

SURPRISES VS. SECRETS



OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will review the rule: “Tell a Trusted Adult” and learn about why secrets may make them less safe, and that there is a difference between a *surprise* and a *secret*.



OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Differentiate between a surprise and a secret
- Identify trusted adults to whom they could reveal a secret



PROCEDURE

1. **Tell** students: *Today we are going to be talking about surprises and secrets. Ask: What does the word “Surprise” mean? You may choose to emphasize and joyfully say “Surprise!” like someone might say at a birthday party in order to set up surprises as light and fun, which will later be contrasted with secrets which are more mysterious and less safe. Tell* students: *Surprises are fun and usually make everyone who knows about them happy! They also get to be revealed after a short time. For example, it’s someone’s birthday next weekend, and your family wants to have a surprise party for that person, so your family asks you not to tell about the birthday party. Ask* students:

- *How do you think the person will feel when he/she finds out about this?* (Happy, excited)
- *Is someone asking you never to talk about what you know?* (No)
- *Does knowing this information make you sad, scared or confused?* (No)

After answering these questions, explain to students that in this case, it’s OK not to tell the person about what they know, because they’ll soon find out and be happy, this is not something they have to keep to themselves forever, and knowing about it doesn’t make them feel sad, scared, or confused.

2. Elicit student examples of other types of surprises. Begin a list of “Surprises!” on the board. Examples could include:

- Surprise visitor (friend or family member)
- Unexpected gift
- Surprise prank/joke
- Surprise dinner, snack or treat

3. Next, **ask** students: *Has anyone heard the saying “Secrets, secrets, are no fun. Secrets, secrets hurt someone”?* If they have heard the expression, probe their understanding of the saying with questions like:

- *How can a secret hurt someone?* (It can hurt their feelings; it can prevent someone from getting help)



MATERIALS

- Attachment 7- Surprises and Secrets
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Computer connected to an LCD Projector
- Chart paper or Whiteboard
- Markers
- “Tell a Trusted Adult” video



PREPARATION

- Print copies of Attachment 7- Surprises and Secrets for each student.
- Prepare colored pencils or crayons for each student or group of students.



NOTE

Many dangerous situations for children involve some element of secrecy. For example, sexual perpetrators use many ploys to keep the activity secret. This lesson presents an opportunity to teach students to recognize “let’s keep this a secret” as a signal to go get help from a trusted adult.

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- *What do you think is the difference between a “surprise” and a “secret”?* (Surprises make people happy, they are short-term and knowing about them doesn’t make you uncomfortable. Secrets are meant to exclude others, often because the information would cause others to be angry or upset, and secrets have no set end-date).

If students have not heard the “Secrets, secrets…” expression, explain the difference between secrets and surprises. **Tell** students: *Secrets are meant to stop someone from learning about something, usually because if other people found out, they would be mad or sad. Sometimes, a person might ask you to keep a secret forever. Some secrets can make you feel sad, scared, confused or uncomfortable.*

4. **Tell** students: *If someone ever tells you to keep a secret forever, or says “never tell anyone”, that’s a warning sign that you should tell a trusted adult about what you know. Give the following example: A friend tells you that he is being bullied by an older kid at recess. The older kid says mean things to him, hits him and touches him in ways that make him feel uncomfortable. Your friend tells you not to tell anyone else about what’s happening.*

Ask students:

- *What could be a reason why your friend does not want you to tell anyone about what’s happening?* (He fears the bully will hurt him worse; He may be embarrassed).
- *What could happen if a trusted adult never finds out about what’s happening?* (The bullying will keep happening; the friend may get hurt; the bully may start hurting other kids, etc.)

5. **Tell** students: *Bullying is a good example of a secret that we should tell a trusted adult about right away. Let’s watch the “Tell a Trusted Adult” video to review who exactly is a trusted adult that we could go to if we ever needed to reveal a secret.*

6. **Play** the “Tell a Trusted Adult” animated video. After watching the video, **ask** students:

- *What were some examples of trusted adults in the video?* (The teacher, Ms. Johnson; Sam’s dad; Jen’s mom)
- *What were some of the situations that the kids told a trusted adult about?* (A teacher making Jen uncomfortable; kids bullying Marco; Sam feeling scared)

7. Next to the list of “Surprises” on the board, begin a list called “Secrets to TELL” and add the three examples from the video to the list. Elicit other student examples of situations where a secret should be told to a trusted adult. Examples may include:

- Someone is being bullied
- Someone is scared
- Someone feels uncomfortable
- Someone is getting/will be hurt

Remind students that if they know a secret that they now realize they should TELL, *it’s never too late to tell a trusted adult about what happened.*

8. Pass out copies of *Attachment 7- Surprises and Secrets* along with colored pencils/crayons. Explain to students that they will be drawing pictures of a surprise and a trusted adult. Allow students to complete both parts of the worksheet individually.



FOLLOW-UP

Allow students to share their drawings with a partner or small group. Encourage them to describe and explain why they drew what they did.



SURPRISES AND SECRETS



SURPRISE!

Instructions: Draw a picture of a fun surprise!



SURPRISES AND SECRETS



SECRETS

Instructions: Draw a picture of a trusted adult you could talk to about a secret that makes you or someone else sad, scared or confused.



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