

A Year of Generosity – July – Be Generous in.... “Honoring Others”

This month’s theme came to us first because July helps us to honor the birth of our country on the 4th of July. We will start this month off with a celebration in a worship service on Sunday July 4th. There will be American Flags for people to take home, a treat (with American Flags), and lots of patriotic songs. Wear something red, white, and blue and join us. We will also be honoring Pastor Orv Osmundson for helping us get through weeks of transition.

As part of honoring our country, two students from the Open Door School shared their story about becoming an American citizen. I am including them below.

Introduction, by Patrick Smith, Coordinator Open Door Learning Center

Becoming a U.S. citizen through naturalization is an experience (or a goal) that many students at the Open Door Learning Center at Arlington Hills share in common. In addition to waiting almost five years before they can apply, citizen-hopefuls must prepare for an oral interview in which the interviewer can ask any of 100 questions related to U.S. government and history, such as “What is the economic system in the U.S. (capitalist or market economy)” and “When was the constitution written? (1787)”. For students who are still trying to master the English language, this can be particularly challenging. Open Door offers citizenship classes and tutoring to help people reach their dream of becoming a U.S. citizen. Two Open Door students wrote about their experiences becoming U.S. citizens.

I moved to the U.S. in October 2003. The reason why I came here was because I got married.

When I started living in the U.S., I wanted to do three things: go to school, become a U.S citizen, and get my driver’s license. The first time I saw the 100 citizenship questions, it made me nervous and scared. When I started, the questions were very difficult. I had to remember the questions and the answers all together.

After I got my citizenship, I felt like a new person and I felt like I was in the American dream.”

-Zong Xiong

I came from a Thailand refugee camp. I moved to the U.S. in 2013. I came here hoping to have a better life with my family. When I lived there, I heard a lot of people talk about the opportunities here. People talked about how you can study after you have a kid, and your kids will receive a free education until they graduate from high school. When I heard people talk about that, I decided to move to the U.S so that me and my family will have those opportunities.

When I moved here, I heard people talk about how you can become a U.S. citizen. I asked them when should I apply to become a citizen, and they answered me that you can apply for it when you have been a resident for four years and eight months. I wanted to become a U.S. citizen because I wanted to be adopted by the U.S. so that I can be free here for the rest of my life.

It was not difficult to apply to get U.S. citizenship because I had people who helped me through the whole process. Teachers helped me to practice questions and answers. They helped me how to prepare for the interview. I watched the video about how to keep your eyes in contact while you're interviewing.

There are 100 U.S. civics questions. The interviewer can ask up to 10 questions, but she stopped after I answered just six correctly. I think the questions were difficult, such as “What year did the Europeans come to the U.S.?” It was very difficult when the questions were like “how many”, “what year” or the name of the president and vice president, but luckily, she didn't ask me many questions. While I took the test, I was very nervous, but the interviewer was a very kind person so it made me feel much calmer.

On May 23, 2019, I became a U.S citizen. It was the most exciting moment in life for me. I felt like I was on another level, I felt like the U.S. is my country. Now I can go visit other countries and go visit my birth country because I am a U.S. citizen now. I mean, you can travel before becoming a citizen but if you do, sometimes it can take you longer to become a citizen.

There are responsibilities when you're a citizen. When you are a U.S. citizen, you have the ability to vote and you can serve the country. The day I became a citizen, I took the oath that I will serve the country when they need me.

-Naw Ni

What great stories!

Please think of more ways of “honoring others”. Read through the scripture readings that we have included on the chart. **Honor your mother and father**. For many of us they are no longer with us, so how can we still honor them. I think this is a part of how we model what they taught us, what we have passed on to our children or friends, when we can still see or hear them in things around us. Those little reminders of where we came from.

We can **honor our friends**, we can celebrate with them in their joys and support them in their sorrows, to be there for them. Honor them by listening for ways that we can help them. **Honor our military and medical professionals** who serve this country and our nation. And honor those who care for the sick and lonely.

As a final note – August will be a month of Sharing – We will be looking for school supplies for the Open Door program in our church and surrounding schools. Start watching for the ads now for sales that will be happening soon!

Here is our chart for July.

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| Month | July |
| Theme | Be Generous in.... <i>Honoring Others</i> |
| Bible Verses | Romans 12: 10-11 ¹⁰ Love each other with brotherly affection and take delight in honoring each other. ¹¹ Never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically. John 12:26; John 12:26(R.S.V.); Exodus 20:12; John 5:23; Philippians 1:20; Proverbs 18:12; Proverbs 15:33; Revelations 4:11; Proverbs 14:31; 1Timothy 1:17; Revelations 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:14-26; 2 Corinthians 8:21; and Philippians 4:8; Matthew 19:19 |
| Benefactor | Others |
| Project | Fourth of July Celebration – Honoring our Country |
| Song/Hymn | LBW – 242 Let the Whole Creation Cry; LBW 252 – You Servants of God |
| <i>Small things we can do to show....Honoring Others</i> | |
| Thank people for their military service, medical service, caring for others; Place a flower at your parents’ gravesite; Honor someone by buying them lunch or a coffee. Just say thank you! | |
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Here is our song for the month of July –

You Servants of God (LBW 252)

You servants of God, your master proclaim, And publish abroad his wonderful name.
The name, all victorious, of Jesus extol’ His kingdom is glorious and rules over all.

Our God rules on high, almighty to save; And still he is nigh, his presence we have.
The great congregation his triumph shall sing, Ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

Salvation to God who sits on the throne! Let all cry aloud and honor the Son.
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim, Fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore and give him his right, All glory and power and wisdom and might
All honor and blessing with angels above, And thanks never ceasing and infinite love!