

5 Simple Ways You Can Teach Your Kids What It Really Means to Be an American – Even if They Attend a Public School...and Even if You Never Went to College!

From: Chuck Muth
Mount Reagan, Nevada
January 21, 2013

Make no mistake, the #1 reason so many Americans vote for Democrats today is that the public schools have been “dumbing down” what it means to be an American for decades.

Actually, dumbing down is being polite. More like de-programming.

And if conservatives don't start doing something about it SOON...our kids and grandkids are at grave risk of losing the American dream.

Do you remember the opening speech from the movie *Patton*? In it, the famed World War II general said to his troops:

“When you were kids, you all admired the champion marble shooter, the fastest runner, big league ball players, the toughest boxers. Americans love a winner and will not tolerate a loser. Americans play to win all the time.”

That was then. This is now...

I maintain the start down the slippery slope to national mediocrity began with the “slaughter rule.”

Somewhere, somehow, sometime in the 1970s, it was determined that one team beating another team in Little League by a big margin was just too painful.

So a new rule was adopted that if a team was leading by ten runs or more at the end of the third inning, the game would be called.

Next thing you know, we no longer kept score in soccer games!

Then we started giving out trophies to ALL the kids who played in a sports league whether their team won or not.

And our public schools have done the same thing with academics.

They're so worried about hurting a kid's "self esteem" that they promote them to the next grade even if they've failed.

And in some public high schools, they've completely done away with valedictorians.

But it's not just in sports and academics. It's in business, too. Just look at the concerted effort to get people to hate "the rich."

It seems that in so many ways today, Americans no longer will tolerate a...WINNER!

General Patton is rolling in his grave.

I firmly believe that if we're ever to change this attitude and reverse this decline in America – which is contributing to how we're getting our butts kicked economically by China, among other nations – we have to break the monopoly the government has on our children's education.

And nothing short of full-blown, universal school vouchers will do the trick. Charter schools and magnet schools are an improvement, but not the solution. Those schools are still run by the government.

Unfortunately, most parents today are trapped in the government-run schools which are controlled by the "screw-the-kids" teachers union. They just can't afford to send one or more children to private schools...and vouchers are but a political pipe dream for them.

So what's the answer?

Homeschooling.

Even if your kids go to a public school!

Conservative parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles all need to spend whatever time you can teaching kids what it means (or at least what it *used* to mean) to be an American; that government isn't our lord and savior. As George Washington put it:

"Like fire, (government) is a dangerous servant and a fearful master."

Or as Thomas Paine wrote:

"Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one."

Are kids being taught about how our Founding Fathers actually thought about government back in the "old" days?

Or are they being taught that "Big Brother" is benevolent and the source of all that is right and good in the world?

Exactly.

So where to begin?

Regardless of what they're teaching your kids in the public school or private school...or what you're teaching them at home...we need to start immersing THIS generation of kids back into colonial American history leading to the adoption of our Constitution.

Day in. Day out.

Year in. Year out.

The Ottoman Empire is fine.

Genghis Khan is cool.

Ancient Greece and Rome are interesting.

But if we really want to teach our kids what it really means to be an American...it's the American Revolution they need to learn and understand.

It's been my experience, as a homeschooler, that kids can really start grasping the founding principles of our nation starting around age 10. Mine have.

And it's not hard to do.

Anyone who can read this report can do it. You don't have to be a teacher (though if you're a parent, you're already a highly qualified teacher!)

And you don't need a college education.

No, all you have to do is...read.

Read to your children. About our nation's founding. Regularly. Believe me, it'll seep in.

Of course, there are a ton of books out there to choose from, including textbooks. But all too often, those textbooks, especially those used in the public schools, provide a "sanitized," if not liberal version of history.

So I use a different "textbook" of sorts: *Don't Know Much About History* by Kenneth C. Davis.

The book is fantastic. It includes short, little known facts about American history and historical figures that I'll guarantee aren't being taught in the public schools.

Here, I'll give you one example: Christopher Columbus.

You and I were taught that “In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue” and discovered America. We lionize Columbus as a brave explorer. School children celebrate his memory on Columbus Day every year, making collages of his ships, the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria.

Right?

But did you know that Columbus was so obsessed with finding gold that he brutally enslaved the local Indians and enforced strict quotas on them.

The “lucky ones” who failed to meet their quotas “lost a hand. The unlucky were crucified in rows of thirteen – one for Jesus and each of the disciples.”

Wow!

And that there were so many complaints about how Columbus was treating people that “he was brought back to Spain in shackles.”

Bet you never learned that in Miss Sally’s history class, did you?!!

Here are some other interesting tidbits you’ll pick up and share with your kids from *Don’t Know Much About History...*

- Did Pocahontas really save John Smith’s life?
- Did the Pilgrims really land at Plymouth Rock?
- Did the Indians really sell Manhattan for \$24?
- Why is Pennsylvania the Quaker State?
- Who were the witches of Salem?
- What was “the shot heard ‘round the world’?”
- Why is there a statue of Benedict Arnold’s boot?
- Betsy Ross: Did she or didn’t she?
- What was Shay’s Rebellion?
- Who were the Federalists and what were the Federalist Papers?
- Why didn’t Jefferson like Hamilton?
- Was George Washington killed by his doctors?
- Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: Did he or didn’t he?
- What was the “corrupt bargain”?
- Who was Tocqueville and why did he say all those things about America?
- What made the South fear a slave named Nat Turner?
- Who fought at the Alamo?
- Why did the Mormons move West?
- Why was there a war with Mexico?
- What forced the Republicans to start a new party?
- What was the difference between Dred Scott and a mule?

- Was Abe really honest?
- What happened at Custer's Last Stand?
- What happened at Wounded Knee?
- Of what was William Tweed boss?
- What happened at Haymarket Square?
- Who was Jim Crow?
- Who were the Wobblies?
- What was the Bull Moose Party?
- How did a dead archduke in Sarajevo start a world war?
- Why were Sacco and Vanzetti executed?
- Why was Prohibition was of the greatest disasters in American history?
- What was the scandal over Teapot Dome?
- Did Henry Ford invent the automobile?
- Why did investors panic in 1929, leading to the Great Crash?
- Why did FDR try to "pack" the Supreme Court?
- What did FDR know about the Japanese attack and when did he know it?
- Did the U.S. have to drop atomic bombs on Japan?
- Why were the Rosenbergs executed for espionage?
- What was McCarthyism?
- What was Teddy Roosevelt's grandson doing in Iran?
- How did Richard Nixon's "five-o'clock shadow" cost him the presidency in 1960?
- What happened at the Bay of Pigs?
- Did "Mississippi Burning" really happen?
- What was the Tonkin Resolution?
- Who was Miranda (of "Miranda rights" fame)?
- What happened at My Lai?
- Why did "Jane Roe" sue Wade?
- What was "voodoo economics"?
- Why was Ronald Reagan called the "Teflon President"?
- What happened to the Evil Empire?
- What was Operation Desert Storm?
- Who took out a Contract with America?
- What is "irrational exuberance"?
- Is that chad dimpled, pregnant or hanging?

And much, much, MUCH more....

So if you do nothing else, go to Amazon.com and buy a copy of *Don't Know Much About History* and simply read one passage each day to your kids. Most passages are only a couple pages long, so it won't overburden you or the kids.

But, boy, are you going to learn a LOT!

Secondly, not only do Americans need to learn about our Founding, but how things went tragically wrong leading up to the Civil War.

This year's Oscar-nominated movie "Lincoln" has rekindled interest in that dark period of our history. And to be honest, I never really spent as much time reading about the Civil War as I did the Revolutionary War.

After taking the kids to see "Lincoln," they showed an interest in learning more. So we went to the bookstore and picked up *Don't Know Much About the Civil War*, also by Kenneth C. Davis.

And I read a passage from that book to the kids a couple times each week, too.

In addition to the obvious topics covered, such as the Emancipation Proclamation, you'll also learn these seldom, if ever taught, tidbits...

- If Jefferson believed all men were created equal, why did he keep slaves?
- What rights does a state have?
- Why did Georgia want to arrest a publisher named William Lloyd Garrison?
- What was the "gag rule"?
- Who was Uncle Tom?
- Who were the Know-Nothings, the Free-Soilers and the first Republicans?
- What are Beecher's Bibles and Border Ruffians?
- What did Lincoln and Douglas debate?
- What happened at Harper's Ferry?
- Who ran against Lincoln?
- Why did Lincoln sneak into Washington for his inauguration?
- What was the Anaconda Plan?
- Who were the "Plug Uglies"?
- What is habeas corpus and what did Lincoln do with it?
- Who was "Little Mac"?
- What was the Trent Affair?
- What was a "Radical Republican"?
- How did a "tin can on a shingle" make history?
- Why did Lincoln fire General McClellan? And why did he fire him AGAIN?
- What was the "Prayer of Twenty Millions"?
- What was the "Richmond Bread Riot"?
- What was so important about Gettysburg?
- Was the Gettysburg Address written on the back of an envelope?
- Did Admiral David Farragut really say "Damn the torpedoes; full speed ahead!"?
- Did General Sherman really say "War is hell"?
- What did General Sherman give Lincoln for Christmas in 1864?
- Was Jefferson Davis wearing a dress when he was captured?
- Who started the Ku Klux Klan?

Fascinating. Absolutely fascinating. I had no idea how little I knew about the Civil War until I started reading this book to my kids. Again, I'm not so much "teaching" history as I am learning it with my children...

And you can, too!

Now here are two additional books I use in our "Americanism 101" studies:

1.) *The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Founding Fathers* by Prof. Brion McClanahan. Chapters on the well-know and forgotten founders include...

- Myths, Realities, and the Issues of the Founding Generation
- A Conservative Revolution: The Issues
- George Washington
- Thomas Jefferson
- John Adams
- James Madison
- Alexander Hamilton
- Benjamin Franklin
- Samuel Adams
- Charles Carroll of Carrollton
- George Clinton
- John Dickinson
- Elbridge Gerry (of "gerrymander" fame!)
- John Hancock
- Patrick Henry
- Richard Henry Lee
- Nathaniel Macon
- Francis Marion
- John Marshall
- George Mason
- Roger Sherman
- John Taylor of Caroline

2.) *The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Constitution* by Prof. Kevin R. C. Gutzman. Chapters on...

- What Made the Constitution: Revolution and Confederation
- Federalism vs. Nationalism at the Philadelphia Convention
- Selling the Constitution: A Rocky Road
- Judges: Power-Hungry from the Beginning
- The Imperial Judiciary: It Started with Marshall
- Undoing Marshall – and Undoing the Union
- The War for Southern Independence as a Constitutional Crisis
- The Pro-Segregation Supreme Court

- The Court vs. FDR
- The Grand Wizard's Imperial Court

All of these books are written at a high school level, so don't be intimidated about using them. But the information provided is priceless...that is, if you want to truly understand America's founding.

And don't think you have to cover ALL of this material in one semester. I expect to use these books on an ongoing basis over the next few years. The material is timeless and invaluable...and you'll never run out of enough of it.

And again, you don't have to TEACH anything.

All you have to do is read to your kids from any or all of these books and then talk to them. They'll ask questions. You answer them. And get this, if you don't know the answer...GOOGLE IT!

Better yet, have THEM Google it. That's why Al Gore invented the Internet in the first place!

So that's four ways any parent can help reverse the slide and prepare a new generation of kids to reclaim our heritage from the liberals and socialists among us. Remember the old saying about those who fail to learn from history?

But what about our modern day situation. How do you teach your kids about what's going on right now?

Well, the 5th "textbook" I use is even more unconventional and unorthodox, but I've found it to be EXTREMELY helpful...

Leave Us Alone: Getting the Government's Hands Off Our Money, Our Guns Our Lives by Grover Norquist.

You know how some parents quiz their kids while riding in the car?

What's the capital of Vermont?

How many quarts in a gallon?

Name 3 of the 7 continents?

Etc., etc., etc.

Here's one I asked my kids the other day:

"Name 4 of the 8 groups that make up the Leave Us Alone coalition."

And they KNEW IT!

(The full answer is: Taxpayers, business owners, 2nd amendment voters, homeschoolers, property rights activists & home owners, communities of faith/church-goers, public servants/police and military, the investors.)

Now, that last group was a bit tougher to explain to the kids. Stocks, 401(k)'s, mutual funds...not exactly concepts easily comprehended, even for many adults.

But fortunately, our family has been watching ABC's *Shark Tank* for several months - so investing in American businesses, inventors and entrepreneurs to make a profit is something my kids actually have a better understanding of than I did when I was their age.

If you haven't seen *Shark Tank*, do yourself a favor and dial it up on Friday nights. And if you can find the repeats, it'll be worth it.

Also included in Grover's book...

- The Takings Coalition
- The Growth of the Investor Class
- The Decline of Labor Unions
- The Political Training of the Young
- Bambi is Getting Safer; Muggers, Less So
- Back to Europe or Forward to America
- Taking the King's Shilling: Friends of Government
- Increasing Voter Turnout, Voting the Prisons, and Voter Fraud
- The New Media: Cutting Out the Middlemen
- Race and Politics
- The Senate, The House, The Presidency
- The States
- Taxes: The Lifeblood of the State
- Tax Reform
- Spending: What Went Wrong?
- The Five Great Reforms

Once again, you don't have to "teach" this material, you just have to read it. And odds are, you'll learn a lot of things you didn't know – even hard-core political activists – along with your kids.

Now let me tie all this together...

A long, long time ago - when I was still a teenager with tons of ideas on how to do things better at a job where I was working (remember, you know it ALL when you're a teenager!) - my boss instructed me to write down all of my suggestions and submit them to him for consideration.

“If you haven’t written them down,” Don Brown advised me, “you haven’t thought them all the way through.”

So in addition to being a big champion of teaching kids American history and the founding principles of our government, I’m also a big believer in getting kids to write.

A lot.

And often.

So I bought the kids an inexpensive journal and give them a short writing project a couple times a week.

You can ask them to write anything you want. The subject matter doesn’t matter so much as getting the kids to think...and then put their thoughts on paper (or word processor if you prefer; but I still like to have them write things out at their age).

So how to do you come up with things to get them to write about?

Simple.

Google “writing prompts for kids” and you’ll find a ton of ideas! Here’s one I found and gave to my kids the other day:

“Imagine you had a hundred dollars, but you couldn't keep it. You had to give it away to a person or charity. Who would you give it to? What would you want them to do with it?”

Here’s what my 12-year-old wrote:

“If I could give \$100 to anyone, I’d give it first to an investor; then they could turn it into more money. I’d get royalties; then with the money from the royalties I could give money to whoever else I wanted. Among those would be charities for kids, like the Toys-for-Tots charity and nature preserves and stuff like that; just anything I wanted!”

Now how many kids educated in a government school think like that?!!

And she learned it simply from me reading from Grover’s book out loud and talking about it what it means to invest in stocks and mutual funds.

Again, let me be absolutely clear...

You do not have to be a full-time homeschoolers to start reversing the damage done by the public schools if your kids are trapped in one of them.

And you don't have to be a "professional" teacher.

All you have to be is...willing and able to read.

Indeed, if you use all five of the books I recommend above, you could read just one passage from one book one day a week and be amazed at how much more your kids will know about what it means to be an American than their peers in school.

Fast.

And since they're already probably doing book reports and other writing projects in school, don't overwhelm them. Just give them one or two writing assignment for their personal journal each week.

They don't have to be long writing projects. Just give them prompts that make them THINK.

OK, here's a BONUS suggestion.

As you're reading to your kids from these books, highlight or underline what you think are important pieces of information to know. This is great for two reasons...

- 1.) If you ever want to review a particular subject item, instead of having to re-read the entire passage or chapter, you just go back to the items you've highlighted or underlined. Saves a ton of time and effort for review purposes.
- 2.) If you want to quiz your kids on the material you've read to them, the highlighted or underlined portions make it easy to put together a test.

That second point is my favorite. Whenever someone suggests that my homeschooled kids should have to take the same tests as public school kids, I respond that I'll have my kids take THEIR government tests if the government-schooled kids have to take MY tests.

How many public school students could explain what the Stono Rebellion was...or the Pistole Fee Controversy?

I'll conclude where I started...

If we're to reverse this country's slide toward European socialism, we need to start teaching kids again about what it really means to be an American. They sure won't learn it from your local government-run public school.

They need to learn it from YOU.

I hope this gives you some usable suggestions on how to start that process. It won't happen overnight, but you have to start somewhere.

As the old saying goes, a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

Take it.

Conservatively yours,



Chuck Muth

The Great Irritator of Liberals

P.S. You don't have to wait until your kids are 10 to start teaching them about the true nature of government. I started when my kids were around 2...with something else I learned from Grover Norquist.

Grover once told me how his own father would always take a taste of Grover's ice cream cone or candy bar before handing it to him, saying, "I'm the government; I get the first bite."

Believe you me, even a two year old quickly gets the message that government isn't your friend when you do that just a couple of times!

I do it to my own kids to this very day. It's now a running joke, but the message has been permanently implanted in their psyches.

Mission accomplished.