

Explore More—Religion in the English Colonies

Directions: Listen to your teacher talk about religion in the English colonies. Circle any words you don't understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.

How did religion influence the founding of the English colonies in North America?

Religion was important in the founding of the original 13 colonies. The leaders who sent colonists to Jamestown hoped they would convert the Indians to Christianity. The Pilgrims, Puritans, Quakers, Roman Catholics, and Jews all came to America to be able to worship God in their own way. America became known as a place where people of many different religious groups could find religious freedom.

Why did Roman Catholics come to America?

The Roman Catholic Church is a Christian church. The head of this church is the pope. The Roman Catholic Church was the official church in England until 1534. In 1534, the king of England had an argument with the pope. Leaders in England passed a law that made the king the head of the church instead of the pope. They named the church the "Church of England" and it became the country's official or established church. The Church of England is a Christian church.

After 1534, people who still wanted to be Roman Catholics were persecuted by the English government because the Church of England was the established church. Lord Baltimore decided to start a colony in America where Roman Catholics could worship freely. The king of England granted a charter for the colony of Maryland in 1632. The first group of Roman Catholic settlers arrived in the Maryland colony in 1634.

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What religion did most of the Jamestown colonists belong to?

Most of the Jamestown colonists belonged to the Church of England. They were called Anglicans. The Church of England, or the Anglican Church, became the established church of Virginia. In the United States, this church is now known as the Episcopal Church.

Why did the Pilgrims come to America?

Some people disagreed with the Church of England. They wanted to get rid of practices and rules they thought were wrong. They also wanted each local church to have control over its own practices and rules. When the leaders of the Church of England refused to make changes, these people left the church. These people became known as Separatists. The leaders of the Church of England began to persecute the Separatists. In 1608, one group of Separatists fled to Holland. However, they were not happy there. In 1620, they came to America to find religious freedom. They settled in Massachusetts. We call these people Pilgrims.

Why did the Puritans come to America?

The Puritans also disagreed with the Church of England. They wanted to get rid of practices and rules they thought were wrong. They also thought the Church of England was too political. However, the Puritans did not want to separate from the church. Instead, they wanted to change or purify it. That's where they got the name Puritans. The religious struggle went on for many years in England. However, the leaders of the Church of England began to persecute this group, too. In 1630, the Puritans came to America to be able to worship God in their own way. They also settled in Massachusetts.

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What did the Quakers believe?

Just like the Puritans, Quakers wanted to make changes in the Church of England. They believed that priests and rituals were not a necessary part of worship. As a result, the Quakers refused to attend the Church of England. The Quakers were against war, so they refused to carry weapons. Quakers also believed that all people were equal. They refused to remove their hats as a sign of respect to people who the church thought were superior. Because of these differences, the Quakers were persecuted. In 1682, William Penn led a group of Quakers to America to find religious freedom.

Why did some Jews come to the English colonies?

The Jews were persecuted in Europe for hundreds of years. They moved from country to country to escape persecution. A few Jews arrived in the colonies as early as 1621. They came to find safety from persecution and to find opportunity. Jews later settled in South Carolina, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and other colonies. In September 1654, 23 Jewish refugees from Brazil came to New Amsterdam, which later became New York. Jews also founded a settlement in Rhode Island in 1658. ❖

YOUR TURN!

1. What did you learn about each group listed in the chart below?
Record your answers. Use the textbook and historical anthology to help you.

Roman Catholics	
Anglicans	
Pilgrims	
Puritans	
Quakers	
Jews	

2. Does religion influence where people live today? Explain your answer.
