

Personal Safety Program

More Bush Baby Stories

Written by R. Guidotti
AJSL Victoria Point Group



Queensland Branch Inc

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Personal Safety Program More Bush Baby Stories

From the Personal Safety Officer:

It gives me great pleasure to be able to share with you the following stories written by Robbie Guidotti (Kanga), AJSL Victoria Point Group, South Area.

I am sure Leaders will agree that the stories are really enjoyable and consistent with the messages of the original stories in the *Personal Safety Program*.

More Bush Baby Stories shows how Leaders can extend the current program to explore other Personal Safety issues with Joey Scout Members.

I hope others will be inspired to further develop their *Personal Safety Program* as Robbie has done.

Thanks to Robbie for sharing his talents with Queensland Leaders.

BRAVO Robbie!!!

Debbie Thomson
Personal Safety Officer

More Bush Baby Stories

... ABOUT FRIENDSHIP ...

On the outskirts of town, there lived a small community of native bush animals. They lived side by side with humankind but rarely left their leafy surroundings.

In this small community lived four very special animals. These animals were still very young and were referred to by the older animals as the *Bush Babies*. They were Joe the Joey Kangaroo, Gumnut Koala, Bill Platypus and Maggie Magpie.

The *Bush Babies* were the best of friends. They were growing up together and learning about life in the bush, not only from their parents but also from each other. Every day to them was a new adventure.

As another new day broke, it found our four friends heading down the well worn trail to the foot of Mount Rush. Mount Rush was one of the four friends' favourite places to visit. Each *Bush Baby* had their own reason for holding this place so special. Joe loved the lush green grass, Gumnut had a seemingly endless supply of gum leaves, Bill adored the meandering stream in which she spent countless hours swimming, and Maggie just could not resist the local witchety grubs.

But the one reason they had in common with each other was they all felt safe while spending time there. Even though each *Bush Baby* was busy doing what they enjoyed, they all kept an eye on each other. Joe sat by the stream chewing the rich green grass as Bill swam leisurely by. Gumnut sat perched in the branch of a tree lazily chewing a mouthful of crisp gumleaves as Maggie circled high above their heads, one eye on her friends, the other watching out for juicy witchety grubs.

As the day drew closer to midday, the four friends lazed under the shade of a willow tree with its branches hanging out over Bill's stream. They planned the following day in detail as to where they would go and what they would do. The day would be at Cooee Gully and if everything they planned came about, tomorrow would be another excellent day.

... ABOUT FRIENDSHIP ...

Discussion:

Friends are very important.

What do you like about your friends?

What do your friends like about you?

What things do you do with your friends?

Sometimes, it's hard to find new friends, especially if you are new to a school or Mob.

How could you help someone to make friends with you?

Activity: Friendship Card

Give each Joey Scout a card with the printed information (as shown over page) on half a piece of A4 paper or card.

Ask them to fill in the spaces by writing:

Own name

Friend's name

Any time

Any day

Anywhere

... and give it to another Joey Scout in the Mob.

The afternoon soon started to turn to dusk as the four made their way back to the security of their homes and their waiting families. Each *Bush Baby* said goodbye to the others, promising tomorrow to be as good as today and if not, better!

The four went their own separate ways, dying to tell any member of their family willing to listen, how they had spent another very special day and most importantly, that they had been together. Friends are a very important part of growing up.

Kanga

An Invitation to
BE MY FRIEND

..... invites to be my friend

Time:

Date:

Place:

**PLEASE KEEP THIS CARD. ANY TIME YOU NEED A FRIEND -
REMEMBER ME.**

FRIENDS ARE VERY IMPORTANT

An Invitation to
BE MY FRIEND

..... invites to be my friend

Time:

Date:

Place:

**PLEASE KEEP THIS CARD. ANY TIME YOU NEED A FRIEND -
REMEMBER ME.**

FRIENDS ARE VERY IMPORTANT

More Bush Baby Stories

... ABOUT SPECIAL TALENTS ...

Bill was the only baby that her mother and father had. She had no brothers or sisters. Even though she had three special friends, she also spent a lot of time playing by herself.

Bill often went down to the stream with her mother and practised swimming. She'd spend hours and hours first going up the stream in one direction, then returning in the other direction. While she did this, her mother lazed on the edge of the bank, or sometimes just in the water. At all times, she kept a watchful eye on her youngster as she was very aware of dangers that existed for a young platypus.

Bill was very small for her age but was an excellent swimmer. Her mother was proud of the way she handled herself in the water and always made sure she told her so. She knew it was an important part of growing up; letting youngsters know that they were good at things they did.

Bill was very happy with the way she swam because her mother's encouragement made her feel special. But Bill was very small, and no matter how much her mother told her it didn't matter, she was always upset about it.

However there was one particular day that Bill and her mother were at the stream, that helped completely change Bill's attitude about herself..

It just so happened that Mother Kookaburra's baby had fallen from the nest into a bunch of branches in the stream. She could hear her baby calling to her but was unable to get to him. She pleaded with Mother Platypus to attempt saving her baby. Mother Platypus tried in vain but the gap in the bundle of branches gathered there was too small for her to venture inside.

Bill immediately offered her assistance. Bill's mother wasn't too sure about this, as she was concerned for her own daughter's safety. Bill convinced her mother she would be fine and was soon entering the small gap in the branches.

As she swam back out with the baby Kookaburra sitting on her back, she realised that her size had let her help somebody out. She couldn't wait to return the baby to his mother. She was so excited and proud of herself. Mother Kookaburra thanked her so much and made her way off back to her nest with her baby.

Bill just wanted to go home and tell her father about rescuing the baby. If she weren't as small as she was, it would not have been possible. She was glad she was the size she was, because it meant she had a special talent.

Kanga

... ABOUT SPECIAL TALENTS ...

Discussion/Activity:

Everybody has a special talent, and everyone is different. We shouldn't feel sad because we can't do everything. We should feel glad that we are special in our own ways. We should also encourage others to use their special talents.

What sorts of things would Mother Platypus have said to Bill to encourage her?

We use "positive words" to encourage others to use their special talents.

Ask the Joey Scouts to help make a list of positive words that should be displayed in the den to remind them how to encourage each other. Words might include:

- That's great
- Keep trying
- I am impressed
- Very good
- I wish I could do that

More Bush Baby Stories

... ABOUT SOLVING PROBLEMS ...

Gumnut was the youngest koala in her family. She had two older brothers and an older sister.

Gumnut's parents were always reminding their children about personal safety; not only home but everywhere they went. They told their children that they should never allow themselves to be bullied. They knew that bullies could be a problem and wanted their children to be aware not to let bullies win.

Gumnut was told to stand up for herself, or if she was unable to do so, then she must tell someone who would help her - like someone from her family or one of her friends.

The day came where her parent's warnings rang true. She found herself faced by two older male koalas who lived on the other side of the hill.

They had cornered her and were picking on her because she was smaller than they were. They made fun of her and pushed her around.

She knew she wasn't big enough to stand up to these two with physical strength, so she tried to talk to them. She told them that just because she was smaller than them, that didn't mean she wasn't just as important as them.

They just laughed at her and continued with the cruel remarks. She wasn't scared of them although she did feel uncomfortable.

Just then, her older brothers turned up to see their sister being bullied by these two other koalas.

As her two brothers came into view, the two koalas from over the hill stopped what they were doing. Gumnut's brothers were bigger than these two, much much bigger, so that left the two bullies unsure of themselves.

Gumnut's oldest brother spoke first asking what was going on. Gumnut didn't want to cause trouble for the other two so was unsure whether to tell her brothers what was happening. When she spoke, she spoke to the two bullies first and not to her brothers.

She told them she didn't like being bullied, called names or being pushed around. She also told them that having her brothers pick on them wouldn't solve anything either.

She just asked them to leave and to consider that it could have been them being pushed around and how they might have felt about that. They both left, uttering a hasty apology.

When they were out of sight, both her brothers praised her for the way she had handled herself and dealt with the situation. They also realised that bullying the other two in standing up for their sister was not the right thing to do. It was much more sensible to solve the problem by standing up to the bullies with words rather than fists.

Kanga

... ABOUT SOLVING PROBLEMS ...

Discussion:

Sometimes when we feel threatened by a bully, we feel like we should bully them back. However this can cause more trouble and will only make you a bully yourself.

How should you talk to a bully?

Suggested answers:

Tell them that their behaviour is wrong, and that they hurt other peoples' feelings. Ask them how would they feel if someone bullied them. Explain if they don't stop you will have to speak to someone about their behaviour. If they threaten you again, tell them you are not interested in talking any more and walk away.

Don't scream at them or threaten to hurt them back. Protect yourself by moving away from them.

How should you stand when you talk to a bully?

Suggested answer: Stand straight and look at them in the eyes.

What if the bully is really making you scared?

Go and tell someone who will listen and help you. If the first person you talk to doesn't seem helpful, then tell someone else.

... ABOUT SOLVING PROBLEMS ...

Activity:

To help children understand the difference between aggressive behaviour and assertive behaviour, list all the behaviours of others which make them feel threatened. These should include:

- ◆ Hitting
- ◆ Biting
- ◆ Pinching
- ◆ Throwing things
- ◆ Pushing
- ◆ Kicking
- ◆ Spitting
- ◆ Hair pulling
- ◆ Swearing
- ◆ Namecalling
- ◆ Teasing
- ◆ Being left out of games
- ◆ Yelling and screaming
- ◆ Saying nasty things about another person
- ◆ Making rude handsigns and body gestures
- ◆ Mimicking behind someone's back
- ◆ Poking
- ◆ Stealing

All these behaviours (and more) are aggressive and will hurt someone either physically and/or emotionally. Children must realise to do these things back to a bully will probably make the situation worse.

The Joey Scout program for Personal Safety Program number 3 looks at assertive behaviour through role-play. It would be advisable to again practise assertive behaviour by role-playing from stories the children will offer about their own experiences.

More Bush Baby Stories

... ABOUT SECRETS ...

Maggie had been pestering her father to take her down to the edge of the stream for ages. She wanted to get her father to teach her to track down the juicy witchety grubs that she knew lived there.

This was the morning they were going to the stream. They flew together from the nest, yelling their goodbyes to Mother Magpie. It was only a couple of minutes when they landed and settled on a rotting log. Maggie was so excited - the big juicy grubs tasted so, so good, and she had never been able to fetch them for herself.

Her father explained to her to check out likely places they would be hiding. "But be aware, little Maggie. Snakes sometimes lay around the rotting branches and trees too," he said.

He told her to stay close and he would keep a watchful eye on her. Even though she was excited, she knew that his advice was sensible and she would do as he asked.

They caught and ate some beautiful grubs that morning and were resting under the shade of a huge gum tree. However, Maggie had something on her mind that was bothering her. She was trying to decide whether to talk to her father about it or just keep it from him and try and deal with it herself.

Her older brother had been giving her a real hard time at home lately and had threatened to hurt her if she told anyone, especially their parents.

Maggie knew her parents had always told her not to keep secrets from them and so she decided to speak to her father about the problem.

He was very comforting about it and told her that he would speak to her brother. Father magpie thanked Maggie for not keeping this to herself as he couldn't be there to help if he didn't know. He also told her that as she grew up, any problems at all should be brought to him or her mother as they would always listen.

If she didn't feel comfortable telling him, he told her to find someone else who would listen and could help her.

She felt much better now, not having to keep this secret to herself any longer. She also had a belly full of fresh witchety grubs and that, no doubt, helped too.

Kanga

... ABOUT SECRETS ...

Discussion:

It is vitally important for children to understand that not all secrets are good. Spend some time talking about how good secrets feel.

What sorts of secrets do you keep from your family and friends?

Suggested answers:

Birthday presents

Special outing

Someone coming to visit

Something new you learn and practise

How do you feel inside about those secrets?

Suggested answers:

Excited

Happy

Can't wait for it to happen

Really want to tell someone

Good because you know you are doing something nice for someone

Why was Maggie unsure about telling her father the secret?

Because her brother threatened her

If a secret is a good secret do you think you should feel threatened, or scared, or guilty or ashamed? NO

What if someone told you to keep a secret or else they would hurt you, or your family?

You must tell someone who will listen and help. Tell them that you have been threatened.

What if they told you no-body would believe you?

This is a threat. Tell someone who will listen and help. Tell them you have been threatened.

What if they told you you'd be sent away from your home?

This is a threat. Tell someone who will listen and help. Tell them you have been threatened.

What if they made you do something you knew was wrong and told you to keep a secret?

It's not your fault. Tell someone who will listen and help. Tell them you have been threatened.

What if you thought the secret was okay at first and then decided it was not okay?

Tell someone who will listen and help.

Activity:

Good secrets made Maggie feel good, just like the witchety grubs and worms she loved to eat.

Worm relay:

The Joey Scouts should have a bowl of cooked spaghetti at end of the room opposite each team, and an empty bowl in front of the team.

On the word go, the Joey Scouts must run up to the full bowl, one at a time as in relay form, select a worm (one piece of spaghetti) and run back to place it in the empty bowl.

The winning team is the one which has the most worms in its (empty) bowl after five minutes, or whatever time frame you choose.

More Bush Baby Stories

... ABOUT BEING OBEDIENT ...

Peter was the youngest possum in the family that lived in Karingal's bushland. He was a very mischievous possum at that. His mother always tried to teach him to be nice to his family and to watch out for strangers. She taught him that if he was to venture off, never to go alone. Her advice to him was to take his older brother, Paul, with him wherever he may want to go.

But Peter's memory was very short when it came to what his mother had told him. He was always cheeky to his brother, and often wandered off. The more times he wandered off and never even saw a stranger, the more game he became.

One morning as the sun was just coming up over the treetops, and the rest of his family had just gone to sleep, he scurried down the tree trunk and quickly left his sleeping family behind. Peter knew possums slept in the day, but this morning he decided to venture down to the dam and just look around.

As he hurried along the well worn trail he had followed on many a night, he kept noticing a shadow falling over him and then disappearing again. He thought very little of it as he was so excited about being out and being able to do as he pleased. "Maybe it was just a cloud," he thought. "You don't notice them so much at night."

As he reached the dam, he was so thirsty. He thought he would just sit on the edge of the bushland and watch the wildlife come and go. Ducks would paddle out amongst the water lilies, frogs would sit croaking on the bank and the odd wallaby would approach the dam for a drink.

He felt safe in amongst the bush and he did remember his mother telling him often about not being out during the day, but he was so thirsty, yes, so thirsty.

He'd just slip out and sneak a quick drink. What possible harm could come to him? No other animal was being disturbed; everything seemed so peaceful.

As he left the safety of the surrounding bush, he again noticed a shadow fall over him.

Again he thought little of it and kept heading for the water's edge. He could taste the cool water; his mind thought of nothing else, when out of the sky dropped a huge eagle - talons open, screaming as it bore down on him.

He turned to look up; the whole sky was taken up with this huge bird. It seemed to block out everything. He turned and ran as fast as his trembling little legs could carry him. The bird's talons grazed his fur-covered back as it missed its target and headed back up the way it came.

Peter reached the bush edge, cowering under a bush shaking, all over.

After a length of time had passed, how long he wasn't sure, he gingerly made his way back up the trail he had come. This time he kept looking up watching the sky, wishing he were home in his tree with the rest of his family.

When the family tree came into view, he flew up its trunk and grinned from ear to ear. He was happy to be safe and among his family members. They slept on unaware of his adventure - a near miss with the eagle. He promised himself he would never ever go off alone again now that he had experienced the danger that his mother had so often warned him against.

He had learnt his lesson. It pays to be obedient. He realised now how lucky he had been and how close he had come to being a meal for a very large eagle.

Kanga

... ABOUT BEING OBEDIENT ...

Discussion:

Why had Peter's mother told him not to venture too far?

Should he have gone out during the day when he knew he wasn't allowed?

Do you think Peter would try to sneak out again like this?

He was very lucky to escape, but what would have happened if the eagle had caught him? Would his family been able to find him? Would they even know where to look?

When you are told not to do something, it is usually because it is not safe. Always try to be obedient, and be sure that your family knows where you are going at all times.

Do you think Peter should tell his parents what happened? Yes he should because this is not a good secret to keep. Others need to know the dangers so they can protect their personal safety, too.

... ABOUT BEING OBEDIENT ...

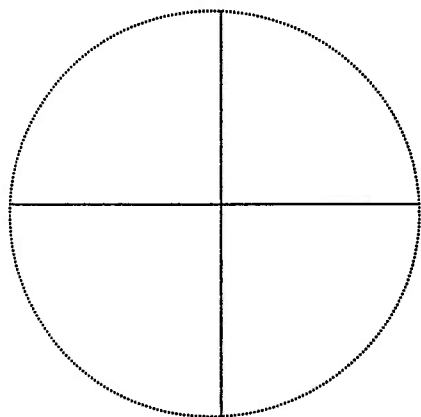
Activity:

Everybody need rules to protect them. If we disobey rules, we may suffer consequences.

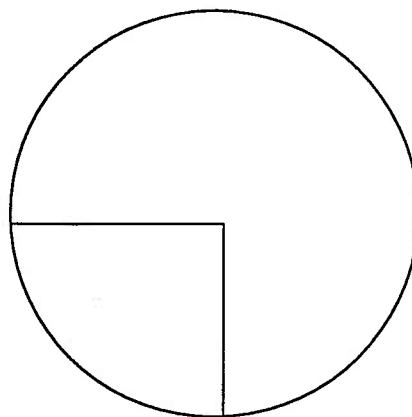
Make a rule chart using two large pieces of cardboard as shown below. By turning the upper circle around, a rule can be displayed, and give you the opportunity to discuss consequences.

Use whatever rules you choose, but write in a positive form rather than negative eg "Never play on the street" becomes "Always play in the yard or playgrounds". Then you can ask what would happen if children decided to play on the street instead of the proper play areas?

Lower circle



Upper circle



Write the rules in each quarter of the lower circle, and cut out one quarter only in the upper circle. Join two circles at the centre point with a split pin. You can write more rules on the circle by dividing it into 8 pieces, instead of 4.

More Bush Baby Stories

... ABOUT STAYING CLOSE TO HOME ...

Joe had been awake for hours as he was always the first in his family to wake. The sun had been showing its bright and happy face for some time and Joe was getting restless waiting for his parents to join him for breakfast.

"Another five minutes," he thought to himself. "That is all I will give them, then I will go and eat by myself."

That five minutes seemed to drag on forever. When it had finally passed, his parents were still asleep.

Joe left the rest of the family sound asleep as he headed to for the usual open area where he and his parents often grazed.

He promised himself he wouldn't go far and wouldn't be long. He'd probably be back before the rest of his family awoke. On the way there, Joe came across Larry Lizard and Old Dingo ambling along the same track he was taking.

His parents had told him to be polite but to always be aware of strangers. He knew Larry Lizard and Old Dingo by sight but had never spoken to them before. He thought the safest way to deal with them was wish them a 'good morning' and be on his way.

Old Dingo and Larry Lizard replied with their good mornings and asked him to stay and talk a while as it was such a beautiful day.

Joe could see no harm in just talking to them; he couldn't possibly get himself into any sort of trouble just talking to them.

Old Dingo asked Joe where he was off to by himself. Joe explained he was off to the usual place where he had breakfast. Larry asked Joe where his parents were. Joe replied, thinking nothing of it, explaining they were still fast asleep.

Old Dingo told Joe he and Larry knew of an even better place that Joe could eat.

Joe argued that his parents knew where he would be at the usual place and that if he wandered off further in a different direction, his parents wouldn't know where to find him.

Larry spoke up coaxing Joe into joining them and telling Joe they would look out for him.

Joe was very unsure of himself. He wanted to try this new place that sounded so wonderful but he was also reminded of his parents telling him not to wander off. They wouldn't be able to look for him if they didn't know where he was. Larry and Old Dingo had offered to watch out for him but he didn't really know them either and that made him feel uncomfortable.

His mind was made up for him as his mother stood atop the crest of a hill and called out to him.

Old Dingo and Larry Lizard looked at each other, excused themselves and beat a hasty retreat.

As his mother approached him, he felt relieved and so happy, and the feeling of security once more returned to him.

He explained to his mother about Larry Lizard and Old Dingo and their offer of a better breakfast place.

His mother was more than glad that she had turned up when she did. She told Joe not to mix company with either of these individuals as they often were up to no good.

They then proceeded to head off to graze on the clean crisp grass that awaited them.

Joe's mother once more reminded him to stay close to home and never to wander off by himself.

Kanga

... ABOUT STAYING CLOSE TO HOME ...

Discussion:

Why do you think Old Dingo and Larry Lizard were up to no good?

Joe could remember what his mother had told him about staying close to home. Why is this important?

Do you think Joe did the right thing going out to eat before his family awoke?

It doesn't matter where you are going, or who you are going with, you must always tell your family what you are going to do.

If Joe had found himself lost in the bush, what Australian bush call for help could he have made? (Cooee)

Activity:

Practise the Australian bush call.

Run a competition to decide who can make the loudest "cooee" and use "Caramel Koala Bears" or chocolate "Australian Animal Bars" as prizes (for everyone). These are available at your local supermarkets.

Maybe a certificate or a gumnut fridge magnet could be presented to the best caller.

