

Summer Reading Packet for Incoming Eighth Grade

Linfield Christian School

Welcome to Eighth Grade English! We're so glad that God has brought you into this class, and we're so excited about next year. In order to successfully prepare for the school year, you will need to read *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes and complete the corresponding assignments this summer.

The assignments that follow are due the first day of class. Please have them printed and stapled together. We will also have a quiz on this book the first week of school. Happy reading! See you in August!

Assignment 1: Read the information about Esther Forbes, and the introduction to the story.

Assignment 2: Do this as you read the book. The attached "Sons of Liberty" worksheet gives you some background on this group. Make a medal that you can hang around your neck. Follow the instructions on the worksheet. There is pattern for size and shape. The medal can be out of any material (cardboard, metal, poster board, etc.). Be creative. Put a string or yarn on the medal and bring it to class the first day.

Assignment 3: Chapters 1-5 are significant in Johnny's life and he changes physically, emotionally, and practically.

- a. Document these changes on the "Pride and Humility" worksheet.
- b. Now read the following scriptures about pride:

Old Testament

Proverbs 8:13

Proverbs 11:2

Proverbs 13:10

Proverbs 29:23

Isaiah 25:11

Proverbs 16:18

New Testament

2Corinthians 5:12

2Corinthians 7:4

2Corinthians 8:24

Galatians 6:4

- c. Write a well-developed 3 paragraph essay, in MLA format, answering the following:

What does the Old Testament say about man's pride in himself and the consequences? What is the difference in the New Testament verses? Why does God's word here seem to say pride is OK? What type of pride is this, and what are we to take pride in for it to be a good thing?

Esther Forbes

For Esther Forbes, the past was as alive as the present. Forbes's love of history dated back to her earliest childhood days in rural Massachusetts. The youngest of five children, Esther was born in 1891 into a family with a tradition of studying history. Her mother was an antiquarian—an expert on objects from much earlier times—whose work focused on New England. Young Esther's home was filled with physical reminders connecting her present life to the past. The Forbes family also preserved history with stories of its own past. One of the stories was about an ancestor jailed for witchcraft.



In these surroundings, Forbes quickly developed her love of history and of stories based on historical events. She read widely—everything from the classical *Iliad*, to her mother's manuscripts, to books found in her attic. Not surprisingly, Forbes's first attempt at a novel, written at age thirteen, had a historical setting. Forbes also spent time riding her pony through the countryside of Massachusetts and scouring ponds for turtles, which she collected.

After high school, Forbes studied history at the University of Wisconsin. Like her character Johnny Tremain, whose life changes because of the American Revolution, Forbes's life was redirected by war. After the United States entered World War I, Forbes left college to join the war effort, working on a Virginia farm. "One of the proudest moments of my life was when the farmer appointed me as a teamster to work only with horses, instead of merely shucking corn and picking apples like the other girls," she said.

Forbes worked as an editor for a book publisher after World War I ended. She also devoted time to her own writing, publishing her first novel in 1926. In the next ten years, she published four more books—all historical novels linked to New England. Turning her interest to biography, Forbes chose as her subject a famous historical figure from this region. Her book *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1943.

During her extensive research for *Paul Revere*, Forbes was drawn to the lives of early Bostonians. She became especially interested in the young apprentices of this time and decided to tell their story in a work of historical fiction. In this work, entitled *Johnny Tremain*, war influenced her life once again. With World War II raging, Forbes saw young people thrust into adult roles of responsibility. Like the patriots of colonial America, they were fighting desperately for their cause. In *Johnny Tremain*, Forbes wanted to show that in the 1770s, as in the 1940s, young Americans "were conscious of what they were fighting for and that it was something which they believed was worth more than their own lives."

Forbes won the 1944 Newbery Medal for *Johnny Tremain*. She explained that she wanted to show readers "the excitement of human nature, never static, always changing, often unpredictable and endlessly fascinating."

Introducing the Story

The story of *Johnny Tremain* begins in 1773 in the Boston home and workshop of old Mr. Lapham, a master silversmith. Fourteen year-old Johnny Tremain is one of three apprentices who live with the Lapham family while learning the silversmith trade. Although Johnny is an orphan, he had the advantage of a mother who taught him to read and write. These abilities, along with Johnny's intelligence and superior skill as an apprentice silversmith, make him overly proud. He wins no friends with his haughty attitude toward the other two apprentices. Johnny is so proud and aware of his value to the Laphams that, at times, he even treats his master's family disrespectfully.

As the story begins, Johnny is far more interested in his personal ambitions than in the political turmoil brewing all around him. At this time, the colonies were on the eve of the American Revolution, and Boston was a hotbed of tension and unrest. Many colonists were fiercely engaged in debating how much control Great Britain should have over the colonies and whether or not to form a separate nation.

Johnny's story is filled with characters, places, and events that make Boston, as it existed in the early 1770s, come alive. Some characters are mostly interested in their daily lives. Other characters are passionately interested in the political changes erupting around them. Though many of these characters are fictional, Forbes has skillfully interwoven their stories with those of real people and events from history. In fact, the author has combined fact and fiction so seamlessly that readers may not always know what is real and what is invented. In the words of one critic, "If Jonathan Lyte Tremain never lived in the flesh, he lives vividly with the men of his time." In writing *Johnny Tremain*, Forbes drew upon the extensive research she did for her biography of a famous Boston patriot: Paul Revere. With Forbes's vivid descriptions, readers can imagine what it was like to walk down Boston's cobblestone streets in the early 1770s. They can share the sense of danger and excitement surrounding such real events as the Boston Tea Party, Paul Revere's famous ride, and the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Readers also learn more about such great Patriot thinkers and leaders as Sam Adams, John Hancock, and John Adams.

In *Johnny Tremain*, readers share not only a historical journey but also Johnny's personal journey of growth and discovery. When planning the novel, Forbes was determined "to give Johnny room enough to change and grow." She also wanted "an obstacle [for] Johnny . . . to face from the beginning to the end of the book. . . . This obstacle was to have psychological significance." At the beginning of the novel, Johnny is an arrogant and impulsive boy, but then life knocks him around quite a bit. He runs into some bad luck and also creates some problems for himself with his excessive pride. He has to face his problems and try to figure out who he is and what matters to him. When the dramatic events of the American Revolution involve Johnny, he must decide what ideas and beliefs are worth fighting for.

THE TIME AND PLACE

The story of *Johnny Tremain* takes place mainly in Boston, beginning in the summer of 1773 and ending in April 1775. At this time, Boston was an important colonial city with a thriving economy. The thirteen American colonies were well established and had grown in population to two and a half million. The geographic area of the colonies was larger than that of the mother country, Great Britain. Transportation within and between colonies was very slow, with horse, or horsedrawn carriage being the fastest method of travel. Mail service was minimal and news could take days, weeks, or months to circulate.

The circumstances leading to the momentous historical events described in *Johnny Tremain* had been brewing for more than a decade. In 1763 Great Britain found itself deeply in debt after the end of the French and Indian War. The British government decided that it was time that the American colonies helped pay for their own defense. Between 1763 and 1775, the British Parliament approved a variety of laws requiring colonists to pay new taxes. Many colonists objected strongly to paying these taxes because they had no representatives in Parliament. Thus, they said, Parliament had no authority to tax them. "No

taxation without representation” became the rallying cry of colonists opposed to the new taxes. One of the new laws, the Stamp Act, meant colonists had to pay a tax—in cash—for most products made from or using paper. As this tax affected nearly every purchase, the colonists decided to protest by boycotting, or refusing to buy, British goods. Some protests led to violence. The most important effect of the Stamp Act, however, was that the colonies began to unify. People like Sam Adams began to organize groups dedicated to the cause of fighting British tyranny.

Another event that helped trigger the American Revolution was the Boston Massacre in 1770. Confusion during a routine street dispute led to violence and bloodshed between colonists and British soldiers who were stationed in Boston. This event further convinced Patriots such as Sam Adams that all the colonies should unite against Great Britain. He encouraged regular communication between important leaders from the different colonies. Eventually, Adams’s “committees of correspondence” became the Continental Congress, which met for the first time in 1774.

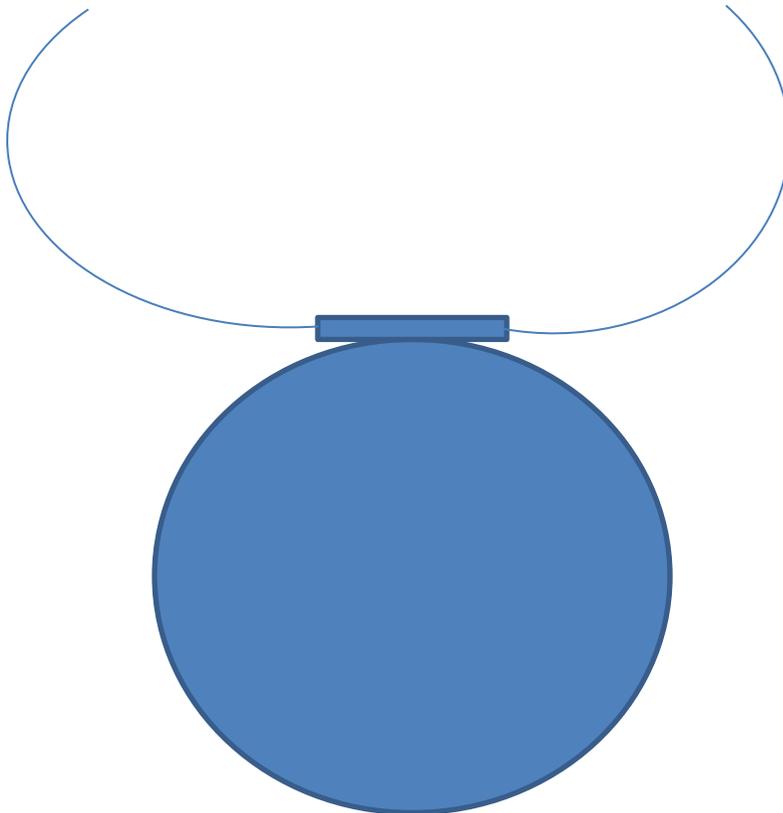
Sons of Liberty

Shrouded in secrecy, the origins of the Sons of Liberty are in dispute. Some historical sources claim that the movement began in New York City, in January, 1765. A more popular claim is that the movement began in Boston, Massachusetts, through the leadership of Samuel Adams in early 1765. It is quite likely that the Boston and New York City chapters of the Sons of Liberty were organized and developed simultaneously. Tradition has it that the Boston chapter gathered beneath the Liberty Tree for meetings. For reasons of safety and secrecy, Sons of Liberty groups tended to meet late at night so as not to attract attention and detection of British officials and the American Loyalist supporters of the British Crown.

Rab belonged to the Sons of Liberty. Johnny noticed the distinguishing medal Rab wore around his neck. On it was engraved a Tree of Liberty. That is all we know about this medal.

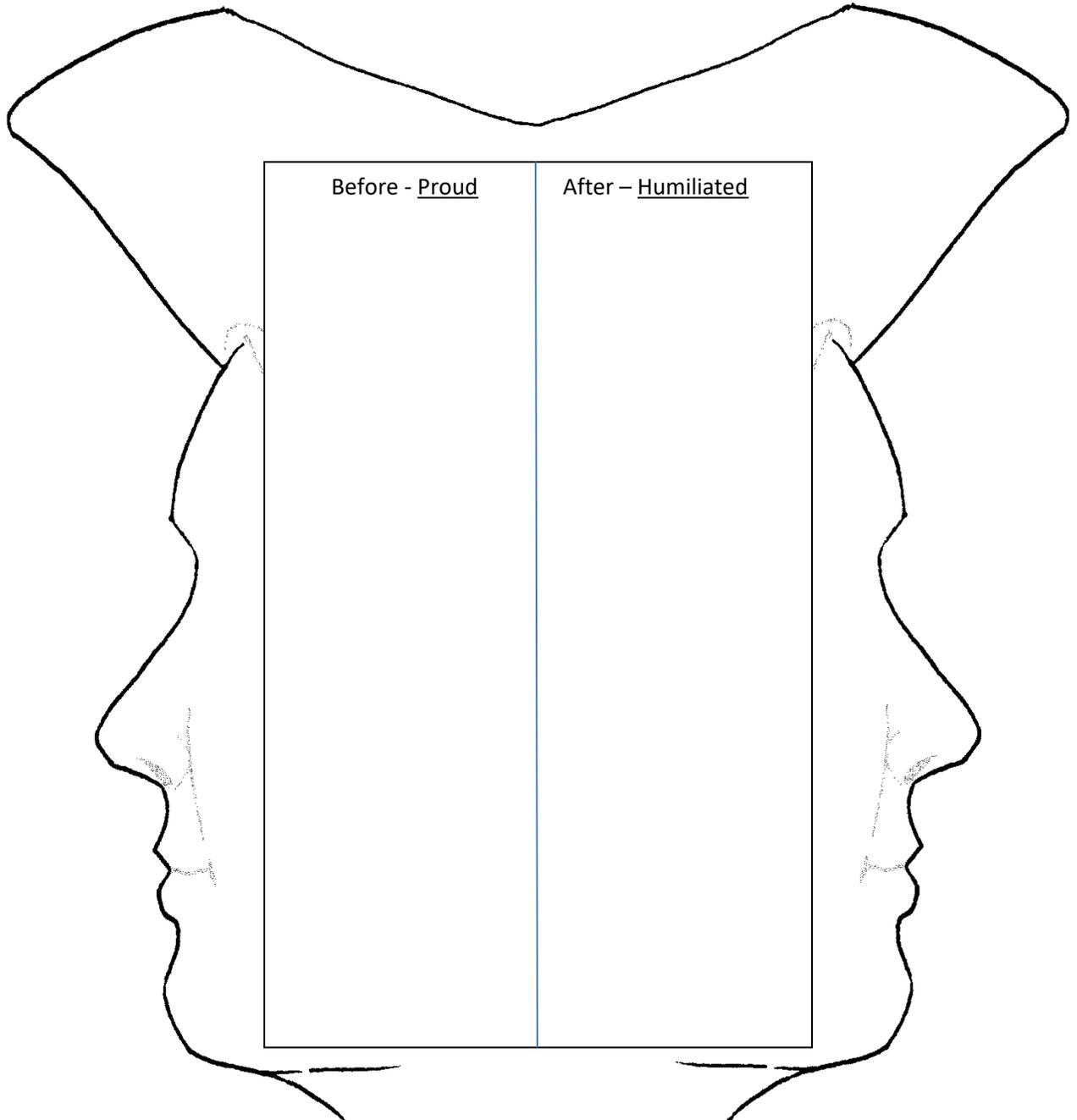
Imagine what you think the medal looked like. Make a replica to wear. Put the Tree of Liberty on the front. Then use your imagination to decide what the back may have looked like.

Below is an approximate size pattern.



Pride and Humility

Johnny's accident changes his life in many ways—physically, practically, and emotionally. As you read the first five chapters of Johnny's story, notice what these changes are and how he reacts to them. List details that show the contrast between Johnny's life before and after the accident.



The image shows a large, hand-drawn outline of a human face, facing forward. In the center of the face is a rectangular box divided into two vertical columns. The left column is labeled "Before - Proud" and the right column is labeled "After - Humiliated". The box is intended for students to write details from the text that illustrate the contrast between Johnny's life before and after an accident.

Before - <u>Proud</u>	After - <u>Humiliated</u>