
Grade Level: Middle School	Study Unit: American Revolution	Lesson Topic: Congress	Resource Materials: Aitken Bible Preface
--------------------------------------	---	----------------------------------	--

Objective:

Middle school students will understand the actions of **Congress** during the American Revolution. In addition, students will see how the colonies pursued economic, political, and religious freedom. Finally, students will explore how the desire for all three freedoms was demonstrated by Congress approving the Aitken Bible.

Procedure:

- Lead the students to discuss the freedoms we have in America—to buy what we want, to vote for who we want, and to believe what we want. Now, lead them to imagine the government takes away those freedoms.
 - Lead students to brainstorm solutions—both legal and illegal—to defending those freedoms.
 - Tell students, when colonials had these freedoms restricted, they formed the American Congress.
- Lead students to discuss how Congress formed and how it progressed.
 - First Continental Congress convened in 1774.
 - Met because of the Intolerable Acts
 - Second Continental Congress convened from 1775 to 1781.
 - Met shortly after the start of the Revolutionary War
 - Adopted the Declaration of Independence in July 1776
 - Congress of the Confederation convened from 1781 to 1789.
 - Met under the Articles of Confederation in March 1781, after ratification
 - Adopted the Constitution of the United States of America in September 1787
- Lead students to discuss why Congress pursued economic, political, and religious freedom.
 - Congress defended the colonies when the British restricted these freedoms.
 - Economic restriction: for example, with the Boston Port Act of 1774, the British closed the port of Boston to business as punishment for the Boston Tea Party.
 - Political restriction: for example, with the Massachusetts Government Act of 1774, the British gave power over Massachusetts to the British-appointed governor.
 - Religious restriction: for example, by funding the Church of England, whose clergy were loyalists, the British helped to make the Church state-sponsored in five colonies.
- Lead students to consider the Aitken Bible as an example of how Congress pursued all three freedoms.
 - Although the Congress of the Confederation could not tax and so had limited means to offer financial support, it issued an official approval of Robert Aitken printing the Bible in 1782, with no acknowledgment of the British license which had prohibited the printing of the Bible in America.
 - Thus, Congress would let printers profit from the Bible (economic freedom).
 - Thus, Congress would not hold a license on the Bible (political freedom).
 - Thus, the British could not stop the printing of the Bible (religious freedom).

Closure/Review:

Lead the students to review the following topics through discussion. Which Congress met because of the Intolerable Acts? Which Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence? Which Congress adopted the Constitution? Why did Congress consistently pursue economic, political, and religious freedom? How was the Aitken Bible an example of Congress defending all three freedoms with one act?