

PROVERBS AND THE PATRIOTS

The purpose of this curriculum is to teach fourth grade children God's wisdom and values from the book of Proverbs and to teach about our American patriots who lived by these values to build our country as ... "*One Nation, Under God.*"

LESSON 4. SEEKING WISDOM

INTRODUCTION TO LEADERS (not to be read to students):

Most of us have experienced situations where we don't know what we should do; how we should handle difficulties; how we should discipline our children; how we should order our lives; how we should make decisions. Oh that we could just take a brief peek into the future, and base our current decisions on what we see there! But, of course, we are not allowed even a glimpse into tomorrow. We must rely on our experiences from yesterday and the tools we have at hand today, to make decisions that will last into tomorrow.

Our forefathers wrestled with decision-making to an agonizing level of intensity. The choices they made centuries ago determined the future, not only for themselves, but for the thousands of others who were Americans. Their decision-making was for the benefit of *all* the people, not just their own immediate families - and they had no more ability to peek into the future than we have!

One of our country's greatest leaders, George Washington, knew the One who did know the future and had all events under His control. George Washington knew that in order to make appropriate, lasting decisions, two steps must be taken. The first is to go to the source of wisdom regularly and seek God's will through devoted prayer and worship. And secondly, Washington plunged into determined reading of the Holy Bible, God's written Word and guide for mankind. Through prayer and Bible reading, Washington sought the will of God for himself and the new nation for which he was in battle. As a result, Washington was blessed by the ever-present evidence of the Lord's hand upon his life, as seen through miraculously answered prayers.

Our lives are not currently defined by a war for independence; however, as Christians we are part of a battle to retain our freedom of religious expression. There are negative things in this society which seek to infiltrate our homes and families, and want to influence our children. We would be foolish to refuse God's wisdom for our own personal battles by neglecting to engage in regular prayer, worship, and Bible reading. God promises His believers in James 1:5 "if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." Our children should be taught to ask God for His wisdom in the many situations they are faced with daily, and to learn to rely on the source of strength of our forefathers. After all, isn't it best to ask for guidance from the One who knows about yesterday, today, and tomorrow?

**Fun with Faith Clubs, Inc. Proverbs and the Patriots
"Seeking Wisdom... George Washington"**

LESSON PLAN:

1. *Opening Prayer* — When the children arrive and are seated, bow your heads and lead them in a prayer. The focus of each opening prayer should be to thank God for this country where we live that was founded on the Christian faith. Thank the Lord for each student present and ask His blessing upon your meeting.

2. *Pledge of Allegiance* -- Have the children stand and respectfully recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. *Patriot Puzzlers* -- This section of your meeting is a “teaser” about the patriot we are about to study. Ask the children to listen carefully to you as you describe this person. See if they can guess who you will be studying. Have candy available to encourage their participation. They may be eating a snack provided by one of the mothers at this time.

Patriot Puzzler:

WHO AM I???

- * I am the father of millions, but have no children of my own.
- * I was home-schooled for most of my education.
- * I learned to read from the Holy Bible.
- * My first job was as a Surveyor when I was 17 years old.
- * As a boy I had no friends or neighbors to play with, only my younger sisters and brothers.
- * At the age of 20 I entered the military.
- * As a man I stood 6’2”, weighed nearly 200 lbs., and had blue eyes.
- * I was the commanding general of the American Revolution.
- * I really never wanted this job, but I was elected to be the first President of the United States.

4. *Clues and Reviews* - This section of your meeting should remind the children of the topic studied at your last meeting. Remind the children of this, “Last time we learned how Thomas Jefferson was influenced by the Christians around him, although Jefferson was not a Christian himself. We learned that we, too, can influence others around us in a positive way.”

Ask these questions:

- * What does peer pressure mean to you?
- * How can you influence the kids at your school in a positive way?
- * What did you learn about Jefferson that showed that he was not a Christian?
- * How do you become a Christian? (Leader: be careful here! Make sure you review the salvation message in the last lesson so you may guide the children to the truth.)

Fun with Faith Clubs, Inc. Proverbs and the Patriots
“Seeking Wisdom... George Washington”

Ask the child whom you have selected to share the results from their Patriot Project. (Answer to the worksheet = “I can be His light at school!”)

* What does it mean to be “His light?”

5. *Lesson from Proverbs* -- Mark the following passages in the books 31 Days of Wisdom & Praise.

Before they look up the verses, ask the group this: *How do you know what to do when you are faced with making a decision, or entering a situation that is new to you?*

It may also be helpful to define the word wisdom -- *the power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action, based on knowledge, experience, and understanding.*

Ask the children to look up these Scriptures and circle or highlight the verses in their book. Allow them time to get themselves organized and help them, if needed. When the group has finished, ask individual students to read the verses aloud, in order.

It is important that the children understand what they have read! Discuss each Scripture as they read it!

The selected Scriptures for this lesson are:

Proverbs 2:6 For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. *(TLB -- For the Lord grants wisdom! His every word is a treasure of knowledge and understanding.)*

* Questions — Who is the source of wisdom? Who is the Lord? What does He give?

Proverbs 2:12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse. *(TLB -- You will be given the sense to stay away from evil men who want you to be their partners in crime ...)*

* Questions -- Why is wisdom valuable? What might be the ways of wicked men?

Proverbs 3:1-2 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. *(TLB -- My son, never forget the things I've taught you. If you want a long and satisfying life, closely follow my instructions.)*

* Questions -- How do you keep God's commands in your heart? Where do you find these commands? How will you benefit from remembering God's teaching? Is it possible to remember something you have never learned?

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. *(TLB -- If you want favor with both God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust the Lord completely; don't ever trust yourself. In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.)*

**Fun with Faith Clubs, Inc. Proverbs and the Patriots
“Seeking Wisdom... George Washington”**

* Questions - Why is it best to trust God, rather than your feelings? What does it mean to acknowledge Him in all your ways? What will God do for you in return?

Proverbs 5:21 For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord and he examines all his paths. (TLB -- *For God is closely watching you, and he weighs carefully everything you do.*)

* Questions -- Can we hide from God? Is there anything that God doesn't know about us?

Consider that our "paths" means where we have been, where we are now, and where we will go in the future - do you think it is best to seek guidance from God who knows all about you, and even knows your future, or your friends who may not know God's ways?

Proverbs 8:33 -- Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it. (TLB -- *Listen to my counsel -- oh, don't refuse it -- and be wise.*)

* Questions -- Where do you find God's instructions? What will you become when you follow His Word?

»» > **FINAL SUMMARY QUESTION:**

“Why is it important to seek God’s wisdom and direction? Where do you find the Wisdom of God?”

During your discussion time, have small pieces of candy available to toss out to the students to encourage their participation. Toss a piece to children with the correct answers, or to those who have the courage to try with an honest effort. (Don't encourage silly answers!)

6. *Patriot Profile -- George Washington*

Suggestion -- For this part of your meeting, move the children to a circle on the floor. This is intended to draw their attention to the story and avoid boredom from sitting in one place for the whole meeting.

Few people in any nation can be considered to be great men, because the deeds of most of us are usually quite ordinary, not extraordinary. But God can raise up great men and women to lead any righteous land. Great people do not become great on their own! They are taught and nurtured by others, and rely on the wisdom of God through his Holy Word, the Bible. They communicate with God through regular, dedicated prayer. Such a man was George Washington. He was ordinary in every way, except that he was chosen by God to be a leader of this nation. Perhaps he was chosen because of his total dependence on God.

George Washington was born in Virginia on February 22, 1732. His father was a wealthy landowner and farmer who died when George was just 11 years old. When his father died, so did George's hopes of getting a world-class education in England as half-brother, Lawrence, had. George had to be satisfied with being taught at home by his mother. She was a woman of rare good sense, and a solid Christian. She taught George how to read from the Holy Bible, and he learned the valuable lesson of self-control from her.

**Fun with Faith Clubs, Inc. Proverbs and the Patriots
“Seeking Wisdom... George Washington”**

George grew up to be a determined young man. When he was finally able to go to a nearby school, he developed an intense interest in mathematics. He decided that he would like to become a land surveyor. He would need to know higher mathematics such as logarithms and trigonometry to do this work. But there was one problem! His teacher would not support George's dream, and refused to teach him these necessary subjects. But George was determined, and he purchased the necessary books. He taught himself these difficult subjects. At the age of seventeen he was appointed surveyor of Culpepper County, Virginia.

George experienced great grief when he lost his father, and again when his half-brother Lawrence died. Lawrence had been near and dear to George all his life. When he died at age 34, George was deeply grieved, yet he was sure that Lawrence was with the Savior Jesus. His grief did not leave quickly, and every day he was comforted by prayers he had carefully copied in a small notebook, reading them over and over "Wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the lamb, and purge my heart by thy holy spirit ... daily frame me more and more into the likeness of thy son Jesus Christ ... thou gavest thy Son to die for me; and hast given me assurance of salvation upon my repentance."

Yes, George Washington was a true Christian because he believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God who had died for the sins that George Washington had committed. George's prayer was that his own life would become more and more like that of Jesus Christ. This was a prayer which God answered throughout the years of war.

By the time the colonies declared their independence from England, George was a seasoned veteran and military leader. As a General, he was a major influence upon the volunteer army of his command. He insisted that they strive for his high standards of Christian living. Every morning after prayers, Washington issued new orders such as these:

"The General expects his officers to attend all functions, dressed in correct uniform." "The General insists on proper military behavior at all times."

"All officers will stop using bad language."

"All men will attend Church services, carrying their arms and ammunition with them."

George Washington was more than just a general. He was a man of God, who made no secret of his Christian faith. He would ride among his army, directing the soldiers to fear God and to practice Christian virtues. He respected God's Word and he prayed daily. And Washington realized how much his rag-tag army would need the Lord on their side to give them wisdom in order to win their independence from England.

Quite often, during times of great stress, Washington would retreat to private places to pray. He had many concerns. His army of volunteers had no uniforms, and no appropriate clothing at all. Some of them went barefoot in the snow, leaving bloody footprints behind. Food was scarce and they were all starving. This left them weak and without motivation or energy to fight the enemy. The British were well-dressed and well-fed and were much better trained than the American army. They had plenty of guns and ammunition, and their soldiers were even paid to fight! How could they defeat such a well-equipped army?

Fun with Faith Clubs, Inc. Proverbs and the Patriots
"Seeking Wisdom... George Washington"

One day a Quaker gentleman named Mr. Potts was passing through a large grove a short way from the army headquarters. As he walked, he heard a noise and stopped to listen. He recognized the noise as a human voice, though he could not hear it distinctly. As he came closer, he caught sight of a man with his back towards him, kneeling in prayer. Potts stopped, not wanting to interrupt the prayers of General Washington.

God used the prayers of George Washington in a mighty way by showering wisdom upon him. Thn the prayers and regular worship of God, Washington was given divine insight that helped him to out-fox the British and ultimately win the war for independence. Washington never took credit for this wisdom himself, but always attributed it to God. Eight years of dying, starving and ragged life had passed since the war had begun. The war had been horrible. When it was all over, Washington gave orders for the chaplains to “render thanks to Almighty God for all his mercies” after the order to cease fighting was read.

After the war, in 1787 Washington was chairman of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, and the following year he was elected the first President. When he took office, he established a tradition by adding to the end of his oath of office these words, which we still hear today...“so help me, God.”

In his inaugural speech, Washington reminded the Americans that the “smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards (ignores) the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained...” And where do we find these eternal rules of order and right? Why, in the Holy Bible itself.

Today the U.S. Capitol has a private chapel for our nation’s congressmen which features stained glass windows. One of these windows is called “Washington’s Gethsemane.” (Gethsemane is the name of the garden where Jesus prayed the night before his crucifixion) This window shows the kneeling figure of George Washington at Valley Forge, praying to God for his soldiers and his county.

No other American has been honored more than George Washington. Washington, D.C., our nation capitol, was named for him and it is there that the giant Washington Monument stands. The state of Washington is the only one of our 50 states that bears the name of a President. Many counties, cities, towns, streets, bridges, lakes, parks, and schools bear his name, and George Washington’s picture appears on postage stamps, on the \$1 bill, and on the quarter.

George Washington, through his service to our nation and his devotion to the Lord, passed on a divine heritage that has been honored by all as we call him “The Father of our Country.” Isn’t it comforting to know that his Father was our Father in Heaven!

7. *Patriot Games*

This game is a team effort to have fun with the brief history of George Washington that is written below. This history will be distorted by the children in “Mad Libs” fashion — they will be replacing key words with other nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. To play the game, divide the group into two teams. Each team will need a scribe (one of the children may volunteer to be the writer and reader of the Mad-Lib). The scribe will ask the children to supply key words and will write their suggestions in the appropriate place. The Mad-Libs sheets are supplied with this lesson.

Fun with Faith Clubs, Inc. Proverbs and the Patriots
“Seeking Wisdom... George Washington”

Give the teams 2 or 3 minutes to complete their sheet. When both teams have finished, read the appropriate history of George Washington found below. Then let each team read their “Mad-Lib” history. This should be a fun and silly way to review his life.

History of George Washington:

George Washington was the son of a Virginia landowner. George was honest, even as a small boy, and even admitted a mistake he’d made when he chopped down one of his father’s prized, imported cherry trees with a new hatchet he had received as a gift. George had good parents, but his father died when he was eleven years old. George went to school at home for most of his life. When he finally entered a public school, he wanted to study mathematics to become a surveyor. George entered the army when he was twenty years old and rose to the rank of General. The one quality that most marked his life was his life of prayer and quiet devotion to God. George was faithful in his Sunday worship, even during the war years. He insisted that every soldier in his army attend weekly worship services, give up foul language, and live the life of a Christian soldier. Whenever George was confronted with overwhelming problems, as he often was, he would retreat to a private place where he could pray and ask for God’s wisdom. God was faithful to George, and provided many miraculous answers to his prayers, such as when he sent a thick, deep fog that allowed the Continental army to escape across the Delaware and away from the British who would have surely defeated them. Today we call George Washington the Father of our Country because he truly led the early Americans in a loving and wise manner. It is ironic, however, that George Washington never had children of his own, although his wife Martha had two children from a previous marriage when she and George were wed. Martha’s first husband had died at an early age. George Washington is a model for all of today because he was wise and used the tools that God has given his people to lead Godly lives - the Bible and prayer.

8. Prayer and Petition

Once the game has been completed, gather the children to sit in a circle on the floor for your prayer time. To quiet the group you might consider playing some soft, soothing music for a minute to aid the transition from play time to prayer. Ask the children to be thinking of how they can seek God’s wisdom through prayer and reading the Bible. Pass the cup of prayer sticks around the circle. Those who wish to pray should take a stick. Open your prayer thanking the Lord for the freedom we Americans enjoy, and for the faith of those who influenced the government of this nation. Thank the Lord for the privilege he has given us to come to Him in prayer.

Call on those who took the sticks to pray out loud. Then close the prayer, asking the Lord to keep His hand on these children, by keeping them safe and by drawing them to love Jesus, as George Washington did.

9. Patriot Projects

Patriot Projects are home lessons which the children take with them to reinforce the lesson at home. Roll these up like a scroll, and pass them out with the Parent Letter as the children exit your meeting.

**Fun with Faith Clubs, Inc. Proverbs and the Patriots
“Seeking Wisdom... George Washington”**

In the Clues and Reviews section of your meeting, you will ask one of the children to share the results of their Patriot Project Plan to call one of these children the evening before your next meeting so they will be prepared to share what they learned.

10. Parent Letter

As the children exit, give each one a Parent Letter and their Patriot Project. You may consider playing background music from your *Acapella Americana* tape.

11. CLEAN UP!!!

Please be faithful in your cleanup of the facilities you have used.

Sources:

The World Book Encyclopedia, Volume 21.

Webster's New World Dictionary. Second College Edition, 1974.

John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution, the Faith of our Founding Fathers* Baker Book House, 1987).

Milton Hadley, *Great American and their Noble Deeds* (Mantle Ministries, 1901, 1992).

Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *The Light and the Glory for Children* (Revell Company Publishers, 1992).

Norma Cournow Camp, *George Washington, Man of Prayer and Courage* (Mott Media, 1977).

MATERIALS YOU MAY NEED FOR THIS LESSON:

- 1. Leader's Kit and contents.**
- 2. Tape player.**
- 3. Colored pencils or highlighters for the children to circle the Bible verses.**
- 4. Multiple copies of Presidential Mad-Libs, Patriot Projects, and Parent Letters.**
- 5. Candy treats.**
- 6. Prayer sticks.**