

# ★The National Motto★

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the motto, “In God We Trust.” The motto is found on money and is therefore a constant reminder to the citizens of the United States that progress is a result of freedom for every American as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

## **Objective**

The student will be able to explain some of the reasons why people selected “In God We Trust” as the motto for our nation.

## **Theme - Progress**

The use of the words “In God We Trust” as a motto affirms by the Founders and subsequent leaders the fundamental role of God the Creator in the founding and growth of the United States of America.

## **Core Knowledge**

Grade 2 - Amer Hist & Geog. Sec V:

Immigration & Citizenship. The meaning of the National Motto, “E Pluribus Unum.” The idea of citizenship. What are the responsibilities of citizens? Sec VIII: Symbols & Figures. The motto on coins.

## **Time**

45 minutes

## **Materials**

- ★ Motto timeline
- ★ Encyclopedias
- ★ Several sets of American coinage & paper money,
- ★ Craft paper strips, pencils, colored markers, tracing or copy paper
- ★ Website - [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org)

## **Preparation**

- ★ Copy materials & make a transparency of timeline information.
- ★ Arrange groups, each with a presenter, a materials handler, & an artist.
- ★ Make money collections for each group.

## **Focus**

Students are to gain an understanding of the national motto. Show students the silhouette of the Lincoln penny on the timeline sheet. Discuss the elements of the coin and how the motto has been expressed over time. (See Links page of [www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org) for additional resources on the National Motto.)

## **Activity**

1. Have students complete the discussion of the timeline & set up cooperative groups.
2. Have students make rubbings of coins and identify the motto.
3. Students present their timelines, rubbings, and the motto used on U. S. money.

## **Closure**

Debrief in groups or whole class about the motto, and ask students to discuss why they think the motto has been expressed in such different ways.

# The National Motto



## **In God We Trust**

The United States National Motto, "In God We Trust," expresses the ideas from the 1776 Declaration of Independence that nature's God is the Creator who gives humans equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and is the Supreme Judge of the world.

**1814** "The Star-Spangled Banner," the national anthem of the United States written by Francis Scott Key, states in the final stanza:

**"And this be our motto, In God is our Trust."**

**1863** In the Gettysburg address, President Lincoln said, "This nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom."

**1864** President Lincoln declared that the words "In God We Trust" be printed on all coins of the United States. This motto has been printed on all United States coins since 1864.

**1954** Congress added the words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States.

**1955** Congress ordered that "In God We Trust" also be printed on all the paper currency of the United States.

**1956** Congress designated "In God We Trust" as the national motto. Congress proclaimed a National Day of Prayer which has been celebrated annually on the first Thursday in May since the early 1950s.

**1970** Legal attacks and efforts to remove "In God We Trust" from money of the United States were rejected by the courts.