

“Under God” and the Pledge of Allegiance: Examining a 1954 Sermon and Its Meaning

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On the first Sunday of February 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower and first lady Marie Eisenhower attended the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, just down the street from the White House. The sanctuary had hosted several presidents in its history, including John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, and Abraham Lincoln. In honor of Lincoln’s birthday, the first couple sat in Lincoln’s pew as Rev. Dr. George MacPherson Docherty delivered a stirring sermon advocating that the Pledge of Allegiance include the phrase “under God.”¹ Within four months, President Eisenhower had signed the bill into law.

(NYAPC archives)



President Eisenhower and Rev. Docherty greet parishioners at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., on February 7, 1954.

How did this happen, and what does it mean? In this article, we explore these questions and provide a lesson plan for teachers examining the topic with a high school social studies class (pp.188–191). We summarize Rev. Docherty’s argument and then offer a lesson that invites students to place his sermon in historical context (with the use of a timeline). Small groups then examine a key passage

from the hand-typed sermon (a primary historical document), comparing it with other notable quotes of varying points of view.

A Minister’s Sermon

Docherty, a graduate of Glasgow University, emigrated from Scotland in 1950, when he was 39 years old. In the sermon titled “A New Birth of Freedom,”

he recalled a recent afternoon when his children came home from school and recited the Pledge for him.

“I could listen to those noble words as if for the first time,” he said. However, he felt something was missing.

The sermon began by noting that the “true strength of America” lies in “the spirit of both military and people—a flaming devotion to the cause of freedom within these borders.” Docherty then described the “American Way of Life” with a long series of images and memories: “losing heart and hat on a roller coaster, ... setting off fire crackers with your children on the Fourth of July, ... school girls wearing jeans and school boys riding enormous push bikes...” He contrasted these images with statements by “a newspaper editor” that Docherty dismissed as platitudes: “It is live and let live; it is freedom to act.”

Docherty arrived at “a strange conclusion. There was something missing in this Pledge ... the characteristic and definitive factor in the ‘American Way of Life.’” He worried that little Muscovites could “repeat a similar pledge to their hammer and sickle flag in Moscow” because Russia also claimed to be a republic that had “overthrown the tyranny of kingship.” “Under God,” he said, were the “definitive words” missing from the Pledge of Allegiance. The phrase could distinguish one nation’s oath of loyalty from the other’s.

Docherty supported his stand by drawing from the words of notable Americans

who credited a deity. (Lincoln's spoken words at Gettysburg, Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, and George Washington's first inaugural address.) He then predicted from where his critics would likely arise, naming "Eighteenth Century Democratic Liberalism"; "modern, secularized, godless humanity"; and the person who "does not believe in God." He categorized agnostics and atheists as "spiritual parasites," because they "are living upon the accumulated Spiritual Capital of a Judaio-Christian [sic] civilization..."—although he tempered this label by adding that some atheists may be "in their obligations as citizens and good neighbors, quite excellent."

In a penultimate paragraph, Docherty dismissed the idea of human evolution, favoring instead the idea of "a sentient being created by God and seeking to know His will, and 'Whose soul is restless till he rest in God.'" The sermon concluded: "This quest is not only within these United States but to the four corners of the globe wherever man will lift up his head towards the vision of his true and divine manhood."

A Grass Roots Campaign

Docherty's sermon was not the first attempt to sway national lawmakers on this issue. (**Handout 1: Timeline**, p. 188–189) In 1948, Louis Bowman, chaplain for the Illinois Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, proposed the addition of "under God" to the Pledge,² stating that he was inspired by Lincoln's use of the phrase during the Gettysburg Address.³ In 1951, The Knights of Columbus (the nation's largest Catholic fraternity) began including the phrase at their highest level assemblies. The following year, all members of the Knights of Columbus did the same. Soon, many civic fraternities were reciting the revised Pledge and encouraging their members to write their congressional representatives and ask for this revision to the pledge. A series of Hearst newspaper editorials echoed the cause.⁴

In March 1953, Gallup pollsters asked

Americans about their feelings regarding a possible change to the Pledge. Almost 70 percent responded favorably to adding "under God."⁵ The next month, Joseph Mahoney, a Knights of Columbus member, wrote to Rep. Louis Rabaut (D, Mich.), who then introduced the first congressional resolution (H. J. Res. 243) calling for the words "under God" to be added to the Pledge.⁶ Over the next few months, 16 similar House resolutions were presented,⁷ and Rep. Rabaut quoted Docherty extensively in speeches. Questions about church-state separation or religious freedom were not voiced on the floor of the House or Senate. Apparently, no congressional leader wanted to "face accusations of being 'soft' on communism and lacking in patriotism."⁸

After Docherty's sermon in February 1954, it was only four months before the Senate unanimously passed the House version of the bill on June 8. The president signed Rabaut's resolution into law on Flag Day, June 14, 1954.

Cold War Fears

The year before, in April of 1953, Eisenhower had delivered his first formal address as president, "The Chance for Peace." His pleas for world peace were tempered by how America's relationship with the Soviet Union had changed since the end of World War II. "In that spring of victory the soldiers of the Western Allies met the soldiers of Russia in the center of Europe. They were triumphant comrades in arms." Between 1945 and 1953, however, the world had seen "hope waver, grow dim, and almost die. And the shadow of fear again has darkly lengthened across the world."⁹ In Europe and Asia, nations were falling into Eastern and Western blocs. North America had been historically buffered from military invasion by two huge oceans. Suddenly, the United States appeared vulnerable to attack. Soviet planes carrying atomic weapons could fly over the Arctic and hit Los Angeles, New York, or Washington, D.C., within a few hours. During this era of heightened tension, many Americans

were "seeking spiritual, not just patriotic, guidance from the government."¹⁰

Beginning in 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wisc.) had accused his political opponents of being Communist sympathizers. The tactics of McCarthyism were mainly used against Democrats and New Deal policies, and they helped the Republican candidate, Eisenhower, win the presidential election in 1952.¹¹ Although McCarthy's methods were being exposed by 1954, the residue of anticommunist hysteria still resonated strongly. In short, the blending of patriotism and piety in Docherty's sermon "combined to serve as an ideological weapon against atheistic Communism."¹²

Religion in the Eisenhower White House

Eisenhower was one of our country's most religious presidents. His 1952 campaign was described as having the "character of moral crusade and a religious revival."¹³ A casual review of Eisenhower's public papers reveals the constant presence of his faith within his work, including numerous references made during formal speeches and public appearances. It was during Eisenhower's presidency that the National Prayer Breakfast was initiated,¹⁴ "In God We Trust" replaced "E Pluribus Unum" as our national motto, and cabinet meetings routinely began with prayer. He was the only president to be baptized after entering the White House, the first to send out Christmas Cards,¹⁵ and he "freely associated God and country... and encouraged others to do the same."¹⁶

As the 1950s progressed, church attendance increased dramatically and "religion suddenly became fashionable."¹⁷ Many Americans spoke openly of their faith to the point where "Religion became more socially respectable, if less spiritually intense."¹⁸ Polls conducted in 1954 revealed that almost 80 percent of the population reported they were church members, and a remarkable 96 percent believed in God. Religious music filled the air and Hollywood produced a steady stream of movies with Biblical themes.

Evangelist Rev. Billy Graham preached to packed stadiums across the nation and became a confidant of the president.¹⁹

Eisenhower's faith has been described as an "American civil religion as much as it was a Bible-based faith" and "devout without being narrowly doctrinal."²⁰ It appeared to be just what Americans needed from their leader during the tenuous times of the Cold War. "Perhaps more than any other president, Eisenhower was closely connected with the religious climate and conditions of his era. Through his personal practices and religious rhetoric, much more than his administrative policies, Eisenhower prodded Americans to rededicate themselves to traditional moral values and the religious convictions of their forefathers."²¹ While his "faith was neither sophisticated nor profound, it was consistent, and consistently devout. He essentially held fast to one big idea—that religious faith was the source of democratic politics."²²

Continuing Controversy

Although the Pledge is ubiquitous in contemporary America, educators²³ and students²⁴ are often uninformed about the history and meaning of the brief document. To thoughtfully enter the discussion of American heritage and policy, students must learn "how to do (not just read) history," which involves "researching, interviewing, critical reading, winnowing fact from opinion, and coming to conclusions based on evidence."²⁵

The Pledge's own "biography" is interwoven with major themes of U.S. history, such as immigration and naturalization, war and peace, and First Amendment freedoms. For example, both the devoutly religious and atheists have refused to recite the Pledge on First Amendment grounds. In 1940, even before the words "under God" were added, members of the Gobitas family fought for the "free exercise" of their religion (Jehovah's Witness), as they perceived the oath to be a form of idol worship.²⁶ In 2000, Michael Newdow, an atheist, filed a suit claiming that the phrase "under God" violated

the First Amendment prohibition against the establishment of a state religion.²⁷

The two-word phrase "under God" certainly adds to the colorful history, energizing a discussion that will be continued by this, and by future generations of Americans as we strive to convey who we are, and what we believe. ●

See pp. 188–191 for the handouts and lesson plan accompanying this article.

Notes

1. George M. Docherty, "A New Birth of Freedom," sermon delivered on February 7, 1954. The hand-typed sermon is posted on the website of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church at http://nyapc.publishpath.com/Websites/nyapc/images/history/Under_God_Sermon.pdf. A transcript of the sermon can be found in *One Way of Living* by George M. Docherty (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958).
2. Karoly Pinter, "The Meaning of 31 Words: the Pledge of Allegiance and Its Interpretations." *The AnaChronisT* 12 (2006): 269-299.
3. Although historians do not agree whether an actual "delivery copy" of the Gettysburg Address exists, there is common agreement that Lincoln inserted "under God," at least verbally, into his speech, which was captured by four independent news reporters. See Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).
4. Stephen Prothero, *The American Bible: How Our Words Unite, Divide, and Define a Nation* (New York: HarperOne, 2012), 410.
5. Richard J. Ellis, *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (New York: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 131.
6. Lee Canipe, "Under God and Anti-Communist: How the Pledge of Allegiance Got Religion in Cold War America," *Journal of Church and State* 45 (2003): 312.
7. Gerard Kaye and Ferenc M. Szasz, "Adding 'Under God' to the Pledge of Allegiance," *Encounter* 34 (1973): 53.
8. Canipe, 318.
9. "Eisenhower's 'The Chance for Peace' Speech," The American Presidency Project (Santa Barbara: University of California, 2012), www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9819#axzz1iahCASEM.
10. Anthony Hatcher, "Adding God: Religious and Secular Press Framing in Response to the Insertion of 'Under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance," *Journal of Media and Religion* 7 (2008): 172.
11. "Joseph McCarthy" (Spartacus Educational, www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAmccarthy.htm).
12. John W. Baer, *The Pledge of Allegiance: A Revised History and Analysis, 1892–2007* (Annapolis, Md.: Free State Press, 2007), 166.
13. Ibid.
14. Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy, *The Preacher and the Presidents: Billy Graham in the White House* (New York: Center Street, 2007): 43.
15. Jerry Bergman, "Religion and the Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower," in *Religion and the American Presidency*, Gaston Espinosa, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 263.
16. Canipe, 313.
17. Ibid., 312.

18. Jack M. Holl, "Dwight D. Eisenhower: Civil Religion and the Cold War," in Mark J. Rozell and Gleaves Whitney, ed., *Religion and the American Presidency* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 120.
19. Bergman, 263.
20. Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 443–444.
21. Gary Scott Smith, *Faith and the Presidency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 255.
22. Preston, p. 442.
23. John J. Chiodo, Leisa A. Martin, and Andrew Worthington, "Does It Mean to Die for Your Country? Preservice Teachers' Views Regarding Teaching the Pledge of Allegiance," *The Educational Forum* 75 (2011), 38–51.
24. Leisa A. Martin, "Middle School Students' Views on the United States Pledge of Allegiance," *Journal of Social Studies Research* 35, no.2 (Fall 2011): 245–258.
25. James W. Loewen, "Patriotism, Nationalism, and Our Job as Americans," in Joel Westheimer, ed., *Pledging Allegiance: The Politics of Patriotism in America's Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007), 62.
26. Jolene Chu and Donna P. Couper, "The Flag and Freedom," *Social Education* 67, no. 6 (October 2003): 327–331.
27. See these two Internet resources: "Should the Words 'under God' be in the US Pledge of Allegiance?" (undergod.procon.org); A website at the First Amendment Center provides related lesson plans (1forall.us/teach-the-first-amendment/) and, at the bottom of the webpage, a list of educational groups that provide resources about First Amendment freedoms.

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HANDOUT 1

Pledge of Allegiance TIMELINE (Vocabulary in bold is from the Pledge)

Time	History of the Pledge	Commentary and Queries (marked *)
1892	Francis Bellamy writes a pledge in preparation for the National Public School Celebration of Columbus Day (the 400th anniversary of 1492) and Chicago World's Fair. On September 8, <i>Youth's Companion</i> magazine publishes his final version: " I pledge allegiance to my flag and the republic for which it stands — one nation indivisible — with liberty and justice for all. " Shortly, thereafter, Bellamy adds the word " to " before "the republic."	Bellamy, a Christian Socialist and former minister, "viewed his Pledge as an 'inoculation' to protect immigrants and native-born Americans from the 'virus' of radicalism and subversion." The words " under God " do not appear. *Did the phrase " one nation indivisible " help unify the nation after the Civil War?
1898	The U.S. declares war on Spain on April 21. On April 22, New York becomes the first state to pass a "flag salute statute" calling for recitation of a patriotic pledge in public schools. Bellamy's Pledge is the last of five recommended pledges.	U.S. expands its influence in Central and South America as a result of the war. *Is this law a patriotic response to the beginning of the Spanish-American War, as some scholars suggest? * Is the U.S. a republic , or is it becoming an empire?
1910	Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) lobbies U.S. Congress for a national flag code to promote patriotism.	Nearly 9 million arrivals during 1901-1910 marked a high point of immigration, unequaled for the next 80 years.
1917	The United States enters the "Great War" (World War I) in Europe.	Uncle Sam drafts soldiers to fight in "the war to end all wars." There is little liberty for pacifists, as many are imprisoned.
1919	Washington becomes the first state to pass a law requiring schools to have children recite the Pledge regularly.	* Is there an inherent contradiction in mandatory recitation of an oath that heralds liberty ?
1923	The first National Flag Conference votes to amend the Pledge by changing "my flag" to " the flag of the United States. " The next year, it adds " of America. "	* What was the significance of changing "my flag" to "the flag" in the 1920s?
1931	President Herbert Hoover signs a law making "The Star Spangled Banner" the National Anthem on March 3.	* Before 1931, there was often "competition between patriotic songs" for use at public events. Could that have been a healthy exercise, or might it have been a nuisance?
1940	First national test of the constitutionality of the Pledge. Mr. Gobitas, a Jehovah's Witness, told his children not to recite it. The U.S. Supreme Court rules against him (8-1) in <i>Minersville [Penn.] School District v. Gobitis?</i>	Children must say the pledge at school. Violence erupts against Jehovah's Witness members after the ruling. Within a few months, three judges admit to changing their minds. (See 1943)
1941	United States declares war on Japan, December 8, then on Germany, December 11. President Franklin D. Roosevelt imprisons U.S. citizens of Japanese descent, of all ages, who are living on the West Coast.	Public debate about entering the war virtually ends after Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. * Japanese Americans living in Hawaii remain at liberty . Why aren't they imprisoned?
1942	On June 22, President Roosevelt makes the Pledge part of the U.S. Flag Code (PL 829, which lists rules on appropriate conduct during the National Anthem and flag display). " I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. "	An amendment (on December 22) to PL 829 describes a new flag salute with the right hand placed over the heart. The previous straight-armed salute too closely resembled the Nazi Party salute.

1943	The U.S. Supreme Court reverses its 1940 ruling. Students may now legally refuse to say the Pledge. (<i>West Virginia State BOE v. Barnette</i>)	Children can choose to remain silent and seated during the reciting of the pledge in the classroom.
1945	The Cold War begins with the division of central Europe into East and West alliances, along with other conflicts and the imminent nuclear arms race.	U.S.S.R., an ally of the United States during World War II, soon becomes "the godless communist enemy."
1948	Louis A. Bowman, chaplain of the Illinois Sons of the American Revolution, recites the Pledge with the addition of " under God " at a chapter meeting.	Bowman was inspired by Lincoln's extemporaneous use of the phrase in the Gettysburg Address.
1951	The Knights of Columbus begin using " under God " at all meetings and sent a resolution to government leaders requesting this phrase be added to the Pledge.	The " under God " idea spreads among patriotic civic organizations in America. U.S.-Soviet antagonism has increased following the first Soviet atomic test in 1951.
1953	Michigan congressman Louis Rabaut introduces the first congressional resolution to add the phrase " under God " to the Pledge.	Senator Joseph McCarthy holds hearings on "communist subversion."
1954	On February 7, Rev. George Docherty delivers a sermon, advocating that " under God " be added to the Pledge, with President Eisenhower and the first lady in attendance. On June 14, the president signs Public Law 83-396, changing the Pledge to its current form. "We are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future," says Eisenhower.	Docherty states that the mention of God is what distinguishes the U.S. Pledge from loyalty oaths in other countries, especially the Soviet Union. Eisenhower will defeat Adlai Stevenson in the presidential election of 1956. * Could the president's support of this law have helped him win a second term?
2000	Michael Newdow, an atheist, files his first suit claiming that the phrase " under God " violates his daughter's First Amendment right to freedom of religion. A series of court cases ensues over the next decade.	* Is recitation of the Pledge in schools coercive?
2002	The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (Calif.), rules in favor of Newdow: reciting the Pledge in public schools is an unconstitutional "endorsement of religion" because of the phrase " under God ."	On November 13, President George W. Bush challenges the ruling, signing a bill reaffirming references to God in the Pledge of Allegiance and the national motto.
2004	On Flag Day, 2004, the U.S. Supreme Court overturns the Ninth Circuit Court ruling on technical issues. Three justices write that the Pledge does not offend the Constitution. (<i>Elk Grove USD v. Newdow</i>)	* Who should decide these questions? The courts, the president, or Congress?
2010	The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reverses its 2002 ruling, declaring that " under God " in the Pledge is indeed constitutional (<i>Newdow v. Carey</i>).	What do you think? Does the phrase " under God " belong in the Pledge?

Notes

1. Greg Beato, "Face the Flag," *Reason* (Dec. 16, 2010)
2. See Jolene Chu and Donna P. Couper, "The Flag and Freedom," *Social Education* 67, no. 6 (October 2003), 327-331; The family name is Gobitas, however, the name was incorrectly spelled "Gobitis" in the case.
3. Yoon K. Pak, "Dear Teacher: Letters on the Eve of Japanese-American Imprisonment," *Middle Level Learning* 12 (2001) 10-15.

Should the Pledge Include the Phrase “under God”?

To omit the words “Under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance is to omit the definitive character of the “American Way of Life”.

This image is used with permission of the New York Avenue Presbyterian church, Washington, D.C.

- (a) To omit the words “Under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance is to omit the definitive character of the “American Way of Life.” ... [N]o state church shall exist in this land. This is separation of Church and State; it is not, and never was meant to be, a separation of religion and life.
—**Rev. George M. Docherty**, Presbyterian minister, 1954.
- (b) As a regular churchgoer who has voted both Democratic and Republican, I believe that my great-grandfather got it right. A Pledge of Allegiance that does not include God invites the participation of more Americans.
—**Sally Wright**, great granddaughter of Francis Bellamy, in a letter to the editor, 2002
- (c) It is unsurprising that a Nation founded by religious refugees and dedicated to religious freedom should find references to divinity in its symbols, songs, mottos, and oaths. Eradicating such references would sever ties to a history that sustains this Nation even today.
—**U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor**, 2004
- (d) ...God and religion have become trivialized in American society. Regular, sincere prayer in a house of worship or in private and the performance of God’s commandments—not generic, rote civic exercises, slogans on money, or imposing religion on atheists—are what truly serve God.
—**Rabbi Jay Lapidus**, letter to the editor, 2002
- (e) “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion...”
—**U.S. Constitution, Amendment I, 1791**

SOURCES:

Rev. George M. Docherty, Presbyterian minister, “A New Birth of Freedom,” Sermon, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C. 1954. Full text is at http://nyapc.publishpath.com/Websites/nyapc/images/history/Under_God_Sermon.pdf.

Sally Wright, “Writing the Pledge: The Original Intent,” letter to the editor, *The New York Times* (July 14, 2002). Bellamy, who wrote The Pledge in 1892, had been a minister.

Sandra Day O’Connor, “Concurring in Judgment,” *Elk Grove v. Newdow* (2004), www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/02-1624.ZC1.html.

Rabbi Jay Lapidus, letter to the editor, *New York Times*, June 28, 2002, p. Q26; quoted in *The American Bible*, by Stephen Prothero, (New York: HarperCollins), p. 418.

LESSON PLAN

Pass the Flag: An Exercise in Civic Discourse

Time: 50 minutes.

Materials needed: A small American flag; a stopwatch (optional); a copy of **HANDOUTS 1** and **2** for each student.

Introduction: Before the exercise, distribute **HANDOUT 1** (a two-page **Timeline** about the Pledge of Allegiance) and allow students time to read it.

Explanation: Organize student chairs in a circle so that students are facing each other. Review the five skills for practicing civil discussion.

Teachers may wish to read aloud the italicized text:

Expressing different opinions about controversial topics, such as the Pledge of Allegiance, is healthy in a democracy. Discussing our opinions openly allows us to weigh and consider others' opinions. Using the Pledge of Allegiance as our topic, today we will practice the "Pass the Flag" method for holding a civil discussion.ⁱ

Give each student a copy of **HANDOUT 2: Five Quotes**. We will take turns reading aloud quotes, (a) through (e). Quote (a) is from Rev. Docherty's 1954 sermon, and quote (c) is supportive. Quotes (b) and (d), however, contradict Docherty's statement, or in some way raise questions about it. Quote (e) is from the First Amendment of the Constitution.

I will let one student begin the discussion by handing him or her the flag. The first speaker can talk for up to 2 minutes, then will pass the flag to another student who signals s/he wishes to speak by raising a hand. The second student now has a turn to speak. We will repeat this pattern until all students have contributed to the discussion. We will begin a second round, which lasts until every student has spoken for a second time. Then a third round, and fourth round can follow. If you want to speak more than once during a round, make a note of your idea to share during the next round.

There are several ways to contribute to the discussion. You may express an original thought or opinion; confirm or differ with another student's comment (with reason); provide a synopsis of the discussion; or make a connection with something you know (such as a prior class discussion, a book you've read, or movie you have seen).

In this civil discussion, we will practice these five skillsⁱⁱ

- 1. Listen as well as talk*
- 2. Encourage others to participate*
- 3. Criticize ideas but not people*
- 4. Support opinions with reasons*
- 5. Weigh alternatives*

Variation: In a classroom with integrated technology, a face-to-face discussion could be preceded by having students use audience response software such as [polleverywhere.com](http://poll Everywhere.com) to gauge student understanding with cell phones, tablets, or laptops. Students could respond to a blog in an asynchronous format or be given a set amount of time to construct their responses. The goal is for students to practice hearing diverse views while constructing their own opinions in a respectful atmosphere.ⁱⁱⁱ

Assessment: Teachers should assess student participation during the discussion in both substantive and procedural ways. For example, teachers should listen for students to bring knowledge to the discussion; elaborate on statements with explanations, reasons, and evidence; argue by analogy; etc.^{iv}

Extension: Consider taking another excerpt from the "Under God" sermon (full text is at http://nyapc.publishpath.com/Websites/nyapc/images/history/Under_God_Sermon.pdf) and find contrasting quotes for students to compare, discuss, and debate. For quotes and opinions, see Stephen Prothero, *The American Bible: How Our Words Unite, Divide, and Define a Nation* (New York: HarperOne, 2012); Richard J. Ellis, *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (New York: University Press of Kansas, 2005), or visit undergod.procon.org.

Notes

- i. A variation on the "talking stick" method, described in *Doing History* by Linda S. Levstik and Keith C. Barton (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997), p. 52.
- ii. Walter Parker, *Social Studies in Elementary Education* (Boston: Pearson, 2012), 84–85.
- iii. Diana Hess, "Discussions That Drive Democracy," *Educational Leadership* 69, no.1 (2011): 69–73.
- iv. Walter Parker, *Social Studies in Elementary Education* (Boston: Pearson, 2012), 89–91.