



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

## **Founder's Day: A Skit Honoring Bishop Richard Allen**

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*This skit was written for four participants ages 5-12.*

*A Breaking News PowerPoint was also used to support the theme of the skit.*

*It was first performed on February 11, 2018, at Union Bethel A.M.E. Church, New Orleans, LA, Rev. Keith J. Sanders, Pastor.*

Speaker 1: This just in...Breaking News...AME Churches around the world are celebrating Founder's Day today!

Speaker 2: Yes (Speaker 1 Name), we believe it marks the birthday of the Late Bishop Richard Allen. We are waiting for (Speaker 3 Name) to connect with us for more on this.

Speaker 1: Yes, yes we understand this celebration happens around Bishop Allen's birthday. Do we know any more details?

Speaker 3: Hi (Speaker 2 Name). Hi (Speaker 1 Name). I have been all around gathering more information on Founder's Day. I have brought with me (Speaker 4

Name). Will you please share with us the background of this apparently annual celebration?

Speaker 4: Hi everyone. Thanks for having me on today.

Speaker 1: Can you tell us what exactly is going on in the AME Churches today? We understand that it is a celebration of sorts.

Speaker 4: Yes (Speaker 1 Name) that is right, it is. We are celebrating the birthday of Richard Allen, the founder of Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia which from what we are told was dedicated in 1794.

Speaker 2: What else can you tell us? How did this all come about?

Speaker 4: Well, I think my colleague may be able to answer that for you.

Speaker 3: Bishop Allen was born a slave. He became a Methodist preacher. He worked various jobs to pay for his freedom. He and his wife, Sarah Allen, were parents to six children. Bishop Allen and Rev. Absalom Jones worked together to form the Free African Society while still worshiping at St. George's Church. However, after a conflict with St. George's, Allen and Jones left the church.

Speaker 4: WOW! Thanks (Speaker 3 Name). I wonder how many people knew that Bishop Allen was a slave.

Speaker 2: Yeah me too...I think it is interesting that he found a second wife with whom he had 6 children. That was a big family.

Speaker 1: Any information on how long it took Allen and his church to be free from the conflicts with St. George's?

Speaker 3: From what I gather, the church was dedicated in 1794 and finally in 1816 the ruled Mother Bethel legally independent.

Speaker 4: (Speaker 3 Name) is there anything else you'd like to share with us?

Speaker 4: Yes, I have a webisode to share with you and the viewing audience.

(Here a 7 minute YouTube video found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Zd-PuQZVFE> is shown.)

Speaker 4: I think it is important that our viewing audience realize just how intelligent Allen was? Could you imagine having the confidence and belief to stand for what you believe and fight for it?

Speaker 2: Yeah that's quite amazing I would say!

Speaker 1: We have to return you back to your regularly scheduled program but it is important that we note that Allen's achievements went beyond establishing the AME Church.

Speaker 3: That is right (Speaker 1 Name), he was a leader in the community and helped form a lot of organizations established to improve the lives of African Americans.

Speaker 2: Allen died in 1831. Since then he has been honored by institutions that bear his name.

Speaker 4: Yes, that is true. There is the Greater Allen Cathedral in New York and the Allen Temple in Cincinnati.

Speaker 1: And so you heard it here first viewers, February 14<sup>th</sup> isn't just Valentine's Day, it's Bishop Richard Allen's Birthday!

Speaker 3: But let's not stop there! Let's sing *Happy Birthday* to Bishop Allen.

*(Everyone joins in singing.)*

Speaker 1: This is breaking news...Happy Founders Day everyone!

This skit appears in *The Anvil, Sankofa: Worshipping God Yesterday, Today, and Forever, Annual Resource Guide, 2019-2020*, (pp 288-290) by the Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. To access other worship resources, copies of *The Anvil* can be purchased through the AMEC Publishing House.