



CHARACTER COUNTS! ® “CITIZENSHIP”

2024 KAFCE Education Program Year

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Additional leader’s guide: Hearth Fire Series # 11: Someone’s in the USA -Showing Respect for the Flag.

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.” Coretta Scott King.

Educational Goals: Learn that basic citizenship is to pay attention. Learn personal qualities of citizenship. Demonstrate proper respect for the US American flag.

In today’s world, there is so much happening that jockey for our attention. The preoccupation to getting the latest news and entertainment from sources such as radio, cable, newspapers, magazines, web stories, Instagram posts, Twitter feeds, podcast, gaming channels and streaming, can be overwhelming. They have not changed what it means to be informed nor changed the nature of the First Amendment but may be changing what it means to be a citizen. Tim Wu, law professor at Columbia Law School and author has said “Frankly, citizenship in our time is about how you spend your attention.” (“To Be a Good Citizen, First Pay Attention”, By Megan Garber, *The Atlantic*, June 30th, 2018)

Being a good citizen has traditionally meant to take action, speaking up or protesting, obeying laws, providing service, paying taxes, being part of a group who have legal and political rights and voting. All these actions are meant to make the Union more perfect. Wu puts it “Citizenship is like a muscle, exercise it, actively, or it will atrophy.”

All the media overload is changing the demands made of citizenship. Wu suggests there is a more basic requirement of good citizenship. To be decisive and selective of the things that command our attention. The foundational attributes are to learn, prioritize, think and to distinguish between that which is urgent and to be worthy and cared about from that which is opposite.

Some personal qualities of citizenship would include moral courage, the defending those who cannot defend themselves; courtesy; honesty; tolerance; compassion; and self-discipline. Can you name other qualities? Reference the thirteen virtues listed by Benjamin Franklin. Look through the *110 Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior* as written by young 14-year-old George Washington. Which ones would apply today’s society?

Community Activities: Assist with the voting process, assist with identifying community needs, support public informational forums for candidates and other community issues, participate in flag ceremonies, teach others to respect the flag, be welcoming to new community members.

MOST OF ALL - Do Random Acts of Kindness and Pay it Forward!