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TEACHERS' LEAFLET No. 6

OCTOBER, 1918

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF EDUCATION

SUGGESTIONS FOR A  
PROGRAM  
FOR  
FIRE PREVENTION DAY

*Prepared for the Bureau of Education by  
The National Board of Fire Underwriters*

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*Designed for use in schoolrooms  
upon Friday, November 1, 1918*

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THE WHITE HOUSE,  
WASHINGTON.

Preventable fire is more than a private misfortune. It is a public dereliction. At a time like this of emergency and of manifest necessity for the conservation of national resources, it is more than ever a matter of deep and pressing consequence that every means should be taken to prevent this evil.

*Woodrow Wilson*



THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY  
WASHINGTON

White Sulphur Springs,  
August 9, 1918.

Gentlemen:

It would be a matter of practical patriotism if, for this year, the observance of Fire Prevention Day could be postponed from its usual date of October 9 to a point beyond the completion of the Fourth Liberty Loan campaign, as the necessities of war-time finance require a bond sale during October.

I am deeply impressed with the importance of conserving American resources from destruction. Since the annual American fire waste is equivalent to the interest upon six billion dollars' worth of Liberty Bonds; since it includes immense quantities of food, cotton, munitions and other war supplies, and results in the serious crippling of productive industry, the lessons of fire prevention should be made more urgent this year than ever before.

I would suggest that November 2 might be an appropriate substitute during this single year. If the suggested postponement can be brought about, it should be possible for all agencies, public and private, to cooperate more effectively in giving the utmost emphasis to this subject.

Very sincerely yours,

*W. G. McAdoo*  
National Board of Fire Underwriters,  
76 William Street,  
New York City.

(NOTE—In accordance with this request, November 2 has been officially designated in most states as Fire Prevention Day for 1918. Schools will, however, observe November 1, since November 2 falls upon Saturday.)



## SUGGESTIONS FOR A PROGRAM FOR FIRE PREVENTION DAY

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Probably at least 100,000 schoolrooms in the United States will hold special Fire Prevention Day exercises upon November 1 as a *direct war measure*.

The United States Commissioner of Education has urged that the custom be generally observed.

The Governors of most of the States will make it the subject of special proclamations.

The 60,000 Four Minute Men of the Committee on Public Information will devote the week of October 28 to November 2, inclusive, to speeches upon fire prevention.

The Secretary of the Treasury has said that "the lessons of fire prevention should be made more urgent this year than ever before," Also that "it should be possible for all agencies, public and private, to cooperate more effectively in giving the utmost emphasis to this subject."

In response to many requests, the following suggestions for a schoolroom program on Fire Prevention Day have been prepared; they may, of course, be varied in accordance with local conditions wherever desirable.

### 1. THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Have the audience rise and sing the first and last stanzas of our national anthem. It is desirable to have these words written upon the blackboard.

#### The Star Spangled Banner

##### I

O say can you see by the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.  
O say does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

##### IV

O thus be it ever when freemen shall stand  
Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation!  
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n rescued land  
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation!  
Then conquer we must when our cause it is just;  
And this be our motto—"In God is our trust."  
And the Star Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

## 2. PROCLAMATIONS AND LETTERS

Provide a sufficient number of pupils to present the proclamations of the Governor and Mayor (where issued) and the letters from prominent officials, contained in this bulletin. Let the first pupil come forward and say, "I represent the Governor of this State;" then follow by reading the proclamation. Use the same method with the others—"I represent the Mayor of this City;"—"I represent the President of the United States;"—"I represent the Secretary of the Treasury;"—"I represent the United States Commission of Education," etc. (*Proclamations of the Governor and Mayor must be secured locally; for other statements referred to, see excerpts on pages 3, 4, 10 and 11 of this bulletin.*)

## 3. THE TEACHER'S ADDRESS

Follow these messages with a brief address by the Superintendent of Schools, the Principal, a member of the Board of Education, or the teacher, emphasizing the value of habits of carefulness as a corrective of fire hazard. The outline which is given below must be considered merely as a suggestion:

You have all heard the proclamation on Fire Prevention Day; you have heard the statements by the President, by Cabinet officers and by the United States Commissioner of Education. You must see, therefore, that the observance of Fire Prevention Day is considered to be a very important matter by many of the leading officials in the country. It is always an important matter, but this year it is more important than ever before.

Let us try to understand why this is so.

In the first place, we are at war with a powerful and desperate enemy who must be beaten if the world is to be a safe place in the future. That is why we have already sent so many soldiers across the sea and are preparing to send so many more. These soldiers can not fight with empty hands; they must have great quantities of arms and ammunition and many kinds of supplies; they must have food and clothing in enormous quantities. These things must be produced by the United States; we can not win the war unless we do produce and ship them.

Right at this point, our plans are greatly interfered with by fire; fire burns up thousands of factories and vast quantities of goods; fire burns up grain elevators and barns filled with wheat and corn; fire burns up cotton which is needed for making explosives; fire burns up lumber, necessary for building ships and aeroplanes; fire burns up wealth and prevents people from buying Liberty Bonds to support the Government; fire burns up houses, leaving people homeless, unless workmen are taken away from war work to rebuild them. Fire, in fact, interferes so seriously with our efforts toward winning the war, that it may be considered a great enemy at home which is constantly aiding the Kaiser. If there were no unnecessary fires, the war could be ended more quickly and with smaller loss of life and treasure.

Many of you have relatives and friends who have already gone to France. Think what it means to you to have them come back safe and victorious! Is there one in this room who would be willing to have it said that he was really working against our brave boys in France; that instead of being a patriotic American, as he thinks he is, he is actually a danger to his country? This may sound strange to you, and yet I want you to listen very carefully to what I am about to say. There are not far from

1,500 fires in the United States every twenty-four hours. This means an average of more than one per minute, day and night; in other words, I suppose that a certain number of fires have broken out somewhere in the country since I began to speak and still others are breaking out while we are sitting here.

Now here is the point for attention: Nearly all of these fires are caused by somebody's *carelessness*; carelessness with matches—carelessness with rubbish—carelessness with lights, or with stoves, or with bonfires, or in some other way; and thousands upon thousands of these fires come directly from *the carelessness of children*.

If carelessness could be taken out of America, and all of the people become truly careful, there would be very few fires. If this were to happen, our houses and barns and grain elevators, munition factories, cotton warehouses and other buildings would not burn up, and our winning of the war would be greatly hastened.

You can see, therefore, that one of the ways to fight the Kaiser's army in Europe is to fight *American carelessness* at home. Can carelessness be cured? Certainly, both carelessness and carefulness are habits; it is as easy to form one habit as the other, if we begin early enough and go about it in the right way. Now, perhaps you can see why it is so important that we learn the lessons of fire prevention this year. Here are a few points to remember:

We all are patriots, and we want America to win in this great war for the freedom of the world;

We want to win as quickly as possible, so that our brave boys may soon be restored to their homes;

We know that unnecessary fires are hindering our efforts and delaying our victory;

We know that unnecessary fires are caused by our carelessness or that of somebody else, and that careless people are, therefore, a menace to their country whether they know it or not;

We are determined to watch our actions and form new habits of carefulness, for by so doing we shall be helping to win the war and shall be building for the future in a way that will enable our country to rise to new heights of happiness and prosperity in the days that are to come.

#### 4. THE FIREMAN'S TALK.

In the next number, a talk by a uniformed member of the Fire Department, it is desirable to include personal reminiscences pointing the moral of carefulness and showing the dangers of careless habits in causing fires. Where it can be done, it is particularly valuable to give local instances where children have performed acts of bravery in rescuing others from fire, sending in alarms, etc. During the course of these remarks, the fireman should show with a box, placed on the platform for the occasion, how an alarm of fire should be rung in. An explanation of the workings of a portable chemical extinguisher would also be of value and add interest to the talk.

#### 5. THE FIRE PREVENTION DAY ANTHEM

Have the pupils sing the Fire Prevention Day Anthem, which follows. This anthem, also, should be written upon the board. The tune, "Maryland, My Maryland," can be found in almost any collection of popular songs.



## Prevention Day! Prevention Day!

(Words by D. T. Praigg. Written for this bulletin.)

We dedicate this hour to thee,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day;  
That on the land and on the sea,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day;  
From loss and danger we may be,  
And carelessness, forever free,  
And over fire win victory,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day.

Nerve us to hold our purpose fast,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day;  
And thus escape the flaming blast,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day;  
And give discretion to outlast  
The lessons of our thoughtless past,  
Where'er our fortunes may be cast,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day.

We need thy counsels in our land,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day;  
To save us from the burning brand,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day;  
Long we've been deaf to thy command,  
Too long refused thy outstretched hand,  
Then make us a Prevention Band,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day.

We'll send thy voice with might and main  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day;  
From ev'ry hill and ev'ry plain,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day;  
Till it returns to us again,  
Made joyous with the glad refrain,  
No more the fi'ry fiend shall reign,  
Prevention Day, Prevention Day.

## 6. THE BOY'S ESSAY

During two weeks immediately preceding Fire Prevention Day, the pupils should have been required to produce short essays running from 200 to 300 words on the dangers of fire and the best way to avoid them, emphasizing the fact that most of the fires that occur are due to carelessness. The best essay written by the boys should now be read by its author as a special number of the program.

## 7. THE GIRL'S ESSAY

The best essay by a girl student should be read.

## 8. THE SOLDIER'S TALK

If possible, secure the services of a soldier in uniform, preferably one returned from the other side, to point out the application of fire prevention to the military success of the nation. It is desirable that the soldier talk in his own words and that he include accounts of some personal experiences. However, this may not always be feasible, and the following suggestions are therefore added:

The uniform that I wear is something of which I am very proud, because it stands for America. When I wear this uniform, everyone can see not only that I *am* an American, but also that I am *working for* America. There are millions of us young Americans who have put on Uncle Sam's uniform in order to help him win the biggest war that the world has ever known. It is a wonderful privilege to have a part in this great undertaking; it is a wonderful thing to feel that we are fighting for democracy and liberty and righteousness. Never pity the soldiers; we do not need your pity; we are happy to know that when we heard the call of our Nation, we stepped into the ranks and got ready to do our "bit" for the land we love so well. But while we do not want your pity, we do want your help.

We realize that with the Army and Navy alone, America could never win this war. The armed forces are like a fist, but the fist can not strike a blow all by itself; it must have the muscle and weight of the whole body behind it. It is just that way with us. We are the fist, but all of the factories and farms and schools and homes, and men and women, and boys

and girls, in the United States make up the great body which must work behind us and work with us.

Suppose, for example, that we were just going into battle and suddenly found out that we did not have enough ammunition. Can you think what that would mean? It probably would mean defeat, for soldiers can not fight without ammunition. Or suppose that our food supply should run short—you know that it requires a vast amount of food to feed millions of men, and it must keep flowing across from America in a steady stream. Or suppose that any of the other supplies which are necessary for this war should fail to reach us—we should be practically helpless. We all know that we are dependent upon the people in this great country back home every minute of the time.

Now, I want you to realize that every one of you—every boy and every girl as well as the men and women, can help. Your teacher has already told you that fires are helping the Kaiser because they burn up food and supplies and factories and wealth at a time when we need every ounce of our strength in order to win this tremendous war. I would hate to think that any boy or girl in this room has ever been responsible for the starting of a fire; I am sure that none of you could have done such a shocking thing on purpose, but some of you may have been careless with matches or with bonfires, or in some other way, and fires that are caused by carelessness seem to burn just as hard as any other kind, once they get started.

I am wearing Uncle Sam's uniform and you are not; yet, in a way, you can be American soldiers, too. We are fighting the Kaiser in Europe, but you can fight him in America—in fact, right here in this town. You can fight him by fighting his great American ally, Preventable Fire. How? In the first place, learn to be careful in your habits; but don't stop with that; that is not enough—learn to use your eyes; learn to recognize fire hazards. Remember that you are surrounded by careless people. Do all in your power to make other people careful and to correct the dangers that you find. Then, no matter whether you wear a uniform or not, you will be soldiers of Uncle Sam, and we men who wear khaki will realize that you are fighting for us and with us.

## 9. THE CONCLUDING SONG

Have the audience rise and sing:

### America

My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing;  
Land where my fathers died;  
Land of the pilgrims pride;  
From ev'ry mountain side  
Let freedom ring.

My native country, thee,  
Land of the noble free,  
Thy name I love;  
I love thy rocks and rills,  
Thy woods and templed hills;  
My heart with rapture thrills,  
Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,  
And ring from all the trees,  
Sweet freedom's song;  
Let mortal tongues awake,  
Let all that breathe partake;  
Let rocks their silence break,  
The sound prolong.

Our fathers' God to Thee,  
Author of liberty,  
To Thee we sing;  
Long may our land be bright,  
With freedom's holy light;  
Protect us by Thy might,  
Great God, our King.

## 10. THE FIRE DRILL

Let the room be cleared of pupils by means of the Fire Drill with a preliminary explanation to the visitors by the teacher.



"Fire prevention is a subject which demands the closest attention of our people. The vast losses which have been brought to this country by fires, which, with precaution, might have been prevented, are in such figures as to be appalling. That there should be an annual day set aside to draw the attention of the people to fire prevention is a most wise thing.

"In times of peace, there is need for calling attention to fire prevention. Under war conditions, any unnecessary destruction of resources is highly culpable. With the liberties of the world at stake, preventable fires are therefore a menacing evil.

"Every effort to reduce losses by fire to a minimum is an effort in the right direction, and I am glad to give my most hearty approval of the endeavor being made to attain an end so desirable."

JOSEPHUS DANIELS,  
*Secretary of the Navy.*

"The one thing which the savage fears most is fire. He fears it because he has not the means of fighting it. Whole civilizations have gone out of existence in the past centuries because man did not know how to master this most useful but most destructive of all forces. As soon as man began to build of brick and stone he learned to lay the foundations of a permanent life, for civilization consists not in the work of any one generation but in the accumulations of many generations.

"We are in France trying to save the cathedrals, the pictures and the chateaus and the parks of that lovely land from the blasting fire of the ruthless Hun, and holding that fire down so that it will not spread to America. We who are left at home can safeguard our cities and the fruits of our civilization against destruction by fire while the boys in the trenches are saving the world's civilization."

FRANKLIN K. LANE,  
*Secretary of the Interior.*

"One of the most experienced fire insurance men in the country once said to me—there are three principles in connection with fires that ought to be borne carefully in mind by everyone. The first principle is that there is no excuse for having a fire happen—all fires are preventable by care. Secondly, if a fire occurs it should be so restricted that it will amount to little. Proper construction and precaution will do much to prevent fires spreading. The third principle was, and the point was that it *was* the *third* principle and *not* the first or the second, that if a fire did take place and if on taking place it was restricted, it ought to be put out.

"Too many people put the extinguishing of fires first. My friend reversed the idea. The prevention of fires was his supreme thought. He carried it out through many great industries with astonishing success and it has become the effective and accepted principle of today upon this important subject."

WILLIAM C. REDFIELD,  
*Secretary of Commerce.*

"We all like to live in communities of 'good citizens,' and, perhaps, we have thought of good citizens as those who respect *our* rights. Of course the same rule applies to us as to them. Emerson has said that the way to *have* a friend is to *be* one; this means, among other things, that the best way to have our rights respected is to respect the rights and promote the welfare of those about us. In short, the 'good citizen' is one who practices the Golden Rule. Anyone who studies these lessons must realize that the good citizen cannot allow himself habits of carelessness. Such habits may make him a danger to others as well as to himself.

"When we come to the question of fire prevention, there are three main points to consider. First, a good citizen will try in every way to avoid being a cause of danger through permitting any of the practices that we have been warned about. Second, he will remove all dangerous conditions that he may find in his own home, and, third, he will train himself to recognize dangerous conditions in the community and will use his influence both to have them removed, and to educate others to habits of carefulness. It is often said that the enormous fire loss of the United States, with its terrible destruction of life and property, is very largely preventable. Statistics prepared by The National Board of Fire Underwriters, through its Actuarial Bureau, will show how foolish and unnecessary are the causes for most of the fires. The correction must come not merely from better fire departments and better building laws, but from educating every family, and every member of every family, to recognize causes of danger, and to practice habits of consideration and carefulness. If this could be done, fire would almost cease to be a public peril. If each of the school children in the United States would learn how to prevent fire and would form habits of carefulness and consideration, it would go far in saving lives and property."

P. F. CLAXTON,

*United States Commissioner of Education.*

## **DON'T DO IT**

*(To be written on the blackboard)*

1. Don't play with matches or leave them where small children may find them and set fire to themselves and their homes.
2. Don't build bonfires; they often cause destruction.
3. Don't fill a lamp or oil stove while it is lighted, for there is danger that it will explode and cause fire and injury.
4. Don't, if your clothing catches fire, run and fan the flames, but stop, drench them with water or smother them with a woolen rug or curtain.
5. Don't keep gasoline indoors; don't uncover it anywhere near a flame, for it is more dangerous than dynamite.
6. Don't use kerosene to light a fire in the kitchen stove or elsewhere, for many have been burned to death by doing so.
7. Don't throw water upon a grease or oil fire, but smother it with sand, earth, salt, soda or by using chemical extinguisher.
8. Don't forget to disconnect an electric flat-iron or electric cooking utensil when leaving it for even a moment, for thousands of fires have been caused by these appliances.
9. Don't have lighted candles, cotton "snow," or inflammable ornaments upon Christmas trees, for they burn up many homes.
10. Don't fail to remind people who smoke that it is dangerous to throw away lighted cigarettes and cigars; they constitute one of our worst fire causes.





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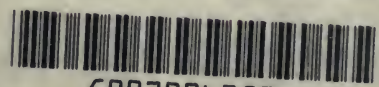
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