



Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 4, WEBISODE 3

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview

Today, American citizens take for granted the freedom to worship as they chose, to attend a church or synagogue or mosque, or to practice no religion at all. Many do not realize that this freedom was hard won, and even in the twenty-first century, citizens of every country do not yet enjoy it. Early in American colonial history, the search for freedom of religion drove many Europeans from their homelands to the North American continent. Once free from religious persecution, some colonist began to practice it themselves on those who did not conform to their beliefs. In the New England colonies, people faced persecution for daring to stray from the rigid codes of Puritanism. In the southern colonies, everyone supported the established Anglican Church with their taxes. Only three colonies, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Maryland offered religious freedom, and the last to Christians only.

As the American colonists began to think of freedom from England, they began to think of other freedoms as well. In 1777, Thomas Jefferson drafted the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*. The Virginia legislature took nine years to approve the document. Jefferson called it “the severest contest in which I have ever been engaged.” In 1789, freedom of religion became the law of the land with the passage of the first amendment to the Constitution.

Teacher Directions

1. Display this quotation at the chalkboard or on chart paper.
“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”
2. Ask the students if they have seen these words before. Where are they from? Who wrote them?
3. If students do not recognize the quotation, tell them that it is from the First Amendment to the Constitution, one of ten amendments written in 1789 by James Madison that became known as the Bill of Rights.

Note to the Teacher: If students have access to a copy of the Constitution, give them clues to discover the quotation for themselves. Sources include Joy Hakim’s *A History of US, From Colonies to Country*, page 195 or the National Archives web site @ www.nara.gov/exhall/charters/constitution.

4. Tell students that some people believe freedom of religion is the basis for all other freedoms. Discuss with the students why this opinion might be true.



Let's Discuss



History Sleuth

Teacher Directions

1. Have resources available for students to find information on the following people. The school media center, history books such as Joy Hakim's *A History of US* or the Internet (including the brief biographies found on this web site) are good sources for research. Prepare a nametag for each historic personality.
 - John Cotton
 - Mary Dyer
 - Roger Williams
 - Thomas Jefferson
 - George Mason
 - William Penn
 - Anne Hutchinson
2. Assign one historic personality to each team. Working in their teams students find information about their person and what he or she would think about the first amendment guaranteeing religious liberty to American citizens.
3. Students record information on the Student Sheet: *Who Am I? What Do I Believe?*
4. When students have completed their worksheet, they help one member prepare to role play their historic personalities in a panel discussion.
5. Assemble a panel of personalities for the discussion and distribute nametags. You or a student may act as moderator. Ask the historic personalities to introduce themselves and respond to questions from the Student Sheet. Encourage the students on the panel to respond to one another's' differences of opinion concerning freedom of religion.

Teacher Directions

1. Students discuss the following quotation.

James Madison wrote: "Religion and government will both exist in greater purity, the less they are mixed together."
2. Help students understand what Madison means. Students discuss: Do you agree or disagree and why?



What do you Think?



Moving Toward
Freedom

Teacher Directions

1. Tell the students that Thomas Jefferson wrote his own epitaph. An epitaph is the writing on a tombstone. Write Jefferson's epitaph on the chalkboard, chart paper or a transparency.

Here was buried Thomas Jefferson
Author of the Declaration of American Independence
of the Statute of Virginia for religious toleration
& Father of the University of Virginia

2. Ask the students what important accomplishments Jefferson did not mention. (governor of Virginia, secretary of state, ambassador to France, vice president and president of the United States.
3. Ask students to speculate why Jefferson would want people to remember him for these three accomplishments. Lead the students to the understanding that Jefferson saw his contributions to freedom and learning as most important. Help students recognize Jefferson's tremendous role in leading the new nation toward freedom.
4. Tell students that Jefferson wrote his epitaph and designed his own tombstone near the end of his long, productive life.
5. At their point in life, the students have an opportunity to look ahead and think about what they would like to accomplish and for what they would like history to remember them.
6. Ask students to think about what contributions they can make toward freedom and write their own individual epitaphs listing these hoped for accomplishments.
7. Remind students that few people achieve the greatness of Jefferson, but everyone can make contributions to freedom.

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Media/Library — Students visit the plantation homes of Thomas Jefferson on the Internet @ <http://www.monticello.org>, George Mason @ <http://www.gunstonhall.org>, and James Madison @ <http://www.gunstonhall.org>.

Art — Students chose a historic personality from the History Sleuth activity and design a poster illustrating that person's contribution to religious freedom.

Literature/Language Arts — Students read *A Matter of Conscience: The Trial of Anne Hutchinson* (Stories of America) by Joan Kane Nichols.



Connections

***Who Am I?
What Do I Believe?***

Name: _____

Year of Birth: _____ Year of Death: _____

Where I lived: _____

Occupation: _____ Religion: _____

What I did so that history remembers me: _____

What I believe about how people should worship: _____

What I think about people of other religions: _____

What I think of the first amendment (or would think if it had been written in my lifetime): _____

