

## Practicing Good Citizenship



During these past couple of weeks, we, as adults, have had many opportunities to practice good citizenship in our communities. Not only has this included responsibly exercising our right to vote, but also taking time to honor all of the men and women who have and continue to serve our nation. Although voting and celebrating Veterans Day are not in the typical educational repertoire of a preschooler, there are still many valuable messages that can come from bringing them into the preschool classroom albeit in a modified way.

Several of our classes practice voting in some kind of way during the year whether it's expressing your preference for

red or green apples, answering whether you'd rather have a dog or a cat as a pet, or casting your ballot in a homemade voting booth for Farmer Brown versus Duck after hearing the beloved story of "Duck for President". Not only are educational moments provided in how to vote (ie. only vote one time, an equal number means a tie, or remembering that votes can't be changed once made), but also in other ways, particularly relating to the development of social emotional skills. Allowing children to express their preferences and make choices helps them to feel empowered and valued. Learning to recognize that it's acceptable to like something different from a friend or that it's important to hear everyone's ideas are skills that equip a child for immediate and future success. Being disappointed in the outcome of a vote or being unsure of what choice to make are good social-emotional skills to practice early as we certainly know how often we face them as adults!

By taking a moment to recognize our nation's veterans as heroes and people who try to help and look out for their neighbor, we are not only planting more seeds of positive citizenship, but also reiterating some of the messages found in our faith, particularly love of neighbor. Some of our preschoolers learned about the veterans or "superheroes" in their own families.



Several of them decorated banners, posters, and hearts in the colors of our flag. Many classroom prayers were offered and some cards were created for the people who have and are still protecting our nation. We had a wonderful opportunity to recognize one of our own preschool teachers as a veteran. It was a special treat to see Ms. Karla don her US Air Force uniform and boots! We all had a chance to practice kindness and appreciation in thanking her for the work that she has done in helping to keep everyone safe!

As we reflect on these past couple of weeks in our nation, no matter what vote we cast or how we feel about the election outcome, I believe it's important to keep in the forefront some of the lessons that our children learned: respecting others choices/ideas, service to others, and helping our neighbors. May our prayer be that we remain mindful of these lessons in our daily lives, especially as we seek to reflect the love and grace given to us by our Lord.

To learn more about the wonderful opportunities that we provide, please visit our website at: [preschoolatstfrancis.com](http://preschoolatstfrancis.com) or contact Shelley Freeman at: [shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org)

