



# Cub Scout Meeting Guide: *It Happened to Me*

## Step-by-Step Guide for Using the Youth Protection Video, *It Happened to Me*, with Your Cub Scout Pack or Den

1. Obtain the video, *It Happened to Me*, from your local council service center and review it. (Invite members of the pack committee to review it with you.)
2. If, after viewing the video, you decide that you would like support from individuals more informed about child abuse, such help is often available from your police department or child protective services agency.
3. Reserve a copy of the video for the date on which you plan to use it with your pack or den.
4. At least two weeks before showing the video to your unit, notify the parents about the scheduled meeting and urge their attendance. (The sample letter for parents can be used for this purpose.) The video is intended for Cub Scout-age boys to watch *only when their parent or guardian is present*.
5. Before the meeting at which the video will be shown, review the leader's guide and become familiar with the issues to be emphasized in the discussion following the video's showing.
6. Show the video at a special pack or den meeting. (See the suggested agenda for this meeting.)

## Sample Letter to Parents

Dear parents:

Child sexual abuse is so prevalent in American society that one in seven boys might be sexually abused before reaching adulthood; the percentage of sexually abused girls is even greater. To respond to this growing social problem, the Boy Scouts of America has developed comprehensive Youth Protection training that addresses the problem of child abuse and at the same time helps Scouting continue to provide a safe environment and meet high standards of leadership for our youth members.

*You and your son* are invited to a special (pack/den) meeting on (date) at (time), when we will show the video, *It Happened to Me*. This award-winning video was produced by the Boy Scouts of America to educate Cub Scout-age boys about child sexual abuse and the steps boys should take to protect themselves from being sexually abused.

*It Happened to Me* is an important part of the BSA's Youth Protection training. Each Cub Scout pack is encouraged to show the video to its members and their parents once a year. The video presents common situations in which sexual abuse might occur. The content of the video has been reviewed by professionals who are knowledgeable about child abuse and child development. The experts who reviewed it found it suitable for viewing by children as young as 6 years old.

You are urged to bring your son to the viewing of *It Happened to Me* so that you and he can watch it together. Child abuse professionals unanimously agree that open communication between parents and children is vital to prevent child abuse, and, while this video is useful as a source of basic information, your son might want to discuss it with you. Your viewing of this video will help to provide a common point of reference for subsequent conversations you and your son might have on this topic.

I hope that you will be able to join us on (date).

Sincerely,

Cubmaster/den leader

## Suggested Agenda for Meeting

- I. Hold an opening ceremony.
- II. Introduce the video, *It Happened to Me*. Refer to the leader's guide for points to use in the introduction.
- III. Show *It Happened to Me*.
- IV. Discussion: Refer to the leader's guide for points to use while discussing the video after it has been viewed.
- V. Hold a closing ceremony.
- VI. Close.

# Leader's Guide

## Introduction

*The video we are going to watch, It Happened to Me, will tell you what child sexual abuse is and show you some of the ways children are put in situations where they could be sexually abused. We all must understand that child sexual abuse is a serious problem. You must learn the ways you can protect yourself if a person tries to sexually abuse you or your friends.*

*Boys, nobody expects that you will be sexually abused. However, just as we learn other skills in case we ever need to use them, we also need to learn about how to prevent sexual abuse. As you watch this video, put yourselves in the positions of the boys who are the intended victims. What would you do?*

(Show the video, *It Happened to Me*.)

## Discussions

*What is child sexual abuse?*

For a boy, child sexual abuse is unwanted touching, looking at, or taking a picture of his penis or other private body parts by an adult or older child. It also can be an adult or older child asking or forcing the boy to touch or look at the abuser's private parts.

*Who were the abusers in the video?*

Mr. MacGregor at the day care center  
Eddie, Ray's cousin  
Mark, a playground leader  
Mr. Johnson, Brad's former neighbor  
Phillip's baby-sitter, a 15-year-old girl

*When you think about sexual abuse, who do you think does it?*

Answers might include *strangers* or *dirty old men*. Point out that **none** of the abusers in the video were strangers. Some were neighbors and some were even family members. Also, the abusers were of all ages and one of the abusers was a young woman.

*What were some of the tricks used by the abusers to try to sexually abuse the boys in the video?*

Mr. MacGregor poured paint on Jake to get Jake to take off his clothes in order to clean up. The *real* reason was to get Jake to pose for pictures while his clothes were off.

Eddie bullies Ray and tells him that he will be "real sorry" if he doesn't do what Eddie wants.

Ty was tricked by Mark into staying late and accepting a ride home; then he showed Ty "dirty" pictures.

Brad was tricked by his former neighbor into climbing a tree and getting a trapped kitten. Point out the kitten was not really trapped and that even if it had been, Mr. Johnson could have gotten the kitten himself.

Phillip was tricked by his baby-sitter into playing a game that resulted in her placing her hand down his pants.

Other tricks shown in the video include

- Giving gifts in exchange for affection

- Blaming the boys—victims—for the sexual abuse
- Telling the boys that no one would believe them if they told
- Threatening to hurt the boys or a member of their family

*What should you do if someone tries to sexually abuse you?*

All of the children should know to tell an adult they trust. They should understand that if sexual abuse happens it is not their fault and they will not be blamed. Parents should reinforce this notion. Ask the boys and their parents to take a minute to talk about whom the boy might tell if threatened by abuse.

*What are some of the safety rules to help avoid sexual abuse?*

- Before going out, tell your parents where you are going, when you will be back, and who will be with you.
- Before getting into a car or going with anybody—even if you know the person—get permission from your parents. If your plans change, let your parents know. If you cannot check with your parents, tell another adult you and your parents have agreed on.
- When going places or playing outside, use the buddy system.
- If somebody tries to touch you in a way that is confusing or scary, say **No!** and then tell an adult you trust.
- If somebody touches you in a way that is not okay, do not keep it a secret. Tell an adult you trust.
- Trust your feelings and talk to grown-ups about problems that are too big for you.
- It is never too late to ask for help.

*Whose fault is sexual abuse?*

Sexual abuse is always the fault of the abuser. Children should *never* be blamed if sexual abuse happens.

## Conclusion

*The video has shown us a few ways that boys can be put in situations leading to sexual abuse. You need to know that most people will stop sexual abuse if you say **No!***

*I want each of you to practice saying **No!** as you would if you were afraid of being sexually abused. You should say it almost like a dog barks: **No!**—short and loud, but not shrill or screaming. When I count to three, say **No!** (Have them say it.) One more time. And again.*

*For parents, I want to call your attention to the BSA publication, How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse and Drug Abuse: A Parent's Guide, inserted in the front of each of the Wolf Cub, Bear Cub, and Webelos Scout books. This booklet has more information concerning child abuse and exercises intended for you and your Cub Scout son to discuss.*

*Thank you all for participating in this meeting. If any of you wish to use this video in your home with your family, it is available from the local council service center.*