

Ready, Set, Prevent: Planning for the 2026 Water Safety Season

Lindsay Mondick, YMCA of the USA

Beth Root, World's Largest Swimming Lesson

Alissa Magrum, National Drowning Prevention Alliance

Miriam Lynch, Diversity in Aquatics

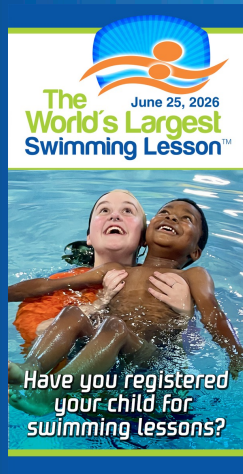
Stephanie Darimont, American Red Cross

Morag MacKay, Safe Kids Worldwide





**ONE TEAM.
ONE MISSION.
REGISTER TODAY!**
World's Largest Swimming Lesson
June 25, 2026



WLSL Date, Pricing & Program Tools

- WLSL Day - Thursday, June 25th
- Host a special WLSL event or participate with regularly scheduled swim lessons
- Pricing – within one city, state:
\$99 for 1 facility, \$149 for 2 facilities, \$199 for 3 or more facilities.
- Scholarships available based on need





**Register by
June 12th at
WLSL.org**



Water Safety Season Toolkit

Proudly Supported by



DOWNLOAD THE FULL TOOLKIT

Take Action

Shareable PSAs

Social Media Content Kit

Campaign ▾

<https://ndpa.org/toolkit/>

COMING SOON!



Join us at our
Autism Acceptance &
Water Safety Webinar

April 13, 2026
12pm ET/ 9am PT



Scan Here for
All the NDPA Toolkits




Longfellow's WHALE Tales

Lesson 1 Resources


By downloading or emailing these materials, I acknowledge that I may use these materials subject to the license granted below solely for education purposes consistent with all requirements provided by American Red Cross for use of these materials. [See below](#) for additional information.

Lesson Plan




[Download PDF \(h\)](#)

Course Presentation



[Download PPT \(ppt\) \(h\)](#)

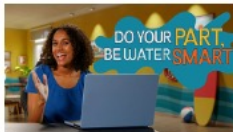
Animated Video



Animated Video: Do Your Part, Be Water Smart
Celebrate water safety with Longfellow and friends. This music video reminds us to be water smart because when you jump in safe, the fun can start!


[Play Video](#)

Live Action Video



Live Action Video: What It Means to Be Water Smart
Anyone can be water smart, including you! It starts with these easy-to-learn ways to be safe in, on and around the water.

[Play Video](#)



RED CROSS WATER SAFETY PROGRAM
Longfellow's WHALE Tales
Water Safety for Children
Teach children about safer behavior, in and around the water.

About Curriculum Reporting FAQs

Water Habits Are Learned Early
WHALE Tales Introduction
Drowning is a leading cause of death for children in the United States. Prevention is the key to saving lives. The Red Cross believes that one way to prevent drowning is to teach children about being safer in, on and around the water in a fun and entertaining way. This complimentary and reimagined program comes complete with interactive videos, posters and lesson plans that will inspire your students while learning to recognize and understand risks of water safety.


[Ready to report your activity?](#)

Who Can Teach WHALE Tales?
Anyone! No special certification is required to teach this material.


WHALE Tales can be taught by:

- Teachers
- Coaches
- Rescue Personnel
- Health Program Leaders
- Utility Personnel/Agencies
- Water Safety Clubs
- Water Safety Organizations
- Water Ambassadors
- Boating/Promotion Guidelines
- Boys/Girls

Longfellow's WHALE Tales may also be integrated into American Red Cross swim lessons.




Poster and Coloring Sheet



[Full Color Poster Download JPD \(h\)](#)
[Coloring Sheet Download PDF \(h\)](#)

[Purchase Poster Set](#)

Activity Sheets



[1-1 Water Smart Matching Download PDF \(h\)](#)
[1-2 For Water Smart Fun, Rules Rule! Download PDF \(h\)](#)
[Answer Key Download PDF \(h\)](#)

Caregiver Letter



[Lesson 1 Caregiver Letter Download PDF \(h\)](#)

[Purchase the Set](#)

Stickers



[Purchase the Set](#)

Leaders: redcross.org/whaletales or cruzrojaamericana.org/WHALE-tales-Espanol/
Parents and caregivers: redcross.org/watersafetyforkids or cruzrojaamericana.org/seguridad-acuatica-infantil

Resources

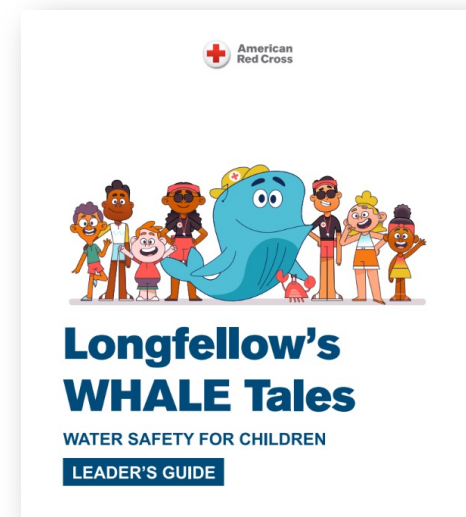
Free, Digital – Downloads and/or streaming

- Leader’s Guide – Administrative, “how to teach”
- Lesson Plans: 9 lessons + Closing Ceremony
- Course Presentations
- Video Segments: Animations and Live Action
- Posters and Coloring Sheets
- Activity Sheets
- Caregiver Letters
- Participation Certificates
- Cutout Longfellow



For purchase on Red Cross Store

- Posters
- Sticker Sheets



The Lessons

- **Being Water Smart - The Basics**

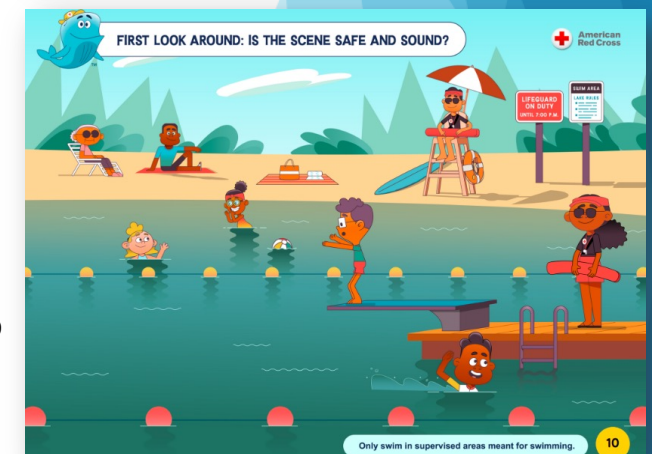
- Lesson 1: Do Your Part, Be Water Smart
- Lesson 2: Swim as a Pair with a Lifeguard There
- Lesson 3: First Look Around: Is the Scene Safe and Sound?
- Lesson 4: Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Life Jacket

- **A Deeper Dive into How to be Water Smart**

- Lesson 5: Play It Smart at Your Home, Pool or Park
- Lesson 6: Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts are Your Guide

- **Being Water Smart in a Water Emergency**

- Lesson 7: Think So You Don't Sink
- Lesson 8: Reach or Throw, Don't Go
- Lesson 9: Stay Calm, Think It Through and You Can Know What to Do



Lesson Plan

Lesson 3: First Look Around: Is the Scene Safe and Sound?



Longfellow's WHALE Tales
Water Habits Are Learned Early

Lesson 3

First Look Around: Is the Scene Safe and Sound?

ABOUT THIS LESSON

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. The lesson wraps up with sun safety information to help participants keep their skin and eyes safer from harm while enjoying their time by the water.

GUIDANCE FOR THE LEADER

Please refer to the section How to Lead Longfellow's WHALE Tales for full guidance on how to teach this lesson and the Longfellow's WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children program. Leaders are encouraged to follow the lesson plan provided. However, use of the course presentation and videos is optional. You should also 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 are offered for activities based on these factors.

KEY TERMS


Designated swim area: An area of the water that is meant for swimming and may be protected by lifeguards

Sunburn: When skin becomes painful and hot to the touch because of too much time in the sun

Sunscreen: A lotion, spray or roll-on used to protect the skin from sunburn and sun damage

TOPIC: INTRODUCTION

Time: 1 to 5 minutes, depending on whether optional video is used

 **Leader's Note:** If needed, start by introducing yourself to participants and allow them to introduce themselves.

SHARE AND TELL DISCUSSION



LEVEL



MATERIALS

Course Presentation 3,
Slide 1

Tell participants:

- In this lesson, we're going to talk about clues you can look for to tell if an area is meant for swimming.
- We'll talk about why it's water smart to know how deep or shallow the water is before you get in.
- And finally, we'll talk about using sun protection as an important way to keep your skin, eyes and health safer while enjoying the water.

VIDEO



LEVEL




MATERIALS

Course Presentation 3,
Slide 2

Dry erase board and
marker, or similar

Tell participants: We are going to watch a short video.

Play animated video: First Look Around: Is the Scene Safe and Sound?

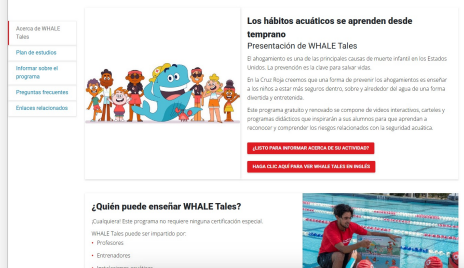
 **Leader's Note:** After watching the video, pose the following questions and allow a few participants to provide answers. If desired, and as appropriate for your participants and setting, you can create a Notice and Wonder chart for all to see by making a column for each and writing down what the participants say. You can refer to this throughout the lesson as you cover topics where relevant.

Ask participants:

- Who can tell me one thing they noticed when watching the video?
 - Allow two or three participants to answer.
- Who can tell me one thing they are wondering after watching the video?
 - Allow two or three participants to answer.

Tell participants: As we go through this lesson and we learn more about this topic, think about what you saw in the video we just watched to help you in our discussions and activities.

Reporting WHALE Tales Activity



Informar sobre el programa

(Guíase por impartir el programa Longfellow's WHALE Tales – Seguridad acuática infantil) Cada alumno cuenta! Ayúdenos a hacer un seguimiento de nuestro impacto y a poner la seguridad en el agua al alcance de todos registrando a continuación su labor de divulgación. El proceso es rápido y sencillo!

| | |
|--|---|
| Instructores de la Cruz Roja Primero inicie sesión en el Centro de Aprendizaje de la Cruz Roja (en inglés) y luego seleccione el botón que aparece a continuación o «Resources» → «Learn to Swim/Safety Outreach» → «Record Safety Outreach» y rellene el breve formulario. EDUCACIÓN SOBRE NATACIÓN/CONCIENCIACIÓN SOBRE SEGURIDAD (EN INGLÉS) | Todos los demás líderes Seleccione «Record Safety Outreach/Registra divulgación de la seguridad» y rellene el breve formulario. PREVENCIÓN DE AHOGAMIENTOS/CONCIENCIACIÓN SOBRE SEGURIDAD (EN INGLÉS) |
|--|---|

RECORD SAFETY OUTREACH / REGISTRA DIVULGACIÓN DE LA SEGURIDAD

Date / Fecha:

*Topic / Tema:

Hands-only CPR (course code: HSSCPR701 r.2018)

Home Pool Safety

Longfellow's WHALE Tales

Longfellow's WHALE Tales - Spanish

Rip Current Safety

Sun Safety

*Total Students / Número de estudiantes:

WHALE Tales Lessons / Lecciones de WHALE

| Available | Chosen |
|---|--|
| Lesson 3: First Look Around: Is the Sc... | Lesson 1: Do Your Part, Be Water Sm... |
| Lesson 4: Don't Just Pack It, Wear Yo... | Lesson 2: Swim as a Pair with a Lifeg... |
| Lesson 5: Play It Smart at Your Home... | |
| Lesson 6: Wave, River or Tide, Water ... | |
| Lesson 7: Think So You Don't Sink | |
| Lesson 8: Reach or Throw, Don't Go | |
| Lesson 9: Stay Calm, Think It Throug... | |

*Outreach Leader Name / Nombre del líder:

*Organization Type / Tipo de Organización:

Other Type / Otro Tipo:

Address / Dirección:

City / Ciudad:

State / Estado:

Zip Code / Código postal:

CONFIRM

redcrosslearningcenter.org > Resources > Drowning Prevention & Safety Outreach

Free Water Safety Courses



Water Safety for Parents & Caregivers Course

Our FREE online course helps parents and caregivers learn the basics of water safety.

[SIGN UP FOR WATER SAFETY FOR PARENTS COURSE](#)



Orientation to Swim Lessons for Parents and Caregivers

This FREE online course can help you get the most out of Red Cross swim lessons.

[SIGN UP FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ORIENTATION TO SWIM LESSONS](#)



Be an Ambassador for Water Safety Course

Take this FREE online course and help your community thrive by teaching kids and adults about water safety.

[SIGN UP FOR WATER SAFETY AMBASSADOR COURSE](#)

www.redcross.org/watersafety

SAVE THE DATES: 2026 Water Safety Webinar Series

WATER SAFETY WEBINARS A 4-PART SERIES

MARCH 3



Getting to Know Families United to Prevent Drowning

APRIL 9



Ready, Set, Prevent: Planning for the 2026 Water Safety Season

MAY 12



Open Water Safety 101: Life Jackets, Boating and Risk Reduction

SEPTEMBER 30



Partnering with Schools on Water Safety



American Red Cross



Evaluation QR Code

