



## Freedom Poem

By Barbara Gilmour

“Hello again, everyone,” said Ms. Gilmour. Tanner, Rudy, Nicole, Stephen, Carmen and Truman the Dragon all said, “Hello, Ms. Gilmour.” “School is over and summer is here,” Ms. Gilmour said. “Who’s ready for that fun summer holiday, the 4th of July?” The kids all jumped up and cheered.

“Last year when we talked about the 4th of July, we had fun creating a rap from the poem, ‘Freedom,’” said the teacher. Rudy jumped up. “That was fun. Can we do that again?”

Tanner added, “I learned the poem better by singing it!” Nicole agreed.

“Let’s see what the ‘Freedom’ poem really means to you,” she said. Truman looked puzzled and asked, “What do you mean?” “Well, Truman, the first stanza of the poem says ‘Freedom for me, Freedom for you, Available to all, In the red, white, and blue.’ What does that mean to you?” she asked. Truman smiled as he replied, “Everyone can live here freely, even dragons!” The rest of the kids reached up and high fived Truman. Nicole added, “I think that means we are all equal here.” The other kids all nodded.

“The second stanza says, ‘Respect our flag, Our country, too, And each person here, So they’ll respect you.’ What does that mean?” asked Ms. Gilmour.

Tanner was first to say, “Take good care of our flag; fly it proudly.” Rudy added, “Take it down in bad weather, and don’t drag it on the ground.” “Don’t say bad things about our country, and be proud to live here,” shared Carmen. Stephen added, “We all deserve the same respect. We should treat everyone with The Golden Rule.”

“What would Cool Kind Kids do about the third stanza?” the teacher questioned. “Take care of our land, water, trees and shore, If we don’t do that, They will be no more.” Three of the kids said, “Recycle!” Truman looked sad and said, “If we don’t take care of our oceans, lakes and parks, kids in the future won’t have anywhere to swim or play.” Everyone decided that recycling, picking up trash and helping keep their schools, neighborhoods and communities clean was easy to do and could help future kids and families.

“The poem ends with, ‘Show that you care, Be grateful, too, For all that we have, In the red, white and blue.’ How would Cool Kind Kids show that they care and are grateful for our country?” All hands went up. Carmen said, “First, we should thank our parents for all they do for us and give us.” Stephen shared, “Thank teachers and others who help, like police and firemen.” Rudy added, “Thank a veteran for our freedom.”

Tanner jumped in with, “Go to the 4th of July parade and salute our flag.” Nicole held up a pretend flag and paraded around the room. Truman marched behind her starting to rap the poem. All the kids joined in. Truman said, “Now that we know what the poem means, let’s practice the Freedom poem rap so we can help other kids become Cool Kind Kids. Let’s perform it at the parade!”

*Barbara Gilmour, Tanner’s grandma, is the creator and developer of the Tanner’s Manners: Be a “Cool Kind Kid” Social Skills, Character Values and Anti-Bullying educational materials and the award-winning “Cool Kind Kid”*

