

Veterans *in the Classroom*



Get your Post involved in your local schools.

Get together with members of your Post to brainstorm ways to participate.

Remember, November is VFW's "Veterans in the Classroom" month. Promoting citizenship education in schools is an important goal for VFW, and there are many programs you can plan and present in schools.

Here are some suggested school activities to help you get started.

- Grades K-2: Young American Award (Supply item #4389). Teach the students the Pledge of Allegiance and present them an "I Learned the Pledge of Allegiance" certificate.
- Grades 3-5: Reading of Ten Short Flag Stories and Flag Education Program. The "Fun Flag Facts" can be copied and distributed to students.
- Grades 6 and higher: Living History Presentation. A presentation about your military service and your experiences in war. Also consider flag education programs for these age groups. Remember, the week of Veterans Day is "National Veterans Awareness" week in the schools.



UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

In everything you do, work closely with your Auxiliary counterpart. The most successful Posts are always the ones that work hand-in-hand with their Auxiliary. Remember, your presenters are representing the VFW. They should be prompt, courteous, polite and knowledgeable.



Speaker's Guideline

Arrangement

The initial contact you make with your local school(s) is very important. Explain that you are interested in assisting the teacher by providing a “living history” presentation about your military service during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq or any other campaign period. Select a date and time for your presentation. The teacher may wish to audiotape or videotape your presentation. Decide on which format makes you feel most comfortable.

Preparation

Prepare a short biography of yourself and your military service (send a copy to the teacher at least two weeks prior to your presentation.) By beginning your presentation with biographical information, you introduce yourself to the students and provide them with information which might inspire further questions. Include in your biographical introduction:

- date and place of birth
- occupation before joining the military
- reasons for joining (did you enlist or get drafted?)
- site and length of basic training
- geographical location of where you served overseas
- length of service
- occupation after leaving the service

Check to see what materials you have from your military service that you could use in your presentation, such as military uniforms, equipment or photographs. Food and clothing hold a special fascination for audiences of all ages. Descriptions of C and K rations, what you missed most from home or the importance of certain clothing items are a few examples of what you could address.

For example, an army helmet and liner are two separate items. You may want to ask the class why a helmet needs a liner (a demonstration wearing a helmet without the liner would immediately demonstrate why a liner was required.) Then, you might describe the different ways you used a helmet: carrying water, cooking and washing. As you prepare, allow time for questions and answers either during or at the end of your presentation.

Here is a suggested breakdown of the class time:

Introduction: 5-10 minutes

Main Presentation: 10-15 minutes

Questions and Answers: 5-10 minutes

Wrap up: 2-5 minutes

Presentation

Contact the teacher two or three days prior to the presentation to confirm the date and time of your presentation and where you should meet the teacher when you arrive at the school.

Prior to your presentation, display your personal items. With the teacher's understanding, try to create an informal atmosphere by having the students sit close to you.

After your presentation, ask the teacher for some feedback on how you did.

Fun Flag Facts



Some U.S. Flag History

The U.S. flag is older than the Union Jack of Great Britain and the Tricolor of France. The U.S. flag is the only flag to have been flown on the moon (1969).

It was first authorized on June 14, 1777. That is now Flag Day. Congress decided a star and stripe would represent each state. Our first flag had 13 stars with seven red and six white stripes. In 1794, two new states were added, and we had a flag with 15 stars and 15 stripes. By 1818 there were 20 states, but our country was still using the flag with 15 stars and stripes. Congress decided having 20 stripes might become a problem due to its size, so they passed a law that said there would be 13 stripes for the original 13 states, and they would add a star for each new state that joined the union. It remains so today.

The U.S. flag has 13 stripes, seven red and six white, with red on the top and bottom. A blue field with 50 stars is located next to the staff in the upper left corner of the flag. It extends from the top to the lower edge of the fourth red stripe. The stars are arranged in alternating rows of six and five, representing the 50 states of the United States. Individual stars do not represent any given state. You may not know it now, but flags, decorations and insignia of all kinds use colors to give special meaning to the flag or decoration: red for valor and zeal; white for hope and cleanliness of life; and blue, the color of heaven, for reverence and loyalty. And stars are an ancient symbol of the heavens. Our flag's 50 stars represent each state as part of the nation, but also a separate level of government. Our federal government was not given the power to control, so that each state would be able to govern themselves in those things they could do better. When you look at the flag, you are looking at the magnificent history of all Americans who have lived before us, your own ancestors, the most enduring nation of free people that has ever existed.

Federal Flag Code

Notice it says code, not law. The way our flag should be treated and honored is not law, but a code that has been developed over the years. It is the standard, it is what is right, it is what each of us should want to know and follow.

Basic Customs

- Display from sunrise to sunset, except when illuminated.
- Hoist briskly/lower ceremoniously.
- Do not fly in inclement weather except when using all-weather flags.
- Display every day at public institutions such as schools or fire departments.
- Display near every polling place on election days.
- If a group of flags is arranged in a straight line or a semi-circle, no flag or pennant should be placed above or, if on the same level, to the right of the U.S. flag. In peacetime, one national flag is not flown higher than another, so the U.S. flag should be on its own right of any grouping at same height.
- If horizontal or vertical against a wall, the union will be uppermost and to the flag's own right, your left when viewing it.
- If suspended over a street, it shall be vertical with the union to the north or east, depending on which way the street runs. So you'll have to learn your geography and map reading to do it right. (Give example for local main street.)
- If on a speaker's platform, it should be above and behind the speaker. Which way did I say if mounted on a wall?
- On special occasions the flag may be flown at half-staff. That is done by raising the flag all the way to the top and then bringing it half-way down. The President of the United States and the governor of any state are the only individuals who can say when the flag is at half-staff and for whom, but it is always at half-staff on Memorial Day until noon, when it is raised to the top of the flag pole.

What must you do when the flag is lowered or raised, passes by as in a parade, or when you are saying the Pledge of Allegiance?

- Stand as straight, as tall and as proud as you can.
- Face the flag and place your right hand over your heart.
- If you are wearing a cap or hat, take it off with your right hand and hold it over your left shoulder, so that your hand is over your heart. Veterans may render the military salute whether in or out of uniform.



Citizenship Education Materials

Available from the



Children's Educational Coloring/Activity Book

16 page coloring/activity book that tells a story and teaches valuable lessons. 8x10". Appropriate for elementary school age. Item # 4125, 4129, 4130, 4123

Pledge of Allegiance Coloring Book

An easy way for kids to learn the Pledge of Allegiance while they color. Interesting scenes tie in with phrases from the Pledge of Allegiance. Item # 4425

Young American Award

I Learned the Pledge of Allegiance Certificate – For Grades K – 3. Item # 4389

America's White Table Book

The White Table is a symbol for service members fallen, missing or held captive in the line of duty. That story is about Katie and her sister helping set the white table for dinner, as a special gift to their uncle. Item # 4752

Flag Questions and Answers

This 16-page brochure provides information about the U.S. flag with changes directed by Federal Flag Code. Item # 4422

Citizenship Education Student Worksheet

11" x 17" red, white and blue activity sheet with information on the presidents and the U.S. flag. May be folded to place in student's binder. Appropriate for grades 3-5. Item # 4126

Pledge of Allegiance Cards

The Pledge on the front. The American's Creed on the back. Item # 4411

Ten Short Flag Stories

A seven-page pamphlet of historical and informational material concerning the U.S. flag. Item # 4418

Etiquette of the Stars & Stripes

Two-color, 21 page booklet on proper usage of the flag, as directed by the Federal Flag Code. Appropriate for high school students and adults. Item # 4415

Pencils

White pencils with Pledge of Allegiance and U.S. flag. Item # 1470

U.S. Presidents 6" Ruler

Features U.S. presidents on back with both metric and U.S. measurements on front. Item # 4410

For additional Citizenship Education items, please see the VFW Store catalog.

Feel free to share this information with teachers and youth group leaders.

REMINDER: "BUDDY"® POPPY FUNDS CAN BE EXPENDED TO PURCHASE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS.

Refer to current catalog or website to view these items and to see current prices. Call (800) 821-2606 or visit www.vfwstore.org to order.