

LESSON E-UIV-L1

A Fireboat and Its Heroic Adventures

Unit IV: 9/11: A Case Study in Contemporary Terrorism

Grade Levels: 3–5

Time: 45–60 minutes



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Interdisciplinary Connections

History, literacy, character education

Objectives

- Understand that greatness isn't only for famous people or famous deeds.
- Realize that we are all able to make contributions and help others.
- Understand the effects of our words and actions on others.
- Demonstrate an understanding that everyone has the potential to be a hero.

Key Terms

- diesel engine
- control dial
- brass nozzle
- propeller

Lesson Materials

- *Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey* by Maira Kalman
- easel note pad
- crayons or markers
- poster boards
- white t-shirts

Lesson Background

- Ask the students: “What is a hero?” Divide the class into groups of four or five. Introduce a word association game and give the groups three minutes to write down as many words as they can to explain or describe the word *hero*. Ask students to share their answers and put them on a class chart.
- Have the students select their own heroes. Ask the students to identify their heroes and list descriptions of their heroes. (If students name a celebrity hero, explore and discuss if these people are heroes because of their celebrity or because they did something heroic.)
- Have each group write down which of their heroes' traits they see in their friends and in themselves.
- Ask students to write an essay that begins, “I think ____ is a hero because...”

Lesson Plan

- Introduce the story and explain that the story is about a fireboat.
- Read the story to the class and show pictures from the book. Discuss the explanation of September 11th.
- Have the groups discuss the following questions one at a time. Use an easel note pad to display the questions. Circulate as the groups discuss the questions.
 - What happened in 1931?.
 - Describe the John J. Harvey fireboat when it was launched.
 - Who was the crew?
 - How was the fireboat brave?

- What did the fireboat do? Who did it save?
- What happened in 1995 to the John J. Harvey?
- Why was the boat saved?
- What people saved the John J. Henry?
- What happened on September 11th?
- Who were the heroes on September 11th?
- What did the John J. Harvey do to help the firefighters on that day?
- Why was the fireboat a hero?
- What award was given to the John J. Harvey?

Evidence of Understanding

- These three activities will enable students to identify the characteristics of a hero and complete a project that reflects that person. (They can use heroes from September 11th.)
- Divide the class into three groups to:
 1. Write a slogan that honors a hero who has done something great in your community.
 2. Design a poster explaining the slogan.
 3. Use the slogan to create a t-shirt for the hero in your community. Invite the hero to class to give her the t-shirt.

Additional Activities and Resources

- View the documentary, *Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey* (available from Spoken Arts: <http://www.spokenartsmedia.com/products.htm>)
- Divide the class into groups to research the articles on the John J. Harvey web site: <http://www.fireboat.org/>. Ask the groups to present different reports on the following topics:
 - History of the John J. Harvey including pictures
 - The role the fireboat played on September 11th
- Read other stories about heroes:
 - John Henry: An American Legend* by Ezra Jack Keats
 - New York's Bravest* by Mary Pope Osborne
- Explore other web sites and stories about the John J. Harvey fireboat:
 - <http://newtownpentacle.com/2009/07/26/john-j-harvey-fireboat-trip-part-1-the-north-river/>
 - <http://newtownpentacle.com/2009/07/28/john-j-harvey-fireboat-trip-part-2/>

Taking Action and Giving Service

- Discuss the various ways we can volunteer to support firefighters and the John J. Harvey organization.
 - Where is the fireboat today?
 - What is the John J. Harvey organization?
 - What can we do as volunteers?
- Invite someone from the John J. Harvey organization to speak to your class.
- Raise money as a class and purchase John J. Harvey t-shirts to help your school.
- Have a John J. Harvey Day at your school to honor the firefighters in your town.
- Write letters to firefighters thanking them for the job they do.
- Invite a firefighter to class and present her with thank you notes and t-shirts.
- Create a stamp for John J. Harvey. Send the design to the U.S. Postal Service.