



CONCORDIA CURRICULUM GUIDE



GRADE
8

Social Studies





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PREFACE

Ministry of Christian Schools

Parental expectations of Christian schools include

- excellent discipline;
- high academic standards;
- low teacher-student ratios;
- dedicated, conscientious teachers;

Many Christian schools offer these advantages. But the real distinction is that Christian schools proclaim Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Teaching Jesus Christ, then, is “the real difference” between Christian and public schools. In Christian schools, teachers and students witness personally and publicly to their faith in Jesus Christ. Students study the Bible and worship God daily. Teachers relate Jesus Christ to all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers and students share Christian love and forgiveness.

Those who teach in Christian schools are privileged with the opportunity to

- teach the Word of God in its truth and purity;
- acknowledge the Bible as God’s infallible Word and the Confessions as the true exposition of the Word;
- identify God’s Word, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper as the means through which God creates and sustains faith;
- emphasize Law and Gospel as the key teaching of Scripture;
- seek to apply Law and Gospel properly in daily relationships with students, parents, and other teachers;
- teach all of what Scripture teaches (including Christian doctrines) to all students, no matter what backgrounds they have;
- share with students what Jesus the Savior means to them personally;
- equip students to proclaim the Good News to others;

- encourage students to find the support and encouragement found only in the body of Christ, of which Jesus Himself is the head.

In Christian schools, Christ permeates all subjects and activities. Religion is not limited to one hour or one class. Teachers seek opportunities to witness in every class and to relate God’s Word to all aspects of life. Through this process, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, students grow in faith and in a sanctified life and view all of life, not just Sunday, as a time to serve and worship God.

In summary, it is intrinsic to ministry in a Christian school that all energies expended in the educational process lead each child to a closer relationship with the Savior and with other members of the Christian community.

How to Use This Guide

The Concordia Curriculum Guide series is designed to guide you as you plan and prepare to teach. The introductory chapters provide foundational information relevant to the teaching of social studies to students in a Christian school. But the majority of the pages in this volume focus on social studies standards and performance expectations together with ideas and activities for integrating them with various aspects of the Christian faith. This volume does not provide a curriculum plan or lesson plan for any particular period or day. Instead, it provides a wealth of ideas from which you can choose and a springboard to new ideas you may create. You may use this curriculum guide with any textbook series.

The social studies standards included in this book are informed by the standards developed by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (see also Chapter 3) and are provided as a compilation of the social studies standards and performance expectations adopted by the individual states. In order to offer a well-coordinated curriculum design, the social studies objectives for this grade level relate to and connect with the standards provided at other grade levels.

The standards, then, can serve you and your whole faculty in several ways. They can help you

1. plan your teaching in an organized way;
2. coordinate your teaching of a subject with the teaching in other grades in your school;
3. select textbooks and other learning or teaching materials;
4. evaluate your current instruction, materials, and objectives;
5. implement procedures for school accreditation;
6. nurture the Christian faith of your students as you teach social studies.

We assume that teachers will use materials in addition to those included in the guide, but, since many materials do not integrate the Christian faith, we have provided suggestions for specific methods to use as you teach day by day. Everyone has a different teaching style. No one will be able to use all the ideas in this volume. As you think about practices that will work for you and would be helpful in your classroom, consider these possible ways to find and use ideas from this volume:

- Read the entire volume before school starts. Highlight the ideas you think you can use.
- Write ideas in your textbooks. List the page numbers from this volume that contain suggestions you would like to use in connection with a lesson or unit.
- Throughout the year, designate periods of time, perhaps at faculty meetings, to discuss portions of this volume as you seek to improve your integration of the faith in social studies. Brainstorm, develop, and implement your ideas. Then follow up with other meetings to share your successes and challenges. Together, find ways to effectively use the suggestions in this volume.
- Plan ways to adapt ideas not closely related to specific lessons or units in your secular text-

books. Inside your plan book clip a paper with a list of suggestions from the volume that you would like to use. Or list each idea on a file card and keep the cards handy for quick review. Use those ideas between units or when extra time is available.

- Evaluate each suggestion after you have tried it. Label it as “use again” or “need to revise.” Always adapt the suggestions to fit your situation.
- Think about integrating the faith each time you plan a lesson. Set a goal for yourself (e.g., two ideas from this volume each week), and pray that God will help you to achieve it. You will find the index at the back of this volume especially helpful in finding faith-connecting activities relevant to specific topics.
- If the ideas in the Concordia Curriculum Guide series seem overwhelming, begin by concentrating on only one subject per month. Or attempt to use the suggested ideas in only two to four subjects the first year. Add two to four subjects per year after that.

Probably the most effective teaching occurs when teachers take advantage of natural opportunities that arise to integrate the faith into their teaching. In those situations, you will often use your own ideas instead of preparing a lesson plan based on teaching suggestions in this guide. Use the white space on the pages of this book to record your own ideas and activities for integrating the Christian faith. We hope this volume will be an incentive to you to create your own effective ways to integrate the Christian faith into the entire school day.

We believe that Christian schools are essential because we believe that our relationship with Jesus Christ permeates every part of our lives. That is why our Christian faith permeates our teaching. That is why we teach in a Christian school.

CHAPTER 1

A Journey: Developing Citizens through Social Studies

By

James B. Kracht

James B. Kracht, author of various social studies curriculum texts and materials in current use and advisor and board member for numerous organizations and agencies, attended Zion Lutheran School in New Palestine, Indiana, is a graduate of Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois, and began his long and productive teaching career in Lutheran schools. Dr. Kracht is a Fellow of the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education and is a recipient of the Extraordinary Service Award from Texas A&M University and the Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Council for the Social Studies. Dr. Kracht was named director of the writing team for the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies in 1995, and in 1996 became Director of the Social Studies Center for Educator Development. He is currently Associate Dean for Academic Programs in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University, where he has been on the faculty since 1974. He also serves as a codirector of a national demonstration project for interdisciplinary curriculum development at the middle grades and as a consultant for the development of national social studies standards in the United Arab Emirates and Syria.

Our Destination

It was a family tradition. On summer Sunday afternoons we would pile into our 1948 Chevy. The first question out of my mouth would be, “Where are we going?” and my dad’s answer was always the same, “We’re going to take a little ride.” “But where?” I would ask. The answer was repeated Sunday after Sunday, “Somewhere.” “Well, how will we know how to get there?” I would insist, knowing I was pressing my luck. “We will just follow our noses,” my mom would laugh. At that point I knew I would never get an answer that would satisfy me, so I would busy myself listening to my parents’ conversation, looking out the back window, and watching the dust trail as our car bumped down the gravel roads. Sometimes those drives would last thirty minutes and sometimes three hours. Frequently we would reach an intersection and disagree on whether to go straight ahead or turn left or right. I was always amazed at the number of new routes we could take and still not know the destination.

While I enjoyed those rides and even continued the tradition with my own children on occasions, most of the journeys I have pursued in life have had a strong sense of destination. Whether travel, education, career, home project, or office task, I approach tasks with a destination or end result in mind. I will admit that sometimes I have chosen the wrong destination and often there have been wrong turns, delays, and detours along the way, but the idea of a destination is comforting. Destinations bring a sense of accomplishment. Destinations are the result of thoughtful decisions. The journey to the destination requires planning and hard work. Wrong turns and detours demand evaluation and correction, while arrival brings a sense of success. In my view, the journey toward citizenship incorporates both the spirit of the Sunday afternoon ride and a planned journey toward a destination. While citizenship is our destination, social studies is the route we take to reach that objective.

Growing new citizens is vital to the continuation of our republican form of government and the

CHAPTER 2

Teaching and Learning Social Studies from a Christian Perspective

Social studies explores the world God made, including the universe and especially our planet, Earth, and the plants, animals, and people found in its various habitats. In the great diversity of life, we see the marvelous hand of our awesome God, who in His great love sustains and upholds our world even as He has sent His only Son to pay for the sins of all people.

Social studies and all other subjects can be taught and learned through the following overall goals, which have been the hallmark of the Christian education material prepared by Concordia Publishing House through the years. These materials aim to assist teachers and leaders so that

- through the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, people of all ages may know God, especially His seeking and forgiving love in Christ, and may respond in faith and grow up into Christian maturity;
- seeing themselves as the reconciled, redeemed children of God and individual members of Christ's body, the Church, they may live happily in peace with God, themselves, and their fellow human beings;
- they may be encouraged to express their joy in worship of God and in loving service to others;
- by the grace of God they may value all of God's creative work in His world and Church and witness openly to Christ as the Savior of all people, participating actively in God's mission to the Church and the world;
- they may joyfully live in the Christian hope of new life in Christ now and in eternity.

Social Studies and God

Our loving and almighty God cares for us. He loves and desires to save all people. Any course of instruction about our world and human history

that ignores the Creator and Preserver of all things is incomplete.

For the children of God, learning Social Studies involves a developing knowledge and understanding of the following:

- God
- Ourselves
- Other Christians
- Nonbelievers
- All creation

God's Word teaches these truths:

- God created the holy angels, the universe, our planet, and all things in six days (Genesis 1).
- He created our first parents, Adam and Eve, and through them all people.
- Yielding to the temptation to abandon God's will, Adam and Eve sinned. All of creation suffered sin's devastating consequences.
- Although God made people in His image, that image was lost to our first parents and to all who would come after them through the fall into sin (Genesis 5:3).
- Strife between God and fallen humanity, among people, between people and animals, among animals, and between people and their environment continues as a result of sin (Genesis 3).
- God sent His only Son to live, die, and rise again in order to pay for the sins of all people (2 Corinthians 5:15). Jesus is the Son of God and also true man. Salvation can be found only in Him (Acts 4:12).
- As God who created all things, Jesus exerts control over the forces of nature. For example, He stilled the storm (Luke 8:22–25), and He reversed the natural decaying process when He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38–44).

CHAPTER 3

Using the Ten Strands of Social Studies in Christian Education

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has approved ten strands for social studies education. These ten strands provide a helpful organizing framework for the social studies standards as they are developed and implemented in our nation's schools.

1. Culture
2. Time, Continuity, and Change
3. People, Places, and Environments
4. Individual Development and Identity
5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
6. Power, Authority, and Governance
7. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
8. Science, Technology, and Society
9. Global Connections
10. Civic Ideals and Practices

The NCSS has given permission for the standards and performance expectations charts for students in early grades (k–3), middle grades (4–8), and high school (9–12) to be adapted to incorporate elements of the Christian faith. The adapted standards and expectations charts for each of the strands follow.

1. CULTURE

Effective social studies programs provide instruction and experiences that enable and equip the learner to

Early Grades

- a. *explore and describe* similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures address similar human needs and concerns, recognizing that God made, loves, and died and rose again to save all people;
- b. *give* examples of how experiences may be interpreted differently by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference;
- c. *describe* ways in which language, stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence behavior of people living in a particular culture, giving special consideration to cultural expressions of the Christian faith;
- d. *compare* ways in which people from different cultures think about and deal with their physical environment and social conditions;
- e. *give* examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups, recognizing that our triune God unites all believers in Holy Baptism.

Middle Grade

- a. *compare* similarities and differences in the ways in which God helps and enables groups, societies, and cultures to meet human needs and concerns;
- b. *explain* how information and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference;
- c. *explain and give* examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture, while differentiating how God's people respond to His goodness through the art, literature, music, and architecture of their culture;
- d. *explain* why individuals and groups respond differently to their physical and social environments and/or make changes to them on the basis of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs;
- e. *articulate* the implications of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups, reporting how missionaries spread the Gospel to various cultures.

High School

- a. *analyze and explain* the ways groups, societies, and cultures address human needs and concerns, sorting cultural values into Christian and non-Christian categories;
- b. *predict* how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference and note the unique perspectives that Christians bring to this task;
- c. *apply* an understanding of culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values, and behavior patterns, identifying and interpreting cultural diversity yet biblical unity in Christian art, music, literature, and architecture;
- d. *compare and analyze* societal patterns for preserving and transmitting culture while adapting to environmental or social change;
- e. *demonstrate* the value of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups;
- f. *interpret* patterns of behavior that reflect Christian values and attitudes that contribute to or may pose obstacles to cross-cultural understanding;
- g. *explain and apply* ideas, theories, and modes of inquiry drawn from anthropology and sociology in the examination of persistent issues and social problems, recognizing our fallen yet rescued human condition according to the teachings of God's Word.

CHAPTER 4

Social Studies Curriculum Standards for Students in Grade 8

This chapter includes social studies standards that have been compiled from the individual state departments of education. They are organized, grade by grade, into the following five areas:

1. Geography 
2. History 
3. Society and Culture 
4. Citizenship and Government 
5. Economics 

The standards have been systematized according to the following numerical designations to indicate grade level, area, category, and performance objective:

The first digit indicates the grade level (e.g., the 2 in 2.5.1.8 designates that the performance expectation is for grade 2).

The second digit indicates the area of social studies (as listed above) addressed by the standard (e.g., the 5 in 2.5.1.8 designates the standard as an economic area since 5 is the number for economics).

The third digit identifies a category within the area. These categories are the same at every grade level (e.g., the 1 in 2.5.1.8 relates to the category *Economic systems, institutions, and incentives affect people in many aspects of life*, which is the first category of economics at every grade level).

The fourth digit indicates the number of the specific performance expectation. These expectations will vary from level to level (e.g., the 8 in 2.5.1.8, as found in the economics area of the grade 2 standards relating to the category *Economic systems, institutions, and incentives affect people in many aspects of life*, refers to the eighth item in that category.)

Chapter 5 provides faith-integration activities organized by category. These activities provide many opportunities to teach aspects of the Christian faith in conjunction with each area of the social studies curriculum. Each activity is keyed to a specific performance expectation.

A complete list of social studies standards performance expectations for this grade level is provided on the remaining pages of this chapter.

GEOGRAPHY



- 8.1 Eighth-grade students will have the opportunity to learn geographic skills, to develop their knowledge of the Earth, and to grow in understanding and appreciation of their responsibilities as stewards of all the Earth's resources.**
- 8.1.1 Skill in using geographical tools helps people understand the world from a spatial perspective.**
 - 8.1.1.1 Use a variety of map projections in geographic and historical studies.
 - 8.1.1.2 Construct and interpret maps using directions, grid systems, legends, boundary lines, political units, and scales to inform discussions of historical and current events.
 - 8.1.1.3 Construct a sketch map of the world from memory.
 - 8.1.1.4 Describe how the major regions of the world are interconnected through physical processes such as wind and/or ocean currents.
 - 8.1.1.5 Use the global system of time zones to identify locations and compare times around the world.
 - 8.1.1.6 On a map locate all states, major cities, mountain ranges, and river systems of the United States.
 - 8.1.1.7 Relate the location of mountain ranges and river systems to the development of the United States.
 - 8.1.1.8 Locate the climate regions of the United States on a map, and explain the characteristics of each.
 - 8.1.1.9 Recognize the physical processes behind natural hazards, and identify areas where the hazards are likely to occur.
 - 8.1.1.10 Tell how natural environmental disasters have changed the physical and cultural features of the landscape of a place or region in the United States.
 - 8.1.1.11 Develop the skill to find information using traditional and electronic resources. Use these resources to make and interpret maps, graphs, and tables.
- 8.1.2 The physical characteristics of places and regions influence where and how people live and work (Physical and Human Systems).**
 - 8.1.2.1 Locate and describe the major cultural, economic, political, ecological, and environmental features of Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and North and South America and the processes that created them.
 - 8.1.2.2 Use both traditional and electronic means to describe the world's major patterns of population growth and settlement, its physical features, ecosystems, and cultures.
 - 8.1.2.3 Compare the major world regions with regard to cultures, religions, economies, government systems, environments, gender roles, traditions, and communications.
 - 8.1.2.4 Recognize the effects on environment from the dispersion of European colonists in North America after AD/CE 1500.
 - 8.1.2.5 Describe the changes in boundaries, distribution of population, and economic activities at critical stages of development in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the United States.
 - 8.1.2.6 Tell how the immigrant influx of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has affected the American way of life.
 - 8.1.2.7 Explain the push-pull factors relating to the population movements of the past.
 - 8.1.2.8 Map major human relocation movements of the past, describing changes resulting from those movements, such as changes in religion and language.

CHAPTER 5

Information and Activities for Integrating the Faith as Keyed to Grade 8 Standards

The social studies standards included in this chapter have been compiled from the individual state departments of education and organized grade by grade into the following five areas:

1. Geography 
2. History 
3. Society and Culture 
4. Citizenship and Government 
5. Economics 

The standards have been systematized according to the following numerical designations to indicate grade level, area, category, and performance objective as described on the first page of chapter 4.

Performance expectations are numbered sequentially (e.g., the 8 in 2.5.1.8 is found in the grade 2 area, relating to the category *Economic systems, institutions, and incentives affect people in many aspects of life* and is the eighth item in that category.) A complete list of social studies standards performance expectations for this grade level is provided in chapter 4.

On the pages of chapter 5, you will find an easy-to-reference two-column format for faith integration with the social studies standards. The left-hand column under the heading “Information by Topic” provides helpful teaching background information and insights relevant for integrating some aspect of the Christian faith. The number following the topic identifies the performance expectation to which the topic relates (see chapter 4). Beside each entry, in the right-hand column under the heading “Discussion Points/Activities,” you will find ideas helpful for planning and organizing student learning experiences that reinforce and expand upon these faith connections.

Be sure to consult the index at the end of this volume for a complete listing of topics and where they may be found.



8.1 Eighth-grade students will have the opportunity to learn geographic skills, to develop their knowledge of the Earth, and to grow in understanding and appreciation of their responsibilities as stewards of all the Earth's resources.

8.1.1 Skill in using geographical tools helps people understand the world from a spatial perspective.

Map Projections

Use a variety of map projections in geographic and historical studies. Comment on the sinful human tendency toward pride. Stress that Jesus came to earn forgiveness for these and all other sins of all people.

Stress that each culture not only has a different way to write and say the word *worldview*, they also have different worldviews based on their heritage, religion, and location. A people's worldview influences the way they see themselves in the world and the maps that they make and use. Despite these differing worldviews, Christ does not change; He is the Lord of all people. (8.1.1.1)

- Use the Internet to research and locate various world maps. Look for examples of distorted maps that give an inaccurate though flattering visual image of a country or location's size or importance. What does the Bible teach about all people regardless of where they live?
- Use an online translation dictionary to translate the word *worldview* into as many languages as you can. (e.g., French—*vue de monde*) What is God's view of the world (John 3:16)?

Maps (Interpretations of)

Use maps to illustrate and discuss the current conflict in the Middle East and how it can be traced to biblical times. Review Genesis 16 and Genesis 22. Point out that three of the world's religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—trace their origin to Genesis and the person of Abraham. (8.1.1.2)

- Construct a map of the Holy Land using a Bible atlas and a map of the modern Middle East using a world atlas. Students should include a compass rose, latitude and longitude, political boundaries, legends, and scales when making the maps. Mark sites of special significance to followers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- Report on the significance of Abraham to each of the following religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Maps (World)

As students sketch maps of the world, point out that their way of mapping the Earth is flawed, but the satellite image is a perfect image of the Earth. Likewise, Scripture tells us that our ways are sinful (Genesis 6:12) and God and His Word are perfect (2 Samuel 22:31). Comment on God's love and His forgiveness of sin offered freely to all the world through Jesus. (8.1.1.3)

- Draw a map of the world as best as you can from memory. Compare your map to a satellite image of the world. Write a theme titled "The World as God Sees It."
- Write an essay telling what God sees when He looks at our world from His vantage point.

**Wind and Currents** (Connecting Major Regions)

Talk about the blessing God provided to ocean travelers in past years through wind and currents. Sing or review the words to the song “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.” Direct the students’ attention to the phrase “He’s got the wind and the rain in His hands.” Stress that God has dominion over all of the Earth. Comment on wind and water as God’s Word uses these elements to teach us about the person and work of the Holy Spirit (e.g., John 3:5–8; 7:37–39; Acts 2:1–4; Titus 3:5–8). (8.1.1.4)

- Imagine you are a Christian missionary traveling to the New World in the days when ships were propelled across the ocean by favorable winds and ocean currents. Write an entry in your daily journal reflecting on God’s goodness evidenced through strong wind and steady currents.
- List and annotate Bible verses referring to wind and water as they relate to the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Time Zones

As you show the connection between global time zones and the sun’s path across the sky, note David’s picturesque description in Psalm 19:1–6 of the sun “like a strong man, [who] runs its course with joy,” and “its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them.” (8.1.1.5)

- Discuss how the sun and stars not only determine how we mark time, but also “proclaim the work of [God’s] hands” to the “ends of the world.”
- We generally observe the time of Christ’s crucifixion (12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Good Friday) according to our local time zone. Use a time zone map to determine what time your local observance would take place if you wanted to do it at the actual hour of Christ’s death in the Holy Land.

United States (States, Cities, Mountains, Rivers)

The geographic coordinates of the present State of Israel are 31°30′ N, 34°45′ E. The country covers slightly more than 8,000 square miles, a bit larger than Massachusetts. The Jordan River is about 200 miles long, traveling from the base of Mount Hermon through the Sea of Galilee and ending at the Dead Sea. It makes a winding path 104 miles long from one sea to the next, although the distance between them is only 65 miles. At 1,349 feet below sea level, the Dead Sea lies at the world’s lowest land elevation. (8.1.1.6)

- Construct maps to compare the size and features of the Holy Land with the size and features of the United States or of the region in which you live.
- On a map of the United States, locate the colleges and seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Why does the Synod maintain colleges where it does? Using a map scale, figure out how far each college and seminary is from where you live. Make a chart using a computer program, and arrange the colleges in order of distance from where you live.

**United States** (Mountains and Rivers and the Development of the)

In the late 1830s, a group of 650 Germans emigrated from the port of Bremen to the United States. The group, which would help found The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1847, sailed across the Atlantic and then traveled the Mississippi River through New Orleans to St. Louis. After arriving, they purchased 4,500 acres of undeveloped land on the Mississippi about 100 miles south of St. Louis for the settlements they planned to establish. This was only thirty-four years after Lewis and Clark traveled through St. Louis at the start of their exploration of the Louisiana Purchase and forty-two years before Mark Twain wrote about the Mississippi in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. (8.1.1.7)

- To better understand the challenges and growth of those Lutheran immigrants' lives in Perry County, Missouri, research the history of St. Louis and modes of transportation at the middle of the nineteenth century.
- Report on a local Lutheran or other Christian camp. How does the camp use the mountains and/or rivers in its environment to achieve its objectives?

United States (Climate Regions of)

What was the weather like in Bethlehem when Jesus was born? We don't know what time of year Jesus was actually born, but comparing the Holy Land's climate to particular regions of the United States can help us to better understand Jesus' living conditions. Students may be surprised to learn that Bethlehem occasionally sees snow in December. (8.1.1.8)

- Use climate data from www.weather.com to create graphs showing average temperatures and precipitation in Jerusalem (5 miles from Bethlehem) at various times of the year. Compare findings with your own region's climate. Identify a North American region that is similar in climate to Bethlehem.
- Do you complain about the weather? Read Martin Luther's explanation of the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer. With respect to weather and climate, what does Luther say should be the content of our prayer? Write a prayer regarding the weather and climate of your region.

Natural Hazards

Consider how a variety of hazardous natural events demonstrate God's continuous hands-on creative work on and within the Earth. (8.1.1.9)

- Examine Scripture to find instances of God using hazardous natural events to purposefully act in the world. Discuss whether His purpose behind natural disasters is always to judge specific instances of evil. Read Luke 13:1–5 to reveal the danger in this way of thinking. In fact, God does use natural events to communicate judgment, but also to call us to praise Him as He reveals His power, majesty, and glory.
- Read and study Psalm 29. List the ways the psalmist uses the forces of nature to praise and give glory to God.



INFORMATION BY TOPIC

DISCUSSION POINTS/ACTIVITIES

of the Churches, which according to the truth of the said Gospel is now practiced amongst us; as also in our civil affairs to be guided and governed according to such Laws, Rules, Orders and Decrees as shall be made, ordered, and decreed as followeth.” (8.2.1.5)

French and Indian War (Causes, Effects, and Significance of)

The cause for the conflict known as the French and Indian War could well be summed up in the word *competition*. After the 1750s, the French and English fiercely competed for resources, trade, and economic opportunity in the New World, but the roots of the conflict were in Europe. What is the root of our sinfulness (1 John 3:8; Psalm 51:5; Matthew 15:19)? The French and Indian War was settled by battles. What battle brought victory over sin (Romans 5:6–8; 1 Corinthians 15:55–57)? (8.2.1.6)

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:10–17. What does Paul say was the source of conflict or competition in the Early Church? What does he warn will be a consequence of this conflict if it is not ended (v. 17)?
- British soldiers who came across the ocean to fight the French and Indians in the North American wilderness found themselves engaged in a very different type of fighting—guerilla warfare. Read Ephesians 6:12–18. What new kind of warfare engages a person when he or she becomes a Christian? With what weapons has our loving and gracious God equipped us?

Representative Government (During the Colonial Period)

Explain that the British colonial system allowed and encouraged those living in America to practice representative government, as the government in England had also grown to be. Colonists therefore received training in—and came to expect—representation to the degree that the idea of taxation without representation was grossly appalling and unacceptable to these colonials who were also British subjects. French and Spanish colonists were not as adequately prepared to govern themselves democratically. (8.2.1.7)

- Review Exodus 18:12–27. Draw a diagram to explain the form of representative government Moses’ father-in-law suggested. Explain the advantages associated with this approach.
- Investigate and identify forms of representative government existing in your congregation’s governing structure.

Great Awakening

Explain that the Great Awakening was a series of religious revivals that swept over the American colonies about the middle of the eighteenth century. William Tennent and Jonathan Edwards are credited with starting the Great Awakening. They believed that the role of emotion in a person’s spiritual life need not be ignored. Edwards stressed also the role of the individual in his or her relationship with God. For background regarding the

- Analyze this segment from the sermon of Jonathan Edwards titled “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” preached in 1741. “The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his



INFORMATION BY TOPIC

Great Awakening and the similarity of current religious movements to the Great Awakening, see this Web site article at <http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us:8080/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/grawaken.htm>. (8.2.1.8)

DISCUSSION POINTS/ACTIVITIES

sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment.” Is this section biblically accurate? Does it contain both Gospel as well as Law? If not, what is the message that needs to be added?

- Evaluate the role of emotion in some of the sermons preached on television.
- To have an awakening assumes that people have fallen asleep. In terms of their faith, what factors in American life during the Colonial period and the years after the founding of the United States would cause people to fall asleep spiritually? How could settling in a new land cause a person to fall asleep?
- What evidence is there to indicate that the leaders at the time of the Great Awakening (George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, John and Charles Wesley) taught people that they were responsible for their own salvation? How would this spirit contribute to a desire for representative government?
- Debate this question: Is emotion helpful or unhelpful in a person’s spiritual life?
- What contributions did the Lutheran Salzburger of Georgia make to Colonial society?

Declaration of Independence

Read the following stirring section of the Declaration of Independence. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Comment that in 1776 Congress asked Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams to propose concepts for the Great Seal of the United States. Franklin’s ideas were an adaptation of the parting of the Red Sea. Jefferson’s idea was God leading the children of Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Though neither concept was accepted, both ideas give evidence for the prominence of biblical images in the culture of the day. (8.2.1.9)

- Analyze the beginning words of the Declaration of Independence. Are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness rights currently enjoyed by all people? If not, who is excluded and why? Write a theme telling what we as Christians might do to extend these rights to those currently denied them, such as those conceived but not yet born, persons with handicaps, or the elderly.
- Design a great seal for your life to illustrate God’s love, protection, and care for you.
- What are the rights and privileges of a Christian? Concerning the rights and privileges of a Christian, how are we able to live out those rights and privileges in America because of the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence?