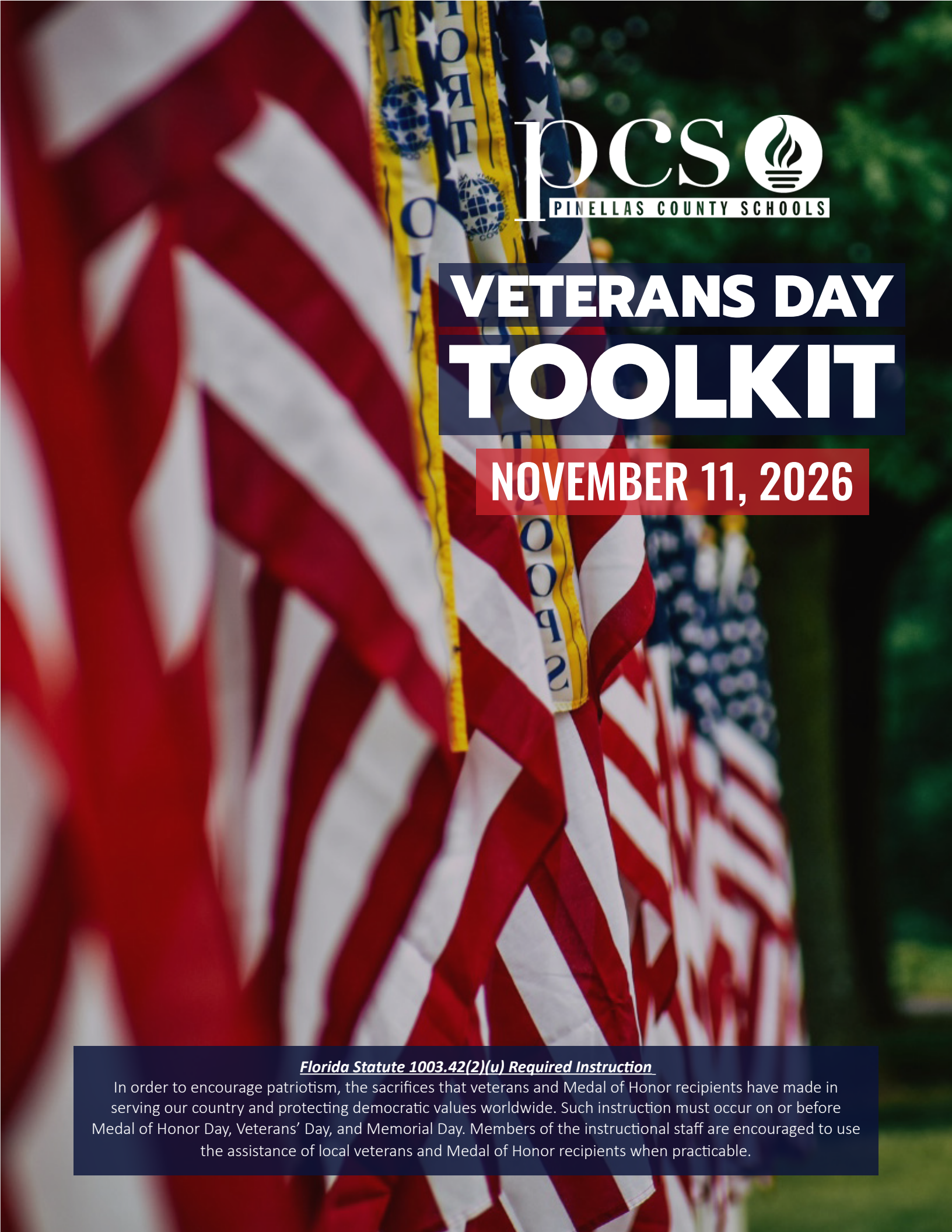


PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

VETERANS DAY TOOLKIT

NOVEMBER 11, 2026

Florida Statute 1003.42(2)(u) Required Instruction

In order to encourage patriotism, the sacrifices that veterans and Medal of Honor recipients have made in serving our country and protecting democratic values worldwide. Such instruction must occur on or before Medal of Honor Day, Veterans' Day, and Memorial Day. Members of the instructional staff are encouraged to use the assistance of local veterans and Medal of Honor recipients when practicable.

Pinellas County Schools recognizes and celebrates the contributions of our veterans. This toolkit was created to support schools (and teachers) by providing sample activities, ideas, and resources that they can use to celebrate and honor our veterans on Veterans Day.



2026 VETERANS DAY THEME

The theme for Veterans Day 2026 is “Veterans Helping Veterans and Their Families" recognizes the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, bringing together the enduring symbols of our Nation’s history with the continued legacy of military service.

SAMPLE SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENT

School announcements are a great way to share information about Veterans Day and the important role that veterans play in our society. Below are some sample school announcements.

It is recommended that during the morning announcement you recognize by name and military branch, the members of your school’s staff who are veterans.

Elementary:
Today is a special day in our country, today is Veteran’s Day. It is a day for all Americans to take time and be thankful for the men and women who serve in our military forces. Our military forces are the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Space Force. Men and women who serve in our military are called veterans. You might have someone in your family or a close friend of your family who is a veteran, but veterans aren’t just family and friends, they are everywhere! They don’t always wear their uniforms, but they made sacrifices in their life to serve and protect our country-and for that we are grateful. Maybe one day you might join the military and then you will be a veteran, too!

Secondary:
Today we recognize and celebrate Veterans Day which began as ‘Armistice Day’ on November 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the end of World War I. It is a day for all Americans to take time and be thankful for the men and women who serve in our military forces. The military men and women who serve and protect the United States in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Space Force come from all walks of life. They are parents, children, grandparents, friends, neighbors and coworkers, and are an important part of our community. Veterans Day is a special opportunity for each of us to give thanks and honor the bravery and sacrifice of all United States Veterans – living and deceased.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

The following are some sample activities that will make this Veterans Day memorable for both students and guests.

All Grade Levels

- Plan a school assembly to be held on Veterans Day and invite local veterans to honor. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs annually publishes a teacher guide that can provide considerations to make when planning a school assembly. https://department.va.gov/veterans-day/
- Photograph wall: Ask students and teachers to bring in a photograph of any family members who are Veterans and display them. Include the veteran’s service record, name, and the student or teacher’s name. Students and teachers who have difficulty obtaining a photograph could share a brief story and service record.
- Create a slideshow presentation with the names of veterans that students/staff share through a Microsoft Form. The names entered in the Form can be copied into the slideshow by downloading the Form results as an Excel document

and “copy and paste” into the sildeshow. Add slides as needed, limit 15 entries per slide and increase the font size for readability. On Veterans Day, the slideshow can be run on a loop through the school’s closed video system and/or in the cafeteria during lunches.

★ *Honor Flight West Central Florida*

- “Mail Call”: Mail call is an important part of each Honor Flight Mission. It’s easy to let our heroes know you appreciate them and all they have done for our country. Show your love and gratitude by creating a thank you card or writing a letter or notes for our Veterans. Cards and letters can be mailed to Honor Flight West Central Florida, P.O. Box 55661, St. Petersburg, FL 33732
    - Watch a video clip on “Mail Call” from the Honor Flight movie: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wty1-U3ieak (2:48min)
    - Honor Flight of West Central Florida website link: https://www.honorflightwcf.org/

★ Hold a Veterans Day poster contest or create a collaborative school flag art project. See sample directions included in this toolkit for elementary and secondary project ideas. *(See Appendix A)*

★ Conduct a performance of the National Anthem or include the singing or playing of various patriotic songs throughout the day. Sample suggestions for elementary, middle, and high schools are included in this toolkit. *(See Appendix B)*

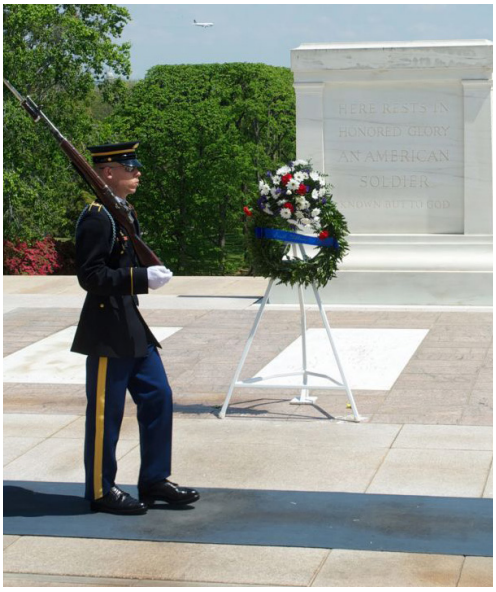
Elementary Level

★ *National Constitution Center (See Appendix C)*

- American Flag Pinwheels (K-12): https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/American_Flag_Pinwheels.pdf
- Patriotic Wreaths (K-12): https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/American_Wreaths.pdf

★ *Medal of Honor Character Development Program* (Free but must create an account to access lessons and resources) *(See Appendix D)*

- Sacrifice Your Scales (K): https://www.cmohs.org/lessons/elementary/sacrifice-your-scales (The lesson includes the use of an additional book but can be modified to work without the text)
- Flag Etiquette (3): https://www.cmohs.org/lessons/elementary/flag-etiquette (The lesson includes the use of an additional book but can be modified to work without the text)
- Exploring the Six Core Values (3-6): https://www.cmohs.org/lessons/elementary/exploring-the-six-core-values





Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Secondary Level

★ *Medal of Honor Character Development Program* (Free but must create an account to access lessons and resources) *(See Appendix D)*

- Exploring the Six Core Values (3-6): https://www.cmohs.org/lessons/elementary/exploring-the-six-core-values
- Symbolism and the Medal of Honor (6-12): https://www.cmohs.org/lessons/secondary/symbolism-and-the-medal-of-honor
- Portrait of a Service Member (6-12): https://www.cmohs.org/lessons/secondary/portrait-of-a-service-member (includes connecting to a local military branch, VFW, or American Legion to find a veteran or an active duty service member who is willing to visit the classroom)

PINELLAS VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS

★ American Legion
Find a post near you: https://www.floridalegion.org/resources/post-locator/

★ Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
Find a post near you: https://www.vfw.org/find-a-post

GENERAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT OBSERVANCE OF VETERANS DAY

★ U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Veterans Day page: https://department.va.gov/veterans-day/

★ Library of Congress Veterans History Project: https://www.loc.gov/vets/

★ Arlington National Cemetery: https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/#!/

★ Military Women's Memorial: https://womensmemorial.org/

★ Infographic: How to Display the American Flag: https://www.usa.gov/flag

★ Facts about the United States Flag: https://www.si.edu/spotlight/flag-day/flag-facts

★ Honor Flight West Central Florida: https://www.honorflightwcf.org/

To share your Veterans Day activities, email news@pcsb.org

LOOKING BACK TO PREVIOUS YEARS

Veterans Day has become an important annual effort in Pinellas County Schools to recognize and celebrate the contributions of veterans. Check out these activities, assemblies and presentations from schools around the district to inspire you to think outside of the box!

Veterans Day celebration at Lake St. George Elementary



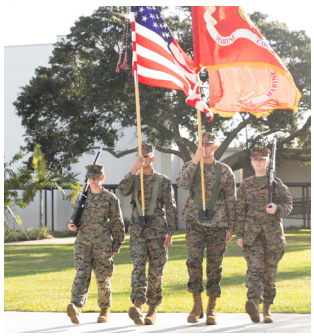





Veteran's Day Event at Palm Harbor Middle



Veterans Day Celebration at Clearwater High School





To share your Veterans Day activities, email news@pcsb.org



VETERANS DAY APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

VETERANS DAY SCHOOLWIDE ART PROJECTS

Elementary Level – Collaborative School Flag Project

1. Show students a video about the U.S. flag and veterans – such as "F is for Flag"
2. Have students draw with crayons, colored pencils, or markers (choose one media) on 8"x 8" white drawing paper either a family member who served in the military or a self-portrait. (If there is time, have students bring in a photo of someone who served as a visual reference.)
3. Have some students color their backgrounds in shades of blue & others make flag backgrounds.
4. Create a giant flag out of all the completed self-portraits (blue background portraits in the upper left-hand corner) and large red strips of bulletin board paper horizontally placed.
5. Display proudly on a large wall, the cafeteria, or a prominent place where school's Veterans Day ceremony occurs (see examples).





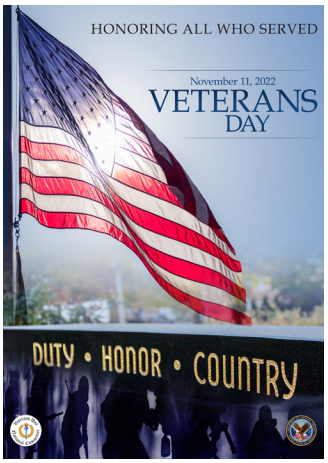
Secondary Level – Veterans Day Poster Contest

1. Show students several posters that have won the annual Veterans Day Poster Contest posted in the online gallery on the Veterans Affairs site: https://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/gallery.asp
2. Discuss why these posters may have won. What commonalities are found in the winning designs? What elements of art/principles of design are found in a successful poster?
3. Have students create sketches of their ideas for a poster and create an 8.5"x11" design for a poster using digital media or traditional media tools (see examples below).
4. Hold a schoolwide contest and ask a judge or two (someone with an art background/expertise) to decide the top three student designs.
5. Blow up the 1st place design to a large poster size (send PDF to Central Printing Services) and frame.
6. Have an unveiling of the 1st place framed poster at an awards recognition during the school's Veterans Day ceremony. Recognize the other two students with top designs.
7. Display the award-winning framed poster in the media center, cafeteria, display case, wall or another prominent place for a year.









APPENDIX B

PERFORMING ARTS VETERANS DAY SUGGESTIONS

Elementary School

Sing
- K-2: You're a Grand Old Flag, My Country 'tis of Thee
- 3-5: America the Beautiful, Star Spangled Banner

Play
- K-2: Yankee Doodle – play sticks on verse and drums on refrain
- 3-5: Play Orff arrangement of a selected patriotic song

Move
- March to Stars and Stripes Forever – Moving to steady beat
- Teach sign language to America the Beautiful

Middle School

Sing
- Free Like Me (3-pt mixed) https://www.jwpepper.com/Free-Like-Me/10996622.item#.YWbkEhDML9E

Play
- Marches of the Armed Forces https://www.jwpepper.com/Marches-of-the-Armed-Forces/2242881.item#.YWhoXUbMKWA

High School

Sing
- Blades of Grass and Purse White Stones (SATB) https://www.jwpepper.com/Blades-of-Grass-and-Pure-White-Stones/10062703.item#.YWbi0xDML9E
- We Remember (SAB or Two-Part) https://www.jwpepper.com/We-Remember/11163230.item#.YWbjExDML9E
- In Flanders Fields (several arrangements) https://www.jwpepper.com/In-Flanders-Fields/10866499.item#.YWbkmRDML9E

Play
- In Flanders Fields https://www.jwpepper.com/In-Flanders-Fields/11204825.item#.YWWREEbMKWA

APPENDIX C

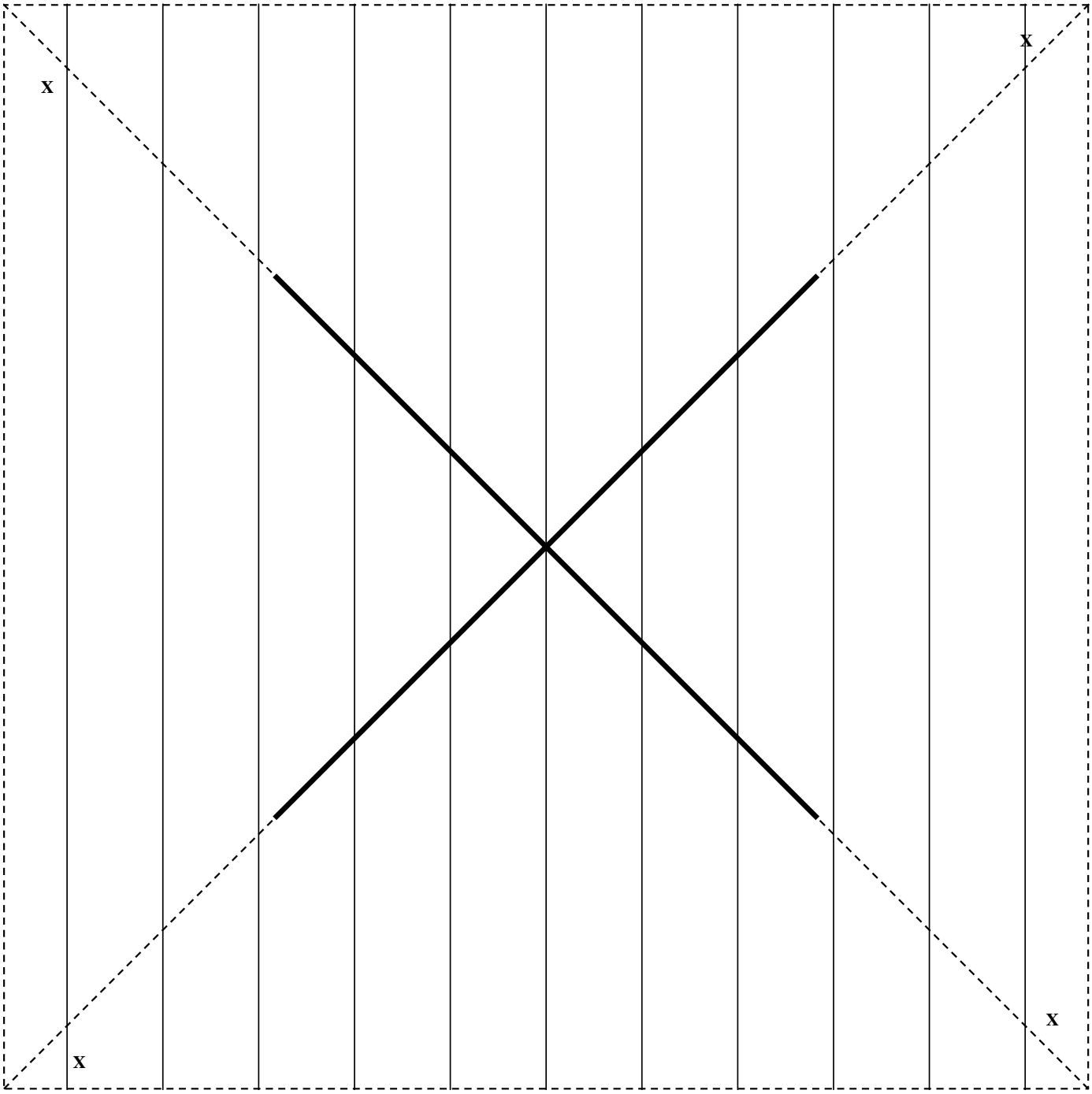
AMERICAN FLAG PINWHEELS (K-5)

Instructions:

- Use markers or crayons to color your pinwheel.
- For a traditional look: Page one—Color every other stripe red | Page two—Color background blue.
- Cut out along the dotted lines and place the two pieces back-to-back, with colored side out.
- Look for the small "X" at the points of pinwheel. Gently fold both pieces of paper over (create a soft fold, do not crease the paper) and bring the points to the "X" at the center of the pinwheel. Do not fold points without an "X".
- With the help of an adult, place a push pin through the center of the pinwheel, securing all the points in place.
- Attach the pinwheel to the top of a pencil by pushing the push pin through the eraser.

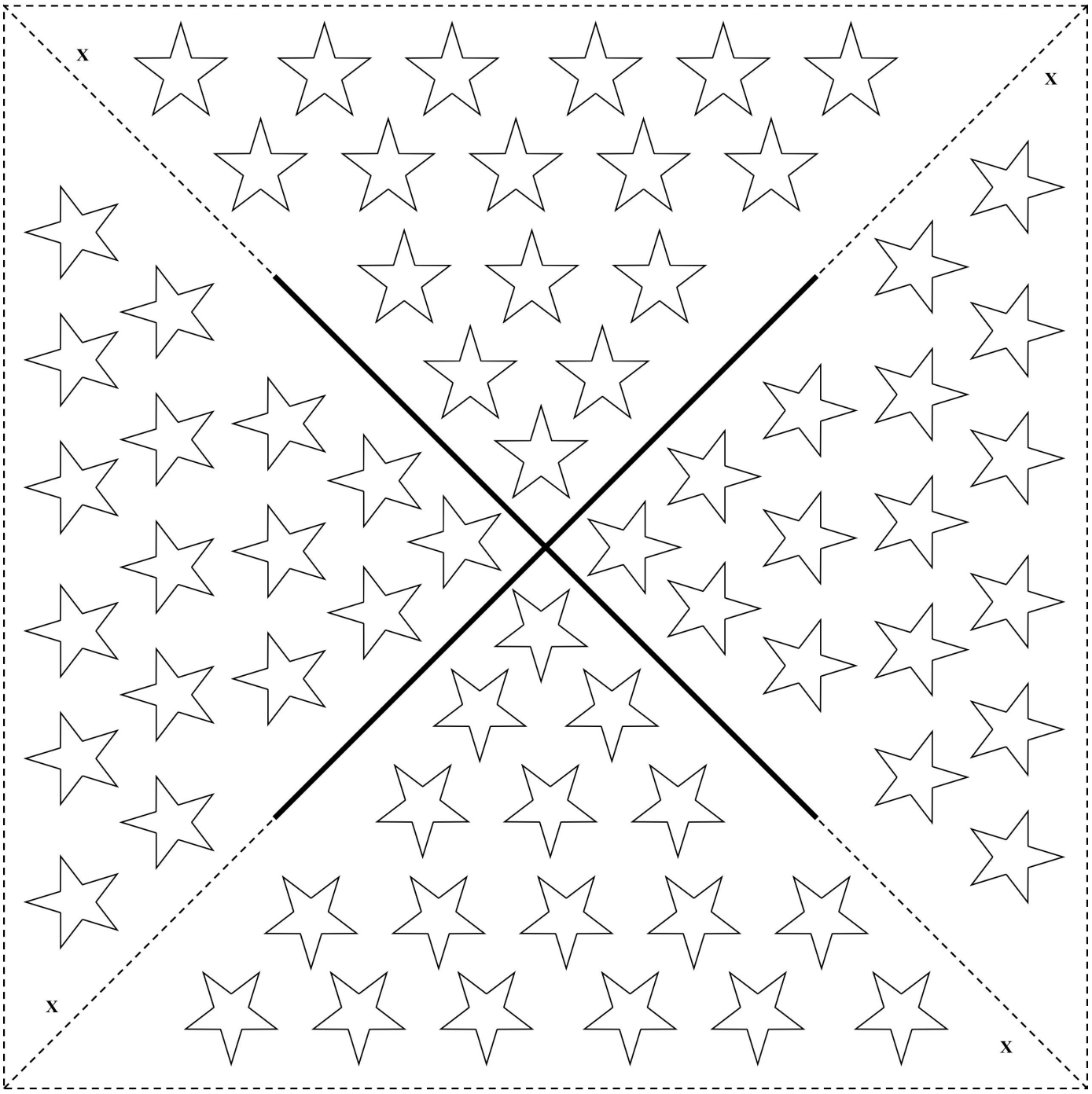
NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

American Flag Pinwheel | Side 1



APPENDIX C

American Flag Pinwheel | Side 2



NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

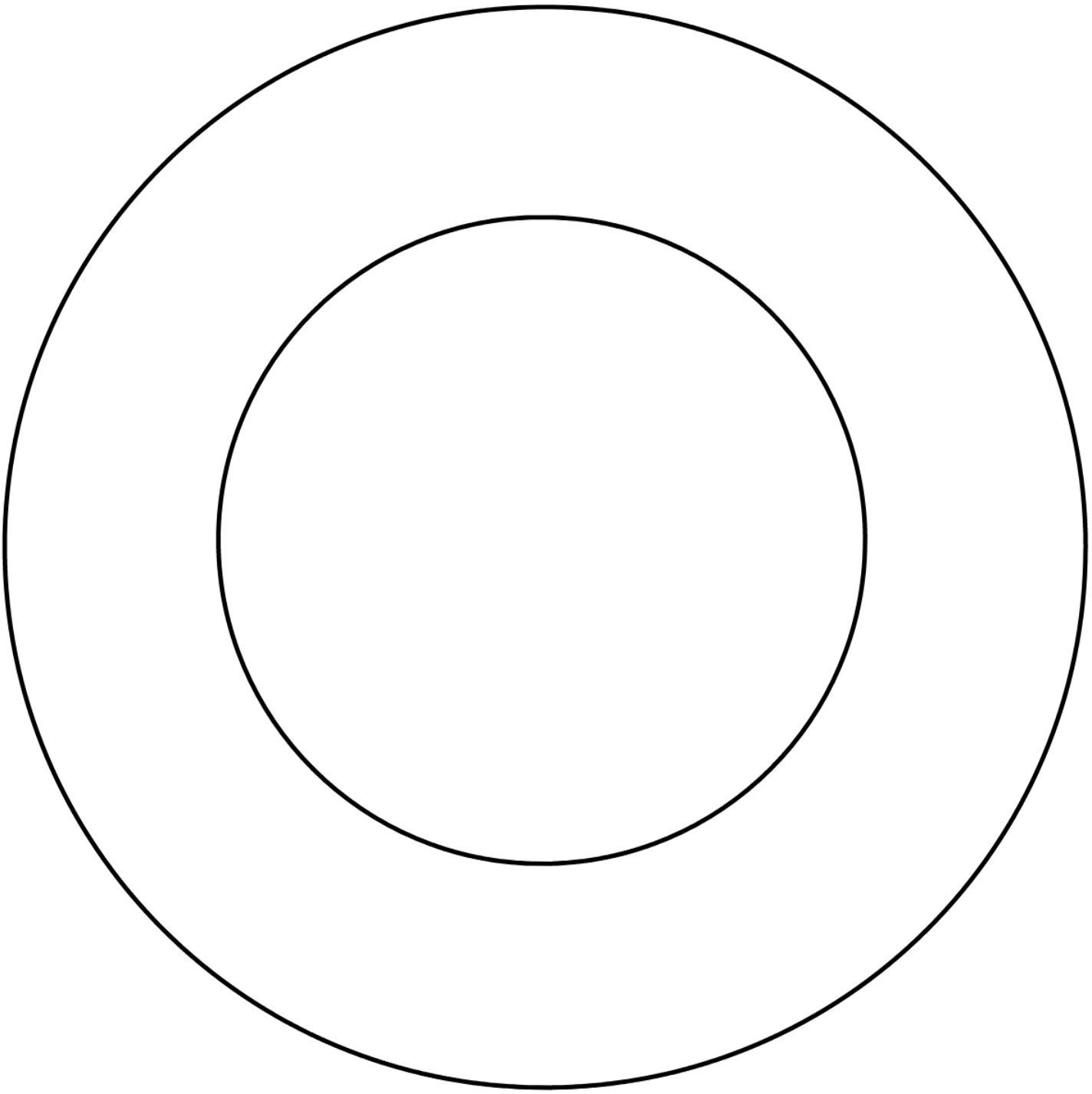
APPENDIX C

PATRIOTIC WREATHS (K-5)

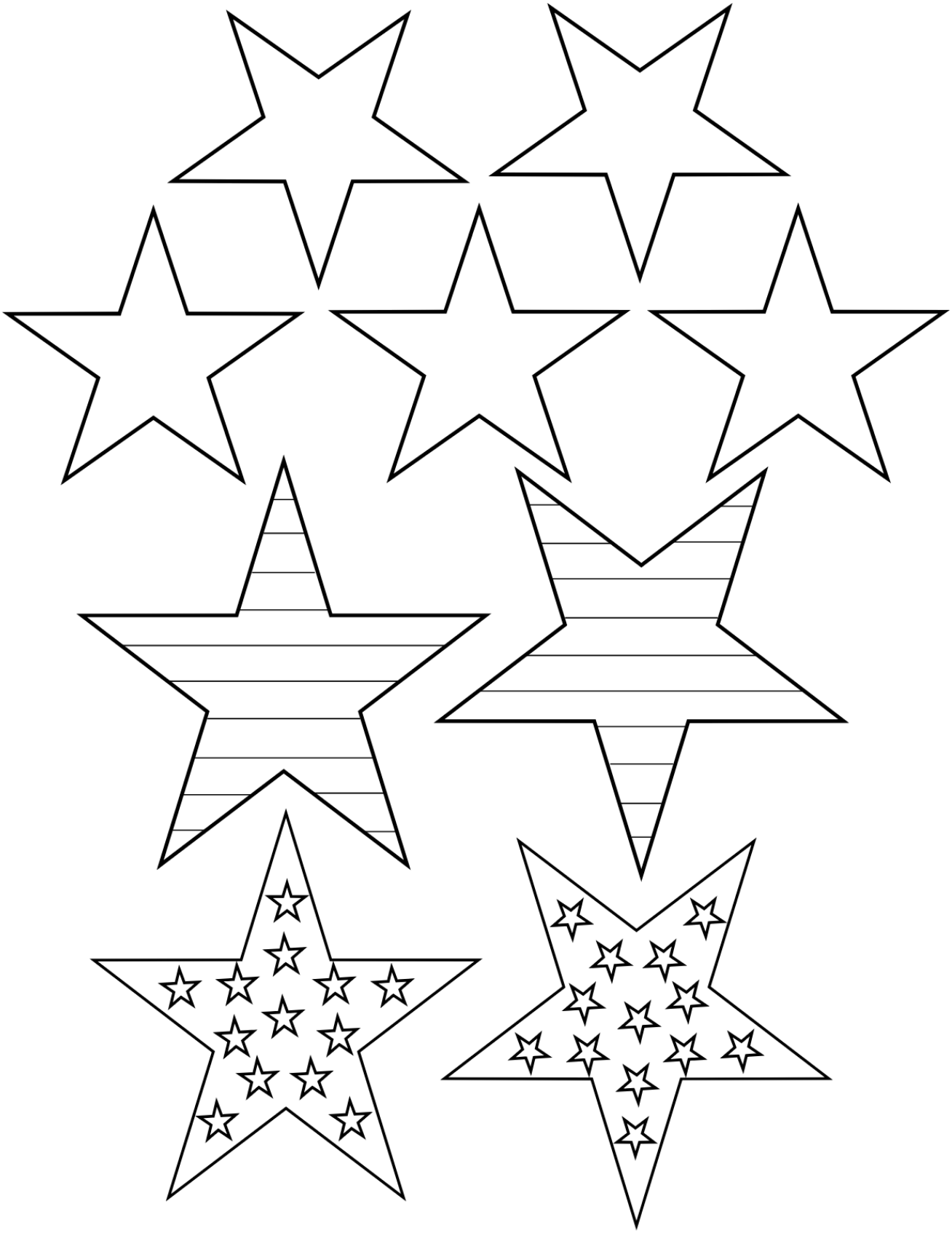
Instructions:

- Print all sheets on 11X17 card stock.
- Cut out the base for your wreath—on the bottom of this page.
- For the 4th of July, Flag Day, and other patriotic holidays, color the stars—for a traditional look, go with
- red, white and blue!
- For Memorial Day or Veterans Day, you could also use the poppies—usually colored red.
- Cut out your stars or poppies and with a glue stick, attach them to the wreath base.
- Using tape or glue, attach a loop of yarn or ribbon to the top of the wreath and display!

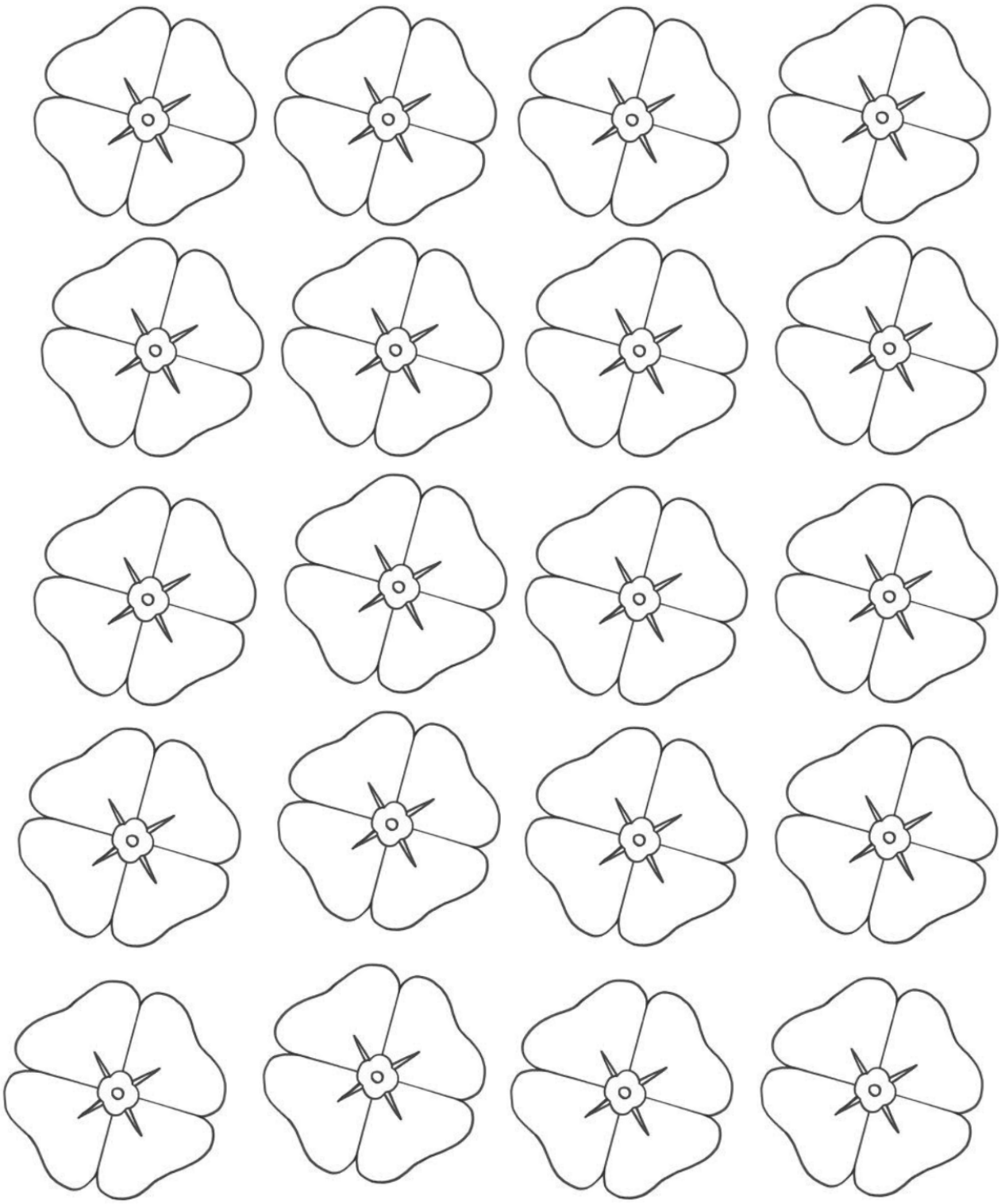
NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER



APPENDIX C



APPENDIX C



APPENDIX D

SACRIFICE YOUR SCALES (K)

Source: Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation Character Development Program

Students will:

- Deepen their understanding of sacrifice
- Create a rainbow fish art project representing sacrifice
- Reflect on and analyze their experiences of sacrificing

Materials Needed:

- The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister (Lesson could be modified to work without access to this text)
- Six colors of tissue paper in half sheets and one sheet of tinfoil (roughly 6" by 6")
- Rainbow Fish template
- Glue
- Crayons or paint and brushes
- Character Club Sacrifice video

Introductory Activity:
Explain to students that today's lesson will be about sacrifice. Read aloud The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister. Explain that students are going to get the chance to make their own rainbow fish.

Whole Group Activity:
Have each student pick one color of tissue paper or the foil and return to their seats with their chosen piece. Ask students if they will be able to make a rainbow fish all by themselves with just their own tissue paper. Ask them what they can do to make a beautiful rainbow fish like they saw in the book. Explain that they will need to walk around and ask their friends to sacrifice some of their tissue paper so they can gather all six colors and the foil for their fish project. They will also need to sacrifice their own paper to their friends. This activity can also be done in small groups with each group making one fish.

Let students walk around the room and gather small pieces or "scales" of all the colors while giving away pieces of their own.

Small Group/Individual Activity:
Hand out a copy of the fish template to each student or each group. Have students create their "rainbow fish" by gluing their collected "scales" onto the fish template. Students can then decorate the background of the template with paint, crayons, etc.

Whole Group Activity:
After the project is complete, ask students the following guiding questions:

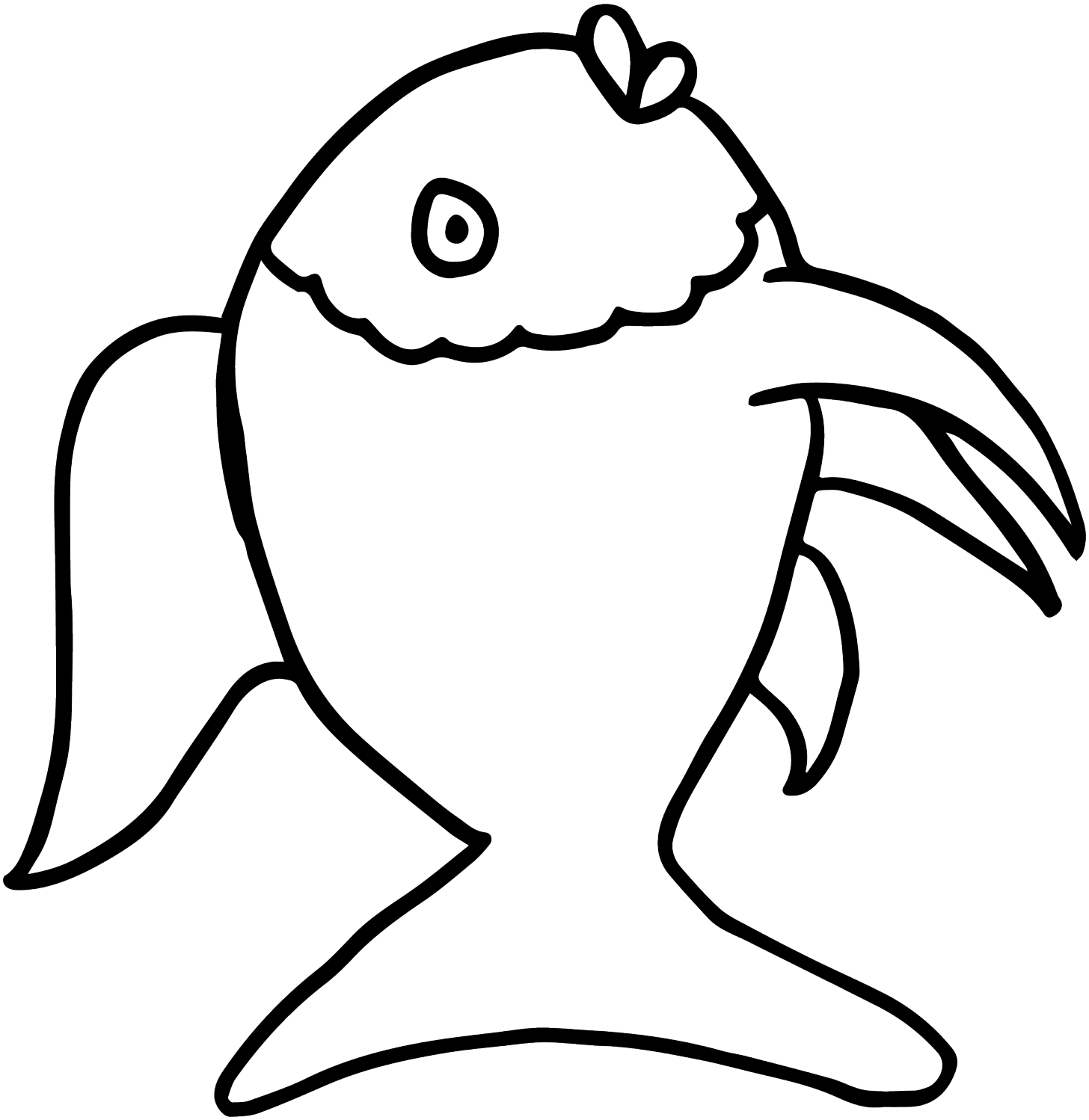
1. How did it feel to sacrifice and tear pieces of your special tissue paper?
2. Have you had to sacrifice something before? Explain.
3. Has someone sacrificed something for you?
4. How did sacrificing pieces of your tissue create something more colorful?
5. Do you think your art is better than it would have been if nobody was willing to make a sacrifice?
6. Praise students for their willingness to sacrifice while they completed the project.

Concluding Activity:
Show students the Character Club Sacrifice video and discuss how it relates to the Rainbow Fish story and the activity.

Assessment:
Discussion and observation, reflection on activity, student participation

Extended Activities:
Have students count the scales on their rainbow fish and write a sentence to add to their fish project. Create a class definition of sacrifice and make a collage of examples and images representing sacrifice.

APPENDIX D



APPENDIX D

FLAG ETIQUETTE (3)

Source: Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation Character Development Program

Students will:

- Recite the Pledge of Allegiance and understand the meaning
- Demonstrate flag etiquette

Materials Needed:

- The Pledge of Allegiance by Norman Pearl (Lesson could be modified to work without access to this text)
- Classroom flag

Introductory Activity:

Read aloud the poem "Red, White, and Blue" by Ann McCune:

"Red, White, and Blue"
The red of the rose,
The white of the snows,
The blue of the skies above, These colors three
Are the ones that we see
In the flag of the land that we love.

Have students share what they know about the flag.

Whole Group Activity:

Read aloud The Pledge of Allegiance by Norman Pearl. Discuss vocabulary from the book highlighting the words pledge, allegiance, Republic, indivisible, liberty, justice.

Discuss and practice flag etiquette:

1. Stand up straight.
2. Face the flag.
3. Take off your hat.
4. Place your right hand over your heart, left hand by your side.
5. Begin.

Create an anchor chart listing flag etiquette.

Small Group Activity:

Place students into small groups and have them practice reciting the Pledge of Allegiance using flag etiquette.

Concluding Activity:

Have students think about three things they learned about the Pledge of Allegiance. Have them either share with the class or write in their journals.

Assessment:

Participation, journal response

APPENDIX D

EXPLORING THE SIX CORE VALUES (3-6)

Source: Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation Character Development Program

Students will:

- Research, define, and interpret the six core values
- Use these definitions and interpretations in an informational essay

Materials Needed:

- Core Values Word Map worksheet
- Video of Citizen Honors awardee Myles Eckert

Introductory Activity (Optional):
Write or project the six core values of the program on the classroom board: courage, integrity, patriotism, citizenship, commitment, and sacrifice. Instruct students to write a journal entry about what they feel these words have in common and why they have been placed on the board.

Whole Group Activity (Optional):
Discuss journal entry responses and the purpose of the values.

Small Group Activity:
Divide students into groups of two to four. Assign each group one of the six core values. Give students copies of the word map or poster paper and these instructions for students to complete:

- TASK 1: Write the core value that your group has been assigned in the center box.
- TASK 2: As a group, define the core value in your own words.
- TASK 3: Identify a minimum of three synonyms for your group's core value.
- TASK 4: Identify a minimum of three antonyms for your group's core value.
- TASK 5: Leave the "Examples" box on the word map blank.

Check for understanding of vocabulary before moving on to the next activity.

Whole Group Activity:
As a class, watch the video about Citizen Honors awardee Myles Eckert. Have the students look for examples of their group's core value as they watch.

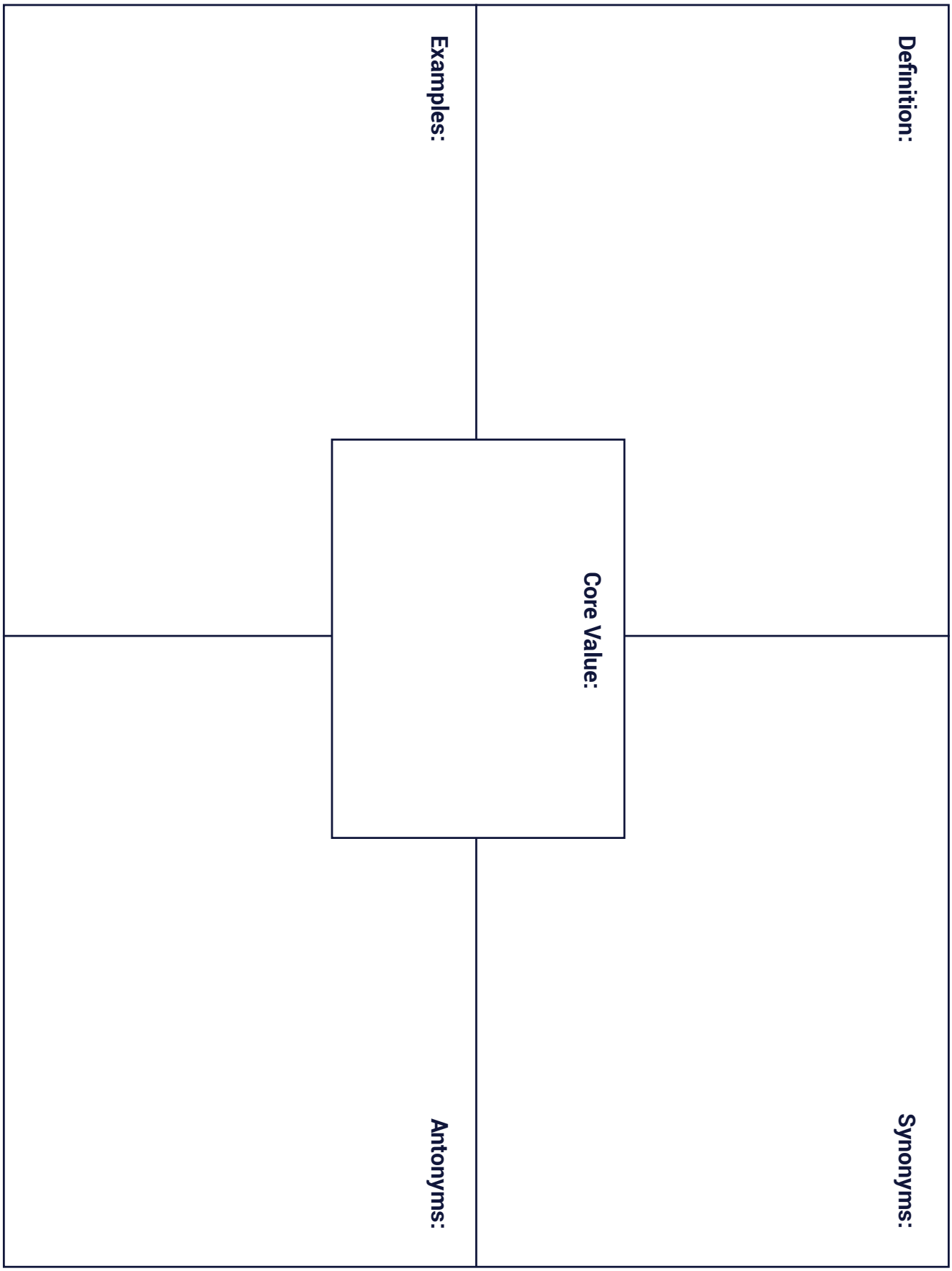
Small Group Activity:
After the video ends, reconvene the groups and have students write examples of their core value from the video in the final space on the word map. Additionally, they can go back and update their definition, synonyms, and antonyms, noting any edits with an asterisk.

Whole Group Activity:
Have individual groups present their core value definition, synonyms, antonyms, and examples to the class. Ask class members to compare and contrast the words and identify what they have in common. Discuss how the values are related to one another.

Concluding Activity:
Lead a discussion on the values and how they relate to the students' lives. Have students write an essay about someone who displays one of the values and how he or she displays that value. In their conclusion or as a separate assignment, have students write about how they can incorporate these values into their daily lives.

Assessment:
Discussion, poster, essay, presentations, and connections to real-life examples

APPENDIX D



APPENDIX D

SYMBOLISM AND THE MEDAL OF HONOR (6-12)

Source: Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation Character Development Program

Students will:

- Define symbolism and identify how it is used in the actual design of the three different Medals of Honor
- Research the changes in the Medals and their ribbons over time

Introductory Activity:
Review the introductory video "In Their Own Words: An Introduction to the Medal of Honor and Its Recipients" with the class then lead a brief discussion of the key points of the video.

Small Group/Individual Activity:
Have students choose a Medal design (Navy/Marine Corps/Coast Guard, Army, Air Force, or Space Force) and re-create it using available media and supplies.

Whole Group Activity:
Display the students' work around the room and have them complete a gallery walk during which they will view and critique all the work.

Concluding Activity:
Have students write a reflection (two paragraphs minimum) or journal entry on their review of the symbolism in the Medals.

Assessment:
Artwork, critique, self-reflection

Resources:
"Medal of Honor: In Their Own Words" video, Medal of Honor: The History documentary, art supplies

Extended Activity:
The students can create a medal of their own design to honor service members, other public servants, or fellow students. Students can present these medals in a ceremony at the school.

APPENDIX D

PORTRAIT OF A SERVICE MEMBER (6-12)

Source: Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation Character Development Program

(The length of this lesson could be condensed)

Students will:

- Develop insightful questions that cannot be easily researched through online resources to ask a service member
- Conduct interviews
- Analyze the challenges of a service member

Medal of Honor Focus: Jay Vargas, U.S. Marine Corps, Vietnam War. Any Medal of Honor Recipient may be used for this lesson. Suggestions include Melvin Morris, Leroy Petry, Gary Littrell, or Clinton Romesha.

Teacher Preparation:
Make contact with a local military branch, VFW, or American Legion to find a veteran or active-duty service member who is willing to visit the classroom.

DAY 1
Introductory Activity:
Have students read the selected Recipient's Medal of Honor citation and view the video based on his or her story.

Small Group Activity:
Have students work with a partner to summarize the action(s) for which the Recipient was awarded the Medal of Honor. They should identify any words or phrases they are not familiar with and ask for clarification to better understand the citation.

Whole Group Activity:
Discuss as a class the Medal of Honor Recipient's actions and how difficult it might have been for him or her to share their story. Explain to students that a veteran or service member will be coming to visit the class and that the students will be preparing questions to ask during the visit. Challenge students to write open-ended questions which are also sensitive to the service member or veteran's experience.

Small Group Activity:
Have students work with a partner to create who, what, when, where, and why questions to ask a veteran or service member. They will write insightful questions to help them learn more about life in a time of war/conflict.

Whole Group Activity:
Have students share out their questions while you record them for the class. Have students decide as a group the top questions to use during the class interview process. After the discussion, have the students decide which questions are the most thoughtful or thought-provoking as well as appropriate.

Provide the students with a list of their questions, and have students decide collectively how to divide up the questions. If possible, the list of questions should be provided to the veteran or service member ahead of time so that he or she may be better prepared about the interests of the students.

Concluding Activity:
Students will be prepared with the question that they will ask the veteran or service member.

DAY 2
Whole Group Activity:
A veteran or service member will come to speak with the class. The students should listen to the veteran or service member tell his or her story based on military duties, asking the questions they prepared on Day 1. Students should actively listen so that they do not ask a question that the veteran or service member already answered.

APPENDIX D

Concluding Activity:
Have students write a reflection on the veteran or service member's visit. The reflection should highlight an area or areas within the presentation that were particularly interesting, inspirational, or previously unknown to the student.

DAY 3
Whole Group Activity:
After discussing the visit, lead a discussion about the similarities and connections between the Medal of Honor Recipient and the guest speaker.

Concluding Activity:
Have the students write a thank you card to the veteran or service member.

Assessment:
Prepared questions, written reflection

Resources:
Medal of Honor citation for chosen Recipient, Living History video for chosen Recipient

APPENDIX E

IN FLANDERS FIELDS (6-12)

"In Flanders Fields" (1915) by John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



John McCrae was born on November 30,1872. A Canadian doctor and teacher who served in World War 1, he is best known for his memorial poem "In Flanders Fields." He died on January 28, 1918.