

The Counselor's Corner

Remember!

Can you feel the excitement? Our students (and teachers) are beside themselves fantasizing about this coming weekend. Not only do they get to miss two days of school, but this holiday foreshadows summer. **It is coming!** We can almost feel the experiences of sleeping in and hanging out more with friends. During this weekend, many moms and pops are happy, too, because they get an extra day to spend time with their families and/or work on sprucing up their homes. All these feelings are certainly valid, but we need to temper them by reflecting on the purpose of our extended weekend.

Memorial Day has a very somber side, and we need to remember those who gifted us with freedom by sacrificing their lives. The roots of our current holiday can be traced back to the Civil War. It was such a horrific time when divisions were created within the country and within families. When battles ended, graves were adorned with flowers. General John Logan made this practice official. Soon people were calling the event Decoration Day until 1971, when Memorial Day replaced it.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan gave a speech in Arlington Cemetery, explaining Memorial Day as "... the day we put aside to remember fallen heroes and to pray that no heroes will ever have to die for us again. It is a day of thanks for the valor of others, a day to remember the splendor of America and those of her children who rest in this cemetery and others."

Unfortunately, the wars and conflicts keep coming, and we have not run out of heroes.

On Memorial Day, we all need to take the intent of the holiday to heart. We should strive to spend some time honoring the men and women who put the needs of peace before their own lives. We can also make this a teachable moment for our children and grandchildren who have never had an experience with the draft, and sometimes do not understand what is involved when a person decides to serve in the military. We can broaden their knowledge about world conflicts, too.

Some things we can do to put more meaning into the day is to make sure we proudly fly our flags. For those who own flag poles, the flag should be flown half staff on Memorial Day until noon, and then raised all the way after that until the sun sets. A national tradition that many of us could follow is pausing for a moment of silence at 3:00 p.m. on Memorial Day. Many veterans stand in the middle of streets, collecting money and offering an artificial poppy in thanks. Think about donating and proudly wearing those red flowers. Watching the National Memorial Day Concert the Sunday before Memorial Day is emotionally moving as well as enlightening.

Although there is not 100% agreement on military matters, we should be unanimous in our support of the men and women who did their best to keep the peace and gave their all.

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