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

Middle school students will understand the formation of **culture** in colonial America. In addition, students will see why European political oppression and religious persecution gave rise to American independence. Finally, students will examine how the spirit of independence in the culture was displayed by the publication of the Aitken Bible.

Procedure:

- Lead the students to remember when they came from elementary school to middle school. Different students came from different elementary schools with different customs, traditions, and experiences.
 - Remember how they identified with their school mascots (Eagles, Bulldogs, Tigers, etc).
 - Remember how they studied in one class instead of multiple classes with different students.
 - Remember how they lined up for everything—cafeteria, library, even the bathroom.
 - Those elementary school customs, traditions, and experiences came together to form a new culture in middle school. This provides a picture of how culture formed in colonial America.
- Lead the students to discuss how European political oppression influenced culture in colonial America.
 - For example, in England, the tyrant King Charles I ruled from 1625 to 1649.
 - He dismissed Parliament, forced new taxes on citizens, and caused two civil wars.
 - People from England, as well as other places of political oppression, fled to colonial America.
 - In the culture, this planted a widespread desire for a government which allowed citizens a voice.
- Lead the students to discuss how European religious persecution influenced culture in colonial America.
 - For example, in Germany, a religious war called the Thirty Years War lasted from 1618 to 1648.
 - The war, one of the most catastrophic in history, was between Catholics and Protestants.
 - People from Germany, as well as other places of religious persecution, fled to colonial America.
 - In the culture, this planted a widespread desire for a government which allowed religious freedom.
- Lead the students to discuss how the French and Indian War (1754-1763) influenced culture in America.
 - The war stirred feelings of oppression and persecution.
 - The war united the colonies for a common cause.
 - The war forced the colonists to fight for their freedom.
 - In the culture, the war and its aftermath planted a widespread desire for independent government.
- Lead the students to discuss how a spirit of independence unified people from different backgrounds.
 - Despite their differences, colonists came together for the cause of American independence.
- Lead the students to consider the Aitken Bible as an example of the independent spirit in colonial culture.
 - Colonists demonstrated independence with petitions for Bibles from a source other than Britain.
 - Congress demonstrated independence in ignoring the British license on the Bible.
 - Robert Aitken demonstrated independence in printing the first English Bible in America.

Closure/Review:

Lead the students to review the following topics through discussion. What influence did European political oppression have on culture in colonial America? What influence did European religious persecution have on culture in colonial America? Why did different groups in colonial culture become united by the American spirit of independence? How did Robert Aitken demonstrate the spirit of independence in publishing the Aitken Bible?