

## A Parent's Lesson Plan – Stranger is Danger ונשמרתם מאד לנפשותיכם

*Designed and written by Binyomin Ginsberg*

1. This lesson is geared to be taught for children between the ages of 7 and 10, but could be adjusted as needed.
2. Must be done in a comfortable setting when there is enough time.
3. Best if taught over two or more sessions.
4. Remember that you **MUST** teach it in a way that will not cause the child to have nightmares or be scared to be outdoors.
5. The child should be explained that this is preventive and not as a result of any past situation.

### 1. Objective

To have my child(ren) learn NEVER to talk with strangers.

### 2. Desired Result

My children will NEVER talk to strangers, unless to a police officer.

### 3. Set the Stage

- Take a walk with your child to the nearest intersection and stand at any one of the corners. Bring along two blank cards on which you can write on along with writing instruments. Divide each card into two columns. One column will be titled strangers and the other non-strangers. The activity for the next thirty minutes will be for each of you (parent and child) to count how many strangers walked by and how many non-strangers walked by.
- Next, compare the total numbers of both cards, see if there are differences and discuss why there may have been differences.
- Next, ask your child for a sentence to describe and translate the word stranger.
- Next, ask your child if a stranger is a bad thing or a good thing and what makes them either bad or good.

### 4. Teach

- a. Teach the following and explain in detail:
  - a. Stranger - ANYONE who is neither a friend nor an acquaintance (explain the meaning well).
  - b. Children see strangers every day - in stores, in the park, and in their neighborhoods. Most of these strangers are nice, good people, but a few (or even just one) may not be. The reason we are NEVER to talk to strangers is because we don't want to talk to one of those bad strangers.

- c. Bad strangers don't have a sign on them, warning that they are bad. Therefore, we are NEVER to talk to any stranger. MOST bad strangers don't look scary.
- d. Bad strangers can hurt people, can grab people away, can scare people and can do many dangerous things.
- e. Bad strangers can be very tricky and they can do tricky things to get you to talk to them or even go with them. They may call you by your name (maybe they see your name on your yarmulka or maybe they heard someone else call you by your name), they may tell you something about you or your family to fool you and make you think that you know (or should) know them and they are really not strangers, they may tell you which school you go to (because of your school uniform), they may offer you a candy or some other treat (that you really wanted to have for a long time), they may tell you that your mother or father told them to pick you up, and **NOW HAVE YOUR CHILD SUGGEST OTHER TRICKS A STRANGER MAY DO.**
- f. Sometimes a bad stranger is by himself and sometimes two or more bad strangers can work together.
- g. Not answering strangers or talking to them is not being impolite and is not considered an *aveirah* in any way.
- h. A bad stranger may act as if he is hurt and he needs your help. If you think that he is hurt, tell someone who is not a stranger.
- i. If ANY stranger approaches you, don't look at them, don't talk to them (not even one word), don't even tell them what time it is or how to get to a certain street, don't walk with them and don't follow them. Even if a stranger asks you if you know them, don't even answer a two-letter word – no.
- j. All of the above applies even if you are not alone and if you are with another friend.
- k. Even if you didn't talk or respond to the stranger, ALWAYS tell the first non-stranger you meet about the stranger you met, what he said to you, what he asked you or anything that happened with that stranger.
- l. Bad strangers can be dressed in a uniform, such as a fireman, policeman, etc. and treat them as you would any stranger. The only time a policeman may not be a problem to talk with is if you need help and you approach the policeman.
- m. Bad strangers can be dressed up and look very frum, but that shouldn't fool you.
- n. If a bad stranger doesn't let you get away from him / her, scream HELP as loud as you can and kick and fight him off as best as possible
- o. Bad strangers can be a man or a lady and sometimes they can be working together.
- p. A bad stranger can be someone very close to you in age and you should treat all strangers alike, even if they are your age.
- q. If you are lost, if you feel sick or if you feel scared for any reason, either go to the first person you see who is not a stranger, find the closest phone booth and either call home or 911 (them how to use a public phone), approach a police officer and how, if desperate, to only approach strangers, if in groups of two or more.

- r. Review with your child the “No, Go, Yell, Tell” rule. If in a dangerous situations, children should say **no**, **go** away, **yell** as loud as they can, and **tell** a trusted adult what happened right away.
- s. You should know that all the rules and facts about strangers apply whether you are indoors or outdoors, in a shul, in a store, etc.
- t. Let your child know that of the children is with you, it's fine to let them say hello and talk to strangers. You are monitoring the situation and will protect them.
- u. Teach them why it is OKAY for you, their parents, to talk to strangers.
- v. Teach them that if every, anyone, even a non-stranger, does something that makes them uncomfortable, they are to tell you immediately.
- w. Teach them that the chances of being hurt by a stranger is very low, nevertheless, you don't want to rely on the small percentage.

## 5. Practice

- a. Have a sheet of 14 faces, three of them non-strangers and eleven strangers and have your child circle the strangers.
- b. Take a walk around the block with your child and have them count (and you count separately) how many strangers they passed by.
- c. Take another walk with your child and together approach a child on the street who is a stranger to you and begin talking to the child. See if they answer or not and if they don't answer, reinforce to your child that the other child learned the lesson well from his parents and if he does answer, tell the other child to ask his parents to teach him the lesson about not talking to strangers.
- d. Using the following situations, ask your child how to respond / react:
  - 1. If a nice-looking stranger approaches you in the park and asks for help finding his lost dog.
  - 2. If a nice-looking stranger approaches you in the park and asks for help finding his lost wallet with the offer of a reward.
  - 3. If a stranger asks if you want a ride home from school.
  - 4. If you think that you are being followed.
  - 5. If while you are walking home from a friend's house, a car pulls over and a stranger asks you for directions.

## 6. Further Practice

- a. Have your child design a book in any format, words, pictures, illustrations that teach the unit on strangers.

## 7. Closure

- a. Instruct your child to take a walk around the block alone and see what happens, if he is approached by a stranger and if yes, what he will do. **Don't be worried about doing this wild part**, but consider arranging for another person (a stranger to your child) approach your child and see what your child does. Did he learn the lesson or not?
  - b. Provide a setting for the child to ask any questions or seek clarification.
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## **What Else Parents Can Do**

In addition to teaching children how to stay away from strangers, there are a few more things parents can do to help their children stay safe and avoid dangerous situations.

- Know where your children are at all times. Make it a rule that your children must ask permission or check in with you before going anywhere. Give your children your work and cell phone numbers so they can reach you at all times.
- Point out safe places. Show your children safe places to play, safe roads and paths to take, and safe places to go if there's trouble.
- Teach children to trust their instincts. Explain that if they ever feel scared or uncomfortable, they should get away as fast as they can and tell an adult. Tell them that sometimes adults they know may make them feel uncomfortable, and they should still get away as fast as possible and tell another adult what happened. Reassure children that you will help them when they need it.
- Teach your children to be assertive. Make sure they know that it's okay to say no to an adult and to run away from adults in dangerous situations or when lost.
- Teach them that if necessary and they have to approach someone for help, they should try to first approach a lady walking with a carriage, if that is not possible, then a lady who is pregnant and if that not possible, then groups of two or more people.
- Encourage your children to play with others. There's safety in numbers!