

Lesson Seventeen

Revolutionaries

LESSON IDEA

To show the difference between the revolutionaries who fought for and won American independence, and those in our time who have worked to destroy freedom while pretending to be like our Founding Fathers. The contrast between George Washington and Cuba's communist dictator Fidel Castro will serve as our main example.

PREPARATION

Review the discussion parts of the lesson and adapt them to fit your family's level of understanding. For younger children, clip pictures of presentday revolutionaries from newspapers and magazines and compare them with those of Washington and signers of the Declaration.

SINCE THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, those who led it have been honored as heroes worldwide. Why do you think so many persons, in so many countries other than our own, share our admiration for George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, John Hancock, and the other Founders? [Encourage each child to answer.]

Fidel Castro, for example, was widely portrayed on American television and elsewhere as the "George Washington of Cuba" during the Cuban revolution in the late 1950s. Was that comparison valid? Why? [Encourage everyone to answer.]

Let us first take a brief look at George Washington as the perhaps the prime example of an American revolutionary leader in 1776. He had lived a comfortable life on his Virginia plantation. His customs, manners, dress, and speech were those of an English gentleman. He had no animosity toward the English and valued the principles of honesty, honor, and fairness that were aspects of the civilization of his day.

In sharp contrast, the Marxist rebel Fidel Castro demonstrated total contempt for such principles as honor, integrity, truthfulness, and justice, and a willingness to use any means to achieve his ends by overthrowing the established order.

But why, if Washington was not opposed to English values, did he lead an army against Britain in a war for independence? Why did he

believe that it was important to break political ties with a nation sought to have its citizens be ethical, truthful, and just? Exactly what aspects of British policy did he and his fellow revolutionaries oppose to the point of being willing to wage war to bring about change? [Encourage discussion, including the point that the American leaders were at odds with Britain's king-centered government, not the basic values of English society. Though justice was the professed goal of English civil law, it was not practiced by the King or Parliament.]

WHY DID WASHINGTON oppose England's king-centered government, but not its code of values? The determining factor was a deep religious conviction. He was recognizing that rights are God-given, he rejected the notion that they were King-given. He valued the honor, honesty, and justice of English society because such positive attributes were based on Scripture and were uplifting for all societies and nations.

Castro, as a Communist, denied the existence of God and waged war against not only the Cuban

FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS

If the discussions in this lesson are beyond the understanding of younger children, you may wish to skip them and focus instead on the story of the mythical kingdom of Thud. Questions that could be raised after reading the story could include:

If you had lived in the country of Thud, would you have joined the rebels of the nation of Opportunity who were fighting for freedom? Why?

Were the Tyrants who overthrew the king honest? Did they fight fairly? Who helped them? Could they have taken over the country without the help of some of the King's own ministers?

What lies do you suppose the Tyrants told the people to entice them to fight each other?

If you had lived in the kingdom, would you have been more frightened if the Tyrants had killed only their enemies, rather than every fourth persons they met at random? Why did they do the latter?

