



ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of the birth of our nation and the most famous document in our history, the Declaration of Independence. American exceptionalism starts with the ideas enshrined in this document: “all men are created equal,” “they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,” “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness,” “to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men,” and that governments derive “their just Powers from the consent of the governed.” Or as Alice Dalgliesh calls it, “The Story of Freedom.”

Dalgliesh also touches on other important themes. The Liberty Bell is prominently placed in her story and she calls out the Biblical scripture inscribed on it: “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, Unto all the inhabitants thereof.” Her final chapter, “To Carry the News” opens with this line and she repeats it as her final words.

She also highlights the theme of religious freedom and immigration in this chapter: “The farmer wasn’t British like many of the people in the colonies. He spoke German. His people had come to America to be free to worship God in their own way.”

BOOK

Title: *The 4th of July Story*

Author: Alice Dalgliesh

Illustrator: Marie Nonast

Year published: 1956

Length: 32 pages



ACTIVITY	TIME	FREQUENCY	PREPARATION
American Songbook: <i>America the Beautiful</i>	5 minutes	Daily	Minimal
<i>Declaration of Independence</i>	5-10 minutes	Daily	Minimal
Political Geography: Thirteen Colonies	15 minutes	Once	Minimal (if you have a puzzle)
Reading: Proclaim Liberty	0 minutes	Daily	Minimal (if you have a bell)
Arts & Crafts: Liberty Bell	30-40 minutes	Once	20-30 minutes
Science: Capillaries & Quill Pens	20-30 minutes	Once	10 minutes (pre-order supplies)
Re-enactment: Signing the Declaration	20 minutes	Once	10 minutes
Civic Culture: Religion	10 minutes	Once	Minimal
History: Liberty Bell	5 minutes	Once	Minimal
Art History: John Trumball	10 minutes	Once	Minimal
Counting: Historical Period	10 minutes	Once	Minimal
Language Arts: Vocabulary	10 minutes	Once	Minimal



Below is one suggestion for your week with *The Fourth of July Story*. Note that we did not include all of the activities above in the agenda below (only 10 of 12). Please experiment with what works for your family!

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Songbook: <i>America the Beautiful</i>	Political Geography: Thirteen Colonies	L.A.: Vocabulary (before reading)	Civic Culture: Religion	Art: Trumbull's <i>Declaration of Independence</i>
Memorize: <i>Declaration of Independence</i>	Arts & Crafts: Liberty Bell	Science: Capillaries & Quill Pens	Re-enactment: Signing the Declaration	Counting: Historical Period
Supplies: N/A	Supplies: U.S. Puzzle Plastic cup, foil, pipe cleaners, small bells, toilet paper roll, construction paper, glue, markers, scissors	Supplies: Feather , X-acto or sharp knife, ink	Supplies: Printed <i>Declaration of Independence</i> , Quill (or regular) pen	Supplies: \$2 bill (optional)

AMERICAN HERITAGE SONGBOOK: AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

Katherine Lee Bates wrote the words to *America the Beautiful* after traveling across the United States to the top of Pike's Peak in Colorado: "our sojourn on the peak remains in memory hardly more than one ecstatic gaze. It was then and there, as I was looking out over the sea-like expanse of fertile country spreading away so far under those ample skies, that the opening lines of the hymn floated into my mind."

*O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties,
Above the fruited plain!*

*America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!*

Originally published as a poem on the Fourth of July, 1895, it wasn't until 1910 that her words were married with the melody we know today. While many tunes were attached to it (e.g., Auld Lang Syne), the one that stuck was a hymn written in 1882 by Samuel A. Ward, the organist and choir director of Grace Church in Newark. All four stanzas of Bates' poem call out to God, making Ward's hymn a fitting accompaniment.





Many people have argued that *America the Beautiful* should be our national anthem instead of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. While its first verse captures the grandeur of America's natural beauty, the second verse pays tribute to our love of freedom and liberty. The third verse honors those who fought and died for us.

Rarely do you hear all four verses sung together. [This version](#) (with lyrics) includes the first, third, and fourth. [This version](#) is more creative, combining the first half of the third verse with the second half of the second verse. It's up to the [Mormon Tabernacle Choir](#) to bring us the complete version.

To keep it fresh for your child(ren), try playing a different version each day before (or after) the reading.

FAMOUS AMERICAN TEXTS: DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Thomas Jefferson wrote perhaps the most inspiring and revolutionary sentence of America's founding in the Declaration of Independence:

*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.*

The phrase "all men are created equal" would inspire generations of Americans. Abolitionists, suffragettes, and civil rights leaders would return to them again and again as they fought for recognition of their own rights to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

Ask your child(ren) to memorize this sentence or, for younger children, just the phrase. Have them recite before or after each reading.

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY: THIRTEEN COLONIES

*On the east coast there were thirteen colonies that belonged to Britain.
Each one was like a little separate country.*

This activity illustrates how small the United States was when we started out. It can be done multiple ways; here are some suggestions:

1. Take a puzzle of the United States and have your child(ren) remove all the states except the original 13 colonies.
-
- In the bottom right corner, there is a colorful illustration of a hand holding a puzzle piece. The hand is rendered in shades of orange and red. The puzzle piece is light blue and has a yellow star on it. The background around the hand features various colored stars and abstract shapes in shades of purple, pink, and yellow.



2. Download an [outline map of the United States](#) that your child(ren) can color. Ask them to color just the original 13 colonies.
3. Using the outline map of the United States, outline the original 13 colonies and have your child(ren) cut them out.

Next, have your student(s) locate Philadelphia on the map. Then, locate New York City. Remind them that one messenger had to carry the Declaration of Independence from Philadelphia to New York so that George Washington could read it to his soldiers as they awaited British troops to attack.

Then, ask your student(s) to note which state is farthest away from Philadelphia. Read the part of the story that discusses how long it took to reach the southern states (two months!). Remind them that there were no phones, cars, trains, or planes back in those days and the fastest way to travel over land to spread the news was by horseback. Finally, locate the boundary between North and South Carolina where young Andrew Jackson read the Declaration of Independence to his neighbors.

READING: PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND!

*Then the bell-ringer pulled on the ropes and the Liberty Bell rang out:
Liberty throughout the land,
Liberty to all the people*

The Liberty Bell is one of the most famous icons of America and it features prominently in *The 4th of July Story*. We actually read the book with a miniature Liberty Bell each day. The kids took turns being the bell ringer. Every time the word “liberty” or “bell” is mentioned, the bell ringer rang the bell. This helped keep them more engaged through the somewhat longer text in this story.

ARTS & CRAFTS: MAKE YOUR OWN LIBERTY BELL

*The Liberty Bell rang out, and all the bells in the city were set to ringing.
They rang all day and kept on ringing as the stars came out in the night sky.*

To make your own Liberty Bells, try following the instructions below (adapted from a [couple](#) of online [sources](#)).

Supplies:

- Plastic or styrofoam cup
- Aluminum foil
- Pipe cleaners
- Small bells



- Toilet paper roll (or paper towel roll - construction paper could substitute as well)
- Construction paper
- Glue
- scissors/knife
- Markers

Directions:

1. (Adult) Cut two holes in the bottom of the paper/plastic/styrofoam cup (I found the knife worked best for this)
2. String a bell on a pipe cleaner and situate the bell in the middle of the pipe cleaner
3. Thread the two ends of the pipe cleaner through the two holes in the cup so the bell is inside of the cup
4. Cover the cup with aluminum foil. Glue ends down.
5. To form the cross-tie at the top of your Liberty Bell: (Adult) cut/punch four holes in the toilet paper roll (basically two holes that go through both sides of the toilet paper roll)
6. Thread the two ends of the pipe cleaner through the four holes of the toilet paper roll and twist ends to hold in place
7. Cut small rectangles out of (brown) construction paper. Write "Liberty Bell" on them and glue to the toilet paper roll
8. Use markers (or scissors) to draw (or cut) the crack in the liberty bell (and/or further decorations)



My kids liked the bells and loved decorating the Liberty Bell at the end. Threading the pipe cleaner through was a bit challenging and so adult assistance was critical. At the end, they rang the bells and said "Liberty for all people; liberty to all inhabitants," just like the story.

For younger kids (and older kids who like coloring), there are multiple [Liberty Bell coloring sheets online](#).



SCIENCE: CAPILLARIES AND QUILL PENS

All day, and part of each night, Thomas Jefferson sat in his rooms in a three-story brick house, writing.

Quill pens were the favorite writing instrument at the time of America's founding and were used in writing the Declaration of Independence. They operate on the principle of capillary action (liquid flows in narrow spaces without the assistance, or even in opposition to, gravity). To make your own quill pen you only need two items: a feather and an x-acto knife (or other sharp knife to shape the feather). Making your own quill pen should be done by an adult with the kids watching. [Written instructions can be found here](#) and/or you can watch a [Youtube video on the process here](#).

Once you have your quill pen you will need ink which you can obtain from an art supply store or [online](#). Quill pens are more challenging to operate but they can also be more artistic than the pens we use for day-to-day writing.

HISTORICAL RE-ENACTMENT: SIGNING THE DECLARATION / SPREADING THE NEWS

When the men from all the states had agreed, they signed their names.


This is a great activity to do with other homeschooling families, family friends, and extended family. Getting more people to participate in the signing enhances the fun and the memories. But you can also involve extended family when it comes time to "proclaim liberty throughout the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof."

Our historical re-enactment of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence required three items:

1. A quill pen and ink (ideally home made as described above)
2. A copy of the Declaration of Independence with extra space at the bottom for additional signatures
3. A daddy willing to act as a pretend horse (bikes, trikes, and scooters also work as pretend horses!)

Download a [copy of the Declaration of Independence](#) (for the wikipedia version click the download button on the lower right). If you print it on a standard 8.5x11 paper there will only be a little room for you and your child(ren) to sign, so consider printing either US Legal size (8.5x14) or larger (11x17).

Read the first two sentences aloud to your child(ren). Then place your copy on the table and have every member of the family sign it with the quill pen or the fanciest pen you have available (very young children can just make their "mark").





For the finale, Daddy galloped the kids to Grandma and Grandpa’s house so they could “spread the news throughout the land” and mount the signed Declaration on their refrigerator. (Don’t forget the galloping sounds!)

CIVIC CULTURE: RELIGION

Perhaps the minister read the words on the Liberty Bell just as they were engraved on the bell – for they come from the Bible and sound like the deep tones of the bell itself:

*“Proclaim liberty throughout the land,
Unto all the inhabitants thereof”*

There are two strong religious connections worth noting in this module. The first is in the text of the Declaration itself, where Jefferson notes that everyone is “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” These “unalienable rights” are bestowed upon everyone by God and cannot be taken away by governments. In fact, as the Declaration notes, it is the primary function of government to protect these natural rights.


Alice Dalgliesh has the Liberty Bell ring throughout her story. Inscribed on it is the bible verse, “Proclaim LIBERTY throughout the Land and unto all the Inhabitants thereof” (Leviticus 25:10). This scripture refers to the Jubilee, when Israelites were instructed to free their slaves. Consider this scripture as an alternate (or additional) memory exercise for your child(ren).

HISTORY: LIBERTY BELL

*All through the country the riders went, taking the news that the Liberty Bell had told –
Liberty throughout the land,
Liberty to all the people.*

The Liberty Bell plays a prominent role in Alice Dalgliesh’s story. But did you know that it wasn’t called the Liberty Bell at the time of her story? It wasn’t until the 1830s, almost fifty years after the Declaration of Independence was signed, that abolitionists started referring to it as the Liberty Bell as they waged their campaign to abolish slavery in the United States. The National Park Service has [a short history of the Liberty Bell](#), including this section on how it became known as the Liberty Bell:

The State House bell became a herald of liberty in the 19th century. “Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All the Inhabitants thereof,” the bell’s inscription, provided a rallying cry for abolitionists wishing to end slavery. The Anti-Slavery Record, an abolitionist publication, first referred to the bell as the Liberty Bell in 1835, but that name was not widely adopted until years later. Millions of Americans became familiar with the bell in popular culture through George Lippard’s 1847 fictional story “Ring,



Grandfather, Ring", when the bell came to symbolize pride in a new nation. Beginning in the late 1800s, the Liberty Bell traveled across the country for display at expositions and fairs, stopping in towns small and large along the way. For a nation recovering from wounds of the Civil War, the bell served to remind Americans of a time when they fought together for independence. Movements from Women's Suffrage to Civil Rights embraced the Liberty Bell for both protest and celebration. Now a worldwide symbol, the bell's message of liberty remains just as relevant and powerful today: "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All the Inhabitants thereof."

ART HISTORY: JOHN TRUMBALL'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

But when the Declaration of Independence was finished, most of the words were Thomas Jefferson's.

John Trumball painted the most iconic painting of the Declaration of Independence in 1818 when most of the signers were still alive. The large (12' by 18') painting was hung in the rotunda of the United States Capitol in 1826. The scene is set in Independence Hall and depicts the five man committee (Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston) tasked with drafting the Declaration as they present it to John Hancock, the president of the Second Continental Congress.

Ask your kids to examine the painting. Thomas Jefferson is the most important author of the Declaration of Independence. Without identifying him, can your child(ren) find him? What makes him stand out in the painting -- what catches the eye? Trumball uses a number of things to draw our attention to Jefferson: he is the only one wearing a bright color; he is the tallest of the committee of five; he is in the foreground; he is placed almost in the center of the painting; all the others are staring towards him; he is the one holding the Declaration.

Your child(ren) might also be interested in seeing Trumball's painting on the back of the \$2 bill, if you can obtain one (there is an image below but an actual \$2 will be more impressive). Jefferson does not stand out quite so dramatically when everyone is colored green.





COUNTING: HISTORICAL PERIOD

Our country was not always the big nation it is now.

For the younger crowd, you can look at Marie Nonast's illustrations and discuss elements of the time period as well as practice counting. We enjoyed pointing out/counting how many dogs, horses, children, women, boats, drums, etc. were on different pages. I pointed out that the women and girls all wore dresses (which made them easy to pick out). We also pointed out other indications of the times (in addition to attire) such as the use of quill pens.

You can also gather some toy horses, cars and planes and ask your children what kind of transportation early Americans had to rely on. Then compare yesteryear with today's transportation. (This may be another opportunity to take a gallop on the Daddy horse :-).

LANGUAGE ARTS: VOCABULARY

They chose a committee of five men to write down the things they believed in, and all the reasons why they wanted to be free. It would be a DECLARATION of INDEPENDENCE.

This module's vocabulary words are taken directly from key passages of the Declaration of Independence.

- **Declaration:** a positive, formal statement; announcement
 - **Independence:** freedom from the control, influence, or support of others
 - **Self-Evident:** obvious; without need of proof
 - **Endowed:** naturally possessing certain talents, features, quality, or other advantage
 - **Unalienable:** impossible to deny or take away
 - **Pursuit of Happiness:** live your life in a way that makes you happy, as long as you do not violate the equal right of others to do so
- 