



The Signs of Safety

Grade level: 2 through 5 (can be modified to accommodate younger/older students, see variations)

Subject: Art, Environmental Studies

Introduction: This discussion and art activity will prepare students for International Walk and Bike to School Day.

Objective: In this lesson students will review the Six Simple Steps to Staying Safe and make signs and banners to improve visibility on International Walk to School Day.

Set Up: Our suggestion is to have the activity set up in one area and to have the introductory discussion away from the materials in order to avoid distraction. We suggest the painting be done outside.

Materials

for hand held "picket" style signs:

blank sign faces (approximately 2ft x 2ft) – cardboard or poster board

Sign handles (1x1 pine, 2 feet in length)

carpet tacks

hammer

Tempra paint (bright colors)

brushes

containers for mixing paint

containers for water

tarp to cover the floor

newspaper to cover the tables

tape

streamers to decorate the signs

cleaning supplies

additional materials for large banners:

large pieces of cardboard (as big as possible)

or plywood, white sheets (cheap at thrift stores) or canvas

White paint or paper to cover the cardboard or plywood

means for securing banners (can be hung from a fence, attached to poles, tied to saw horses, mounted on wood etc.)

Preparation:

Cardboard pieces for small signs will need to be cut from larger pieces of cardboard. If time does not permit making a blank sign for each child, this works well as an activity for partners, banners can be made by small groups. The cardboard can then be painted white or covered in paper (colored or white butcher).

Mix paints and set up working area.

Discussion: Introduce the lesson and activity by asking the students if they know about International Walk and Bike to School Day, ask for a show of hands. Have one student explain what WBTS Day is about. Check for understanding of the word international. Explain that on October 5th, kids all over the world will walk and ride to school to show that we can get around without cars.

Further explanation and instructions may be necessary, particularly for first and second graders. Tell students that a note will be going home to their parents, inviting them to join us for WBTS Day, and if they have any questions they should ask their parents.

Ask the students if they know the Simple Steps to Staying Safe.

Prompt them to provide these answers:

- 1) When walking or biking, stop at every curb or edge.
- 2) Always STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN, especially while crossing. Look left, look right, then left again, before stepping past any curb driveway or edge.
- 3) Always wear a helmet when riding a bike.
- 4) Always ride in the same direction as traffic.
- 5) Learn all traffic signs and signals
- 6) Look for the safest place to cross the street. Use crosswalks, crossing signals and crossing guards.

Instruction: Explain that we will be making signs to carry on WBTS Day (students can also make signs to mount on their bikes) and signs to place at staging areas and in front of school. These signs will make us easier to see and will send a message to people in cars.

Review the rules for using paints.

Ask the students what some messages they would like to send to car drivers would be. (slow down, kids are walking here, hang up and drive!, share the road, etc.) Some words and phrases can be put on the board to be copied. Symbols and pictures are great. As children finish their signs they can bring them to an adult who will nail the sign to the handle.

Variations:

If your school has a buddy program this is a great activity for older students to do with first and second graders. One way to structure the activity is to have older students write out messages on banners in big (1 or 2 ft high) bubble letters and then let the first and second graders fill in the letters and paint around them.

Assessment: Did students know the six simple steps to staying safe? Did they make signs with relevant messages and pictures?

Closing: Thank the students for their hard work and ask them to talk to their friends and families about joining groups for International Walk and Bike to School Day!