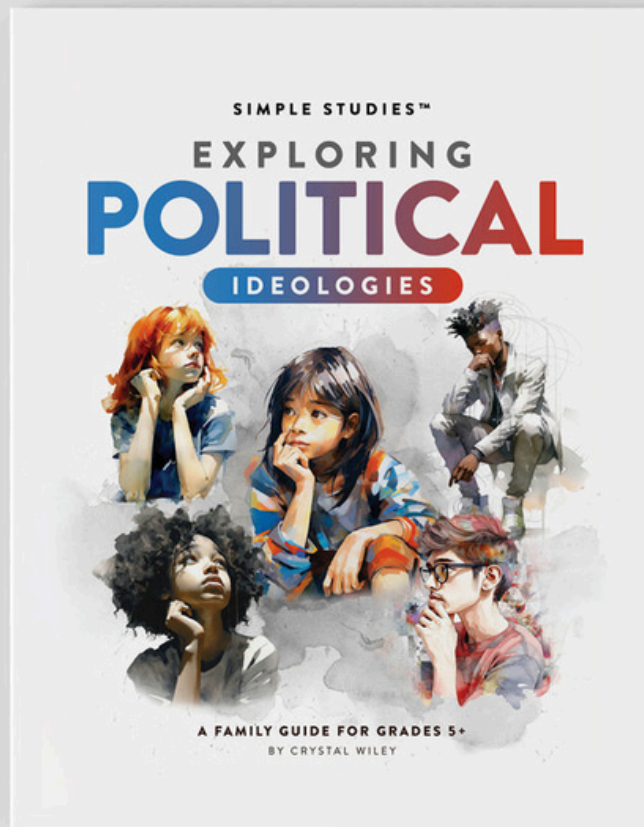


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SIMPLE STUDIES™

EXPLORING POLITICAL

IDEOLOGIES



A FAMILY GUIDE FOR GRADES 5+

BY CRYSTAL WILEY

Materials Needed for Entire Study

Please note: I am not the author of our featured book for this guide, and the beliefs and opinions expressed are solely those of the author. Our text and information covers sensitive topics that may be more appropriate for older/mature students. Therefore, I recommend previewing each chapter before reading it aloud or giving it to your child to ensure it aligns with your family's comfort level.

- ❑ **Are You Liberal? Conservative? or Confused?** by Richard J. Maybury **(Be sure to obtain the 2004 Edition)** Check your library first! Otherwise, you can find the book [here](#). Multiple used paperback and hardback versions exist online.
- ❑ **Personal Narration Notebook or Journal**
- ❑ **Commonplace Notebook¹**
- ❑ **Computer** (to research provided links, Canva templates and short videos)²
- ❑ **Drawing Pad, Loose-Leaf Paper + Quality Coloring Pencils** (optional)
- ❑ **Poster Board & Markers** (optional)
- ❑ **Resource Booklist (for each lesson)** (attached)

¹ A *Commonplace Notebook* is a special personal journal where students (and often parents) collect quotes, ideas, and passages from their readings that resonate with them or spark their interest. This practice encourages careful reading, reflection, and the cultivation of thoughtful habits. In keeping with Charlotte Mason's philosophy of education, the commonplace notebook serves as a tool for students to engage deeply with literature, history, and other subjects, allowing them to make meaningful connections and internalize knowledge in a way that is personal and lasting. This notebook becomes a treasured collection of wisdom, reflections, and learning over time, reflecting the student's intellectual journey and personal growth.

² Please note any external links provided in this guide are included for your convenience and to enhance your child's learning experience. These links lead to websites that are not under our control, and we are not responsible for the content, privacy practices, or any potential issues that may arise from visiting these sites. We recommend that you review the content of these external sites and monitor your child's internet use to ensure that the material is appropriate and aligns with your family's values. If you have any concerns about the content found on these sites, we encourage you to use discretion and discuss it with your child.

Chapter + Resource Booklist by Lesson

There are a plethora of wonderful books featuring stories, people and ideas about political philosophies, government and citizenship. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and I encourage every instructor to seek out additional living books as you see fit.

I encourage instructors to do their due diligence in previewing books you offer your students. I am not the author of any books listed and therefore am not responsible for each author's viewpoint or the language used. In curating these booklists, please know I did my very best to offer multiple perspectives from all walks of life.

NOTE: Finally, I tried to offer more than one suggestion should you be unable to secure them all at your local library.

HELPFUL TIP: I recommend gathering any resource books for Lessons 1 - 12 before beginning lessons. I will remind you later on to gather books for Lessons 13 - 26.

Lesson 1:

- Common Sense* by Thomas Paine
- The Tuttle Twins and the Fate of the Future* by Connor Boyack
- How the U.S. Government Works* by Syl Sobel
- The Signers: The 56 Stories Behind the Declaration of Independence* by Dennis Brindell Fradin
- The Founding Fathers!: Those Horse-Ridin', Fiddle-Playin', Book-Readin', Gun-Totin' Gentlemen Who Started America* by Jonah Winter

Lesson 2:

- Words That Built a Nation: A Young Person's Collection of Historic American Documents* by Marilyn Miller
- Among the Hidden* by Margaret Peterson Haddix
- The Last Safe House: A Story of the Underground Railroad* by Barbara Greenwood
- Rifles for Watie* by Harold Keith
- The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- The Law* by Frédéric Bastiat

Lesson 4

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *Are You Liberal? Conservative? or Confused?*
- Narration Notebook or Journal
- Resource Books below (optional)
- Computer (optional)

Ask students what they recall from the last chapter.

Read together, *Are You Liberal? Conservative? or Confused?*, chapter 4, "Basic Political Spectrum," and ask students for an oral or written narration.

High School: Have students copy the Left-Right Political Spectrum diagram from the book into their notebook. Then, have them use the book or their own dictionary to write descriptions for "liberal" and "conservative." Ask students if they agree or disagree with the liberal and conservative temperaments described in the book, and why or why not.

Family Discussion Questions:

Should the government be more involved in providing services such as healthcare, education, and welfare, or should these responsibilities be primarily managed by individuals and private organizations?

What are the benefits and drawbacks of government-provided services?

Can a balance be struck between government support and individual autonomy? Why or why not?

Why is it important to listen to multiple perspectives when considering someone's personal beliefs, values and motivations?

Dictation: "Legend has it that this spectrum came from the 1789 French National Assembly in which the liberals were grouped on the left of the presiding officer and the conservatives on the right."

Optional: Have students study the picture of the American Founders at the end of chapter 3, or in [this linked picture](#). Have students sketch the picture and add their own notes (e.g., "*The American Founders were Juris Naturalists.*").

Resource Books for Lesson 4: *Rush Revere and the Brave Pilgrims* by Rush Limbaugh, *The Tuttle Twins Learn About The Law* by Connor Boyack, *American Conservatism: Reclaiming an Intellectual Tradition* edited by Andrew J. Bacevich, *Understanding Politics: Ideas, Institutions, and Issues* by Thomas M. Magstadt, *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction* by Michael Freeden, *What You Should Know About Politics . . . But Don't: A Nonpartisan Guide to the Issues That Matter* by Jessamyn Conrad

Lesson 16

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *Are You Liberal? Conservative? or Confused?*
- Narration Notebook or Journal
- Resource Books below (*optional*)
- Computer (*optional*)

Ask students what they recall from the last chapter.

Read together, *Are You Liberal? Conservative? or Confused?*, chapter 16, “The National Religion,” and ask students for an oral or written narration.

High School: North Korea is an example of a country where the population is largely uneducated about political ideologies outside of the state-sponsored propaganda. The government tightly controls information, suppresses freedom of speech, and restricts access to outside media, making it difficult for citizens to learn about alternative political systems or options. This lack of education and exposure reinforces the authoritarian regime's power, as citizens are unable to critically assess the government's actions or consider alternative forms of governance. Have students explore the effects of restricted education on political ideologies by analyzing [North Korea's political system](#) and compare it to more open societies in a diagram, bar graph or illustration of their choosing.

Family Discussion Questions:

NOTE: We will dive more into moral character and personal responsibility in later chapters.

What does the author say is becoming a “national religion”? (*statism/playing God*)

How can being well-informed empower someone in political discussions?

How can a person best learn to defend their beliefs? What role does critical thinking and education play in this process?

How could this lack of knowledge impact democracy and decision-making?

How does education contribute to personal empowerment?

Dictation: “The only real solution to our countries problems is to debunk the national religion, statism, and get back to the fundamental principles that yield strong character.”

Optional: Watch this 12-minute TEDTalk: [My escape from North Korea](#). This talk includes graphic details about life in North Korea (caution is advised for younger students). For those interested in exploring further, there are numerous TED videos featuring speakers who delve into related topics such as freedom, sacrifice, compassion, and the efforts of undercover missionaries.

Resource Books for Lesson 16: *The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau, *Watership Down* by Richard Adams, *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

Lesson 17

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *Are You Liberal? Conservative? or Confused?*
- Narration Notebook or Journal
- Resource Books below (optional)
- Computer (optional)

Continue to memorize your Bible verse together or choose a new one to start memorizing.

Ask students what they recall from the last chapter.

Read together, *Are You Liberal? Conservative? or Confused?*, chapter 17, “The U.S.-Nazi Alliance or A U.S.-Soviet Alliance?” and ask students for an oral or written narration.

High School: Ask each student to select a diary entry, letter, or memoir from someone who lived through World War II (e.g., a soldier, civilian, or Holocaust survivor). After reading, have them give an oral or written narration, or write a short essay reflecting on what they learned. (Explore [Eyewitness to History](#) where students can read first-hand accounts from individuals who directly experienced WWII and a [link to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum Collections](#). The USHMM provides an extensive collection of Holocaust survivor testimonies, diaries, and letters. Students can explore these first-person accounts to gain insight into life during the Holocaust, including the experiences of soldiers, civilians, and survivors. See book recommendations on the next page.

Family Discussion Questions:

What does “a single bad idea can corrupt and kill millions” mean?

How can one political ideology become so dangerous?

Do you believe America should join wars in other countries to protect innocent lives? Why or why not?

What did George Washington believe? Do you agree or disagree with him?

What lessons can we learn from World War II and other historical events about the importance of understanding and critically evaluating political ideas?

How can we apply these lessons to current global issues?

What responsibility do individuals and communities have in preventing the spread of dangerous political ideas? What if people disagree what should be considered dangerous ideas?

Lesson 17 Continued on the next page...

Lesson 17 Continued...

Dictation: "Many tend to assume political ideas are mere ivory tower theories for scholars to debate, but this is quite wrong and dangerous. As World War II demonstrated, these ideas are life and death matters that affect us and our families directly. A single bad idea can corrupt and kill millions."

Optional: Have students poll their family and friends by asking, "Should America join wars in other countries to protect innocent lives?" Ask them to answer with a simple "yes" or "no." Then, have students create a pie or bar graph to display the results in their notebook.

Resource Books for Lesson 17: *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank, *Night* by Elie Wiesel, *Testament of Youth* by Vera Brittain, *Letters and Papers from Prison* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom



Lesson 21

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *Are You Liberal? Conservative? or Confused?*
- Narration Notebook or Journal
- Resource Books below (*optional*)
- Computer (*optional*)

Continue to memorize your Bible verse together or choose a new one to start memorizing.

Ask students what they recall from the last chapter.

Read together, *Are You Liberal? Conservative? or Confused?*, chapter 21, “Muddied Waters,” and ask students for an oral or written narration.

High School: It’s important to define key terms clearly when discussing topics with conflicting opinions, ensuring everyone is on the same page before engaging in a deeper discussion. Have students write down the bold terms on pages 101–103 and write short definitions, in their own words, of what each term means. (See optional activity below to expand on this idea.)

Family Discussion Questions:

Why is it important to define key terms before engaging in a discussion, especially when opinions differ?

Can you think of examples from your own life where a disagreement or argument could have been resolved if the terms had been clearly defined at the start?

How do assumptions about what certain terms mean influence our discussions and interactions?

How can we avoid making assumptions about others' definitions of key terms?

Dictation: “Don’t always assume you know how a word is being used. Always try to learn the writer’s beliefs and definitions.”

Optional:

1) Watch: [2-minute Video: How to Have a Respectful Disagreement](#)

2) **NOTE:** *This simple activity requires students to have a partner (or a parent).* Have students select a topic where people often have conflicting opinions (e.g., “freedom,” “justice,” or “equality”). Make sure the topic is one that can have multiple interpretations depending on how it’s defined. Have students pair up. Each student should write down their definition of the key term(s) associated with the topic without consulting their partner. Pairs then share their definitions with each other and discuss any differences in their definitions and consider how these differences might lead to misunderstandings or conflicts in their discussions on the topic.

Resource Books for Lesson 21: See *Chapter + Resource Booklist*

Bible Verses

Bible verse choices (ESV) for our students to memorize throughout our lessons together.

Romans 13:1

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."

1 Timothy 2:1-2

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way."

Proverbs 29:2

"When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan."

Psalm 22:28

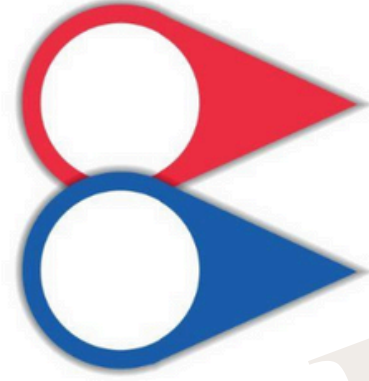
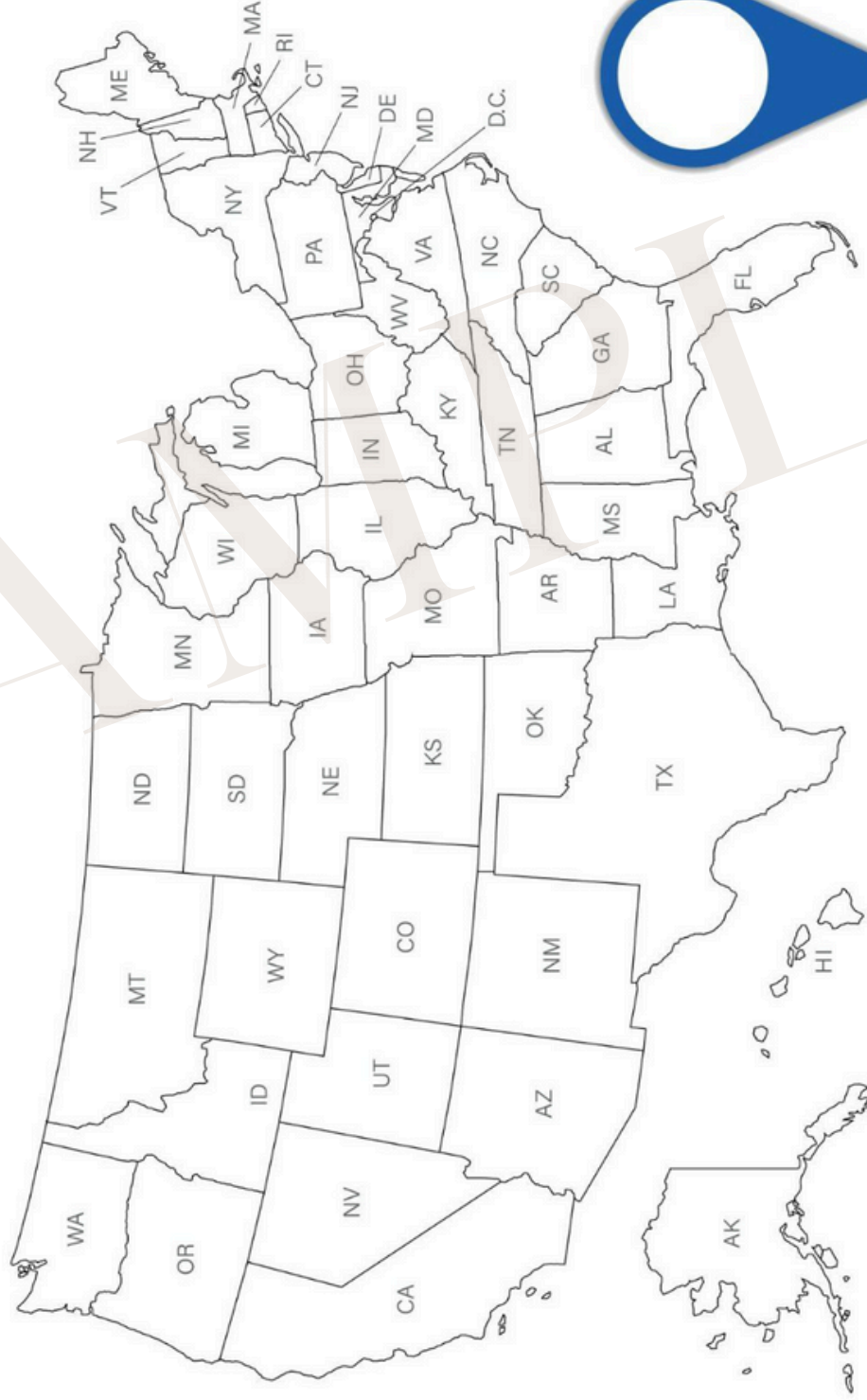
"For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations."

Daniel 2:21

"He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding."



U.S. ELECTION RESULTS



Democrat Republican

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EXPLORING

POLITICAL

IDEOLOGIES



COLORING PAGES

NAME

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EXPLORING

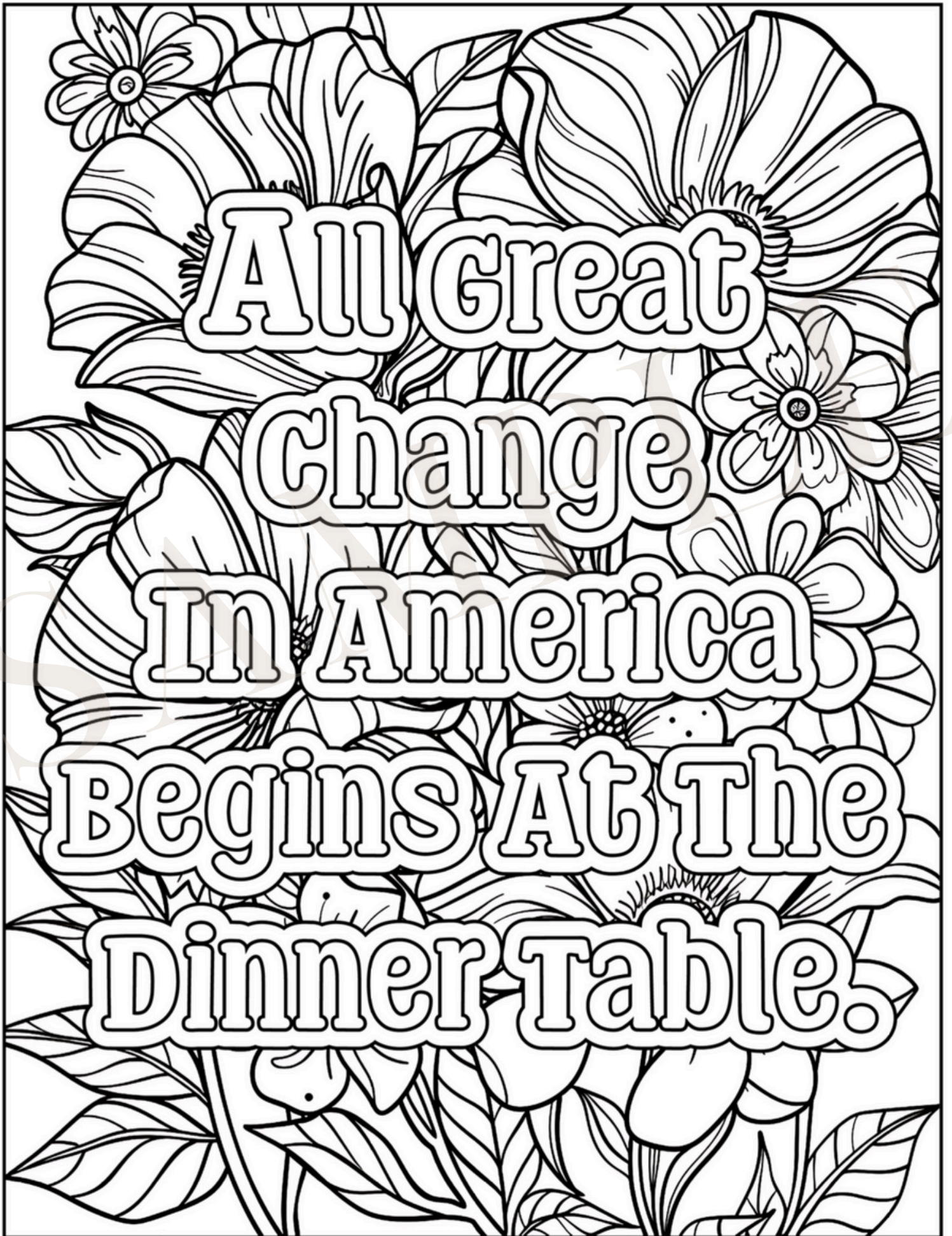
POLITICAL

IDEOLOGIES



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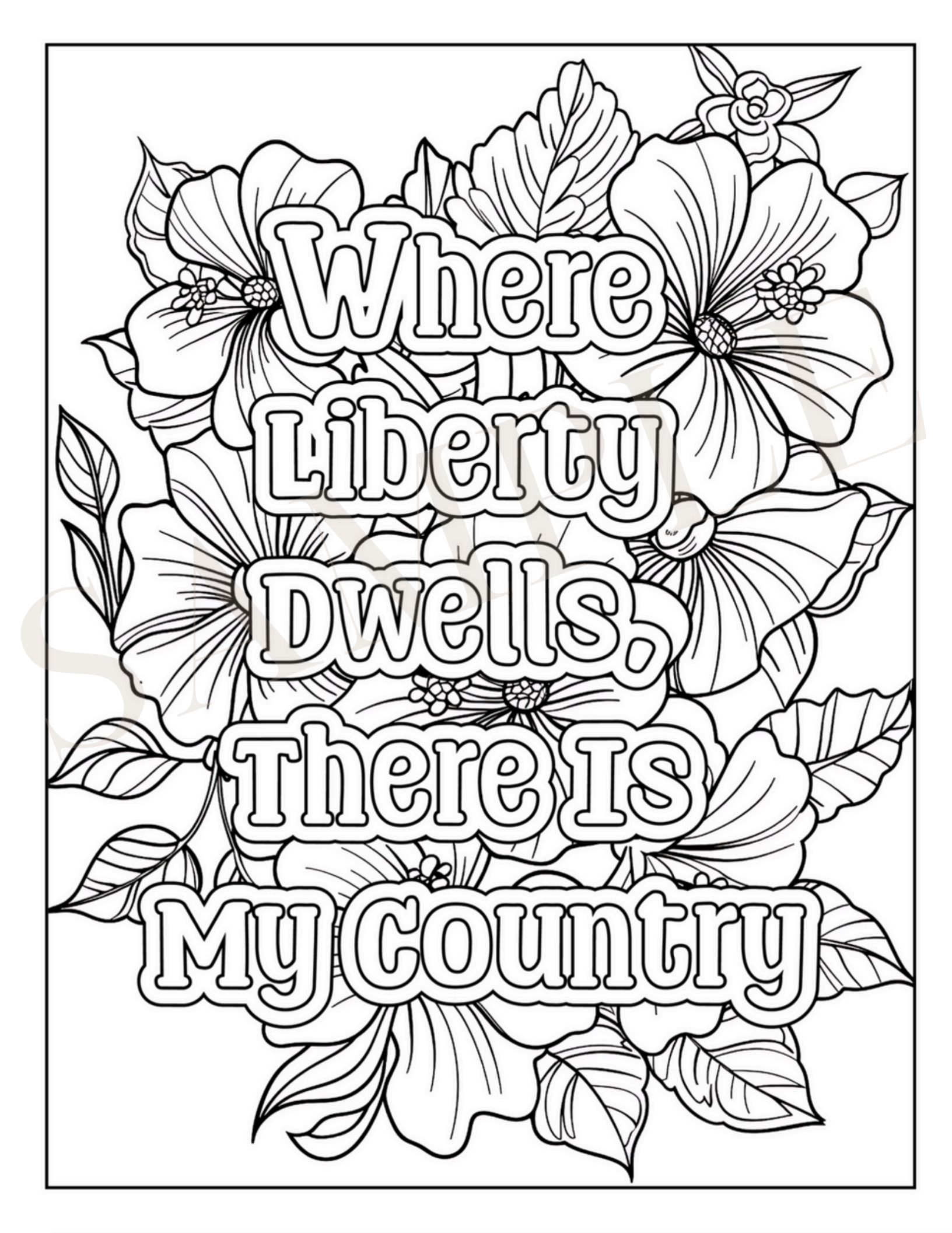
All Great

Change

In America

Begins At The

Dinner Table.



Where
Liberty
Dwells,
There Is
My Country

An Uncle Eric Book

ARE YOU... LIBERAL? CONSERVATIVE? OR CONFUSED?



by Richard J. Maybury

SECOND
EDITION

TESTIMONIALS

CMSIMPLESTUDIES.COM

I have been searching for a few years for the right addition to our morning time. I needed something that has poetry, reading, Biblical principles and nature oriented lessons. I would find something but become overwhelmed by the amount of "fluff" and extra content. These studies are so feasible and attainable and have added a wonderful component to our Charlotte Mason homeschool! My only problem is choosing which one to do next!!!! Love them all!!! - Katie Woodruff

OUR KIDS RECENTLY FINISHED YOUR JUNGLE STUDY AND REALLY ENJOYED IT. :) — GENEVIEVE D.

We've used your guides from the beginning, gosh, so many years ago. I love how you take the cream off the top of so many different curriculum and put it together in a way that's custom fit for your family. - Miette Allison

I LOVE YOUR STUDIES. I HAVE AN 8 AND 5 YEAR OLD AND WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING THROUGH THE FOREST ANIMALS GUIDE. IT'S SO FUN. - LYDIA JENKINS

I like all of these guides because they're simple but interesting and give just enough further resources (links, booklists, ideas) to be fun without being overwhelming, an important factor for us! - @thesunrisemama

TRULY LOVE YOUR PRODUCTS; THEY ARE A GREAT FIT FOR OUR FAMILY. I LOVE HOW THE LESSONS ARE SO FLEXIBLE. THEY CAN BE SHORT (JUST READING AND COLORING) OR WE CAN GO DOWN A RABBIT HOLE FOR THE AFTERNOON. WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR CREATING THEM! — KÀRIN MANCINI

TESTIMONIALS

CMSIMPLESTUDIES.COM

We did the Simple Studies Burgess Birds and it was our favorite homeschool study we've ever done! We have kids in 8th grade down to kindergarten and all my children enjoyed doing this study together. It's amazing to see each bird that they drew in their nature journal. I printed "how to draw" pages for my youngest sons so it gave them step by step instructions on how to draw each bird. They loved that. My young ones also loved the coloring pages! We were sad when the book came to an end. I would highly recommend this study and you can make it work with a variety of ages.

– Claire Jones

US HISTORY IS FINALLY STARTING TO BE INTERESTING FOR MY 7 YEAR OLD. THANK YOU FOR CREATING AN INTERESTING, AFFORDABLE WAY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN TO LEARN ABOUT US HISTORY! – SARAH W.

My daughters and I started with Among the Meadow People and I truly appreciate your simple studies. They are enjoying them and sharing facts with family. They loved how God created the robin with a pocket of oil for when it rains. Thank you for serving the homeschool community with your time and talent. – Nicole M

JUST FINISHED COURAGE. WE LOVED IT! IT WAS OUR FIRST STUDY AND NOW I WANT TO BUY THEM ALL!! -MAGGIE MILLER

I'm officially obsessed with your studies. They've been a life-giving presence in our homeschool this year & I'm so grateful to have found them. – Hannah Connor

I AM SO PLEASED WITH WHAT I FOUND! I AM PLANNING ON INCORPORATING 3 OF THE SIMPLE STUDIES IN OUR YEAR. THEY ARE SO CUTE!! AND ARE GREAT FOR MY BROOD-- 8, 6, 3.5 AND 14 MONTHS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION. – MARIA DOUGLASS

CHECK OUT OUR OTHER PRODUCTS!

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