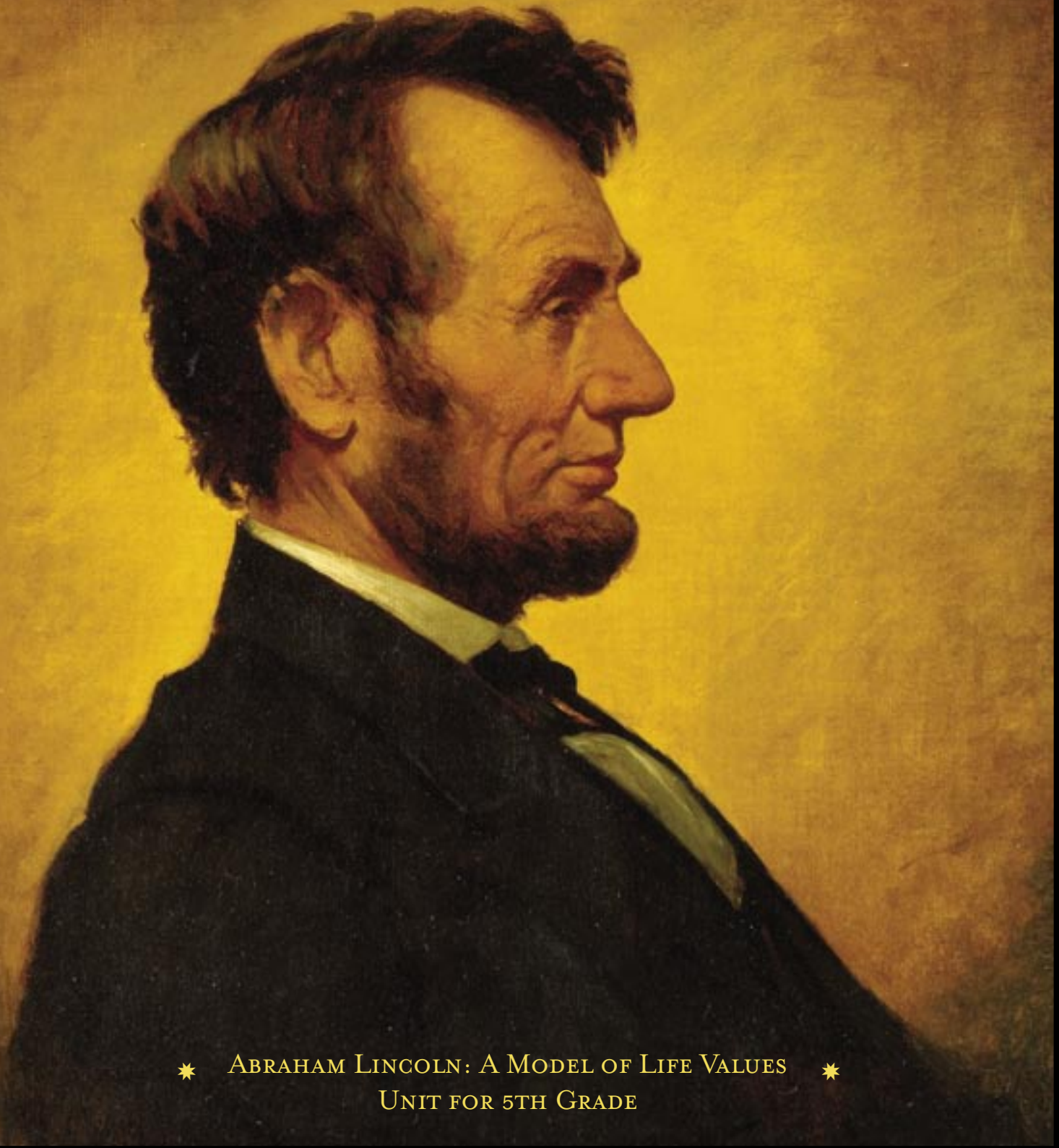


# LEARNING WITH LINCOLN

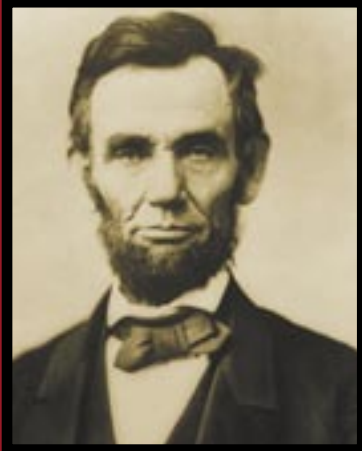


★ ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A MODEL OF LIFE VALUES ★  
UNIT FOR 5TH GRADE

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Lincoln Financial Group is pleased to provide the following curriculum guide introducing students to the core life values Abraham Lincoln represents. Lincoln Financial Group proudly observes these six life values through their business practices. Through shared ownership and an emphasis on personal excellence in the workplace and beyond, Lincoln Financial Group encourages all employees to live up to the stellar model of our nation's sixteenth president. Through the following activities, Lincoln Financial Group strives to inspire young people to embrace these six values in their daily lives.

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# LEARNING WITH LINCOLN

## TO THE TEACHER:

This lesson encourages students to learn about Abraham Lincoln as an historical figure and as a human who exemplified certain personal values. It combines a history lesson with notions of character development. President Lincoln was known for his self-deprecating humor, and was not without his own limitations. However, his story provides a useful illustration of six important values and practices: the commitment to excellence, integrity, responsibility, fairness, respect, and the commitment to diversity.

## Recommended Materials

- Dictionaries
- Folder, spiral notebook section, or binder section for each student to serve as a unit journal and vocabulary list
- Resources on Lincoln's life (Refer to Resource list)
- Six pieces of colorful construction paper, tape, and bright markers

**Before You Begin:** It would be helpful if your students have some familiarity with Abraham Lincoln. In-class orientation may include timeline and map activities. Creating a timeline of Lincoln's life, with ten or twelve recognized events, builds chronological understanding. Locating five or six key places in his life encourages mapping skills and competency in geography. Both classroom activities will add to the richness of your students' understanding.

In large block letters, write one of the values on one piece of construction paper with the markers, for a total of six pieces of paper. Tape these prominently around the classroom.

**Introduce Vocabulary:** The six life values include words that are complex for many fifth graders. It is important that your students have a clear understanding of what these words mean. Some of the words, such as "respect," may be heard daily, while others, such as "integrity," are more challenging. As homework, in class, or during a school library period, students should define the six values, either in small groups of two or three or individually.

**The Lincoln Life Values Are The Commitment To Excellence, Integrity, Responsibility, Fairness, Respect, And The Commitment to Diversity.**

Review the meanings of the Lincoln life values with your students. Definitions then may be written on the wall board, possibly by different students. In their journals or notebooks, each student should use each of the life values as a heading on a piece of paper, and provide the definition under it. They should have a total of six labeled pages. (You may want them to exchange notebooks to check each other's work.)

**Information for Your Class:** Lincoln is one of the American presidents who is respected throughout the world. Where do we see his face every day? (*On a penny.*) One reason why he is still remembered and respected long after his death is because he followed these life values.

**LINCOLN LIFE VALUE 1: THE COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE**

Abraham Lincoln consistently sought to educate himself, do his best and overcome any obstacles.

**Student Reading:** *The following may be read aloud by a student in class.*

Abraham Lincoln was born into a very poor family. His father and stepmother barely knew how to read. He could not go to school very often because he had to do farm work to help his family. There were not always schools near where he lived. But he wanted to learn. He read as many books as he could find. He did not have a lot of money to buy books. And books were not easy to buy on the frontier. When he was a teenager, he walked six miles to borrow a book! He strongly believed that education was very important. He was committed to excellence.

When Abe grew up, he became a lawyer, a politician, and finally the President of the United States. His commitment to excellence helped him achieve these goals.

**Journal Activity:** Students should write in their journal an example of Lincoln's commitment to excellence. They may use the information in the passage above, or information they find in other sources. Why do they believe that commitment to excellence is important? Ask the students to write an example of commitment to excellence by someone they know. It may be a family member, a sports figure, or a friend. What about themselves? What is their commitment to excellence? Over the course of a week, they should write in their journals examples of commitment to excellence that they find in their lives.

**LINCOLN LIFE VALUE 2: INTEGRITY**

Abraham Lincoln stood by his principles and was honest with people.

**Student Reading:** *The following may be read aloud by students in the class.*

Abraham Lincoln has a nickname. He is called "Honest Abe." One reason why he has that nickname is because he had integrity. He stood up for his beliefs. If he made a promise, he followed through with it. And he did not pretend to be someone he wasn't. Abe did not hide his family background.

Even after he became successful, he did not change his values. During the Civil War, when he was president, he was visiting an army camp. There was a pile of wood that needed to be chopped for the fire. He grabbed an ax and began chopping firewood. Soldiers who saw

him were amazed. They thought he was too important to do a task like that. But Abe had integrity. He always remembered from where he came.

**Journal Activity:** The journal activities for integrity and the following four values are built on the same model as the activity for commitment to excellence. Students should write in their journal an example of Lincoln's integrity. They may use the information in the passage above, or information they find in other sources. Why do they believe that integrity is important? Ask the students to write an example of integrity in someone they know. It may be a family member, a teacher, a sports figure, or a friend. What about themselves? Do they have integrity? Over the course of a week, they should write in their journals examples of integrity that they find in their lives.

**LINCOLN LIFE VALUE 3: RESPONSIBILITY**

Abraham Lincoln took his familial and professional roles seriously, always accepting his duties and honoring his commitments.

**Student Reading:** *The following may be read aloud by a student in class.*

Abe Lincoln had a strong sense of responsibility as a young man. He worked for his father clearing land and taking care of the farm. He also worked for other farmers. Because his family had many children, there were many expenses. Until he was 21, Abe gave all his wages to his father to help support the family. He might have left home, or kept the money he earned. But even as a teenager, Abe was very responsible. He knew his parents relied on him.

**Journal Activity:** Students should write in their journal an example of Lincoln's sense of responsibility. They may use the information in the passage above, or information they find in other sources. Why do they believe that responsibility is important? Ask the students to write an example of responsibility in someone they know. It may be a family member, a teacher, a sports figure, or a friend. What about themselves? Do they have a sense of responsibility? Over the course of a week, they should write in their journals examples of responsibility that they find in their lives.

**LINCOLN LIFE VALUE 4: FAIRNESS**

Throughout his life, Abraham Lincoln not only treated those around him with fairness, he also fought for the right of every man to have the opportunity to financially advance.

**Primary Source Activity:** Using primary sources is an important part of studying history. Your students should understand that there is a difference between a secondary source, such as a textbook, and a primary source, such as an eyewitness account of an event. A secondary source is written after the event has occurred, and generally combines information from different sources to give a more complete picture. A primary source is the exact words of the original document, speech, or interview. In this case, the primary source is a selection from one of Lincoln's speeches.

Lincoln presented this speech in March 1860, in New Haven, CT. Below is a quote from that speech. You may copy the passage and distribute it, or write it on the wall board. It will be challenging for your fifth graders to read and comprehend. Read it aloud once in class. Working in small groups, your students should paraphrase the quote in their own words, so that their comprehension can be assessed.

"When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition.... I want every man to have a chance — and I believe a black man is entitled to it — in which he can better his condition — when he may look forward and hope to be a hired laborer this year and the next, work for himself afterwards, and finally to hire men to work for him...."



— ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
*Speech in New Haven, Connecticut*  
 March 6, 1860

**Document-based questions.** You as the teacher may cut and paste these questions to leave out the answers.

1. When and where did Lincoln give this speech? Was Lincoln president at the time?
2. What does the phrase "When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life" mean? How would we express that today? *(Possible answers include: most people are born poor, few people start their life with money. "Race of life" refers to life's pathway.)*
3. Today it is accepted that all people, regardless of color, should have the chance to better themselves. We call it equality of opportunity. In 1860, not everyone agreed with that principle. How do you think the audience responded to Lincoln's speech? Who would not like this speech? *(Background for the teacher: Although many people in the North and the South did not believe in racial equality, the folks in Hartford, Connecticut and in New England generally were opposed to slavery by 1860. Slaveholders would not like this speech.)*
4. What does "better his condition" mean?
5. Why doesn't Lincoln include women in this quote about economic fairness? *(Women of all races were considered second-class citizens. Their condition usually depended on their fathers and husbands.)*
6. How does Lincoln describe the process of equal economic opportunity? What are the stages from being poor to being comfortable? *(Working for hire, working for oneself, and finally hiring other laborers.)*

**Journal Activity:** Have students write in their journal about an unfair situation they have experienced or witnessed. They should answer the following:

Have they ever treated someone unfairly? Why is it important to be fair to others? Is life always fair? Why or why not?

## LINCOLN LIFE VALUE 5: RESPECT

**Treat others with the same respect with which you hope they treat you.**

**Student Reading:** *The following may be read aloud by a student in class.*

Abraham Lincoln respected people from many different backgrounds. During the Civil War, he met Union soldiers and their families from all walks of life. He showed respect to poor widows and to Supreme Court justices. Perhaps most impressive is that he respected the Confederates who were his enemy. In 1865, after he had been elected for another term, he gave his second inaugural address. It is one of his most famous speeches. In it he urged Americans to have "charity towards all, malice towards none." Tragically, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated the month after he gave this moving speech.

**Vocabulary Activity:** Look up the words "charity" and "malice." What do they mean? Often when we use the word "charity" today we mean an organization that does good works for people in need. What did Abe Lincoln mean? *(Kindness and respect.)*

Why did Lincoln encourage "charity towards all, malice towards none"? The Civil War was ending. What was he worried that people might do? *(He was worried that the Northerners would be very cruel to the Southerners.)* How does this demonstrate Lincoln's belief in treating others with respect? *(He did not want the losers in the war to be dishonored and badly treated.)*

**Journal Activity:** Ask your students the following questions for their journal activity. Have you ever felt that someone has treated you with no respect? How did that make you feel? Have you ever treated someone else without respect? How might you be more respectful in the future? Why is it important to show people respect even when you are playing a game? How should winners treat losers in a game? Over the next two weeks, keep track of times that you were treated with respect, and tried to show respect to others.

## LINCOLN LIFE VALUE 6: COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Differences in race, religion, and background bring strength when people respect each other.

**Student Reading:** *The following may be read aloud by a student in class.*

Perhaps Abraham Lincoln is most famous for the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the slaves in the states that had joined the Confederacy. The Emancipation Proclamation did not free all slaves, but it was a giant step in the direction of freedom. Lincoln's commitment to diversity was not limited to enslaved African-Americans. He believed that people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, including immigrants and Native Americans, should be treated fairly too.

The phrase "commitment to diversity" is a new one. Lincoln would probably have said "tolerance." But in some ways a commitment to diversity is more than tolerance. It implies more than different types of people should be tolerated. It says that different types of people working together make the world a richer, more exciting place.

### Questions for Students

1. What was the Emancipation Proclamation?
2. What does "commitment to diversity" mean?
3. What other Lincoln life values are part of a commitment to diversity? (*Fairness, respect, integrity.*)

**Journal Activity:** Students should write a journal entry about what diversity means to them. They should give an example of something positive they have learned from someone of a different background or religion.

**In-class Brainstorming:** What are the advantages of diversity? What would it be like to live in a country where everyone was the same?

Lincoln Financial Group observes these six life values through their business practices. They also believe in the importance of employee ownership. Lincoln Financial Group encourages all employees to express their commitment to and pride in the Lincoln enterprise by becoming a shareholder. Employee ownership increases interest in corporate affairs and demonstrates pride and confidence in the organization.

The National Constitution Center presents *Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War*, sponsored by Lincoln Financial Group, June 10 through November 4, 2005 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Produced in association with The Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, Indiana, *Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War* illustrates how Lincoln's leadership and constitutional vision steered the nation through its most turbulent years and into a future that forever changed America.

# RESOURCES

## WEBSITES

**"Learning with Lincoln"**

[Historychannel.com/classroom/lincolnlearning](http://Historychannel.com/classroom/lincolnlearning)

**"Abraham Lincoln."** ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM.

[alincolin-library.com](http://alincolin-library.com)

**"Abraham Lincoln."** AMERICA'S STORY FROM AMERICA'S LIBRARY, THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

[americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/Lincoln](http://americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/Lincoln)

**"Abraham Lincoln."** THE HISTORY PLACE.

[historyplace.com/lincoln/index.html](http://historyplace.com/lincoln/index.html)

**"Abraham Lincoln."** THE WHITE HOUSE.

[whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/al16.html](http://whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/al16.html)

**"Abraham Lincoln Birthplace."** NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

[nps.gov/abli/](http://nps.gov/abli/)

**"Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress."** THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND KNOX COLLEGE.

[memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/malhome.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/malhome.html)

**"Civil War Photographs: Abraham Lincoln."** ABOUT.

[7I2educators.about.com/cs/historycw/l/blewphlincoln.htm](http://7I2educators.about.com/cs/historycw/l/blewphlincoln.htm)

**"Education Links."** THE LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION.

[lincolnbicentennial.gov/links-new.html](http://lincolnbicentennial.gov/links-new.html)

**"Education Links."** ABRAHAM LINCOLN ONLINE.

[showcase.netins.net/web/creative/Lincoln/education/educate.htm](http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/Lincoln/education/educate.htm)

**"Lincoln Home."** NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

[nps.gov/liho/](http://nps.gov/liho/)

**"Lincoln: The Constitution and The Civil War."** NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER.

[constitutioncenter.org](http://constitutioncenter.org)

**"The Lincoln Memorial."** NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

[nps.gov/linc/home/htm](http://nps.gov/linc/home/htm)

**"The Lincoln Museum."** THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

[thelincolinmuseum.org](http://thelincolinmuseum.org)

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## BOOKS FOR YOUNG ADULT READERS

Bausum, Ann. *Our Country's Presidents*. Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2001.

Bracken, Thomas, Sandra Stotsky, and James Scott. *Abraham Lincoln*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1998.

Davis, Kenneth C. *Don't Know Much About Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Harper Collins Children's Books, 2004.

Freedman, Russell. *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. New York: Clarion Books, 1989.

Harness, Cheryl. *Abe Lincoln Goes to Washington: 1837–1865*. Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1997.

Judson, Karen. *Abraham Lincoln*. Springfield: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 1998.

Marrin, Albert. *Commander in Chief: Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1997.

North, Sterling. *Abe Lincoln, Log Cabin to White House*. New York: Landmark Books, Random House, 1993.