

**Grade Level:** 4 - 6

**Time:** 60 min. (2 - 30 minute sessions)

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

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

History, literacy, art

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to explain the difference between a "hero" and a "star" or a "celebrity."

Students will be able to provide a number of examples of memorials that have been created to commemorate different events and people in the history of the state of New Jersey and the history of the United States.

Students will be able to explain the purpose of a memorial.

### **Key Terms:**

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

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

*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

*Commemorate* – to keep alive the memory of a person or event through a ceremony or monument

*Honor Guard* – police, firemen, or other official group gathered to show respect and to pay tribute

*Granite* – an igneous rock with a crystalline texture; very hard, firm

### **Materials:**

**Sirius, The Hero Dog of 9/11**, a book by Hank Fellows, 9/11 Songs and Books, New York, 2008. ([www.9-11Songs.com](http://www.9-11Songs.com))

Photos of the Twin Towers before and after 9/11, memorials and commemorative ceremonies for 9/11, and sketches of the plans for the memorial planned for the site of the former Twin Towers.

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

<http://www.historychannel.com/search.do?Text=September=11%2C=2001> are both excellent sources of information with an interactive map, videos, a timeline, radio broadcasts, photos of the crash sites, witness reactions, etc.)

*\* Review photos and use only those appropriate for your class.*

### **Activities/Procedures:**

Ask the students to explain what a K9 Unit is.

What kinds of dogs are often used in K9 Units?

Read the book **Sirius, The Hero Dog of 9/11**, stopping at strategic points for questions and discussion. Show the photos as the reading progresses.

What kind of dog was Sirius? Why is that kind of dog often selected and trained to serve as a K9 dog?

Describe the relationship that developed between Sirius and his police officer partner David. Why do you think a good relationship between the officer-and-dog partners is so important?

Explain some of the responsibilities and duties of a K9 dog and police officer team.

What was off-duty life like for Sirius and David?

Ask the students if any of them have a pet. Make a list of some of the kinds of pets identified. (If a student does not have a pet, they may offer suggestions and information about other family members, friends, and neighbors who have pets in regard to this question and the following questions.)

What are some of the things the students and pets do together?

Would you enjoy having a pet like Sirius? Why or why not?

What happened to David on the day the Twin Towers was attacked and destroyed?

What promise did David make to Sirius? Did he keep his promise?

What happened when Sirius was found?

Why do you think a monument was included for Sirius in the memorial garden that was created?

Study the photos of the memorial garden on page 27 of the book. Describe the appearance of the memorial garden and monuments.

For grades 4 and 5: Using the photo study form found at the site of the National Archives, analyze the two photos found on page 27 of the book.  
(<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons>)

**Evidence of Understanding:**

Make a drawing or a collage of a K9 dog carrying out the responsibilities and duties as a K9 "officer". Beneath the drawing/collage, write a short paragraph explaining why the dog is so important to law enforcement and to protection of the community and explaining why such dogs should be honored and respected for their work.

Write a letter to a K9 police unit thanking them for the jobs that they and their K9 partners do for you and your community. Design an award (a ribbon, a badge, etc.) reflecting the work that a K9 dog performs and deliver it to the unit along with the letter.

**Extension Activity:**

Write a poem about an animal that has been a loyal, faithful pet.

Small group activity: Research the training of a K9 dog and the characteristics and skills that such a dog needs. Also find several stories about K9 dogs that have received special recognition for the high service they have performed. Present an oral report on the training and some of the stories about the dogs. Include any information on memorials or awards any of the dogs received.

Divide the class into small groups for research and assign one of the following topics to each group: Lockerbie air crash, Lockerbie, Scotland; bombing of train in Spain; bombing of train in England; attack on the Pentagon in Washington, DC; crashing of the airplane in Shanksville, Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001; other terrorist attacks selected by teacher. Each group should find the following information: date of event; description of attack; source of the attack; description of any memorials and/or commemorative ceremonies for those lost in the attack.

\*Use only materials appropriate for your class.

Listen to the songs or read the lyrics of the songs "Halfway to Heaven" and "Spirit of America" that were written by Hank Fellows. ([www.9-11Songs.com](http://www.9-11Songs.com)) Analyze the lyrics of each song. Make a chart that includes the following information: main ideas in each song, mood reflected in each song, reflections on the event (9/11).

On YouTube there is a video focusing on K-9 dogs. The final dog shown in the video is Sirius. You may choose to view and discuss this video with your students. However, it is highly recommended that you preview the video to determine if it is appropriate for your students. Not recommended for students below 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D91GQRX3YdY>

*Note to the teacher: The complete book **Sirius, The Hero Dog of 9/11** is presented here in its entirety with the generous permission of the author Hank Fellows. Information about obtaining additional hard copies of the book and his music may be found at his web site ([www.9-11Songs.com](http://www.9-11Songs.com)).*