**“U-for Utah”**

**Narration:**

There is no doubt, we can be proud to be Utahns.  Today you will hear reasons why we are extraordinary and unique.  The State of Utah is the only state in the U.S. that begins with the letter “U.”

Utah’s landscape is quickly defined by its high mountain ranges, five amazing national parks and the Great Salt Lake-- the largest lake west of the Mississippi River.

Even though our scenery and rock formations are some of the most stunning in the world, it is our citizens that distinguish us most.  Our history is filled with stories of noble people who sacrificed to carve a state from the desert wilderness.   You are a part of Utah and you can be grateful to live in this state. Here’s a song that will help you understand why!

**STATE SONG: “UTAH, THIS IS THE PLACE”**

The first four words in our state song tell why we are an inviting place to live:  “Utah, people working together**.”**  Our willingness to work hard, as well as, giving service to other people, are two qualities that differentiate us.

Our long-standing tradition for volunteer service has made us top in the entire nation for reaching out and helping others. That isan exceptional quality**.**  How did we build that reputation?Let’s look at our history to see how we got where we are today.

A very long time ago, before people from other lands knew about America, those who lived in these valleys were Native Americans.  They lived in Tribal communities with their families. Many descendants of these first people still live in our state today. They are eight Tribal Nations: Ute Tribe, Confederated Tribe of Goshute, Northwest Band of Shoshone Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Skull Valley Band of Goshute, Paiute Tribes of Utah, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe and Navajo Nation. Other indigenous tribes are the Pueblos and Hopi Tribes.

Some tribes lived in teepees made of lodge poles and animal skins; others built wickiups, dome type dwellings and Navajos built hogans made of poles, branches, clay and mud. Some tribes created their homes within the walls and caverns of mountains and mesas. Tribes planted and harvested their crops and they hunted, fished and trapped wildlife for food.

Most lived nomadic lives, as they would travel seasonally to follow food and resources. They survived because they were strong. We recognize the contributions of the Native Americans.

When the first explorers came from Europe to America, people from far away began learning of this place.  Some of the very first European travelers and explorers were from Spain. Father Escalante and Father Domingues (Doh-ming-ges) two Catholic priests, led a group in 1776. They made maps of their travels which helped guide others to this area in the West.

*(Some students walk to mic dressed as trappers*.)

Next came FUR TRAPPERS and TRADERS known as “Mountain Men”. They came to this new area searching for valuable beavers. These skins were used to make tall hats which were popular with people who lived in cities in the Eastern part of America and in Europe.

Among the trappers were Jim Bridger, Peter Ogden, Jedediah Smith and E. Provost. They wanted to store their furs for safe keeping. So, the trappers would dig a place in the earth to bury their “cache” of animal furs until they could sell them. They told stories of the abundance of fur-bearing animals.  Soon other Mountain Men became interested and came westward.

*(Some students walk to mic dressed as pioneers.)*

It was the MORMON PIONEERS who arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. They came to settle the area and establish a place for their families. They were not looking for wealth, furs, gold nor silver. They wanted to find an isolated destination that could be theirs alone, a place far from others where they could worship as they pleased without fear of persecution.

The state looked much different then.  Much of it truly was a barren wilderness. They began their tradition of hard work.  They started to clear the land, to build homes and bring water from the mountains to irrigate the seeds they planted.

The spring after they arrived, swarms of crickets began devouring the seeds planted in their gardens and their young crops.  What occurred was called the “Miracle of the Gulls.”

(Speaker can hold up pic of UT state bird.)

Legions of seagulls, native to the Great Salt Lake, kept the crickets from destroying all the pioneers’ food.  These birds ate masses of crickets and continued eating them for over two-weeks. This made possible the survival of the 4,000 Mormon pioneers who had journeyed to the valley.  Seagull Monument was built in honor of this rescue. Families continued to battle the harsh elements to cultivate this sagebrush-covered desert.

When we celebrate PIONEER DAY now on JULY 24TH, we can watch the Days of ’47 Parade and we remember the early Utah pioneers and the heritage many Utahns hold dear.  Now we have 29 counties in Utah, filled with cities and towns with towers and spires where our people live, work and worship in freedom.

In the next song you will hear the names of our 29 counties.  Some are named to recognize explorers, some include the first Native Americans, our natural resources and even our exceptional landscape.

**SONG:  “The 29 Counties of Utah-”**

In 1865 the American Civil War had ended and four years later in 1869 a big change happened to our nation and to Utah.  The railroad and trains connected Utah to points west to California, and points east, beyond the western territories to the United States.

It is important to remember that before Utah’s early settlers could even begin their journey to Utah, they first needed to get to the Midwest. They came by boat or rail to those starting points. Before hitting the dusty trails making their trek to the West, many had traveled hundreds or thousands of miles. Immigrants from across the ocean had already endured a rocky ship ride some 3000 miles before landing in the United States.

Why did this make such a difference to those living here? Before the railroad, the journey to come here meant people traveled 1300 miles by wagons pulled by horses and oxen or people pulling handcarts the long, exhausting distance on dusty trails.

The transcontinental railroad was a huge transformation! With trains transportation had improved and communication was fast with the invention of the telegraph. The isolation of the West had changed forever!

The two railroads met together—here in Utah.  A “golden spike” marked the place where the rails finally joined together at Promontory Point, Utah near the city of Ogden.  It meant large amounts of goods could be shipped in a matter of days, when before it took 3 to 5 months. Many items were delivered here and food and minerals from our mines were now hauled out to places hundreds of miles away.

**SONG**: **“Iron Wheels a Rollin’”** (Train whistle heard)

Finally, after a long process, in 1896 STATEHOOD DAY CAME.  Utah had first been organized as a territory of the United States and now we became the 45th state in the Union.  There was cheering as we joined the nation. We were named Utah in honor of the Ute Indian Tribe who lived high in the mountain tops.

Utah led the way in government. The same year that Utah became a state, Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon, a noted physician, was the first female to ever be elected to serve as a “state senator” in the United States.

Because our people were known for being hard working and industrious, this area was called “Deseret.” That means “honeybee.”  Being called the “Beehive State” is a complement to our productive citizens.

*(Option- Students are dressed as different historical characters.  At different points in the program, individual students can tell a brief summary of a historical person.)*

Utah is the top state in the nation to give the most volunteer service. What and outstanding honor!  Out of all 50 states, our people rank number one in giving help to people and showing respect by reaching out to others.  We care in our hearts and then we become motivated to help with our hands.

*(Option-Some students could tell Utah stories of examples of service and helping others.]*

An unusual event happened in 2002.  It is a highlight in our history. Our state was chosen as the location for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.  We welcomed the nations of the world as we hosted athletic events like ice skating, skiing and hockey. We showed examples of caring and esteem for all people with different heritage backgrounds, different languages and different lifestyles.

There were 26,000 volunteers who served during the Olympics, offering help and showing kindness to others. Volunteer service is where Utahns really shine.  Friendship and goodwill are Olympic ideals expected of those who host these Games.

Bridges of understanding are built when differences are respected. Every person deserves to be treated with respect.  Can YOU be a “bridge builder”? If someone does not look like you or if a person disagrees with your way of thinking, can you still be a friend?  Utahns realize that diversity makes our lives rich and full. Every person has value and must be treated fairly. Can you lead the way?

**Students perform:  “RESPECT Rap”**

**RESPECT for one another—is what we want to give;**

**No tearing down, but building up –is how we want to live.**

**Our differences are part—of all humanity.**

**“Fairness for all,” means— we’re friendly in U. T.**

**RESPECT, I’ve got, you’ve got it, we can all agree.**

**RESPECT, we’ve got it—in our state of U. T.**  (“U” & “T” are said separately, like Utah’s abbreviation.)

One person: What about in our very own school? Do we treat others with “RESPECT?”

One person: Does bullying another student show good will and respect—like Utah did during the Olympics?

*(One group of students say-)* Let us ask this question:  How do I feel inside after I tease or humiliate someone?

When you try to help another person, it will come back to you in a positive way.

*(Another group:)*  Do I try to understand how another student feels? If I recognize that every person deserves to be treated with respect—that changes how I see others. I will value them and be fair.

*(Another group-)* People who show kindness seem to have a light,

We want to be near them.  It just feels right.

One person:  “Someone shows some kindness.  Someone gives their time. Someone helps a neighbor… See us Shine.”

**Final Song:  “See Us Shine”**

*(Teacher or principal says-)*As we end our program, we encourage everyone to reach out and be a friend.  Each generation of Utahns helps the next to build a brighter future. As our state grows, we are committed to treating all people with respect.  Our challenge today is that each of us will shine as an example. **END**