

VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

for use with
Program 4

SAYING “NO”

In the Youth Guidance Video Series



EDUCATIONAL GOALS:

- 🍏 Children learn that sometimes we have to say "no" to our friends.
- 🍏 Children learn some good ideas for how to say "no" to a friend and still be cool.
- 🍏 Children learn (or have it reaffirmed) that smoking is very definitely something to say "no" to.

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HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

Use in classrooms, libraries, youth service agencies, youth groups, or show it to your kids at home. Ideal for parents, too.

YOU CAN CHOOSE![®] is an entertaining and thought provoking video series designed to help children develop a range of important life skills and a healthy self-esteem. Each episode presents an imaginative skit in which one character makes a tough choice with the help of a group of real elementary school children. In this program, **Saying No**, Missie Mouse has to choose whether to say "no" to a friend or do something she knows is wrong.

In addition to learning when and how to say "no" to a friend, viewers will see that everything they do involves choices and that they have the power within themselves to make the best choices.

You can greatly enhance the impact and usefulness of this video by following it up with discussions, writing assignments, learning activities, and by enlisting parental support. We have prepared this guide to help you in your efforts.

Before you show the tape, we recommend that you ask a few questions to start the kids thinking about the issues treated in the program. You'll find some appropriate questions in the "Discussion Questions" section of this guide.

Since the program is divided into three segments, you have the option of stopping the tape after any segment to talk about it. Here is how the program breaks down:

1. **Skit, Act I:** Missie Mouse falls into a dilemma and faces a difficult decision.
2. **Group Discussion:** School children explore the issues and decide what Missie should do.
3. **Skit, Act II:** Missie follows the children's advice and discovers the personal rewards that come from making a good choice.

While this discussion guide may appear to be written for classroom teachers, any group leader or parent will find it a useful tool for getting the most out of this **You Can Choose!** video program.

THE STORY

Missie Mouse returns to school after vacation to find that her best friend, Rhonda Bird, has just taken up smoking and wants Missie to do the same. When Missie objects, Rhonda insists that smoking makes her sophisticated and grown up, and that if Missie doesn't get with it, she may find herself left out. Missie feels very torn because she has always looked up to Rhonda as a more socially advanced role model, but now Rhonda is doing something that Missie disapproves of. Should Missie stand her ground and risk losing her friend, or bend to the pressure and do something she knows is wrong? After listening to the wise thoughts of a group of real children led by host Michael Pritchard, Missie makes the right choice and firmly, but gracefully, persuades Rhonda that smoking is a bad idea.

HOW TO SAY "NO!" AND STILL BE COOL

To say *no* and make it stick, try this three-step technique. Ask yourself each of these questions, and then look your friend straight in the eye, and confidently state your position:

1. What's the problem?

Be very specific about what is wrong. Give it a name. Say "*that's stealing,*" or "*that's dangerous,*" or "*that's mean.*"

2. What could happen?

a] Could anyone be harmed by it (including you)? How?

b] Could it get you into any kind of trouble? What trouble?

c] Would it make you feel bad about yourself if you did it?

3. What could we do instead?

If you suggest something else to do, it makes it easier for your friend to go along with you. If you can't change your friend's mind, walk away, but let your friend know he or she is welcome to join you. Say something like "*I'm going to the park. If you change your mind, come on over.*"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions to ask before showing the tape.

1. What is peer pressure?
2. Have you ever had to say "no" to a friend?
3. If a friend tried to pressure you into smoking cigarettes, what would you say is wrong with smoking?

Questions to ask after showing the tape.

4. Why did Rhonda think that smoking was "really fun"?
5. Why do you think Rhonda wanted Missie to try smoking?
6. Why did Missie have trouble choosing whether or not to smoke?
7. How do you think Missie felt about herself for saying "no?" How do you think Rhonda felt about Missie for saying "no?"
8. Why do people have trouble saying "no" to friends?
9. Besides smoking, what are some other things to say "no" to?
10. When someone suggests doing something you don't feel right about, what are some things you can do besides just saying "no?"
(Ignore the suggestion, make a joke about it, change the subject, offer a better idea, etc.)
11. Did the kids in the discussion part of the program say anything that you strongly agree or disagree with?
12. What did you learn from this video program?

GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Write the three-step technique from page 3 on the board, and then have the group use it to perform some role-playing exercises. Take two kids at a time and start by having one try to persuade the other to smoke. Then replace smoking with other issues that pertain to this group. Have the kids who are watching critique the role-plays, identifying what worked well and what didn't. Make sure every child gets a chance to be the one who says "no."
2. To reinforce this lesson, hold a weekly "Saying *No* Challenge" by repeating the kind of role-playing described in #1, above. Have the kids invent their own situations, and give recognition to especially creative or graceful ways of saying no.
3. Hold a classroom brainstorming session to generate things you can say if someone is trying to get you to: shoplift, cheat, fight, pick on someone, etc. Write the ideas on the board and discuss them.
4. Design a "Saying *No*" poster and keep it on display on your classroom wall. You might even have the kids design a new poster every month or two.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Here is an assignment you can use to help stimulate critical thinking. Have everybody cut a cigarette advertisement out of a magazine or newspaper and write a paper which addresses the following questions:

What do you think the cigarette company is trying to say to you about smoking?

Do you agree or disagree with that message? Why, or why not?

Have them bring the advertisements to class with their papers for a group discussion.

2. Write a radio or TV anti-smoking commercial. If your school or organization has the facilities, you might even produce these commercials on audio or videotape.

3. This assignment will encourage young people to play an active role in society. Have everybody write a letter to a tobacco company telling what is wrong with smoking and why the company should not try to influence people to start. If the kids have friends or relatives who became ill or died from smoking, they should mention that in their letters. Let the kids know that you are going to put all their letters into a large envelope and mail it to a tobacco company. Then, do it. If the company responds, be sure to share it with the kids.

4. Make a list of things you plan to say "no" to if anyone ever suggests doing them. Using the three steps on page 3, plan out what you will say for each thing on your list.

HOME ASSIGNMENTS

To enlist the involvement of parents, make copies of the Parents' Page (see next page) and send them home with the children. Tell the children to discuss the video with their parents, and to perform the following activities.

1. Play a "saying no" game with your parents or other members of your family. First, teach them the three-step "Saying No" technique on page 3. Then, ask them to try to convince you to do something wrong while you practice using the three steps to say "no." Then, switch roles.
2. Ask your parents or other members of your family to tell you about a time they should have said "no" but didn't. Why didn't they? If they had it to do over again, how would they do it differently? Share with them any ideas you have about how to handle the situation better. Ask them to tell you about a time they did say "no" and were glad they did.

Note to the teacher or group leader: It might be a good idea to think of some way for the children to share the outcomes of these activities with each other. Perhaps they could give written or oral reports or discuss their experiences in small groups.

(Copy this page and send it home to the parents.)

PARENTS' PAGE

Dear Parent,

Your child is involved in learning-activities designed to enhance self-esteem, develop positive life skills, and empower young people to make good choices for themselves.

He or she may be asked to complete several tasks at home. Your cooperation with these activities will support our overall program.

The current lesson is about saying "no" when a friend pressures us to do something we know is wrong or potentially harmful. We have shown a video entitled *Saying No*, which presents a skit and discussion about two friends in conflict over whether or not to smoke cigarettes. We urge you to ask your child to tell you about this video program and what he or she learned from it.

Here are some things you can do to encourage your child to say "no" when friends pressure them to join in on a possibly harmful activity.

- Share with your child your own memories of dealing with peer pressure.
- Acknowledge that it's not always easy to say "no" to a friend. But sometimes it's necessary.
- Encourage your child to tell you about his or her day. Talk about your day. Keep the channels of communication open.
- Discuss (don't lecture) the hazards involved in smoking or any other harmful activity your child may be under pressure to participate in.
- Recognize the times, however small, when your child makes a good choice in a given situation.

ABOUT MICHAEL PRITCHARD

Michael Pritchard is a juvenile probation officer turned comedian / youth counselor / public speaker. After his college graduation in 1973, Mike went to work for the St. Louis Police Department and then moved to San Francisco's juvenile hall. In his years of working with young offenders, Mike discovered that his penchant for humor served as a powerful counseling tool, enabling him to break down communication barriers and help a lot of troubled kids turn their lives around. As Mike is fond of saying, "the shortest distance between any two people is a good laugh." Mike's unusual combination of talents gained him recognition as California's "Probation Officer of the Year" the same year that he won the San Francisco International Comedy Competition.

Whether he's being funny or serious, Mike's big love is talking with kids about the choices they make in their lives. He teaches young people that they have the power of choice, that they are responsible for the choices they make, and that they owe it to themselves to choose the best.



"The shortest distance between two people is a good laugh."

LICENSE AGREEMENT

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You **may** play this video on your institution's closed-circuit television system within a single building or campus. This right **does not** extend to multiple schools within a district.

You **may** permit viewers to watch this video on your premises, or lend it to them to take out.

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You may **not** duplicate, alter, or reproduce this tape in any manner, in whole or in part.

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If you have any questions regarding this license agreement, or your intended use of this tape, please contact:

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