

# PRAGER UNIVERSITY PRESENTS THE 4TH OF JULY DECLARATION

## **NOTE TO HOST:**

We hope this 4th of July finds you, your family and your friends in good health and that you are enjoying another happy occasion together.



We all love the barbecues, the parties and the fireworks that have been a part of this celebration. But if that's all the 4th July is about, the day loses its meaning and we lose a vital connection to our past.

Welcome to our 4th of July Declaration!

This brief ceremony is designed to remind us how fortunate we are to be Americans today, on our nation's birthday.

We have modeled our celebration after the Jewish Passover, probably the best known commemoration of a historical event in the world. It has kept the memory of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt alive for over 3000 years.

As Americans we need to reconnect to our Founding Fathers and rediscover the meaning behind our country's creation. And we need to do it every year. That's the point of ritual - to help us remember. Without memory, life -- whether of an individual or a nation -- is meaningless. That's where the 4th of July Declaration comes in. In keeping with our philosophy at Prager University that profound concepts can be taught in five minutes or less, we have kept our declaration very brief.

But if you follow our simple narrative, this holiday will not just be another barbecue. It will become the meaningful day it was meant to be; celebrating the birth of our exceptional country, the United States of America.

You can always add more to your 4th of July Declaration, but this is the cornerstone.

Doing a little will mean a lot --to you, to your family and friends, and to the nation.

*(Feel free to read this "Note to Host" to those assembled at your celebration of the day.)*



## Materials and Ingredients Needed for the Ceremony:

- **Sweet iced tea**
- **Salty pretzels**
- **Strawberries and blueberries and whipped cream**  
*But any goodie colored red, white and blue will do.*
- **A small bell**  
*The ringer on your cell phone will do in a pinch*
- **An American coin**  
*The bigger the better. Half dollar is ideal, but quarter will do.*
- **A printed (unsigned) Declaration of Independence.**
- **Lyrics to "God Bless America" for all your guests.**

## CEREMONY BEGINS:

*DIRECTION: Gather everyone around the table.*

**HOST SPEAKS:** Today we take a few minutes to remember what the 4th of July is about and remind ourselves how fortunate we are to be Americans.

Before America was a nation, it was a dream - a dream shared by many people over many generations.

It began with the Pilgrims in 1620, who fled Europe so that they could be free to practice their religion as they saw fit. It continued through the 17th century as more and more came to a place that came to be known as the New World. In this new world, it wasn't your past that was important; it was your future.

As more and more people came, they started to see themselves not as Europeans but as Americans. The land was open and spacious. The opportunities limitless.

By 1776, a century and a half after the first Pilgrims landed, the citizens were ready to break away from Old World of Europe and create a new nation.

On July 4 of that year, 1776, they did just that. They pronounced themselves free from the tyranny of the King of England. We know this pronouncement as The Declaration of Independence.

This dream of independence didn't become real by accident. The American dream became real because good people took action, and were prepared to die for the least realized of all human dreams - liberty.



*HOST INVITES THE YOUNGEST PEOPLE (ABOVE 7) PRESENT TO READ AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:*

**YOUNG READERS:** **Q:** Why do we celebrate the 4th of July?  
**A:** Because the 4th of July is the birthday of the American people - the day we chose to become the United States of America, a free and independent nation.

**Q:** Why is America different from all other countries?

**A:** In 1776, countries were based on nationality, religion, ethnicity, and geography. But America was created on the basis of a set of ideas. That is still true today.

**Q:** What are those ideas and what makes them so special?

**A:** Three ideas summarize what America is all about. You can see them engraved on every American coin. They are "Liberty," "In God We Trust," and "E Pluribus Unum."

*HOST PASSES AROUND AN AMERICAN COIN AND CHOOSES READERS FROM THE GROUP:*

**READER #1:** "Liberty" means that we are free to pursue our dreams and to go as far in life as hard work and good fortune will take us.



**READER #2:** "In God We Trust" means that in America we believe that our rights and liberties have been granted to us to us by the Creator and therefore they cannot be taken away by human beings.



**READER #3:** "E Pluribus Unum" is a Latin phrase that means "From Many, One." Unlike other countries, America has been composed of people of every religious, racial, ethnic, cultural, and national origin. Out of many people we become one people -- Americans.



**HOST:** We have gathered certain items to symbolize the Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War that followed. That war won our freedom.

*HOST HOLDS UP EACH SYMBOLIC ITEM AS HE EXPLAINS*

- HOST:**
- We drink sweet iced tea to remember the Boston tea party, when patriots dumped British tea into the ocean rather than pay unfair taxes on it to King George  
*(all take a sip)*
  - We eat a pretzel to remember the suffering of the salty tears of the soldiers during the harsh winter at Valley Forge.  
*(all take a bite)*
  - We ring a small bell to remember when the great Liberty Bell, now in Philadelphia, rung to proclaim the surrender of the King's armies.  
*(if you don't have a small bell, use your cell phone ringer)*
  - We eat strawberries and blueberries dipped in whipped cream to celebrate our American pride symbolized by the colors of the American flag.  
*(Any red, white and blue "goodie" will do.)*

**HOST:** We celebrate America's uniqueness but we do not deny that America has always been imperfect. There are no perfect individuals, so there can hardly be a perfect country. Our national history has its share of shame. The greatest of these is the shame of slavery which existed at our founding, as it existed in every country in the world at that time. But let it never be forgotten that we fought a terrible civil war in which hundreds of thousands of American died. And the reason for that war was to fight slavery.

Let it also not be forgotten that America has fought in more wars for the freedom of others than any nation in the history of the world. America's history is one that we can all be proud of. Proud to remember. Proud to celebrate. Proud to carry into the future.

So, now we close with one more ritual. Let each of us sign our names to the Declaration of Independence. It may be a replica of the one our founders signed, but the words and sentiments are eternal.

*EVERYONE PRESENT SIGNS THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE*

*THE HOST PASSES OUT THE WORDS TO "GOD BLESS AMERICA"*

**HOST:** Everyone sing with me.

*EVERYONE SINGS "GOD BLESS AMERICA."*

**HOST:** Happy Birthday, America. Happy 4th of July. Let's eat!

*TELL US HOW IT WENT! SEND US FEED BACK. [4TH@PragerUniversity.com](mailto:4TH@PragerUniversity.com)*