

Citizenship

Small Group Session June 5, 2017

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Centre County, State College, PA; by Carol Pollard

Reading

“Citizenship is the common thread that connects all Americans. We are a nation bound not by race or religion, but by the shared values of freedom, liberty, and equality.”

<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learners/citizenship-rights-and-responsibilities>

“To become a U.S. citizen you must take the Oath of Allegiance. The oath includes several promises you make when you become a U.S. citizen, including promises to:

- Give up all prior allegiance to any other nation or sovereignty;
- Swear allegiance to the United States;
- Support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States; and
- Serve the country when required.

U.S. citizens have many responsibilities other than the ones mentioned in the Oath. Citizens have a responsibility to participate in the political process by registering and voting in elections. Serving on a jury is another responsibility of citizenship. Finally, America becomes stronger when all of its citizens respect the different opinions, cultures, ethnic groups, and religions found in this country. Tolerance for differences is also a responsibility of citizenship.

When you decide to become a U.S. citizen, you should be willing to fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship. We hope you will honor and respect the freedoms and opportunities citizenship gives you. At the same time, we hope you become an active member of your community. It is by participating in your community that you truly become an American. “

<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/article/chapter2.pdf>

Chalice Lighting

Check-In

Discussion Readings

“The complexity of the so-called individual that’s been praised for decades in America somehow has narrowed itself to the ‘me’. When I was a young girl we were called citizens – American citizens. We were second-class citizens, but that was the word. In the 50s and 60s they started calling us consumers. So we did – consume. Now they don’t use those words any more – it’s the American taxpayer and those are different attitudes.”

- [Toni Morrison](#)

"It is not always the same thing to be a good man and a good citizen."

-- [Aristotle](#) (384-322 BC)

Questions to promote discussion

1. What does being a U.S. Citizen mean to you? What is the difference between saying “I am an American” and “I am a U.S. Citizen”?
2. Do you feel that there is a conflict between U.S. Citizenship and the UU sixth principle: “The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all”?
3. Is being a UU totally separate from being a U.S. Citizen? Do the roles conflict or reinforce

each other?

4. What are the limits on what you would do to defend the country or the constitution?

5. In what ways has the idea of U.S. Citizenship changed for the better and in what ways changed for the worse?

6. To become citizens, immigrants must pass the citizenship test, correctly answering 7 of 10 questions selected from a hundred possible questions (see attachment). What would you want potential citizens to know?

Reactions to the Session

Closing Reading and Extinguishing the Chalice

Religion creates community, community creates altruism and altruism turns us away from self and towards the common good... There is something about the tenor of relationships within a religious community that makes it the best tutorial in citizenship and good neighborliness.

--Jonathan Sacks

1. What is the supreme law of the land?
2. What does the Constitution do?
3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?
4. What is an amendment?
5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
6. What is ONE right or freedom from the First Amendment?
7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?

8. What did the Declaration of Independence do?
9. What are TWO rights in the Declaration of Independence?
10. What is freedom of religion?
11. What is the economic system in the United States?
12. What is the “rule of law”?

13. Name ONE branch or part of the government.
14. What stops ONE branch of government from becoming too powerful?
15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?
16. Who makes federal laws?
17. What are the TWO parts of the U.S. Congress?
18. How many U.S. Senators are there?
19. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?
20. Who is ONE of your state's U.S. Senators now?

21. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?
22. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?
23. Name your U.S. Representative.
24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?
25. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?

26. We elect a President for how many years?
27. In what month do we vote for President?
28. What is the name of the President of the United States now?
29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?
30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?
31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?
32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?
33. Who signs bills to become laws?
34. Who vetoes bills?

35. What does the President's Cabinet do?
36. What are TWO Cabinet-level positions?
37. What does the judicial branch do?
38. What is the highest court in the United States?
39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?
40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?

41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is ONE power of the federal government?
42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is ONE power of the states?
43. Who is the Governor of your state now?

44. What is the capital of your state?
45. What are the TWO major political parties in the United States?
46. What is the political party of the President now?
47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?

48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe ONE of them.
49. What is ONE responsibility that is only for U.S. Citizens?
50. Name ONE right only for United States citizens?
51. What are TWO rights of everyone living in the United States?
52. What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?

53. What is ONE promise you make when you become a United States citizen?
54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?
55. What are TWO ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?
56. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?
57. When must all men register for the Selective Service.

58. What is ONE reason colonists came to America?
59. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?
60. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?

61. Why did the colonists fight the British?
62. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
63. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?
64. There were 13 original states. Name THREE.
65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?
66. When was the Constitution written?

67. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name ONE of the writers.
68. What is ONE thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?
69. Who is the "Father of Our Country"?
70. Who was the first President?

71. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?
72. Name ONE war fought by the United States in the 1800s.
73. Name the U.S. War between the North and the South.
74. Name ONE problem that led to the Civil War.
75. What was ONE important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?
76. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?
77. What did Susan B. Anthony do?

78. Name ONE war fought by the United States in the 1900s.
79. Who was President during World War I?
80. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?
81. Who did the United States fight in World War II?
82. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?
83. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?
84. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?
85. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?
86. What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States?

87. Name ONE Indian tribe in the United States.
88. Name ONE of the two longest rivers in the United States.
89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?
90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?
91. Name ONE U.S. Territory.
92. Name ONE state that borders Canada.
93. Name ONE state that borders Mexico.
94. What is the capital of the United States?
95. Where is the Statue of Liberty?

96. Why does the flag have 13 stripes?
97. Why does the flag have 50 stars?
98. What is the name of the national anthem?
99. When do we celebrate Independence Day?
100. Name TWO national U.S. Holidays.

Answers at <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Office%20of%20Citizenship/Citizenship%20Resource%20Center%20Site/Publications/100q.pdf>