

## **Talk, Reach, Throw, and Don't Go!**

Grade: 5<sup>th</sup>  
Subject: Rescue Sequence/Method  
Theme: Following the proper rescue sequence, students can use items on board a boat or by a pool to help rescue someone from the water.  
Goal: For students to learn the proper rescue sequence.

### Objectives:

- Students will identify three rescue items.
- Students will identify the proper sequence and method for rescuing someone in the water.
- Students will understand why it is important not to swim for a drowning person.
- Students will identify the signs and signals of a drowning person.
- Students will understand the importance of wearing a life jacket.

### Background:

- Drowning can occur within 20-60 seconds.
- Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental deaths for children 14 years old and younger.
- A drowning person cannot yell or wave for help and will look like they are splashing and playing in the water.
- Two out of three drowning victims had no intention of going into the water.
- Most drowning victims had a life jacket available, but did not wear it.
- Most boating fatalities are not the result of a collision, but victims unexpectedly entering the water as a result of a fall or capsizing.
- Most fatalities involve boats that are less than 16 feet in length.
- Lifejackets are required in Arizona and Nevada for children 12 years old and younger.
- Items on board a boat can be used to rescue an individual in the water

Activities: Sink Fast (see summary for description)  
Talk, Reach, Throw, Don't Go! (see summary for description)  
Scenario Pool Party (see summary for description)

### Key Points:

- Learning the proper rescue sequence can prevent students from becoming victims themselves.
- Life jackets can only work if you wear them.
- There are many items around a pool or on a boat that can be used to help rescue a drowning person.

- Knowing the signs of someone having difficulty in the water.

Each set of duffel bags contain the following items to be used in conjunction with the Water Safety Education programs:

- four life jackets (one adult size/three child size)
- one Personal Flotation Device (PFD) Type IV throwable (cushion)
- one PFD TYPE IV throwable (ring)
- one rescue throw rope
- one cooler
- one towel
- one inflatable toy ring
- one stopwatch

Please be sure to keep the items together with the correct duffel.

**Other things to take with you to the programs:**

- Copy of your requested schedule
- Water safety education teacher evaluations
- Water safety education booklets (one for each student)
- Pencils or rulers (one for each student)

**Summary of one way to do **Talk, Reach, Throw, Don't Go!****

Water Safety Education Program

submitted by Ellen Anderson

4-5-06

When I arrive to the classroom, I let the teacher know that I need to make a big open space for the students to sit on the floor. It usually means that desks and chairs need to be moved out of the way. After getting permission from the teacher, I instruct the students on where they need to move their desks.

Once everyone is sitting on the floor, I introduce myself, NPS mission, etc. and ask them what are their favorite summer activities at Lake Mead? They will most likely mention water related activities. I tell them that I'm in their classroom today, because I'm concerned about their safety while they're enjoying the water activities available at the lake. A few years ago at Boulder Beach swim area a 14-year-old boy drowned because he was not wearing a life jacket. He jumped off a raft to try to get a paddle that had dropped into the water. Most drownings at Lake Mead are due to people not wearing a life jacket.

These are the background facts that I use in this program:

1. Drowning can occur within 20-60 seconds
2. Most drownings occur within 10 -15 feet from safety.

3. Two out of three drowning victims had no intention of going into the water.
4. Most drowning victims had a PFD available, but did not wear it.
5. Items on board a boat or beside a pool can be used to rescue an individual in the water.

I mention that I want to teach them some simple skills that will keep them safe while they enjoy the water this summer, whether they are on a boat or at a pool. We are going to create different situations that will help them make safe decisions. Here are a few of my favorite situations:

### **SINK FAST**

I choose a few students to get inside an imaginary boat that is in front of the class. I place on the floor in front of them enough life jackets so everyone has one. I do not want them to put them on yet. We pretend that they're out on the lake and everything is going great, until we notice that a storm is approaching. I mention that they're trying to get back to the launch ramp before the storm hits, but the waves are too big and suddenly the boat turns over. Depending on the class, sometimes I actually have the students that are not in the imaginary boat wave their arms like waves on the lake! At the count of three, I tell them to put on their lifejackets as fast as they can because the boat is sinking fast! I begin timing them to see just how quickly they can get on their life jackets! This is a lot of fun and the students enjoy the activity. After everyone has calmed down, I mention how funny this activity seems in the classroom, but situations like this one have happened at Lake Mead and they have resulted in drownings. It only takes between 20-60 seconds for someone to drown. How long did it take for them to put on their life jackets? What could they have done differently to prevent a possible drowning? Stress the importance of wearing a life jacket when on a boat at Lake Mead NRA.

### **TALK, REACH, THROW, DON'T GO!**

When I first come into the classroom after talking with the teacher, while the students are getting their desks moved, I write on the board the words listed above: *talk, reach, throw, don't go!* I mention that these simple words can save your life or help save the life of someone else. These words are part of something we call a "rescue sequence". I tell them that I'm here today to help them learn these simple steps if they are ever faced with a situation where someone has fallen into the water either in a pool or off a boat.

- Step 1. **Talk** with the person first to see if they can get to safety on their own.
- Step 2. **Reach** out to the person with something for them to grab hold of. Never reach out with your hands. Always have something between you and the person in the water.
- Step 3. **Throw** anything that floats to them, so they can try to hold on to it.
- Step 4. **Don't Go!** Don't ever go in the water after someone, unless you are a trained lifeguard. You can become a drowning victim. I know from first hand experience. I almost got drowned by my son, who was only a few years old at the time.

### **SCENARIO POOL PARTY**

I set up a scenario of a party at someone's house and all the adults decide to move inside. The mother and father have asked big sister and big brother to keep an eye on little sister

or brother while the adults go inside. I ask for a few students to be big sister, big brother, and little sister or brother. The big siblings are in fifth grade and the little sister or brother is only three. I bring the students to the front of the class and set up the scene by an imaginary pool. I put out the towel, cooler, radio, snack box, etc. and put out a throwable cushion pretending it is some kind of chair cushion. I ask the students what other items we might find around a pool. A teacher's yard stick makes a good pretend pool skimmer.

I then instruct the big siblings to be talking and listening to music, etc. while the little sister or brother is directed to play with a ball or something you can find in the classroom. Pretend that the ball gets dropped or blown into the imaginary pool. Now stop the action right there and ask the class if anyone has a little sister or brother and what do they think that three-year-old is going to do about the ball that went into the pool? Most kids will immediately say "try to get the ball by reaching toward the water!" And that is just what happens! Direct the little sister or brother to get into the water and pretend to be drowning: Encourage the big sister or big brother to do something to help get little sister or brother out of the pool. They could drown! Most often one of the siblings will rush into the pool and grab the little sister/brother. I hope this happens, because you can stop the action and demonstrate why going into the water after someone can be dangerous. When someone is frantic in the water trying to breathe air they will be desperate and will climb right on top of whomever it is in the water with them. Even small children can climb on top of adults. I know because it happened to me!

Ask for suggestions on how to rescue someone without going in yourself. See if they mention using some of the items for reaching and throwing. Demonstrate how you should get all the way down on your stomach when reaching with an object. Examples that can be used for reaching: pool skimmer, pool crook, the throwable, a towel, etc. Explain also that the next step is to throw anything that floats to the person. Both reaching and throwing can be difficult if a small child is involved. If they don't mention getting an adult for help, be sure to mention the importance of that! Not all of us are like the dog, Beethoven, who rescued the girl who fell into that pool in the movie.

When I give the Water Safety Education programs it never fails that I meet students who have had near drowning experiences. Occasionally I meet students who've had family members drown. A few years ago I spoke with a student who was at Boulder Beach when there was a drowning. It definitely opened my eyes to the importance of what we do. Any of these students could be the next drowning victim at Lake Mead NRA. Our safety education programs can save lives. Please give these students your very best effort.