



# Service Learning Lesson Guide

*Lesson Topic: Helmets - Teen-to-Adult  
Don't Let Them Risk it All in a Fall*

## What's the Point?

This lesson is designed to be used by high school students to educate the parents of middle school students about the dangers of riding a bicycle without a helmet or a helmet that doesn't fit properly.

Teachers can use this lesson to fit specific curriculum goals and time constraints. This lesson can be incorporated into a variety of courses including: Public Speaking, Physics, Statistics, Anatomy and Physiology and Civics.

## Objectives

- Students will learn how to properly fit a bicycle helmet.
- Students will learn about traumatic brain injuries and how lives change as a result of those injuries.
- Students will share what they learn with parents.
- Parents will learn how to properly fit bicycle helmets.
- Parents will commit to wearing helmets when out bicycling and make sure that their children wear helmets that fit them correctly.

## Materials

- Data on bicycle crashes and injuries
- Materials for creating experiments
- Videos on how to properly fit helmets
- Bicycle helmets
- Handouts for parents

## Interest Grabber

Teens should conduct an informal survey of middle school aged children before a presentation to parents. Students should spend time observing the younger teens to see how wear helmets when riding a bicycle.

Think of provocative questions to ask parents. For example: "If asked, how many of your children would jump off a four story building with no safety net?" Most parents will answer "not mine" but this risk is similar to the risk many young people make if they ride a bicycle without a helmet. Falling off a bicycle without a helmet is similar to hitting the pavement at the end of a two to four story fall.

## Teaching Steps

1. Share some of the statistics related to bicycle crashes. Use the sources on the NOYS website for example statistics.
2. Visit [www.thinkfirst.org](http://www.thinkfirst.org) to learn about how traumatic brain injuries are caused and how they impact the lives of survivors. Share what you learn with the class.
3. Use an experiment to demonstrate how fragile the brain is and how a helmet provides protection. Examples of demonstration projects can be found in "Demonstrating Bicycle Helmet Effectiveness: A How-To Guide" by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). A link to the report can be found on the NOYS website.
4. Watch the NHTSA videos on proper fit for bicycle helmets. Fit a helmet yourself and talk through the installation steps until you can show someone else how to fit it properly.
5. As a group research how parent behaviors impact behaviors in their children. For example, are children of parents who wear bicycle helmets more likely to wear helmets themselves? Why? Document what you learn for your parent presentation.
6. Determine the best way to share what you have learned with parents. This could be at a PTA meeting, a church group meeting, a meeting at the library or an invitation only meeting of parents that you know.
7. Put together a presentation that highlights the dangers of riding a bicycle without a helmet. Talk with parents about the impacts of a traumatic brain injury whether a child is killed, injured or disfigured in a bicycle crash.
8. Play video testimony to show first-hand how a traumatic brain injury can impact a young person's life. The Think First Foundation has video clips of young people talking about how brain injuries have impacted their lives. They are short clips that can be used in your outreach efforts.
9. Share what you learned about how children learn and model the behaviors of the parents.

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## Teaching Steps Continued

10. Next ask parents how many of their children wear helmets. Then ask them if the helmets fit properly. Talk about the six steps to a proper fit and show a video clip of demonstrating this. A link to a NHTSA video can be found on the NOYS website.
11. Ask parents how many wear helmets when riding a bicycle? Talk with them about being a “Roll Model”. Use the materials found on the NOYS website to provide tips for talking with teenagers about bicycle safety.
12. Distribute “Roll Model” brochures, found on the NOYS website, on proper fit and pledges to wear bicycle helmets to students.
13. Think about your own behavior. Do you use a bicycle helmet when you ride? Are you willing to be a “Roll Model?”
14. As a class, research what the laws are for bicycle helmet use where you live. How do those vary from other localities, states and even countries? Are there places with higher bicycle helmet use rates than others? If so, why? Are there best practices in other places that would help encourage greater bicycle helmet use in your community that don’t require you to pass a law?
15. Think about ways to reach more young people with this life saving message. Maybe start a helmet drive/donation during the holiday season so more young people have access to helmets.

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## Evaluation

The activities and follow-up can be evaluated using a teacher-created rubric. Student participation in the lesson and discussions can also be evaluated using a teacher-created rubric.