



**Iowa National Guard Youth and Teen Program**  
**Family Programs Office**  
JFHQ A-1 RM 186  
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Johnston, IA 50131



**Book:** The Next Place  
**Author:** Warren Hanson  
**Ages:** 4-12  
**Lesson:**



1. Begin by showing the students the cover of the book. Then read the title of the book to the children. Have the students infer what the book might be about based on the cover and title.
2. Ask the students what it means to be safe. Who are people in our community that help keep us safe?
3. Why do you think the little boy on the cover is looking at a globe?
4. Begin reading the story, pausing throughout to ask the following questions:
  - a. What are other things kids in America get to do?
  - b. How do people in the military keep us safe?
  - c. Why would it be hard when his buddy has to leave?
  - d. What does it mean when someone is deployed?
  - e. What do you think it would be like to live in the desert?
  - f. Why is it important to write letters?
  - g. Why does it take so long for the letters to make it from the desert to home?
  - h. Sometimes Service Members are gone for over a year. How do you think things would be different when they come home?
  - i. What are some questions you would ask your buddy if he or she was in the desert?
  - j. Why is he proud of his buddy?
5. After reading the story, ask the students to draw conclusions as to what the message was. How would they feel if their loved one had to be gone for a very long time?

**Activities:**

1. After reading the story, review the pictures of the landmarks included. Have the students find out where these landmarks are located.
2. Take the time to learn more about the desert. The weather...the people who inhabit the desert...customs and traditions. Use a map or globe to show where the students live and countries where we have Service Members stationed (i.e. Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Germany, Japan, etc.)
3. Have the students write letters to community members and/or Service Members thanking them for all they do to keep everyone safe.

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