

Emergency Preparedness

Month: May

Week #: 34

Day: b. Tues. Time: 30 min.

# House Fire Safety

Life Tree Learning Systems ©

Objectives/Aims

The students will: recognize potential fire hazards in the house; know what to do in the event of a house fire.

Materials

none

Illustration

What could start a fire at my house?  
When this lesson is over, I'm going to see if my house is safe or not! By doing so, I could save my family and my house!

Background

Why should children be aware of home fire safety and know how to safely escape from a fire? The answer becomes obvious when you look at the statistics:



**The Overall Fire Picture - 2005**

- There were 3,675 civilians that lost their lives as the result of fire.
- There were 17,925 civilian injuries that occurred as the result of fire.
- There were 115 firefighters killed while on duty.
- Fire killed more Americans than all natural disasters combined.
- 83 percent of all civilian fire deaths occurred in residences.
- 1.6 million fires were reported. Many others went unreported, causing additional injuries and property loss.
- Direct property loss due to fires was estimated at \$10.7 billion.
- An estimated 31,500 intentionally set structure fires resulted in 315 civilian deaths.
- Intentionally set structure fires resulted in an estimated \$664 million in property damage.

Source: National Fire Protection Association Fire Loss in the U.S. During 2005 and USFA's Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2005.

Group Activity

1. Say, "Why do you think it's important to study home fire safety and learn how to escape from a fire?" A: Accept all answers and then read the statistics from the 'Background' information. Emphasize that more Americans die from fire than from all other natural disasters combined.
  
2. Say, "Today we're going to take an imaginary trip through an imaginary house looking for possible fire problems. Now close your eyes and imagine that you're at the front door of the house. On the door is a sign with a big smiley face that says, "Come on in!" You open the door and enter the house. The first room you enter is the living room. As you look at the room, using your imagination, you notice a shirt laying on a lamp, a hot radiator and some matches laying on the

### **Group Activity (continued)**

table. You also notice various toys on the floor, so you know that a young child lives here. Okay, now open your eyes. What did you see in the room that could have caused a fire or caused someone to get burned?" *A: The shirt could have caught on fire. The matches could have been used by the child to set a fire. The child could have been burned if he or she touched the hot radiator.*

3. Say, "Close your eyes once again and imagine that you're still standing in the living room. Now you notice that there is a roaring fire in the fireplace. There is not a screen over the fireplace. Next to the fireplace is a stack of newspapers. Okay, open your eyes. What else did you see in the room that could have caused a fire or caused someone to get burned?" *A: There wasn't a screen over the fire so sparks could have shot out and started a fire. The paper was too close to the fire and the heat of the fire could have caused them to ignite. The child could have gotten burned by the fire since it wasn't covered.*

4. Say, "Close your eyes so we can continue our imaginary tour. Now you leave the living room, travel down the hallway and go into the kitchen. On the stove you notice a pot of water vigorously boiling on the front burner. The handle of the pot is sticking out over the edge of the stove. Turning to your right, you notice a whole bunch of electrical cords sticking out of the wall socket. The cords run down under a throw rug. In addition, you notice a metal fork laying on the floor by the outlet. Finally, you smell and hear popcorn popping in the microwave. Nobody is around. Okay, now open your eyes. What did you see in the room that could have caused a fire or caused someone to get burned?" *A: The handle of the pot, which was sticking over the edge, could have been grabbed by the child, causing the boiling liquid to be spilled all over him. The electrical cords could have caused a fire. The child could have used the metal fork to stick in the outlet, giving him an electrical shock/burn. The popcorn could have burned and started a fire since nobody was around to monitor it.*

5. Say, "Once again close your eyes so that you can continue your tour of your imaginary house. Now you leave the kitchen, go back to the hallway and take the stairs leading to the second floor. You enter one of the bedrooms and look around. You notice a nice fragrance coming from a candle burning on a night stand. The window next to the night stand is open and the breeze is blowing the curtains all around. Looking upward, you notice a smoke alarm hanging from its wires. It appears to be out of order. Okay, now open your eyes. What did you see in the room that could have caused a fire or caused someone to get burned?" *A: The curtains could have knocked over the candle or caught on fire themselves. The smoke alarm needed batteries, or needed to be fixed, so that it could warn of an impending fire.*

6. Say, "Close your eyes for the last time. Imagine that you informed your imaginary parent that the smoke alarm needed new batteries and so they fixed it. Yawning, you realize that you're so tired from your imaginary house tour that you crawl into the comfy looking bed and fall promptly to sleep. Suddenly, you hear a loud 'beep, beep, beep!' You smell smoke and your eyes are stinging from the fumes. Okay, open your eyes. What do you do in this situation where your house is on fire?" *A: Stay calm, stay low and get to the floor. Do not hide or take any belongings. Crawl along the floor along a predetermined route that your family planned and practiced. When you get to the door, if it is closed, feel the door to see if it is hot. If it is hot, get out the alternate way your family planned and practiced. Continue crawling until you escape the house. Go to your designated 'safe spot' that your family discussed. If you don't have a safe spot, go to your neighbors. Make sure someone calls 911. Do not go back into the house for any reason!"*

### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. By a show of hands, how many of you have made plans and practiced your escape route out of your house? If not, encourage your family to do this... you'll feel a lot safer and secure.

### **Variations/Extensions**

1. If you have access to a computer projector, go to <http://www.epa.gov/kidshometour/> and do the home tour as a class or have individual/pairs of students do it on their own.
2. Ask a student to volunteer to be a 'people puppet' and be the child who travels through the house.

### **Conclusion**

Say, "House fires are hot, scary and they can be deadly. It is much better to prevent them from happening in the first place, so tonight take your own house tour and see if it is safe. If you notice something that worries you, talk to your parents or caretaker. If there is a fire, remember first and foremost to stay calm. You know what to do."

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