

LEARNING WITH LINCOLN

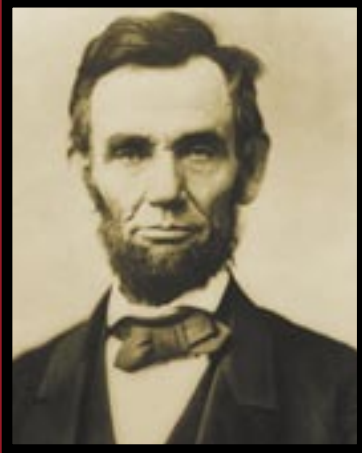


★ ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A MODEL OF LIFE VALUES ★
UNIT FOR 8TH GRADE

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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.



LEARNING WITH LINCOLN

TO THE TEACHER:

Materials You Will Need: Dictionaries, six large pieces of construction paper or posterboard, background readings on Abraham Lincoln, notebooks or paper for each student.

Preparation: These lessons are based upon the life values Abraham Lincoln represents. You can provide students with an easy way of remembering the life values by writing them on posterboard or construction paper and posting them throughout your classroom. Additionally, you can provide a framework for the unit and the historical context for Abraham Lincoln's life by having students define the following vocabulary terms in their notebooks or journals: life value, commitment to excellence, integrity, responsibility, fairness, respect, diversity, militia, emancipate, emigrate, liberty, suffrage, consecrate, hallow, detract, militia and resolution.

UNIT LESSON PLANS

This unit on the life values of Abraham Lincoln can be taught on its own or incorporated into a broader unit on the Civil War.

LESSON 1: INTRODUCE THE LIFE VALUES

1. A good way to introduce Abraham Lincoln is by asking students to reflect on the image of his face which is part of our everyday lives. You can start by asking students, "Whose face is on the penny?" Follow up with a discussion of why they think President Lincoln is on the penny and what his image in American culture represents. Then introduce the six life values Abraham Lincoln's life represents (commitment to excellence, integrity, responsibility, fairness, respect, and diversity). You can explain to students that you will discuss the ways President Lincoln's life provides examples of these values, and that they will be able to add additional life values to the list as the unit proceeds.
2. Have students break up into six groups. Have the students look up each value in the dictionary and write the definitions on a vocabulary sheet for this unit or in their notebooks. Ask your students to give examples of these life values from their daily lives. (Teachers may choose to also have students research the origins of each word in order to build vocabulary.)
3. Have students break up into six groups. Assign each group to one of the life values. Have them research the life of Abraham Lincoln at the library, using the Internet, or by using background reading that your class has read or that you have compiled. Ask each group to find three ways Lincoln represented the life value they have been assigned, and write them down in a few paragraphs. Then ask each group to designate three students to report back to the class in a short oral presentation of 5 to 10 minutes.

Incorporating photographs, paintings and sketches found in some of the books and websites provided would enhance all of the lessons.

LESSON 2: COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

1. In order to teach the Commitment to Excellence value, students should learn about Abraham Lincoln's childhood and young adult life through reading stories (see attached listing of suggested readings and resources). Students should take notes about the ways Lincoln demonstrated his commitment to excellence.

Content covered within the reading should include the following:

- Lincoln's impoverished beginnings, including his hard work during childhood.
- His great ambition to be educated. While his formal education ended when he was 15, Lincoln buried himself in books as one of the great "self-taught" leaders in American history. Lincoln famously walked six miles to borrow *English Grammar* by Samuel Kirkham, and spent hours alone reciting poetry and studying math. In 1837, Lincoln became a lawyer after following his own course of study on Illinois law.
- Lincoln's determination to continue his drive for education even given his lack of financial resources and his failures in various ventures (such as opening a store).
- Lincoln's attempt to win a seat in the Illinois State Legislature in 1832 despite his lack of experience and young age (he was only 23 years old), and his eventual success after this initial loss.
- His dedication to creating a better world through building public education, civic life, and democratic values.



2. After reading about Lincoln's life, ask students to break up into groups of four or five. Ask each group to reenact an episode in Lincoln's life that they think best demonstrates the value of commitment to excellence. Possible options for this activity include performing a skit, drawing a comic strip, writing a poem or singing a song. Encourage students to be creative, and to include examples from Lincoln's life and work in their presentations.
3. Ask students to pick one representative from their group to explain how their project reflects this life value.
4. After the presentations have been completed, lead the class in a discussion about Lincoln's commitment to excellence. How did Lincoln's commitment to excellence affect his life? What were some of the pivotal moments in his life when Lincoln chose excellence when he could have opted for an easier route? What were some of the compromises or sacrifices he had to make in order to stay committed to this value?

5. Ask students to reflect on these projects in their journals or in short essays. For this assignment, ask them to write a short essay or story about an example of someone else in their lives who they think embodies the commitment to excellence Lincoln represents. They may also choose events in their own lives in which they overcome difficulties or challenges. You can ask for student volunteers to share their journal entries with the larger class or group.

LESSON 3: INTEGRITY

1. Introducing students to the story of Abraham Lincoln's co-ownership of a store with William F. Berry will illustrate his honesty and integrity. The following are some of the details you may want to present in a short lecture:

- J. Rowan Herndon sold each of the men half the store. Neither buyer had enough money for their share of the store, so they signed individual promissory notes.
- The store failed and soon afterward Berry died.
- Berry's estate could not pay for the loan and even though Lincoln did not have the legal obligation to pay it, he took responsibility for paying the loan. It took him 15 years to pay over \$1,000.

Follow-up Questions:

Why do you think Lincoln took on Berry's loan?

Why does this story show Lincoln's integrity?

Would you have taken on Berry's loan?

2. Divide the class into at least four groups with a minimum of 3 students in each group. Each group is responsible for creating a posterboard which presents the history of the events listed below. This project will capture the ways Lincoln achieved this life value throughout his political life. Students can use images of Lincoln, quotes from his speeches, and images of the specific topics on their posterboard in order to represent the topic or issues. Topics can include:

- His opposition to the Mexican War (1846) at his own political expense.
- His anti-slavery stance.
- His advocacy of public education.
- His support in certain instances of workers' right to strike.

3. Ask for students to designate one person from their group to present the posterboard to the class, and to discuss Lincoln's approach to the issue citing specific examples from his life and work.

4. In order for students to grasp the interconnectedness of the six life values, ask them to discuss how Lincoln's integrity as a leader went hand in hand with other values such as fairness, responsibility and respect.

5. As a supplement to this unit, ask students to research a contemporary example of an event or action in which integrity is displayed by an individual or group. Sources for these stories could include newspapers, magazine articles, or television news stories. In a short essay of 2-3 pages, ask students to describe the event or issue and how it is an example of integrity in action.



LESSON 4: RESPONSIBILITY

1. Ask students to brainstorm about the word “responsibility.” In what ways do people hold them responsible? What are they expected to provide? In what ways are your students responsible for themselves and for others? What tasks and activities are required in their lives? What are their priorities?
2. Set up a scenario for your students involving Lincoln’s life. At the time when Lincoln was growing up, sons were bound to their families until 21 years of age. On the frontier, sons and daughters worked to support the family, whether in the field, within the home or by being “rented” out. Have your students imagine living at home and always turning all of their hard-earned money over to their father, when they’d rather leave home and have their own careers. Ask students to write a short essay describing whether or not they would leave home and why.
3. Have students discuss the following questions:
 - a. Why do you think Lincoln decided to stay with his family?
 - b. In what ways was Lincoln responsible to his father and stepmother?
 - c. Why was it important for Lincoln to have a sense of responsibility?
 - d. What are our legal obligations versus our social responsibilities? Is there a distinction? Do we ever have responsibilities that go outside the bounds of the law? Can you think of historical examples (hint: the life of Martin Luther King, Jr.)?
 - e. Why is it important for one to have a sense of responsibility?
 - f. Can someone still have integrity and a commitment to excellence if they are not responsible? Can she/he be respectful?
 - g. How else have we witnessed Lincoln being responsible?
 - h. What responsibility do corporations have to society?
4. Have your students write a song or a poem about why being responsible is important, which may include the various ways one can be responsible.
5. Have students write in their journal about a time that they felt the largest sense of responsibility. Ask them to describe the situation and how they handled the responsibility. How did it feel to have responsibility? Does the student think he/she acted responsibly?

LESSON 5: FAIRNESS

1. Lead students in a discussion of experiences they remember in which they were treated unfairly. Ask one of them to explain such a scenario to the class. Does this action seem fair to the larger class or group? What would have been fair in this situation? Why is it bothersome when we experience something as unfair? Why is fairness an important value for all of us to uphold?

2. Provide each student with a copy of the following excerpt and have a student read it aloud to the class. Lead students in a discussion about the quote and have them summarize in their own words what they think it means.

“When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition; he knows that there is no fixed condition of labor for his whole life...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, March 6, 1860*

3. Lead students in a discussion of the following questions:
- What do you think is Lincoln’s main message in this section of the speech?
 - How does this speech reflect Lincoln’s dedication to fairness?
 - What are some of the other words you would use to describe Lincoln’s belief that anyone can eventually “better [their] condition”? (Examples: democracy, opportunity, “the American dream.”)
 - Was Lincoln’s belief that African-Americans should be able to advance typical of his time period? Which groups in society would have agreed with his view?
 - Think about the date Lincoln gave this speech (1860). What is the historical context in which he gave this speech? Who do you think his audience was for the speech?
4. To conclude the study of this life value, ask students to write a journal entry describing to a five-year-old child why fairness is an important life value. Ask them to be sure to give at least one example of how Abraham Lincoln is an example of how to live fairly. They can also add examples of fairness in their own lives or in contemporary society in their journal entries.

LESSON 6: RESPECT

- I. Abraham Lincoln always had a great respect for the law. He warned that a failure to observe the nation’s laws could destroy freedoms in the United States, and he argued that respect for the law “become the political religion of the nation” (he said this before age 30). Lead your students in a discussion of this quote. Ask them to discuss the following questions:
- What does it mean to make the law “the political religion” of the U.S.?
 - Why would Lincoln think that one person disobeying the law could hurt the freedoms we have in society?
 - Do you think there are times when it is appropriate to disagree with or dispute a law? When? Which ones do you disagree with?

2. By using Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address and his Gettysburg Address, students will teach one another about the respect Lincoln showed others. Separate the class into groups of about four. Distribute one of the quotes below to half of the groups and the other to the other half of the groups. Ask each group to read the excerpt and discuss the corresponding questions.

“In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war....We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.”

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN, *First Inaugural Address*, March 4, 1861

- a. Who were Lincoln’s “dissatisfied fellow-countrymen”?
- b. What is the main message of this quote?
- c. Why do you think Lincoln stresses that, despite political differences, the nation must not become enemies of one another?
- d. In what way does this statement reflect Lincoln’s commitment to being respectful?

“We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.”

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN, *Gettysburg Address*, November 19, 1863

- a. What events had transpired at Gettysburg before Lincoln gave this speech?
- b. Why does Lincoln believe the men who fought should be honored?
- c. What does the word consecrate mean? Why does Lincoln believe the land cannot be consecrated?
- d. In what ways does this quote reflect Lincoln’s commitment to respect?
- e. In what ways does our nation respect soldiers who have died during war?

LESSON 7: DIVERSITY

1. Provide each student with a copy of the following excerpt from the 1850s and have a student read it aloud to the class. Have the students suggest their interpretations.

“When the Know-Nothings [a political party] get control, [The Declaration of Independence] will read ‘all men are created equal except negroes and foreigners and Catholics.’ When it comes to this, I shall prefer immigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty.”

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 1850s

- a. How do the Know-Nothings feel about diversity?

(Background note: The Know-Nothing Party was formed out of fear of the new and increased immigration in the U.S. and was founded on racism and religious bias. Many members of this party feared job competition, and they expressed their fears by resorting to stereotypes and hatred in their efforts to maintain financial security.)
 - b. How does Lincoln feel about the Know-Nothings and their political stance?
 - c. Why does Lincoln oppose their stance on immigration and the role of African-Americans and Catholics in American society?
 - d. What does Lincoln’s message say about his view of diversity?
2. Ask your students to research Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation at the library, using the Internet, or by reading the background reading you have provided. Ask students to write an editorial in which they take a stance either for or against Lincoln’s proclamation. Be sure to have them remember the historical context in which Lincoln lived. They will want to identify the location of the paper their editorial would be published in, and how that would affect their position. After they have completed their editorials, ask students to present their stance in an oral presentation of 3 minutes or less. Then, lead the larger class or group in a discussion of how the Emancipation Proclamation relates to diversity in American society.
 3. Diversity is a life value that can relate to many aspects of social life. There are many kinds of diversity – racial diversity, age diversity, and gender diversity. The effort to achieve women’s rights often went hand in hand with efforts to achieve racial diversity. At times, these two goals were at odds as in the passage of the 14th Amendment which defined the right to vote as a male right. In 1864, the former slave and activist Sojourner Truth went to visit Abraham Lincoln at the White House. At the library, using the Internet, or using the background reading you have provided, have students research the 1864 visit. Ask your students to answer the following questions:
 - a. Who was Sojourner Truth? Where was she born?

- b. In what year did Sojourner Truth visit Abraham Lincoln at the White House?
- c. What were the issues and concerns Sojourner Truth brought to the White House?
- d. To whom did the 14th Amendment extend voting rights?
- e. When did women officially get the right to vote?
- f. How does the visit of Sojourner Truth to the White House reflect Lincoln's dedication to diversity?

Students should write a journal entry about what has surprised them about Lincoln and what value they have found most important. Also, students should write about what diversity means to them and provide an example of something positive they have learned from someone different from them. These should be shared in class along with a brainstorming about the advantages of diversity.

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

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

alincolln-library.com

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

americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/lincoln

"Abraham Lincoln." THE HISTORY PLACE.

historyplace.com/lincoln/index.html

"Abraham Lincoln." THE WHITE HOUSE.

whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/al16.html

"Abraham Lincoln Birthplace." NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

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

"Civil War Photographs: Abraham Lincoln." ABOUT.

712educators.about.com/cs/historycw/l/blewphlincoln.htm

"Education Links." THE LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION.

lincolnbicentennial.gov/links-new.html

"Education Links." ABRAHAM LINCOLN ONLINE.

showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/education/educate.htm

"Lincoln Home." NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

nps.gov/liho/

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

constitutioncenter.org

"The Lincoln Memorial." NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

nps.gov/linc/home/htm

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

thelincollnmuseum.org

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.