



The U.S. & The World SS.7.CG.4.4
The Significance of September 11th, 2001
VIDEO SCRIPT



Benchmark Clarification Seven: Civic Virtue, Responsibility, and the Common Good

1. The events of 9/11 were a significant and impactful tragedy. The actions of these terrorists affected the lives of so many Americans, and we live with the consequences to this day. Indeed, the war in Afghanistan just ended a few short years ago. The government now has more authority in surveillance, and the ways in which we travel and engage with each other have changed. Be sure to watch some of the other videos in this series to see how. Survivors continue to deal with the aftereffects and illnesses for being at Ground Zero when the Twin Towers collapsed. But still, we remain Americans, and we still believe in the importance of the common good even today.

2. After watching this video, you will be to

- recognize the ways in which humanitarian, charitable, and volunteer aid following the events of September 11th, 2001, reflects the principles of civic responsibility, civic virtue, and the common good. So let's get started.

3. As citizens of the United States, we have certain responsibilities to each other and to the common good. Remember that the common good refers to beliefs or actions that are seen as a benefit to the community rather than individual interests. For example, road systems, clean air, clean water, the justice system, and public safety are all part of the common good. And citizens who give up something to benefit their community are reflecting the common good too. The actions of the passengers on Flight 93 or the first responders who rushed into the burning Twin Towers on 9/11 both reflect a concern for the common good.

4. Embodied in this is the idea of civic virtue. Civic virtue means the good characteristics, attitudes, practices, and activities that we engage in as participants in our constitutional republic. One of our most important civic virtues is volunteering. After the events of September 11th, 2001, many Americans from all walks of life demonstrated what it means to be a virtuous, responsible, and engaged citizen.

5. Soon after the attacks of 9/11, American citizens volunteered to help sort through the rubble. They also offered to use their skills, in organization, in medical care, and in support, to provide humanitarian aid to families of victims, survivors, and active first responders dealing with the pain and suffering of 9/11. Many of them put the needs of others ahead of their own. For example, Richard Testa drove into New York City to volunteer his time as a massage therapist helping hundreds of first responders and other volunteers relieve the stress in their joints from working to move rubble and find survivors or, more likely, remains. Hundreds of those same people worked in 'bucket brigades' to clear out literally tons of debris from the collapse of the towers. Volunteering their time, their energy, and their skills to improve the lives of their fellow Americans embodies the importance of the common good and serves as an example of living up to the civic virtues and principles envisioned by our Founders.

6. Charitable giving to those impacted by 9/11 also demonstrates an adherence to these principles. Many Americans who could not go to New York as volunteers offered financial support to those who were impacted

by the events of September 11th. According to the Ford Foundation, more than 1 billion dollars was raised in just two months after the events of 9/11. Americans, recognizing the importance of the common good and supporting their neighbors, donated in record numbers.

7. Americans gave so much money that the two largest relief agencies, the American Red Cross and September 11th Fund, issued public statements saying that they did not wish to receive more money. And yet they raised another half billion by June of 2002!

Americans, recognizing the importance of their civic responsibility and the common good and supporting their neighbors, donated in record numbers.

8. Many foundations were established after the events of 9/11, and continue to this day. There are organizations that support the families of victims and survivors. Some also provide financial and medical support to first responders and civilians suffering health effects from dust and toxic materials they inhaled in the effort to rescue survivors and clear the rubble from the Twin Towers.

9. Researchers have identified more than 60 types of cancer and other conditions linked to exposure at Ground Zero, including gangrene, arthritis, and chronic hip, knee, and lower back problems. According to the Mount Sinai Hospital, nearly 10,000 first responders and others who were in the World Trade Center area have been diagnosed with cancer. More than 2,000 deaths have been attributed to 9/11 illnesses. Finally, of September 2023, more than 600 first responders have died from illnesses related to the rescue and recovery efforts, which is more than the number of firefighters and police who died in the Twin Towers on 9/11.

10. Many Americans also donated time, money, and skills to support the creation of the National September 11th Memorial and Museum, built on the site where the Twin Towers once stood. They also supported the construction of the Flight 93 National Memorial at the site of the crash of Flight 93.

11. Finally, American civic and political leaders played a large role in encouraging Americans to remember their civic responsibilities and virtues and the common good. President George W. Bush and New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, for example, gave speeches and modeled ways in which citizens could come together to support each other in a time of crisis.

12. We have a responsibility to each other as citizens to concern ourselves with the common good, and with the well being of our neighbors, of our fellow citizens. The actions of Americans on and after 9/11 ultimately demonstrate how important and impactful it is to live up to our founding principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and why the common good matters. Let's continue to understand and live up to that responsibility, so that we can best honor those that can no longer do so.

13. Be sure to watch the other videos in this series or visit the 9/11 and Flight 93 memorials and museums to learn more about the significance and impact of the events of September 11th, 2001.