

Puritan Notes

WORDS FOR THE DAY: INDULGENCE: Something way over the top in terms of self-serving behavior or a show of wealth or something similar. EMIGRATE: to leave a place (compare to IMMIGRATE which means to come to a place).

MAGISTRATE: A person with legal authority, like a judge.

1. You might ask the students what they know about Colonial America—when it was (before the American Revolution) and approximate dates. The Puritan arrival from England to America marked the first permanent settlement of people (meaning people who brought their families and planned to stay forever) in the area that would become the United States. Their colony was called the Massachusetts Bay Colony. They were also the people represented in the myth of the first Thanksgiving (which has a kernel of truth to it).

2. The students should now be told about historical fiction. These are fictional stories that are set in real places during real historical periods and sometimes have real people in them. In this story, Samuel Lincoln and the town of Hingham were real.

3. “Reason” in this story’s title refers to the logic one uses to make a decision or convince others to make a decision, not “reason” like in a motive for doing something.

4. The Puritans in MA were also those who burned women at the stake they believed to be witches, but only a minority of Puritans participated in this, and most regretted it later.

5. The Old Ship Church still exists in Hingham today and is well attended. Today the Puritan Church is called the Congregational Church. But parishioners are not nearly as strict as they were in the colonies.

6. Whirligigs are spinning games made with cardboard circles and twine; scotch hopper is the older name for hop scotch; board games at that time were likely to be games of chess.

7. The students may be interested in what a “just war” means. Obviously the Puritans had no case here in the argument for slavery, but usually it means that you can go to war if there is no other way to correct a horrible situation—like being attacked yourself or saving a large population of people.

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