

READ, WHITE and BLUE

Celebrating 250 Chapters of America

★ CELEBRATE LITERACY WEEK 2026 ★

Infant/Toddler Activity Packet

The Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) Division of Early Learning (DEL) is collaborating with FDOE's *Just Read, Florida!* office for the eighteenth annual statewide *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! 2026* events. *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! 2026* is scheduled for **January 26-30, 2026**, so mark your calendars now for this important week of events. This year, our *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* theme is **Read, White and Blue: Celebrating 250 Chapters of America!**

DEL supports the Celebrate Literacy Week theme from an early learning perspective with a focus on reading books to deepen children's knowledge.

Save the date for the simultaneous reading activity on **Wednesday, January 28, at 10 a.m. EST**. Help us spread the love of literacy to infant and toddler children by reading the book *Parade Colors* by Barbara Barbieri McGrath in provider homes, centers and schools.

Parade Colors by Barbara Barbieri McGrath



This fun and happy children's book highlights the many colorful and wonderful things children will experience during a parade. Take your children on an adventure as you read about all the colors on the firetruck, the parade floats and the American flag. Reading books such as *Parade Colors* builds children's experiences and expands their knowledge of the colors all around us.

Suggested Vocabulary Words or Terms from *Parade Colors* (with child-friendly definitions)

- **Big** is very large.
- **Little** is small.
- **Drum** is an instrument that makes sounds when you tap it.
- **Fire Truck** is a big red vehicle that helps firefighters go fast to places where there is a fire. It carries water, ladders and tools to help keep people safe. Fire trucks make loud noises and have flashing lights.
- **Play** (a drum) is using a drum to make music or sounds.
- **Color** is what makes things look different from each other. It's what we see when we look at a red apple, a blue sky or a green leaf.
- **Star** is a bright shape with points that look like it sparkles in the sky. You can see stars at night up in the sky, and sometimes we use star shapes to decorate or show something special.

- **Flag** is a piece of cloth with colors and shapes that stands for something special—like a country, a team or a celebration. People wave flags to show pride or to join in a parade or party.
- **Police Officer** is a helper in our community. They wear uniforms and help keep people safe.
- **Horse** is a big animal with four strong legs, a long tail and a mane (hair on its neck). Horses can run fast, make a sound called a neigh and sometimes help people by pulling wagons or giving rides.

**Teachers are encouraged to use vocabulary from the book that is most suitable for the children in their care.*

Parade Colors by Barbara Barbieri McGrath

Conducting a Read-Aloud and Intentional Teaching Tips

Plan ahead

- Prepare for a picture walk by reading *Parade Colors* by Barbara Barbieri McGrath to become familiar with the story and identify pictures you may want to point out and any new vocabulary words you can introduce to the children.
- Create a child-friendly definition for each new word to build the children’s vocabulary and background knowledge for the story.
- Determine open-ended questions ahead of reading.

Before reading the book

- Choose a place and time that supports a cozy setting. Gather children on the carpet or floor to join you.
- Review the cover of the book. Call attention to the labels and images that you see. Point and read the title, author and illustrator. Ask the children what they see.

While reading the book

- Be enthusiastic by showing excitement and curiosity as you read the story.
- Call attention to the images on each page of the book.
- Introduce new vocabulary words by using the best picture of each new word in the book. Note: It is not necessary for the text of the word to be on the same page as the picture of the word.
- Follow the prompts below to introduce new vocabulary words and ask open-ended comprehension questions. For example:
 - Ask the children what they see. Repeat what the child says and verify or correct with the actual word.
 - Teacher: “What do you see on the cover? What do you think this story is about?”
 - Child: “A truck.”
 - Teacher: “Yes, that is a truck. That’s a fire truck. It is a big word to say.”
 - Connect the story to real-life experiences. “Have you ever seen that type of truck before?”
 - Repeat the prompts as you encounter each new picture/vocabulary word in the story.

After reading the book

- **Connect the story to real-life experiences.** Show the last picture of the book. Ask questions and make statements such as:
 - “There was a horse in the parade! What was the horse doing?”
 - “Who was on the horse?”
 - “What do police officers do?”

Extension Activities for Infants and Toddlers

Following reading, teachers may choose to implement one or more of the following:

Activities for Infants and Toddlers

Activity 1: Flag Waving Dance

Activity 2: Color Parade

Activity 1: Flag Waving Dance



Activity Directions for Infants

Create Soft Flags. Use lightweight fabric (like felt or cotton) to make small flags. Sew or glue two pieces together if needed. Use soft handles like ribbon loops or just let the baby hold the fabric.

- Gentle Movement Time. Sit with the infant on your lap or a soft mat. Play the music and gently wave the flags in front of them. You can also help them hold and wave the flag with your assistance.
- Visual Engagement. Move the flags slowly side to side, up and down or in circles. This helps with visual tracking and attention.
- Tactile Exploration. Let the infant touch and feel the fabric. Talk about the colors: “This is red! Can you feel the soft blue?”
- Bonding & Language. Sing or hum along with the music and narrate what you’re doing: “We’re waving the flag! Look at it go!”

Supplies/Materials

- Lightweight fabric
- Glue
- Ribbon

Activity Directions for Toddlers

Play patriotic music and let toddlers wave their flags while you use some movement prompts. Use lightweight fabric (like felt or cotton) to make small flags. Sew or glue two pieces together if needed.

- Use some of the prompts below during the Flag Waving Dance activity with toddlers to encourage movement, language development and fun:
 - **Movement Prompts**
 - “Can you wave your flag high in the sky?”
 - “Let’s march like we’re in a parade!”
 - “Wave your flag fast—now slow!”
 - “Can you spin in a circle with your flag?”
 - “Let’s stomp our feet while we wave!”
 - **Color & Object Prompts**
 - “What color is your flag?”
 - “Can you find someone with a red flag?”
 - “Let’s wave our blue flags together!”
 - “Is your flag big or small?”

- **Imaginative Prompts**

- “Pretend you’re leading the parade—who’s behind you?”
- “Can you wave your flag like a firefighter in the parade?”
- “Let’s be drummers—tap your feet while you wave!”

- **Language & Social Prompts**

- “Can you say ‘red’ while you wave your red flag?”
- “Let’s wave together—1, 2, 3 go!”
- “Who has the same color flag as you?”

Supplies/Materials

- Lightweight fabric
- Glue
- Ribbon

Related Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (FELDS)

Physical Development

I.B.b.1. Uses perceptual information to guide motions and interactions with objects and other people
I.B.b.1.a. Exhibits body awareness and starts to move intentionally

Approaches to Learning

II.A.1. Shows awareness of and interest in the environment

Creative Expression Through the Arts

VIII.C.2. Responds and moves in creative ways while listening to music, stories and or/verbal cues

Language and Literacy

IV.A.1.b. Responds to gestures of adults

IV.A.1.c. Responds to gestures that indicate understanding of what is being communicated

IV.C.2.b. Vocalizes pleasure and displeasure sounds differently

IV.E.1.a. Engages in verbal and nonverbal conversations using facial expressions, gestures or sounds to initiate or respond to communication

Activity 2: Color Parade



Activity Directions for Infants

Help infants begin recognizing colors while enjoying tactile and visual play.

- Introduce One Color at a Time: Hold up a scarf and say the color name clearly: “This is yellow!” Let infants look at it and touch it.
- Peek-a-Boo Play: Gently cover your face with a scarf and play peek-a-boo. Say: “Peek-a-boo! It’s the red scarf!”
- Tactile Exploration: Let infants hold and crinkle the scarf. Talk about how it feels: “The blue scarf is soft!”
- Mirror Fun (Optional): Place a baby-safe mirror nearby and let infants watch themselves with the colorful scarves.
- Color Switching: Rotate through different colors, repeating the name and letting infants explore each one.

Supplies/Materials

- Lightweight scarves or fabric squares in bright colors (red, blue, yellow, green or orange)
- A soft mat or blanket for playtime
- Optional: a mirror for added visual fun

Activity Directions for Toddlers

Color Parade Collage. Provide toddlers with red, white, blue, green and yellow paper scraps. Let them glue pieces onto a large sheet to create their own “parade” scene.

- Set Up the Workspace. Lay out the large sheet of paper on a table or floor. Arrange the colored paper scraps in small bowls or piles within easy reach.
- Introduce the Colors. Show each color to the toddlers and name it clearly: “This is red!” Encourage them to repeat the color names.
- Explain the Activity. Tell the toddlers they’re going to make their own parade scene using colorful paper pieces. You can say: “Let’s make a parade with lots of colors! You can glue the pieces wherever you like.”
- Demonstrate Gluing. Show them how to use the glue stick or squeeze a small amount of liquid glue. Help them glue a few pieces to get started.
- Let Them Create. Allow toddlers to freely choose colors and place scraps on the paper. Encourage creativity. There’s no right or wrong way!
- Talk About Their Art. As they work, ask questions like:
 - “What color are you using now?”
 - “Is that a float or a flag?”
 - “Can you find a blue piece?”
- Add Extra Elements (Optional). Provide stickers, crayons or markers for toddlers who want to add more details to their parade.
- Display Their Work. Once finished, hang the collage on a wall or bulletin board. Celebrate their creativity by calling it the “Toddler Parade of Colors!”

Supplies/Materials

- Paper scraps in red, white, blue, green and yellow (cut into small squares or shapes)
- Large sheet of paper or poster board
- Child-safe glue sticks or liquid glue
- Optional: stickers, crayons or markers for extra decoration

Related FELDS

Approaches to Learning

II.A.1 - Begins to show eagerness and curiosity as a learner

II.B.1 - Pays attention for longer periods of time and persists at preferred activities

Creative Expression Through the Arts

VIII.C.2 - Responds and moves in creative ways while listening to music, stories and or/verbal cues

Language and Literacy

IV.A.1.b - Responds appropriately to simple requests

IV.A.1.c - Responds to language during conversations, songs, stories or other experiences

IV.A.1.a - Engages in multiple back-and-forth communicative interactions with adults as part of sensory, social and emotional experiences

IV.C.1.a - Looks intently at or points at a person or object that has been named with the goal of establishing joint attention

IV.E.1.a - Engages in conversations, asking and responding to simple questions through gestures and single words

Physical Development

I.A.1.a - Uses movement and sense to explore and learn

I.B.2.a - Uses body position, balance and especially movement to explore and examine materials, activities and spaces

Social and Emotional Development

III.C.1 - Enjoys games and other social exchanges with familiar adults

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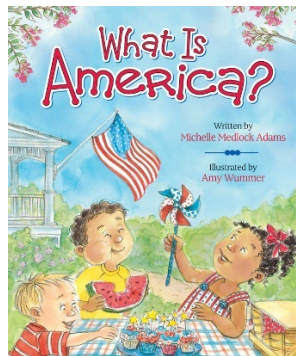
Preschool (ages 3-5) Activity Packet

The Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) Division of Early Learning (DEL) is collaborating with FDOE's *Just Read, Florida!* office for the eighteenth annual statewide *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! 2026* events. *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! 2026* is scheduled for **January 26-30, 2026**, so mark your calendars now for this important week of events. This year, our *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* theme is **Read, White and Blue: Celebrating 250 Chapters of America!**

DEL supports the *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* theme from an early learning perspective with a focus on reading books to deepen children's knowledge.

Save the date for the simultaneous reading activity on **Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 10 a.m. EST**. Help us spread the love of literacy to preschoolers (3- to 5-year-olds) by reading *What is America?* by Michelle Medlock Adams in provider homes, centers and schools.

***What is America?* by Michelle Medlock Adams**



This family friendly book highlights the many exciting facts about being an American and why we celebrate our country. Read along with the children and have deep discussions about the beauty of America, the freedoms we have and why we are celebrating America's 250th birthday.

Suggested Vocabulary Words or Terms from *What is America?* (with child-friendly definitions)

- **America** is the name of our country.
- **Tourists** are people who travel or visit places for fun.
- **4th of July** is the day we celebrate America's birthday.
- **Pledge of Allegiance** is a way for Americans to promise their loyalty to America.
- **Grand Old Flag** is a nickname for the American flag. Other nicknames are "Old Glory" and "Stars and Stripes."
- **Bald Eagle** is a bird that is a symbol of America.
- **Symbols** are pictures or objects that have meaning or represent an event. The American flag is a symbol of our country, America.

- **Faith** is believing in or hoping for something.
- **Amber** is a color word that describes something that is brown, gold or yellow.
- **Vote** is to express your opinion or make a choice.
- **Melting Pot** means many different people coming together to become one group.
- **Anthem** is a special song we sing about our country, America.
- **Lady Liberty or the Statue of Liberty** is a very tall statue that represents freedom and was given to America by the country, France.

**Teachers are encouraged to use vocabulary from the book that is most suitable for the children in their care.*

What is America? by Michelle Medlock Adams

Conducting a Read-Aloud and Intentional Teaching Tips

Plan ahead

- Read *What is America?* by Michelle Medlock Adams, ahead of time and become familiar with the story identifying any new vocabulary words the children may not know.
- Create a child-friendly definition for each new word to build the children’s vocabulary and background knowledge for the story. See the list of suggested vocabulary words with child-friendly definitions above.
- Plan open-ended questions to ask the children during the read aloud.

Before reading the book

- Review the parts of the book with the children (front/back cover, title, author, illustrator, top/bottom and the spine of the book).
- Ask questions to engage the children and activate background knowledge. For example:
 - “Who writes the words or story of a book?” (Response: **the author**) “The author of this book is Michelle Medlock Adams.”
 - “Who draws the pictures in the book?” (Response: **the illustrator**) “The illustrator of this book is Amy Wummer.”
 - Let’s look at the front cover of the book, “What do you think this book is about?”

While reading the book

- Call attention to the new vocabulary words by using the pictures in the book. Note: It is not necessary for the text of the word to be on the same page as the picture of the word.
- Follow the prompts below to introduce new vocabulary words and ask open-ended questions. For example:
 - **Say the word.** “Tourist. That is one of our new words.”
 - **Say the child-friendly definition.** “A tourist is someone who travels or visits another place for fun.”
 - **Connect the story to real-life experiences.** “Have you ever been a tourist? Tourists like to visit new places; can you share when you were a tourist and went somewhere you had never been before?”
 - **Repeat the above prompts** as you encounter each new vocabulary word in the book.

After reading the book

- **Connect the book to real life experiences.** “They were watching fireworks. Can you share about a time you saw fireworks? What was it like?” (i.e., loud, pretty, scary)
- **Ask open-ended questions.** “The 4th of July is America’s birthday. Tell us about a time you celebrated something.”

Extension Activities for 3- to 5-Year-Olds

Following the simultaneous reading, teachers may choose to implement one or more of the following:

Activities for 3- to 5-Year-Olds

Activity 1: America Parade

Activity 2: Stripes Patterns

Activity 3: Rhyme Memory Match

Activity 4: Class Picnic Seating Plan

Activity 5: Fizzling Fireworks - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) Activity

Activity 1: America Parade



Activity Directions

- Educators and children will plan for an America Parade by making instruments and props for every child using materials they have readily available in the classroom.
 - Make or gather musical instruments as described in supplies/materials list below.
 - Make paper three-cornered hats.
- Educators and children will select songs for the America Parade and make a playlist of patriotic songs to use during the parade.
- Educators will play the patriotic playlist and lead children in a parade with their instruments and hats.
- Following the America Parade, hold a class vote to determine the favorite musical anthem played during the parade.

Supplies/Materials

Provide classroom instruments for every child or make your own:

- Drums - made from oatmeal cartons or other recyclable cylinders
- Rhythm sticks or chopsticks
- Various types of musical horns
- Bells
- Triangles
- Shakers
- American flags or red, white or blue scarves or streamers
- 3-corner hats - made from newspaper or butcher paper or construction paper with red, white or blue feathers
- Marching music for parade - create a play list with patriotic music for marching

Related Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (FELDS)

Physical Development

I.B.a.2.a. Begins to combine and coordinate two or more motor movements

Social Studies

VII.D.3. Identifies differences and similarities of basic physical characteristics (e.g., landmarks or land features)

VII.F.3. Begins to explore basic principles of democracy (e.g., deciding rules in a classroom, respecting opinions of others, voting on classroom activities or civic responsibilities)

Activity 2: Stripes Patterns



Activity Directions

- Provide red, white and blue paper strips.
- Guide children to identify the AB pattern (red, white, red, white) on the American flag and encourage children to extend and duplicate the pattern using red and white paper strips.
- Guide children to recognize more complex patterns (AB, AAB, ABB, ABC) and encourage them to use paper strips to create a pattern.
- Invite children to glue their patterns onto paper to make their own “flags.”

Supplies/Materials

- Red, white and blue paper strips
- 8x10 sheet of paper
- Glue sticks

Related FELDS

Mathematical Thinking

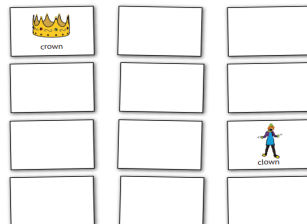
V.C.1. Identifies and extends a simple AB repeating pattern

V.C.2. Duplicates a simple AB pattern using different objects

V.C. 3. Recognizes the unit of repeat of a more complex pattern and extends the pattern (e.g., ABB or ABC)

Activity 3: Rhyme Memory Match

Source - [Florida Center for Reading Research](#)



Activity Directions

For this activity, the educator will create rhyme word cards ahead of time for children to practice recognizing rhyming words. This activity may be used as a whole group or small group literacy activity.

- Place the Rhyme Picture Cards face down in rows. To begin with, use only a set of 6 to 8 cards with 3 or 4 rhymes to match.
- Taking turns, children select two cards, name the picture on each (e.g., “crown, clown”), and determine if there is a match.
- If there is a match, pick up the cards and place them on the side. If cards do not match, return them to their original positions.
- Continue until all rhyming pairs are made.

Adaptations and Extensions

- Sort cards on a pocket chart and review rhyming pairs.
- Play using initial sound picture cards.

Supplies/Materials

- Rhyme word picture cards

Related FELDS

Language and Literacy

IV.F.2. Shows age-appropriate phonological awareness

IV.A.2. Demonstrates understanding when listening

Activity 4: Class Picnic Seating Plan



Activity Directions

During this small group activity, children apply counting, number operations, and explore how to compose and decompose a group of children to determine how many picnic blankets are needed for a class picnic if sitting in groups of 3, 4 or 5.

Step 1: Setting the Scene

- After reading, *What Is America?* by Michelle Medlock Adams, explain to the children that they are going to plan a class picnic, and everyone will need a place to sit. Ask, “I wonder how many blankets we need for our class so that everyone has a seat?”
- “How do we figure out how many people there are?” and “How do we figure out how many people go to each spot?”

Step 2: Count and Confirm

- Have children use concrete representations using toy people or cubes to represent the number of children.
- To foster children’s prediction and experimentation ask how many people there are before counting them and then guide children to experiment with dividing them into groups.
- Explain, “We could sit in groups of 3 on each blanket...or maybe 4...or even 5.” Let’s see what happens when we try each way.” Have students set up 3 blankets, then 4 blankets, and then 5.
- Children place their toy people or cubes on 3 blankets, then 4 blankets, and then 5.

Step 3: Experiment and Discuss

- Try grouping in three first. “Let’s see if we can make groups of three friends per blanket. Does everyone have a blanket? Are there any extras or empty spots?”
- Repeat for groups of four and groups of five, guiding children to notice patterns. Encourage children to predict before regrouping. Ask, “If we try groups of 4 next, do you think we’ll need more blankets or fewer?”

Step 4: Reflect & Extend the Thinking

- “Do some groups have more or fewer people?”
- “Which grouping uses fewer or more blankets?”
- “Was it fair? Did everyone have a place to sit?”
- Connect to real-world reasoning: “If more friends come to our picnic, what would we need to change?” or “What if we wanted smaller groups so we could talk more easily-what would happen?”

Supplies/Materials

- Toy people or cubes
- “Blankets” (mats, construction paper, drawn circles on the floor, blocks)

Related FELDS

Mathematical Thinking

- V.A.3. Demonstrates one-to-one correspondence when counting objects placed in a row (one to 15 and beyond)
- V.A.5. Constructs and counts sets of objects (one to 10 and beyond)
- V.B.1. Explores quantities up to eight using objects, fingers and dramatic play to solve real-world joining and separating problems
- V.B.2. Begins to demonstrate how to compose and decompose (build and take apart) sets up to eight using objects, fingers and acting out

Social and Emotional Development

- III.B.2. Attends to sights, sounds, objects, people and activities
- III.D.1. Develops sense of identity and belonging through play

Approaches to Learning

- II.A.1. Shows increased curiosity and is eager to learn new things and have new experiences
- II.D.1. Demonstrates some planning and learning from experiences

Activity 5: Fizzling Fireworks - STEAM Activity



Activity Directions

This experiment produces a safe chemical reaction that creates fizzy and colorful effects resembling fireworks.

Step 1: Setting Up the Experiment

- Safety First: Provide protective equipment such as safety glasses and/or gloves.
- Prepare the workspace: Place a large, shallow tray or baking sheet on a flat surface.
- Prepare the colored vinegar: In small bowls (or cups), mix a few drops of different food coloring with white vinegar.
- Arrange the coffee filters: Spread the coffee filters out flat on the tray.

Step 2: Experiment and Discuss

- Present the experiment: Engage children in a conversation about fireworks to activate previous knowledge. Remind children that fireworks are explosives that must be handled with care only by adults who know how to handle them safely. Share that they will be doing a fireworks experiment using baking soda and vinegar.
- Explain the concept: Talk about the states of matter involved in this experiment, review definitions for *solid*, *liquid* and *gas*. Review the mix: a solid, the baking soda, with a liquid, the vinegar. The result is bubbles, which are trapped gas. Explain the concept “*chemical reaction*,” a process in which a material (or more than one material) is converted to another material.
 - When you mix vinegar and baking soda you create carbon dioxide, water, and dissolved ions. (The dissolved ions are the atoms that don’t make the water or carbon dioxide. They remain dissolved in the water.)
 - When baking soda and vinegar interact the result is a reaction called “fizz” (the product of the reaction: carbon dioxide gas, sodium acetate and water.)
- Create the fizzy base: Have children use a spoon to sprinkle baking soda over the entire surface of each coffee filter.
- Drip and fizz! Give the children pipettes or eye droppers and let them drip the colored vinegar onto the baking soda on the coffee filters. Encourage them to watch the colors fizz and bubble like mini fireworks.
- (OPTIONAL) Add sparkles: For extra glittery effects, sprinkle some glitter onto the fizzing mixture as it reacts.
- Dry: Once the fizzing stops, let the coffee filters dry completely. The leftover color and residue will create a textured, colorful firework design.
- Display: Once dry, mount them on black construction paper to make the colors pop.

Step 3: Reflect & Extend the Thinking

- Link concepts: connect the experiment to the book reading.
- Apply the concept (fireworks) to their lives outside the classroom.
- Encourage the use of higher order thinking by asking open ended questions such as how did the colors mix on the coffee filter? What did you notice when we added the *vinegar*?
- Optional: Create a classroom book. Support children in brainstorming and planning as they create a classroom book displaying their textured coffee filters and narratives about their fireworks creation.

Supplies/Materials

- White coffee filters
- Baking soda
- White vinegar
- Food coloring or liquid watercolors
- Pipettes, eye droppers, or small squeeze bottles
- Shallow tray or baking sheet with raised edges
- Spoons for sprinkling baking soda
- Glitter (optional)
- Black construction paper (optional, for mounting the finished art)

Related FELDS

Physical Development

I.A.b.1.b. Identifies consequences of not following safety rules

Approaches to Learning

II.A.1. Begins to show eagerness and curiosity as a learner

Language and Literacy

IV.A.1.b. Shows understanding by asking and answering factual, predictive and inferential questions adding comments relevant to the topic and reacting appropriately to what is said

Scientific Inquiry

VI.A.2.a. Uses tools and various technologies to support exploration and inquiry (e.g., digital cameras, scales)

VI.A.3.a. Makes predictions and tests their predictions through experimentation and investigation

VI.C.1.d. Investigates and describes changing states of matter – liquid, solid and gas

Supplemental Resources for Preschool

Patriotic Book Titles

Fourth of July Mice! by Bethany Roberts

Good Night Florida by Adam Gamble and Mark Jasper

Proud Little Patriot by Alla Belousov

Patriotic Songs

You're a Grand Old Flag by George M. Cohan

America the Beautiful written by Katherine Lee Bates, music by Samuel A. Ward

The Star-Spangled Banner by Francis Scott Key, music by John Stafford Smith

The Pledge of Allegiance



I pledge allegiance to the flag of the
United States of America, and to the
Republic for which it stands, one
Nation under God, indivisible, with
liberty and justice for all.