

Kids and Paddle Boats Instructor Activities

*****Important Instructor Notation: Since many of these activities involve touching children, it is very important to be aware how you are touching them and to avoid any perception of inappropriate touching. Ask permission, e.g. "May I put this life jacket on you?" Parents should give permission prior to contact being made or if parents are not present such as a school setting, follow the advice and consent of the Teacher or Administrator and have other adults present during any contact with children.**

**Some cultures are more sensitive to touching than others, particularly on the head.
Be sensitive and always ask first.**

1. **Floating Oranges: Demonstrates importance of wearing life jackets:**

Materials: Several oranges or tangerines, a clear container with water, knife or something to peel the oranges/tangerines.

Activity: Have students throw an unpeeled orange/tangerine into the clear container filled with water. It will float on the surface. The orange represents a person wearing a life jacket.

Next peel the orange explaining that this is the swimmer without their life jacket. Ask the students what they think will happen. The unpeeled orange will sink to the bottom of the container. The orange peel will float on the surface as a life jacket if not worn. If safely done, have the students peel their own orange (gives ownership to demonstration).

You can then re-wrap a peeled orange in the orange peeling. This can demonstrate a swimmer wearing an improperly fitting life jacket. The peeled orange when placed in the water will then come out of the peeling and sink to the bottom while the peel floats on the surface. This will demonstrate how a boater wearing an improperly fitted life jacket will sink and drown while the jacket floats to the surface.

2. **Life Jacket Demonstration: Demonstrates how important size, fit, color, and condition are to survival:**

Materials: Several kid's life jackets of varying colors, condition (good and bad, sizes; and at least one float cushion or ring.

Activity: Hold up various life jackets to show what to look for when shopping for a life jacket. Look at **SIZE** and **FIT**. Explain how life jackets are sized. Demonstrate how various sizes fit several kids by having them try on life jackets: one too large, one too

small, and one just right. Ask kids about how they buy clothes and look at sizes when trying on clothes.

Be sure to emphasize that life jackets just be labeled “U.S. Coast Guard Approved.”

Look at ripped and torn life jackets explaining why these do not work.

Discuss **COLOR** of life jackets. What color is water? What colors should be different to show you clearly in the water? How does a blue life jacket differ from a red, orange, yellow or pink one? How does a camouflage life jacket look in the water?

Ask about the pillow collar on the life jacket. Demonstrate how the collar keeps a child’s head face up. Show how the safety strap keeps the child’s life jacket on when being lifted from the water. Also, demonstrate how the handle on the collar will allow pulling them out of the water.

Have the kids repeat “SIZE, COLOR, FIT” to show they know the important considerations when wearing a life jacket.

3. Noise-making Devices for Safety: Demonstrates having a whistle and using one to get help.

Materials: Various whistles, including some that use a pea and some water-proof without a pea, and a bowl of water.

Activity: If available, provide some students with a whistle that use a pea, and some “non-pea” whistles. After having the students demonstrate that each whistle works, have each student place their whistle in the bowls of water and then try to blow the whistle. The ones with peas will not work as well. They need to be sure that their whistle is one that works if it gets wet. If the weather turns bad (or it gets dark) and you can't see very well (or can't be seen by bigger boats), blowing your whistle will let other boaters know where you are. If you find yourself in trouble, blow it to attract the attention of anyone who may be in the area. This is a recognized way to get help, so only use it when you really need help

4. Dressing for the Day: Demonstrates importance of dressing for a safe and comfortable trip.

Materials: Shirt, hat, sunscreen, water bottle, sunglasses.

Activity: Ask students how to be protected from the sun while on the water. five students each demonstrate how each item can protect them from the sun. One student puts on a shirt and explains how this protects from sunburn, wind, and provides more comfort. Also

explain that wearing a bright color can make you more visible in a paddleboat.

Another student put on a hat and explains why this is important to protect from the sun and dehydration. Also, explain how the color of a hat can make you more visible.

Another student displays sunscreen (can also add a chap-stick as well) to explain why using it is important to avoid sunburn.

Another student sips on water while explaining why keep hydrated is so important on the water.

Another student slides on sunglasses to show how they protect the eyes from the sun, the reflection of the water, and allow you to see more clearly as you paddle on the water.