

Creating The Story – Developing a Blueprint / Outline

Once the students are comfortable with the key elements in the story, have them create a short piece of theater that emphasizes certain aspects of the journey.

A good way to construct these scenes is to have students draw up a “blueprint” or outline covering the main areas such as Characters, Location, Theme and Conflicts.

Students can decide who the main characters are needed to perform each scene. They will then give the scene a setting or location. The theme or style of the piece should then be decided, followed by the conflicts that the characters may face.

Once students have created a blueprint as a group, they can assign characters, set a theme and what conflicts they would like to involve in their piece.

Once this has been confirmed, students can begin performing a piece of improvisation that encompasses the knowledge they have of the Pilgrim Fathers.

CHARACTERS	LOCATION	THEME	CONFLICTS
William Brewster	England	Drama	Betrayal
Richard Clyfton	Immigration	Thriller	Love
King James I	The Mayflower	Comedy	Passion
Kings men	Holland	Action	War
	America		Religion

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The Pilgrim Fathers

L4823DVD

Teachers Guide

Program Overview

This is the story of a group of religious Separatists who sailed across the Atlantic in 1620 and helped shape the laws and ways of life in what was to become the United States of America.

Told by two British historians from near the Pilgrims home villages in Nottinghamshire, England and interspersed with dramatic reconstructions this program probes their roots in the England of the 1600's. It explores their reasons for leaving England as well as the perilous journey they took to get to America.

The story begins in Nottinghamshire where Separatists - worshippers wanting to reform the then highly intolerant church - were in danger from the Crown. They believed in a greater freedom of religion than the authorities would permit. Two of the leading Separatists were a postmaster called William Brewster and a parson called Richard Clyfton. Fearing for their lives they decided to leave England and create a community where they were free to practice their beliefs.

The original escape attempt was from Boston, in Lincolnshire and unfortunately wasn't successful. Many of the people trying to escape were arrested by the Kings men down by the water's edge before they managed to escape.

After months of re-planning, the second attempt was successful but wasn't without difficulties. As the men boarded the ship from a port near Hull, they waited for their wives and children to join them. As the men looked on, they saw the Kings men approach the women and children and arrest them whilst the men on the boat could do nothing to help them.

The men then set sail for Amsterdam but were met by ferocious storms and were blown up towards Norway. Miraculously they arrived in Amsterdam to the surprise of the locals, as they too were sure the ship would have been lost to the sea.

Soon after the Pilgrims landed in Amsterdam the women and children joined them. The Pilgrims eventually set up home in Leiden, Holland but after twelve years decided to move on. The decision was made to cross the Atlantic Ocean and build a new world in America.

They were packed into a ship called the Mayflower. There were no beds and they slept in the cold and wet leaking decks, sharing their space with rats. Food was scarce. There was no fresh meat and only a little water. Violent storms caused sea sickness and swept one of the passengers into the raging sea – amazingly he was saved.

On November 9th 1620, land was spotted – Cape Cod on the East Coast of North America – over 3,000 miles from the start of their journey in Nottinghamshire, England.

William Brewster, his wife Mary and their nine-year-old son Love, played a major part in founding the new society.

The Pilgrims found a rich land with cornfields, timber and rivers teeming with fish. They set up their new colony - Plimoth - now modern Plymouth, Massachusetts. From these humble beginnings their influence helped shape the nation into the United States of America that we know today.

Although we credit the Pilgrims for Thanksgiving, this program explains why this brave group is far more significant, because the quest for religious freedom matters far more than a celebratory harvest feast. The tale ends with the historic Mayflower Compact, the first self-governing agreement in America.

Questions for thought and further discussion:

- 1. Who were the Separatists?** (Answer: Church congregations in the villages of Babworth, Scrooby and Sturton-le-Steeple in England who wanted to reform the church system in England).
- 2. What did the Separatists believe in?** (Answer: They believed in greater freedom of religion).
- 3. Name two of the leading Separatists** (Answer: William Brewster, Richard Clyfton).
- 4. Why did they want to leave England?** (Answer: They feared religious persecution).
- 5. How did the Separatists leave England?** (Answer: By ship).
- 6. What was the name of the ship they sailed in?** (Answer: The Mayflower).
- 7. How long was the journey across the Atlantic?** (Answer: 3,000 miles).
- 8. Where did the Separatists land before arriving in North America?** (Answer: Amsterdam).
- 9. What year did the Separatists land in North America and in what town?** (Answer: 1620. Plymouth (Plimoth)).

- 10. Where the early years easy or hard for the Pilgrims?** (Answer: Life was hard. Over 50% of the Pilgrim Fathers died as a result of the cold weather and the inadequate housing they built for themselves).
- 11. Did the Pilgrims find all the Native Americans friendly once they arrived in New Plymouth?** (Answer: No).
- 12. What did the Pilgrims do to protect themselves from the unfriendly Native Americans?** (Answer: They built a wooden fence with watchtowers that surrounded the homes that had been built. This eventually became a fort. The fort also served as a meeting place to discuss issues of government within the new colony).
- 13. Did more Pilgrims make the journey after the first colony was established?** (Answer: Yes. Over the next few years, as life for Puritans became more uncomfortable in England, more and more made the journey across the Atlantic).
- 14. What Trades did the Pilgrims Success and Survival Depend On?** (Answer: The Pilgrims founded colonies that thrived and their success depended on fishing, shipbuilding, trade and farming).
- 15. What holiday do Americans celebrate today, to remember the coming of the Pilgrims to America?** (Answer: Thanksgiving).

Have students create a list of feelings or emotions that they feel the Separatists may have felt during their journey to the New World.

Examples include: *Frustration, disbelief, anger, scared, panic, resentment, hunger, desperation, hope, belief.*

Examples from situations the Separatists encountered include:

Differences of religious beliefs.

The failed attempts to flee.

Life in Amsterdam.

The journey across the Atlantic Ocean in the Mayflower.

Arriving at Cape Cod.

Setting up a new life in America.