

Lesson Thirty-Five

Miss Liberty

LESSON IDEA

To explain the origin and significance of the Statue of Liberty.

PREPARATION

Read "During the Week" and prepare copies of the Lazarus quotation. Practice the pronunciation of Laboulaye (La-boo-lay) and Bartholdi (Bar-tol-de) so the names can be cited accurately during the lesson.

SEVERAL LESSONS AGO we discussed a proud American beauty who is now more than 200 years old. Do you remember who she was? ["Old Glory," our nation's flag.] Tonight we will learn about another famous beauty who weighs-in at 225 tons! Can anyone guess her name?

Formally, she is called "Liberty Enlightening The World," but most of us know her as the Statue of Liberty. Her home is an island in the harbor near one of our greatest cities. Does anyone know the names of the island and the city?

This proud lady stands as a towering statute on Liberty Island (formerly Bedloe's Island) in New York harbor. She has greeted millions of immigrants who have come to America seeking freedom. She holds in her right hand a torch that symbolizes liberty; in her left, a tablet inscribed with the date July 4, 1776, the birthday of our Republic. At her feet lie the broken chains of slavery and bondage. She is dressed in the robes of an ancient goddess, and her head is adorned with a crown befitting a queen. Though she stands motionless, she seems a moment ago (in the words of one American author) to have "stepped forward, and halted, and raised her torch into the sky. There is

energy without effort and movement combined with repose. Her aspect is grave almost to sternness; yet her faultless features wear the serenity of power and confidence. Her message is the sublimest ever brought to man, but she is adequate to its delivery.... No words are needed to interpret her meaning, for her gesture and her countenance speak the universal language, and their utterance reaches to the purest depth of the human soul."

Does anyone know why the Statue of Liberty resides in New York harbor? Was she a government project created by an act of Congress? Was she a gift from a foreign country? Was she a bequest from an American millionaire who arrived on our shores as a penniless immigrant? [The answers given by each family member will indicate how much each knows about this famous American landmark.]

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Statue of Liberty is that she is one of the most statues ever made, yet she was designed, built, and paid for by thousands of individual citizens in two nations: France and America. She is an outstanding example of individual responsibility and cooperation. Neither Congress nor the French national government planned her design or appropriated tax money to finance her construction. Can you imagine what would happen today if it were proposed to give some other freedom-loving nation a statue symbolizing a mutual regard for freedom? How many

voices would likely be raised urging Congress to pass legislation appropriating tax money to pay for it? How many would contend that the government must coordinate the project because individuals cannot cope with such a huge undertaking? [For high school students, this is an opportunity to



The Statue of Liberty

