

Constitution Day Skit

The skit consists of the following cast of characters:

King George III/the Judge played by Attorney
Constitution played by a Teacher

The following played by the students:

Cookie Thief (1)
Soldiers (2-4)
Attorney (1)
Protestors (2-4)
People Praying (2-4)
Journalists (1-3)
Jurors (if enough students)(12)

One child “steals” a cookie (told they can take a cookie before class begins and the child takes the cookie in the view of others), which sets the skit in motion. King George notices cookie missing from jar and asks, “Who stole my cookie?” Children who saw “thief” take cookie point. Thief is escorted by the soldiers to “the dungeon” where he awaits his trial. The attorney argues on behalf of the thief, the protestors protest his incarceration, the people praying pray for compassion, and the journalists report on the situation. The jurors are to determine the guilt/innocence.

In the first rendition, the attorney argues the defense to King George on behalf of the thief. King George is displeased with the attorney’s argument and sends the attorney to the dungeon. The soldiers escort the attorney away. King George then asks the protestors why they are protesting, they explain, and are promptly sent to the dungeon as well, escorted by the soldiers of course. The people praying are then sent to the dungeon, and so is the journalist. The jurors sit silently and are not involved.

ATTORNEY, now acting as herself, tells the students that we will try the skit again using the U.S. Constitution. One by one, the students are let out of the jail and they are told why under the constitution it is wrong for them to be in jail (i.e. the cookie thief wasn’t given a fair trial, the attorney is allowed to defend the defendant, the protestors have freedom of speech, the people praying have freedom of religion, the journalist has the freedom of the press, and there is a right to a jury). This is a good time to review the Bill of Rights with the students.

Now the skit is replayed using the constitution to the Judge (ATTORNEY). First, the Judge tries to put the thief in jail, but the teacher swoops in with the constitution and says “No, he has a right to bail and a fair trial!” and the Judge has to let the thief out on bond. The journalist reports on the release of the thief pending trial and on the protestors and the people praying and reports on the situation and why they think the cookie thief is innocent (can have one journalist report on from one protestor and one praying person, “back to you John, kind of thing”). The Judge tries to silence the journalist, but the teacher raises the constitution yelling out “No, he has the

freedom of press!” and the journalist is able to continue reporting. The Judge tries to silence the protestors, but the teacher brings over the constitution, “No, he has the freedom of speech” and the protestor can continue to protest. The Judge then tries to silence the religious prayers and again, the teacher thrusts forward the constitution, “No he has the freedom of religion” and the people can continue praying. The students typically figure this out after the first/second constitution interruption and they join in too. Finally, the attorney makes her argument to the Judge and when the Judge tries to put the attorney in jail, the teacher waves the constitution saying “No, he has a right to counsel!” The attorney continues to make the argument on behalf of the thief and the thief is either set free or sentenced (jurors making final determination).

Afterward, we have discussion about how the actors felt, what the class learned, and any questions they have. Oh, and we give everyone a cookie too.