

What Patriotism Means to Me:
The Mark of a Patriot

When my dad interviews an auto mechanic for his company, he looks to see if the man's hands are calloused and stained with oil because it validates his resume. Likewise, true patriots get their hands dirty when caring for, growing, and protecting America. The highest form of patriotism is dying for our country, but patriots must also be willing to live for it. They make it their duty to put America ahead of personal interests and convenience. As a patriot, I work hard and get my hands dirty.

God has blessed me with a family that puts patriotism into action. Ever since I was in a stroller, I have joined my parents at monthly precinct committee meetings, campaigned for candidates, gathered proposition signatures, and volunteered at a non-profit, family-policy organization. As homeschoolers, we attend leadership, free-speech, and free-market economics conferences and exchange podcasts, online lectures, and articles. We continuously discuss current events, politics, religion, and America's founding principles. We stand by Ronald Reagan's adage, "All great change in America begins at the dinner table."

Over the years, this foundation has equipped me to take ownership of my patriotism and put it into action. Starting a teenage political club has enabled me to invite speakers on a variety of subjects, share resources with young people, and facilitate lively discussions on how policy and current events impact Americans. Members join campaign events, volunteer at the Veterans Day parade, and attend political seminars at our state university. Additionally, I serve with TeenPact, a national leadership program that educates youth on how our government works. I teach kids to write bills, how the legislative process operates, and to become proactive citizens. One is never too young to do the work of a patriot!

Before he was killed in World War I, Martin Treptow, a young American soldier, wrote, "I will work, I will save, I will sacrifice, I will endure, I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone." When citizens put their patriotism into action, America is strengthened. Will you join us?