

# Activity Day!

## Outline & Printable Resources



This Month's Lesson:

## The Valor of Virtue

### Suggested Activity and Discussion for Kids

*Depending on the size and makeup of your group, you may want to divide the children into age groups for the different activities.*

### Opening

- Prayer
- Pledge of Allegiance (*located in the General Resource pdf*) You can have one of the children hold a small flag or use a larger flag. This is a great opportunity to teach the children respect and proper care and folding of the flag.)
- Recite Preamble to the U.S. Constitution (*located in the General Resource pdf, doing this each day as a family will have your children memorizing it in no time at all.*)

**Theme Story:** Reflecting the Light of Virtue

**Story & Discussion:** The Nobility of a Boy

**Discussion & Activity:** The Golden Rule, Ben Franklin—pursuit of a virtuous life

**Story & Discussion:** Public Virtue

**Project:** Making Lanterns

### Closing

- Read/Recite "The American's Creed" (*located in the General Resource pdf*)
- Prayer
- Announce the next month's theme and date/location for next Activity Day

## Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Review the entire outline to consider how best to present the activities to each age group.
  - Cut out the copies of the preamble and American's Creed to have on hand, or use copies from the previous Activity Day.
  - Bring an American Flag for the Pledge of Allegiance.
  - Review pages 6-9 for three stories to read.
  - Print the Golden Rule and Public Virtue graphics from page 5
  - Making Lanterns Project. View the how-to video and instructions located on page 10. Collect the items needed for this activity.
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### **Theme Story and Discussion:** Read *Reflecting the Light of Virtue*

(See page 6)

#### **Discussion prompt questions:**

1. How did Ben Franklin help his community?
2. How did his example influence others?
3. Did the government require Ben Franklin to post the lantern outside his door?
4. Ben Franklin provided light in the darkness. What are some things we can do to be a light in our community?

### **Story & Discussion:** Read *The Nobility of a Boy* (See page 7-8)

1. Why do you think the money weighed so heavy in the boy's pocket?
2. Why did he think it was okay to take the money?
3. Why did he decide it wasn't the right thing to do?
4. Do you think it was hard for the boy to give the money back and confess what he did?
5. Since the boy took the money in secret, why didn't he just give it back in secret? Wouldn't that have been easier?
6. What did you learn from this story?

### **Discussion & Activity:** The Golden Rule, Ben Franklin—pursuit of a virtuous life

The Golden Rule is a simple and yet profound way to teach children about personal accountability as well as personal and public (or civic) virtue.

- Display the Ben Franklin “Golden Rule” graphic to lead this discussion (see graphic “Golden Rule” on page 5)

The Golden Rule is to treat others the way we want to be treated. Does that mean treat only people who are nice to us the way we want to be treated?

The highest level of the Golden Rule is to treat even people who are mean to us the way we want to be treated. If everyone lived the Golden Rule, the world would be a much kinder place. Some form of the Golden Rule exists in almost every culture.

- **Christianity:** Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31)
  - **Judaism:** What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. That is the entire law; all the rest is commentary. (The Talmud, Shabbat 31)
  - **Hinduism:** This is the sum of duty: Do naught unto others which would cause pain if done to you. (The Mahabharata) *Hindu Proverb: Help thy brother's boat across and lo! thine own has reached the shore.*
  - **Islam:** None of you has faith unless he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. (Hadith 2:6)
  - **Buddhism:** Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. (Udana Varga)
  - **Confucianism:** “Is there one word that will keep us on the path to the end of our days?” “Yes, Reciprocity. What you do not wish yourself, do not unto others.” (The Analects)
1. Why do you think the Golden Rule is a universal rule of society?
  2. How can living the Golden Rule ourselves make our communities safer?
  3. What does the story of The Good Samaritan in the Bible (Luke 10:25-37) teach us about the Golden Rule?

### **Story & Discussion:** Public Virtue (see graphic “Public Virtue” on page 5 for this discussion)

Explain to the children that Public Virtue (also known as Civic Virtue) is the dedication of citizens to the common good of the country or community, even at the cost of their individual interests.

- Show the Video “**What is Civic Virtue?**”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANl4MqtHBxg>

- Read the *Nathan Hale Story* (See page 8-9)

1. How did Nathan Hale demonstrate public virtue?

2. Can you think of other people in history that demonstrated public virtue?

*(example: signers of the Declaration of Independence pledged their lives, fortunes, sacred honor)*

3. What are some ways we can demonstrate public virtue ourselves?

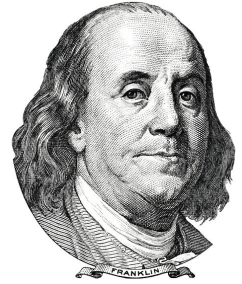
**Project:** Making Lanterns (See how-to video and instructions page 10)

Print this page to display the *Ben Franklin Golden Rule* and *Public Virtue* to lead discussions.



## Reflecting the Light of Virtue

One night, long before street lighting was heard of, as Benjamin Franklin sat cooling himself by an open window, he heard a man stumble and fall on the uneven cobblestones in front of his door. The man obviously hurt himself judging by the words he growled while picking himself back up.



Franklin made note of what had happened and said to himself, "It is evident that I am, in a sense, the cause of this man's fall. Had there been a light in my window it would have shone on the street and so prevented his misfortune."

The next morning he hurried to the lantern maker's shop. The shopkeeper asked if he was looking for a small lantern to light his way as he walked in the night. "Oh, no," was Franklin's reply. "My friend, I want a huge lantern with wide light spaces on four sides and I want a good strong rack to hang it from." Mr. Franklin then pointed to the largest lanterns in the shop.

The keeper laughed. "There's not a room big enough in all Philadelphia for that lantern."

Franklin replied, "It's not too big for the out-of-doors. Please prepare the rack and hang it over my front door before nightfall. Make sure it carries out well onto the street, but high above every passing head. I shall personally tend to lighting it each evening."

The keeper was puzzled but agreed to do just as he was told.

Soon, people came from far and near to see the light Franklin had swung out in front of his own door.

"What an idea," said one.

"I shall do the same," said another.

"Why stumble over these cobbles when a little light over each man's door makes the dark way plain?"

"Why didn't someone think of this before?"

"Trust Old Ben to think up a scheme like this to get the citizens of this town busy on street lighting. Any other person would have talked and argued, but Old Ben—well—he just went ahead and hung up a light."\*

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As confusion and contention increases in our nation and world, **Moms for America**® offers a simple solution: Don't underestimate the power and influence that one home reflecting the light of virtue can have on an increasingly darkening world.

*\*Adapted from Wings of Flame by Joseph B. Egan, 1929.*

*Read and discuss "The Nobility of a Boy" with the children.*

## The Nobility of a Boy

There was once a young boy named David who lived in New York City in the early 1900s. He worked as an errand boy at a bank near his home. His job was very important to the family for his father had recently passed away and he had a mother and sister at home who were ill and could not walk. David was the only one left to care for his mother and sister and he was the sole support for them. It took every cent he could possibly earn to take care of their little family.

A few weeks after David's father's funeral, the doctor came to the house to check in on David's mother and sister. The doctor told David that unless he could get his mother to the country where there was plenty of fresh air that she would grow increasingly worse and may very well be gone by winter. David tried everything he could to find a way to send his mother and sister to the country but there was no way. He made barely enough money to provide their basic needs; there was no money to pay for them to stay in the country and no one to house them. David was broken hearted and he felt helpless as he watched day after day as his mother grew less and less strong.

One day while working at the bank, David was sweeping under a table when he found a roll of bills—a big roll and he could see that some of them were yellow-backs. Now at that time, yellow-backs were a type of paper currency that was redeemable for gold coin. These were issued until the early 1900s and thought very valuable as they were able to be exchanged into precious metal on demand.

David scooped up the bills and started to head for the office of the bank president when he suddenly hesitated realizing what this money would mean. "Just think," he thought, "of what these bills will do. They can send mother and Millie away for the whole summer and then they will be well. No one knows I have them and they don't belong to the bank. They were on the floor with trash paper. I'm going to keep them. Finding is keeping and they are mine."

So David dropped the wad of bills into his front pocket, then his back pocket, then shifted them into his coat pocket. He felt sure that everyone could see them as he left the bank but no one stopped him. All the way home he fingered the bills in his pocket taking his hand in and out of the pocket and shifting the bills inside. When he arrived home he checked on his mother and sister and then walked to the cupboard in the hallway, opened the front drawer and dropped the bills inside closing the drawer with a hard thud.

An hour later David walked back into the bank and shuffled quickly through the front room making his way to the office of the bank president. Entering the office, he threw the bills on the desk and whispered, "I found these when I swept." Then, with a cry of pain, he fled from the bank.

The next morning David was back at the bank to do his work when he was called into the bank president's office. When David entered the room the bank president looked up from his desk and spoke.

"David," he said, "I wish you would tell me why you brought those bills back last night. I know why you wanted them and what they would have done for you and your family. No one knew you had them. Why did you bring them back?"

*(continued...)*



## The Nobility of a Boy *(continued...)*

David leaned far over the desk and looked right in the eyes of the president of the bank. "Sir," he said, "as long as I live, I have to live with myself and I don't want to live with a thief."

A few days later the mother and Millie went to the country but not alone. David went with them and they spent the whole summer in the countryside—a gift from the bank to show their deep appreciation for the nobility of the boy.\*

*\*Adapted from a story told by Margaret Eggleston in her book "The Use of the Story in Religious Education"*

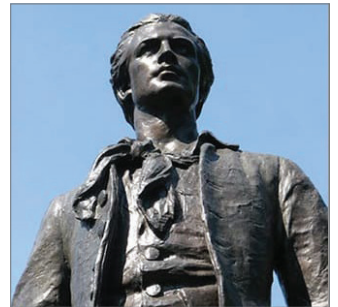
*Read and discuss the **Nathan Hale** story with the children.*

### Nathan Hale

School Teacher, Patriot, Soldier, Spy

On September 22, 1776, the Redcoats hanged Captain Nathan Hale, a 21-year-old Patriot spy. His last words – "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country" – became a rallying cry for the Continental Army. The British gave Nathan Hale no trial, and after his death, buried him in an unmarked grave like a common criminal. But, just who was Nathan Hale?

Nathan graduated from Yale University in 1773 at a time when less than 1% of the male population attended college. He almost became a Christian minister, as his brother Enoch did, but instead became a Grammar School teacher.



When the Revolutionary War began in 1775, Hale left his teaching position to enlist in the Continental Army. He accepted a commission as first lieutenant in the 7th Connecticut Regiment under Colonel Charles Webb of Stamford. Over the ensuing year, Hale proved an effective commanding officer. He held his unit together despite steady military setbacks and inconsistent pay that shattered morale and prompted mass desertions in other regiments of the Continental Army. A fellow soldier of Nathan Hale, Lt. Elisha Bostwick said of him, "when any of the soldiers of his company were sick he always visited them and usually prayed for and with them in their sickness."

In the Spring of 1776, Hale's unit joined the Continental Army's effort to prevent the British from taking New York City. According to tradition, Nathan Hale was part of a daring band of patriots who captured an English sloop filled with provisions from right under the guns of a British man-of-war.

That summer, as British troops and Hessian mercenaries advanced on New York City, General Washington sought a spy to penetrate the British lines at Long Island to get information. Nathan Hale was the only volunteer.

Fellow officer Captain William Hull attempted to talk him out of it, but Hale responded, "I wish to be useful, and every kind of service necessary to the public good becomes honorable by being necessary. If the exigencies of my country demand a peculiar service, its claim to perform that service are imperious."

Nathan barely had time to infiltrate New York before the Redcoats seized and burned the town. On September 21, 1776, Hale was captured by the "Queen's Rangers" commanded by an American loyalist, Lieut. Col. Robert Rogers.

*(continued...)*

## Nathan Hale *(continued...)*

General William Howe ordered him to be hanged the next morning. Hale wrote a letter to his mother and brother, but the British destroyed them, not wanting it known a man could die with such firmness. He asked for a Bible but was refused. Nathan Hale was marched out and hanged from an apple-tree in Rutgers's orchard, near the present streets of East Broadway and Market in New York City.

His executioners reported that the young man "bore himself with gentle dignity, great composure and resolution."

The Essex Journal stated of Nathan Hale February 13, 1777, "At the gallows, he made a sensible and spirited speech; among other things, told them they were shedding the blood of the innocent, and that if he had ten thousand lives, he would lay them all down, if called to it, in defense of his injured, bleeding Country."

On November 19, 1863, Nathan Hale's nephew, Massachusetts Governor Edward Everett, spoke at the dedication of the Battlefield right before Abraham Lincoln gave his Gettysburg Address. Nathan Hale's grandnephew was well-known author Edward Everett Hale, who wrote, "We are God's children, you and I, and we have our duties...Thank God I come from men who are not afraid in battle."

Nathan Hale's final words are a testament to the patriot he was. His life, cut short so young, is immortalized as an extraordinary example of public virtue.

*"I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country"*

– Nathan Hale, September 22, 1776

*Read and make preparations prior to Activity Day.*

## Making Lanterns



Making lanterns is a fun way to teach the kids about reflecting the light and being a light in the darkness. There is a great quote by St. Francis Of Assisi – “All the *darkness* in the world cannot *extinguish the light of a single candle.*”

There are three different lantern projects you can choose from. You can choose one or do all three, depending on the age of the children.

View the **How-To Video** at

<https://vimeo.com/706664819>

See the video for instructions.



Materials needed and preparation for each project are listed below.

### Paper Lanterns

Materials needed:

- 8 1/2 by 11 colored cardstock in various colors
- Embellishments as desired such stickers, streamers, etc.
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Glue



### Glass Jar Lanterns

Materials Needed:

- Glass Mason Jars in desired sizes
- Tissue paper in various colors
- 8 oz bottle glue
- Ribbon and other embellishments as desired

Preparation: Gather all materials. Clean and dry jars.



### Tin Can Lanterns

Materials Needed:

- Soup or vegetable cans (at least one for each child)
- Hammers
- 2 Penny Nails
- Ribbon, craft or spray paint and other embellishments as desired

Preparation: Collect cans throughout the month. Wash cans. Fill with water and put in freezer. Cans need to be in freezer at least 24 hours prior to the Activity Day.

