

Medal of Honor Character Development Program™



About These Lessons

Lessons in the Dear Young American series focus upon powerful advice from Recipients of the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest military award for valor. Part of the Medal of Honor Character Development Program, this series offers shorter lessons designed specifically for Advisory, Leadership, Social-Emotional, or Guidance classes that may not have time to complete full class-length lessons. The Dear Young American video series from MilitaryTimes provides specific advice to students and allows opportunities for students to reflect on the values of courage, commitment, sacrifice, integrity, citizenship, and patriotism. These lessons progress in complexity and can be modified based on grade level or ability. Each lesson in this series is designed to last approximately 20-30 minutes, and each lesson builds upon the previous lesson's concepts. However, each lesson could be expanded should the instructor or students wish to explore advice from the Recipients further.

These lessons may also serve as a "starting point" to scaffold into larger and more complex lessons from the Medal of Honor Character Development Program.

Teacher Preparation

Before starting this lessons series, we suggest you familiarize yourself with the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's website to easily navigate through Recipient pages and videos. Each lesson in this series focuses on a single Recipient, but to keep the lessons short, we use only their short Dear Young American video. You and your students can find significantly more information on each Recipient, including a longer living history video, Medal of Honor citation, and more on our website.

In addition to reviewing the lesson tasks students will undertake, we suggest you learn more about the Recipient your students will be studying that day. The questions posed in each lesson can be modified or expanded to suit your students' specific level.

Resources

All lessons and videos are available at www.cmoHS.org/news-events/DYA



Congressional Medal of Honor Society Character Development Program

The Medal of Honor Character Development Program is a free resource which teaches courage, commitment, integrity, sacrifice, citizenship, and patriotism to students through educationally grounded lessons developed by teachers for teachers. These six values are embodied in the Medal of Honor and exemplified in the actions for which it has been awarded.

Both the elementary and secondary resources of the Medal of Honor Character Development Program teach students to recognize and exemplify these values, making them useful as Social Emotional Learning resources, as a classroom management system, or as a tool to create a positive and healthy school culture. These character education lessons feature extraordinary military and civilian stories, providing students with concrete examples to live by. Because the lessons are grounded in cross-curricular academics, most teachers can incorporate them into an existing unit and double the accomplishments in their precious teaching minutes. Built to be flexible, the program is appropriate for public, private, charter, homeschool, and extra-curricular settings.

The entire Medal of Honor Character Development Program is free to educators. The curriculum includes individual and group activities, worksheets and extended activity suggestions, and resources such as Medal of Honor citations, live and archived webinars, and an extensive living history collection.

Medal of Honor Recipients Featured in this Series

Harvey “Barney” Barnum, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, Vietnam War

Gary Beikirch, U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Florent Groberg, U.S. Army, War on Terrorism (Afghanistan)

Gary Littrell, U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Robert Modrzejewski, U.S. Marine Corps, Vietnam War

Leroy Petry, U.S. Army, War on Terrorism (Afghanistan)

Ronald J. Shurer II, U.S. Army, War on Terrorism (Afghanistan)

Brian Thacker, U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Jay Vargas, U.S. Marine Corps, Vietnam War

Hershel “Woody” Williams, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve,
World War II

Congressional Medal of Honor Society

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to preserving the legacy of the Medal of Honor and its Recipients, inspiring Americans, and supporting the Recipients as they connect with communities across the country. Chartered by Congress in 1958, its membership consists exclusively of those individuals who have received the Medal of Honor.

The Society carries out its mission through outreach, education and preservation programs, including the Medal of Honor Museum, Medal of Honor Outreach Programs, the Medal of Honor Character Development Program, and the Citizen Honors Awards for Valor and Service. The Society's programs and operations are funded by donations.

Learn more about the Medal of Honor and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's initiatives at <https://www.cmohs.org>.

Military Times and Dear Young American Videos

Military Times is a part of the Sightline Media Group, formerly known as the Army Times Publishing Company, which first published Army Times in 1940. Throughout its history, the company has a strong heritage and tradition of meeting the highest standards of independent journalism and has expanded with publications serving all branches of the U.S. military, the global defense community, the U.S. federal government, and several special interest, defense-oriented industry sectors.

Military Times provides quality, unbiased reporting on the important issues for the military community: Military News, Financial Services, Pay and Benefits, Health Care, Education and Training, Promotions and Certifications, Product Reviews, Gear and Games, Transitioning to Civilian Life, Travel and Leisure.

Military Times recently published a series of videos entitled Dear Young Americans. In this series, Medal of Honor Recipients offer direct advice to young people, those who are about to step into adulthood. Their advice and words of wisdom to young Americans form the basis of this set of lessons.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTORY LESSONS

INTRODUCTORY LESSON 1 Selfless Service.....	5
INTRODUCTORY LESSON 2 What Are the Six Core Values?.....	6

LESSONS

LESSON 3 Gary Littrell: Look in the Mirror.....	7
LESSON 4 Brian Thacker: You Have to Keep Going.....	8
LESSON 5 Harvey “Barney” Barnum, Jr.: Raise Your Hand.....	9
LESSON 6 Ronald Shurer, II: Find a Way to Serve.....	10
LESSON 7 Jay Vargas: Do the Best You Can.....	11
LESSON 8 Robert Modrzejewski: Make a Different Decision.....	12
LESSON 9 Hershel “Woody” Williams: Your Name Is the Most Precious Possession You Have.....	13
LESSON 10 Florent Groberg: Have a Conversation.....	14
LESSON 11 Gary Beikirch: You Have to Decide.....	15
LESSON 12 Leroy Petry: Look to Your Left and to Your Right.....	16



Dear **YOUNG AMERICAN**

What Is the Medal of Honor?

Students will:

- understand what the Medal of Honor means to the United States
- identify the symbols, brief history, and design of each Medal and the branches which they represent

Teacher Preparation:

Select a Recipient Portrait of Valor from the Dear Young American webpage. This document will be used at the end of this lesson.

Introductory Activity:

Read this brief description of the Medal of Honor:

The Medal of Honor is the United States' highest award for military valor in action. And while over 150 years have passed since its inception, the meaning behind the Medal has never tarnished. Etched within are the very values that each Recipient displayed in the moments that mattered—bravery, courage, sacrifice, integrity. A deep love of country and a desire to always do what is right. A distinguished award presented only to the deserving, the Medal tells a story of its own.

Ask students to reflect and share their thoughts on what the description means.

Whole Group Activity:

As a class, watch “The Medal of Honor: Inspire the Future.” Instruct students to take notes, focusing on the design features of the three different Medals.

Individual Activity:

Have each student write a one-paragraph description of one of the three Medal of Honor designs. Direct students to visit www.cmohs.org to watch the video again and to find more in-depth information about the Medals.

Whole Group Activity:

Facilitate a brief discussion with students about the designs of the Medal of Honor. Ask them to share reasons they believe concepts or values were included (or even excluded) from the Medal designs.

Whole Group Activity:

As a class, read the selected Recipient Portrait of Valor.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

For next time, ask students to think about what Medal of Honor Recipients might be like. What are their backgrounds? What did they have to experience in order to receive the Medal of Honor? What values might they hold dear? Encourage students to ask family members or family friends if they have any knowledge about the Medal of Honor.

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

What Are the Six Core Values?

Students will:

- define and interpret the six core values embodied in the Medal of Honor

Introductory Activity:

Ask students about their reflections from the previous lesson. What do they think the Recipients are like? What values would be important to them?

Next, share with students the six core values they will focus on for this lesson series: courage, integrity, patriotism, citizenship, commitment, and sacrifice. Instruct students to provide thoughts about what they feel these words have in common, and ask students why these words would be chosen as those which embody the Medal of Honor. Discuss responses as a class.

Small Group Activity:

Divide students into groups of two to four. Assign each group one of the six core values. Instruct students to complete three tasks that explore their assigned value more in depth.

TASK 1: As a group, define the core value in your own words.

TASK 2: Identify a minimum of 3 synonyms for your group's core value.

TASK 3: Identify a minimum of 3 antonyms for your group's core value.

Whole Group Activity:

Have each group share their core value definition, synonyms, and antonyms with the class. Ask class members to compare and contrast the words. Discuss how the values are related to one another.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Tell students that they will be introduced to Medal of Honor Recipients over the next several lessons. For next time, ask students to identify how each of the core values they learned about today can be an essential life skill not only on the battlefield, but also in everyday civilian life. Remind students that Medal of Honor Recipients are just normal people, hailing from all walks of life.

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

Look in the Mirror

Students will:

- evaluate how integrity guides decision-making to empower not only oneself, but others
- define integrity and demonstrate how to build and practice integrity in their own lives

Introductory Activity:

Ask students to recall the six core values from the previous lesson and share with the class how they connected the values to everyday life.

Next, explain to students that they will be discussing integrity today. Lead a short discussion with students about the word integrity. Students can recall the definitions of integrity presented in the previous class and brainstorm examples of integrity.

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *Look in the Mirror*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Gary Littrell. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers.

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a short response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Gary Littrell states that if you want to enter the military, you must be “physically and mentally strong.” What does he mean by this statement, in your opinion?
- The first piece of advice Gary Littrell offers is to “balance” your military and family life. His experience relates to his service in the U.S. Army, but can this advice transfer to anything you do in life? Explain how you can use this advice in your own life.
- Gary Littrell states that “No one can take your integrity from you. You have to give up your integrity.” How could you explain this statement to someone younger than you – a sibling, a niece or nephew, or an elementary student who lives in your neighborhood?

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of integrity and other values they noticed in the video.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Gary Littrell stated that “The most important thing to do in your life is to be able to look in the mirror and be proud of what you see.” Think about the last time you looked in the mirror. Were you concerned just with how you looked? Were you fearful in some way of what others think about how you look?

The next time you look in the mirror, look directly into your own eyes. Think of what Gary Littrell said about integrity, and how no one can take it from you. Ask yourself in your mirror, while no one else is watching, how you can create integrity in your daily life that no one else can take. Commit to making three positive decisions that belong to you, three decisions that no one else can take from you.

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

You Have to Keep Going

Students will:

- evaluate how commitment leads to powerful, daily decisions that can positively affect the lives of others
- demonstrate a commitment to acknowledge actions of others that impact daily life

Core Value Focus: Commitment**Introductory Activity:**

Have students share their experiences of looking in the mirror from the previous lesson. Connect that experience back to Gary Littrell's quote that no one can take your integrity.

Explain to students that you will be discussing commitment today. Lead a short discussion with students about the meaning of commitment. Students can brainstorm examples of commitment either in their life or some examples that they have observed in others.

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *You Have to Keep Going*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Brian Thacker. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a short response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Explain how you think Brian Thacker's actions demonstrated commitment to his fellow soldiers in Vietnam, but also in his life after his service.
- Thinking of commitment, what do you believe Brian Thacker means when he says, "...you're in command; you're certainly [not] in charge?"
- How does Brian Thacker's statement "You have to keep reacting and doing and moving" reflect commitment? How can you react and keep moving in your life?
- According to Brian Thacker, what is the most important advice that he offered? How does this advice illustrate a powerful way to demonstrate commitment? How can this advice help in your life?

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of commitment and other values they noticed in the video.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Brian Thacker's most important piece of advice that he offered in this video is the power in committing to say "thank you" to those who have seen you through tough times. Have students think of individuals who have offered support for them. Encourage students to create a commitment to say "thank you" throughout the week or the month to those who offer their help, support, or friendship. Students can create a list of either people to thank each day or situations where they may not always think to thank someone else. Examples could include bus drivers, cafeteria workers, crossing guards, coaches, teachers, friends, or someone who opens a door for them.

LESSON 5

"BARNEY"
BARNUM, JR.
Vietnam War

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

Raise Your Hand

Students will:

- understand that fostering a sense of courage begins with knowing yourself and acting upon something that may seem difficult
- demonstrate courage by developing personal goals and asking for guidance to attain those goals

Core Value Focus: Courage

Introductory Activity:

Ask students to share their experiences of actively thanking others. Were there any times when they realized how much people depend on one another? Share a moment of thanks that you as an adult gave today, and ask students if there were any examples from today when they thanked someone.

Explain to students that you will be discussing courage today. Lead a short discussion about the term courage. Students can brainstorm examples of courage either in their life or some examples that they can relate to others. Often, people equate courage with battles, athletics, or a feat of physical heroism. Challenge students to think of courageous instances outside of physical actions.

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *Raise Your Hand*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Barney Barnum. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers.

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a short response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Keeping the word courage in mind, what do you believe Barney Barnum means when he says, "Take the word 'failure' out of your vocabulary"?
- In offering his advice, Barney Barnum states "...never say it's too hard. Never say I can't." Why does it take personal courage to take his advice and act upon it in your life?
- When discussing the concept of failure, Barney Barnum says that if you try something and it doesn't work, you should raise your hand to get some guidance. How does asking for advice reflect personal courage?

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of courage and other values they noticed in the video.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Barney Barnum's most important piece of advice in this video is the humility and courage to set personal goals and ask for help. Ask students to reflect on something they would love to achieve in the very near future (examples can include raising a grade, making a team, starting a new project or hobby). Using Barney Barnum's advice, have students set a goal with an "I can" mentality. Guide them to think of people who they can ask for help in achieving this goal—a coach, family member, teacher, or friend. Ask students to monitor their progress on their goal and remind them that if something doesn't work, "raise your hand."

LESSON 6

RONALD
SHURER, II
War on Terrorism

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

Find a Way to Serve

Students will:

- explain how service and leadership require personal sacrifices
- analyze ways in which service and sacrifice benefit not only local communities, but the greater global community

Core Value Focus: Sacrifice

Introductory Activity:

Have students provide an update on the goal setting assignment from the last lesson. Ask students if they found it difficult to ask for help. Share a goal you may have set as an adult and how you achieved it.

Explain to students that you will be discussing sacrifice today. Lead a short discussion with students about the term sacrifice. Often, sacrifice is related to big actions, but guide students to think of smaller sacrifices such as time, a possession, or food. Challenge students to think of times when sacrifice was only a minor “inconvenience” rather than a grand action.

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *Find a Way to Serve*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Ron Shurer. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers.

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a one-paragraph response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Ron Shurer offers powerful advice when he states, “find a way to serve something that’s greater than yourself.” What does he mean by something greater than yourself? How does this service require sacrifice for someone who serves their community?
- Ron Shurer says that service to others can “set you up for the rest of your life.” What do you think he meant by that? How can serving and sacrificing for others improve your own life?
- Sometimes to help truly help others, we have to rethink our view of the world and those around us. Ron Shurer says, “you [should] take a step back from yourself and see the whole world.” How can you “step back from yourself?” How does opening your mind connect with sacrifice?

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of sacrifice and other values they noticed in the video.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Ron Shurer’s message to you is to find a way to serve. By serving, you will have to sacrifice something—your time, your energy, possibly giving up something you want to do. Ron Shurer stated that, no matter how small the act, you’ll find a lot of value in serving, and it will set you up for the rest of your life. Following his advice, find one way to help a student or teacher within your school. Keep track of what you had to sacrifice in order to serve. This will help you actively make sacrifices when weighing the value of service over personal wants.

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

Do the Best You Can

Students will:

- evaluate the fundamental characteristics of citizenship and how it relates to the treatment of others
- analyze the concept of communication, and demonstrate how civil communication among citizens can help to solve problems in their communities as well as the nation

Core Value Focus: Citizenship**Introductory Activity:**

Have students share how they served from the last lesson. Ask students if they had to sacrifice anything in order to serve—no matter how small. You may share, as an adult, the small acts you do to serve others.

Explain to students that you will be discussing citizenship today. Lead a short discussion with students about the term citizenship. Provide or ask students to provide examples of citizenship. Challenge students to think of how citizenship presents more opportunities than just rights and voting. What types of groups are they citizens of?

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *Do the Best You Can*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Jay Vargas. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers.

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a short response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Jay Vargas charges young Americans to “Accept the challenge to assist each other and our nation to try to solve some of [the] problems...that our nation is suffering [from] today.” Identify two problems facing our nation today, and offer solutions to these problems.
- When Jay Vargas speaks about solving problems, he says, “Start to communicate...you can learn a lot by communicating eyeball to eyeball.” What does he mean by this? Today, we often use forms of written communication (text, email, instant messages, social media) more frequently than face-to-face communication. What are some advantages to communicating face-to-face when trying to problem solve?
- Jay Vargas notes that “too many people don’t believe in themselves. They give up too easily. Get up, keep going, and never give up.” As a member of your community, explain how his advice to “do the best you can” would benefit others.

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of citizenship and other values they noticed in the video.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Jay Vargas charges all Americans to try to help solve some of the problems that our nation is facing. As a member of your community, find a problem that your school or town is currently facing and help address that issue. Examples can include collecting non-perishable food for a local food bank, organizing a monthly litter clean up group, or participating in a voter registration drive.

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

Make a Different Decision

Students will:

- analyze the decision-making process, and explain how integrity helps to guide better decision-making
- evaluate how to utilize decision-making skills to determine what is important in their lives

Core Value Focus: Integrity

Introductory Activity:

Have students share an update on their community service project from the last lesson. Ask students to actively think about any of the other core values besides citizenship they used in order to better their community. You may share, as an adult, ways that you help address community issues.

Explain to students that you will be discussing integrity today. Lead a short discussion with students to review the term integrity. They may recall Gary Littrell's advice or any other Recipient's advice from a previous lesson. Challenge students to share how they have demonstrated and developed integrity in their decision-making since the first lesson.

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *Make a Different Decision*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Robert Modrzejewski. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers.

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a short response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Modrzejewski offers advice to “get as much education as you possibly can. The more education that you have, the greater options that you have later in life.” Explain how education (technical school, job training, reading or researching, college, etc.) leads to better decision-making. What options does education provide for you later in life?
- Modrzejewski speaks about some of his own failures and offers advice to others. Regarding decisions, he states that “sometimes you have to make a different decision from the one you originally made.” Think of a decision that you have made that you later realized was the wrong decision. Did you change your decision? Why can it be difficult to admit that you made the wrong decision? What are some of the challenges that arise when you change your decision?
- Modrzejewski noted, “Every day is going to have its test.” How can possessing integrity help you to accept the challenge of each day's test? Can you think of how you have been tested today? How can you decide to respond to the challenge you have faced today?

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of integrity and other values they noted in the video.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Robert Modrzejewski advised us to “Try to do the right thing whenever possible.” In between now and the next lesson, pay attention to a decision made by a character you are familiar with—from a movie, a tv show, or a book you are reading. Analyze their decision(s). Did they make the right decision? Did they have to reverse their original decision? How did integrity play a role in their final decision/action? Were there consequences?

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

Your Name Is the Most Precious Possession You Have

Students will:

- describe how integrity, sacrifice, courage, and commitment are a basis for patriotism
- analyze how appreciation for the United States leads to improving our nation

Core Value Focus: Patriotism

Introductory Activity:

Referring to the last lesson, ask students to share their observations from a character or individual who demonstrated integrity in decision-making. You may share an observation that you noticed as an adult.

Explain to students that you will be discussing patriotism today. Lead a short discussion with students about the term patriotism. In discussion, emphasize the difference between patriotism and nationalism.

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *Your Name is the Most Precious Possession You Have*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Woody Williams. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers.

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a short response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Woody Williams states that we must “maintain our character. We have to do things to demonstrate that our character is important to us, and one of the most important facets of our life.” How can you better demonstrate that your character is important to you?
- Woody Williams states, “circumstances change your life. All of us have circumstances that happen in our lives that we have absolutely, at the moment, no control of. It’s what we do as a result of that circumstance that is the most important thing.” What circumstances do you face over which you have no control? How do you plan on using your circumstances to make better decisions? When you are older, how do you think you will reflect on these circumstances?
- Woody Williams made a powerful observation: “In just a few years, this country is going to be in your charge. The future is going to be in your hands.” What are some actions that you can take today to help shape the future of our nation?

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of patriotism and other values they noticed in the video.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Woody Williams stated that your name is the “most precious possession you have.” He also advised us to “...be appreciative of who we are, what we have, and what others have done to give us what we have today in America.” For next time, reflect upon your name. Research what your name means. Is there any history behind it? As you research the meaning(s) behind your name, reflect upon what you want people (family, friends, etc.) to think when they hear your name.

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

Have a Conversation

Students will:

- understand how courage allows the ability to have difficult conversations to address personal challenges
- demonstrate courage to have a conversation to explore speaking and listening skills

Core Value Focus: Courage**Introductory Activity:**

Referring to the last lesson, have students share their name meanings. Ask students if they learned anything about their name's significance. What do students want people to think when their name is heard?

Explain to students that you will be discussing courage today. Lead a short discussion about what personal courage means. How does it extend beyond physical courage?

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *Have a Conversation*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Florent Groberg. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers.

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a short response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Florent Groberg offers powerful advice when he states, "When you're struggling, when you're finding yourself in a tough spot, a dark hole, the best thing that you can do for yourself is to open up. Let those feelings come out." Is there a time in your life that you've felt you were in a tough spot? Who can you open up to? How can you find the courage to reach out for help?
- In offering his advice, Florent Groberg states when opening up to others, "Let them hear you. Do the talking. And then listen." In conversations, some people listen while others only wait to talk. Think about your last conversation-did you listen, or wait to talk? Do you think it takes courage to participate in a genuine conversation?
- Florent Groberg encouraged you to "Appreciate the moment. Appreciate the people around you." Why do you think he strongly encouraged you to appreciate this? Do you live in the moment? How do you actively show appreciation for those around you?

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of courage and other values they noticed in the video.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Florent Groberg stated, "In every conversation you have an opportunity to learn something that will have an impact on your life." Demonstrate the courage to start a conversation. Talk to someone you don't know well, or reach out to a friend, and check in on them. Ask questions like "How are you doing? Are you going through anything you want to talk about?" For next time, be prepared to share something you learned by courageously starting a conversation and actively listening as you converse.

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

You Have to Decide: What Is the Right Thing to Do?

Students will:

- explain how sacrifice leads to understanding what it means to truly live
- demonstrate courage and sacrifice to step out of their comfort zone to help others

Core Value Focus: Sacrifice

Introductory Activity:

Have students share what they learned from conversations they had following the prior lesson. Remind students that personal or confidential conversations should remain as such. Ask students about the challenges of starting a conversation, and how they used courage to have a conversation.

Explain to students that you will be discussing sacrifice today. Lead a short discussion to recall what personal sacrifice means.

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *You Have to Decide: What is the Right Thing to Do?* featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Gary Beikirch. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers.

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a short response to one or several of the following prompts.

- Gary Beikirch offers powerful advice when he states, “You don’t have to wear a uniform to be fighting...the battle is first fought and it’s won or lost in our hearts and our minds.” What does he mean by this? How can you win battles in your mind and in your heart? What might you have to sacrifice to win them?
- In offering his advice about life, Gary Beikirch states, “If you want to really live, start...by...learning what it means to deny yourself [of something] to be able to help somebody else.” When thinking about sacrifice and service, how does this mindset allow you to “really live?”
- Gary Beikirch offers that there is a “difference between success and significance.” He adds that you need to “realize that you have a purpose.” Which do you think is more important to your life—success or significance? How can this thinking help you to realize your purpose?

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask students what examples of sacrifice and other values they noticed in the video.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

Gary Beikirch stated, “If you’re able to step outside of your comfort zone, you will have a meaning to life that those who are protected, those who stay in their comfort zone, those who want to stay safe—they’ll never know.” For next time, make an active choice to step outside of your comfort zone. It can be sitting with new people at lunch, joining a new club, team, or organization, or beginning a new hobby. Be prepared to be uncomfortable, but be prepared to really live.

Dear YOUNG AMERICAN

Look to Your Left and to Your Right

Students will:

- analyze how working to improve every day reflects values that will help others also improve
- explain how to utilize the six core values daily to improve themselves, their community, and their nation

Introductory Activity:

Have students share how they stepped out of their comfort zones from the last lesson. Ask students to reflect on how they felt before and how they feel now. Ask how they can continue to stretch their comfort zones in the future.

Explain to students that this lesson will pull together all six of the Medal of Honor values.

Whole Group Activity:

Watch the Dear Young American video *Look to Your Left and to Your Right*, featuring Medal of Honor Recipient Leroy Petry. Ask students to make notes of observations or any advice that he offers.

Individual Activity:

Following the video, have each student write a response to one or several of the following prompts.

- In offering his advice, Leroy Petry admits that “I was that person struggling at a point in my life. If it wasn’t for others around me, I may have never gotten out.” How does this quote explain Leroy Petry’s perspective on life? What can you do to make sure that others know they can depend on you when they need help? What can you do if you are the one who needs help?
- When reflecting on his life experience so far, Leroy Petry says, “I wake up in the morning, and I know I’m blessed with the opportunity to better myself and others around me every single day.” What value does this quote represent to you? How can you better those around you in your daily life?
- Leroy Petry offers meaningful life advice when he states, “Every day you think you’re having a hard time, look to your left and to your right. There’s going to be somebody that’s having it harder than you are.” Paying attention to those around you and their struggles can help you feel less alone and can also help you identify ways to help others. Think of someone you know who might be struggling with something, and list ways you could help ease their difficulties.

Whole Group Activity:

Have students share their responses. Ask what core values they saw represented in Leroy Petry’s advice.

For Next Time: Ask students to demonstrate what they learned from the lesson

You have experienced the stories of ten of the most courageous and committed individuals who have served in the United States Armed Forces. Each of these men provided invaluable advice for some of life’s most difficult challenges. Armed with their advice, think about the six core values each of these stories exemplified. Of the six core values, which one do you believe is your strength? In which value do you believe you need more growth? Share your responses with the class. Remember the advice given by Leroy Petry: “Take advantage of your time and make it count.”