Middle School
Mini Activity

# Find the Scam

NetSmartz Workshop
A PROGRAM OF THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

**Use this activity to demonstrate how online scams are difficult to recognize. You will need three small rubber balls and three colored plastic cups.**

Ask the children to close their eyes. While they aren't looking, place the rubber balls inside the three cups on a table. You should not be able to see through the cups. Now ask everyone to gather around the table and ask for a volunteer.

Say to the volunteer: *You know this game. I've hidden a ball in one of these cups. These cups represent online contests that you want to enter, but one of these contests is a scam. I'm not going to show you where the ball is right now because online you never know. Find the cup with the ball; find the scam.* Now rearrange the cups being careful not to show the three hidden balls. Ask the volunteer to choose.

Pick up the chosen cup and show the ball: *You've been scammed!*

Now ask for another volunteer and do the same: *You've been scammed, too!*

Now show that all three cups have a ball inside: *Just like I tricked you into thinking that two of these cups did not have a ball in it, online scammers can trick you into believing they are offering legitimate contests. You can guard against online scams by asking a trusted adult before giving away personal information like your name, address, and phone number online. Remember, don't give your personal information to any website you aren't 100% sure of.*




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Middle School
Mini Activity

# Take a Stand

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**Use this activity to encourage children to take a stand against cyberbullying. You will need a roll of masking tape.**

Use masking tape to mark a line down the center of the room. Explain to the children that one side means "Yes" and the other side means "No."

Now ask them: *If someone sends you an embarrassing picture of a classmate on your cell phone, would you send it to someone else? Move to this side if your answer is "yes," and to this side if your answer is "no."*

Let everyone answer, then ask someone who said "no" to convince those on the other side to switch sides and take a stand against cyberbullying. Continue with the remaining questions. If no one is on the other side, stand there yourself and ask them to convince you:

- *If someone posted a rumor about a classmate online, would you tell your best friend to check it out? (No)*
- *If someone set up a fake social networking profile for a classmate, would you report it? (Yes)*
- *If you knew someone's IM password, would you log onto their account? (No)*
- *If someone posted rude comments on your social networking page, would you tell an adult? (Yes)*
- *If someone is being rude to you while gaming online, would you be rude to them? (No)*

Explain to the children that being mean or rude to others online is considered cyberbullying. Not only will they be hurting someone's feelings, but they can also get in trouble at school or even be charged with a crime.





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# Simon Says

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**Use this activity to teach children how to recognize the warning signs that an online friend is a predator.**

Ask the children to stand in a circle.

Now tell them: *You're online and you just made a new friend named Simon. Simon says, "Tell me about that new movie you saw." Is that OK to talk about? Raise your hand if you say "yes." Keep your hand down if you say "no."*

Wait for everyone to answer, and then call on someone who said "yes" to explain why they answered that way. Some requests from Simon are OK to talk about online, but some hint that he is an online predator. Ask the rest of these questions. After everyone answers, you can raise your hand if the best answer is "yes," or keep it down if the best answer is "no." Then call on someone who answered correctly to tell you why that answer is right.

- *Simon says, "Tell me your cell phone number so we can talk all the time." (No)*
- *Simon says, "Tell me what you thought of that book I was telling you about." (Yes)*
- *Simon says, "Tell me your e-mail address so I can send you something." (No)*
- *Simon says, "Tell me your address so I can send you a gift." (No)*
- *Simon says, "Tell me about your favorite online game." (Yes)*
- *Simon says, "Tell me why you can't trust your parents, but you can trust me." (No)*

Ask everyone to sit down and remind them that some things are OK to talk about with online friends like hobbies and games, but when someone starts asking for personal information, sending you gifts, or trying to turn you against family or friends, they might be a predator. If an online friend is making you uncomfortable or talking about inappropriate things, you should tell a trusted adult right away.




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Middle School
Mini Activity

# Headline Stories

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**Use this activity to demonstrate how posting something inappropriate online can have negative consequences.**

Ask two children to come to the front of the room. Tell one of the following stories for each child:

- *(Child's name) was upset with school administrators for rescheduling a school event he helped plan. He/she vented on his blog about what idiots they were. When the principal saw the blog, he barred him/her from serving as class secretary.*
- *(Child's name) joined a group of teammates in setting up a fake social networking page in their coach's name. They posted mean comments about their coach and his family. When the site was discovered, the athletes were kicked off the team. (Volunteer's name) even lost his/her athletic scholarship to college.*

Now ask: *Do you think what happened to these two was fair? What if I told you that these are true stories that have actually happened to real people?* Remind the children that once you post something online, you lose control of it. Even if you meant for only a few people to see, anyone can copy it and post it elsewhere, so be careful what you post.




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