

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



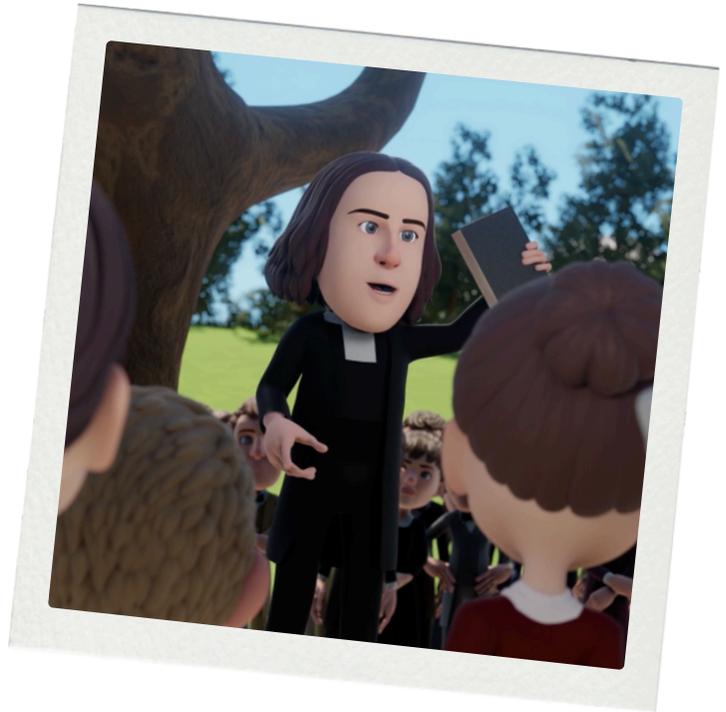
Faith and Freedom: The First Great Awakening's Influence on America's Founding

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Key Themes

- Awakening to Faith and Unity
- Faith in Our Founding
- Faith Across Denominations
- Self-Reliance and Personal Responsibility
- Self-Governance and Fairness
- The Value of Freedom and Democracy



Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Faith
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Identify the First Great Awakening as a time when people became excited about their faith and came together as a community.
- Compare how a colony, which is ruled by another country, differs from a community where people choose to work together for a common goal.
- Describe George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards and their roles as preachers who inspired people to reconnect with God.
- Explain that the First Great Awakening taught that everyone is equal before God, which later became an important idea in the Declaration of Independence.
- Analyze how leaders can use words to help make the world a better place.
- Understand that faith means trusting in God, and it played a central role in uniting people during the First Great Awakening.

Key Terms

- 0 1 **Bible:** a holy book inspired by God that teaches about Him, His love, and how He helps us live a good life.
- 0 2 **Christianity:** a religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- 0 3 **colony:** a place where a group of people settle and live, but it is still ruled by another country.
- 0 4 **community:** a group of people who live, work, or play together and support one another, like a neighborhood or a classroom.
- 0 5 **denomination:** a group of Christians who practice their faith in God in a similar way.
- 0 6 **faith:** trusting and believing in something or someone.
- 0 7 **First Great Awakening:** a revival — a new excitement — about the religious beliefs brought to the New World by the first settlers from England.
- 0 8 **honor:** to feel or show admiration or respect for something or someone.
- 0 9 **preacher:** a person who talks to others about God and teaches them lessons from the Bible.
- 1 0 **religious revival:** a renewed excitement about God and His plan.
- 1 1 **self-government:** making decisions about how to live and work together as a group, without someone (like a king) telling you what to do.
- 1 2 **self-reliance:** taking care of yourself and being responsible for your choices.
- 1 3 **unity:** working together as one despite differences.

Introduction

TELL Students ✍️

Alright, little patriots, let's start with a fun game! I want everyone to pretend you're sleeping. Close your eyes and make your best sleepy sound — "Zzzzz..." Now, when I say "Wake up!" I want you to stretch your arms, open your eyes wide, and say, "I'm awake!" Let's try it! [Lead the class in pretending to sleep, then excitedly call out, "Wake up!" Encourage students to stretch, open their eyes wide, and say, "I'm awake!"] Great job waking up! Did you know that a long time ago, something important happened and it was called the First Great Awakening? It was like a big "wake-up" for people's hearts and minds. The **First Great Awakening** was a revival — a new excitement — about the religious beliefs brought to the New World by the first settlers from England. Many years ago, these settlers traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to create a new life. So what were their beliefs, and why were they important? To understand, we need to go back almost 100 years before the First Great Awakening.

ASK Students

Why do you think people might need a "wake-up" for their hearts and minds? What could make them feel excited about their beliefs?

TELL Students 📺

In the spring of 1630, a man named John Winthrop led a group of people from England across the Atlantic Ocean. **[Reference John Winthrop Image]** They were heading to a place we now call Massachusetts to start a new life. To help them understand this dangerous journey they were beginning, John Winthrop gave a speech to explain why they were leaving England and what they hoped to do in this new land. In his speech, he said:

"We must delight in each other; make other's conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace . . . For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us."

ASK Students

What did Winthrop mean by "a city upon a hill"?

Introduction

TELL Students

When John Winthrop said “a city upon a hill,” he meant that the Massachusetts colony should be a shining example for others to see — like a bright light that shows people the way. A **colony** is a place where people settle and live, but it is still ruled by another country. **[Reference Colony Image]** Winthrop wanted his colony to stand out by working together, being kind, and showing respect for one another, so others could look up to them. Winthrop was inspired by a verse from the Bible, in the Book of Matthew, Chapter 5, Verse 14, which says: “*You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.*” The **Bible** is a holy (something that is special, pure, and set apart for God) book that teaches about God, His love, and how He helps us live a good life. It is a very special book for Christians and teaches how to treat others with kindness and respect. **[Reference Bible Image]** The Bible has two main parts:

- The Old Testament, which tells stories from before Jesus was born.
- The New Testament, which tells about Jesus’ life and teachings.

Christians believe the Bible is God’s word, given to help people know Him and follow His plan for their life. John Winthrop believed that the new colony in Massachusetts could be like the Bible—a light of hope for everyone to see. Winthrop believed that by working together, showing kindness, and respecting one another, they could honor God and inspire others. To **honor** means to feel or show admiration or respect for something or someone. This idea — respecting others because they are created by God — became very important in American history. It’s even found in the Declaration of Independence, which says that all people are given rights by their Creator, or by God. **[Reference Declaration of Independence Image]**

ASK Students

What do you think it means to be a “light of the world,” and what did the colonists try to do to be “lights of the world”?

TELL Students

To be a “light of the world” means to be an example of kindness, goodness, and love that others can see and follow. The colonists could be “lights of the world” by working together, helping one another, and showing respect for everyone, just as John Winthrop hoped. But things didn’t go as smoothly as Winthrop had dreamed. The colonies didn’t always get along because not everyone shared the same beliefs.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Different groups of Christians, called denominations, had their own ways of practicing their faith.

Faith means trusting and believing in something or someone. A **denomination** is a group of Christians who practice their faith in a similar way. Different denominations may share many basic beliefs about God, but practice their faith in Him differently. These differences between denominations sometimes caused disagreements and made it hard for the colonies to work together as one community. Instead of being united, the colonists often argued about how to best worship God. Years later, the First Great Awakening helped people realize that they needed to reconnect with God and focus on what they had in common, like their deep love for God, instead of their differences. This movement reminded everyone of the importance of faith and **unity**, which means working together as one group to achieve a common goal. The First Great Awakening helped bring the colonies closer together and taught them how to live and work together, despite their differences.

ASK Students

Why do you think it's important to focus on what we have in common instead of our differences? How can that help us work together as a community?

TELL Students

Focusing on what we have in common helps us work together because it reminds us that we are all part of the same community. A **community** is a group of people who live, work, or play together and support one another, like a neighborhood or a classroom. **[Reference Community Image]** When people focus on shared values, like kindness and respect, they can solve problems and achieve more together. But the colonies didn't always act like a united community. Remember, a colony is a place where people settle and live, but it is still ruled by another country. The colonists often forgot John Winthrop's idea that "the eyes of all people" were watching them, and they sometimes mistreated each other because of their religious disagreements. But, in the 1730s, something amazing happened—a big religious revival swept through the colonies. This revival, called the First Great Awakening, helped unite Christians by inspiring them to focus on their faith and come together. One of the most important leaders of this movement was a preacher named George Whitefield. **[Reference George Whitefield Image]** A **preacher** is someone who talks to others about God and teaches lessons from the Bible.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Preachers often give speeches, called sermons, to help people understand how to know God and live in a way that pleases Him. During the First Great Awakening, Whitefield's messages helped many people find unity and purpose, bringing the colonies closer together.

ASK Students

How are a colony and a community the same? How are they different?

TELL Students

Benjamin Franklin, one of America's Founding Fathers, said that "people of all groups and denominations" came to hear George Whitefield speak. Franklin admired Whitefield's speaking skills, supported his work, and listened to his message. **[Reference Benjamin Franklin Image]** Whitefield was a powerful and dramatic preacher from England. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1739 and traveled up and down the east coast, visiting every colony. From Savannah, Georgia, to Boston, Massachusetts, Whitefield shared his messages of the faith, hope, and unity that is possible through Jesus Christ. But what is faith? Remember, faith means trusting and believing in something or someone. For Christians, faith is about trusting in God and believing in His love and promises. **Christianity** is a religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God, who came to Earth to show God's love and to save people from their sins. For George Whitefield, it didn't matter what type of Christian denomination someone belonged to. He believed that Jesus Christ's love was for everyone, no matter where they lived or how they worshiped Jesus. Whitefield said that true faith isn't about belonging to one group or another, but about choosing to have Christ's love in your heart.

ASK Students

Why do you think George Whitefield believed that Jesus' love was for everyone?

TELL Students

George Whitefield believed that Jesus' love was for everyone because he thought faith wasn't about belonging to a specific group but about having Christ's love in your heart. He wanted people to focus on what united them, not what made them different.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Because of his message about the hope available through knowing God, Whitefield became very popular. His powerful voice and inspiring sermons made him America's first famous person, or what we might call a celebrity. He delivered about 18,000 sermons to nearly 10 million people. Many of these sermons were in the New World (now the United States of America), and he also spoke in other countries, many times in his home country of England. Often, thousands of people would come to hear him speak at once. Whitefield's message helped unite the colonies by reminding everyone that they were equal before God, no matter what denomination they belonged to. This idea was one of the important lessons of the First Great Awakening.

ASK Students

Why do you think so many people wanted to hear George Whitefield speak?

TELL Students

Another important person in the First Great Awakening was Jonathan Edwards. **[Reference John Edwards Image]** He was a pastor who lived in Massachusetts. Before George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards preached at a Congregational church in Northampton, Massachusetts, in the early 1730s. His powerful sermons became very famous and helped change the way people thought about their faith. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more!

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon
Ep. 37: First Great Awakening



Lesson

TELL Students

Jonathan Edwards was a powerful preacher who gave what many people believe is the most famous sermon of the 1700s. It was called Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. This sermon became very well-known and had a big impact during the First Great Awakening. **[Reference Jonathan Edwards Image]** Edwards spoke about how people from all over—from the North, South, East, and West—were turning back to God and renewing their faith. In his sermon, Edwards said:

"And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein CHRIST has flung the door of mercy wide open, and stands in the door calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God; many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south."

This means that Edwards believed God's love and forgiveness were available to everyone, no matter where they lived. He wanted people to understand that it was never too late to turn back to God and become part of His kingdom, rather than just living for themselves. His sermon inspired many people to reconnect with God, follow His plan, and come together as a community.

ASK Students

Why do you think Jonathan Edwards wanted everyone, no matter where they lived, to know God for themselves?

TELL Students

Jonathan Edwards wanted people to leave their bad habits behind and grow closer to Christ. He believed that true faith wasn't just about going to church or belonging to a certain group—it was about having a real change in your heart...a change only God could make. Like George Whitefield, Edwards taught that following Christ means letting God guide how you think and act every day. Edwards explained that true faith reaches deep into the heart and leads people to live good and obedient lives. Being **obedient** means following the rules or doing what you are asked to do. When someone is obedient, they listen carefully and make good choices to do what is right. **[Reference Obedience Image]** For example, being obedient could mean listening to your parents when they ask you to help around the house, following your teacher's instructions at school, or doing what God teaches in the Bible, like being kind, honest, and helpful. Edwards wanted people to live in a way that showed they were honoring God in their choices and actions.

Lesson

ASK Students

Why do you think Jonathan Edwards believed it was important to let God's love guide how people think and act every day?

TELL Students

Jonathan Edwards believed it was important to let God's love guide people because it helped them make good choices and live in a way that honored God. He wanted people to allow God to change their hearts and actions to reflect kindness, honesty, and respect for others. This idea of living by God's love was part of the larger impact of the First Great Awakening. The First Great Awakening brought the colonies together with the shared belief that everyone is made equal by their Creator, or by God. This belief—that all people are created equal—became so important that it was later written into the Declaration of Independence. **[Reference Declaration of Independence Image]** The Declaration of Independence says that all people “are created equal” and are given certain rights by their Creator, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This belief became one of the main ideas upon which our country was founded. Edwards' and Whitefield's sermons helped spread this idea, and their sermons were loved by all kinds of people—farmers, workers, rich, poor, educated, and uneducated alike—because they taught that everyone is equal before God, no matter who they were.

ASK Students

Why do you think it was important for Edwards and Whitefield to teach that everyone is created equal and has special rights from God?

TELL Students

The First Great Awakening also taught the important ideas of self-reliance and self-government.

Self-reliance means taking care of yourself and taking responsibility for your choices.

[Reference Self-reliance Image] The First Great Awakening preachers, like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, reminded people that accepting Christ was a personal decision. They taught that no one could make this choice for you—it is something you needed to decide in your heart. This idea of taking responsibility for your faith helped people understand the importance of making thoughtful, independent decisions in other parts of their lives too. **Self-government** means making decisions about how to live and work together as a group, without someone like a king telling you what to do.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

The First Great Awakening encouraged people to think about fairness and the idea that communities should work together to make rules that benefited everyone. These lessons helped people in the colonies start thinking about creating a government that listened to their needs and worked for them. The First Great Awakening helped them see the value of independence and unity, which later became important when the colonies decided to govern themselves and form a new nation.

ASK Students

Why do you think it's important for people to make their own choices and work together as a group to make fair rules?

TELL Students

When people take responsibility for their decisions and work together to make rules, it builds stronger communities. This idea became even more important during the First Great Awakening. The First Great Awakening also introduced the idea that one strong voice could lead to big changes. This idea became important when the colonies decided they wanted a government that got its power from the people, not from a ruler. Before this, kings and rulers made all the decisions, and many people didn't have a say in decisions that affected them. The First Great Awakening reminded people that everyone is created equal by God and has the ability to make their own choices. It also helped people realize they should have a say in how their government worked. This movement brought people together and gave them the courage to believe that their voices mattered. These ideas helped shape the foundation of America and are just as important today. **[Reference American Flag Image]**

ASK Students

Why do you think it's important for everyone to have a say in decisions that affect their community or government?

TELL Students

People need to have a say in how their government works because this ensures that everyone's voice is heard and respected.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

When we remember that everyone is created equal by God, it means that no one is more important than another, and everyone deserves to be treated fairly. This idea is a big part of how our government works today. In America today, the people make decisions by voting.

[Reference Voting Image] This includes voting to choose leaders and deciding on important issues. The First Great Awakening reminded people that their voices mattered, and this idea is still true today. For you, this might mean working together as a class to make fair decisions. For example, you could vote on which game to play at recess or decide on a new classroom rule. When you share your ideas and listen to others, it helps everyone feel included and respected. Just like the people during the First Great Awakening learned to come together and share their ideas, you can practice working as a team to make choices that are fair and good for everyone. That's how we create strong, united communities!



Be the Light of the World!



Objective

Help first graders understand the concept of being a "light of the world" and working together in a community while tying it to the lessons of the First Great Awakening.

Preparation

- Print or draw a large candle or lighthouse on a poster board.
- Cut out small paper "flames" or light rays for each student.
- Have markers or crayons ready for the students.

Introduce the Activity

John Winthrop talked about being a "city upon a hill," which means being a light of hope and a good example for others. We're going to think about how we can be like a light in our classroom, just like the colonists were learning to be a light in their community. Let's make a big light together!

Brainstorm Ideas

What can you do to be a light of kindness, goodness, and love in our classroom or at home? How can we work together to be a great community? (Encourage responses like helping friends, sharing, listening to others, and being respectful.)

Create the Light

1. Hand each student a paper "flame" or light ray.
2. Instruct them to write or draw one way they can "be the light" in their community.
 - Example: Drawing themselves helping a friend or writing "be kind."
3. After they finish, have each student attach their flame to the candle or lighthouse on the poster board.

Reflect as a Group

- Look at this beautiful light we created together! When we all do our part, we make our classroom and community a bright and happy place, just like the colonists were learning to do during the First Great Awakening.



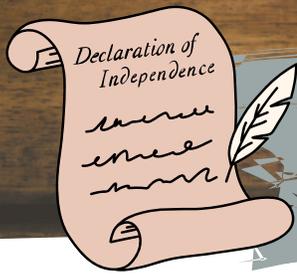
Be the Light of the World!



Wrap Up with a Song

Be a Light! (To the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

*We are lights for all to see,
Kind and helpful, we can be.
Working, sharing, every day,
Helping others find their way.
We are lights for all to see,
Kind and helpful, we can be.*



Path to Independence Walk



Objective

Help first grade students understand how the First Great Awakening influenced the belief that all people are created equal and how this idea connects to the Declaration of Independence.

Materials Needed

- Large sheets of paper or construction paper (to create stepping stones).
- Markers to write key ideas and phrases.
- A printed or displayed excerpt from the Declaration of Independence: *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."*

Preparation

1. Write phrases or key ideas related to the First Great Awakening and the Declaration of Independence on the paper stepping stones. Examples:
 - "Faith"
 - "Unity"
 - "Self-Reliance"
 - "Self-Government"
 - "The Voice of the People Matters"
 - "All People Are Created Equal"
 - "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"
2. Arrange the stepping stones in a path across the classroom floor.

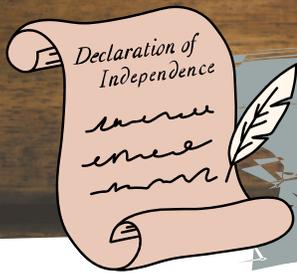
Step 1: Introduce the Activity

Today, we're going to take a special walk through history to learn how the First Great Awakening helped shape the ideas of equality and freedom, which later became part of the Declaration of Independence.

Step 2: Begin the Walk

1. Lead the students to the first stepping stone and discuss how faith played a role in the First Great Awakening and how it influenced the ideas in the Declaration of Independence.
2. Continue through the stepping stones, stopping to explain or discuss each idea briefly.





Path to Independence Walk



Step 3: Reach the Declaration of Independence

1. At the final stepping stone, point to or display the excerpt from the Declaration of Independence.
 - The lessons of the First Great Awakening—like faith, unity, and equality—helped inspire the Founding Fathers to write this: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”
 - How do you think the lessons of the First Great Awakening helped people believe in the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence?

Step 4: Reflection

Just like stepping on each stone helped us learn, the ideas of the First Great Awakening were like stepping stones that led to the belief in equality and freedom in the Declaration of Independence. These ideas are still important today!

Tracing Sheet

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Great Awakening

Great Awakening

Great Awakening

Great Awakening

Great Awakening

Resources

- <https://www.americanyawp.com/reader/colliding-cultures/john-winthrop-dreams-of-a-city-on-a-hill-1630/>
- <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/5>
- https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/declare.asp
- <https://www.britannica.com/event/Glorious-Revolution#:~:text=Church%20of%20England.,What%20caused%20the%20Glorious%20Revolution%3F,non%20Catholic%20population%20and%20others>
- <https://users.ssc.wisc.edu/~rkeyser/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/TolerationAct1689.pdf>
- <https://gutenberg.org/files/20203/20203-h/20203-h.htm>
- <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/come-poor-lost-undone-sinner>
- <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/george-whitefield-did-you-know>
- <https://gutenberg.org/files/20203/20203-h/20203-h.htm>
- <https://minio.la.utexas.edu/webeditor-files/coretexts/pdf/174120sinners20angry20god.pdf>
- <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/mather-a-man-of-reason-edwards-a-supernatural-light/>
- Jefferson, Thomas. Declaration of Independence.

Images

John Winthrop



Credit: Wikipedia.

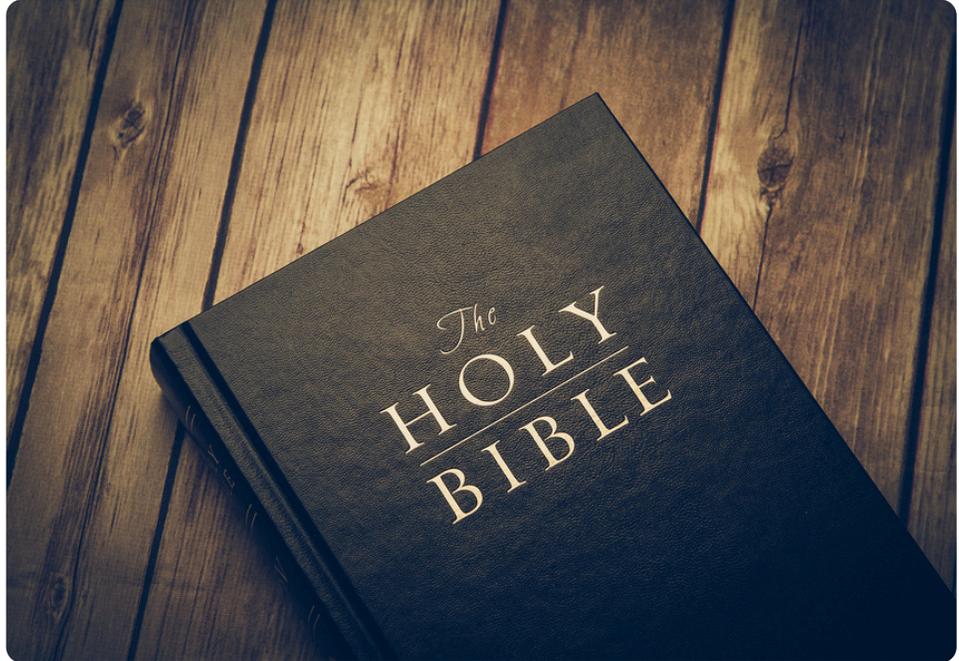
Colony



Credit: Canva Pro.

Images

Bible



Credit: Canva Pro.

Declaration of Independence



Credit: Canva Pro.

Images

Community



Credit: Pixabay.

George Whitefield



Credit: Wikipedia.

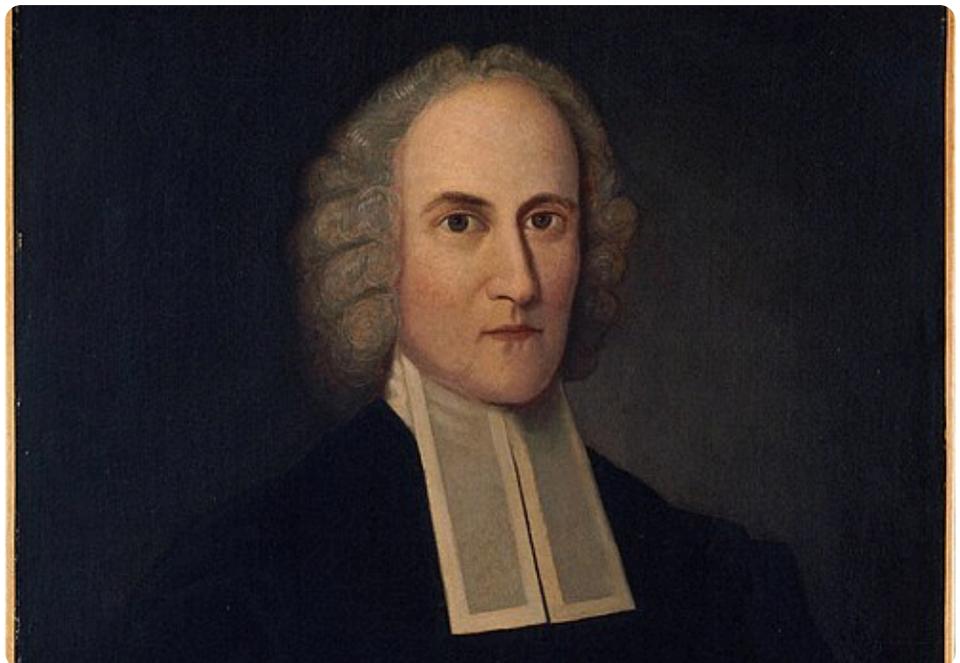
Images

**Benjamin
Franklin**



Credit: Wikipedia.

John Edwards



Credit: Wikipedia.

Images

Self-reliance



Credit: Canva Pro.

American Flag



Credit: Canva Pro.

Images

Voting



Credit: Canva Pro.

