



Discussion Guide for

WHAT'S RIGHT WITH AMERICA

OBJECTIVES

- To describe how the loss of basic freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights would end American society as we know it.
- To show how a lack of freedom of speech can prevent individuals from making sound choices for themselves and their government.
- To understand that in our society, the rights that we enjoy are integral to our system of government, and without them, we cannot function productively.

SYNOPSIS

This thought-provoking program poses the frightening question, "What would happen if our government eliminated the Bill of Rights?" The question is explored through a dramatization of how life might be for Americans if we no longer had the Bill of Rights.

After living in a remote jungle for a number of years, without access to television, radio or newspapers, a couple return to the United States with their teenage daughter and twelve-year-old son. At the airport they learn that there is a new president and that women and girls have become the property of men.

Slowly, the family comes to realize that the Bill of Rights is no longer in effect, such that women, girls and minorities have lost all rights, and boys are taken from their families and forced to become soldiers to fight against rebel groups composed primarily of women (since women typically will not kill children). Even the father discovers that he has no freedom. He is forced to vote for the incumbent government, and when he tries to leave the country with his family, he learns that they can only leave if he agrees that his son will become a lung donor for the son of the president.

What's Right with America leaves viewers to ponder for themselves what choices they would make if faced with a similar situation. Produced by Arnold Shapiro Productions.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE VIEWING

1. What is the Bill of Rights?
2. Name the amendments in the Bill of Rights.
3. Rank these amendments in the order of importance to you personally.
4. Consider the amendment you ranked as #1. How do you think your life would be without it?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER VIEWING

1. How did the dramatization make you feel?
2. How plausible is this scenario? Why?
3. When the family arrived at the airport, why were the wife and daughter told to get on the luggage cart? (Because they were considered part of the husband's property.)

4. Which of the 1st Amendment rights were missing from the new society? (Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, rights of assembly and petition.)

5. What evidence was there that these rights didn't exist? (The daughter was not allowed to make a speech in public, there was no free press.)

6. What other freedoms guaranteed in our society were gone? (The right to vote freely, the right to know the charges against you, the guarantee against being imprisoned beyond a certain time without being charged, the right to a jury trial.)

7. After watching the program, has your opinion changed about which rights are the most important to you? Why?

8. Why do you think the rights of women were especially targeted by the new government?

9. What protections are built into our government to preserve our rights and freedoms?

10. Why were the boys taken from their families?



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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Research how the Bill of Rights came to be included in our government. What did the debate involve before the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution?

Write about a situation where men are the ones whose basic rights have been eliminated. How might women run things differently?

Think about recent court cases that have been prominent in the news. How might the press coverage, trial proceedings and verdicts have been different if there were no Bill of Rights?

Research the political system of a country that is not a democracy. What is different about the rights and freedoms the citizens of that country have or don't have compared to here?

RELATED TITLES IN THE AIMS COLLECTION

8685SG The Bill of Rights in Action: Freedom of Speech

8681SG The Bill of Rights in Action: Women's Rights

8689SG The Bill of Rights in Action: The Story of a Trial

PROGRAMS DETAILS

LENGTH:

45 minutes

SUBJECT AREAS:

Social Studies

AUDIENCE LEVELS:

Senior High

ORDER NUMBER:

1-9269SG

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