

# Junior Ranger

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Junior Ranger Parent or Caring Adult Guide



## Flight 93 National Memorial

Dear Parent or Caring Adult,

This booklet suggests some ways to assist you in helping your child better understand a visit to the Flight 93 National Memorial site.

It begins with general guidelines for children of all ages. You'll also find guidelines for two developmental levels (younger and older) and a booklist.

In addition to this guide, we offer activity booklets for both developmental levels. There is a bookmark at the end of the booklet for your child.

The topics discussed in this guide *may or may not* affect your child in particular. You know your child best. You can decide what fits best for your child. We hope you find the guide and activity booklets helpful, and thank you for visiting us!

Flight 93 National Memorial

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL CHILDREN

### **Your Feelings**

Remembering and hearing about the events of September 11 can bring back a lot of thoughts and feelings for you about that day. These feelings might even bring up earlier losses you've had to deal with – like losing a loved one or even moving or leaving a job.

We all have our own ways of handling information that's upsetting. Before you try to talk with your child, it can help to take some time to think about how you're feeling. What affected you most?

Some adults and children find it too painful to talk about September 11. But remember that children pick up on our feelings, even if we don't put them into words. It can also help to keep in mind that your child may not have been born at that time – or may not be old enough to remember much about that day. Young children are especially tuned into how their parents feel, even if they don't understand why. If we don't let children know that we're sad because of a plane that went down in that field a number of years ago, they'll make up their own ideas – which might even be more scary than reality.

### **Your Child's Feelings**

Children react in their own unique ways – and their reaction will probably be different from yours. Keep in mind, too, that each child in a family might react differently.

It often helps to put some of those feelings into words, like "I was sad there." Or "I was so worried that day when it happened." Or "It made me angry to think that people might want to hurt others." Or even to say, "I was full of so many feelings – sad for the passengers and crew, proud of them, grateful for what they did, scared and angry that some people want to hurt others, all at the same time." When we put our feelings into words, it helps children know *their* feelings are natural and

normal. They also learn from us that we can have difficult feelings like being scared or worried, and that those feelings don't have to overwhelm us. We can handle them...and move on...that life is full of happy times and hard times. For many people putting their feelings into words helps them heal and cope.

### **How to Start**

It's a good idea to start simply. Children will ask if they want more. They'll also let you know when they've had enough.

Parents sometimes worry about creating a concern where there is none, but unfortunately, children are exposed to violence (through TV, DVD's, movies, video games, and the news). It's more likely that they are concerned about things, even things you can't imagine. It's better to open the door to talking, and then decide what to do from the way your child reacts.

### **Listening Now and Later**

Children know when we're really listening – when we look at them, when we answer in caring ways, and when we stop what we're doing and listen. For some older children, it may be less embarrassing to talk about their feelings when we aren't looking right at them. It might be easier to have those kinds of conversations in the car or while we're busy with something else.

Give your child time to think and talk. Try not to fill the silences too quickly. Your child might be trying to find the right words to say next. Maybe your child isn't ready to talk. It can take time to think about all that they see and hear at the Memorial site. Keep in mind, too, that some children are more private about their feelings and don't feel like talking. The most important thing is to listen whenever your child feels like talking.

When children can put their feelings into words, those feelings tend not to be so scary or overwhelming. And when we answer caringly, they don't feel so alone.

## **Activity Booklets for Younger & Older Children**

As children develop physically, so does their ability to understand and handle difficult information. This guide and the activity booklets give suggestions according to two developmental levels: younger and older children.

These levels are not specifically defined by age or by grade. You can decide where your child is in this continuum of development, which development level applies best and what your child is ready to talk about or handle.

The activity booklets can also be adapted to your child's level. For instance, in the younger booklet, topics are introduced so you can talk with your child further if they are ready. In the older booklet, the child is encouraged to either write or draw, whichever is most comfortable. Also, there is a reading list at the end of this brochure if you or your child would like to read more on different topics.

## **Reverence and Respect**

It may be difficult for a child to understand that people have come to the Memorial Site to pay their respects and honor the passengers and crew of Flight 93. Most children will sense from the adults around them that this is a place to be quiet and less active.

Keep in mind that it may be hard for younger children to be respectfully quiet for a long time. Even a quiet reminder might not work. It may be a good idea, then, to walk your child away from the area so as not to disturb others.

## **Remember, Honor, Choose, Hope**

All of the materials for your children share the common theme of:

***REMEMBER September 11, 2001***

***HONOR the passengers and crew of Flight 93***

***CHOOSE to make a difference***

***HOPE for tomorrow***

## *GUIDELINES FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN*

### **Talking after you visit the site**

It may be better to say, "Can you tell me what you're thinking about?" or "What do you remember from the Memorial?" rather than "What did you think about it?" which may be hard for a young child to answer – or easily shrugged off. Remember, it can be hard for anyone to talk about sad or complicated feelings.

If your child asks a question and you don't know the answer, it's okay to say, "I don't know." You might tell your child that there are many things in life that no one has the answer for. You may want to then ask, "What do you think?"

### **Possible Safety and Security Concerns**

There are different kinds of safety and security concerns that children might have. Some might worry that this might happen to other airplanes. It can help them to know that since that time, people in the government and in the airline companies have done a lot to make it safer.

Some children might worry about what might happen to their parents who travel on airplanes. Remember that younger children tend to see things from their own point of view and how it affects them. An honest way to answer is, "I intend to come back from my trip and be here to take care of you and to keep you safe."

### **Delayed Reactions**

There are some children who may want to check on their parents at night, or be worried when a parent goes somewhere for a while. They might insist on knowing, "Where are you going?" That's a way some children deal with their fears. You can let them know you will be back and give them some idea about when you will be back.

**Provide Hope for Tomorrow**

At this level, doing normal, routine activities can be reassuring to your child. You can also focus attention on the “helpers” in your community – those who keep us safe. That helps your child know that many adults care about children and are doing things to keep them safe. There are lots of reasons to feel positive about tomorrow.

**Activity Booklet for Younger Children**

The activity booklet for this level is a storybook to read quietly with your child before, during or after your visit. ***Zoomer, the Softball***, tells how he became a tribute. He explains tributes, honor, heroes, community helpers that keep us safe, choosing to do something for others, and hope for tomorrow.

You can talk more about these topics with your child if you feel he or she wants and is able to understand more. The story might also help you talk about other things your child saw, thought or felt about the site. It might be a way to encourage talking about feelings. There are also spaces to put thoughts into writings or drawings. The illustrations are in coloring book style for coloring at home. You can also use this as a way to talk about the visit again if you feel this might be helpful.

***GUIDELINES FOR OLDER CHILDREN*****Possible Safety and Security Concerns**

Going on an airplane can still be a concern for older children. But their fascination with technology can help them understand more about specific security measures and devices. Besides developing security at airports, scanners, x-ray machines, locks on the cockpit door, no-fly lists, engineers and airline executives are working on new technologies all the time to keep us safe. Information can help children feel they have some power over their fears, and it makes their fears less scary.

**Feelings and how to handle them**

Talking about feelings can help to get those feelings out in the open and easier to handle – and not so overwhelming. Putting your feelings into words lets your child know those feelings are natural and normal. It is also good to let them know that there are lots of ways of dealing with our feelings without hurting others.

Children might naturally ask, “Why would someone do this? Why did it happen?” You might want to say something like, “Some people wanted to hurt others, and the brave passengers and crew tried to stop it.” If your child asks why someone would want to hurt others, you can say that nobody knows for sure. Some people who are angry don’t know any other way to handle those feelings. Let your child know that it’s important for everyone to find ways to deal with their feelings without hurting anyone.

**Prejudice**

Thinking someone is good or bad because of their skin color, religion, or some other difference is “pre-judging” them or being prejudiced about them. Having an opinion like this about a whole group of people can often prevent us from learning about someone one-on-one. It is only then that we learn that each person is special and unique, no matter how someone looks or what religion someone practices.

Some worry that people who look like the terrorists or come from certain countries all want to hurt us. But even Americans who are sad and angry about what happened on September 11<sup>th</sup> understand that not everyone who looks like the terrorists or who come from those countries all want to harm us. In fact, many of the people who look like this or come from the countries are sad and angry about that day, too, and know that hurting others is not the answer. It can be hard to stop ourselves from judging people by how they look. Older children may want to know more. Check the reading list at the end of this booklet for more information.

**Provide Hope for Tomorrow**

Words have power! Think about how powerful WORDS were on Flight 93 – WORDS on the air phone letting people know what happened, and that they loved each other, WORDS of the passengers' vote (yes or no), the important WORDS "Let's roll" – which was a call to action.

Those are words of hope – we'll stop this dangerous behavior and take action. Some adults are turning their anger into positive things – learning more about Islam, building memorials, raising money for the families...etc. What kinds of things would your child like your family to do? Do they have ideas of what they could do?

**Terrorism**

If you feel it can help your child to understand more about terrorism, you can suggest a book on the reading list. Knowledge can sometimes help children feel they have some power over the information, so they don't feel so hopeless or helpless.

**Talking With Your Older Child**

If your child doesn't want to talk, that's okay. Don't make your child feel as if you're questioning or pushing them for an answer. Some children are private. Some children may need to think awhile before answering. If you show them that you respect the silence, you might find that your child will come to you to talk about it later on.

Keep in mind that it may take months or even years for a child to talk about a visit to the site. That discussion may come later, when something is in the news about September 11 or Flight 93 – or when there is another crisis. Just as planting a flower seed takes a while to grow and bloom, it might be some time later that your child may say something like, "I remember when we were there."

## Activity Booklet for Older Children

This activity booklet is a journal with self-guided questions and activities. Younger children in this grouping may need some guidance from you and want to draw their answers rather than write them. Older children might be able to use it on their own. Your help may or may not be needed, depending on your child. Either way, your interest in their booklet and their answers can be beginning points for discussion.

In addition to the journal and if available, you might want to allow your children to take their own pictures of the visit. Disposable cameras are ideal for this purpose.

- *On That Day: A Book of Hope for Children*, by Andrea Patel, Publisher: Tricycle Press, 2001; Making sense of the world again at a simpler level, with a preschooler's understanding.
- *Helping Children Deal with Tragic Events in the News, Timeless Wisdom from Fred Rogers for Parents, Caregivers and Teachers*, by Fred Rogers with Hedda Sharapan; Publishers: Family Communications, Inc., 2004 [www.fci.org](http://www.fci.org); pamphlet.
- *One Family Under the Same Sky*, by Laura Cohen, Sandra Allen, Eric Dlugokinski, Publisher: Feelings Factory, Inc. 1997; This book is a compilation of world-wide children's messages, both drawn and written, to the children of Oklahoma City to offer encouragement, support, hope, healing and love.
- *September 12<sup>th</sup>: We Knew Everything Would Be All Right*, by first grade students of H. Byron Masterson Elementary, Kennett, Missouri, Publisher: Scholastic, 2002. Reassurance that although bad things happened on September 11<sup>th</sup>, on September 12 everything would be all right, and why.

- *Frankie Wonders...What Happened Today?* by Yvonne Conte, Publisher: Amsterdam-Berwick Publishing Company, 2001; A storybook to read to children to help them understand the events of September 11 and how the news affected people, as they learned about it. It is about a child observing and feeling the sadness in his household, the questions and concerns he has, and how his parents made him feel safe again.
- *September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001: A Simple Account for Children*, by Nancy Poffenberger, Publisher: Fun Publishing Company, 2002; This book presents difficult subjects for the elementary grade reader. Student artwork helps describe the events in NYC, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania, as well as the nation's response to terrorism.
- *Helping America Cope*, by Annette La Greca, Copyright 2001 7-Dippity Inc., [www.7-dippity.com](http://www.7-dippity.com); This book addresses the concerns parents have about how the events of 9/11 and their aftermath might affect their children. It contains activities that parents and caring adults can do together with their children 6-12 years old.
- *The Crash of United Flight 93 on September 11, 2001*, by Tonya Buell, Publisher: Rosen Publishing Group, Inc. New York, NY, 2003; Written for elementary school readers, this 64-page book covers the events surrounding the hijacking and crash of United Flight 93. The book includes color photos, brief biographies of passengers and crew, a glossary, and a list of books for further reading about September 11<sup>th</sup>.
- *Understanding September 11<sup>th</sup> - Answering questions about the attacks on America*, by Mitch Frank; Publisher: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, New York, NY 2002; The maps, pictures & explanations are helpful to all ages. Text is for Age 12 & above.
- *On American Soil: A Day To Remember*, by Oklahoma City National Memorial Education Committee, Publisher: Oklahoma City National Memorial Trust, 2001; Oversized (12"x20") story book about what happened the day of the OK city bombing and building the OK City National Memorial. For elementary age children.

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Explore, Learn, Protect:  
Be a Junior Ranger



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