CHILDREN'S MESSAGES

A) Buy the Veterans of Foreign Wars red poppies that are available for donations just before Veterans Day. A donation to this venerable community group will provide you with an excellent message prep and help veterans. Explain the history of the poppies and share a portion of the poem, **In Flanders Fields** (WWI). Tie in that as Christ sacrificed for us so we return love to God by sacrificing for others as the example is made by veterans in service to God and nation. Then have the children go out and present a poppy of thanks to each veteran in the congregation. This is one generation saying thanks to another.

B) Children have been sending homemade cards to military overseas in every conflict the country has fought. Have Sunday School children make up special thank you cards for each veteran. Talk about being thankful to God for all his kindness to us and most of all for Jesus Christ and his life, death, and resurrection for us. Have the children deliver this 'mail of love' on Sunday immediately after the children's message to the veterans present.

C) 'Coining' in the military for exceptional performance is a practice of presenting a special coin of excellence to a military member by a commander. All military services do this. The coins range from simple pieces to highly elaborate medallions. It is a recent idea started in the early 1990s. Simple thank you coins for veterans can be purchased on line. Explain to children the practice of coining as way of saying thanks as Jesus showed gratitude to God and we show gratitude in return. There are many ways to approach this, but show the children how to slap the coin in the hand resulting in a firm handshake leaving the coin in the hand of the veteran while saying with a loud voice, "thank you".

D) Shoe boxes of goodies have been sent to military service folks for what seems like forever. These boxes are filled with snacks, cards of encouragement, prayer books, simple pleasures, and health items cherished in austere places. Have the children make a box of goodies for each veteran and present them in gratitude for service.

E) The ELCA Prayer Book of the Armed Forces, printed by Augsburg Publishing for $8 apiece, is a superb gift for giving to veterans as a way to say thanks and help them deal with many issues from that service by the use of this spiritual tool. Have the children present this sign of love to each veteran after sharing with the children how God's Word is a gift in our lives.