



Lesson Plan #5

Listening to Our Instincts

Presenter Overview: The human body is wired with an impressive inner warning system. Children are usually unaware of their instincts, but these gut feelings work every day to protect them from danger. By teaching children to recognize, trust and follow instincts, we greatly increase their ability to stay safe.



Key Points:

- Instincts are our inner sirens. They warn us when something is wrong and when we need to be careful.
- Recognizing, trusting and following our instincts can help to keep us safe from unsafe behaviors and situations.



Vocabulary:

Instincts, proceed, recognize, react, uneasy



Props:

Toy emergency vehicle with siren (or picture of emergency vehicle); PowerPoint slides #17-18; Student Handout, “Listening to My Instincts” (pg. 195)

The Presentation:



Quick Review: In the last lesson, we learned that there are laws to help protect us and keep us safe. Sexual abuse is *against the law* and must be reported to a trusted grown-up and the police. We learned not to make up stories about sexual abuse or other crimes because it is also *against the law* to say someone committed a crime when he or she did not.

Learning Objectives:

In this lesson, we will learn that our bodies have a special warning system, like a siren, that we can depend on to help keep us safe.



Discussion:

1. What are instincts?
 - Feelings we have inside that can give us important information about behavior and situations. Sometimes instincts warn us when things are wrong or dangerous.*
2. What does a siren tell us? (Ring siren, display picture of emergency vehicle, and/or show Slide #17.)
 - *Something is wrong.*
 - *Someone is in danger.*
 - *Someone has been hurt.*

How do we feel when we hear a loud siren?

- *Worried*
- *Frightened*
- *Excited*

3. Point to where those feelings come from.
 - (Students will point to their stomachs.)*

Yes, we pointed to our stomach, our “gut.” What do we call those feelings?
Instincts.

Some people call instincts “gut feelings” because we can actually feel them in our gut or belly.



4. Instincts are our very own personal sirens. Like yellow traffic lights, they tell us what?
 - *Slow down.*
 - *Be careful.*
5. Let's talk about how our instincts work in everyday situations:
When something comes toward our eyes quickly, what do we do? *Blink.*
When we touch something very hot? *Pull our hand away quickly.*
When something large is thrown at us? *Bring our hands up and turn away.*
When we are suddenly frightened or hear a loud noise? *Jump or freeze.*

6. Now, a show of hands:
Have any of you ever met someone you would describe as “weird” – who made you feel uneasy?
Have you ever been online and seen pictures that gave you a funny or sinking feeling in your gut?
Have any of you ever had a really strange feeling about a person or situation, but didn't know why?
(Shows of hands.)



Most of us have had those feelings at one time or another. What makes us feel that way?
Our instincts. Our inner siren.

(Display PowerPoint slide #18) If we get a funny feeling in our gut about a person or situation, what are our instincts telling us?

That something is wrong and to be careful.

If someone or something sets off our inner siren, should we tell a parent or another trusted adult?
Yes.

7. Besides instincts, what else are we all born with that we can use to protect us from harm?
Our brain, our built-in computer.
8. If we use these two safety tools we are born with – brains and instincts – together, do you think it would be a big help in keeping us safe?
Yes.

So from now on, every time we hear a siren, let's remember our own inner sirens and how they can help us *Think First & Stay Safe.*



Lesson Recap: To sum up what we have learned, it's important to remember these things.

1. Instincts are inner sirens that tell us to slow down and be careful.
2. Recognizing, trusting and following our instincts can help keep us safe from unsafe behaviors and situations.
3. If someone's behavior sets off our inner siren, we should tell a trusted grown-up.



Presenter's Notes:

- Distribute Student Handout, “Listening to My Instincts” (pg. 195).
- Review and send home with students.



Additional Resources:

For the Classroom: School Program Poster: “Trust Your Gut” - Available for free download @ www.childluresprevention.com/schools/posters.asp.
Student Handout #5 on page 195 .