



MUSEUM GUIDE FOR VISITORS WITH CHILDREN

This guide has been created for parents and caregivers to help children 8 to 11 years old understand the history of the World Trade Center, what happened on 9/11, and how the site has been rebuilt. Note that this guide does not include the Museum's historical exhibition, ***September 11, 2001***, which may not be appropriate for visitors 10 years old and younger.

For further questions, or more information, visit 911memorial.org/teach-learn.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each artifact in the guide is accompanied by age-appropriate questions you might pose to children, along with basic background information for you to share. Questions that encourage children to make observations and closely look at an artifact, such as ***What do you notice?***, work especially well throughout the Museum.

The following pages include guidelines for how to talk about this complex subject and suggested answers to common questions about 9/11. A glossary of **Key Terms** is located at the back of the guide.

It is normal to have many questions about such a significant event. For people of any age, an encounter with the history of the attacks of September 11, 2001, can elicit strong emotions. These emotions can intensify when both children and adults feel they do not have a complete understanding of what happened, making it more difficult to make sense of this history.

Staff are stationed and available throughout the Museum to provide more information or if you have a question that's difficult to answer. In addition, you can visit the education pages on our website, www.911memorial.org/teach-learn, for additional context and resources.

TIPS FOR TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT 9/11

Answer questions with facts.

Children may have many questions about 9/11. Answer these questions with basic facts and point them to reliable sources, including our website www.911memorial.org, for further information.

Be specific. It can be easy to make generalizations when discussing 9/11. The story of 9/11 is actually thousands of individual stories. Highlight those stories and emphasize specificity to help humanize the history. Avoid stereotypes and oversimplifications.

Listen. It is important to offer children a safe space to share their memories, beliefs, and questions. Actively listen to their thoughts and encourage respectful conversation and debate. Insist that opinions be supported by evidence. Grounding discussions in evidence will promote critical thinking and help ensure that conversations remain focused.

Know yourself. Adults aren't immune to the emotions sparked by 9/11. Acknowledge and attend to your own reactions and feelings, memories, and connections. 9/11 is not an easy topic to think about, let alone discuss with a child. Recognizing your feelings beforehand and then sharing them honestly with your children offers them a model for dealing with their own emotions and helps promote a safe, trusting environment.

We don't have all the answers.

It's all right not to know the answer to every question. 9/11 is a complex subject with repercussions that are still evolving today. If you can't answer your child's question, be honest and use the opportunity to model yourself as a learner; you can explore the question together.

COMMON QUESTIONS

What is 9/11? “9/11” is shorthand for a date, September 11, 2001. That day, 19 men **hijacked** four commercial airplanes. They intentionally flew three of the planes into buildings: the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon, the headquarters for the armed forces of the United States, located just outside Washington, D.C. The Twin Towers ultimately collapsed because of damage from the impact of the hijacked planes. Hijackers turned the fourth plane off course and headed to Washington, D.C., likely to be crashed into the U.S. Capitol building. The passengers and crew aboard that plane fought back, and the plane instead crashed into an empty field in western Pennsylvania.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed as a result of the 9/11 attacks, including people from more than 90 nations.

What was the original World Trade Center? The original World Trade Center was a 16-acre complex in lower Manhattan, a busy part of New York City. The World Trade Center included seven buildings, a large plaza, and an underground shopping mall. Thousands of people worked and visited there every day. The centerpieces of the complex were the Twin Towers. On September 11, 2001, the entire World Trade Center was destroyed.

What were the Twin Towers? The 110-story Twin Towers were the tallest buildings in New York City. For a brief period, they were the tallest buildings in the world. They were called the Twin Towers because they were nearly identical. You could tell them apart, though, because the North Tower had an antenna on its roof.

The towers were well known throughout the world and famous for their size.

The North Tower, 1 WTC, stood 1,368 feet tall, and the South Tower, 2 WTC, stood 1,362 feet tall. On clear days, views could extend 45 miles from the top of

the towers in every direction—far enough to see all five New York City boroughs, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

Why did the terrorists do this?

The hijackers were terrorists, meaning that they used violence to try to frighten other people and impose a particular point of view. They belonged to a terrorist group called al-Qaeda. The terrorists hoped that by attacking important buildings in the United States and hurting many people, they would force the United States into changing its foreign policy, especially in the **Middle East**.

Why is the Museum located belowground? The Museum is located belowground because **remnants** of the original World Trade Center buildings are still visible belowground, and it is the Museum's job to preserve them so they can be seen by visitors like you. In addition to these building remnants, the Museum is filled with **artifacts** that help tell the story of 9/11.

ARTIFACTS

World Trade Center Tridents

Location: Concourse Lobby



- *Describe the shape of these two objects.*
- *What markings and words do you notice on them?*
- *Where do you think these objects came from?*

These two columns once formed part of the outside of the North Tower. We call them tridents because they fork into three columns near the top. Seventy-six of these tridents used to stand side by side to form the bottom of each of the Twin Towers. The columns forked around the fifth floor and then continued up the rest of the two buildings. You can see a picture of what they used to look like nearby.

You might see the word “SAVE” written on the tridents. After 9/11, people wanted to make sure some objects from the World Trade Center were kept and protected for a possible future museum. They spray painted the word “SAVE” in big letters on those objects to make sure they were preserved.

Box Column Remnants

Location: North and South
Tower footprints



- *What shape are these objects?*
- *Why do you think they line the floor throughout this level of the Museum?*

The Twin Towers were so tall and so heavy they had to be anchored into a special kind of rock strong enough to support their weight. This solid rock is called **bedrock**. You can see actual bedrock in the **South Tower Excavation**.

The perimeter **columns** that held up the Twin Towers were attached to bedrock, just like roots support a tree. These columns are called “box columns” because of their shape—they’re hollow and square. From bedrock, they rose to form the tridents you might have seen on the **Concourse Lobby** level.

After the towers collapsed on 9/11, most of the box columns aboveground were destroyed. But some remained standing and were eventually cut down to clear the site.

What you see in the floor are the bottom sections of the columns, which continue down below the floor, where they are still bolted to bedrock. Around the North Tower footprint, these rows of squares trace most of the actual outline of the original building. A portion of the South Tower footprint can also be seen in the Museum.

Segment of the Radio and Television Antenna

Location: Center Passage



- *What do you think this object is?*
- *Where do you think it came from?*

This is a piece of a 360-foot antenna that used to sit atop the North Tower. The antenna was as tall as a football field is long. It was the easiest way to tell the Twin Towers apart, since the South Tower did not have one. This antenna once broadcast radio and television signals all over the New York City area. All transmissions stopped on 9/11 when the tower collapsed, so TV and radio stations used other antennas in the area to let people know what was happening.

Ladder Company 3 Fire Truck

Location: Center Passage



- *What kind of vehicle is this?*
- *What differences do you notice between the front and the back of this truck?*
- *Can you find a helmet near the truck?*

This fire truck belonged to a firehouse in Manhattan, New York City Fire Department (FDNY) Ladder Company 3.

On 9/11, rescue workers, including the firefighters from Ladder Company 3, immediately rushed to help those who were trapped or hurt at the World Trade Center. These men and women ran toward the buildings when most people were running away. We call these rescue workers **first responders**.

The first responders came from many firehouses, police stations, hospitals, and other locations. They rushed to the scene to help those inside the burning towers. That was their job. Sadly, many first responders were killed on 9/11 when the towers collapsed. This Ladder Company 3 truck was damaged by the collapse of the North Tower.

On the side of the truck you can see a helmet that belonged to Ladder Company 3's captain, Patrick John Brown, who was killed on 9/11. Captain Brown's nickname was Paddy. This helmet was found in the trunk of Paddy's car. If you look closely, you can see two axes on the helmet. This **symbol** represents his rank of captain.

Slurry Wall

Location: Foundation Hall



- *Why do you think this wall was built?*
- *Have you ever tried to build a sand castle close to the ocean? What happened?*
- *How many sections of this wall do you notice? Do they all look the same?*

This large wall is called a slurry wall.

During the construction of the World Trade Center, engineers had to dig a deep hole to anchor the new buildings into bedrock. But with the Hudson River located just to the west of the site, engineers were worried that when they dug, water might flood the hole and make it impossible to build anything, just like when you build a sand castle too close to the ocean.

Their idea was to build a wall around part of the construction site. It took about a year to build, but just as the engineers had hoped, the slurry wall did its job. It kept the Hudson River out and the site dry, allowing the Twin Towers to be built.

The slurry wall was built around a large section of the World Trade Center construction site, creating an area nicknamed “the bathtub.” Most bathtubs hold water in, but because of the slurry wall, this bathtub kept water out.

If you look closely at the slurry wall, you will notice it has three sections. The right and left sections are newer than the middle section. On 9/11, the slurry wall was damaged, but held strong enough that water did not flood the site. After 9/11, it had to be repaired. The outer sections show the new wall, while the middle section was repaired from behind so we could see the original wall here in the Museum.

Last Column

Location: Foundation Hall



- *What different markings and images do you notice on this column?*
- *Why do you think people would mark a column like this?*

On 9/11, the World Trade Center was destroyed. Working 24 hours a day, recovery workers cleared the site over a period of nine months. It was dangerous work; if you moved one piece of steel, others pieces might fall and fires burned for months.

In the middle of this enormous hall, you can see a very tall steel column covered with graffiti, notes, and cards. Originally part of the South Tower, this was the very last piece of steel from the Twin Towers to be removed from **Ground Zero**. Some of the workers and first responders signed their names or left messages on this column. Soon, family members of people who died in the attacks, volunteers, and others added their own messages and memorabilia to it. The column became a place to share feelings and memories.

Now known as the Last Column, this piece was removed in a special ceremony on May 30, 2002. Each marking tells a story, and you can learn more at the kiosks on either side of the column.

Survivors' Stairs

Location: Memorial Hall



This staircase originally led from the World Trade Center Plaza down to the street below. Hundreds of people escaped down these 38 stairs to safety as they fled the site. For many of these people, the stairs are a symbol of their survival on 9/11. Because of this special history, the stairs were preserved.

Thousands of people who worked in the towers on 9/11 **evacuated** safely. This was because of the orderliness of those evacuating and the courage of the first responders who helped direct their escape.

- *How many stairs can you count?*
- *This staircase is huge. It is very heavy and stands 64 feet tall. Why do you think it was saved and moved into the Museum?*
- *Does it look damaged? Where?*

Lady Liberty

Location: Education Center



- *What is this object a replica of?*
- *Which attached mementos do you notice?*

Can you find:

- *FDNY and NYPD patches?*
- *Patches from other countries?*
- *Airline wings?*
- *A paper crane?*
- *A Starburst candy wrapper?*
- *Money?*
- *Why do you think these items were attached to Lady Liberty?*

Even on such a tragic day, many wonderful and courageous acts occurred. People acted

heroically on 9/11 and in the days afterward—from the first responders who rushed into the buildings to try to save those who were trapped to the children all over the world who sent in uplifting letters and artwork to encourage and comfort the rescue and recovery workers. The shock and the sadness also brought families, friends, even strangers together, connecting them in special ways. Shortly after 9/11, this object—a **replica** of the Statue of Liberty—was left outside a firehouse in midtown Manhattan.

Fifteen firefighters from this firehouse who responded to the World Trade Center on 9/11 were killed that day.

No one knows who left this statue outside the firehouse, but it quickly became covered with different objects and tributes placed by passersby and visitors to the firehouse.

Each of the items affixed to the statue tells its own story; the statue does too. But they all also serve as symbols for understanding what happened on 9/11 and how people responded to the attacks.

Maasai Flag Painting

Location: Education Center



- *This painting is made up of different images and words.*
- *What images do you notice? What words can you read?*

The Maasai are an African group living primarily in Kenya, a country in eastern Africa. After 9/11, the Maasai heard about the attacks in America. Although most of the Maasai community had never been to the United States, they felt very sad and wanted to do something to comfort the American people.

In the Maasai culture, cows are considered special. So, the community decided to make a gift of 14 cows to America, as a way of showing sympathy. A flag was made to honor the generous offer of the Maasai; this painting shows that flag. A brown bull and white cow are

shown. The city skyline depicts lower Manhattan and the Twin Towers before 9/11.

Many Americans were deeply touched by the Maasai's gesture. In the end, the cows remained with the Maasai, who knew best how to care for them. But, the cows are still considered a gift to the people of the United States.

The artifacts on view in **Tribute Walk** and in the **Education Center** lobby represent just a few of the many responses to 9/11. There are thousands of others, both big and small, from adults and children alike. Many people chose to volunteer or perform community service activities in response to 9/11. In fact, in 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law a bill that established September 11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance every year.

Think about what you could do during difficult times in your own community. How would you lend a hand? *Examples might include starting or donating to a charity, collecting necessary supplies, making food, creating something to comfort people, and learning more to teach others.*

GLOSSARY

artifacts: Objects on display in our Museum. To help protect them, most cannot be touched by visitors.

bedrock: Strong rock underneath the Earth's surface. In New York City, the bedrock is called "Manhattan schist."

columns: Upright, or vertical, structures that help hold up buildings. In the Twin Towers, as in all tall buildings, they were made of steel.

evacuated: Exited safely.

first responders: Uniformed officers, like firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs), who are trained to help in an emergency. On 9/11, many first responders rushed to the World Trade Center to help.

Ground Zero: A phrase used to describe a scene of great devastation. It was used to describe the destroyed World Trade Center after 9/11.

hijack: Seize control of and divert from the intended path. On 9/11, 19 men hijacked four airplanes.

Middle East: A region of the world located largely in western Asia. There are many countries in the Middle East, including Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen.

remnants: What are left of something. There are remnants of the original World Trade Center in the Museum.

replica: A reproduction, or copy, usually on a smaller scale.

symbols: Images or objects that represent something. Some symbols can represent more than one thing. For example, to some, the Statue of Liberty is a symbol for the United States, while to others, it stands for freedom and liberty.

9/11
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180 Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10006
911memorial.org