

American Heritage Discussion Series: Learners with Littles

Session 3: Interpreting the Founding at the Civil War

Children's Lesson Outline

Abraham Lincoln

- Introduce Abraham Lincoln as the president who helped to bring an end to slavery in the United States of America. Slavery is when someone is forced to work the whole time they are awake. Enslaved people in America had no freedom and little choices of their own.
- Show period photograph of Abraham Lincoln.
- Show a picture of Lincoln's restored childhood log cabin home.
- Read parts of [*I am Abraham Lincoln*](#) by Brad Meltzer

Frederick Douglass

- Introduce Frederick Douglass. He was born into slavery. When he got bigger, he escaped his enslaver. Douglass taught himself to read. He started to tell his story about being enslaved. He wrote a book about his life that made more people want to end slavery. This led him to start speaking about how slavery should end for everyone. He was called an abolitionist because he wanted to end slavery.
- Show pictures from [*A Picture Book of Frederick Douglass*](#) by David A. Adler

Slavery Ended When the Civil War Ended

- At the end of the Civil War, President Lincoln helped to end slavery in the United States.
- Show picture of the resolution in Congress for the Thirteenth Amendment.
 - The Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution said in the United States, no one can enslave another person.

Photography During the Civil War

- Photography was invented at the time of the Civil War, so we have photographs from this time.
- Pass around images (soldier portraits in uniform) from the Civil War.
- What do you notice in the photographs?
- You can take a Civil War style photo today of you and the people who came with you today.

Quilting During the Civil War

- At the time of the Civil War, the government did not give soldiers all that they needed. Women volunteered to make beds and quilts for the soldiers.
- The work of making the quilts connected the women together in a community.
- The quilts were often made of block patterns, so they could make them quickly.
- Sometimes women would sell their quilts to raise money for soldiers.
- There are some family stories of people using quilts to signal to people escaping slavery. Some stories say if a quilt was hung on a clothesline or in a window, it was safe to come into the home. We're not sure if these are just folk tales or if this really happened. There's not a lot of historical evidence for it, but it could have happened.
- Look at the photographs of quilt blocks. What do you notice?

Choose a Craft

Talk about each craft. Invite the children to choose which they want to do.

- Lincoln's Log Cabin (paper bag craft)
- Frederick Douglass Biography Scavenger Hunt
- Quilt Blocks
- Reconstruction Amendments Coloring Page
- Douglass Quote Coloring Page
- Civil War Photo Booth