

"Water Safety with Ranger Willie B. Safe"

TOPIC/SUBJECT: Water Safety

TARGET AUDIENCE/AGE LEVEL: All ages

TIME: 15 - 20 minutes (beach program using 1 - 2 skits)

30 - 45 minutes (campground program using 3 - 4 skits)

THEME: Many people die every year because they do not follow basic water safety principles.

GOAL/PURPOSE: The audience will realize the importance of being safe on or near the water and be motivated to learn more about water safety on their own.

OBJECTIVE(S): At the completion of the program the audience will be able to identify 1 or 2 rules of water safety and will associate the thumbs up sign with being safe. The audience will wear their life jackets and will encourage others to wear theirs. At the completion of this program, the audience will respect the water and will not take the importance of being safe around it for granted.

DESCRIPTION:

- A. Set up the skits so that they are visible to the entire audience.
- B. It is ideal to choose volunteers for the skits before your program starts. This keeps your program moving along smoothly without interruptions. If this is not possible, take a few minutes during the program to get volunteers.
- C. Remember the volunteers should be willing to participate. Explain to them briefly what they are going to be doing.
- D. Explain to the volunteers what their parts in the skits will be. Let them know that they act out their part according to what you say during the program.
- E. The skits involve the volunteers being in unsafe situations on or near the water.

SKITS:

Fishing from the shore / Reach, Throw, Row, Don't Go

Kid on an inflatable raft / Swim with a buddy

Alcohol and boating can be a deadly combination

Be Dam careful (or It Can Suck the Life Out of You)

Hotdoggers stay home

Life jacket fashion show / Life Jackets: They Float. You Don't.

- A. Skits are attached and can be changed to fit your needs or different skits can be used.
- B. Have music playing while the audience is entering to set the mood. Preferably music pertaining to water safety.
- C. Welcome everyone to your program, introduce yourself, and explain your program briefly. Try and state the theme somewhere in the introduction.
- D. Ask for a volunteer to be your assistant. Pick a willing volunteer, preferably from the age of 10 - 12 years old. The volunteer will be Park Ranger Willie B. Safe. Provide a ranger hat and life jacket for Ranger Willie.
- E. You and Ranger Willie interact throughout the program. You ask Ranger Willie if the participants in the skits will be safe. You may need to provoke Ranger Willie using questions to encourage the correct response.
- F. Don't embarrass or humiliate your volunteers in front of everyone. Remember you need them, so make them feel comfortable.
- G. After it has been explained why the participants in the skit were not safe and what should be done to be safe, tell Ranger Willie that he/she was right and give them a "thumbs up for safety".
- H. Have the audience give a "thumbs up for safety". This should be done after each skit and at the end of the program.

- I. Explain to the audience that if they ever see you again they should give you a Thumbs Up For Safety. They can also give the thumbs up sign to other people that they see being safe. This will help your audience recall your program and remember to be safe.
- J. Thank your volunteers for assisting you and give them something for helping.
- K. Wrap up your program with a strong conclusion. Repeat the theme one more time. Thank everyone for coming.
- L. Have handouts for the audience and encourage them to take them.
- M. Tell the audience about upcoming programs or have flyers available on them.
- N. Let the audience know that they may ask questions, concerning the program, your agency or project at the end of the program.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT:

Skit materials are included with the scripts

Water safety music	Sound system and microphone	Handouts and flyers
Prizes for volunteers	Ranger hat and life jacket for Ranger Willie	

FISHING FROM SHORE / REACH, THROW, ROW, DON'T GO SKIT

Items Needed: Fishing pole, Long stick or something to reach with, Cooler or something to throw that floats, Two volunteers, preferably adults

One volunteer will be a fisherman acting like they are fishing from shore. Give them a fishing pole for a prop. The other volunteer will be a passerby that may need to help the fisherman.

The fisherman slips into the water and can't save himself. The passerby thinks about jumping in to save the fisherman, but is encouraged by the audience not to do so. The passerby then finds a long stick to try and reach the fisherman, but the fisherman is just out of reach. The passerby notices a cooler that belongs to the fisherman. The passerby empties the cooler and places the lid back on it. Then the passerby throws the cooler out to the fisherman. The fisherman reaches for the cooler and uses it to float on. The fisherman floats close to the shore and is saved.

Explain reach, throw, row, don't go and why you should wear a life jacket near the water even if you don't intend to get into the water. Remember to interact with Ranger Willie and give he/she the thumbs up sign. Have the audience also give the thumbs up for safety sign.

KID ON AN INFLATABLE RAFT / SWIM WITH A BUDDY SKIT

Items Needed: Inflatable raft

3 or 4 volunteers portraying the following:
 one child that will be on the raft, one swimmer, one or two parents

The kid is floating several feet from shore and it looks as though no one is paying any attention to the child. The raft hits a stick in the water and starts to leak. The kid panics and falls into the water. The kid does not know how to swim and the depth of the water is over their head. They try to yell, but no words come out. The kid starts waving and thrashing their arms in all different directions. The kid goes under the water. Wait 5 seconds. But luckily a person swimming nearby noticed the kid go under the water. The swimmer pulls the kid out of the water. The kid's parents are enjoying lunch several feet away and wonder what all of the commotion is about. They realize it is their kid being carried out of the water. In a panic they run to see if their kid is ok. Luckily the kid is alive.

Explain that a child can drown in only 20 seconds, swim with a buddy, and don't rely on inflatable toys.

ALCOHOL AND BOATING CAN BE A DEADLY COMBINATION SKIT

Items needed: Two volunteers as boaters Mock boat Cooler

Two boaters are enjoying a beautiful day on the lake. While enjoying the lake they are also enjoying something else, alcohol. They are boating along with nothing to worry about. The alcohol is effecting their vision, coordination, judgement, and balance. As the day goes on the boaters start getting a little careless; yelling, standing up, horsing around, and making their boat go faster and faster. The boaters do not realize that they are headed straight for a bridge. When they do realize it the driver tries to swerve, but it's too late and they hit the bridge with such force that it throws them both out of the boat. Ask Ranger Willie and the audience if they think the boaters survived.

Explain that more than 50% of all boating accidents involve alcohol, know when to say when - drink in moderation and the best thing to do is leave the alcohol on shore.

BE DAM CAREFUL or IT CAN SUCK THE LIFE OUT OF YOU SKIT

Items Needed: Mock boat "Dam" sign No boat buoy (optional)
Fishing pole Life jacket One volunteer fishing from boat

The boater is having no luck fishing, but they have heard that there are a lot of fish near the dam. They decide to check it out. Their fishing luck increases the closer they get to the dam, but they notice a lot of fish right up next to the dam. The boater notices the no boat buoys, but pays no attention to them because the water looks calm. The fisherman is right about the fish and catches a nice one that is a fighter. The fight continues and is nearly over when the fisherman decides to stand up. They lose their balance and fall overboard, but they are safe because they are wearing their life jacket. But wait, the fisherman is pulled under the water and cannot be seen. Ask Ranger Willie where the fisherman went.

Explain to the audience that they should stay clear of a dam's intake and outtake, because they can suck the life out of you. Interact with Ranger Willie to explain the undertow near dams and why it is important to obey warning signs and buoys.

LIFE JACKET FASHION SHOW SKIT

Items needed: Five different types of PFDs Five volunteers

Have the volunteers come up and each one gets a different type of PFD to model. One at a time have each volunteer show off their PFD. Describe each PFD as it is being modeled. With a little audience encouragement the volunteers will usually strut their stuff. After the fifth volunteer is done explain why it is important to wear a life jacket on or near the water. They float, you don't, and an unconscious person can't swim or try to save themselves. Explain state laws throughout the show.

HOTDOGGERS STAY HOME / PWC OPERATION SKIT

Items needed: One volunteer as PWC operator Life jacket

Look, there is a person who is enjoying this nice day riding their Jet Ski. Looks like they are being pretty safe by wearing their life jacket. The PWC operator notices a boat making a big wake and has heard that it can be dangerous to jump wakes, but there are not a lot of boats around and wonders how dangerous could it really be anyway. They jump the wake and don't see any danger in it and it is really fun. The boat throws a huge wake that can't be resisted. The PWC operator notices that they can probably get the biggest jump the closer they get to the boat and decide to challenge it. They take off anticipating the jump. They do not realize that there is a boat approaching on the other side of the wake. They are in mid-air before they notice the oncoming boat and by then it is too late to do anything about it. Luckily the oncoming boat sees the Jet Ski and turns before they collide. Ask Ranger Willie what the PWC operator could have done differently to avoid that close call.

Explain that a PWC should be operated safely and hotdoggers should stay home. Explain that not all PWC operators are hotdoggers and that the operators that are not being courteous should stay home before they ruin the sport for everyone.