

Lesson plan 1:

Get down low and go, go, go

Background

Students need to know safe practices to ensure that they respond quickly to smoke alarms and threatening fire situations. When they are asleep, people can't smell smoke, so smoke alarms are an essential early warning system. Even in a short time, smoke can cause a child to become disoriented and unable to respond. It is important to check doors for heat before opening and to always use the back of your hand rather than the palm, as the former is more sensitive, especially to temperature. As a household, it's also important to have a home fire escape plan that includes a safe meeting place. Even though it is important for students to understand the dangers of a fire, younger children can still be easily frightened. The focus of the lesson should be on the importance of safe behaviour, rather than dwelling on the dangers.

Suggested teaching time

40 minutes

Objectives

To develop an understanding of the dangers of smoke in a fire so that students are able to:

- recognise that smoke alarms provide a warning of fire
- understand that their home must have a working smoke alarm
- demonstrate the safe behaviour of crawling low in smoke to an exit.

Materials needed

- Smoke alarm (to be sourced from the fire station)
- *Smoke parachute*

Lesson outline**1. What is smoke?****10 minutes**

- Encourage the students to close their eyes and pretend to be in a darkened room. Ask 'How do you feel?' Explain that smoke filled rooms are dark, just like when your eyes are covered.
- Discuss experiences, for example, watery eyes, coughing, students who have had smoke in their eyes from a barbecue or campfire.

2. Smoke alarms**5 minutes**

- Ask 'How would you know there was smoke inside your house?' Discuss the need for a warning, particularly if people are asleep, when they can't smell smoke.
- Ask students to block their ears because things are about to become noisy. Operate the smoke alarm. Ask students if they have alarms in their homes and in which rooms they are located. Discuss why the alarms are placed there.
- Explain that if a room is full of smoke we cannot breathe very well and feel that we don't know where we are. Explain that smoke rises, which makes the air cooler and breathing easier near the floor.

3. Get down low and go, go, go

25 minutes

- Discuss what students need to do after they hear the smoke alarm. If they are in bed they should roll onto the floor. Mention that students should never hide from a fire.
- Emphasise that they need to get out, very quickly. They need to call out to others in the house as they go. Talk about all the possible ways of getting out of rooms. Identify these as exits.
- Select students to demonstrate getting down as low as possible to crawl to a door. When the door is reached stress the need to feel the door with the back of the hand to see if it is hot. Discuss why this procedure is important, in particular why you would use the back of the hand and not the palm. Ask students what they would do if the door felt hot.
- Use the **Smoke parachute** to simulate a smoke filled room. Half of the class can operate the parachute while remaining students practise crawling to safety. Ask children to switch roles so that everyone has a turn at crawling to safety.
- Discuss what would happen once they get outside a burning building. Where could they go? Where could they be safe and wait for their family? Emphasise that students need to get out as fast as possible. Students must never go back into a fire, not even to try to find Mum or Dad, their pets or their favourite toy. It is important that all households have a home fire escape plan, together with a designated safe meeting place.

Extension activities

- **Worksheet 21: Find the exits to safety**
- **Online game: Home fire escape plan** at www.cfa.vic.gov.au
- **Worksheet 4: Captain Koala badge**

Captain Koala says...

Get down low
and go, go, go!

