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## INTRODUCTION

### THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING AMERICAN HISTORY IN OUR TIMES

**Education in the United States.** A rapidly changing world demands a well-informed and active type of citizenship. Mere verbalizing about democracy is not enough. We must try to comprehend it. We must go back to its inception, see it born, watch it develop and grow and meet the challenge of our times. Above all, we must understand the principles upon which our democracy is built. While we strive to maintain a place of leadership in guiding the world to peace and security, we need to take our historical bearings in order to grasp the total depth of our own way of life.

Citizenship is meaningful only in the light of the Providential view of history – the true brotherhood of all men under the Fatherhood of God.

**History as a Focal Point in Citizenship.** If “education is the ability to meet life’s situations,” and if the social studies are designed to present all aspects of man meeting these situations – political, social, economic, cultural – then surely the American history class is the appropriate place to get the true meaning of our heritage as Americans. This heritage aids us in making a fair and honest appraisal of ourselves as a people. It tells the story of Americas successes and its failures, its accomplishments and its goals. It represents the key to understanding the present and to wise planning for the future.

We must see American history as a continuation of the Judaeo-Christian civilization enriched by the special blessings bestowed on our country by an all-wise Creator. We must view ourselves as agents with a special mission as members of a world society; that is, to bring to all members of the family of man unity, prosperity, and a way of life that rests securely on the dignity of man as a child of God.

**Responsibility to the Student.** Most children in the intermediate grades have a desire to put new ideas into a logical and meaningful pattern of thought. They ask frank questions and should be given reasonable explanations. They should have a great deal of discussion – opportunities to express their views, to be critical of explanations, to find the difference between honest criticism and unreasonable faultfinding.

Increased attention should be given to individual differences among pupils. This includes remedial instruction as well as provision for more able students to explore deeper, rather than merely broader, fields. Acceptance by peers is of great importance to children of this age; thus, committee work and “team spirit” are profitable. At this age level, too, the children are reaching out for a new set of values which will prepare them for an adult world.

**Attitudes to be Developed in History.** To achieve its purpose, the study of history must result in the production of good attitudes. It should help the pupils feel:

- a. That self-confidence, self-respect, and a sense of belonging are requisites for good citizenship.
- b. That all human beings, regardless of race or creed, are entitled to equal rights and equal liberties. That all human beings have contributed to our own way of life. That new nations rising in our times are different; but difference does not necessarily imply inferiority. (Differences in culture must be explained in the frame of reference of “cultural lag.”)
- c. That respect for rules, regulations, and constituted authority is imperative in a democratic society. Laws among nations, as well as laws among men, must be based on justice and must, in the American tradition, be in accord with Divine Law.
- d. That respect for the opinions of others, even though they may

not agree with one’s own opinions, is the basis and guarantee of all freedoms.

That compromise is desirable when differences cannot be resolved and when no violation of principles is involved.

That international understanding depends largely upon improved articulation and understanding.

That although evolutionary processes of solving international problems are slow, they are more constructive in the final analysis than are revolutionary processes.

That our high standard of living is very largely the result of the profits, incentives, competition in business, and good working agreements among all the economic and social factors of our civilization.

**Skills to be Mastered in the Course.** The skills that should result from the study of history include the ability to: (1) locate, gather, analyze, classify, and summarize data of historical importance; (2) memorize, reproduce, and relate materials; (3) use the various sections of the text – Table of Contents, Fact Summary, Glossary, Pronunciation Guide, and Index; (4) read maps and globes and interpret works and source materials in a brief introduction to the historical method; (6) interpret and analyze current news and illustrations; (7) develop a sense of critical thinking – to be articulate, to use judgment in assessing materials of learning; (8) read with various degrees of intensity according to the nature of the information sought.

**How to Achieve these Goals.** The objectives of this course can be reached by incorporating the special aids listed in the *Teachers’ Manual* under the titles: *Christian Social Principles and Historical Perspectives*. These will be indicated throughout the *Manual* to remind the teacher of the significance of the Principal and/or Perspective applicable at the point of reading. The list of Principles and Perspectives is given below.

When a Principle or Perspective is referred to in the *Manual*, it will be indicated by a symbol. The symbol for a *Christian Social Principle* is: ⚡<sub>2d</sub>. The cross identifies it as a *Christian Social Principle*; the “2” and “d” refer to the number and letter of the particular principle. The symbol for a *Historical Perspective* is: ⚡<sub>3b</sub>. It carries the identifying spectacles as well as the number and letter of the particular Perspective.

### CHRISTIAN SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

#### 1. The dependence of all men on God

- a. God made the world.
- b. God sustains the world.
- c. God intends us to use the world.

#### 2. Individuals have essential dignity

- a. As creatures of God
- b. As children of God
- c. As destined heirs of heaven
- d. As men having inherent rights
- e. As men having duties commensurate with these rights
- f. Governments are instituted to protect these rights
- g. Majority rights supersede individual rights
- h. Minority rights must be respected
- i. The state is made for man, not man for the state

#### 3. Man is a social being

- a. It is natural for man to “group”
- b. The family is the basic unit of society
- c. Man shares in the life of family, church, and community

4. **Sacramental Life is vital to man**
5. **Work is both a right and a duty**
  - a. Man has dignity as a worker
  - b. Man has a right to fair wages, hours
  - c. Man has an obligation to work – an “honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay”
  - d. Employers have rights and obligations
  - e. Man has the right to bargain collectively
6. **All men are spiritually and physically interdependent.**
7. **Man must use natural resources wisely.**
  - a. Man has an obligation to share
  - b. Man has an obligation to conserve
8. **Man must share non-material goods**
  - a. Man must share cultural advances
  - b. Man must spread knowledge of the true faith
  - c. Man must evaluate contributions of all
9. **Man must be just in relations**
  - a. Individuals with each other
  - b. Nations with each other
  - c. Individuals with nations, and vice versa
10. **All men have a common bond of unity in nature.**
  - a. Man has common origin
  - b. Man has common destiny

#### **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**

1. The past is related to the present.
2. Civilization has moved from East to West; it may complete full circle.
3. Geography, sociology, economics, politics – all have interaction with history.
4. History is essentially the story of man in common cultural patterns – his need for:
  - a. religious expression
  - b. making a living
  - c. law and order
  - d. social organization
  - e. knowledge and
  - f. self-expression in art,learning science, literature, etc.
5. The Providential view of history notes the Divine plan in the story of mankind fulfilling its destiny.
6. History is a true story. Witnesses may differ in describing facts, thus historians use a method to try to get unbiased materials.
7. History is the “story of man write at large.”
8. History must be studied by using the tools: maps, charts, pictures, reading skills.
9. History is the story of the blending of civilizations and cultures; no man, no state stands alone.

#### **BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH THE BOOK**

**Organization of the Text.** As the Table of Contents indicates, this text has been divided into seven units tracing significant events in our nation’s history from its European background through to the present day. The major part of the text deals with the pre-Civil War era, but there is also a summary of later development.

Each unit has been developed along a central theme, but has been broken down into segments or chapters from which definite ideas evolve. The chapters are numbered and usually contain several sections. At the end of each chapter there are questions which should be used as a guide to the study of the text. Some questions are directed to factual information, some provoke critical thinking, and others may be used for summarizing. The chapter-end material also contains work activities which should prove a challenge to children of different ability groups.

**Special Features.** There are many special features which should simplify the task of teaching *American History*.

1. A *pictorial study* of America, past and present, introduces the text.
2. A *map* at the beginning of each unit sets the stage for the story. The unit maps supplement the area and period maps found within

- the chapter. These maps may be used for direct desk reading or may be enlarged by use of an opaque projector for wall reading.
3. A *Unit Introduction* directed to the pupil appears at the beginning of each unit. The introduction not only previews the important facts of chapters to come, but it also gives a strong sense of continuity necessary to make history “live.”
  4. A *Time Pie* at the beginning of each unit and a *Time Line* at the end, give the child an important sense of chronology and progression. They also serve to focus attention on a particular period under study.
  5. *Unit-end Activities* contain a variety of fact and discussion questions, a section correlating geography with history, and a section which gives the child *Interesting Things to Do*.
  6. A *Bibliography* appears at the end of each unit. This list has been reviewed and approved by Catholic librarians.
  7. *Illustrations* in black and white and in color depict historical personages and events.
  8. *Stop and Think* questions, set in italics throughout the text, are intended to provoke thought and to stimulate discussion.
  9. *Pronunciations* of unfamiliar words are shown with diacritical markings as the words are introduced as well as in a composite glossary.
  10. The *Fact Summary*, a compilation of information about our Presidents, states and territories, may supplement material found within the text.

#### **INTRODUCING THE BOOK TO THE STUDENTS.**

**Care of a Textbook.** Pupils should be given a reminder of the utility and the beauty of books in general. The teacher should show the students how to open a new book by gently pressing down the pages from the inside fold out. Plastic covers can be used to preserve the neat appearance of the text. The child should be encouraged to use a bookmark rather than to bend down corners of the pages. A child should be taught to *use* a book, not merely to handle it.

**Parts of the Book.** Let the children examine the book and tell what they like about it. Note especially the physical qualities of the exterior of the text, the cover illustration and title, and so on. Turn to the title page and call attention to the illustration, the complete title, the authors, and the publisher. Then turn to the next page and examine the acknowledgments, the *nihil obstat*, the *imprimatur*, and the date of copyright. Let the children examine the maps and discuss the variety of illustrations with the ideas they represent.

Turn to the Contents to survey the outline of the topics which will be developed during the year. Ask pupils how many units the text has. What are they about? How many chapters are there? What are the titles? This is the time to show the children how to use the Index. Point out the difference between an index and a table of contents.

**Special Section.** Before you introduce the first unit, you will undoubtedly want to use the special section on pages 8-15 for a quick tour of America’s story.

“Land of the Free is a pictorial study of the growth of our republic. This section previews the historical events discussed in the text: early settlement, the struggle for liberty, our country’s expansion, and the challenge of the future. After everyone has the “feel” of the book, you will wish to introduce Unit 1 at once.

#### **HOW TO USE THE UNIT**

**THE SEVEN UNITS.** The seven units in *American History* tell the story of our country from its old world beginnings to discovery and settlement, peace and war, and to the challenge of the Space Age.

**Unit 1.** The Crusades resulted in increased trade and exploration. Ultimately, all water routes to the East were followed and the New World was discovered.