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Life, Liberty, and Opportunity: The Struggle for Freedom in Tidewater Maryland 1634-1865
Center for the Study of Democracy... a joint project of St. Mary's College of Maryland and Historic St. Mary's City

A National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Landmarks of American History Program

Overview of Lesson Plan:

Students examine excerpts from the Maryland Act Concerning religion 1649, The English Bill of Rights 1689 and the United States Bill of Rights First Amendment 1791 to determine what religious freedoms were granted in Maryland, Great Britain and later in the United States. Students develop an understanding of the revolutionary thinking of the Calvert family concerning religious rights.

Grade Level of Lesson Plan: 8th grade to high school

Suggested Time Allowance: 50 minutes

Objectives:

- Students compare and contrast governmental policies concerning religion over time and place.
- Students understand why the Calvert Family granted religious freedom to Christians living in the Maryland colony.
- Students understand how religious freedom is protected in the United States today.

Materials and Resources:

Transcript of the Maryland Act Concerning Religion 1649 -

http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/amerdoc/maryland_toleration.htm

Teacher highlighted or excerpted copy

Photocopy of the Maryland Act Concerning Religion from the Maryland Archives –

<http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/msa/speccol/sc2200/sc2221/000025/html/origtoler1.jpg>

Copy of the English Bill of Rights-

http://www.constitution.org/eng/eng_bor.htm

Teacher highlighted or excerpted copy

Copy of the First Amendment

Graphic organizer

Activities and Procedures:

Warm Up/Introduction:

Using a projection computer or overhead projector, display a copy of the First Amendment. Have students identify what rights they have that are protected by this amendment.

Ask students why the writers of the Constitution felt it was necessary to protect people's freedom of religion – the right to worship or not worship as they see fit.

Tell students they will examine three documents that deal with religious freedom and the role government has played in the exercise of religious belief.

Procedure:

Distribute graphic organizer.

Distribute copies of the Maryland Act Concerning Religion, The English Bill of Rights and the First Amendment. These may be excerpted or highlighted copies or the full text version depending on the reading level of the students.

Students may work individually or in small groups depending on what works best for the given set of students.

Once students have completed their graphic organizer ask them why Cecil Calvert's governmental policy concerning religious belief was so revolutionary in 1649. Have students cite information from their graphic organizer or the English Bill of Rights to support their answer.

Discuss with students what groups of people were not guaranteed political and religious rights according to the Maryland Act.

Ask students who was and was not protected by the English Bill of Rights. The teacher may need to explain the term "popery" for students to better understand the excerpts. Point out to students that the role of the government was to protect the true faith, the Church of England, a Protestant Church and the Catholic Faith was viewed as creating instability in the nation because Catholics were perceived as having a higher allegiance to the Pope rather than the King.

Closure/Summary Discussion:

Ask students which of the three acts grants the greatest amount of religious freedom. Point out to students the First Amendment does not list their rights regarding religious belief and exercise, but instead limits the power of Congress in enacting laws regarding the establishment or prohibition of religion.

Ask students does that mean any form of worship is allowed in the United States. Discuss if it should it mean any form of worship should be allowed. Point out to students that religious practice can be limited by law. For example polygamy or animal sacrifice is not allowed in the United States.

Extension or Enrichment Activities:

Students compare the laws governing religious belief in the colonies of Pennsylvania and/or Rhode Island.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Bibliography and/or Work Cited Resources and Internet Sources:

http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/amerdoc/maryland_toleration.htm

<http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/msa/speccol/sc2200/sc2221/000025/html/origtoler1.jpg>
http://www.constitution.org/eng/eng_bor.htm

Academic Content Standards: (Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum)

(8)1.A.1 Describe the evolution of the U.S. political system as expressed in the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

(8)1.A. 2 Analyze the impact of historic documents and practices that became the foundation of the American political system during the early national period

(8) 1.A.2.d Explain how historic documents such as: Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights and the Mayflower Compact influenced the underlying principles of the U.S. Constitution