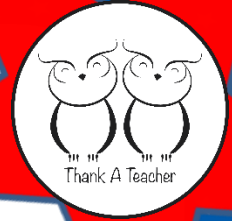
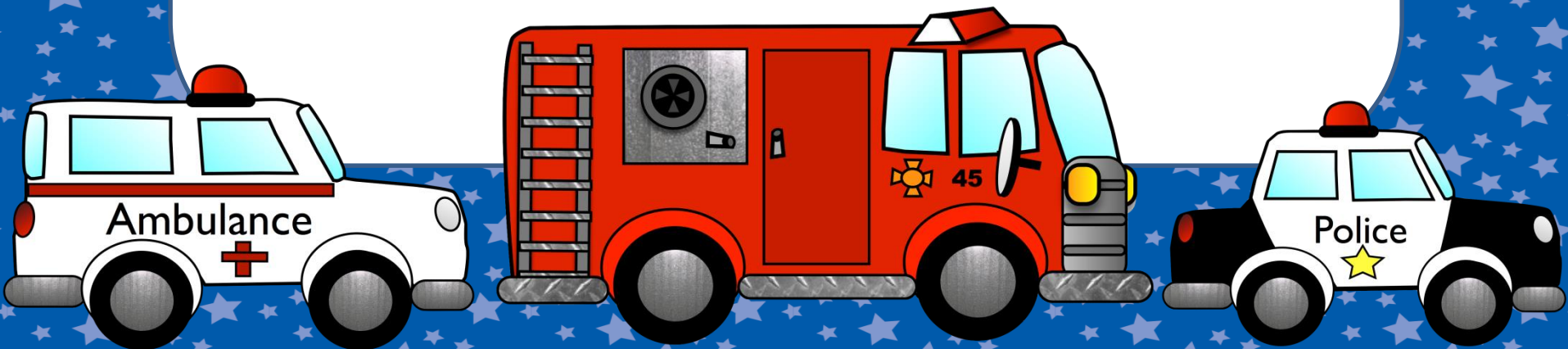


Over  
2000 Classes  
Participated  
Last year!



# Heroes of 9/11: Thanking Our First Responders



**Problem:** How to commemorate 9/11 with elementary age children without focusing on frightening elements.

**Solution:** I have created a thank you letter template for students to show appreciation to their neighborhood First Responders. Jody wrote the included student friendly article that details the important role First Responders play in protecting our communities. Students can use ideas from the article to be a spring board for larger projects beyond the classroom.



**Extension Activities:**

- Bake cookies to deliver with letters
- Write persuasive letters to support the creation of a National Day of Recognition on Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Send letter to local newspapers
- Create a Comfort Pack. Students get a labeled quart-size Ziploc that they can fill with anything that would make them feel better in an emergency. Possible items to include: family photo, mini flashlight, granola bar, deck of cards, puzzle, pen or pencil. Collect, store in classroom and return at end of the year.

**Results:** In the past I've dropped off the letters and treats at the local fire station on 9/11 and was amazed at the gratitude shown by these hometown heroes. It was Incredibly meaningful for both the students and the First Responders!

## Heroes of 9/11: Thanking Our First Responders

This month marks the anniversary of September 11, 2001. Over the years, people have looked for ways to honor those who lost their lives and make sure they are not forgotten. A new, unfamiliar term entered our vocabulary after 9/11: First Responder.

A First Responder is exactly like it sounds--a professional who is the first to respond or arrive at the scene of an emergency whether it is a wild fire, flood, tornado, or act of violence. We often think of Firefighters as First Responders, but First Responders can also be Police Officers, Sheriff's Deputies, State Troopers, State and Federal Officers and Dispatchers, as well as members of the Armed Forces.

Kids all over the country have found ways to honor and celebrate their local First Responders and their often heroic work. This summer a group of 40 kids in Connecticut participated in "Conntrek 9 - Hikers Helping Heroes." They walked 100 miles in eight days to raise money for First Responders. On the tenth anniversary of 9/11, sixth and seventh graders at Fort Zumwalt Middle School in O'Fallon, Missouri delivered cookies and chili to the First Responders in their community to thank them for their service.

Students can find both big and small ways to honor the First Responders in their neighborhoods and towns. At the individual level, a simple but sincere thank you note to a local hero working to keep us safe is a powerful and moving treasure. Some people have thought of really big ideas to honor our First Responders. There is currently a movement to convince Congress to set aside a national day of recognition each year on September 27th to honor our First Responders in the fire, police and medical professions.

# Today you are going to write a thank you letter to a First Responder.

In your letter you need to:

- Indent your paragraph or paragraphs
- Use correct spelling and punctuation
- Sign your letter
- Color the emergency vehicles or draw your own picture on the back

Ideas: Thank them for protecting us, for teaching kids how to stay safe, and for working hard.



Idea: Do you want to be a First Responder when you grow up? If yes, explain which profession and why?



Idea: Tell about a time you or someone you know was helped by a first responder. Or tell about a time when you helped someone.



Sept. 11, \_\_\_\_\_

Dear First Responder,

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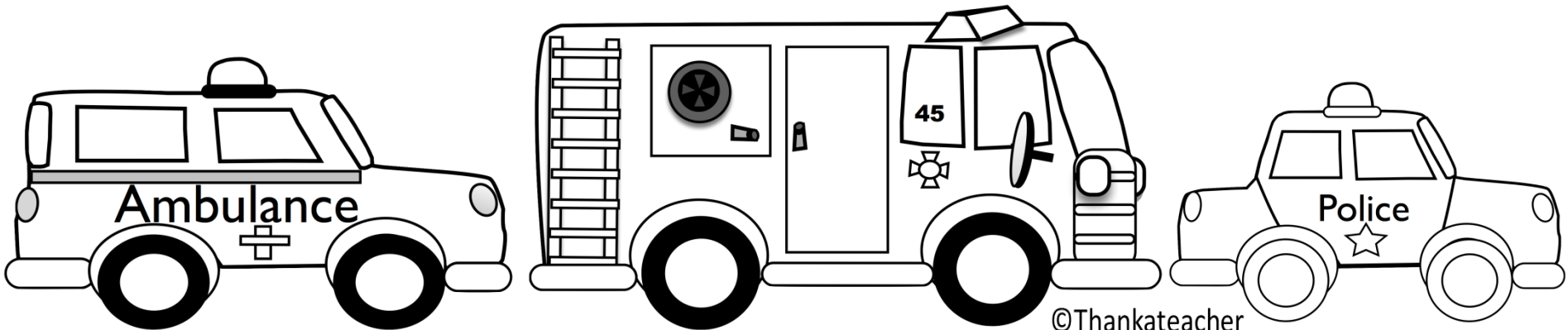
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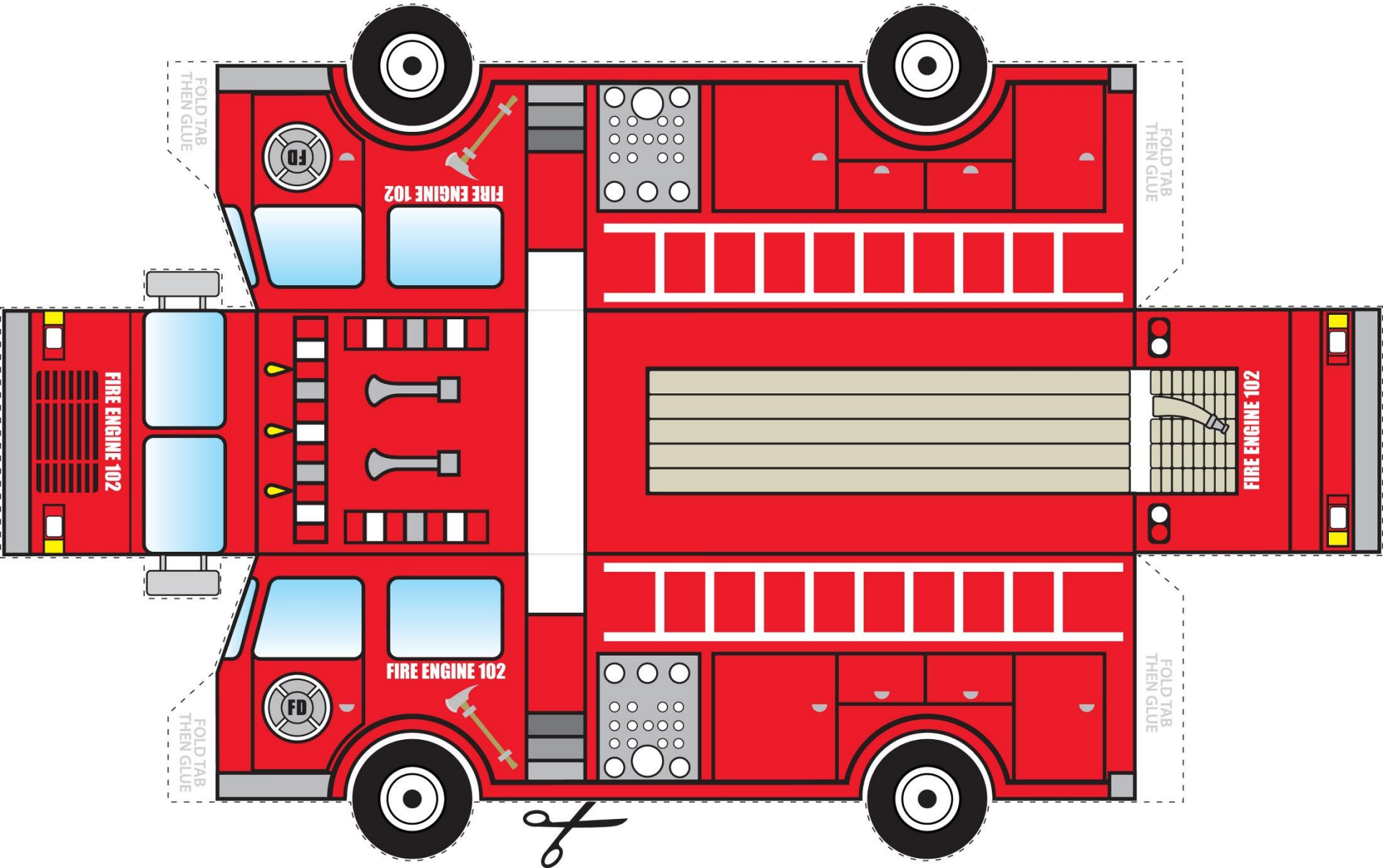
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Sincerely,



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Cut out along the line and glue tabs.



## Heroes of 9/11: Thanking Our First Responders

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