Changing Colonial Faith

How colonists opened new ways to practice religion

SS24.6.5b "Describe the contributions of colonists in bringing about religious change in colonial society."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what each colonist did to change religious life, and circle the change that followed each action.

New Choices for Worship

1. In seventeenth-century Massachusetts, government leaders expected people to follow the colony's Puritan church. Roger Williams argued that people should not be forced to worship in a certain way. He also said that civil leaders should not punish people for their religious beliefs. Massachusetts leaders banished him in 1635. In 1636, Williams founded Providence, where settlers could practice different faiths. His actions gave people who disagreed with strict church rules another place to live and helped make freedom of conscience a real choice in colonial society.

2. Anne Hutchinson held meetings in her Massachusetts home where colonists discussed sermons and religious ideas. She questioned some Puritan ministers and argued that people could have a direct relationship with God. Her meetings gave ordinary colonists, including women, a place to speak about faith. After a trial in 1637, Massachusetts leaders ordered her banished. In 1638, she helped establish Portsmouth in present-day Rhode Island. Hutchinson's meetings and move challenged the idea that religious leaders in Massachusetts should control every discussion of belief.

3. In 1681, English Quaker William Penn received land that became Pennsylvania. Quakers had faced punishment for their worship in other colonies. Penn invited people from several religious groups to settle in his colony and allowed them to worship without joining one official church. Mennonites and other groups came. This policy helped make Pennsylvania a place where neighbors could practice different faiths. It did not end religious limits everywhere, but it showed how a colonial leader could change rules, not just argue against them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Roger Williams's actions give colonists a new choice about religion?

2. How did Anne Hutchinson's meetings and her move to Portsmouth each challenge religious control?

3. What did William Penn do that changed religious life in Pennsylvania?

4. How were Hutchinson's and Penn's ways of bringing about religious change different?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise the leaders of a new colonial town. Write four or five sentences proposing one new rule about religion, explaining how ideas or actions from two colonists in the passage shaped your rule, and predicting how the rule could change life in your town.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 6 · SS24.6.5b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what each colonist did to change religious life, and circle the change that followed each action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Roger Williams's actions give colonists a new choice about religion?	**Williams argued against forced worship and founded Providence, where settlers could practice different faiths.**
2	How did Anne Hutchinson's meetings and her move to Portsmouth each challenge religious control?	**Her meetings let ordinary colonists, including women, discuss faith. Helping establish Portsmouth offered another place to live outside Massachusetts.**
3	What did William Penn do that changed religious life in Pennsylvania?	**Penn invited several religious groups to settle there and allowed them to worship without joining one official church.**
4	How were Hutchinson's and Penn's ways of bringing about religious change different?	**Hutchinson opened discussions about faith in her home. Penn used his power as a colonial leader to welcome different religious groups.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our town should let people hold religious discussion meetings in shared spaces. Hutchinson's meetings showed that colonists wanted places to talk about faith. Penn welcomed people from different religious groups, so our rule should let any group use the spaces. Neighbors with different beliefs could then meet without being required to join the same church.

Accept historically supported explanations that connect a colonist's action to a change in religious life. For Part 3, the rule must be the student's own proposal and draw on two colonists from the passage.