

We Hold These Truths



By Lee Yates



The Declaration of Independence is a statement of human rights. People may look back on this document for its historical importance and poetic language, but the words are still important. Take some time to review these words and consider how your family might continue the human rights work that the signers of the Declaration of Independence began.

For
Teen Family

Season
Summer

Needed
Computer, Internet access, paper, pen, envelope, postage

Prepare in Advance
Print out a copy of the [Declaration of Independence](#).

Activity Plan

1. Gather as a family. Begin with prayer. Here are some words if you need them:
God, help us find the wisdom in the work of leaders in the past and use it in the future. Amen.
2. Read the Declaration of Independence. You can do this individually or have someone read it aloud. Use the following questions to guide your conversation on this document:
 - What “church words” are used in this document?
 - How do the complaints of the early colonies compare to the complaints of other oppressed peoples at different times in history?
3. Ask someone to read aloud the first two paragraphs again. Think of groups of people around the world who might find their own feelings and experiences echoed in these words. For each of these groups, consider who is oppressing them and to whom they might address their complaints.
4. Pick one group from step 3 to research a little more. Spend some time on the Internet and find out what you can about this group and the issues it is facing. For example, you might consider refugees from some war-torn region.
5. Write a letter on behalf of this group. You might direct your letter to a government official, humanitarian group, or other appropriate organization. For example, if you chose refugees from a certain war-torn region, you might want to write a letter to your congressional representatives about policies regarding foreign aid support for these people.
6. If appropriate, find a nonprofit organization that serves people in the group you have identified and plan a way to contribute to their work, either through a gift of money, a donation of supplies, or time spent as volunteers. For example, if you chose to focus on refugees from a certain war-torn region, you might contribute to the work of an international humanitarian aid organization.
7. Anytime you hear a prayer for your own nation this summer, say a silent prayer for people still dreaming of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

