

America's Dedication to God

So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord.
I Kings 8:63

Skit may be used for First Landing Day (April 29)
(Middle school to highschool level)

Background Information

The Scriptures teach that, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." (Psalm 33:12) As we study the profound events of the first landing at Cape Henry, we will understand the Biblical principle that a nation dedicated to God, whose people strive to honor His ways, will be blessed of God.

Webster defines *dedicate* as, "To set apart and consecrate to a divine Being, or a sacred purpose; to devote to a sacred use, by a solemn act, or by religious ceremonies; as to dedicate vessels, treasures, a temple, an altar, or a church, to God or to a religious use." Most Christians can remember that they were dedicated to the Lord as young people by their parents, or they have dedicated themselves to His service.

Just as individuals can be dedicated to the Lord, other entities can be as well. Have you ever been to the dedication service for a new building? In I Kings 8:22-30 Solomon dedicated the Temple to God and His service, as did the scribe Ezra in Ezra 6:13-22 after the Temple had been rebuilt. There are also other entities which are dedicated, like the commissioning of a vessel.

Nations can likewise be dedicated by covenant to a deity. The first nation in history to be dedicated to God was the tiny nation of Israel, as we read in Joshua 24:19-27. Moreover, in King Josiah's day, the covenant with God was renewed after the book of the law had been discovered. As long as Israel walked in obedience to her covenant with God, she was blessed and protected by God.

Nations can be dedicated to false gods as well. The nation of Haiti, for example, had tragically been dedicated to the devil on August 14, 1804 by a group of slaves led by a man named Boukman. This covenant of dedication to the devil was renewed every year on August 14th, and in 1991 the Haitian government renewed this commitment. And we can clearly see the results; it is the poorest, most poverty-stricken and oppressed country in the world.

America was also dedicated to the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith on both of her coasts, at different times by English Protestant Christians. The following skit highlights the dedication on the East coast.

Props

- 11" x 17" copy of an early colonial map outline of America with Virginia/America written across it
- 5-foot high "wooden" cross and stand
- Large black Bible labeled "Geneva Bible"
- A "scroll" of the 1606 Virginia Charter quotes from the skit script
- A "scroll" of the 1612 Virginia Charter quotes from the skit script

- A “scroll” of the 1628 Virginia Charter quotes from the skit script
- A print of the painting of “The Landing at Cape Henry” by English artist Stephen Reid of the April 29, 1607 dedication service
- Bishop’s embroidered cape
- Tan or cream color blanket as “sand” in which to “plant” the cross

Characters and Costumes

- **Narrator** in modern clothes
- **Friend of Liberty** in a red, white and blue patriotic costume
- **1606, 1612, and 1628 Charter Readers** in 17th century costumes with loose shirts, laced-up colorful vests, and breeches tied at the knee, and white stockings with leather shoes
- **Reverend Robert Hunt** in a white bishop’s robe (a choir robe works well) and embroidered cape

Blocking

Display the print or framed picture of “The Landing at Cape Henry” by Stephen Reid in a prominent place on the stage. The **Narrator** and **Friend of Liberty** stand center stage beside a small table holding the following props: the early colonial map, large black Bible, folded blanket “sand”, and bishop’s embroidered cape

Skit: America’s Dedication to God

- Narrator:** Today, we want to tell you an exciting story of God’s Providence. The Bible says, in Psalm 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.” America has been blessed by God like no nation in history other than Israel. That is because America has chosen to follow God’s ways. God’s plan for America was that she would be dedicated to Him, for His glory and His purposes. God decided that America would be settled by the English, by Protestant Christians, not by Spain, which was Roman Catholic.
- Friend of Liberty:** Does this have something to do with the Chain of Christianity?
- Narrator:** Yes, after the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s, Biblical Christianity was spread all over Europe. The tiny nation of England embraced God and His Word, resulting in salvation and civil liberty. The English became known as “The People of the Book.” That book was the Bible.
- Friend of Liberty:** The English Pilgrims and Puritans were the most famous of the Protestants.
- Narrator:** Yes, the Puritans were men and women who wanted to purify the corrupted Church of England. There were some Puritans who decided to separate from the Church of England and start their own churches. They were called Separatists. The Pilgrims were Separatists. Other Puritans decided to stay within the Church of England and try to make it more pure, as the Bible says it should be.
- Friend of Liberty:** Wait a minute. We are talking about the Puritans and Pilgrims, but the Jamestown colonists came over thirteen years before the Pilgrims came to Plymouth.
- Narrator:** Yes they did, but many of the Jamestown colonists and others related to them were

Puritans. We actually need to begin our story much earlier. God gave a vision for the founding of a Christian nation in the New World to a Puritan named Richard Hakluyt.

Friend of Liberty: Richard Hakluyt . . . I've never heard that name before.

Narrator: That's because non-Christian historians leave out the Christian aspect of the founding of our nation. Richard Hakluyt was a Christian pastor, scholar, teacher, and geographer. God called him to be a minister. God gave Hakluyt a vision for his nation, England, as well as Scotland and Wales to be used to fulfill the Great Commission.

Friend of Liberty: I know what the Great Commission is: it's the command of Jesus to make disciples of the nations, to take the gospel to the whole world.

Narrator: Exactly. God providentially prepared Hakluyt through an interest in exploration, and through a study of the explorers he became convinced that America was the land that God was going to use for His purposes.

Friend of Liberty: Wow, that's exciting. Tell me more!

Narrator: Certainly. God used Hakluyt to help form the Virginia Company to actually send the colonists and supplies to the New World. God also gave Hakluyt the vision for America, for he helped write the 1606 Charter. (*Hold it up*) Listen to the part of it which tells why Virginia was being established.

(1606 Charter Reader enters stage)

1606 Charter Reader: We want to give glory to Almighty God by taking the Christian religion to those who don't know Him. We desire to take the Gospel of Jesus to those people who are living in spiritual darkness. The Gospel will set them free and help them to develop a Christian civilization and a proper government. Listen to the original charter words:

(Read clearly and slowly from the 1606 scroll)

"Wee, greatly commending and graciously accepting of thiere desires to the furtherance of soe noble a worke which may, by the providence of Almightye God, hereafter tende to the glorie of His Divine Majestie in propagating of the Christian religion to suche people as yet live in darknesse and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worshippe of God may in tyme bring the infidels and salvages living in those parts to humane civilitie and to a settled and quiet govrmente, doe by these our letters patents graciously accepte of and agree to thaire humble and well intended desires . . ."

Narrator: In this first charter it was also recognized that the Christian faith was to be preached and therefore "planted."

1606 Charter Reader: *(Read clearly and slowly from the 1606 scroll)*

We command our President, council members and ministers that they diligently preach and plant the true Word of God and the Christian faith. They are to preach and plant Christianity in every colony and among the salvages* (Native Americans). [Here it is in the original charter:]

* Original spelling—the Christians saw the Native Americans as spiritually salvageable.

“. . . and wee doe especially ordaine, charge and require the said Presidents and Councells and the ministers of the said several Colonies respectively, within their several limits and precincts, that they with all diligence, care and respect doe provide that the true word of God and Christian faith be preached, planted and used, not only within every of the said several Colonies and plantacions but alsoe as much as they may amongst the salvage people which doe or shall adjoine unto them, according to the doctrine, rights and religion now professed and established within our realm of England . . .”

Narrator: The third charter, dated March 12, 1612, opened with a greeting from King James, and then made this statement.

(1612 Charter Reader enters stage)

1612 Charter Reader: *(Read clearly and slowly from the 1612 scroll)*

The first colony in Virginia is for the purpose of spreading the Christian religion and for converting the non-believers in Virginia to a Christian way of life. Here it is in the original wording of the charter:

“Whereas at the humble suite of divers and sundry our lovinge subjects, as well adventurers as planters of the First Colonie in Virginia, and for the propogacion of Christian religion and reclayminge of people barbarous to civilitie and humanitie.”

Narrator: The 1628 fourth charter contained a section where a college was to be established to teach the Native Americans, the “infidels,” the true religion.

(1628 Charter Reader enters stage)

1628 Charter Reader: *(Read clearly and slowly from the 1628 scroll)*

The King of England wants a college to be built in Virginia and has raised the money to build it. The college will be for the purpose of training of the non Christian (Indian) children in true religion (Christianity), moral virtue, civility, and other godly purposes. This college is to be built in Henrico. [I will read it in the original charter's words:]

“And whereas, by a special grant and licence from His Majesty, a general contribution over this realm hath been made for the building and planting of a college for the training up of the children of those infidels in true religion, moral virtue and civility, and for other godly uses, we do, therefore according to a former grant and order, hereby ratifie and confirm and ordain that a convenient place be chosen and set out for the planting of a university at the said Henrico in time to come and that in the mean time preparation be there made for the building of the said college for the children of the infidels.”

Friend of Liberty: In some stories that people often recount about the Jamestown colony, the colonists are not credited for trying to tell the natives about Jesus.

Narrator: Maybe you just haven't heard all of America's true history. Also, remember that everyone who came to Virginia did not agree with Mr. Hakluyt's vision for this nation. It's the same today isn't it? Some people are trying to follow God's ways and many are not.

Friend of Liberty: That's sad, but true.

- Narrator:** Mr. Hakluyt had planned to come as the first pastor, but his wife did not agree, so Hakluyt chose Robert Hunt, his secretary, for this extremely important job. Hunt was a godly man who had the same vision as Hakluyt for America.
- Friend of Liberty:** Was he the man who led the dedication service at Cape Henry?
- Narrator:** Yes! And did you know that there was another dedication service twenty-seven years before the one at Cape Henry?
- Friend of Liberty:** Never heard of it.
- Narrator:** Francis Drake, an English Christian explorer and the son of a pastor, explored the west coast of America in 1579. He had to repair his ship and landed in what is now San Francisco. While he was there, he held a dedication service, dedicating the whole continent to God in honor of his queen, Elizabeth I. He called this continent Nova Albion.
- Friend of Liberty:** What does Nova Albion mean?
- Narrator:** It means “New Land of Righteousness.”
- Friend of Liberty:** So America was dedicated to God from both the west and east coasts?
- Narrator:** It sure was! So, back to Cape Henry; after landing on April 26, 1607 and exploring for several days, the dedication service and planting of the cross took place on April 29th. Let’s reenact it.
- Friend of Liberty:** I love drama. Let’s do it!
- Narrator:** The dedication was held on a hill at Cape Henry. At that time this hill was over 100 feet high. The huge oak cross that they planted would be seen for over 300 years by all the ships and boats entering the Chesapeake Bay. In the 1930’s the oak cross was replaced by a stone cross. Just before the service Pastor Hunt put on the official robe of the Bishop of England.
- (Robert Hunt enters stage and puts on the embroidered Bishop’s cape)*
- Friend of Liberty:** This sounds like an official dedication, not just a few men praying.
- Narrator:** Right!
- (Charter Readers act as colonists and set up the wood cross in the “sand”. Then one colonist holds out the open Bible while another places the map of Virginia/America on top of it.)*
- Narrator:** And here are Pastor Hunt’s words.
- Robert Hunt:** We dedicate this land, and ourselves, to reach the people within these shores with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to raise up godly generations after us, and with these generations take the Kingdom of God to all the earth.

May this Covenant of Dedication remain to all generations, as long as this earth remains, and may this Land, along with England, be Evangelists to the world.

May all who see this Cross remember what we have done here, and may those who come here to inhabit join us in this Covenant and in this most noble work, that the Holy Scriptures may be fulfilled.

Psalm 22:27-28 says, "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and He rules over the nations."

Let us pray: *(All colonists bow on one knee.)* Almighty and Merciful God, let us never stray from the Commission to which You have called us, to bring the inhabitants of this land to the knowledge of Your kingdom. Help us to take Your truth to those who so desperately need to receive it. Let the day come quickly, Oh God, when the knowledge of Your Son shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. And even if we should fall short in Your calling, You will stir up our children after us and give them this blessed land. Let us do our small part to fulfill the Great Commission. Use us, O God, even though we are weak and sinful, for the building up of Your kingdom which shall cover the whole earth. Let it be said that God has made His ways known upon the earth and His saving help among all nations. In the name of our Holy Savior, Amen.
(Colonists rise and all characters look at the cross.)

Narrator: Now it's up to us to continue to let God use us in our nation to reach others with the good news of Jesus.

Friend of Liberty: I want to help others know about the abundant life that Jesus has given me.

Narrator: Me, too, let's do it!

Sources

The Charters of Virginia (Virginia Beach, VA: Patriot Prints, 1994)

Jan Bauder, *A Brief Time Line of American History* (Virginia Beach, VA: Patriot Prints, 1993)

Richard Hakluyt, *Hakluyt's Voyages* (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1965)