10 Things Parents Can Do to Raise Engaged, Informed, and Responsible Citizens

1. Use the newspaper to find real-life examples of Bill of Rights in action today.

2. Bring your child to vote with you.

3. Encourage your child to participate in extra-curricular activities that provide opportunities for him/her to make decisions, work with peers to accomplish a task, and use problem-solving skills.

4. Devote one family dinner a week to discussing current events YOUR CHILD identifies. Try to get your child to express his/her opinions before you share yours. Assist your child in identifying current events he/she is interested in by reading a newspaper, watching a televised newscast, or online news.

5. Provide opportunities for your children to make choices. Provide options everyone can live with and have the whole family vote to decide...what’s for dinner, what movie to watch, what game to play, etc. Take time to talk about “majority rule” and other democratic ideas.

6. Tell your child an anecdote about a time when you took action to change something you did not like or agree with.

7. As a dinnertime topic: When was the first time you realized that living in a free, democratic society is important to you.

8. Select a movie with a topic relating to government or rights to view as a family and discuss the issues. Examples:

   Legally Blonde II
   All the Presidents Men
   Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
   Good Night, Good Luck

9. Bring your child to a civic meeting:

   PTA
   Neighborhood Watch
   City Council
   City/County Hearing

10. Do a family race to see which member can come up with a complete list of local, state, and national representatives:

   City Council person
   Mayor
   State Senate
   U.S. Representative
   County Board of Supervisors
   State Assembly
   Governor
   U.S. Senate