

CHARACTER



Citizenship

November 2003

CITIZENSHIP: the status of a citizen with its attendant duties, rights and privileges.

“All it takes for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.”

Edmund Burke

Citizenship: A Matter of Duties and Rights

If we were asked to define *citizenship*, we might first be inclined to define it as a matter of birth or formal naturalization. However, Webster’s first defines *citizenship* as “the state of being vested with the rights and duties of a citizen.” Therefore, citizenship carries with it not only a country of origin or naturalization but also of rights and duties. A citizen can conclude that if he or she fulfills his duties of citizenship that the rights of citizenship will be protected. Regarding the duties of citizenship, it has been written that “unless one truly promotes the common welfare of his country, he is an alien in the oldest sense of that term—that is, estranged from his fellows.”

Individual opinions may differ as to what promotes “the common welfare of his country,” however, most would agree that some of the basic duties of citizenship include voting, being active in politics and in community, abiding by the laws of the land, and similar concerns. In defining *citizenship* in a fuller sense, we should in addition to these duties consider what John Adams, one of the Founding Fathers, proclaimed the duties of citizenship to be. He declared, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” Clearly, John Adams emphasized the importance of our most important duties of citizenship: morality and spirituality.

Alexis de Tocqueville, a French historian, came to America in 1831 to study its penal, social, and political institutions. At the conclusion of his ten-year study, he wrote:

“I sought for the greatness and the genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there; in her fertile fields and boundless prairies, and it was not there; in her rich mines and her vast world commerce, and it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good,

and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”

From these two historical statements, morality and spiritual strength are at the core of America’s greatness and the preservation of our Constitutional freedoms--the rights of U.S. citizens. How healthy is the moral and spiritual foundation of America? President Calvin Coolidge declared that our nation’s moral and spiritual foundation is in need. He stated:

“We do not need more material development, we need more spiritual development. We do not need more intellectual power, we need more moral power. We do not need more knowledge, we need more character. We do not need more government, we need more culture. We do not need more law, we need more religion. . . . If that side is strengthened, the other side will take care of itself. It is that side which is the foundation of all else. If the foundation be firm, the superstructure will stand.”

Similarly, Ezra Taft Benson, former Secretary of Agriculture, stated that our country was suffering from “erosion . . . not erosion of the soil, but erosion of the national morality.”

His suggestions for curbing our national moral and spiritual “erosion” are that we strengthen the home and family, encourage obedience, strengthen character through adherence to high spiritual and moral principles, increase chastity and purity, oppose legislation which strike at the foundation of the home and family, and concentrate upon shifting from materialism to spirituality.

As citizens of a nation that was founded upon a moral and spiritual foundation, our first duty is to perpetuate and strengthen that foundation so that we can maintain and enjoy the rights of citizenship that are a part of this great nation.

Julianne T. Blickfeldt
Lindon Resident

“There are no ‘passengers’ on spaceship earth. Everybody’s ‘crew.’”

M. McLuhan

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

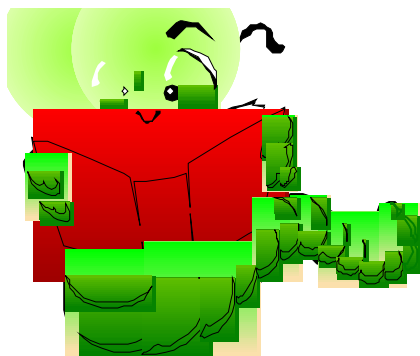
“Parents have the duty to govern their children. But the object of all good government is to prepare the subject for self-government.”

Dr. Lyman Abbott

Book List

Seven Brave Women
by Betsy Hearne

The Courage of Sarah Noble
by Alice Dalgliesh



IN HONOR OF NATIONAL FAMILY MONTH, Lindon Character Connection presents “Strengthening the Family” by President L. Edward Burton, former state legislator, mayor, church authority and leader, Sunday, November 9th at 7 p.m. at the Lindon Stake Center 1050 East 100 North Lindon. (adults only please)

Family Activities

–**Visit a national park or historic site.** Talk about the many natural and man-made wonders of our state, country, and world. *What are our responsibilities to the environment? How can we help preserve history?*

–**Play a game of matchbox cars,** first with the rules of the road, then without. *What does obedience to laws have to do with being a good citizen?*

–**Sir Winston Churchill,** British statesman, was born on November 30, 1874. He once said, At the bottom of all the tributes paid to democracy is the little person, walking into the little booth, with a little pencil, making a little cross on a little bit of paper - no amount of rhetoric or voluminous discussion can possibly diminish the overwhelming importance of the point.” *What are the responsibilities of a citizen?*

By Laura Clement

Kid’s Corner

Citizenship is respecting the community, state and country. True citizens help everybody out to the best of their ability. They vote if they are of age. But, not just adults can show citizenship. Kids can be citizens too. For example, we can recycle, not litter, do service, and not vandalize. There are many other things we can do besides those as well. We can give respect and encourage people to do the right things.

- **Eric Abram**

Citizenship is helping people whether you know them or not. You can do something as simple as holding a door open for someone you see struggling...I think we need a little more citizenship in the world. So, if you are reading this right now, think about how high a level your citizenship is at. If it needs to be higher, I challenge you to make that a goal. - **Madysen Welcker**

Citizenship is when you are a citizen of a country or a state. We kids, here at Aspen Elementary are citizens. We care about others. We can show citizenship by being nice to others, respecting others’ property, and obeying rules. - **Rebecca Sidwell**

Mrs. Omer’s 6th grade
Aspen Elementary School

We, at Character Connection would like to focus on helping parents access character materials this year by using the web site located at www.thecharacterconnection.com. If you are interested in receiving a monthly reminder of the character traits and access to resource materials, please e-mail your address to arlainea@isquaredinc.com

Character Connection is a not-for-profit organization encouraging the enhancement of character development in our community. We are accepting financial support, if you can help please send contributions to:
Lindon Character Connection
c/o Alpine Foundation
575 N 100 E
American Fork, UT 84003
(You may also give your donation to any executive board member.)

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