

# 9/11 MEMORIAL

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UNIT: Individuals and 9/11

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GRADE LEVEL/S: 9-12

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TIME NEEDED: 1-2 sessions

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TEACHER: Mary M. Vazquez

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LESSON TITLE:

## FATHER MYCHAL F. JUDGE: THE POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL

### Common Core Standards

**RH 1** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**SL 1** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**W 1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**W 2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### Key Questions/ Issues Addressed

What is the "Power of One"?

How can such contrast - i.e., good and evil, courage and cowardice, hope and despair, tragedy and optimism - exist and flourish side-by-side in human society?

### Lesson Goals/ Objectives

Students will understand that within tragedy, there are glimpses of courage, hope, and heroism.

Students will be able to understand the power that one individual life can have on many people.

### Key Terms

Catholic Priest

### Materials

[Biography](#) of Father Mychal Judge (See [Appendix A](#))

[Father Judge's Actions on 9/11](#) (See [Appendix B](#))

Photo of Father Judge's body being carried out of the rubble by five men, photographed by Shannon Stapleton: <http://shannonstapleton.com/#/911/sept3>

Photo of the Michelangelo's Pieta:  
[commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo%27s\\_Piet%C3%A0\\_Saint\\_Peter%27s\\_Basilica\\_Vatican\\_City.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo%27s_Piet%C3%A0_Saint_Peter%27s_Basilica_Vatican_City.jpg)

**Materials**  
(continued)

Excerpts from *Night and Dawn*. (Optional: See Extension Activities)

PBS documentary *Saint of 9/11* (Optional: see Extension Activities)

Interactive 9/11 Timeline: <http://timeline.national911memorial.org>

**Background**  
**for lesson**

This lesson can be divided into multiple lessons, if necessary.

**Instructional**  
**Activity/**  
**Procedures**

1. Individually or in groups, define “Hero.” *What characteristics or qualities are necessary for a person to be declared a hero? Is heroism always planned? Can it be automatic? Spontaneous? Is heroism only seen in physical acts of bravery? What are other forms of heroism?*
2. Read Father Judge’s [Biography](#) (Appendix A) and [Actions on 9/11](#) (Appendix B). After reading Father Judge’s biography, ask: *what qualities or work ethic prepared him for his actions on 9/11? Father Judge walked into the tower to help others, while he could have stayed away from harm. Why did he respond as he did? Does his religious background have any role in his final actions? Could a lay person, someone who is not a priest/rabbi within a religious order, also demonstrate such courageous behavior? Could an atheist? Explain.*
3. Study the photographs of Father Judge and the Pieta. *What feelings are evoked by the photograph of Father Judge in death?*

Note: The teacher might want to use a photo analysis worksheet available through the National Archives: [www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo\\_analysis\\_worksheet.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf)

Tell students that this photograph became one of the most famous photographs taken on 9/11:

- *Do you think he would have objected to this photograph? Explain.*
- *Why do you think the [Philadelphia Weekly](#) called the photo the “American Pieta”?*
- *Looking at Father Judge’s life and death, what does one learn about humanity after hearing his story?*
- *Had he lived, would you still consider him a hero?*

4. Looking at the totality of Father Judge’s life, ask students whether they feel that they have to agree with a person’s perspectives on life to view them as heroic. *Does a person have to sacrifice his or her life to be considered a hero?*
5. In times of great tragedy and sorrow, people turn to spirituality. *Why do you think that happens?*

**Instructional Activity/ Procedures**  
(continued)

6. The American short story writer and novelist Bernard Malamud (1914-1986) once said, "Without heroes, we are all plain people, and don't know how far we can go." *What does he mean? How does it relate to Father Judge's life? How does it speak to you?*
  7. Possible final activities:
    - Write a one-page paper outlining what you have learned about courage and integrity during 9/11.
    - Interview someone whom you think has shown heroism. It could be someone who is a friend, family member, teacher, etc. In a one-page paper, explain what that person did to show heroism and why you think his/her actions were important.
    - Research the life of a famous person, either living or dead, who demonstrated heroism.
    - Compare/contrast historical or current acts of heroism with those of Father Judge. In a one-page paper, explain who this heroic person is, what s/he did, and how s/he compares to Father Judge.
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**Evidence of Understanding**

Students will display their understanding through their class participation and final activity.

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**Extension Activities**

Read the story of Welles Crowther and the Red Bandana in the accompanying lesson. Both Father Judge and Welles Crowther, although different ages and from different occupations, found the courage to put themselves in harm's way on 9/11. Identify some similar characteristics that led to their actions.

Watch the PBS documentary *Saint of 9/11*, available on youtube.com.

Daly, Michael. The Book of Mychal - The Surprising Life and Heroic Death of Father Mychal Judge. (Thomas Dunne Books, 2008).

Ford, Michael. Father Mychal Judge: An Authentic American Hero. (New York: Paulist Press, 2002).

Read the children's book He Said Yes: The Story of Father Mychal Judge written by Kelly Ann Lynch and illustrated by M. Scott Oatman.

Note: This is written for 3rd and 4th graders.

Religious prejudice was part of the objectives of both the 9/11 terrorists and the condemnation of the Jews in Nazi Germany during World War II. Discuss why so many violent acts of aggression are committed in the name of religion.

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**Extension  
Activities  
(continued)**

Many people question their own beliefs in God after such a tragic event. Others find great consolation in God or other spiritual beliefs. Read two passages from Elie Wiesel's Night Trilogy. The first is from "Night." In this excerpt, Wiesel describes his time at Buna, a sub-camp of Auschwitz, during the Holocaust. It is about the hanging of a boy who is accused of stealing from the Gestapo guards. The hanging is long and painful for the young boy because of his light weight. The prisoners must walk past the victim, stare him in the eyes, and continue to walk in a straight line. It is truly a tragic moment for prisoners to witness. Someone asks, "Where is God now?" Read the response from Wiesel (pages 70-72).

The second passage is from "Dawn." World War II has ended and former imprisoned Jews are discussing how they survived their ordeal. One man, Gideon, testifies that he was able to survive his torture and imprisonment because of his faith in God.

*Ask: How did spirituality inform the individuals in these two passages? Are their actions realistic? What is the difference between fact and faith? How did faith help/hurt in the two situations?*

## APPENDIX A

## Biography of Father Mychal Judge

Father Mychal F. Judge was born Robert Emmet Judge to Irish immigrants in Brooklyn, New York, May 11, 1933. He became a Roman Catholic priest of the Franciscan Order of the Friars Minor and became chaplain of the Fire Department of New York. He was the first recorded victim of the September 11, 2001 attack.

Judge grew up during the Great Depression. With his older sister, Erin, and his fraternal twin sister, Dympna, he learned about being poor at a young age. When he was six years old, his father died after a long and painful illness. To earn money for the family, Judge shined shoes at New York's Penn Station. He would frequently visit nearby St Francis of Assisi Church where he would see Franciscan friars and later knew that this was the career path he wanted to take.

At the age of fifteen, he began his preparation to become a priest. From 1948 until 1961, he trained at three seminaries in New York, New Jersey, and New Hampshire, earned his BA from St. Bonaventure University, and was ordained a priest in Washington, D.C. Upon entering the Order of the Friars Minor, he took the religious name of Mychal.

Judge served in the following parishes from 1961-1986:

- St. Anthony Shrine, Boston, MA
- St. Joseph Parish, Rutherford, NJ
- Sacred Heart Parish, Rochelle Park, NJ
- St. Joseph Parish, West Milford, NJ

For three years, he was an assistant to the president of Siena College in Loudonville, NY. In 1986, he was assigned to the monastery of St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City, where he lived and worked until his death in 2001. In 1992, he was appointed Chaplain of the Fire Department of New York City. As chaplain, he offered encouragement and prayers at fires, rescues, and hospitals. He counseled firefighters and families, sometimes working sixteen hours a day. He also ministered to the homeless, the hungry, the sick, the injured, and the grieving.

Having acknowledged that he was homosexual, Judge was an advocate for Catholic gays and lesbians, though many were alienated from the Church.

He also overcame alcoholism with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous, and shared his personal story with others who struggled with this illness.

Anecdotes from his life:

- Judge once gave his own winter coat he was wearing to a homeless woman and later said, "She needed it more than me" (*Saint of 9/11* film homepage, spoken by Mychal McNichols, *Saint of 9/11*, 2006).
- While anointing a man dying of AIDS the man asked him, "Do you think God hates me?" Judge picked him up, kissed him, and rocked him in his arms (*Saint of 9/11*, 2006).

Even before his death, many considered Judge to be a living saint because of his extraordinary spirituality and works of charity. Sometimes while praying, Judge became so absorbed in prayer that he often "became lost in God, as if lost in a trance, that he'd be shocked to find several hours had passed." (Daly, Michael. *The Book of Mychal: The Surprising Life and Heroic Death of Father Mychal Judge*. St. Martin's Press, 2008, p. 320.)

**APPENDIX B**

**Father Judge's Actions on 9/11**

On the morning of 9/11, soon after the first airplane hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center (8:46 am, Eastern Standard Time), Father Mychal Judge rushed to the site. He was met by NY Mayor Rudolph Giuliani who asked him to pray for the city and its victims. Judge administered last rites to victims lying on the street, then entered the lobby of the North Tower where an emergency command post was organized. He continued to offer aid and prayers to the rescuers, the victims, and the dead.

At 9:59 am when the South Tower collapsed, debris flew through the main entrance to the North Tower, killing many inside including Father Judge. At that moment, Judge was praying aloud and was heard saying, "Jesus, please end this right now! God please end this!" (Daly, Michael, The Book of Mychal: The Surprising Life and Heroic Death of Father Mychal Judge. St. Martin's Press, 2008, p.336.)

Shortly after his death, a NYPD police lieutenant, William Cosgrove, who had also been hit by debris, found the priest's body. Cosgrove, along with two firefighters, Christian Waugh and Zachary Vause, a member of the Office of Emergency Management, Kevin Allen, and a civilian bystander, John Maguire of Goldman Sachs, carried the body out of the North Tower to an ambulance, where it was brought to St. Peter's Church nearby. Shannon Stapleton, a Reuters photographer, captured Father Judge's body being carried from the North Tower. The Philadelphia Weekly described the photograph as an "American Pieta." ("Upward Christian Soldier," Philadelphia Weekly, May 3, 2006.)