

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.