



American
Red Cross

American Red Cross

Longfellow's WHALE Tales

WATER SAFETY FOR CHILDREN

LEADER'S GUIDE



This Leader's Guide is part of the American Red Cross Longfellow's WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children program. The emergency care procedures outlined in the program materials reflect the standard of knowledge and accepted emergency practices in the United States at the time this manual was published. It is the reader's responsibility to stay informed of changes in emergency care procedures.

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Longfellow's WHALE Tales

Water Habits Are Learned Early

How to Lead Longfellow's WHALE Tales

INTRODUCTION

The American Red Cross believes that one way to help reduce drowning incidents among children kindergarten through 5th grade is to teach water safety education in elementary schools and other youth programs. The Red Cross created the Longfellow's WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children program to teach children about being safe around the water and to promote safe behaviors and healthful aquatic recreation.

Longfellow's WHALE Tales materials are designed to help anyone who wishes to teach children about safer behavior in, on and around the water in a dryland environment. This could include teachers, leaders of youth programs, Red Cross Club members, public safety personnel and others. Longfellow's WHALE Tales may also be integrated into swim lesson programs. Information about how to do so is covered in the Water Safety Instructor® (WSI™) course. Those with WSI certification should reference those course materials for more information.

Commodore Wilbert E. Longfellow started the Red Cross Lifesaving Corps in 1914 to train volunteers in the methods of lifesaving and resuscitation. His next step was to provide large-scale instruction in swimming. The Commodore's teaching philosophy was to "entertain the public hugely while educating them gently." He did just that. In tribute to Commodore Longfellow, who was known as the "amiable whale," the mascot for the WHALE Tales program and animated videos is Longfellow, a blue whale. WHALE is an acronym for Water Habits Are Learned Early.

HELP US HELP YOUR PARTICIPANTS

As a leader presenting Longfellow's WHALE Tales, the Red Cross asks that you report information about your usage of the program, including the number of participants reached. The way you report depends on whether you are a current Red Cross instructor or not.

- **Red Cross Instructors:** Log in to the Red Cross Learning Center at redcrosslearningcenter.org. Select **Resources>Learn to Swim/Safety Outreach>Record Safety Outreach**, then complete the fields.
- **All Other Leaders:** Go to: redcrosslearningcenter.org/s/learn-to-swim. Select **Record Safety Outreach**, then complete the fields.

This important step helps us learn more about how this program is being used, who is being reached and how well we are meeting the needs of leaders and participants.

Your reported participant enrollments also help the Red Cross tell your community's "water safety story" and attract funders that support mission related activities such as our Centennial Campaign to help teach water competency to children and adults who are most at risk.

PRESENTING LONGFELLOW'S WHALE TALES

Longfellow's WHALE Tales lessons teach children about water safety in different environments, such as pools, waterparks, oceans, lakes and rivers. It addresses potential water hazards that may be present around the home and community, and touches on sun safety, boating safety, weather concerns and much more.

To help keep participants engaged, group discussions are complemented by entertaining videos, helpful visuals, fun activities and more. There are also take-home activity sheets, caregiver letters, colorful stickers and certificates to help participants share and celebrate what it means to be water smart.

Program Design and Length

Longfellow's WHALE Tales is designed to be flexible, allowing leaders to adapt their presentation of the material depending on the learning level of participants, the setting, available resources and time constraints. A leader can choose to present any, or all, of the safety topics when making a presentation, including the animations, live action videos and course presentations. A leader can also choose which activity sheets and caregiver letters to distribute. Although estimated times are included for each lesson topic, there is no set format and no minimum or maximum amount of time leaders are required to use to present the information.

Topics Covered

There are a total of nine unique lessons that make up the full Longfellow's WHALE Tales program. These are divided into three general sections.

Section 1: Being Water Smart – The Basics

- **Lesson 1: Do Your Part, Be Water Smart.** This lesson introduces participants to foundational guidelines and rules to help them be safer in, on and around the water. These form the basis for all other lessons in the Longfellow's WHALE Tales program. **It is strongly recommended that leaders start with this lesson before conducting any other lessons.**
- **Lesson 2: Swim as a Pair with a Lifeguard There.** This lesson takes a closer look at one of the key water safety rules: A person should never swim alone. Lifeguards, other capable adult water watchers and a water buddy should all be included as part of a participant's water safety team. Information on the importance of learning to swim is also included.
- **Lesson 3: First Look Around: Is the Scene Safe and Sound?** This lesson provides more information about what a designated swimming area should look like and why it's important to know how deep the water is before getting in. It wraps up with sun safety information.
- **Lesson 4: Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Life Jacket.** Participants learn about when and why it's important to wear a life jacket in, on or around the water. This lesson also covers some basic boat safety guidelines.

Section 2: A Deeper Dive into How to be Water Smart

- **Lesson 5: Play It Smart at Your Home, Pool or Park.** This lesson explores specific water safety guidance when at a pool or waterpark. It also covers other places a participant might encounter water in their home and near where they live or visit that are not meant for swimming, but still require water smarts.
- **Lesson 6: Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts are Your Guide.** From oceans to ponds, rivers to lakes, this lesson takes a deeper dive into specific considerations for different types of natural waterfront settings.

Section 3: Being Water Smart in a Water Emergency

- **Lesson 7: Think So You Don't Sink.** This lesson provides basic information about how participants can help themselves if they start to have trouble in the water or if a water emergency occurs. **If you will be teaching the other lessons in Section 3, you should first cover this material.**
- **Lesson 8: Reach or Throw, Don't Go.** This lesson provides information about how participants can best help others in the event of an aquatic emergency without putting themselves in harm's way.
- **Lesson 9: Stay Calm, Think It Through and You Can Know What to Do.** This lesson includes water safety hazards related to thunderstorms, floods and ice.

Program Materials

Each lesson in Longfellow's WHALE Tales features a robust collection of water safety content and supporting resources designed to engage your participants. Use only the materials of greatest relevance to your group – or use them all!

Lesson Plans



Leaders are encouraged to follow the lesson plans provided as closely as possible. However, leaders may adapt the language and activities as needed based on the age and learning level of participants, the teaching setting, local references and available time. In some cases, options and variations are offered for activities based on these factors.

Each lesson begins with a few select key terms, the teaching objectives and a list of materials, equipment and supplies that may be needed. Before you conduct a lesson, you should familiarize yourself with this information and decide what sections you plan to cover, so you can be prepared with what you'll need. Lessons also include printable coloring sheets, activity sheets and caregiver letters as described below. You'll want to print what you need before beginning a lesson.

The use of a dry erase board and marker, or other method, to record participant answers for all to see is sometimes recommended and can be beneficial. However, leaders should adapt to the learning abilities and reading level of their participants in deciding whether to use this method.







Lesson Levels

Look for these icons to help you choose the best activities for the participants' grade level:


	Level 1 activities are best for participants in grades K-2.
	Level 2 activities are best for participants in grades 3-5.

Lesson Activities

Look for these icons as a guide for the type of activity used to teach each topic in the lesson. All activities may be adapted by the leader as appropriate for the participants in your group.

	Share and Tell Discussions are designed to teach essential information in a lecture-type format enhanced by opportunities for participant input.
	Get Up and Move activities aim to get participants up out of their seats for more active learning.
	Brain Games tap into critical thinking skills to engage participants in considering the effects of their actions in, on and around water.
	Pop Quizzes reinforce topics covered in the lessons. Questions can take a variety of formats, such as multiple choice, true or false, and short answers.
	Aquatic Activities are specific to lessons taught at an aquatic facility (e.g., pool, waterfront). These make use of commonly available equipment and supplies or environmental examples.
	Videos provide a fun and engaging way to teach key messages included in the lesson content. There are animations and live action videos for each lesson.

Leader's Notes

 Look for Leader's Notes throughout the lesson plans for tips and information about teaching specific topics in the course.

Course Presentation

The optional course presentations (one for each lesson) include colorful visuals that pair with select program activities, as well as real world examples that help illustrate key concepts that can otherwise be difficult to describe. Each course presentation also includes the animated videos, live action videos and posters described below.

To assist with using the course presentation, look for the corresponding slide numbers for the topics covered in the left-column of the lesson plan tables. It is important to note that you may not need to show all slides provided depending on the teaching or activity options selected.

Instructions on how to download the course presentation are available at [redcross.org/WHALETales](https://www.redcross.org/WHALETales) and on the Red Cross Learning Center. Before leading a Longfellow's WHALE Tales lesson, become familiar with the presentation software and test the display and audio of the system to be used. If you will be using the course presentation, it is recommended that you have backup copies of the presentation in case technical difficulties occur.

Video Segments: Animated and Live Action

Each lesson includes one animated video and one live action video that can be shown to help teach and reinforce important ways to be water smart.

- **Animated videos** take kids on exciting, imagination-filled adventures with Longfellow the Whale and his sidekick, Clawdette, serving as their very capable water watchers and guides. Partying river monsters? A surprise game show? Epic campfire stories? These are all part of the fun that keeps kids wondering what will happen next while being introduced to important water safety themes they won't likely forget.
- **Live action videos** introduce participants to our very own charismatic "online video influencers" who happen to love to help kids learn about water safety. These videos can be used to teach key lesson concepts as an alternative to more traditional classroom activities where noted.

Posters and Coloring Sheets

Each lesson includes an activity that references a scene depicted on a related full-color poster. These can be projected using the course presentation slides, or purchased as a full-size learning tool that can be displayed in your class setting.

In addition, each poster is also provided as a separate coloring sheet. These can be printed and distributed to participants as a take-home reminder of the lessons learned.

Activity Sheets

Each lesson includes two activity sheets that can be printed and distributed to participants to support what they've learned. These can be used during the program sessions or as a take-home activity. One version is geared toward Level 1 participants. The other is geared toward Level 2 participants. However, leaders can choose which activity sheets are best suited for their participants' needs.

Caregiver Letters

As participants will be taught, water safety takes a team that includes the adults in their lives. The caregiver letters, available as a part of each lesson plan, support this idea by sharing information, tips and resources that caregivers can use to help keep their families safer in, on and around the water.

Sticker Sheets

Colorful stickers – each set includes nine different versions featuring characters from the Longfellow's WHALE Tales animated videos – are available for purchase. Use them as a way to recognize the accomplishments of your participants when they complete each lesson, or hand them out at safety fairs or other events to promote water safety.

Closing Ceremony and Participation Certificates

Whether your group does one lesson or all nine, the closing ceremony included with the Lesson Plans is a way to mark the journey they have made toward learning how to be water smart. Content includes a final activity to remind them that water should be fun, plus the opportunity to take a safety pledge together as a group.

A choice of three different participation certificates is also included to mark their accomplishment. One version includes the safety pledge that is a part of the closing ceremony so they can take it home as a reminder of what they've learned. The other two versions are a simple, but still meaningful, recognition of their participation – one in a full-page format and the other a half-page format.

Material Delivery Methods

Leaders can access the full set of program materials using one or more of the following options:

- **Free Digital Files:** Download most program materials, including lesson plans, videos, course presentation slides (including videos and poster illustrations), activity sheets and caregiver letters by visiting [redcross.org/WHALETales](https://www.redcross.org/WHALETales) or by logging in to the Red Cross Learning Center at [redcrosslearningcenter.org](https://www.redcrosslearningcenter.org) and selecting **Classes>Course Materials>Longfellow's WHALE Tales**.
- **Printed Posters:** Purchase a full-set of printed, full-size posters (22x17") at [RedCrossStore.org](https://www.RedCrossStore.org).
- **Sticker Sheets:** Purchase the Longfellow's WHALE Tales sticker sheets at [RedCrossStore.org](https://www.RedCrossStore.org). These are sold in sets of 9 sheets containing 18 stickers each.

BEING A LEADER

The Longfellow's WHALE Tales program has been developed for use by teachers, leaders of youth programs, Red Cross Club members and others involved in water safety training for kids. No prior swimming experience or water safety training is necessary for an individual to lead the activities in this program.

Leader Expectations

When conducting Longfellow's WHALE Tales, it is expected that you:

- Ensure that participants know that they should consult with you if they have concerns about their ability to participate in any of the activities.
- Ensure that the classroom and activity areas are well supervised and free of hazards.
- Are familiar with the presentation materials and equipment and know how to use them effectively.
- Create a non-threatening environment that encourages participants to achieve the learning objectives.
- Adapt your teaching approach to match the experience and abilities of the participants.
- Are prepared to answer participants' questions or know where to find the answers.
- Provide a positive example by showing healthy habits when interacting with participants.
- Comply with all instructions in the materials, including the terms and conditions.

- Report any presentations conducted as follows:
 - **Red Cross Instructors:** Log in to the Red Cross Learning Center at redcrosslearningcenter.org. Select **Resources>Learn to Swim/Safety Outreach>Record Safety Outreach**, then complete the fields.
 - **All Other Leaders:** Go to: redcrosslearningcenter.org/s/learn-to-swim. Select **Record Safety Outreach**, then complete the fields.

Getting Started

To get started, familiarize yourself with all course materials, activity options and available resources. This will help you determine the best lessons and course flow for your participants.

Then, before conducting the Longfellow’s WHALE Tales program in part or full:

- Determine the place, date and time.
- Find out how many children will be participating. You will need to print out activity sheets and caregiver letters if you will be handing them out. If you wish to present certificates, you will need to print those as well.
- Determine if you will have Internet access and/or what equipment is available to you for the purposes of presenting the course presentations and videos. Take any steps needed to secure access/equipment prior to conducting the lessons.
- Gather the materials, equipment and supplies needed for the lessons. A list of what may be needed to conduct the lesson is at the beginning of each lesson plan.
- Practice! If you are new to leading water safety programs such as Longfellow’s WHALE Tales, it’s always a good idea to do a dry-run of the full lesson – perhaps using a few children you know as your practice students. This will help you get more organized in your preparation, organization and execution of the lesson. If you will be co-presenting, practice is especially important so each of you knows your roles and assignments.
- Conduct the lesson. The materials make it easy! Have fun – and know that what you are teaching these youth can literally save their lives.
- Share your successes! By teaching water safety, you are becoming 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. To be engaged in the larger conversation of water safety and drowning prevention, share what you are doing on social media and use these hashtags:

#RedCrossWaterSafety	#NotOneMoreDrowning
#LongfellowsWHALETales	#TeachWaterSafety
#RedCrossSwim	#ProudRedCrossProvider

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more background on topics relevant to the Longfellow’s WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children program, you can utilize any of these resources:

- **Refresh Your Water Safety Knowledge:** Looking to brush up on your own water safety knowledge? Visit redcross.org/watersafety to learn more about a variety of water safety topics and what it means to be water competent. This site also provides links to online courses related to water safety. This information may help if questions arise from participants while you are leading this program.
- **Complete the Becoming an Ambassador for Water Safety Course:** This free online course, which is about 30 minutes in length, covers fundamentals of water safety, provides an orientation to

Red Cross materials to teach water safety in a dryland, classroom-based setting and offers ideas on how to implement water safety education in your community. It is intended for teachers as well as adult and youth leaders in the community who are committed to sharing Red Cross resources to impact drowning rates, especially in places that are most at risk for drowning. Register at redcross.org/take-a-class. Select **Swimming + Water Safety** and **Online Only**.

- **Contact Red Cross Training Services:** Connect with a Red Cross Training Services representative at **1-800-RED-CROSS** (1-800-733-2767) or email support@redcross.org for answers to your questions about leading the Longfellow's WHALE Tales program, purchasing materials or anything else related to Red Cross training.
- **Support Participants and Caregivers:** The public-facing home of the Longfellow's WHALE Tales program is redcross.org/watersafetyforkids. Send program participants here to view the animations and videos with their families and friends, and to find additional copies of the lesson activity sheets. There are also a variety of resources for parents and caregivers who want to learn more about water safety and how to support their children to gain even more water smarts.

To learn more about the history, mission and structure of the American Red Cross, as well as about Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety, Lifeguarding, First Aid, CPR and AED courses, go to redcross.org.

SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL CONTENT

The scientific content and evidence within the American Red Cross Longfellow's WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children program is consistent with the American Red Cross Aquatic Guidelines and Best Practices and the most current science and treatment recommendations from:

- The International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR)
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- The Policy Statements, Evidence Reviews and Guidelines of:
 - American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
 - American Red Cross Disaster Preparedness
 - American Red Cross Youth Preparedness
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - International Life Saving Federation
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 - National Weather Service
 - The ZAC Foundation
 - U.S. Coast Guard
 - Water Safety USA

Guidance for this course was provided by the American Red Cross Scientific Advisory Council, a panel of 60+ nationally and internationally recognized experts from a variety of medical, nursing, EMS, advanced practice, allied health, scientific, educational and academic disciplines. Members of the Scientific Advisory Council have a broad range of professional specialties including resuscitation, emergency medicine, critical care, obstetrics, pediatrics, anesthesia, cardiology, surgery, trauma, toxicology, pharmacology, education, sports medicine, occupational health, public health and emergency preparedness. This gives the Scientific Advisory Council the important advantage of broad, multidisciplinary expertise in evaluating existing and new assessment methodologies, technologies, therapies and procedures—and the educational methods to teach them.

More information on the science of the course content can be found at the following websites:

- ilcor.org
- redcross.org/science

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We extend our gratitude to all of the members of the American Red Cross Scientific Advisory Council, who lend their expertise and guidance to support the development of American Red Cross Training Services programs.

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