The American Red Cross has developed fun activity guides for youth volunteers to use to help spread the word about the Red Cross and its mission: to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies, by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

Activity Guides can be used by Red Cross Clubs, general youth groups or any other students who want to organize Red Cross mission-related activities. No matter which activity you choose, get in touch with your local Red Cross region or Service to the Armed Forces (SAF) station. With these helpful resources and guidelines, you can definitely make your activity a success!
About
Water safety outreach can be taught by youth leaders to help raise children’s awareness of safe behavior in, on, and around the water. Red Cross programming is available for elementary-school-aged children and older youth in middle or high school.

For Children: Longfellow WHALE Tales
An acronym for Water Habits Are Learned Early, WHALE Tales is designed for children from K through 6th grades. It is a dryland-based water safety program with lesson plans that focus on different water safety topics, each about 30-minute in length. There is a great deal of flexibility with WHALE Tales so it can be delivered in various situations, such as small groups of children in a classroom or larger groups in a camp setting. Leaders can present a single session or schedule a series to present all topics.

For Youth and Adults: Water Safety Outreach
These lifesaving water safety presentations are designed to be delivered in 30-minute sessions to help educate about general water safety and more specialized topics of home pool, rip current, and sun safety.

Purpose
Drowning is the number one cause of death for children between 1 and 4 years old. It is the second leading cause of injury death for youth under 14 and third for those under 19 years old. The Red Cross believes that one way to help reduce drowning incidents among school-aged children is to teach water safety education in schools and other youth programs. Youth leaders can use the Longfellow’s WHALE Tales program and water safety presentations to teach youth about safe behavior and making good decisions in, on, and around water that can save their lives.

Time Required
Each of the water safety topics is about 30-minute in length.

Volunteer Services Contact
Before you begin, contact your Regional Volunteer Services Officer (RVSO), who will guide you to resources that will help make this an impactful and successful event! You can search for your regional Volunteer Services contact info by ZIP code here.
How to Get Started:

Before conducting any lessons, presenters are expected to participate in two free online courses—Basic Instructor Fundamentals for Youth (on Edge) and Becoming an Ambassador for Water Safety.

You can access the course materials via Teach Water Safety Outreach. You are required to complete the Leaders Agreement and Code of Conduct, as well as the WHALE Tales form (when teaching young children) and/or the Water Safety Outreach form (when teaching older youth).

Before conducting any lessons, make sure to familiarize yourself and your team with the material listed below:

Longfellow’s WHALE Tales

- **Lesson Plans (include 11 safety topics):** Each lesson consists of an introduction, key points organized by topic, discussion questions designed to encourage student participation, fun classroom activities, suggested activity sheets, and a lesson wrap-up. Several lesson plans are available in Spanish.

- **Posters:** Color posters provide visual support and reinforcement for each safety topic. These can be printed or the images can be projected on a screen using a projector.

- **Video Segments:** Video segments are available for eight of the lessons. The videos feature Longfellow the whale, who guides students through the safety topics. Each video shows children in various scenarios who must make choices about water safety. The video segments are available with English and Spanish subtitles.

- **Certificates:** You can download and present certificates (four designs) to students upon completion. Multiple versions are available in Spanish.

Water Safety Presentation

- **Presentation Outlines:** Presentation outlines include key terms, learning objectives, materials, equipment & supplies lists, and a lesson format that facilitates instruction. Each lesson consists of an introduction, key points organized by topic, questions designed to generate discussion, classroom activities, participant handouts, and links to additional resources if more in-depth information is desired.
Step 1: Time and Location
- Determine the date, time, and location for hosting your event.

Step 2: Event Planning
- Print out sufficient copies of the fact sheets and activity sheets based on the number of participants you are expecting. You should also print out certificates if you wish to present them to the participants.
- Gather all the material, equipment, and supplies needed for the lesson based on the lesson plan.

Step 3: Practice
- Conduct a dry run with your friends or family so you can be more prepared for the lesson. Make sure you know your roles and responsibilities if you will be co-presenting.

Step 4: Conduct the Lesson
- Have fun! Engage with the participants and know that what you are teaching can save lives!

Step 5: Report Your Teaching Activity & Celebrate Your Success
- After each time you teach, complete the webform on the Safety Outreach section of the Red Cross Learning Center.
  - Visit redcrosslearningcenter.org, select Resources, then Drowning Prevention and Water Outreach. Click on the red “Record Safety Outreach” and follow the prompts.
- Take a moment to recognize your achievement as an “ambassador for water safety”! You are helping raise awareness about drowning and the need to practice water safety, and gain life-long safety, survival, and swimming skills.
- Share the great work that you have done and stay engaged in the larger conversation of water safety and drowning prevention using these hashtags:
  - #RedCross
  - #TeachWaterSafety
  - #MakeWaterSafetyHappen
  - #WaterSafety
  - #NotOneMoreDrowning
TEACHING WATER SAFETY TO YOUTH

Red Cross Club Toolkits:
Review youth volunteer resources on Red Cross Youth. Share the Red Cross Club Toolkits with students at the event who may be interested in learning about Red Cross Clubs.

Share with Us
Share pictures and videos of your Live Stream Gaming activity by posting them in the American Red Cross Youth Network Facebook Group or posting on Instagram and tagging @americanredcrossyouth.

Looking for More Information?
If you’re interested in organizing another activity, visit our Activity Guides Archive here.
Have more questions about volunteering with the American Red Cross as a youth volunteer? Email youthinvolvement@redcross.org!