

Topic:

Watchwords of Liberty by Robert Lawson

Time:

Two 45-minute sessions or longer

Grade:

4-6

Core:

5: 6050-0601

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Become familiar with historical figures' personalities and styles.
2. See how one person can make a difference.
3. Know that many people shaped our country and continue to do so.

Procedure:Introduction

1. Talk to the students about phrases or words they hear on radio or television. Foolish words, wise words, words of hope, of faith — "It's the real thing."
 - Brainstorm short list on board.
2. Ask if the students think those slogans will be remembered or mean anything to anyone in ten years — in a hundred years?
 - What about "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country?" Who said that? How long ago? Does it have more meaning, impact than those listed on the board?
3. Many sayings we hear today were said 100 or 200 years ago. "Give me liberty or give me death!" "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."
4. Read the selection from "Where was Patrick Henry on the 29th of May?" demonstrating how, where, and why he delivered this speech using "Give me liberty or give me death!" See Handout 1.

Independent Research

1. In partners, students will draw a saying out of a hat (see Handout 2).
2. Research the quote and fill in worksheet (Handout 3).

Additional Resources:

Poor Richard's Almanac by Benjamin Franklin

Great Americans by Harold & Gloria Faber

Author:

Mary Jo Rasmussen

(Procedure continued)

Sharing Ideas

1. Make a poster of your saying with information on it and present to the class or display in the room or hall.
2. Orally report to the class, sharing the information.
3. Have the students share in small groups -- rotating around the room so all hear each saying with accompanying information.
4. Have students become the character and give the speech from which the quote was taken.

Extension:

Have students think of a saying that's used in their own home — by parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or siblings. Write a story setting the background, giving details of the event that always prompts the family member into saying the slogan.

HANDOUT 1

On March 23rd, 1775, just a few weeks after Sarah's death, Patrick Henry delivered his most famous speech at St. John's Church in Richmond, Virginia. By this time, everyone knew who Mr. Henry was; they had all heard of his passion for liberty and of the extraordinary quality of his voice. There were those who swore that Patrick Henry could not even announce that it was a cold evening without inspiring awe. So, of course, on March 23rd, St. John's Church was filled to overflowing — people standing in the aisles, in doorways, sitting on window ledges.

Patrick Henry was angry not only at the king who was disregarding America's petitions, insisting on taxation, and preparing for war, but he was also angry at those people who still wanted to be friendly to the king and keep peace. Patrick stood up and pushed his glasses back on his head which was what he did when he was ready to use his fighting words.

"Gentlemen may cry peace, peace," he thundered, "but there is no peace. . . Is life so dear or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?" Patrick bowed his body and locked his hands together as if he, himself, were in chains. Then suddenly he raised his "chained" hands over his head.

"Forbid it, Almighty God!" he cried. "I know not what course others may take but as for me--" Patrick dropped his arms, threw back his body, and strained against his imaginary chains until the tendons of his neck stood out like whipcords, and the chains seemed to break. Then he raised his right hand in which he held an ivory letter opener. "As for me," he cried, "give me liberty or give me death!" And he plunged the letter opener in such a way it looked as if he were plunging it into his heart.

The crowd went wild with excitement. One man, leaning over the balcony, was so aroused that he forgot where he was and spit tobacco juice into the audience below. Another man jumped down from the window ledge and declared that when he died, he wanted to be buried on the very spot that Patrick Henry had delivered those words. (And so he was, 25 years later.)

HANDOUT 2

SAYINGS

Instructions: CUT OUT SAYINGS, FOLD, AND PLACE IN HAT OR BOX. LET STUDENTS DRAW OUT A SAYING FOR USE IN HANDOUT 3.

So they committed themselves to the will of God . . .

Westward the course of empire takes its way.

Taxation without representation is tyranny.

Give me liberty, or give me death!

Where liberty dwells, there is my country.

We hold these truths to be self-evident . . .

If they want to have a war, let it begin here!

Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes.

I only regret that I have but one life to lose . . .

These are the times that try men's souls.

I have not yet begun to fight.

Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute.

Don't give up the ship!

We have met the enemy and they are ours.

O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light . . .

Our country, right or wrong.

To the victors belong the spoils of the enemy.

Liberty and Union, now and forever . . .

Our federal Union: It must be preserved.

I shall never surrender nor retreat.

Remember the Alamo!

I would rather be right than be President.

Cotton is King.

On to Richmond.

There is Jackson, standing like a stone-wall.

Hold the fort; I am coming.

Damn the torpedoes, go ahead!

Government of the people, by the people, for the people . . .

With malice toward none . . .

War is hell.

Go west, young man, and grow up with the country.

The last rail is laid, the last spike driven.

Mr. Watson, come here, I want you.

There is no substitute for hard work.

You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.

Remember the Maine!

There is room here for only 100 per cent Americanism.

Speak softly and carry a big stick.

America is the great melting pot.

The world must be made safe for democracy.

Lafayette, we are here.

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

Remember Pearl Harbor!

Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

HANDOUT 3

Name(s) _____

Quote _____

Date Due _____

1. Who said this quote?
2. Why was it said? Under what circumstances?
3. When was it said?
4. Why do you think this saying is remembered today even if the event or circumstance isn't?
5. Locate on a map where the person was when (s)he said it. Tell where the person was, giving details (in building, if so, which one; on the deck of a ship; in a park; etc.).
6. How was the speaker feeling when (s)he said it; angry, inspired, overjoyed, excited, desperate, emotional? Why?
7. How did the listeners react to the speech? Did it make a difference in history?