game provides such an opportunity.*

**“RIGHTS” or “WRONGS”?**

For each small group (of 4-6 persons) you will need:

One LARGE sheet of paper (newsprint or poster paper)

2-3 Markers

For extra fun:

Bring in some island music (or one of those “Soothing Sounds of the Ocean” CDs) and play them while the Youth are making their lists. Toss in some sunglasses for fun!

To Play:

- Split into groups of 4-6 persons.
- Distribute paper and markers to each group.
- Give these instructions out loud:
  - You are stranded on a desert island with the people in your group. (Sorry!)
  - You have 10 minutes to come up with a list of “rights” that everyone on your island will have. You may make them as fun or as silly as you like.
  - At the end of 10 minutes someone from your group will read these out loud to everyone else.
  - The whole group will decide if you have more “Rights!” or “Wrongs!”
  - For example:
    - Everyone on our island gets to spend seven days a week at the beach! (*Right!*)
    - All the coconut milk you can drink! (*Right!*)
    - If you snore, you can’t sleep in the community hut! (*Right!*)
    - No one has to bathe! (*Wrong... oh, so wrong!*)
- Say “Ready! Set! Go!!!!!!”
- Allow 10 minutes for group work. (Hopefully no one gets “voted off the island” during this part of the activity!)
- Call time (Be ruthless... no one likes a wimpy timekeeper.)
- Have someone from the noisiest group come up first to read their list of “Rights!”
- As a group decide if they are “Rights!” (Thumbs up) or “Wrongs!” (Thumbs down)

**NOTE to LEADERS:** There is no way to actually win or lose at this game. It is just a fun group experience. So, don’t worry about trying to keep score or hand out points. Just try to make sure that the “RIGHTS” don’t get too personal or hurt anyone’s feelings. Otherwise, relax, put your feet up, and enjoy the sounds of the waves crashing on the beach. In the meantime, have some fun watching teens make up rules for themselves.

*I only wish I could be a little fly on the wall of your Youth Room! - Sharon*

**SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS*****The Declaration of Independence – July 4, 1776***

*When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the **Laws of Nature and of Nature's God** entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, **that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights**, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.*

*(sections omitted)*

*We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, **with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence**, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.*