

Ben Speaks

Interpreting Benjamin Franklin for the 21st Century

Programs

Steve Nousen, who interprets the life and works of Benjamin Franklin to 21st century audiences, offers four separate programs to your group:

Ben Speaks: A 21st Century Conversation with Benjamin Franklin

In this highly popular, entertaining, and thought-provoking program, Dr. Franklin travels across three centuries to reflect on his life and times. He uses readings from the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to show how he helped 13 individual colonies transform themselves from outposts in the British Empire into an independent nation which still serves as a beacon of freedom to people around the world. Following his presentation, Dr. Franklin takes questions from the audience and encourages conversation. The program appeals to all ages.

The 1776 Dilemma: King or Country

Had they been alive during our war for independence, most modern Americans have little doubt that they would have fought alongside George Washington and stood by Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and the other Founding Fathers. The fact is that a third of the people in the colonies remained Loyalists to King George (Franklin called them Royalists); another third either played each side against the other or remained neutral waiting for the winner to emerge. That left only a third of the people in the colonies to support the Patriots.

Set in the fall of 1776, "King or Country" challenges members of the audience to put themselves in that time and imagine where their loyalties would have fallen. The choice is not an easy one, especially for those who prospered under the Crown. Dr. Franklin uses clear and understandable language to explain the Declaration of Independence and the need to take up arms against the British. He tries to convince his audience to join the revolution to which he pledged his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor. Following the presentation, Dr. Franklin answers questions about the Declaration of Independence, progress in the war, and other "current" events.

Benjamin Franklin's Way to Wealth in the 21st Century

When he was 17, Ben Franklin ran away from his home in Boston and ended up in Philadelphia with only a few coins in his pocket. Twenty-five years later, he was wealthy enough to retire. Over the last 42 years of his life, he used his wealth for the betterment of mankind. How did he do it? What can we learn from his example to help ourselves during the Great Recession?

This lively program uncovers the secrets of Franklin's road to riches and applies them to modern America. Among other things, Dr. Franklin introduces us to Father Abraham, an invention of Franklin's alter ego Poor Richard. Wise old Father Abraham answers the questions still plaguing us today: Won't these heavy taxes ruin the country? How shall we ever pay them? What would you advise us to do?

Benjamin Franklin: The South Carolina Connection

Though he never stepped foot in South Carolina, Benjamin Franklin had a tremendous impact on the development of the state. This intriguing program delves into the virtues of industry, frugality, resolve, and education. This is the story of how young Benjamin Franklin rose from poverty to wealth and, in the process, established newspapers in the two most important cities in colonial America -- Philadelphia and Charleston. You will meet a remarkable immigrant family, the Timothy's, led by their extraordinary matriarch, Elizabeth. Until you know the story behind the founding of the South-Carolina Gazette, you don't know all you need to about the history of South Carolina.