

SELF-EVIDENT
The Truths That Built a Nation
Young Explorers Edition • Grades Three through Six

LESSON NINE

“The Freedom to Believe”

The Words We Are Studying

The freedom of conscience, which grows from our God-given rights

A right that flows from the Declaration

The Big Idea

God made you free to believe in Him and to follow your conscience. No one can force what you believe in your heart.

Words to Know

Conscience. The voice inside you that knows right from wrong and what you believe is true.

Believe. To hold something as true in your heart. You get to choose what you believe about God.

Force. To make someone do something against their will. You cannot really force someone to believe.

What It Means

The Founders named some rights out loud, but they knew there were more that grow from the same root. One of the most important is the freedom of conscience, the freedom to believe.

Your conscience is the part of you that knows right from wrong and decides what you believe about God. The Founders believed this belongs to God and to you, and that no king or government should try to control it.

Here is something interesting: you cannot really force someone to believe something in their heart. You might make someone say words, but real belief has to be chosen freely. That is how God made us.

A Picture to Help You Remember

Imagine trying to force a friend to like broccoli by yelling at them. Even if they take a bite, you cannot make them truly enjoy it inside. Their real feelings belong to them.

Belief is like that, only much more important. What you believe in your heart about God belongs to you and to God. That is why the freedom to believe is so precious, and why we protect it for everyone.

What a Founder Said

“*Conscience is the most sacred of all property.*”

— James Madison, 1792

In plain words: What you believe in your heart is the most precious thing you own. It belongs to you and to God.

Why It Matters for You

You have the freedom to believe in God and to follow what is right, and no one can take that away from your heart.

You should also respect that other people get to make their own choices about what they believe. We do not force people; we love them and share the truth with them.

Let’s Talk About It

1. What is your conscience, and what does it help you do?
2. Why can’t someone really force another person to believe something in their heart?
3. Why did the Founders think the freedom to believe was so important?
4. How can you respect other people even when they believe differently than you?

Try This

Think about something you believe is true and important. Write it on a card. Then talk about why it is special that God lets you choose what to believe in your heart.

A Verse to Remember

“We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)