

GUIDELINES

For Teaching about 9/11 in the Classroom

1. Keep in mind that conversations about understanding and respect should not be limited to 9/11 lessons, commemorative events, or other special programs but instead, should be demonstrated every day in the classroom.

2. Identify school, district or state-wide goals and values that are expressed through your 9/11 lesson plans. Developing this rationale by examining existing 9/11 anniversary projects or school wide commemorations will help create a unified school approach and make it an inclusive school event.

3. Be sensitive to the religious diversity in your classroom and choose your language carefully when referring to the perpetrators.
 - Educators should be mindful of stereotyping the Muslim community in particular and how this could have an impact upon students.
 - Provide opportunities for students to share life experiences. Make the classroom a place where students' experiences are not marginalized, trivialized, or invalidated. Prejudice and discrimination have a unique impact on each individual.

4. Establish an environment that allows for mistakes. Assume good will and make that assumption a common practice in the classroom. Since most people have been unconsciously acculturated into prejudicial and stereotypical thinking, individuals may not be aware that certain attitudes are hurtful to others.

5. Be sensitive to the visual materials - photos, videos, audio – and their emotional nature and potential impact upon students. Choose materials that clearly meet the goals and objectives of the lesson.

6. Avoid having students engage in educational activities that simulate the roles of terrorists, perpetrators, bystanders, upstanders, etc.

7. Be prepared to respond to purposely directed acts of bias. Students will carefully observe how educators intervene when someone is the target of discriminatory or hate-based behavior. Silence in the face of injustice conveys the impression that prejudicial behavior is condoned or not worthy of attention.

8. Avoid articulating your personal political beliefs in reference to 9/11 and terrorism by choosing your language carefully.

9. Avoid "preaching" to students about how they should behave. Provide opportunities for students to resolve conflicts, solve problems, work in diverse teams and think critically about information.