

THEME: Our Republic

TOPIC: Republic, Natural Law

PREPARATION / PROPS: Poster of the Signing of the Constitution, Liberty Tree sign, papers on the “Liberty Tree”, pictures of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, Natural Law poster with characteristics (universal, unchanging, everlasting, unchangeable) and examples of Natural Law such as laws of physics, mathematics, logic, chemistry, planetary motion, the law of life, uniformity of Nature, and the Word of God

LESSON: Republic. Today's lesson is about our Republic, which is our type of government. In a republic, all of the people vote for just a few people to represent them. Then those people vote and make decisions for us. It's easier than having everyone vote. So in a republic, it is important for people to tell their representatives what they want. The founding fathers – the men who wrote the Constitution – thought that a republic was the best form of government, especially for a growing United States.



The idea of a republic as a form of government was not a new idea. A man named Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote about the idea of a republic back about 50 years before Jesus was born. James Madison did a lot of research on governments and the founding fathers liked Cicero. He wrote about Natural Law, which is basically recognizing the rules of right conduct (doing the right things) and identifying them with the laws of God.

Founding Fathers Believed in God. It is true. The truth is what is important. And it is a fact that the founding fathers believed in God. They also believed that God works in our lives every day. They didn't think that God made the universe and then went on vacation. They thought he made everything – the earth, animals, people – and then he stayed here with us, guiding us and protecting us every day, when we rely on Him. They called that “Providence” - God taking an active part in our lives.

Preamble. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. In the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence, the first sentence that tells us the purpose, he wrote some words that mean basically that America had to break away from Great Britain and take her place among the other countries of the world, that we deserve the same respect as those other countries, and that it was our right, given to us by “the laws of Nature and Nature's God.”

The Laws of Nature and Nature's God. Natural Law are laws of nature which are set up by God. Laws of Nature are universal – which means they are the same here as they are everywhere in the world. The sun rises in the east in Pennsylvania. It also rises in the east in New Jersey and China. Natural Laws are unchanging – that means they never change, and you can count on them. The sun will always rise in the east. They are everlasting – that means they always existed and they always will. The sun will continue to rise in the east. They are unchangeable – meaning there is nothing you can do to change them. You could make a law to change them, but it wouldn't work. That would be like making a law saying the sun should rise in the west. The universe has to obey these laws – there is no choice. Some

examples of natural laws are: the laws of chemistry and the laws of mathematics.

Our founding fathers formed our government to be in line with God's Law. Some examples of God's Law are the 10 commandments. They include having no other gods, honoring your mother and father, no lying, no stealing, and no killing. The founders believed in those.

They thought that Natural Law was the truth. Natural Law is reality. You can't get around it. You can't change it with made up laws. They thought that laws made by the government had to be in line with Natural Law or they wouldn't work. They thought that the government had to deal with people the same way people had to deal with people.

For example, if Andrew has 2 televisions, and Ashley has no televisions, Rylan can't TAKE one of Andrew's TV's and give it to Ashley. That is called stealing and is not in line with God's law. Can the government take one of Andrew's TV's and give it to Ashley? Well, the government sometimes does that sort of thing. Is it in line with God's law? No, it isn't. It is the same as stealing. Because it is not in line with God's Law, it probably won't work out well. Ashley will learn to rely on the government instead of God and instead of herself, and instead of her friends and neighbors. Is it a good idea to replace God with government? No.

Another bad thing that will happen if the government gives things to Ashley without her earning them, is that she will never fully use the gifts that God gave her to make her own money and buy her own things. It would be easier for her to let the government take care of her. That doesn't honor herself or God.

What else can happen? Let's say Andrew has 10 pieces of candy. If the government takes half of them, will he feel like giving any more of them away to his friends? Or is he more likely to want to keep what he has left? He probably is going to want to keep what he has left. So having your things taken from you, makes you feel less charitable, less like wanting to give and share. But God wants you to share. So by making a law that is not in line with God's law, many things can go wrong.

Virtuous People. The founding fathers believed that a republican form of government was the best form. But they knew that only a virtuous and moral people could maintain it. That means that people need to be good or it won't work. Most people have heard of the Golden Rule - "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The founders believed this was extremely important or our government would not work properly.

To follow the Golden Rule, they knew that people needed to be prepared, and they thought the way to do that was to be educated. Thomas Jefferson said that "Virtue is not hereditary." He and the other founders believed that kids needed to be educated, not just in math and reading, but also in religion and morals. They thought that Bible reading in school strengthened morals – that means your understanding of right and wrong. They thought it improves behavior and also teaches responsibility. Because our government was based on Natural Law and God's Law, people needed to be educated in both to understand our government.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Can you give some examples of Natural Laws or the law of nature? What could be a man-made law that would be in line with that law of nature? What could be a man-made law NOT in line with that law of nature? Would either of those laws work well?
- We have a republican form of government which means the people elect representatives to do the voting. Are public officials mind readers? How do they know what the people want them to do?
- Would the founders approve of the public education curriculum today? What are some things they would like? What are some things they would not like?

ACTIVITY: Baking Soda and Vinegar Experiment

Materials: Small cups, spoon, baking soda, squeeze bottle of vinegar, trash bag



Method: Explain that the Laws of Chemistry are a Natural Law, and that Natural Laws are universal. Give each of the kids a small cup and put a spoonful of baking soda in it. Then pass around the bottle of vinegar and tell them to squeeze some into their cup. The younger kids will love having the freedom to do this themselves so long as they are responsible. Ask them to watch what happens in their cup and then to watch what happens in their neighbors' cups. Have them describe it. Ask if everyone's did the same thing. Then ask them a series of questions to show that this is a natural law.

Would it happen the same way tomorrow? Would it happen if you did this in New Jersey or China? Do you think you could change the reaction? What if you made a law to change it – would it work? This activity is to drive home the idea of Natural Law.

REFERENCES: The 5,000 Year Leap, "Natural Law for Kids" by Chuck George, God and Natural Law by Jason Lisle, Ph. D.