

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOTHER

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by Jean Fritz, ill. by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan
(Grosset & Dunlap)

Theme: American History, Mothers, Presidents

Grade Level: Grade K-5

Running Time: 20 minutes

This is the story of the mother of our first President, George Washington. Mary Ball was an interesting character, an independent woman whom, to no one's great surprise, raised a boy who grew to be as independent and headstrong as his mother—and President of the United States as well! The story takes children through the days of George's boyhood, helping them to understand how his family obligations, particularly his responsibilities to his mother, helped to carve out his future.

OBJECTIVES

- To familiarize children with the background of the first President of the United States, George Washington.
- To introduce children to what life was like in the early 1700's.
- To explore the courage and independence necessary for George Washington to meet his goals and ambitions.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

See what children know about George Washington. Ask:

- What can you tell me about our first President?
- What was he famous for besides being President

of our country?

- What other Presidents can you name?
- What responsibilities does the President of our country have?
- Would you want to be President? Why? Why not?

Share the book *George Washington's Mother* with children. After hearing the story, have children consider what special characteristics both George and his mother had that helped the young Washington become the first President of the United States.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Have children close their eyes and imagine what life was like in the early 1700's. Talk about the different occupations people had, the foods they ate, the games children played. Focus on family life and the relationships. Help children understand the strength of family ties when all family members worked and struggled together.

Explain to children that George Washington was an army general. Through your discussion, help children explore how this role prepared Washington to serve as leader of our country. Have children describe different leadership roles they may have had (leading a group in a song, doing classroom chores, helping younger school friends at recess, etc.). Encourage children to think about how these roles help them gain confidence and work independently.

Share other stories about George Washington and his contributions to our country. If possible, visit museum or library exhibits that will help introduce children to more information about this famous American hero. Later, have children describe other characteristics they feel Washington must have had (courage, honesty, perseverance) to be successful on the battlefield and as President.

Have children talk about their relationships with their parents and siblings. Help children to see how they are influenced by, and influence, family members through their daily interactions. Give each child in the group an opportunity to discuss the things they admire about their different family members.

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