

**Grade level:** 3 - 5

**Time:** 2-3 class periods

## **Sirius, the Hero Dog of 9/11**

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

Geography, History, Literacy

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to briefly describe the events of 9/11/2001 and the terrible destruction of life at the four airplane crash sites.

Students will be able to explain the role of K-9 dogs in serving and protecting people and property as Sirius did at the World Trade Center Twin Towers.

Students will be able to describe the courage displayed by the first responders, workers and visitors, and passengers in the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and on the airplanes as the terrorist events of 9/11 happened.

### **Key Terms:**

*Immigrant* – a person who enters a new country or region, especially to settle there

*K9* – a short way to spell “canine” that is used to refer to dogs in a police unit

*Port Authority* – a part of the government that is in charge of traffic, regulations, safety and security, etc. of a port or harbor; Port Authority of New York and New Jersey protects and regulates the ports and harbors around the New York City area in New York and New Jersey

*Twin Towers* – a term often used to refer to the two tallest towers of the World Trade Center in New York City; a famous tourist site as well as a center of business, transportation, etc.

*World Trade Center* – huge center of business, transportation, etc. in New York City that is comprised of a number of buildings including the Twin Towers

*Pentagon* – a five-sided building where the main offices of the United States Department of Defense are located; one of the sites attacked by the terrorists who flew a captured airplane into the building on September 11, 2001

*Kennel* – a place where dogs are kept or bred

*Rubble* – debris from a building that has been bombed, destroyed in an earthquake, etc.

*Survivors* – persons who continue to live after a disaster, tragedy, or other catastrophic event

*Police Honor Guard* – police officers gathered to show respect and to pay tribute

*Memorial* – anything meant to help people remember a person or event, sometimes in the form of a monument, a ceremony, or other form

*Hero* – a person who watches over, guards, and/or protects others

*Monument* – a statue, marker, plaque, building or some other structure that is set up to honor or to keep alive the memory of a person or an event

*Badge* – an emblem or some other form of mark that is worn to show membership in an organization or to indicate rank in a public office

**Materials:**

Book: Sirius, *The Hero Dog of 9/11* by Hank Fellows. ([www.9-11Songs.com](http://www.9-11Songs.com))

Map of the United States.

Photos of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

(<http://www.historychannel.com/content/9-11> or

<http://www.historychannel.comsearch/do?searchText=September+11%2C+2001>)

There are many other resources about September 11, 2001 on the web but **all sites including the History Channel web site should be reviewed prior to use to ascertain if the photos and information are appropriate for your class.**

**Activities/Procedures:**

Explain the term "immigrant" and show photos of immigrants coming to the United States over the years, past and recent.

Ask students why a person or a family would decide to leave their homeland to come to live in the United States.

Discuss how immigrants have changed and enriched the nation.

Discuss the ways in which immigrants were involved in the Twin Towers.

Show photos of the World Trade Center and identify the Twin Towers prior to 9/11/2001.

Have students offer suggestions about the reasons the Twin Towers were considered so special, the numbers of people (Americans, immigrants, and foreign visitors) who worked and visited the Towers every day.

Consider reasons why the Twin Towers came to symbolize the United States to so many people. (The history channel web site listed above is an excellent resource for information for this lesson but there are many other excellent sources on the Internet also. However, the teacher should preview all Internet sources carefully before using them with the students. Consider grade level, student preparation, etc. in making your selection of sites to use.)

Show photos of the Pentagon.

Discuss the purpose of the Pentagon.

Note the shape of the building.

Gather information about its size and the number of people working there.

Locate New York City, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania on a map of the United States. Mark the locations.

Read the book **Sirius, the Hero Dog of 9/11** by Hank Fellows. Share the photos with the class as the book is read. Stop the reading at strategic points for class discussion.

Describe the role of the Police K9 Unit at the World Trade Center.

Why do the students think that Sirius was left behind in the kennel when his police handler ran into the North Tower to help people after the plane crashed into it on 9/11?

How many airplanes were involved in the events of 9/11/2001? Of these, how many airplanes were flown into the Twin Towers?

What happened to the other airplanes that were seized? Did any of the people on the planes survive the crashes? (Refer students back to the map and the location of each crash site.)

Read the descriptions of the rescue efforts and the scene at the Twin Towers. Ask the students to describe what happened at the Twin Towers. Show photos from the book, other books, and the Internet. (Be selective in choice of photos.)

Ask the students about the long search of the rubble. Look for photos in magazines, books, and on-line that show the reactions of people to the tragedies and to the people who continued rescue efforts at the sites of the disasters.

Where was Sirius' police handler David during the immediate search of the tower rubble?

Where was Sirius in the months following the destruction of the towers? How was he found?

Describe the reactions of David and his fellow officers to the recovery of Sirius' body.

Why do you think David wrapped Sirius in an American flag?

Ask students to offer their thoughts and explanations of the reactions and responses of people to the tragedies and the many volunteers who sought ways to help.

Discuss the word "hero" with students and ask them to define the term. Ask the students to compare and contrast a hero from a person who is famous, notorious, and powerful, a celebrity, etc.

Ask the students to identify the people they believe were the heroes of 9/11/2001 and to explain why they think so.

Ask students why they believe the United States and other countries have been attacked by seized airplanes, suicide bombers, and other bomb methods? **(Do not permit this to become an attack on any one individual, organization, or ethnic or religious group. Guide the discussion into thoughtful consideration of possible reasons. Point out that different events have been carried out in different countries by different groups and different individuals and for different reasons.)**

Discuss some of the ways that the events of 9/11 and other terrorist events have changed security procedures and lifestyles in countries that have suffered attacks.

### **Evidence of Understanding:**

Students will write a paragraph describing the many people who were impacted by the events of 9/11: victims, survivors, rescuers, family members of those lost, friends, etc. The description should include the many nationalities, types of workers and visitors, etc. who were lost or escaped from the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pa. that day.

Create a collage or drawing that illustrates what they have written. Gather the photos from magazines, scan from books, and download from the Internet.

**Extension Activity:**

Using the Internet, magazines, books, and other sources, gather research on sites of terrorist attacks in the United States and other countries. Make a chart listing the places, the nature of the attack, the amount of destruction and lives lost, person(s)/groups believed responsible. Discuss the results of this search in class. Analyze possible reasons why the Twin Towers have received more attention in newspapers, etc. than the tragedies at the Pentagon and Shanksville.

Invite a police officer with a K9 unit and his K9 dog to visit the class and to talk to the class about their training, their activities, and their lives together. After the visit, have students write a list of things they observed about the behavior of the dog during the visit and the relationship between the police officer and his K9 dog. Students should write letters of thanks and appreciation after the visit.

If possible, take photos of the visit of the police officer with his dog and of the children with the police officer and the K9 dog. Use the photos to make a bulletin board and/or an album. Ask students to write comments to accompany the photos and place the comments on the bulletin board and/or the album next to the appropriate photo. If an album is made, it may be a much appreciated gesture if the officer and his dog are given a copy of the album.

*Note to teacher: Hank Fellows, author of **Sirius, The Hero Dog of 9/11**, has been called "America's Songwriter" because of music that he has written. In the aftermath of the destruction of the Twin Towers, he wrote two songs expressing his feelings about the nation's loss. The songs, "The Spirit of America" and "Halfway to Heaven," can be found at his website. ([www.9-11Songs.com](http://www.9-11Songs.com)) Additional copies of his book may be ordered via his website and/or e-mail ([hank@9-11Songs.com](mailto:hank@9-11Songs.com)). Mr. Fellows has generously permitted his book to be used for this lesson plan.*