

Youthful Patriotism- Celebrating “One Nation Under God”

The children marched the flag-lined walkways of the town hall courtyard. Decked out in red, white and blue, they waved miniature American flags and marched to the beat of patriotic music. Leading the parade was the 4th of July queen and a character dressed in a stars-and-stripes suit, representing the best of Uncle Sam. At the microphone was a popular TV personality, Lanie Pope. It was a festive atmosphere.

The event was created for Kernersville young children 36 years ago by a preschool teacher who wanted her students to have a patriotic experience designed just for them. The Kiwanis Club renamed the event the Miss Mary’s Children’s Parade, in honor of its founder.

The event is fairly simple. It is an attempt to inspire patriotism and joy in the hearts of children age 6 and younger. Later in life the kids will learn more about the founding principles of the nation they honored in the parade. History tells us that we declared our independence from England on July 4, 1776, announcing to the world that the 13 North American colonies desired to join together to form their own unified country. What makes this a faith-based act is that the first of the six founding principles of our country says that an individual’s rights come from God and not from the government.

We are a nation blessed by God because of our reverence for the Lord from the very beginning. A verse from the book of Psalms speaks to that blessing. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance. From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth—he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do (Psalm 33:12-15).*

Watching those happy children circle the courtyard at the Miss Mary’s Children’s Parade, it is easy to see God’s blessing on families in the United States. Our faith reminds us that God has been our strength and protector as the foundation of our nation. We can’t do it on our own. God’s grace is freely given not achieved. *No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love ... We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you (Psalm 33:16-22).*

As you celebrate Independence Day, appreciate the foundation of our nation’s strength – the relationship of our founding fathers with the creator of our world. The Christian faith tells us we are free because of Jesus’ sacrifice for each of us. We live in a free nation that cherishes the reality that God is the source of that freedom. As Lee Greenwood sang in his patriotic song, “God Bless the USA, it says, “I thank my lucky stars to be living here today; 'cause the flag still stands for freedom, And they can't take that away; And I'm proud to be an American; where at least I know I'm free.” Because of faith, on July 4th, 1776 thirteen colonies became one nation, under God. Let the children celebrate!

Question: In what ways can you impress upon our youth the fact that the freedoms we enjoy in this country are because of the wisdom of our founding fathers, who sought to unify 13 independent colonies and be “one nation, under God.”

Prayer: Most gracious heavenly Father. We thank you for inspiring the founding fathers of our great nation to create a country that honors you as Lord. Amen.

