Questions of Authority

Trace how a religious revival influenced colonial society and political beliefs.

SS24.6.5c "Explain the influence of the Great Awakening on colonial society, including how it shaped the political beliefs of colonists."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle two changes the revivals brought to colonial religious life. Underline two statements that help explain how revival ideas could shape political beliefs.

When Colonists Questioned Authority

1. In the 1730s and 1740s, large crowds gathered in Britain's North American colonies to hear traveling preachers. This wave of religious revival became known as the Great Awakening. George Whitefield preached outdoors so people who could not fit inside a church could hear him. His sermons urged listeners to seek a personal change of heart, not simply follow church customs. Some listeners wept or spoke about their beliefs afterward. Others disliked the loud meetings and thought trained ministers should guide religious life.

2. The revivals changed colonial communities as well as worship. People from different colonies heard some of the same preachers and read accounts of their sermons. Some formed new churches when they disagreed with older church leaders. Women and enslaved people attended revivals, and some Black Christians became preachers, although slavery and unequal rights continued. Many colonists began to believe that ordinary people could think about religious questions for themselves. At the same time, arguments over the revivals divided families and congregations.

3. The Great Awakening did not tell colonists to declare independence. Still, its ideas could shape how some colonists thought about power. If a listener could question a minister's authority, that listener might also ask whether a government leader deserved obedience. Revivals taught some people to judge leaders by their actions rather than accept a title alone. Later, when colonists debated British rule, these habits of questioning authority could support arguments about political rights. Not everyone agreed, and religion was only one influence on colonial political beliefs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did outdoor preaching help the revival reach people who might not hear a sermon inside a church?

2. How could disagreement with older church leaders change a colonial community?

3. How might questioning a minister's authority affect a colonist's view of government leaders?

4. Why would it be inaccurate to say the Great Awakening caused all colonists to support independence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a colonist who attended a revival is asked to accept a new town rule without discussion. In three or four sentences, explain how the revival might shape that person's response and why you cannot assume every colonist would react the same way.

ANSWER KEY

Questions of Authority

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.5c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle two changes the revivals brought to colonial religious life. Underline two statements that help explain how revival ideas could shape political beliefs. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did outdoor preaching help the revival reach people who might not hear a sermon inside a church?	**Whitefield preached outdoors so people who could not fit inside a church could hear him.**
2	How could disagreement with older church leaders change a colonial community?	**Some people formed new churches, while arguments over the revivals divided families and congregations.**
3	How might questioning a minister's authority affect a colonist's view of government leaders?	**A colonist might also question whether a government leader deserved obedience and judge that leader by their actions.**
4	Why would it be inaccurate to say the Great Awakening caused all colonists to support independence?	**The revivals did not call for independence, not everyone agreed with them, and religion was only one influence on political beliefs.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A colonist who attended a revival might ask town leaders why the rule is needed. Hearing that people could think about religious questions for themselves might make the colonist more willing to question other leaders. The colonist might want to judge the rule by its effects rather than accept it because a leader announced it. Not every colonist would respond this way, since some disliked the revivals.

Accept responses that connect a specific revival idea or experience to a possible political belief without claiming the revivals directly caused independence. For Part 3, the reason colonists might differ should be consistent with the passage.