

My Country, 'Tis of Thee Worksheet
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Verse 1

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside,
Let freedom ring!

Verse 2

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,
Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills,
Like that above.

Verse 3

Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees,
Sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake;
Let all that breathe partake;
Let rocks their silence break,
The sound prolong.

Verse 4

Our fathers' God, to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.

Vocabulary In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

Verse 1: 'tis, thee, liberty, pilgrim, freedom

Verse 2: native, noble, Thy, rills, templed, rapture

Verse 3: mortal, partake, prolong

Verse 4: author, holy

Word Pictures Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, perhaps, without drawing a picture of Christ, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

Verse 1: land of liberty, where my fathers died, pilgrims' pride, mountainside

Verse 2: noble free, rocks and rills, woods and templed hills

Verse 3: music swell the breeze, ring from all the trees, freedom's song, mortal tongues awake

Verse 4: freedom's holy light

Mechanics Verbally discuss

Who is the speaker? (Does the speaker have a specific personality or has the author remained in the background so the message of the poem will be more clear?)

What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character? (Sometimes, poems reveal nothing about the speaker's personal thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. Yet, the poem may demonstrate those character traits that are important to the author like courage, loyalty, perseverance, etc.)

Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone? (Sometimes poems are not directed to anyone in particular, but to anyone that may read it.)

Does the poem have a setting? (Does the author tell where the poem occurs? Is the poem about a specific event?)

Is the poem about a particular event? (Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?)

Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly? (Some poems are straightforward and are meant to be taken literally. In songs, the theme may be presented in the refrain or in the last few lines. Sometimes the theme is a little bit more difficult to discern as it is made with figurative language or symbols.)

How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?

What point of view or perspective is the speaker? (What meaning do you think the poem has for the author?)

How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time? (Did your thoughts and feelings change after you took time to study it?)

Comprehension Questions Verbally discuss

Verse 1: To what is the author singing to and about? Why would this be important? Explain and discuss: “Land where my fathers died, Land of the pilgrims’ pride.” How can freedom ring? Do we even want freedom to ring? Why? Why do you think the terms “ ’tis” and “thee” were used?

Verse 2: What is meant by “Land of the noble free”? Explain and discuss: “I love thy rocks and rills, Thy woods and templed hills; My heart with rapture thrills, Like that above.” Why do you think the term “Thy” was used?

Verse 3: What will swell the breeze? What will ring from the trees? Why? What should mortal tongues do? Why? According to the author, what should rocks do?

Verse 4: Who is the Author of liberty? Why is author capitalized? Why is the poet singing to the Author of liberty? What is the poet requesting of the Author of liberty in lines 4, 5, and 6? Why?

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

What Does the Bible Say?

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the four verses.

From bondage to spiritual faith;
From spiritual faith to great courage;
From courage to liberty;
From liberty to abundance;
From abundance to complacency;
From complacency to apathy;
From apathy to dependence;
From dependence back again to bondage.

The above was written by Professor Alexander Tytler when the USA was still a British colony. What does Professor Tytler mean? Give scriptural support for Professor Tytler's assertions along with historical, Biblical examples.

Caleb (Num 13:30), Joshua (Josh 1:1-11), Jonathan (1 Sam 14:1,6-14), and Daniel (Dan 6:1-28) all seem to take courage seriously. Courage is doing what is right even though one is afraid. Give other individuals in the Bible that demonstrated courage. Give historical examples of courage. After reading the newspaper, listening to the news on radio, or watching the news, can you think of any examples of courage presently? What will you tell your grandchildren about courage? How will you encourage your grandchildren in this character trait?

Discuss this in light of 1 Corinthians 16:13, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

What does the Bible have to say about liberty, freedom/free, independence, and tyrant/tyranny. For scriptural helps refer to the web site page at the following address:

<http://www.lovetolearnplace.com/SpecialDays/Veteransday/Bible.html>

Discuss this poem in light of ...

Matthew 22:37 " ... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

Luke 10:27 "... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."

Deuteronomy 6:5 ... "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Mark 12:30 ... "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength ..."

The Author/Poet

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The name of the author for this poem or lyric is Samuel Francis Smith (1808-1895). He was born 21 October 1808 and died 16 November 1895 both in Boston, Massachusetts. He became a Baptist minister in 1832 and edited *Baptist Missionary Magazine*.

Geography

Locate Massachusetts on a globe, map and atlas.

Challenge Locate Boston on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast Massachusetts' and/or New England's weather with your own for one week.
Make a Massachusetts or New England meal for your family.

Activities

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each verse. (Note: that will be four different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the song and the author's name which will be your book's cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the message of this poem.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, "interview" various individuals this poem could illustrate (e.g., family members, Oliver Cromwell, pilgrims, settlers, Moses, Joshua and Caleb, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents' permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author's view of the impact of *My Country, 'Tis of Thee*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Samuel Francis Smith (1808-1895) and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.