

9/11 MEMORIAL

UNIT: Heroic Rescue, Recovery, and Cleanup

GRADE LEVEL/S: 7-8, 9-12

TIME NEEDED: 1-2 sessions

TEACHER: Reba Petraitis

LESSON TITLE:

AN “UNUSUAL” SURVIVOR’S STORY

Common Core Standards

W 3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Key Questions/ Issues Addressed

What happened on 9/11?

How can we understand an event through an object?

Lesson Goals/ Objectives

Students will research 9/11 and be able to analyze the attacks from the viewpoint of a doll that “survived.”

Key Terms

“Chances for Children” Charity

Materials

9/11 Memorial website: www.911memorial.org

Computer with internet capabilities

“Little Red” Images (See [Appendix A](#))

“The Rescue of Bessie” story (See [Appendix B](#))

Background for lesson

For a basic background of 9/11: See [9/11 FAQ](#): www.911memorial.org/faqabout911

Instructional Activity/ Procedures

1. Ask students: *Why are dolls so important to children?*
2. Direct students to the 9/11 Memorial website: www.911memorial.org. For a background of the day, research the Interactive 9/11 Timeline: <http://timeline.national911memorial.org>.
3. Shift to the days following 9/11, during the early Rescue, Recovery, and Clean-up efforts. Introduce “Little Red” (see [Appendix A](#) for images):

Brian Van Flandern self-deployed to Ground Zero on September 11, 2001, determined to use the skills he had honed as a volunteer emergency services technician. He spent twenty four hours at the disaster site, aiding a team that excavated a survivor pinned beneath the rubble. Toward the end of his stint, Van Flandern found a doll in the wreckage, believing it to be a clue to the presence of a child. He later learned that the doll was “Little Red,” the mascot for “Chances for Children,” a charity quartered in the North Tower’s 101st floor offices of Cantor Fitzgerald.

Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, had founded the charity several years before to assist American children with catastrophic medical needs, education, AIDS awareness, and other matters. One of its first beneficiaries was a child severely injured in the 1995 terrorist bombing in Oklahoma City.

Many versions of this doll were spotted in the rubble at Ground Zero in the days following the attacks of 9/11/01. The New York Historical Society has another copy of the doll in its collection.

- Source: 9/11 Memorial Museum

4. As a creative writing assignment, students will portray the events of the day through the eyes of the survivor, Little Red, and answer the following questions in their narrative based on the Interactive 9/11 Timeline:
 - *Who was Little Red?*
 - *What did she represent to the charity? To children?*
 - *What did she see? What did she hear? Use the five senses.*
 - *How did she feel?*
 - *Who was she attached to (i.e. friends, family)?*
 - *What did she learn?*

Evidence of Understanding

Students will display their understanding through their narrative activity.

**Extension
Activities**

Dolls have survived disasters throughout history. Students may read the story of the Chicago Fire of 1871 and "Bessie" at www.greatchicagofire.org.

- Click on Web of Memory/Souvenirs/Library or see [Appendix B](#).
- Read the story: [The Rescue of Bessie](#) and answer the following questions, again from the point of view of the doll:
 - *Who was Bessie?*
 - *What did she mean to Harriet Peabody?*
 - *Who was Bessie attached to? Who was attached to Bessie?*
 - *What did she learn about loyalty and human relationships?*

APPENDIX A



"Little Red." Chances for Children Charity Mascot discovered on the morning of September 12th by EMT, Brian Van Flandern

Collection 9/11 Memorial Museum.
Gift of Brian Van Flandern.

APPENDIX B Bessie's Story



Harriet Peabody's Doll, Bessie
<http://chicagohistory.org/fire/souvenirs/library.html>

As this short narrative indicates, Mrs. Butler told her moving story of her precious doll and the fire that destroyed Chicago many times.

Mother took me to the window to look at the brilliant sky where the blazing sky made it light enough to read by. To fix a point for my earliest recollections, let me take the Chicago fire.

This story has been told and retold to generations of grandchildren who liked to hear it repeated. I was a very little girl, six years old; the youngest of the family and had been put to bed as usual early on that Sunday eve the 8th of October, 1871. Some unusual noise waked me and I found my big sister and brother gone from their beds, walking around fully dressed in the middle of the night. Mother came at my call and to my pleasure said I might get up and dress for, as there was a great fire on the West Side which seemed to be coming in our direction[,] the sparks [were being] blown by a strong wind. Mother took me to the window to look at the brilliant sky where the blazing sky made it light enough to read by. All night long people came to our home for refuge, driven from their own homes[,] and all watched the progress of the flames.

At that moment I remembered my precious doll Bessie, had been left in the playroom.... Father and our house man helper were carrying the carpets up to the roof to soak there with water which would put out the sparks, when just then word came that the water works tower was burning and [there was] no more water. Father had a carriage and an [express] wagon waiting at the door and when morning came all of our personal belongings were loaded on the wagon[,] and Mother, my big sister and I got into the carriage ready to move; Father and my brother Stuyve on the wagon. At that moment I remembered my precious doll Bessie, had been left in the playroom and instantly I jumped out and ran back to the house where I picked up Bessie in her crib and carried both away in my arms.

So, we joined the long procession which was passing; mostly on foot, people carrying some special treasure in their arms (one woman had a pig) all bound Northwest. At the entrance of what is now Lincoln Park we turned West; finally crossing a bridge over the river to the Northwest side which the fire never reached; burning itself out in the open unbuilt land of Lincoln Park.