

Mastering the 10-Minute Mini-Lesson



MANY GROUP LEADERS are happy to invite a fire fighter or life safety educator to teach a short lesson during a meeting, service, or social event. Make the most of these invitations. Be aware that 10 minutes will fly by! Prepare a short, engaging mini-lesson to share the most relevant information for the population in attendance. Be respectful of the group's time. Do not exceed the time frame you have been allowed. Resist the urge to cram too much information into the 10 minute session. It is better to address one issue effectively and return for another visit in the future to cover additional topics.

The 10-Minute Mini-lesson is a helpful strategy life safety educators can implement in a variety of settings. Worship services, gatherings at the local senior center, or service club meetings may all be potential opportunities to deliver short fire safety presentations with specific audiences.

Deciding Which Topic to Address

Ten minutes is a very short amount of time. Thoughtful planning will help you use the time efficiently.

- Examine data related to the population to whom you will present and speak with the group leader to uncover particular issues of concern. This will help determine what topic would be most valuable for your audience.
- Write 1 objective for the presentation. The objective will describe what you hope your audience can do as a result of your mini-lesson. Sample objectives:
 - "After the mini-lesson, participants will be able to describe at least 3 preventive actions related to smoking and fires."
 - "By the end of the session, audience members will be able to identify 3 potential hazards related to electrical equipment."
 - "After the discussion, seniors will be able to accurately distinguish between safe and unsafe behaviors while cooking in the kitchen."
- Review **NFPA Educational Messages** and related information connected to your objective.
- Review the mini-lesson plan format guidelines and organize your material accordingly. Put your plan on paper.

Mini-Lesson Plan Format

Step 1: Introduction (1–2 minutes)

- Explain who you are and how you are connected to the community.
- Explain the purpose of your visit.
- HOOK your audience: Find an interesting way to guide participants' attention towards the topic at hand. For example, share a statistic about fire risk in the community, a quick story about how a safety strategy helped someone avoid injury, or display a prop related to your mini-lesson (a pan and lid, a tangle of electrical cords, a space heater and a yard stick, or a chirping smoke alarm with a weak battery) and ask volunteers to predict the topic of the presentation.

Step 2: Body of the Presentation (7–8 minutes)

- Share important information and safety messages related to the topic. The information should directly connect to the presentation objective. Do not go off track. This mini-lesson must be concise. Given this time frame, LESS is MORE.
- Support the message with relevant examples.
- Use visuals if practical: Props, posters, pictures, or projection.
- Ask the audience questions to keep them involved. Most presenters find it helpful to plan questions ahead of time.

Step 3: Conclusion (1 minute)

- Briefly review the most important points of the presentation.
- Ask 1 or 2 review questions.
- Share your contact information and encourage participants to get in touch if they have questions related to the lesson or other fire safety concerns.
- Thank the group for their time.



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Tips to Enhance the Mini-Lesson

When implementing the mini-lesson, consider the following guidelines to ensure a top-notch presentation:

- During the introduction, share your lesson objective with your audience. This will help focus participants' attention.
- Deliver a clear message. Avoid technical terms and complex vocabulary.
- Engage your audience. Ask them questions and involve them in the presentation. Think of your lesson as a discussion rather than a lecture.
- Be enthusiastic. Your demeanor is contagious! If you are excited about your lesson, your participants will be as well. Use humor appropriately.

After the Lesson

- Make yourself available after the lesson to answer questions from participants and to build connections with group members.
- Provide safety tips sheets for participants to review later.
- Remind participants to contact you later with further questions or concerns.
- Connect with the group leader to debrief the experience. Ask the leader if s/he has suggestions to improve the mini-lesson and inform her/him you are happy to return for additional presentations in the future. Thank the leader for inviting you to present.

A Final Piece of Advice

Your mini-lesson will get better each time you present it. Practice it in front of friends or family members before you present to a community audience. You might find it challenging to complete the lesson within ten minutes. During practice, ask one of your participants to watch the clock and hold up a sign at each 2 minute interval to remind you of the passing time (For example, "2 minutes have passed", "4 minutes have passed"). This will help you develop an appropriate pace for the lesson and stay on schedule.

Try not to be nervous. People will appreciate what you are trying to do and you will become more comfortable giving the presentation with time and practice. Remember, you are providing life-saving information to people in your community and these tips can save lives.



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