



# I Know What to Do!

## Classroom Guide

*Getting lost is scary — until you remember the rules*

**CASEL Competency:** Responsible Decision-Making

**Grade Level:** Pre-K–2

**Duration:** 40–50 minutes

**Category:** Safety Magic

## Learning Objectives

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- Learn the BECOME A TREE technique — stop moving, plant your feet, stay visible
- Practice yelling a parent's REAL name (not "Mommy") in a crowded place
- Know how to identify a safe helper (a mom with kids, a store worker with a name tag)
- Memorize and recite a parent's full name and phone number

## Overview & Preparation

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### Key Vocabulary

BECOME A TREE • Safe helper • Stay put • Full name • Phone number • Visible • Calm • Practice • Separation • Reunion

### Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Practice phone number cards
- Name tag props (for safe helper ID)
- Cones or markers for "tree" practice
- Whistle or signal

## Before Reading

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### Connection Question

*Have you ever been separated from your grown-up in a store or park? What did you do? What SHOULD you do?*

### Background Building

In this story, the hero is at a busy place with their parent. Something catches their eye — they turn to look — and when they turn back, the parent is GONE. Panic! But then the hero remembers the rules they practiced: BECOME A TREE. Stop. Plant your feet. Don't run. Yell your parent's REAL name. Find a safe helper. Say your full name. Recite the phone number. And wait — because help is coming.

## During Reading — Pause Points

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- **When the hero turns around and the parent is gone** — The parent was RIGHT HERE and now they're gone! What's the hero feeling? What would YOUR first instinct be — to run or to stop?
- **When the hero remembers "BECOME A TREE" and plants their feet** — The hero stopped instead of running! Why is staying still better than running around looking?
- **When the hero finds a safe helper and says their full name and phone number** — The hero told the helper their REAL name and their parent's phone number. Why is knowing this information so important?

## Discussion Questions

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**1.** BECOME A TREE means STOP and STAY PUT. Why is running around the WORST thing to do when you're lost?

↳ If a tree could talk, what would it say to a scared kid?

**2.** The hero yelled their parent's REAL name — not "Mommy" or "Daddy." Why? What happens if you yell "Mommy" in a crowded place?

↳ Do you know your parent's real first and last name?

**3.** A "safe helper" is a mom with kids or a worker with a name tag. Why these people?

↳ Who would NOT be a safe helper?

**4.** The hero practiced these rules BEFORE they needed them. Why is practice important for emergencies?

↳ What other safety rules do you practice (fire drills, etc.)?

## Facilitation Tips

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This lesson should include PHYSICAL PRACTICE. Have children actually plant their feet, yell a parent's name, and recite information. Muscle memory matters more than discussion in emergencies.

## Emotional Payoff

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*The hero overrides panic with preparation. The rules they practiced turn a terrifying moment into a solvable problem. BECOME A TREE transforms the child from a helpless victim of separation into a capable person who knows EXACTLY what to do.*

## After Reading Activities

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### BECOME A TREE Drill

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Open space, cones

Practice the full sequence: teacher says "You're lost!" Children FREEZE (become a tree), plant feet wide, look around, yell a parent's name (use practice names), then walk to a "safe helper" station. Repeat 3 times until it's automatic.

### Phone Number Song

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Index cards, markers

Each child writes their parent's phone number on a card. Create a rhythm or song to remember it. Practice saying it 5 times. Test: can you recite it with eyes closed? This is the most critical safety information a child can carry.

### Safe Helper Identification

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Picture cards of different people

Show pictures: Who is a safe helper? (Mom with kids: YES. Store worker with name tag: YES. Random adult: NO. Police officer: YES.) Practice: "Excuse me, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm lost. Can you call my parent at \_\_\_\_\_?"

## Writing Prompts

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- Draw yourself as a TREE — feet planted, strong, waiting for help. What makes you a strong tree?
- Write the steps: 1. BECOME A TREE. 2. Yell my parent's real name. 3. Find a safe helper. 4. Say my name and number.
- Draw a "safe helper" and explain how you know they're safe.

## Home Connection

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### Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we practiced "I Know What to Do!" — what to do if separated from you in public. Your child learned: BECOME A TREE (stop, plant feet, stay visible), yell YOUR real name (not "Mommy"), find a safe helper, and recite your phone number. PLEASE practice these skills at home — muscle memory saves lives.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Practice BECOME A TREE at the grocery store: "If we got separated right now, what would you do?"
- Make sure your child can recite your FULL name and phone number from memory
- Role-play finding a safe helper: "Who would you go to in this store?"

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

### Related Books

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- I'm Lost by Michael Escoffier
- The Berenstain Bears Learn About Strangers by Stan & Jan Berenstain
- My Body Belongs to Me by Jill Starishevsky
- Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathmann