Religion and the Fight for American Independence

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #1: Religion and the Revolutionary War Effort

Directions: Imagine that you are a soldier in the Continental Army. Using the materials indicated below, write a three-paragraph letter to a friend or relative in which you inform him or her of General Washington's orders and your reaction to them. In this letter you should address the following questions:

1. Why do you think General Washington issued these orders?
2. If you were commander of the army, would you issue similar commands?
3. Would you be enthusiastic to follow General Washington's religious requirements and expectations?

Religion and the Congress of the Confederation, 1774-89:
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel04.html

George Washington, General Orders, July 4, 1775:
http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mgw/mgw3g/001/004.jpg

The Continental Congress having now taken all the Troops of the several Colonies, which have been raised, or which may be hereafter raised for the support and defence of the Liberties of America; into their Pay and Service. They are now the Troops of the UNITED PROVINCES of North America; and it is hoped that all Distinctions of Colonies will be laid aside; so that one and the same Spirit may animate the whole, and the only Contest be, who shall render, on this great and trying occasion, the most essential service to the Great and common cause in which we are all engaged.

It is required and expected that exact discipline be observed, and due Subordination prevail thro' the whole Army, as a Failure in these most essential points must necessarily produce extreme Hazard, Disorder and Confusion; and end in shameful disappointment and disgrace.

The General most earnestly requires, and expects, a due observance of those articles of war, established for the Government of the army, which forbid profane cursing, swearing and drunkeness; And in like manner requires and expects, of all Officers, and Soldiers, not engaged on actual duty, a punctual attendance on divine Service, to implore the blessings of heaven upon the means used for our safety and defence.

George Washington to the President of Congress, December 31, 1775:
http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mgw/mgw2/007/1700168.jpg

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I have long had it on my mind to mention to Congress, that frequent applications had been made to me respecting the Chaplain's pay, which is too small to encourage men of Abilities. Some of them who have left their Flocks, are Obliged to pay the parson acting for them more than they receive. I need not point out the great utility of Gentlemen whose lives and conversation are unexceptionable, being employed for that service in this Army.

George Washington, General Orders, August 3, 1776:
http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mgw/mgw3g/001/335.jpg

That the Troops may have an opportunity of attending public worship, as well as take some rest after the great fatigue they have gone through; The General in future excuses them from fatigue duty on Sundays (except at the Ship Yards, or special occasions) until further orders. The General is sorry to be informed that the foolish, and wicked practice, of profane cursing and swearing (a Vice heretofore little known in an American Army) is growing into fashion; he hopes the officers will, by example, as well as influence, endeavour to check it, and that both they, and the men will reflect, that we can have little hopes of the blessing of Heaven on our Arms, if we insult it by our impiety, and folly; added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense, and character, detests and despises it.

George Washington, General Orders, March 22, 1783:
http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mgw/mgw3g/007/097.jpg

In justice to the zeal and ability of the Chaplains, as well as to his own feelings, the Commander in chief thinks it a duty to declare the regularity and decorum with which divine service is now performed every Sunday, will reflect great credit on the army in general, tend to improve the morals, and at the same time, to increase the happiness of the soldiery, and must afford the most pure and rational entertainment for every serious and well disposed mind.

No fatigue [hard labor] except on extra occasions, nor General review or inspections to be permitted on the Sabbath day.

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Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #2: Anglican Loyalists

Directions (Group A): In your own words, outline the main points in the two paragraphs below.

From Charles Inglis, Letter to the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, October 31, 1776: http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=910

I have the Pleasure to assure you that all the Society's Missionaries, without excepting one, in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, &, so far as I can learn, in the other New England Colonies, have proved themselves faithful loyal Subjects [of the King of England] in these trying Times; & have to the utmost of their Power opposed the Spirit of Disaffection & Rebellion which has involved this Continent in the greatest Calamities. I must added, that all the other Clergy of our Church in the above Colonies, tho[ugh] not in the Society's Service, have observed the same Line of Conduct; & although their joint Endeavours could not wholly prevent the Rebellion, yet they checked it considerably for some Time, & prevented many thousands from plunging into it, who otherwise would certainly have done so…

The Clergy, amidst this Scene of Tumult & Disorder, went on steadily with their Duty; in their Sermons, confirming themselves to the Doctrines of the Gospel, without touching on politics; using their Influence to allay our Heats, & cherish a Spirit of Loyalty among their People. This Conduct, however harmless, gave great offence to our flaming Patriots, who laid it down as a Maxim—"that those who were not for them, were against them." The Clergy were everywhere threatened; often reviled with the most opprobrious Language; sometimes treated with brutal Violence. Some have been detained in the close Confinement for several Weeks, & much insulted, without any Crime being even alleged against them. Some have been flung into Jails by Committees, for frivolous Suspicions of Plots, of which even their Persecutors afterwards acquitted them. Some who were obliged to fly their Own Province to save their Lives, have been taken Prisoners, sent back, & are threatened to be tried for their Lives because they fled from Danger. Some have been pulled out of the Reading Desk, because they prayed for the King, & that before Independency was declared. Others have been warned to appear at Militia Masters with their Arms—have been fined for not appearing, & threatened with Imprisonment for not paying those Fines. Others have had their Houses plundered & their Desks broken open, under Pretence of their containing *treasonable* Papers…

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Religion and the Fight for American Independence

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #2: Anglican Loyalists

Directions (Group B): In your own words, outline the main points in the three paragraphs below.

From Charles Inglis, Letter to the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, October 31, 1776: http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=910

The present Rebellion is certainly one of the most causeless, unprovoked and unnatural that ever disgraced any Country—a Rebellion marked with peculiarly aggravated Circumstances of Guilt & Ingratitude. Yet amidst this general Defection, there are very many who have exhibited Instances of Fortitude & Adherence to their Duty, which do Honour to Human Nature & Christianity—many who for Sake of a good Conscience, have incurred Insults, Persecution & Loss of Property; when a Compliance with the Spirit of the Times had insured them Applause, profit & that Eminence of which the human Heart is naturally so fond. Perhaps such Cases are the most Trying to a Man's Fortitude—much more so, in my Opinion, than those which are sudden & where Danger, the more apparent, yet is not more certain or real…

Thus matters continued, the Clergy proceeding regularly in the Discharge of their Duty, where the Hand of Violence did not interfere, until the Beginning of last July, when the Congress thought proper to make an explicit Declaration of Independency; by which all connection with Great Britain was to be broken off, & the Americans releases from any allegiance to our gracious Sovereign. For my part I had long expected this event—it was what the Measures of the Congress from the Beginning uniformly & necessarily led to.

This Declaration increased the Embarrassment of the Clergy. To officiate publickly, & not pray for the King & Royal Family according to the Liturgy, was against their Duty & Oath, as well as Dictates of their Conscience; & yet to use the Prayers for the King & Royal Family, would have drawn inevitable Destruction on them. The only Course which they could pursue to avoid both evils, was to suspend the public Exercise of their Function; & shut up their Churches. This accordingly was done…

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Religion and the Fight for American Independence

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #2: Anglican Loyalists

Directions (Group C): In your own words, outline the main points in the two paragraphs below.

From Charles Inglis, Letter to the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, October 31, 1776: http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=910

How Matters are circumstanced in the more southerly Colonies, I cannot learn with any Certainty; only that the Provincial Convention of Virginia have taken upon them to publish an Edict by which some Collects [prayers] for the king are to be wholly omitted in Liturgy, & others altered, the Word "Commonwealth" being substituted for the King. For my Part I never expected much Good of those Clergy among them who opposed an American Episcopate [that is, the appointment of a bishop for America]; if such should now renounce their Allegiance & abandon their Duty, it is no more than what might naturally be look for. There are however several worthy Clergymen in those Provinces; some of whom, I hear, have taken Sanctuary in England—particularly from Maryland…

Upon the Whole the Church of England has lost none of its Members by the Rebellion as yet—none, I mean, whose Departure from it can be deemed a Loss. On the contrary, its own Members are more firmly attached to it than ever; & even the sober & more rational among Dissenters—for they are not all equally violent & frantic—look with Reverence & Esteem on the Part which Church People have acted. I have not a Doubt but with the Blessings of Providence, His Majesty's Arms will be successful, & which Reason, Prudence & Common Sense dictate, the Church will indubitably increase, & theses Confusions will terminate in a large Accession to its Members. Then will be the Time to make that Provision for the American Church which is necessary, & place it on at least an equal Foot with other Denominations, by granting it an Episcopate, & thereby allowing it a full Toleration. If this Opportunity is let slip, I think there is a Moral Certainty that such another will never again offer…

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Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #2: Anglican Loyalists

Directions (All groups): On the chart below, summarize in your own words the main points of the paragraphs your group was assigned to read.

Paragraph	Main Points
#1	
#2	
#3 (Group B only)	

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Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #3: George Washington and Quaker Pacifism

Directions: Read the document below, using the questions that follow to guide your reading.

The Address of the Religious Society Called Quakers, from Their Yearly Meeting for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the Western Parts of Maryland and Virginia, September 28, 1789: http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=928

Question	Answer
What is the main argument that the Quakers put forward in this letter?	
What points do they use to support the main argument?	

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Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #3: George Washington and Quaker Pacifism

George Washington to the Pennsylvania Council of Safety, January 19, 1777: http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mgw/mgw4/039/0800/0844.jpg

As there is not the least doubt that the principle object of the Enemy is to get Possession of the City of Philadelphia, it is absolutely necessary, that every person able to bear Arms (except such as are conscientiously scrupulous against in every Case) should give their personal Service, and whenever a part of the Militia is required only, either to join the Army or find a Man in their place.

George Washington to Governor William Livingston (of Pennsylvania), May 11, 1777: http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mgw/mgw4/041/0800/0832.jpg

I have been informed by Colo[nel] Forman, that the Quakers and disaffected are doing all in their power to counteract your late Militia Law; but I hope, if your Officers are active and Spirited, that they will defeat their evil intentions and bring their Men into the Field.

George Washington, Powers to Officers to Collect Clothing for the Use of the Army, November 2, 1777: http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mgw/mgw3b/004/336335.jpg

By virtue of the powers vested in me by the honorable Congress I hereby authorize [officers of the Continental Army] to collect all such blankets, shoes, stocking, and other Clothing suitable to the use of the Army...in the State of Pennsylvania, as the Inhabitants can spare without greatly disrespecting their Families. In doing this you are to take care that the unfriendly Quakers and others notoriously disaffected to the cause of American liberty do not escape your vigilance....

George Washington to Brigadier General John Lacey, Jr., March 20, 1778: http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mgw/mgw4/048/0000/0088.jpg

Sunday next being the time on which the Quakers hold one of their general Meetings, a number of that Society will probably be attempting to go into Philadelphia. This is an intercourse that we should by all means endeavor to interrupt, as the plans settled at those meetings are of the most pernicious tendency. I would therefore have you dispose of your parties in such a manner as will most probably fall in with these people, and if any of them should be mounted on Horses fit for the draft or the service of light Dragoons [cavalry] I desire they may be taken from them....

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Activity #3: George Washington and Quaker Pacifism

Directions: Imagine that you are George Washington and have just received the letter from the Quakers that you read earlier. Given what you know about George Washington, draft a letter as you believe Washington would have in response to the Quakers.

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Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #3: George Washington and Quaker Pacifism

Directions: Read George Washington's Letter to the Annual Meeting of the Quakers (http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=393) and compare it to the letter that you drafted earlier. Indicate the similarities and differences between the two on the chart below:

Similarities between your letter and Washington's	Differences between your letter and Washington's