

Teaching History with Rebecca Rubin, An American Girl Doll

Take your child's natural interest in American Girl dolls and use their stories to study American History. For example, use Rebecca Rubin to learn about the arrival of immigrants into the US. Look for ways to bring this time period to life through directed discussions and by incorporating hands-on activities like crafts and games.

Preparation

- Determine how long you'll take to study each doll/time period.
- Plan the historical points you'd like to cover.
- Read books (the doll's and others) and determine questions you will discuss.
- Decide on some activities like games, crafts, and food to incorporate.
- Gather and prepare any supplies you'll need.

Execution

- Book Questions – ask questions that will prompt discussion and thought
- History – explore and discuss what is happening historically in the doll's era
- Activity – play games that children would be playing during that time
- Craft – choose one for the doll, the child or for both
- Snack – select food relevant to the time period or situation

Extension

- Study history with friends, make it a co-op.
- Expand on the history you're studying, see what else is going on in the time period.
- Choose extra subjects to study further, like sewing, art or geography.

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Sample questions from the book *“Meet Rebecca.”*

- Where is Rebecca’s family from? Why did they come to New York?
- Why was Rebecca trying to earn money? What did she find to do that earned her money?
- Why was her family discouraging Rebecca from dreaming about becoming an actress?

History topics to study:

- What were working conditions like for the immigrants?
- Child labor.
- What was happening in the rest of the world that sent so many fleeing to America?
- Business in the early 1900s.

Craft Information:

- Afikomen Bag – cut a rectangle out of felt. Cut off the corners of one end so that when the felt is folded, it looks like a bag/purse. Glue the sides to make the bag. Give the girls glitter, buttons, gems or other items to decorate their bag.
- Doilies – you can either crochet small doilies for the girls/dolls, teach them how to do it or purchase them off of Etsy (this is what I did).

Seder Information:

- There were two websites that I found helpful as I planned out the Seder. They were http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/1609/jewish/The-Seder.htm and <http://judaism.about.com/od/holidays/a/sederplatesymbols.htm>.

Check out our Pinterest page for other great ideas – <http://pinterest.com/homeschooletc>

Megan Zechman

www.homeschoolingetc.com

I’m a founder of Homeschooling etc, a company dedicated to supporting homeschool families as they Educate Through Community. I live in Central Florida with my husband and two girls, who have always been homeschooled. Most days you’ll find us out of the house learning in our big, beautiful world!