

Teachers Create Unique Lessons for Students On 9/11 Anniversary

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In exclusive interviews with Fox News Digital, teachers across the country discussed the difficulties, and strategies used, in teaching students about 9/11.

The hurdles teachers face are many, like explaining a time in history that is still in the minds of many, but is not current news for younger generations. Finding unique ways to educate youth on the events that shaped the future they live in is no easy task. That is especially so for an event that is emotionally charged for people across the country.

For many teachers, it is important to get across the lessons learned from 9/11 to the younger minds who did not personally experience it. The National September 11 Memorial & Museum offers teachers different programs and lesson plans to help with instruction of this sensitive topic.

Kristin Burns of Keith Country Day School in Illinois explained how she went about her 9/11 instruction last year:

"I had all the teachers say where they were on 9/11 and had the kids interview people in the community," she said of the lesson. "And we compared different perspectives for where people were or what happened that day because it was such a visceral thing that happened and everybody that was there it's just kind of cinched in your memory."

She found that having the children share their own families' stories of how they dealt with the tragedy was especially impactful.

Daniel Buck, a sixth grade English teacher, shared his own views on the instruction of 9/11 in America:

"I don't necessarily think schools are doing a particularly good or bad job of it," Buck says. "9/11 is at this interesting point where it's not current events, but neither is it yet ancient history. It's currently making the change from being a living memory to something way in the past for students. How schools treat those two categories of information differ. That being said, schools need to really start thinking about it. We no longer can assume that students know about it because they had some experience with it. They must be taught about it.

"In my own personal experience, one previous school had students march bleachers to represent firefighters climbing the steps of the Twin Towers and research individual firefighters who lost their lives," Buck says. "That combination, marching as a time to reflect upon the research they did earlier, was a sobering experience. Another school I worked at had nothing formal. A handful of teachers took it upon themselves to teach about the event or craft activities related to it, but that was done of their own volition, not formal direction from administration."

Over the years, several states have made lessons about 9/11 and its impact on the U.S. mandatory, the most recent of which was signed by Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey (R):

"September 11, 2001, was a day that changed America," Gov. Ducey said. "It shaped a generation, forever altering how we view the world, how the world views us and how we interact with each other. But as indelible as the memory of that tragic day is for many of us, the passage of time has taken an inevitable toll. We are now at a point where Arizonans of a certain age have no direct recollection of the pain and anger we felt two decades ago when terrorists attacked our country, or the resolve and courage demonstrated in the days that

followed. For this reason, my office will work with educators and lawmakers to introduce, pass and sign legislation that guarantees the next generation of Arizonans never forgets what happened on September 11, 2001.”

When we commemorate the 21st anniversary of 9/11 this Sunday, many across the nation will recall where they were and how their lives were shaped by this horrific event that claimed 2,996 lives. {eo}

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