

## **Youth Message - Veterans Day - 2012 (for a group of older kids)**

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Does anyone ever tell you what to do? Who? Do they ever tell you to do something you don't want to do?

We grownups have to do what we're told sometimes too. The government tells us to pay taxes and drive slower than the speed limit, whether we want to or not. If we have a job, our boss tells us to get to work on time, and then tells us what to do when we get there.

When we're kids, people usually order us around for our own good, to keep us safe, like "Don't yank the dog's ear or he might bite you," or "Stay out of the road so you don't get run over." Some grownups, though, have jobs where they're ordered to do dangerous things, like fight a fire or rescue people from drowning. Especially if their job is in the military service.

Anybody know what holiday Americans are celebrating today, November 11? Yes, Veterans Day. What's a veteran? Right, Veterans Day honors all the men and women who served in the army, navy, air force, marines—all of our country's armed forces.

*(To congregation)* Who are our veterans here, raise your hands? Which branch did you serve in? When you were in the service, did anyone ever tell you what to do?

Some military jobs aren't dangerous. But sometimes our service men and women are put in harm's way, to keep the rest of us safe and free. A few soldiers win glory, like medals for bravery. Sadly, some of them are seriously injured, physically and emotionally. They may suffer that pain the rest of their lives. Some even die. They make those sacrifices for the sake of other people, for our freedom.

Jesus did that, too. God told his son, Jesus, to die on the cross. Jesus sacrificed his own life, so the rest of us could have freedom from sin and live forever in heaven with him.

Many other people put their lives on the line to do God's work. Most of us here work for God by coming to church to worship, and serving on committees, and doing mission work in our local community. We can do those things without fear, thanks to our veterans who fought for our freedom. But some people sacrifice a lot to do what God asks them to do. Some even die in God's service. We call them martyrs. We have a guest today who will tell us about one martyr—his brother.

First, pray with me. Heavenly father, we thank and praise you for the sacrifice of your son who freed us from sin and gave us eternal life. Bless the veterans who sacrifice to keep our country free, and bless your faithful servants who risk everything to do your work. We pray for their reward in glory with you in heaven. In Jesus' name. Amen.