

Lesson 2: Crossing Streets Safely

Time: approximately 40 minutes

This curriculum does not cover every possible scenario that a child may encounter as a pedestrian, but instead addresses the basic skills needed to be a safe pedestrian. Teachers should use their discretion as how to appropriately break material to accommodate their daily schedule. Studies have demonstrated that skill-building activities are the most effective way to promote student retention of pedestrian safety skills. While the “Activity” portion may be postponed to a future class period if needed, it is an essential component to this curriculum and all lessons should be complemented with the reinforcement of safe pedestrian behavior. More time can be spent on practicing the behavior if children are already familiar with the core material.

Lesson Objectives:

The objective of this lesson is to review the basic concepts of crossing a street safely. At this maturity level, students should know how to safely cross the street, but they probably rush through the steps without thinking them through. Teachers may want to allow students to think through the steps as if the students were teaching a younger child.

The students will be able to

- Use care and caution when crossing smaller, residential streets
- Recognize that they need to set a proper example for younger children
- Identify and demonstrate the five steps to crossing a street

Applicable National Standards of Learning:

- Physical Education Standard 1: Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.
- Physical Education Standard 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.
- Health Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
- Health Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Materials:

Masking tape, rope, tall boxes or barriers, and other material to create a model street

Pictures of Safe and Unsafe Streets

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet

Example:

Preparation: Using the above listed materials, create a model street.

You will need four long strips of material to make the street and two associated sidewalks, as well as several shorter strips to create a center line for the street.

Place a tall trash can or box in the street. This will act as a visual barrier to emphasize the “second edge.”

Lesson Outline

Introduction: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Identify reasons for crossing the street
- Explain the importance of setting a good example for younger children
- Define “mid-block”
- Evaluate the safety of crossing specific streets

Discussion & Teacher Modeling: (10 minutes)

The teacher will

- Discuss and simultaneously model the steps to crossing the street safely

Sample Script

Today we are going to review the steps to crossing the street safely! As you all know, there are many different kinds of streets. Today we’re just going to learn how to cross smaller streets, like the streets in (the teacher names a nearby quiet, residential area).

Why do you think it is important to cross the street safely?

- *For my own safety*
- *To show other students and even adults how to cross streets safely*

In this lesson, when we talk about crossing the street we are talking about crossing the street at mid-block.

Raise your hand if you think you know what mid-block means.

- *Mid-block means “middle of the block.” It is when we are at some place along the street, not at a corner or an intersection.*

In this lesson, when we talk about crossing streets safely we are also talking about a specific kind of street. Look at these pictures of different streets. Give me a thumbs up or thumbs down to tell if it is a good or bad idea to try to cross them. ***[Teacher displays the Materials Introduction pictures of safe and unsafe streets.]***

After looking at these pictures, what are some characteristics of a street that we should think twice about crossing at mid-block?

- *One that has heavy traffic, traffic moving at high speeds, several lanes of traffic*

[Teacher shows the model street or takes the class to a familiar and safe street.]

Let’s imagine that we are going to be crossing the street or teaching a younger child to cross the street for the first time (use diagram from the preparation portion of this activity plan). This is the sidewalk next to the street and this is the actual street. As we talk about the steps to crossing the street, we are going to practice together. Please stay with me as we talk through each step. We are not going to rush. Remember, we have to be good role models for the younger children in our care.

Lesson Outline

1. Identify a Safe Place to Cross the Street
 - Define and explain types of “visual barriers”

Sample Script

Now that we know what streets are safe to cross and we are on a street that we have deemed safe, we have to remember that it is not always safe to cross at any place on that street. You have to be sure to find a safe place to cross.

How do you know where it is safe to cross?

- *A safe place to cross is where you can see clearly in both directions.*

Raise your hand if you remember what we call something that makes it hard for you to see or that makes it hard for cars to see you?

- *A visual barrier*

What are some examples of visual barriers?

- *Parked cars, trucks and buses, tall bushes, trash cans, trees*

What should you do if you want to cross the street but encounter a visual barrier? (i.e., A parked car is making it hard for you to see traffic coming down the street)

- *Find another place to cross the street*

Let’s all find a safe place to cross on our street here. When you have found your spot, put your hands on your hips so that I know you are ready. ***[Students find safe areas on the side of the model street. Teacher places the box or trash can near the model sidewalk as a visual barrier. Teacher watches and helps guide any students having difficulty or those who have chosen an unsafe area.]***

Lesson Outline

2. Stop at the Edge
- Define the “edge” and discuss examples of “edges”
3. Look and Listen for Traffic
- Practice the Left-Right-Left Procedure for looking
 - Discuss senses a student may use when crossing the street

Sample Script

Next, let’s talk about another step you should follow before actually crossing.

What is the “edge” of a street?

- The curb or side of the road; the line between safety and danger*

Why is the “edge” a good place for me to stop?

- It is a place where you can see cars coming, but you are still far enough away from the road.*

Before we find the edge, let’s imagine that I decided to cross the street further down. **[Teacher positions herself so that the visual barrier is in her line of sight.]** You can see that there would be a large barrier in my way. I cannot see one direction down my street. What do you think I should do?

- Find a safer place to cross that is free of visual barriers*

This is a great answer! What if there is not a safer place to cross? What else could I do?

- Move out a little more to the edge of the barrier.*
- Move to the **second edge** [students may need guidance to recall this vocabulary word from the previous year’s instruction]*

Watch as I stop at this second edge. **[Teacher demonstration]**

Since we are all in safe places that are free of visual barriers, let’s move to the edge of our street. Remember—don’t cross yet! Just move to the edge.

Great! We have stopped at the edge of the street, but we still cannot cross yet. We are forgetting one of the most important things to do before crossing the street. Raise your hand if you know what I should do next.

- Look left-right-left*

What are we looking for when we look Left-Right-Left?

- For traffic*

Why do we look left first?

- That is the direction that the traffic closest to us is coming from*

Then, why do we look right?

- To see if traffic is coming from the opposite direction*

Finally, why do you think we look left again?

- Because cars move fast and we want to make sure it is still safe to cross where cars are moving closest to us*

(continued)

Lesson Outline

3. Look and Listen for Traffic (continued)

4. Cross Quickly and Safely

- Explain how and why children should walk (not run) across the street in a straight line
- Analyze why walking in a straight line is shorter than walking at a diagonal

5. Be especially cautious in bad weather

- Explain how adverse weather conditions can impede drivers' ability to see and stop for pedestrians.
- Describe extra precautions pedestrians should take when crossing the street in bad weather.

Sample Script

You've got it! We not only have to use our sight sense when we cross though. We have to use another one of our five senses.

What do you think it is?

- *Hearing*

What are some of the sounds we should be listening for?

- *Car engines, horns, sirens, etc.*

What should I do if I hear one of those sounds?

- *Stop and wait until it is clear. Look and listen for traffic again.*

Good! Now, let's all look left-right-left. I don't see any traffic. Let's all listen. I don't hear any traffic. The street is clear, so I am going to start to cross the street.

Now, as we cross the street, I want you to make sure you are remembering ways to safely move when you cross.

- *Are you walking? You should never run because you may trip and fall.*
- *Is your head up? Are you looking left-right-left and listening while you are walking?*
- *Are you walking straight across the street? Remember in geometry that the diagonal line on a right triangle is longer than the straight lines. You want to move in a straight line because you will be in the street less time and you are less likely to be hurt. [The teacher may want to demonstrate this concept by using sidewalk chalk or a string so the students can visualize.]*

Good, we are now safely on the other side. We've learned the basic principles we need to know in order to cross the street safely.

Today the weather is good. But, what if it were raining or snowing? How do you think rain and snow affect drivers?

- *They can't see as well.*
- *They can't stop as quickly.*

That's right! An important thing to think about when crossing the street is what drivers can see and do. When the weather is bad, drivers may have difficulty seeing you or may not be able to stop as quickly. Have you ever slipped on some ice? Well, that's what it's like for cars when it's raining or snowing. Very slippery! Have you ever been inside a car when it is raining or snowing hard?

Can you see well?

- *No.*

(continued)

Lesson Outline

5. Be especially cautious in bad weather (*continued*)

6. Be a Role Model

Sample Script

Besides snow and rain, what else can make it difficult to see from a car?

- *When it is dark.*
- *When the sun is shining in your eyes.*

Good. It's always important to think about what drivers can see and do before you cross. What are some things you can do to make it easier for cars to see you when you are crossing the street?

- *Wear bright-colored clothes and reflective material.*
- *Carry a flashlight if it's dark.*

What are some things you can do if you think cars may have trouble stopping because it's raining or snowing?

- *Be especially careful about where and when you cross the street.*

Yes, when it is raining or snowing, you should be especially careful about where and when you cross the street. Find the place along the street where you can see the farthest in both directions, and only cross when you are sure no cars are coming. Remember to look left-right-left before you cross the street, continue looking left-right-left as you cross, and always cross in a straight line because it is the shortest distance.

Let's talk about a serious situation: What if you see a younger child attempt to run or cross the street? What could you do?

- *Offer to cross with them by calling out and asking them to wait for you to begin crossing.*
- *Make sure that you do not run after them. Always stop at the edge first.*
- *Make sure to show them how through the steps for safe street crossing.*

Lesson Outline

Activity Options:

The students could...

- a. Practice the five steps with teacher guidance (15-20 minutes, *see sample script*)
- b. Practice crossing the street on school grounds or on a neighborhood or residential street near or within school grounds to reinforce appropriate behavior (10-20 minutes)
- c. Take a supervised walk in a nearby neighborhood with adult volunteers to practice and reinforce proper behaviors when crossing the street (20-30 minutes)

Closure: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Review the five steps for crossing the street
- Review the importance of being a safe role model for younger children.

After the review, it is highly recommended that teachers take students to a safe environment outdoors to reinforce the learned behaviors. Parent and other adult volunteers may be necessary to make this first-hand experience more valuable and safe for the children.

Sample Script

ACTIVITY OPTION A:

Now, it's your turn! Each of you is going to get the chance to show me how to cross the street correctly.

[The teacher should individually call on specific students to cross the street. The teacher should assess the students' ability to follow directions, verbalize their actions, and make decisions based on scenarios that may occur when crossing the street.]

[If time permits, the teacher can also have this older group of students buddy up with a younger group of children (perhaps grade level pairings of K, 1st and 4th & 2nd, 3rd and 5th). The older children can demonstrate safe behavior while teaching and modeling the younger children.]

Let's review all that we have learned today.

What do we do first before crossing the street?

- *Find a safe place to cross with no visual barriers*

Once you locate a safe place to cross, what is the first step?

- *Stop at the edge*

What is the next step before crossing the street?

- *Look left-right-left and listen for traffic*

Finally, how should you cross the street?

- *Walk in a straight line and continue to look and listen for traffic*

Perfect! Raise your hand if you are always going to be a good role model for younger pedestrians! I know that you will!

Suggested Cross-Curricular Connections:

These optional activities are included to extend the lesson into other areas of learning. Most activities presented may be completed within a 20-minute time period.

Physical Education**Class Game with Listening and Movement**■ **PASS!**

- Divide the class into equal teams. Arrange two desks and chairs at the front of the room—one for each team. Give each team one piece of paper.
- Have one student number the sheet from 1–5 for the number of questions (more or less at the teacher’s discretion).
- The game starts with player one on each team. The teacher will ask a pedestrian safety question aloud to the student (DO NOT write it on the board). Player One will have to write the answer on the paper. Other players are doing some sort of in-place exercise (jumping jacks, push-ups, sit-ups, knee lifts, etc.) behind the team member writing. Offer breaks where appropriate if students are getting too worn out.
- After one minute (or less if deemed appropriate), Player One will pass the paper to the next student. Player One will join the other players doing movement. During this next minute, Player Two will answer the second question. They also have the opportunity to edit the previous question.
- When time is up, they will pass the paper to the next player, and so on.
- THE ENTIRE ACTIVITY IS PERFORMED IN SILENCE, and no other paper is permitted on their desk.
- At the end, tally up the answers to see which team wins.

Literature

- The following are appropriate examples of children’s literature to use with this lesson in the unit of study:
 - ***Make Way for Ducklings*** by Robert McCloskey (There are several online resources for lesson plans based on the book. One, developed by Chris Frazier at Oakbrook Elementary in Ladson, South Carolina may found at: http://129.252.3.27/lesson_plans/PDF/Make%20Way.pdf) (This activity may be done in small groups or individually.)
 - Read the story
 - List unsafe behaviors the mother duck exhibited while crossing the street.
 - Rewrite the section of the story where the mother duck crosses the road to show that she knows pedestrian safety.

Social Studies (Geography)

- Analyze routes on a map (to be completed in small groups)
 - Students research the setting of ***Make Way for Ducklings*** (can be read in this Social Studies class, or coordinated with the Literature class above) and find an appropriate map online to analyze. (The following is one suggested Web site that includes appropriate maps: <http://www.dgl.salemstate.edu/Profs/Young/Ducks/DUCKS.htm> and click on “Download Material (images & maps)”.)
 - Allow children to identify the mother duck’s route through the city by finding specific locations on the map
 - Allow children to evaluate the mother duck’s route to show if it is the safest route she could have chosen. (For an added challenge, the children can identify alternate routes the mother duck could have chosen.)

Materials

Pictures of Safe and Unsafe Streets

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet