

A 4-H/CRD Video Discussion Guide

NOV 9 1989

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY: Staying Away From Strangers

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Can children be outgoing and make friends in new situations if they are taught to be wary of strangers? Is it possible to teach children to be cautious but not fearful? Can young children understand that someone they may think of as a friend after a five minute encounter is still really a stranger?

STAYING AWAY FROM STRANGERS approaches this sensitive subject through an imaginative animated story in which two children show a new friend from another planet how to be safe with strangers. Their space friend learns that the problem with strangers is that you don't know them well enough to be sure how they will behave. This being so, you should always keep a safe distance from strangers, recognize things strangers may do to trick you, and respond in safe ways.

Once the space friend has learned all this, he feels he can get along in the new neighborhood. And to show he will always remember the most important lesson of all, the lights of his homing spaceship spell out the message — **NEVER GO ANYPLACE WITH A STRANGER.**

INTENDED AUDIENCE

Primary grade students.

OBJECTIVES

- Recognize that a stranger can be anyone regardless of looks, age, or sex.
- Understand that strangers are people you don't know well enough to predict their behavior.
- Decide that a friendly stranger may be as unsafe as an unfriendly one.
- Realize that keeping safe is more important than being polite or helpful.
- Learn to keep a safe distance from any stranger on foot or in a car.
- Recognize tricks strangers use to get children to go with them.
- Keep away from places where a stranger might find them alone.
- Follow the most important rule — **NEVER GO ANYPLACE WITH A STRANGER.**

SYNOPSIS

Suppose one day you make a new friend — maybe a person who arrived in your neighborhood in a space ship. He wouldn't know much about your world and you would need to teach him things he needed to know to be safe — especially ways to be safe with strangers.

Your new friend would probably want to know what strangers look like. Do they have tails or pointed teeth or wear T-shirts with **STRANGER** on them? You'd tell your friend that strangers can be any age or sex and that they look like everyone else. What is important is that strangers are people you and your parents don't know well. Even if you have seen a person on your street

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before and maybe talked to her, even if you decided you liked her, she is still a stranger. And the problem with strangers is that you can never be sure how they'll act toward you.

STAYING AWAY FROM STRANGERS presents several scenarios designed to provide young people with learning situations involving challenges presented by strangers. The scenarios represent real life challenges a young person could experience at any time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the word "strange" mean? What does it suggest about strangers? Do all strangers do strange things?
2. Which of the people you see every day are strangers? Are any of the people who live in your neighborhood strangers?
3. What can you tell about a person just by looking? What can't you tell?
4. How do you decide whether you know people well enough to trust them?
5. Should you always answer someone who speaks to you or asks you a question? Why or why not?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Was the space creature once a stranger to the children? What do you think the children did when they first met him? How do you think the children's parents decided this stranger had become a friend?
2. What things might a stranger offer to give you that would be hardest for you to say no to? Role play these offers and practice saying no.
3. Can you think of ways a stranger might find out your name and make you think you know him or her?
4. How far away should you stay from a stranger who speaks to you? Why is it important not to get any closer?
5. What should you do if you are alone in a supermarket and someone offers to buy you some candy? Asks you to help carry groceries?

Coronet Film and Video

Length: 11 minutes

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Development

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and September 30, 1977, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. James F. Johnson, Acting Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, and Acting Vice Provost for Extension, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia; Clinton V. Turner, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia.