



God made a decree many years ago that we set up memorials to help our children know about the things that happened in the past:

Joshua 4:6-7

We will use these stones to build a memorial. In the future, your children will ask, “What do these stones mean to you?” Then you can tell them, ‘They remind us that the Jordan River stopped flowing when the Ark of the Lord’s covenant went across.’ These stones will stand as a permanent memorial among the people of Israel.”

During this Memorial Day weekend be sure to talk to your children about the reason for the celebration. Help them know it is more than just grilling out or going to the beach.

Joshua 4:6-7 points out that God wants our children to know about the past and to understand the reason for things we do in the present. Memorial Day is meant to be a time to remember the American soldiers who died in service to our country. Teach them to value the ultimate sacrifice these soldiers made for us all.

The history of Memorial Day originally began in 1868 as a day to decorate the graves of soldiers who died in the Civil War. In more recent years our government passed a resolution that Memorial Day be observed on the last Monday of May as an occasion to remember and honor the men and women who died in all wars.

Memorial Day honors American service members who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle, while Veterans Day pays tribute to ALL American veterans, but especially honoring living veterans who have served their country. You can keep the days straight by the fact that Memorial Day is in May and it has to do with the memory of those who died.

Regardless of how you might feel about the present state of America, don’t fail to remember those who died for her in the past. Here are some resources and ideas to help you lead your children to appreciate what the day means.

- Show pictures of and tell them about any family members or friends that have served
- Teach them patriotic songs <http://thedebtweowe.com/8-patriotic-songs-you-should-teach-your-children>
- Listen to patriotic music. Here's a good cd to purchase: [America's Favorite Patriotic Songs for Kids](#)
- Watch patriotic movies
- March like a soldier: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOb7CEXxG-w>

1. Send cards or write a letter to a veteran in a veterans' home. After the Civil War, the US found itself with a large number of indigent and disabled veterans who couldn't care for themselves or go back to work. The first veterans home was opened in 1864, and since dozens have sprung up to give back to our vets. It's the least the nation can do, but we as citizens can do more. Do something to let them know they are not forgotten.

2. Visit the local veteran's cemetery. Some graves are well-maintained by family members, but when there are no living relatives, that chore falls on the shoulders of local veteran's groups. Lend a hand by bringing some flowers and helping to beautify a few of the less cared for graves.

3. Raise your flag. Sometimes showing your thanks can be as simple as flying Old Glory at your house.

4. Visit a battlefield. Memorial Day owes its roots to the Civil War, and there are numerous sites up and down the East Coast where soldiers laid down their lives for us.