

A close-up, slightly draped American flag is visible on the left side of the image. The blue field with white stars is at the top, and the red and white stripes are below. The flag is set against a plain white background.

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A Reasoned Patriotism
Critical Thinking and Civic Duty in
an Age of Polarization

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Chapter 1

Patriotism versus Nationalism

*Patriotism is when the love of your own people comes first;
nationalism, when hate for people other than your own comes first.*

Charles de Gaulle

Take patriotism away, and the nation's soul has fled.

Edward Mark Deems

Once a uniting feature of American culture, when one talks of patriotism today it tends to lead to suspicion at best, and attack at worst. Where flags flying on every porch used to be the norm in our nation, now merely standing for the national anthem has become a political statement. While some people might demonstrate an uncritical devotion to their country, others find that there is nothing worthy about the nation in which they live. Neither position is one of balance, and in this book we will explore what British educator Charlotte Mason called a “reasoned patriotism.”

In this time of tension and division, the cynicism which exists around the concept of love of country is in part due to the unfortunate conflation of patriotism with nationalism. Distinctions must be

Chapter 4

A Democratic Republic

Americans today celebrate democracy and downplay republicanism when for those who prize freedom the priority should be the other way around.

Os Guinness, *Last Call for Liberty*

Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself.

John Adams

Love of country and a reasoned patriotism are rooted in a knowledge of the history of one's nation. This includes a basic understanding of the manner in which the nation is governed. Sadly, there is a lack of understanding amongst many citizens today regarding the nature of our government. All Americans should be able to make distinctions between a democracy and a republic, but today even our politicians conflate these terms.

Let us begin with the point that confuses many Americans: the United States is not a pure democracy; rather, it is a democratic republic, or representative democracy, and there is a vast difference

Chapter 9

Critical Thinking

The dialectician is the one who thinks things out, and Chesterton believes that each of us should do that for ourselves – or as many as possible should do that – since the alternative is to be guided by fragments of someone else’s philosophy without ever realizing it.

Chesterton is a great defender of individual freedom and responsibility, and clear thinking is one requisite of freedom.

Stratford Caldecott, Beauty in the Word

We live in a digital age in which we are inundated with information vying for our attention. This influx comes at us through podcasts, television, radio, newspapers, magazines and social media at such a pace that we can hardly catch our breath before the next factoid comes before our eyes and ears. At this rapid rate it is impossible for these media to convey knowledge and understanding. Instead, they emit an abundance of information. Those of us familiar with Charlotte Mason undoubtedly know that she asserts, “It cannot be too often said that information is *not* education.”⁷⁶

What does one do with all this input? Do we accept it all – especially when it comes from a trusted source? Do we reject it all,

Chapter 12

Practical Suggestions

All great change in America begins at the dinner table.

Ronald Reagan

Now that we have established what citizenship as an academic subject involves, hopefully you feel confident that it is already being organically addressed in your home. However, in this section, you will find several practical suggestions for bringing your citizenship lessons to life.

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Patriotic Songs of America

- America, or My Country, 'tis of Thee **121**
Samuel F. Smith (1808-1895)
- America the Beautiful **123**
Katherine Lee Bates (1859-1929)
- Battle Hymn of the Republic **126**
Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910)
- God Bless America **128**
Irving Berlin (1888-1989)
- The Star-Spangled Banner **129**
Francis Scott Key (1779-1843)
- Yankee Doodle **130**
Unknown
- You're a Grand Old Flag **134**
George M. Cohan (1878-1942)

Military Anthems

Anchors Aweigh

Anthem of the United States Navy

Stand Navy out to sea,
Fight our battle cry;
We'll never change our course,
So vicious foe steer shy-y-y-y.
Roll out the TNT,
Anchors Aweigh.
Sail on to victory
And sink their bones to Davy Jones, hooray!

Anchors Aweigh, my boys,
Anchors Aweigh.
Farewell to foreign shores,
We sail at break of day-ay-ay-ay.
Through our last night ashore,
Drink to the foam,
Until we meet once more.