What's A PFD?

TOPIC/SUBJECT: PFD's - Personal Flotation Devices or Life Jackets
TARGET AUDIENCE/AGE LEVEL: Elementary students
TIME: 10-15 minutes
THEME: Life jackets are of no use unless you wear it and it fits you properly.
GOAL/PURPOSE: Participants will be able to explain why it is important for a PFD to fit them personally.
OBJECTIVE(S): The audience will know what the "personal" in Personal Flotation Device means.

DESCRIPTION:
A. Choose a willing participant from the audience (you will have to accurately assess the weight of your volunteer in order to correctly size the PFD).

B. Intentionally have the volunteer try on over or undersized PFD's. Every time that the volunteer tries on a different PFD ask the audience if it fits properly.

C. After eliminating obvious choices (i.e. too small, too large), have the volunteer pick out a PFD that fits them properly.

D. Ask the audience to **TELL** not **SHOW** the volunteer how to put on the PFD. Typical responses may be "put it over his or her head" or "wrap the strap around his or her waist." Following the audience's verbal instructions might lead to some pretty laughable situations, particularly with younger students.

E. After the volunteer has properly put on a PFD explain why it fits properly. You can ask the volunteer to check the PFD to see if the poundage limits are correct for them.

F. Explain to the audience how they can check their PFD to see if it fits them properly by performing a float test. Tell them that the next time that they go to the beach or pool to wear their PFD in a shallow area, sit down, and pick up their feet off the ground. If they float with their head out of the water then their PFD fits them properly. If their chin is in the water they should get their PFD replaced.

PROGRAM NOTE: To increase effectiveness the entire program should be highly participatory. Involve the audience by allowing them to "blurt" out how they would put the PFD on.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT: An assortment of PFD's in different sizes and styles.