



Old Glory

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Produced by
Colman Communications Corp.

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Old Glory

Time: 11:16

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Our nation's flag is seen in many places — atop buildings, in front of houses, on car bumpers, and in our classrooms. Our flag, sometimes called “Old Glory,” has been around for more than 200 years. Before our country had a flag of stars and stripes, it had many other flags. Although legend has it that Betsy Ross of Philadelphia designed and made the first official American flag, most historians believe that Francis Hopkinson was the person most likely responsible for “Old Glory.” The first official American flag had 13 stars, but now it has 50 — one for each state. The Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892, and when we recite it, we promise to respect and obey the rules of our country. “Old Glory” is usually an important part of our nation's holidays because it reminds us of our country's history, its blessings and its great beauty. There are also many rules for flying, displaying, and folding our flag. In addition, there are many interesting facts about “Old Glory,” such as how it inspired our national anthem, how it is the only flag to have flown on the moon, and how it got its name.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, students should be able to do the following:

1. Briefly review the history of the American flag.
2. Tell who wrote the Pledge of Allegiance and under what circumstances.

3. Tell who wrote the “Star Spangled Banner,” and under what circumstances.
4. Briefly explain the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance.
5. Show how to properly fold, fly and display the American flag.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Discuss flags. Why do people have flags? Help your students understand that some flags can be used to send signals, and others may be used for decoration. Explain that still other flags are used to represent, or stand for, something. Some businesses, states, and countries have flags. They stand for all the people in the business, or state, or country, and what those people do and believe. Then direct the discussion toward the American flag. How many stars does it have? How many stripes?

Pre-Viewing Activities

Ask the class if anyone knows who made the first American flag. Tell them that the program they’re about to see will give an answer that may surprise them, and will discuss many other things about the American flag, including why it’s called “Old Glory.”

Post-Viewing Activities

Ask what things in the program were most interesting. Using your classroom flag, have your students demonstrate the proper way to fold the flag. If time allows, have your students design and draw a classroom flag. Does your school have a flag? If not, you could also have your students design and draw one. Perhaps a parent could sew the school flag or class flag.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

We see it almost everywhere, waving in the breeze in front of neighborhood homes, high atop large buildings in office parks and downtown areas.

We see it on shirts and ribbons.

We see it on sunglasses, buttons and bumpers.

It hangs above the chalkboard in our classrooms, and outside, in front of our school buildings.

It's "Old Glory" — our American flag!

Old Glory has been around for a very long time — in fact, more than 200 years.

It first appeared in 1777, during the Revolutionary War, when American colonists fought English soldiers to break away from English rule.

The first American flag had 13 stars — sometimes arranged in a circle, sometimes not — and 13 stripes, which stood for the 13 English colonies in America.

Actually, there were other American flags at that time, but none was approved by congress to be the official flag, as was the "Stars and Stripes."

One of them, called the "Continental Colors," had a small British flag on it. This "Union Jack" was placed over a field of 13 red and white stripes.

The flag was supposed to show that the colonies and England were united.

But the "Stars and Stripes" appeared shortly after the "Continental Colors" first flew, showing that, in truth, England and its American colonies were not united at all — that the Americans wanted their own country.

And now they had a flag to express those feelings. Legend has it that George Washington, our country's first president, asked Betsy Ross of Philadelphia to design and make our first flag.

And while Betsy Ross was a flag maker, most historians now agree that she had no part in its design, nor was she the first person to make it.

Some experts believe Francis Hopkinson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was the person who was really responsible for Old Glory's design. But nobody knows for sure.

In any event, the flag didn't stay the same very long, because every time there were new states, new stars and new stripes were added.

After awhile, the stripes became too crowded, so it was decided that the flag should go back to only 13 stripes, and only a star should be added for each new state.

Today, of course, there are 50 stars on our flag because our country has 50 states.

You see them on your classroom flag whenever you recite the pledge of allegiance.

CLASS: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands...

NARRATOR: Sometimes we say things out of habit, without really thinking about what they mean.

Reciting the pledge of allegiance is like that for a lot of people. So what do all those words mean?

Well, when you recite the pledge, you promise to be loyal to the stars and stripes — that you won't do anything to hurt it or the country for which that flag stands — the United States of America.

As an example, you could be promising not to litter because littering hurts our country by making it unsightly.

You could be promising to obey laws and rules, too ~ such as safety rules — because following them helps our country to be a safe place.

Pledging allegiance to one nation "under God" means that most Americans believe in the power of religion to help them become better persons, regardless of which religion it may be.

The word "indivisible" means "can't be divided" or split apart. So even though we are a nation of many different kinds of people, we still are

bound together as one — as Americans striving to be good members of our community.

“With liberty and justice for all” means all Americans — regardless of their color, sex, age, or religion — are free to do as they wish as long as it isn’t harmful to others... and that we are a nation of laws that protect everyone.

By the way, the editor of a children’s magazine, Francis Bellamy, wrote the pledge about one hundred years ago to help celebrate America’s first Columbus Day — October 12th, 1892.

On that day, some 120,000 children around the country recited the Pledge of Allegiance for the very first time

Today, more than 100 years later, millions of youngsters do the very same thing each morning, before they begin their class work.

Old Glory is almost always an important part of our national holidays because it helps remind us of our nation’s history, its many blessings, its varied people from all walks of life, and its great beauty.

Because Old Glory stands for so many wonderful things, we have a special holiday set aside for it — Flag Day — every June 14th.

WOMAN: Yes! Happy Flag Day! June 14th! Yeah!

NARRATOR: For the same reason, we also have many rules and traditions about how to treat the Stars and Stripes respectfully.

First, it should be flown when the weather is good — not in bad weather, unless it’s an all-weather flag made of special material.

Next, when the Stars and Stripes are carried in a parade, or placed in a group of other flags, it must be to the right of them.

In addition, our flag should be raised swiftly, but lowered slower, in a more respectful manner. There’s a proper way to fold the flag, too. Making certain that it never touches the ground, it’s folded in half, lengthwise, two times.

Then, a corner at the striped end of the flag is folded over and over in the shape of a triangle – again and again – until the flag is completely folded into a triangular bundle.

Finally, the Stars and Stripes are placed halfway up the flag pole, or at “half-mast,” when an important person has died and is flown upside down only in a drastic emergency, such as when a ship is sinking.

Now that you know some basics about the American flag, here are some additional “flag facts” with which you can amaze and impress your friends.

Fact number one: Francis Scott Key wrote the words to our national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner,” after a battle between the English and Americans at Ft. McHenry during the War of 1812.

Key watched the fighting all night, but didn’t know who had won until morning — at “dawn’s early light” — when he saw the Stars and Stripes still flying above the American fort.

He was so happy, he wrote the poem that eventually was set to music and became our country’s national anthem.

Fact number two: The world’s largest flag was displayed at the foot of the Washington Monument on Flag Day, 1991. It was bigger than a football field, and weighed almost 15,000 pounds!

Fact number three: On July 20, 1969, the first flag on the moon was the Stars and Stripes, placed there by astronaut Neil Armstrong.

Finally, fact number four answers the question many people ask about the American flag: “Why is it called ‘Old Glory’?”

Here’s the story: Back in 1824, Captain William Driver was ready to leave port for a trip around the world.

As he stood saying good-bye to his wife and some friends who came to see him off, several sailors were busy nearby raising the flag.

Captain Driver looked at it and said to the small group gathered around him, “What a glorious sight! What a glorious flag! Glorious is the only word! I’ll call her ‘Old Glory!’”

And our flag is glorious because it represents a great country made up of many different kinds of people who live together as one nation — the United States of America!