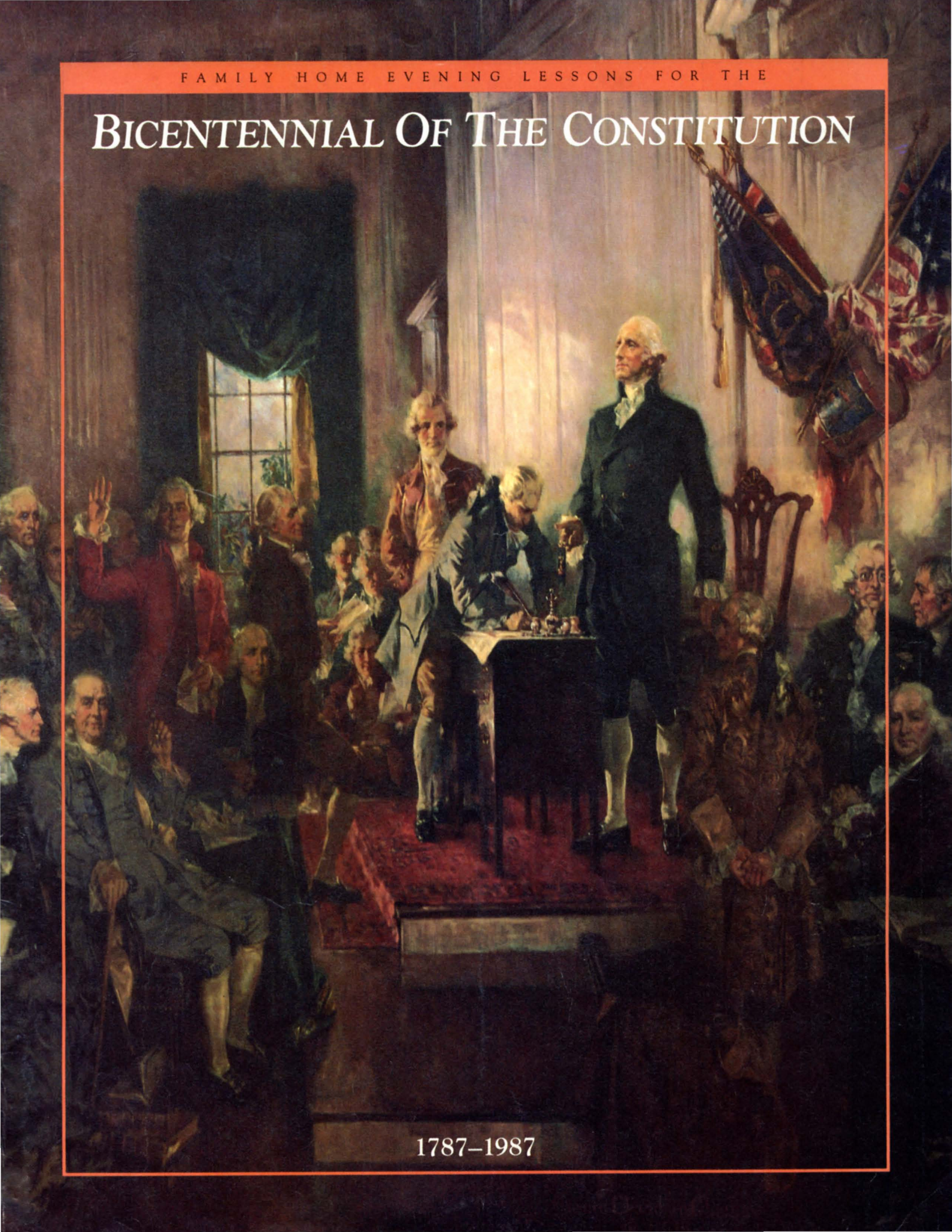


FAMILY HOME EVENING LESSONS FOR THE

BICENTENNIAL OF THE CONSTITUTION



1787-1987



President Gordon B. Hinckley
First Counselor



President Ezra Taft Benson



President Thomas S. Monson
Second Counselor

Our Dear Brothers and Sisters:

On September 17, 1987, we commemorate the two-hundredth birthday of the signing of the United States Constitution. The group of inspired men assembled for that convention produced the document that the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to as "a glorious standard" and "a heavenly banner."

In commemoration of this important event, we are providing this booklet, which contains three family home evening lessons, activity ideas, and a copy of the Constitution. We encourage you to prepare and teach each lesson prayerfully so that family members may feel the divine significance of the Constitution in their minds and hearts.

Faithfully, your brethren,

The First Presidency

Cover: *Scene at the Signing of the Constitution* by Chandler Christy. United States Capitol Collection. Architect of the Capitol.

Published by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

Copyright © 1987 by Corporation of the President of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America

“The Event Is in the Hand of God”

George Washington

Suggested lesson for adults and families with older children. Substitute similar ideas and materials if desired.

PREPARATION

Read the entire lesson and then arrange for needed materials. These may include:

- The map of the thirteen states with each state's delegates listed (see p. 15).
- One or more copies of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.
- The five word-scramble puzzles, each copied on a separate piece of paper.
- The missing vowel puzzle copied on a sheet of paper large enough for everyone to see.
- George Washington's statement written on a piece of paper.
- President Ezra Taft Benson's statement written on a piece of paper.

Present the material in your own words. Discussion questions are indented with dots (•).

PRESENTATION

The Lord Guided the Preparation of the U.S. Constitution to Preserve Freedom and to Prepare for the Gospel's Restoration

Soon after the revolutionary war, leaders of the United States saw the need for a stronger government. Therefore, in February, 1787, Congress asked the thirteen states to send representatives to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (Show the map, p. 15.) Fifty-five delegates came, representing every state but Rhode Island. George Washington was president of the convention and during one of the early meetings made an

important statement about the convention's purpose. (Have someone read aloud the following statement by Washington.)

“Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God” (in William Peters, *A More Perfect Union* [New York: Crown Publishers, 1987], p. 18).

Writing the Constitution was a difficult process. The delegates held many different opinions about what authority government should have and how it should be organized. However, after nearly seventeen weeks of proposals and debates, this diverse group of men produced a document considered by many to be a miracle. They created a plan for a government that is so well balanced that no social or geographic group can dominate any other; a government strong enough to protect the individual rights of all its citizens and yet not invade their privacy nor infringe on their freedom.

Part of the Constitution's sacred importance for Latter-day Saints is based on the principle of agency. Arguments over this principle began in the council of heaven before the earth was created.

(Have someone read aloud Moses 4:1–4. Then, referring to these verses, discuss the following.)

- What did Satan try to destroy? (Verse 3: man's agency.)
- What is the difference between “agency” and “freedom”? (Agency is the right to make our own choices. Freedom is the ability to exercise our agency.)
- Why is freedom important? (It is through the free exercise of agency that we can fully mature and develop our greatest potential.)

Because of our Constitution, we enjoy freedom that very few people have experienced. President Ezra Taft Benson explained why we have been blessed with our Constitution. (Have someone read his statement that follows.)

“I testify that the God of heaven selected and sent some of his choicest spirits to lay the foundation of this [the American] government as a prologue to the restoration of the gospel and the second coming of our Savior” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, p. 138; or *Ensign*, May 1976, p. 93).

It was part of the Lord's plan to establish this country and its Constitution. He revealed the events of that plan to the prophet Nephi more than one thousand years before Columbus came to America.

Word-scramble Puzzles

- LUUOCMSB
- GPILSRM
- EMCAARI
- TIISRBH
- UTYIVLEONARR RWA

- Have 1 Nephi 13:12 read aloud. Hold up word-scramble 1 and ask:
 - Who was “the man among the Gentiles” in verse 12? (Columbus.)
- Have 1 Nephi 13:13 read aloud. Hold up word-scramble 2 and ask:
 - Who are the “other Gentiles” in verse 13? (Pilgrims. This, of course, includes other early colonizers.)
- Have 1 Nephi 13:14–16 read aloud. Hold up word-scramble 3 and ask:
 - What is the “land of promise” in verse 14? (America.)
- Have 1 Nephi 13:17–18 read aloud. Hold up word-scramble 4 and ask:
 - Who are the “mother Gentiles” in verse 17? (British.)
- Hold up word-scramble 5 and ask:
 - What is the “battle” referred to in verses 17–18? (Revolutionary war.)

From a military standpoint, the colonists should not have won the war for independence. Their armies were greatly outnumbered. They did not have enough weapons, food, or clothing. They lost most of their battles. But, they won the war!

(Have 1 Nephi 13:19 read aloud.)

- Why did the colonists win? (They “were delivered by the power of God.”) It was part of the Lord’s plan to help the colonists win their war for independence.

See if you can read what the Lord said about this in the Doctrine and Covenants. (Display and explain the puzzle.)

Missing Vowel Puzzle

__ND F__R TH__S P__RP__S__

H__V__ __ __ST__BL__SH__D

TH__ C__NST__T__T__N

__F TH__S L__ND, B__ TH__

H__NDS __F W__S__ M__N

WH__M __ R__S__D __P.

All vowels have been removed from this scripture. Solve the puzzle by filling in the vowels so you can read the verse. Then search for the verse in the Doctrine and Covenants. (Tell family members to use the index. [Hint: look under “Constitution.”] After Doctrine and Covenants 101:80 is located, have verses 79–80 read aloud. Write the reference, Doctrine and Covenants 101:80, on the bottom of the missing vowel puzzle. Display the finished puzzle in a prominent place as a lesson reminder during the week.)

CONCLUSION

This country and its Constitution are part of the Lord’s plan to restore the gospel and help protect the freedom of all people.

(Have family members tell how they personally feel about the blessings of freedom, the Constitution, and the Restoration.)

(Possible activity: one from pages 13–14, such as 1, 2, or 4.)

Suggested lesson for families with young children. Substitute similar ideas and materials if desired.

PREPARATION

Read the entire lesson and then arrange for needed materials. These may include:

- Cut out the three pictures on page 13 and make them into puppets by taping them to the ends of sticks, pencils, or spoons.
- Make drawings, or obtain pictures of: (1) an LDS meetinghouse, (2) a school, and (3) a letter-size envelope ready to be mailed.

Present the material in your own words.

Discussion questions are identified with dots (•).

PRESENTATION

The Constitution Blesses Us with Good Rules

- Can you name some of our family rules? (Briefly name some of your family rules.)
- What are rules and why do we have them? (Rules are things we are supposed to do. We have rules so that we won’t get hurt and so that we can keep our things from getting lost or broken. Rules help us to be happy.)

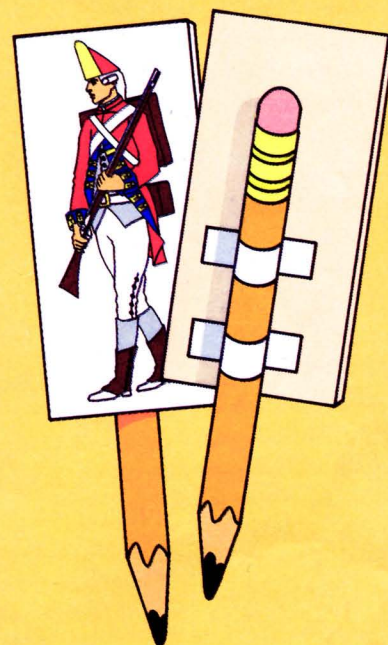
(Tell the following story using the soldier puppets.)

Over two hundred years ago, long before you and I were born, there was a terrible war. Some people from a far away country called Great Britain (hold up the British soldier) were fighting the people who lived in this country (hold up the American soldier). People in Great Britain wanted to make the rules for the people here, but many of the rules were not good. So, when the people here wanted to make their own rules, a war began. (Move the two puppets to look as if they are in battle.) They fought for many years, and many were killed. Finally, the people here won the war. (Put down the British soldier puppet.) At last they could make their own rules. They made a new nation called the United States of America, and they were very happy. (Put down the American soldier puppet.)

That war was a long time ago, and many things have changed since then. Great Britain and our country are now good friends.

(Hold up the signing of the Constitution picture.) Not long after the country became the United States of America, some men met to decide what kind of rules we should have here. They wrote the rules down and called them the Constitution. (Show the Constitution, pages 8 and 9.) This year the Constitution will be two hundred years old.

Heavenly Father loves us very much and wants us to be happy. He wants us to learn and grow and be like him. To make sure this could happen, he helped this country be free and he helped the men who wrote the Constitution to make good rules. Because of the Lord’s help, we live in a land where we can choose our own leaders and make our own rules. We call this “freedom.” We are free to learn about the Lord, to go to Church (show a picture of an LDS meetinghouse), to school (show a picture of a school), and to tell our government leaders what we think without getting into trouble (show a picture of a letter). Because of the Constitution, we are free to do a lot of things many people in other parts of the world cannot do. We are very blessed to have these good rules called the Constitution.



“In Order to Form a More Perfect Union”

Preamble to the Constitution

Suggested lesson for adults and families with older children. Substitute similar ideas and materials if desired.

PREPARATION

Read the entire lesson and then arrange for needed materials. These may include:

- A. One or more copies of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.
- B. President Ezra Taft Benson’s statement written on a piece of paper.
- C. A copy of the Preamble (see back cover).
- D. Phrases from the Preamble written on pieces of paper. (Note: Original spelling and punctuation have been used.)
- E. Separation of governmental powers chart (see p. 6).
- F. A copy of the Bill of Rights (see p. 7).

Present the material in your own words. Discussion questions are identified with dots (•).

PRESENTATION

We Must Understand the Principles of the Constitution

This nation and its Constitution are part of God’s plan to protect his children’s freedom. Because of the freedoms here, the Lord could restore the gospel and bless the world.

Our prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, has told us to learn the Constitution’s principles. (Read President Benson’s statement aloud.)

“We should understand the Constitution as the founders meant that it should be understood. . . . Such understanding is essential if we are to preserve what God has given us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, p. 138; or *Ensign*, May 1976, p. 93).

To understand the Constitution better, we will review its three major parts.

We will start with the introduction, the Preamble.

(Have the Preamble read aloud [see back cover and p. 8, at the top]. After this lesson, you may display a copy of the Preamble [see back cover] in a prominent place to reinforce this lesson during the week.)

- Why did the makers of the Constitution write the Preamble? (To outline the correct purposes of government.)

(Place the copy of the Preamble face down and hand out the slips of paper marked with the Preamble’s phrases [but not the definitions] shown below. Have each phrase held up one at a time and discuss the meaning of each. Be sure to bring out the points mentioned.)

- A. “We the People” (A reminder that government’s power comes from the people it serves.)
- B. “In Order to form a more perfect Union” (To help our nation’s many states be more unified.)
- C. “Establish Justice” (To make sure people are treated equally and fairly.)
- D. “Insure domestic Tranquility” (To keep the citizens of our country from fighting each other.)
- E. “Provide for the common defence” (To protect our nation from outside enemies.)
- F. “Promote the general Welfare” (To help protect our health and happiness.)
- G. “Secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity” (To keep government from becoming too powerful and to protect our freedoms and the freedoms of our children and future generations.)

(After discussing the meaning of the Preamble’s phrases, mix up the pieces of paper and pass them out to the family members. See if they can place them face up on a table or the floor in their proper sequence. Then, display the copy [see back cover] and have everyone repeat aloud the entire Preamble together.)

The Constitution establishes a government with limited and separated powers. This prevents any branch of government from becoming too powerful.

(Hold up the chart on page 6 as you present the following.)

The second section of the Constitution, the “articles,” outlines the duties and powers of three branches of government: the legislative, executive, and judicial.

The legislative branch makes or “legislates” laws. It is also called “Congress.” Congress is divided into two groups: the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The executive branch is headed by the president of the United States, who “executes” the laws, or, in other words, sees that the laws are followed.

The judicial branch includes the Supreme Court and many lower courts. It “judges” or decides if laws agree with the Constitution. It sees that people are treated fairly and equally under the law. It also interprets laws and defines what the laws mean and how they are to be applied.

We choose the people who represent us in the legislative and executive branches. These include the president of the United States, senators, and representatives. (See if you can name your representatives in Congress.)

The judges are appointed by the president, but they must also be approved by the Senate before they can serve.

Other articles of the Constitution are about the relationship of states to the federal government, how to change or “amend” the Constitution, and the establishment of the Constitution as the supreme law of the country.

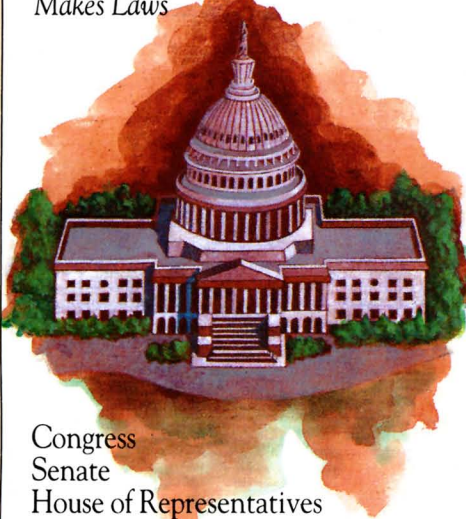
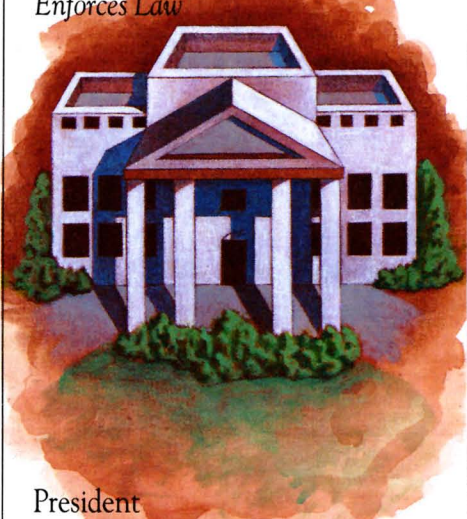

The third section of the Constitution consists of the twenty-six changes or additions called “amendments” (see pp. 7, 10).

(Hold up the Bill of Rights [see p. 7] and present the following.)

The first ten amendments are called the Bill of Rights. These include the

<p>guarantee of personal rights and freedoms. (See how many you can name. Refer to the Bill of Rights as needed.)</p> <p>(Have Doctrine and Covenants 98:5–6 read aloud.)</p> <p>(Discuss at least three conditions</p>	<p>established by the Constitution that demonstrate the divine inspiration in the Constitution's creation. These could include: (1) Personal freedoms are guaranteed; (2) Government power ultimately comes from the people it serves; and (3) Because government</p>	<p>powers and duties are separated and divided, no branch of government can become too powerful.)</p> <p>(Possible activities: see pages 13–14, such as 7 and 8.)</p>
<p>Suggested lesson for families with young children. Substitute similar ideas and materials if desired.</p> <hr/> <p>PREPARATION</p> <hr/> <p>Read the entire lesson and then arrange for needed materials. These may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Materials for a favorite family game. 2. A copy of the Constitution (see pp. 8–9). 3. A favorite dessert or treat. <hr/> <p>PRESENTATION</p> <hr/> <p>Voting Means I Can Help Choose</p> <p>Let's play a game. What game shall we play? (Let the family offer several</p>	<p>suggestions. Then say:)</p> <p>We only have time to play <i>one</i> of the games. Let's choose one. (Let the family discuss and choose a suitable game; play it.)</p> <p>Games are fun to play. But they are only fun if everyone follows the rules. The rules are important so that everyone will enjoy the game.</p> <p>(Show the copy of the Constitution [pp. 8 and 9].)</p> <p>Our country has rules, too. They are called the Constitution. The Lord helped some men write the Constitution so that we can enjoy living in this country. One of the Constitution's rules lets us vote. That means we can help choose. In this country we can help choose our leaders such as the president of the United States.</p>	<p>• Do you know what our president's name is?</p> <p>Voting is like trying to decide which game to play for home evening. Sometimes each of us wants to play something different. Then we talk about it and choose, or vote, for a game we will all play, just as we did when home evening began.</p> <p>In some areas around the world, the people are not allowed to vote or choose their leaders. We are very blessed to live in the United States where we have good rules, like the Constitution, that let us vote for the people we want to lead us.</p> <p>• What does <i>to vote</i> mean? (To choose.)</p> <p>At the beginning of home evening we voted on which game to play. Now let's have another vote. Who wants dessert?</p>

Balanced National Government: Three Branches

<p>ARTICLE I</p> <hr/> <p>Legislative Branch <i>Makes Laws</i></p>  <p>Congress Senate House of Representatives</p> <p>Can override a president's veto by a two-thirds vote Can impeach and remove a president from office Can refuse to approve presidential appointees or treaties Can amend the Constitution</p>	<p>ARTICLE II</p> <hr/> <p>Executive Branch <i>Enforces Law</i></p>  <p>President</p> <p>Can veto laws proposed by Congress Appoints Supreme Court justices</p>	<p>ARTICLE III</p> <hr/> <p>Judicial Branch <i>Interprets the Constitution and Laws</i></p>  <p>Supreme Court Lower courts</p> <p>Can declare laws unconstitutional</p>
--	---	--



of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

ARTICLE I The Legislative Branch

Section 1—Congress

Legislative powers. All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2—The House of Representatives

1. **Composition, term, election.** The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states, and the electors in each state shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislature.

2. **Qualifications.** No person shall be a representative who shall not have attained to the age of twenty-five years, and been seven years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state in which he shall be chosen.

3. **Apportionment of representatives and direct taxes.** Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons. The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct. The number of representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each state shall have at least one representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the state of New Hampshire shall be entitled to choose three; Massachusetts, eight; Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, one; Connecticut, five; New York, six; New Jersey, four; Pennsylvania, eight; Delaware, one; Maryland, six; Virginia, ten; North Carolina, five; South Carolina, five; and Georgia, three.

4. **Vacancies.** When vacancies happen in the representation from any state, the executive authority thereof shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies.

5. **Officers and impeachment.** The House of Representatives shall choose their speaker and other officers and shall have the sole power of impeachment.

Section 3—The Senate

1. **Composition, term.** The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each state, chosen by the legislature thereof, for six years; and each senator shall have one vote.

2. **Classification.** Immediately after they shall be assembled in consequence of the first election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three classes. The seats of the senators of the first class shall be vacated at the expiration of the second year, of the second class at the expiration of the fourth year, and of the third class at the expiration of the sixth year, so that one-third may be chosen every second year; and if vacancies happen by resignation, or otherwise, during the recess of the legislature of any state, the executive thereof may make temporary appointments until the next meeting of the legislature, which shall then fill such vacancies.

3. **Qualifications.** No person shall be a senator who shall not have attained to the age of thirty years, and been nine years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state for which he shall be chosen.

4. **President of Senate.** The vice-president of the United States shall be president of the Senate, but shall have no vote, unless they be equally divided.

5. **Other officers.** The Senate shall choose their other officers, and also a president *pro tempore*, in the absence of the vice-president, or when he shall exercise the office of president of the United States.

6. **Impeachments.** The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or affirmation. When the president of the United States is tried, the chief justice shall preside: and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present.

7. **Judgment in cases of conviction.** Judgment in cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States: but the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment, and punishment, according to law.

Section 4—Congressional Elections and Meetings

1. **Election regulations.** The times, places, and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives shall be prescribed in each state by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of choosing senators.

2. **Meeting of Congress.** The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 5—Congressional Rules and Procedures

1. **Admission of members; quorum.** Each house shall be the judge of the elections, returns, and qualifications of its own members, and a majority of each shall constitute a quorum to do business; but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members, in such manner and under such penalties as each house may provide.

2. **Rules of procedure.** Each house may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members for disorderly behavior, and, with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a member.

3. **Journals.** Each house shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the members of either house on any question shall, at the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journal.

4. **Adjournment.** Neither house, during the session of Congress, shall, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other place than that in which the two houses shall be sitting.

Section 6—Compensations, Privileges, and Restrictions

1. **Compensation and privileges.** The senators and representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law, and paid out of the treasury of the United States. They shall in all cases, except treason, felony, and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the session of their respective houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any speech or debate in either house, they shall not be questioned in any other place.

2. **Holding other offices prohibited.** No senator or representative shall, during the time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil office under the authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the emoluments whereof shall have been increased during such time; and no person holding any

office under the United States shall be a member of either house during his continuance in office.

Section 7—Procedure for Passing Laws

1. **Revenue bills.** All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other bills.

2. **How bills become laws.** Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the president of the United States; if he approves he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his objections, to that house in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the objections at large on their journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If, after such reconsideration, two-thirds of that house shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections, to the other house, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two-thirds of that house, it shall become a law. But in all such cases the votes of both houses shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the persons voting for and against the bill shall be entered on the journal of each house respectively. If any bill shall not be returned by the president within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law, in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their adjournment prevent its return, in which case it shall not be a law.

3. **The President's approval or disapproval (veto power).** Every order, resolution, or vote to which the concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of adjournment) shall be presented to the president of the United States; and before the same shall take effect, shall be approved by him, or, being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two-thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the rules and limitations prescribed in the case of a bill.

Section 8—Powers Granted to Congress

1. The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

2. To borrow money on the credit of the United States;

3. To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes;

4. To establish a uniform rule of naturalization and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States;

5. To coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin, and fix the standard of weights and measures;

6. To provide for the punishment of counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States;

7. To establish post offices and post roads;

8. To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries;

9. To constitute tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court;

10. To define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas, and offenses against the law of nations;

11. To declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water;

12. To raise and support armies, but no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years;

13. To provide and maintain a navy;

14. To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces;

15. To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions;

16. To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the states, respectively, the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

17. To exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular states, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the government of the United States, and to exercise like authority over all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the state in which the same shall be for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dockyards, and other needful buildings; and

18. To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States or in any department or officer thereof.

Section 9—Powers Denied to Congress

1. The migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each person.

2. The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless, when in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require it.

3. No bill of attainder or *ex post facto* law shall be passed.

4. No capitation or other direct tax shall be laid, unless in proportion to the census or enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

5. No tax or duty shall be laid on articles exported from any state.

6. No preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce or revenue to the ports of one state over those of another; nor shall vessels bound to or from one state be obliged to enter, clear, or pay duties in another.

7. **Public money.** No money shall be drawn from the treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law; and a regular statement and account of the receipts and expenditures of all public money shall be published from time to time.

8. **Titles of nobility.** No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States; and no person holding any office of profit or trust under them shall, without the consent of the Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office, or title, of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign state.

Section 10—Powers Denied to the States

1. No state shall enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation; grant letters of marque and reprisal; coin money; emit bills of credit; make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts; pass any bill of attainder, *ex post facto* law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, or grant any title of nobility.

2. No state shall, without the consent of the Congress, lay any imposts or duties on imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for

executing its inspection laws; and the net produce of all duties and imposts, laid by any state on imports or exports, shall be for the use of the treasury of the United States; and all such laws shall be subject to the revision and control of the Congress.

3. No state shall, without the consent of Congress, lay any duty of tonnage, keep troops or ships of war in time of peace, enter into any agreement or compact with another state or with a foreign power, or engage in war, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay.

ARTICLE II Executive Branch

Section 1—President and Vice-president

1. **Executive power; term of president.** The executive power shall be vested in a president of the United States of America. He shall hold his office during the term of four years, and, together with the vice-president, chosen for the same term, be elected as follows.

2. **Electors.** Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of senators and representatives to which the state may be entitled in the Congress; but no senator or representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector.

3. **Original election method.** The electors shall meet in their respective states, and vote by ballot for two persons, of whom one, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves. And they shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each; which list they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the president of the Senate. The president of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be the president, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such majority, and have an equal number of votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately choose by ballot one of them for president; and if no person have a majority, then from the five highest on the list the said House shall in like manner choose the president. But in choosing the president, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. In every case, after the choice of the president, the person having the greatest number of votes of the electors shall be the vice-president. But if there should remain two or more who have equal votes, the Senate shall choose from them by ballot the vice-president.

4. **Time of elections.** The Congress may determine the time of choosing the electors and the day on which they shall give their votes, which day shall be the same throughout the United States.

5. **Qualifications.** No person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of the United States at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the office of president; neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty-five years, and been fourteen years a resident within the United States.

6. **President's disability or removal.** In case of the removal of the president from office, or of his death, resignation, or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the said office, the same shall devolve on the vice-president, and the Congress may by law provide for the case of removal, death, resignation, or inability, both of the president and vice-president, declaring what officer shall then act as president; and such officer shall act accordingly until the disability be removed, or a president shall be elected.

7. **Salary.** The president shall, at stated times, receive for his services a compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that period any other emolument from the United States, or any of them.

8. **Oath of office.** Before he enter on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation:

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Section 2—Powers of the President

1. **Military powers, reprieves, and pardons.** The President shall be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several states when called into the actual service of the United States. He may require the opinion, in writing, of the principal officer in each of the executive departments upon any subject relating to the duties of their respective offices; and he shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment.

2. **Treaties, appointments.** He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by law; but the Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers, as they think proper, in the president alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments.

3. **Filling vacancies.** The president shall have power to fill up all vacancies that may happen during the recess of the Senate, by granting commissions which shall expire at the end of their next session.

Section 3—Other Powers and Duties of the President

He shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary occasions, convene both houses, or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them with respect to the time of adjournment, he may adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers; he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed and shall commission all the officers of the United States.

Section 4—Impeachment

The president, vice-president, and all civil officers of the United States shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.

ARTICLE III Judicial Branch

Section 1—Federal Courts

Judicial power; judges. The judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from

time to time ordain and establish. The judges, both of the Supreme and inferior courts, shall hold their offices during good behavior, and shall, at stated times, receive for their services a compensation, which shall not be diminished during their continuance in office.

Section 2—Jurisdiction

1. **Federal courts in general.** The judicial power shall extend to all cases, in law and equity, arising under this Constitution, the laws of the United States, and treaties made, or which shall be made, under their authority; to all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls; to all cases of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction; to controversies to which the United States shall be a party; to controversies between two or more states; between a state and citizens of another state; between citizens of different states; between citizens of the same state claiming lands under grants of different states; and between a state, or the citizens thereof, and foreign states, citizens, or subjects.

2. **Supreme Court.** In all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, and those in which a state shall be party, the Supreme Court shall have original jurisdiction. In all the other cases before mentioned, the Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction, both as to law and fact, with such exceptions, and under such regulations as the Congress shall make.

3. **Trial rules.** The trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury; and such trial shall be held in the state where the said crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any state, the trial shall be at such place or places as the Congress may by law have directed.

Section 3—Treason

1. **Definition; evidence.** Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court.

2. **Punishment.** The Congress shall have power to declare the punishment of treason, but no attainder of treason shall work corruption of blood or forfeiture except during the life of the person attained.

ARTICLE IV Relations of the States

Section 1—Acts, Records, and Court Proceedings

Full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state. And the Congress may by general laws prescribe the manner in which such acts, records, and proceedings shall be proved, and the effect thereof.

Section 2—States' and Citizens' Privileges

1. **Citizens' privileges.** The citizens of each state shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several states.

2. **Extradition.** A person charged in any state with treason, felony, or other crime, who shall flee from justice and be found in another state, shall, on demand of the executive authority of the state from which he fled, be delivered up to be removed to the state having jurisdiction of the crime.

3. **Fugitive laborers.** No person held to service or labor in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

Section 3—New States and Territories

1. **Admission of new states.** New states may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new state shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other state; nor any state be formed by the junction of two or more states, or parts of states, without the consent of the legislatures of the states concerned as well as of the Congress.

2. **Power of Congress over territory and property.** The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular state.

Section 4—Protection of States Guaranteed

Republican government; protection against invasion and rebellion. The United States shall guarantee to every state in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and, on application of the legislature, or of the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened) against domestic violence.

ARTICLE V Amending the Constitution

The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several states, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several states, or by conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress; provided that no amendment which may be made prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any manner affect the first and fourth clauses in the ninth section of the first article; and that no state, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate.

ARTICLE VI General Provisions

1. **Debts recognized.** All debts contracted and engagements entered into before the adoption of this Constitution shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution as under the Confederation.

2. **Supreme law of the land.** This Constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding.

3. **Oath of office.** The senators and representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several state legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several states, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

ARTICLE VII Ratification

The ratification of the conventions of nine states shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution between the states so ratifying the same.

Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the states present, the seventeenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven, and of the independence of the United States of America, the twelfth. In witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names.

Bill of Rights

Ratified 15 December 1791

AMENDMENT 1

Freedom of Religion, Speech, and the Press; of Assembly Petition

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

AMENDMENT 2

Right to Keep and Bear Arms

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

AMENDMENT 3

Quartering of Soldiers

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

AMENDMENT 4

Search and Arrest Warrants

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

AMENDMENT 5

Rights in Criminal Cases and Protection of Property

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due

process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

AMENDMENT 6

Rights of an Accused Person

In all criminal prosecutions the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

AMENDMENT 7

Rights in Civil Suits

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than

according to the rules of the common law.

AMENDMENT 8

Excessive Bail, Fines, and Punishments Prohibited

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

AMENDMENT 9

Rights Retained by the People

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

AMENDMENT 10

Powers Reserved to States or People

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

AMENDMENT 11

Lawsuits Against States

The judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by citizens of another state, or by citizens or subjects of any foreign state.

AMENDMENT 12

Election of the President and Vice-president (Ratified 1804)

The electors shall meet in their respective states and vote by ballot for president and vice-president, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as president, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as vice-president, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as president, and of all persons voted for as vice-president, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the president of the Senate. The president of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes for president shall be the president, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers, not exceeding three, on the list of those voted for as president, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the president. But in choosing the president, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice.

And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a president, whenever the right of choice shall devolve upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the vice-president shall act as president, as in the case of the death or other constitutional disability of the president. The person having the greatest number of votes as vice-president shall be the vice-president, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed, and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the vice-president; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two-thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of president shall be eligible to that of vice-president of the United States.

AMENDMENT 13

Abolition of Slavery (Ratified 1865)

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT 14

Civil Rights (Ratified 1868)

Section 1. Citizenship defined; citizens' privileges. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2. Apportionment of Representatives. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for president and vice-president of the United States, representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a state, or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any

of the male inhabitants of such state, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such state.

Section 3. Loss of privileges. No person shall be a senator or representative in Congress, or elector of president and vice-president, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any state, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any state legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any state, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each house, remove such disability.

Section 4. Public debt. The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any state shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations, and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5. The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

AMENDMENT 15

Suffrage (Ratified 1870)

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT 16

Income Tax (Ratified 1913)

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several states, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

AMENDMENT 17

Direct Election of Senators (Ratified 1913)

Section 1. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each state, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each senator shall have one vote. The electors in each state shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislatures.

Section 2. When vacancies happen in the representation of any state in the Senate, the executive authority of such state shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies, provided that the legislature of any state may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election, as the legislature may direct.

Section 3. This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the Constitution.

AMENDMENT 18

Prohibition (Ratified 1919; repealed 1933, by Amendment 21)

Section 1. After one year from the ratification of this article, the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

Section 2. The Congress and the several states shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several states as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the states by the Congress.

AMENDMENT 19

Women's Suffrage (Ratified 1920)

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT 20

Presidential and Congressional Terms (Ratified 1933)

Section 1. The terms of the president and vice-president shall end at noon on the twentieth day of January, and the terms of senators and representatives at noon on the third day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

Section 2. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the third day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 3. If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the president, the president elect shall have died, the vice-president elect shall become president. If a president shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the president elect shall have failed to qualify, then the vice-president elect shall act as president until a president shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a president elect nor a vice-president elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as president, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a president or vice-president shall have qualified.

Section 4. The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a president whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a vice-president whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

Section 5. Sections 1 and 2 shall take effect on the fifteenth day of October following the ratification of this article.

Section 6. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several states within seven years from the date of its submission.

AMENDMENT 21

Repeal of Prohibition (Ratified 1933)

Section 1. The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.

Section 2. The transportation or importation into any state, territory, or possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.

Section 3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several states, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the states by the Congress.

AMENDMENT 22

President Limited to Two Terms (Ratified 1951)

Section 1. No person shall be elected to the office of the president more than twice, and no person who has held the office of president, or acted as president, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected president shall be elected to the office of the president more than once. But this article shall not apply to any person holding the office of president when this article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of president, or acting as president during the term within which this article becomes operative from holding the office of president or acting as president during the remainder of such term.

Section 2. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several states within seven years from the date of its submission to the states by the Congress.

AMENDMENT 23

Presidential Electors for the District of Columbia (Ratified 1961)

Section 1. The district constituting the seat of government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct: A number of electors of president and vice-president equal to the whole number of senators and representatives in Congress to which the district would be entitled if it were a state, but in no event more than the least populous state; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the states, but they shall be considered, for the purposes of the election of president and vice-president, to be electors appointed by a state; and they shall meet in the district and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT 24

Voting Rights Protected (Ratified 1964)

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for president or vice-president, for electors for president or vice-president, or for senator or representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT 25

Presidential Vacancies (Ratified 1967)

Section 1. In case of the removal of the president from office or of his death or resignation, the vice-president shall become president.

Section 2. Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the vice-president, the president shall nominate a vice-president who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both houses of Congress.

Section 3. Whenever the president transmits to the president pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the vice-president as acting president.

Section 4. Whenever the vice-president and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the president pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the president is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the vice-president shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as acting president.

Thereafter, when the president transmits to the president pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the vice-president and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive department or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the president pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. Thereupon Congress shall decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after receipt of the latter written declaration, or, if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds vote of both houses that the president is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the vice-president shall continue to discharge the same as acting president; otherwise, the president shall resume the powers and duties of his office.

AMENDMENT 26

Suffrage for Eighteen-Year-Olds (Ratified 1971)

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of age.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

"May Those Principles... Be Established Forever"

Doctrine and Covenants 109:54

Suggested lesson for adults and families with older children. Substitute similar ideas and materials if desired.

PREPARATION

Read the entire lesson and then arrange for needed materials. These may include:

- A. The front cover.
- B. One or more copies of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.
- C. President Ezra Taft Benson's statement (on protecting our freedoms) written on a piece of paper.
- D. The scripture puzzle copied on a piece of paper large enough for everyone to see.

Present the material in your own words. Questions for discussion are identified with dots (•).

PRESENTATION

We Should Preserve the Principles of the Constitution

James Madison, one of the key members of the Constitutional Convention, noted a prophetic moment as the last of the delegates signed the Constitution. He related how Benjamin Franklin directed the attention of nearby delegates to George Washington's chair. Carved into the back of the chair was a sun, painted in gold. (Hold up the front cover and point to George Washington and his chair.) Dr. Franklin observed, "I have [often looked at the chair during the troublesome periods of the convention] without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting: But now at length I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun" (James Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787* [Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1966; reissue, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987], p. 659).

On that day—September 17,

1787—Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, James Madison, and thirty-six other delegates endorsed the Constitution with their names. Together, they saw the rising sun of a bright new day for human freedoms and balanced government.

Joseph Smith felt strongly about the principles of the Constitution. In the dedication prayer for the Kirtland (Ohio) Temple in 1836, the Prophet asked the Lord to preserve them.

(Have Doctrine and Covenants 109:54 read aloud.)

President Benson said there are four things we must do to protect and care for our divine freedoms: "(1) We must be righteous. . . . (2) We must learn the principles of the Constitution and then abide by its precepts. . . . (3) We must become involved in civic affairs. . . . (4) We must make our influence felt. . . ." (Ezra Taft Benson, *The Constitution, A Heavenly Banner* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1986], pp. 28–30).

Let's consider each one of these obligations.

"1. We Must Be Righteous"

The Book of Mormon is very specific about the relationship between our freedoms and our righteousness. To find out what it says, see if you can solve this scripture puzzle. (Have family members fill in the missing words by guessing letters, similar to the game "hangman." After the lesson, the completed puzzle may be displayed in a prominent place to extend the influence of this lesson during the week.)

We can "be free from
 _____, and from
 _____, and
 from all other _____
 under heaven, if [we] will but serve the
 God of the land, who is
 _____."

(After the blanks are correctly filled in, have the family members find the verse in the Book of Mormon by using a key word search in the index or Topical

Guide [hint: look under "Bondage"]. Then have the entire verse of Ether 2:12 read aloud. Write the scripture reference, Ether 2:12, at the bottom of the puzzle.) (Consider watching the Church Videocassette 10, *God Blessed America* [see p. 14, number 11].)

"2. We Must Learn the Principles of the Constitution and Abide by Its Precepts"

The Constitution was written to help us lead orderly and safe lives. But, if we don't understand the principles of freedom that are outlined in the Constitution and abide by its precepts, we could lose the intended blessings.

President Benson asks us: "Have we read the Constitution and pondered it? Are we aware of its principles? Could we defend it? Can we recognize when a law is constitutionally unsound?" (*The Constitution, A Heavenly Banner*, p. 29).

(Possible activity: one from pages 13–14, such as 2 or 5.)

"3. We Must Become Involved in Civic Affairs"

- What are "civic affairs?" (The needs and concerns of the community.)
- What are some needs and concerns in our community? (Answers might include crime, gambling, pornography, air and water pollution, waste disposal, drug and alcohol abuse, public education, the elderly, the poor, those with disabilities, the unemployed, budgets and taxes, public lands, culture, and recreation.)

(Identify at least one community concern you would like to be involved with, then ask:)

- How does it affect us?
- Do we need to know more about it?
- How can we find out more about it?
- What should we be doing about it?
- How and when should we do it?

"4. We Must Make Our Influence Felt by Our Vote, Our Letters, Our Advice"

(Have Doctrine and Covenants 98:10 read aloud.)

• What are three words that describe the kind of men and women we should choose to represent us in government? (Honest, good, and wise.)

• Besides electing good, honest, and wise people to represent us, what can we do to be more of a positive influence in our community?

(Possible activity: one from pages 13–14, such as 9 or 12.)

CONCLUSION

Even with an inspired Constitution, people and governments can become wicked. This happened among the Nephites about thirty years before Christ was born. The Book of Mormon tells us that the people “trampled under their feet the laws of Mosiah, or that which the Lord commanded him to give unto the people” (Helaman 4:22).

(Have Helaman 5:2 read aloud.)

• How were their laws established? (By the voice of the people—elections.)

• Why were their laws becoming corrupted? (There were more who chose evil than who chose good.)

• Could that happen in the United States of America?

• How can we prevent this from happening? (We must be righteous, informed, active citizens.)

Suggested lesson for families with young children. Substitute similar ideas and materials if desired.

PREPARATION

Read the entire lesson and then arrange for needed materials. These may include:

- A. Drawings or pictures of things you have been blessed with because of your freedom, such as your family; an elected president; someone praying; an LDS meetinghouse; scriptures; a school; and career people, such as a doctor, store manager, and bus driver.
- B. A copy of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.
- C. A picture of the First Presidency (see inside front cover).

Present the material in your own words. Questions for discussion are identified with dots (•).

PRESENTATION

To Keep Our Freedom We Must Obey the Lord and Obey the Constitution

(Start the lesson by gently but firmly holding one of your children in a way so that escape is impossible. Tell the captive child to go do something he likes to do, but continue to hold him. Make it fun, but let the child feel the frustration of not having his or her freedom to go do something. Then ask the child:)

• How did you feel when you could not get away?

You were my prisoner. I captured you and would not let you free. For a short time you lost your freedom. We are going to talk about freedom.

Freedom is a very special thing the Lord has blessed us with. To help you understand what freedom is, let's play make-believe. Let's make-believe that you went outside to play and found our house surrounded by a wire fence—a fence with sharp points that would cut you if you tried to crawl through or climb over. And next to the sharp wire fence there were soldiers with guns to stop you from leaving. Do you think you would like that?

Now, let's make-believe that some strangers came and took part of our family to a far away place and we couldn't see them or talk to them. How would that make you feel?

Our story is just make-believe, but, there really was someone who had to live that way for a while. It was a young girl named Kitty.

(The following true story is adapted from “Baboe Kit's Gift” by Kitty de Ruyter and Kathie Johnston Brough [Ensign, Feb. 1987, pp. 62–64].)

A long time ago, when Kitty was nine years old, some bad people started a terrible war. Because of the war, Kitty's family was forced to leave their beautiful home. Soldiers took Kitty's father and three older brothers and sent them far away. Kitty, her mother, and the rest of the family were taken to live in a place like in our make-believe story. There were fences made out of sharp wires, and there were soldiers with guns to keep people from leaving.

Kitty was very sad. She and her family had to live like that for nearly two years. Finally, the war was over. Kitty was able

to leave. Her father and brothers were found, and their family was together again.

Kitty and her family were much happier, but Kitty would never forget the terrible things that happened because of the war. When she was nine, Kitty used to wonder, “What will my tenth birthday be like? Will I be free?”

Right now, we have our freedoms. We don't have a sharp wire fence around our home. There aren't any soldiers to keep us from leaving. (Hold up a picture of the family.) We can stay together as a family.

Freedom also means that we can choose our leaders by voting.

• Can you tell us what some of our other freedoms are?

(Hold up a picture of someone praying.) We can pray.

(Hold up a copy of the scriptures.) We can read the scriptures.

(Hold up a picture of an LDS meetinghouse.) We can go to Church.

(Hold up a picture of a school.) Freedom means we can go to school.

(Hold up pictures of various career people—you may wish to substitute your own examples.) We can become doctors or bus drivers or store managers or anything we want to be.

Freedom is a great thing. And it is a blessing from the Lord. The scriptures (hold up a copy of the Book of Mormon) tell us that to keep our freedoms we must serve Jesus Christ and keep his commandments (see Ether 2:12). We must also obey the Constitution and the other laws of this country and make sure we have good leaders (see D&C 98:4–10).

Our prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson (show the First Presidency picture [see inside front cover] and point to President Benson), promises us that the Lord will help us to keep our freedoms if we will obey the Lord's commandments and obey our country's laws.

• Do you remember why Kitty was sad when she was nine years old? (Some bad people started a war. She lost her freedom and her father and brothers were separated from the rest of the family.)

The scriptures and the prophet tell us that we must do two things if we want to keep our freedoms and our happiness. Can you name them? (Keep the Lord's commandments and obey the laws of this country.)

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

You may combine your lessons with one of the activities below or consider doing these activities outside of your family home evening.

1. Read and discuss the following scriptures. You may want to read one of the passages each day for a week as part of your daily family scripture study.

1 Nephi 13:12–19. (Nephi sees a vision of Columbus, the Pilgrims and other early colonizers, and the revolutionary war.)

2 Nephi 1:6–7 and Ether 2:9–12. (This land will remain a land of liberty as long as we are righteous and serve Jesus Christ.)

Mosiah 29. (Mosiah formed a new Nephite government that no longer had kings. It was government by the voice of the people with a system of elected judges.)

Helaman 4:22 through 5:3 (The inspired Nephite government became corrupt because there were

more who chose evil than who chose good.)

Doctrine and Covenants 98:5–10 (Support the Constitution and remain free. Choose honest men as leaders.)

Doctrine and Covenants section 134 (The proper role of government and laws.)

The twelfth article of faith (in the Pearl of Great Price). (Be subject to government leaders and obey the law.)

2. Learn more about the Constitution and about the lives of our founding fathers. Obtain books from a public library about the Constitution and about some of the men who helped write it, such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, and Gouverneur Morris. Besides reading on your own and encouraging other family members to read these books, you can read paragraphs from the books to younger children, or you can discuss what you have read at dinnertime.

3. Participate in community and national Constitution celebrations. (A variety of celebrations will be held from 1987 through 1991.)

4. If you know of ancestors who lived in this country during the time of the American Revolution and the writing of the Constitution, tell about these ancestors.

5. Make arrangements to see government in action by visiting such places as:

- A. A courthouse to watch a trial.
- B. A town or city government meeting.
- C. A school board meeting.
- D. A county government meeting.
- E. A session of your state legislature.
- F. A session of one of the houses of Congress.

6. Learn and sing patriotic hymns (see the Church hymnal index, p. 423, "Patriotism"). Discuss the words of the hymns.

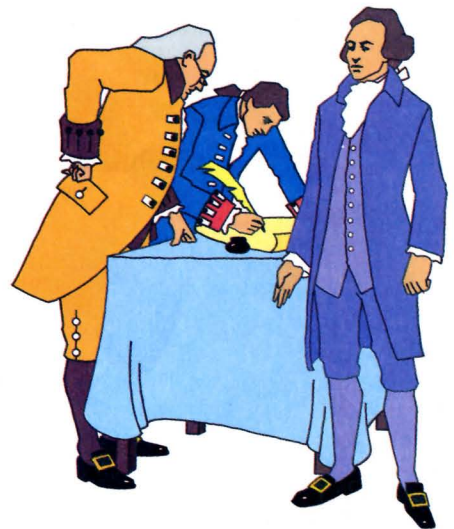
See page 4 for instructions on using these line drawings.



American soldier



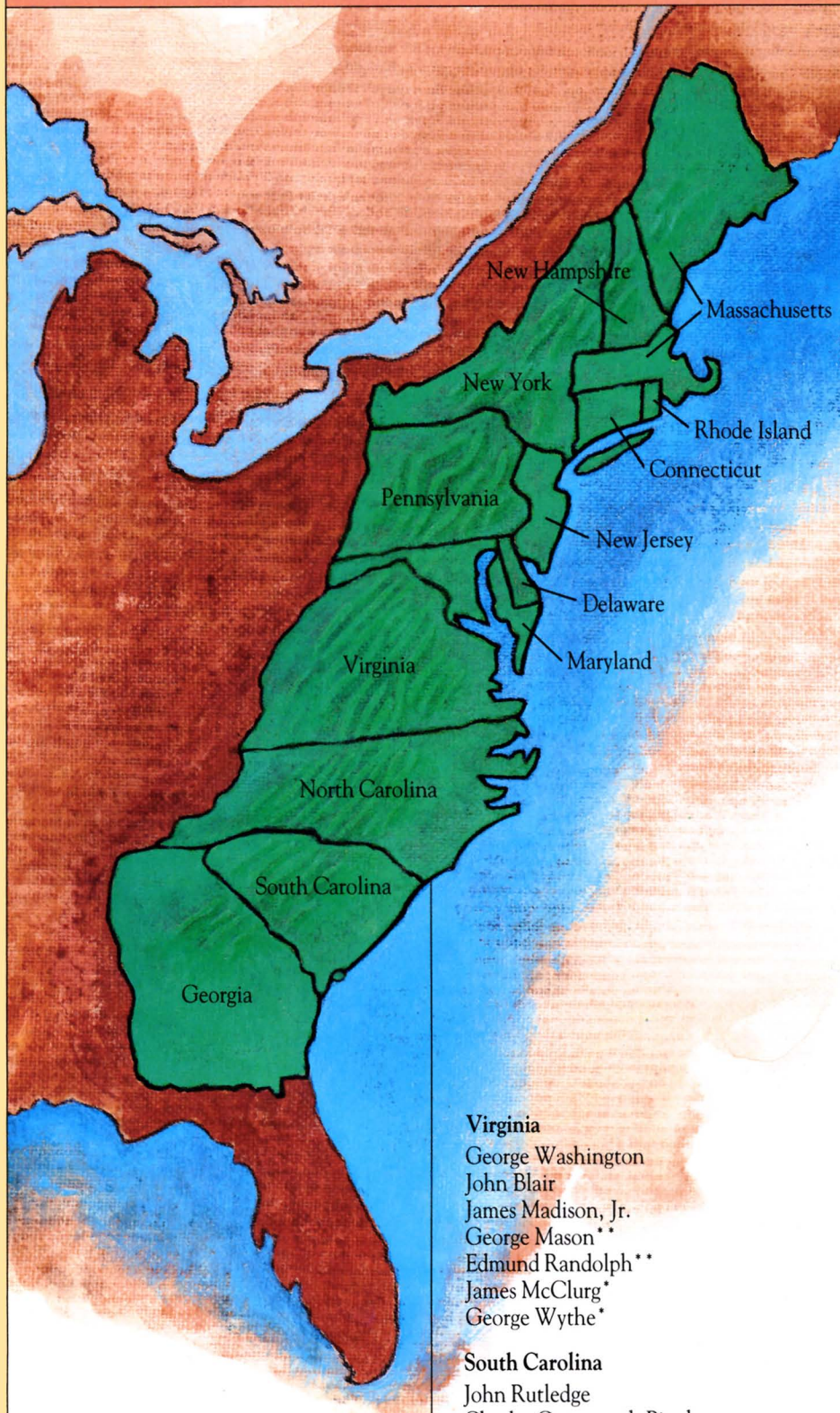
British soldier



Signing the Constitution

<p>7. Search the Constitution and identify the article or amendment where each of the following is explained:</p> <p>A. How to amend or change the Constitution. (Discuss the amendment process and why it is important.)</p> <p>B. The duties of the president of the United States. (Discuss some of the powers the president does and does not have and why limits are placed on the president's powers.)</p> <p>C. The powers of Congress. (Discuss some of the powers Congress does and does not have and why limits are placed on its powers. Identify powers held by states and not by Congress.)</p> <p>D. The description of the judicial system. (Discuss some of the powers the judicial branch does and does not have and why limits are placed on its powers.)</p> <p>E. All qualified citizens are allowed to vote regardless of gender. (Discuss what it might be like in this country if government powers were not controlled by "the people.")</p>	<p>F. Slavery is abolished. (Discuss why it is wrong for one person to enslave another.)</p> <p>G. The right for trial by jury is granted. (Discuss what could happen if jury trials were not permitted.)</p> <p>H. A person's religious freedom is protected. (Discuss what it might be like if religious freedom were not protected.)</p> <p>I. What happens if the president dies or resigns. (Discuss why an orderly succession to the presidency is important.)</p> <p>8. Write down your family rules and make a "Family Constitution." Have all the family members sign it. Display it where everyone will see it often.</p> <p>9. Keep a record of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the elected officials who represent you in Congress, at your state legislature, and in your community.</p> <p>10. If possible, visit historical sites that are related to the American Revolution and the Constitution.</p>	<p>11. Obtain from your meetinghouse library a copy of the Church's Videocassette 10 (stock number VV086). As a family, watch the program called <i>God Blessed America</i>.</p> <p>12. Exercise your citizenship by:</p> <p>A. Voting in elections.</p> <p>B. Running for political office.</p> <p>C. Serving on community boards or committees.</p> <p>D. Becoming informed on important local, state, and national issues.</p> <p>E. Expressing your opinions and your appreciation to government leaders through personal visits, phone calls, or letters; participating in hearings and government meetings; circulating and presenting petitions; or other appropriate activities.</p> <p>F. Writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.</p> <p>G. Participating in a neighborhood crime watch group (check with your local police department or sheriff's office).</p>
--	---	---

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES



New Hampshire

John Langdon
Nicholas Gilman

Massachusetts

Nathaniel Gorham
Rufus King
Caleb Strong*
Elbridge Gerry**

Rhode Island

Did not send delegates

Connecticut

William Samuel Johnson
Roger Sherman
Oliver Ellsworth*

New York

Alexander Hamilton
John Lansing*
Robert Yates*

New Jersey

William Livingston
David Brearley
William Paterson
Jonathan Dayton
William Churchill Houston*

Pennsylvania

Benjamin Franklin
Thomas Mifflin
Robert Morris
George Clymer
Thomas FitzSimons
Jared Ingersoll
James Wilson
Gouverneur Morris

Delaware

George Read
Gunning Bedford, Jr.
John Dickinson
Richard Bassett
Jacob Broom

Maryland

James McHenry
Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer
Daniel Carroll
Luther Martin*
John Francis Mercer*

North Carolina

William Blount
Richard Dobbs Spaight
Hugh Williamson
William Richardson Davie*
Alexander Martin*

Virginia

George Washington
John Blair
James Madison, Jr.
George Mason**
Edmund Randolph**
James McClurg*
George Wythe*

South Carolina

John Rutledge
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney
Charles Pinckney
Pierce Butler

Georgia

William Few
Abraham Baldwin
William Houstoun*
William Pierce*

Forty Signed

Thirty-eight delegates signed in person; John Dickinson of Delaware was ill and asked a fellow delegate to sign his name. The fortieth signature was that of Major William Jackson, who was not a delegate but served as secretary; he signed as a witness to their signatures.

* Left before the signing of the Constitution. ** Disagreed with some parts of the Constitution; refused to sign.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.