



Founders' Influences SS.7.CG.1.1
Ancient and Religious Influences
VIDEO SCRIPT



JUDEO-CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE

1. In other videos in this module, you learned about the influence that ancient Greece, especially the polis of Athens, and the Roman Republic had on America's constitutional republic, including principles like democracy, rule of law, separation of powers, and civic participation. In this video, we'll take a look at Judeo-Christian ideas that influenced America's constitutional republic.
2. After watching the video, you will be able to:
 - ◆ Explain how the Judeo-Christian ethical ideas of justice, individual worth, personal responsibility and the rule of law influenced America's constitutional republic.
3. The term Judeo-Christian refers to the commonalities that exist between the Jewish and Christian faiths. Judaism and Christianity are religious beliefs that focus on ethical principles such as what is considered right and wrong or just and unjust. The influence of Judeo-Christian ethical ideas are rooted in the principles, ideas, and concepts outlined in founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the American legal system.
4. There are four ideas that we'll focus on in this video: individual worth, justice, personal responsibility, and rule of law.
5. The idea of individual worth in both Jewish and Christian religious traditions emphasizes the value of every individual. This idea is present across most founding documents. The Preamble of the Declaration of Independence highlights a belief in individual worth by stating that all people have certain natural rights that cannot be taken away. As Thomas Jefferson wrote, all men are created equal and they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Remember too that the U.S. Constitution highlights the concept of popular sovereignty in the words, "We the People," stating that the government receives its power from people and exists to serve them, important aspects of ensuring our individual worth.
6. The idea of justice is present in the Jewish and Christian holy texts and emphasizes how justice is administered to maintain fairness. This idea is most prevalent in the American legal system, which stands as a symbol of justice with the goal of supporting appropriate personal and professional conduct to maintain stable societies. Remember that it's embedded right into the Preamble of the Constitution, 'to establish justice,' and the guarantees of our Bill of Rights. This is also connected to the idea of personal responsibility.
7. The idea of personal responsibility in both Jewish and Christian religious traditions, holds individuals accountable for their actions, and can be connected to that idea of justice. The American legal system ensures legal accountability for actions and upholds the idea of personal responsibility and the pursuit of justice. This is also important as a component of the idea of civic participation, and our responsibilities and obligations as citizens.

8. Rule of Law is another ethical idea that has roots in Judeo-Christian tradition. Both religions utilize a written law code through the Ten Commandments. The structure of the American legal system embodies the idea of the rule of law, and the U.S. Constitution outlines the idea of the rule of law for government leaders. Just as with the Ten Commandments, the modern idea of rule of law is that no one is more important than the law and that it applies to everyone equally.

9. The ideas of justice, individual worth, personal responsibility, and rule of law collectively influence various aspects of America's constitutional republic. Justice guides fairness and equality in our legal system, individual worth highlights that a person's worth and dignity must be recognized and respected, personal responsibilities teaches citizens how to be accountable for upholding our constitutional republic, and rule of law reinforces the idea that all persons must equally obey the law. These are all important aspects of civic life and our constitutional republic. You can learn more about these and similar ideas throughout this course and in other modules on Civics360.