

# FIREBOAT

## The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey

K-4

by Maira Kalman

**Lesson Plan Title:** Heroes

**Concept / Topic To Teach:** Heroes, Values

**National Standards Addressed:**

**History—**

**Standard 4:** *Understands how democratic values came to be, and how they have been exemplified by people, events, and symbols.*

6. Understands historical figures who believed in the fundamental democratic values (e.g., justice, truth, equality, the rights of the individual, responsibility for the common good, voting rights) and the significance of these people both in their historical context and today.

**Civics---**

**Standard 27:** *Understands how certain character traits enhance citizens' ability to fulfill personal and civic responsibilities.*

3. Knows private character traits that contribute to the health of American democracy such as individual responsibility, self-discipline/self-governance, honesty, persistence, and compassion.

**Language Arts—**

**Standard 2:** *Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.*

1. Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas (e.g., common figures of speech, sensory details.)

2. Uses paragraph form in writing (e.g., indents the first work of a paragraph, uses topic sentences, recognizes a paragraph as a group of sentences about one main idea, uses an introductory and concluding paragraph, writes several related paragraphs.)

**Standard 8:** *Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.*

1. Contributes to group discussions.

7. Makes basic oral presentations to class (e.g., uses subject-related information and vocabulary; includes content appropriate to the audience; relates ideas and observations, incorporates visual aids or props; incorporates several sources of information.)

**General Goal(s):**

Children desire and need good role models. Children need to know what being heroic really means. Children may not realize that many people with whom they come into contact on a daily basis can be considered heroes. It is important for students to understand that being a hero does not necessarily mean that one has superhuman abilities or money or fame.

Identify the qualities and actions that make a person a hero (or heroine).

Discover people we know that can be considered heroes.

Demonstrate that everyone has the potential to be a hero.

**Required Materials:**

**Video:** *Fireboat: the Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey*, produced by Spoken Arts. A feisty fireboat first launched in 1931 comes out of retirement when help is needed on September 11th, 2001.

**Background (for teachers):**

Many families and teachers are torn about how to deal with the information children have received through the media about the tragedy of 9-11. This event will be a historical milestone in the life of children 12 and under. This book, *Fireboat*, puts the event in the context of a cheerier, more age-appropriate story about not giving up on the usefulness of things, though still dealing directly with what transpired. The chaos, for instance, is depicted in an expressionist framework, emotionally charged (and a bit tricky to read without a few tears) making this title is a good example of a book that should be a shared reading experience with plenty of discussion. More sensitive than scary, this book celebrates the heroic efforts of that terrible day, and it can be pointed out to young listeners that when terrible things in the world, there are helpers rushing forward to give aid. Hip and busy illustrations capture New York's indomitable flair and spirit.

Access Eric Digest ED424190 for a document on "Using Stories about Heroes to Teach Values." <http://www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests/ed424190.html>

**Anticipatory Set (Lead-In):**

Rescue workers were among the true heroes of September 11. Police and fire department members, as well as emergency medical personnel, were the first on the scene of the attack of the World Trade Center in New York City. They headed through blinding smoke to rescue those trapped on the upper floors of the Towers. Many lost their lives when the structures collapsed, while others were able to make it out to safety.

**Step-By-Step Procedures:**

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Tell them they are going to play a word association game. You will write a word on the board and they will have 3 minutes to write as many words as they can associate with the word. Write the word "hero" on the board. Have students share their answers, making certain they can justify why each word applies to the word/concept "hero." After the sharing, ask the class: "What does it mean to be a hero?" Have them describe the things that make a person heroic. Help them make the distinction between heroic qualities and having lots of material possessions and money. Also, make the distinction between being a hero and performing a heroic deed. Do heroic people only do heroic deeds?

Show *Fireboat* video

Ask students the reasons rescue workers were heroes on September 11.

Working in small groups, create posters showing the similarities and differences between superheroes and real-life heroes. One group can choose to honor community helpers (the first responders) and create a postal stamp to honor them. Have another group draw pictures of the equipment that firemen use (different types of fire trucks, hats, boots, hatchets, etc.)

**Assessment Based On Objectives:**

Students can be graded on classroom participation, the ability to work well in groups.

**Extension:**

Use the Internet to research role models and heroes. Students can write reports about popular heroes and historical figures that they admire. Students can make displays using photographs, magazine and newspaper clippings, and their own writing.

**Resources:**

Website: <http://www.myhero.com/myhero/>

National Fire Prevention Week is the second week in October. Check with your local fire department about a field trip to the local fire station or a visit to the classroom by a fireman. This is an excellent jumping off point for fire safety.

Resources:

Website: <http://www.nfpa.org/sparky>

Video: *Stop, Drop and Roll* by Margery Cuyler, illustrated by Arthur Howard, available through Spoken Arts.

Using library and Internet research have students identify symbols (American Flag, Statue of Liberty, Liberty Bell, Mt. Rushmore, Bald Eagle, White House, etc.) that represent the United States. Each student will create an information card about his/her symbol. Questions to be answers: 1. Why are these symbols important to Americans? 2. How do they represent America?

As a class, discuss:

Why do Americans need patriotic symbols?

What purpose do patriotic symbols serve?

Resources:

Website: <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/>

Video: *America is...* available through Spoken Arts.

### **Additional resources:**

Historic Fireboat Aids in New York City Response and Recovery at the World Trade Center

(<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/fireboat.htm> )

Indianapolis Marion County Public Library ([http://infozone.imcpl.org/kids\\_path\\_sept11.htm](http://infozone.imcpl.org/kids_path_sept11.htm))

This pathfinder is about the events that took place in New York City, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001. It includes a list of books, videos and websites that you can look at for current news as well as information about important topics and ideas that you may be wondering about. It includes information about efforts to create memorials and rebuild at the site of the World Trade Centers, the Pentagon & the crash site in Pennsylvania.

John J. Harvey, Ltd. (<http://www.fireboat.org/index.asp>) The website about the John J. Harvey.