

Facilitator's Guide

It Happened to Me

(Learning For Life 2007 rev.)

Introduction

It Happened to Me is a video presentation for viewing by students in the Learning for Life program. Teachers who have viewed the video gave it high marks for addressing personal safety issues in a very non-threatening manner. The situations of possible peril presented in the video are intended to be ambiguous, allowing adults to be as specific as they wish in discussing personal safety rules with the children.

The intent of the video is to develop communications between adults and children about personal safety decisions made by the child—but with help from their parents or other trusted adults.

The core message for children is contained within the *Four Rules of Personal Safety* presented in the video. These rules are:

- ② **Check first** with a parent or other trusted adult before I change plans, go anywhere or accept anything from anyone.
- ② **Go with a friend** in order to be safer and to have more fun. For Cub Scouts, the friend should be a parent, other trusted adult, or older child approved by the parents.
- ② **It is my body** and I have the right to say no to anyone who tries to touch me in places covered by my swimming suit or to do things that I think are wrong.
- ② **Tell a trusted adult** anytime I am hurt, scared or made to feel uncomfortable.

While these rules are specifically intended to protect children from sexual abuse, the advice to seek help from trusted adults is applicable to many problems that children confront.

Preparation for Viewing

It Happened to Me is designed for a viewing audience of children from 6 to 9 years of age. When used in the Learning for Life program, parents should be invited to view and discuss the video with their child. Some teachers will want to preview the video with parents before watching it with their students.

We strongly encourage individuals who will facilitate the discussion of *It Happened to Me* to view the video in its entirety before presenting it to a class. There are several pauses during the video to allow for discussion of the applicable rule. To accomplish the objective of strengthening communication between adults and children, the discussions are intended to discuss how the rules would apply in their lives. Your role as discussion facilitator is to suggest discussion topics and move the program along.

Other Resources

Before showing *It Happened to Me*, a letter should be sent to the parents of each student to inform them of the planned presentation and to invite them to attend with their children. A sample letter is included as part of this guide.

To help reinforce the “Four Rules of Personal Safety” presented in *It Happened to Me*, you are strongly encouraged to distribute copies of the *Safety Seekers* activity book that also features these important rules. The *Safety Seekers* activity books are available from your local council service center.

Viewing the Video

The video consists of a set of scenarios demonstrating the application of the “Four Rules of Personal Safety.” After each discussion period, the video will also review the key points of the rule.

Discussion Guides

Check First

INTRODUCTION: In this situation, Jonathon was befriended by a teenage youth aide, Sam, who encouraged Jonathon to violate one of the rules. Despite wanting to go with Sam, Jonathon checked first with Mr. Anderson.

Discussion Questions:

- ❑ Why did Jonathon do the right thing by checking first with the adult in charge?
- ❑ Why was this rule a good idea?
- ❑ What are some situations that you have been in to which the check first rules applies?
- ❑ Who are some of the adults in your life with whom you need check first?
- ❑ Does your family have any rules like check first?

Go With a Friend

INTRODUCTION: In this situation, Tim and his brother Steve visit the raceway to see a champion race car driver and his car. Tim’s mother approved the trip and Steve served as Tim’s “friend” for the outing. On the way to see the driver and his car, they encounter Greg, a young adult who hangs out at the youth center where Tim spends time. Greg attempts to join Tim and Steve but is politely, but firmly, told by Steve that his presence would not be welcome. Shortly after they arrive at the raceway, they notice Greg is there and acting somewhat strange.

Discussion Questions:

- ❑ What does this rule really say? (*The meaning of the rule: Go with someone who is approved by your parents or caregivers and who can help you be safer. In this situation,*

Steve was Tim's friend and was able to help protect Tim.)

- ❑ Why is it safer to be with others rather than be by yourself when you go places?
- ❑ Who are some friends who can help you be safer when you go places?
- ❑ Does your family use this rule?

It's Your Body and You Can Say NO!

INTRODUCTION: In this situation Miguel, the son of the after-school caregiver, touched Christin in a way that made Christin feel very uncomfortable. It may have been an accident—we don't know—but it really bothered Christin and she let Miguel know that she didn't like it.

Discussion Questions:

- ❑ Was Christin over-reacting when she told Miguel to stop and accused him of touching her the way he did?
- ❑ If the touching was an accident, why did Miguel want it to be kept a secret?
- ❑ If someone touched you in the same way that Miguel touched Christin, what would you do?

Tell Your Parents or Another Adult You Trust

INTRODUCTION: In this situation, Christin attempted to tell her mother what happened to her at aftercare. With everything else that her mother was doing, she did not stop to listen to Christin's concerns. She was able to get help by going to her school counselor.

Discussion Questions:

- ❑ What lessons did you learn by viewing this situation?
- ❑ Who are some of the trusted adults you could go to for help?
- ❑ If you had something really important to tell your parents, how would you get their attention?

After Viewing the Video

Distribute copies of the ***Safety Seekers*** activity book to each student.

Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parents:

Children growing up in our society are faced with many problems which they need adult help to resolve. Threats to their personal safety are serious problems that require parents and other adults to help make decisions that will help children be safer. Hardly a day goes by that the media fails to report sexual abuse of children, bullying in America's schoolyards, or, most recently, predators seeking access to children through the Internet.

To respond to these growing social problems, the Learning For Life program developed comprehensive Youth Protection training that addresses the problem of child abuse and at the same time helps communities to provide a safer environment for youth.

You are invited to preview a video, *It Happened to Me*. This video was produced by the Learning for Life program to help elementary school students develop personal safety skills. This presentation focuses on four simple rules for children to follow as they rely on parents and other trusted adults to help them make personal safety decisions.

It Happened to Me is an important part of the Learning for Life program. Each Learning for Life class is encouraged to present the video to its students and their parents once a year. The video portrays common situations that demonstrate the application of the "Four Rules of Personal Safety." The content of the video has been reviewed by parents, youth leaders, and educators. The review panels found it suitable for viewing by children as young as 6 years old.

Child development professionals unanimously agree that open communication between parent and child is vital to the child's personal safety. Viewing this video together will help to provide a common point of reference for subsequent conversations you may have on this topic. We urge you to attend the viewing of *It Happened to Me* so that you can watch and discuss it together.

I hope that you will be able to join us on (date, time, and place).

Sincerely,

Teacher