

**Grade Level:** 6 – 8

**Time:** 90 minutes

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

### **Objectives:**

Students will demonstrate their understanding of a short story.

Students will realize that animals are also victims of tragedies.

### **Key Terms:**

*Canine* - Relating to dogs

*K9 Unit* - A specially trained unit of dogs used by the police

### **Materials:**

**Sirius, The Hero Dog of 9/11** by Hank Fellows

### **Activities/Procedures:**

Do now/journal activity: What can dogs do to assist people in every day life situations? (Service dogs, police dogs)

Share and discuss what students wrote.

Read aloud to students the short story book **Sirius, The Hero Dog of 9/11**. (You may have the students take turns reading it or have them read it individually.) Once read, use the following guided questions for discussion:

- Why are only certain breeds of dogs used by K9 units?
- What job did Sirius have when he went to work with his partner, David?
- Why do you think David left Sirius in his kennel when he went to help rescue people from the North Tower?
- How did you feel when Sirius said that he was invisible?

The author uses the word “wandered” when describing what Sirius was doing after the Twin Towers collapsed.

Does this word paint an emotional picture for you?

What did you see in your mind?

What words would you use to describe how you felt when you learned that David was trapped, and although Sirius was barking for hours, no one could hear him?

Why do you think the author tells the reader that for four months, Sirius’ spirit would try to comfort people who came to visit the World Trade Center site?

How did you feel when you learned that David had kept his promise?

Why do you think that a special monument was made for Sirius as part of the Memorial Garden?

The author uses a "human voice" to tell the story of a dog. Do you think this was effective? Why or why not?

**Evidence of Understanding:**

Responses of students

**Extension Activities:**

Besides being an author, Hank Fellows, is known as "America's Songwriter". Visit <http://www.9-11songs.com/> to listen to "Halfway to Heaven" and/or "Spirit of America." Please note that music teachers may write to Mr. Fellows to receive free copies of the four-part choral arrangements for these songs and Fellows' other songs. Additional copies of the book **Sirius, Hero Dog of 9/11** may be ordered via his website and or e-mail. Mr. Fellows has generously permitted his book to be used in its entirety for this lesson plan.

Teachers and students might also like to read **The Faithful Elephants** by Yukio Tsuchiya. A zookeeper in Tokyo narrates the true story of three faithful elephants that were sacrificed during World War II. Fearful that these elephants might be freed after bombings and cause bodily harm to others, the emperor mandates their killing. Resistant to poisonous food and syringes, the only way to kill them is through starvation. It is an agonizing task for the zookeeper to see his faithful elephants experience such extreme pain. This is a tragic story, and teachers should read this book before introducing it to students.

Visit the following website to view a short video on rescue dogs and September 11. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D91GQRX3YdY> (Teachers should preview this to determine its applicability and suitability for your class. The final dog shown in the video is Sirius.) Explain what you learned about the duties of a K-9 unit and the life of a K-9 dog. What were some of the breeds of the dogs shown in the video?