



# FATAL CHAIN

How do accidents happen? By accident! No one plans for an accident to happen. The less planning and the more little mistakes, the greater the chance of a bad accident happening. This lesson is a quick reminder for children that the decisions they make have consequences. Tell them about the “Fatal Chain” of events that lead up to a tragedy. Its usually a series of small mistakes where people make several wrong decisions, that cause big accidents. Tell them a story. You can use a version of the following one, or you can invent your own that’s more appropriate to the children’s situation.

*4 teenagers were camping together on the banks of a river. They had spent the **day in the sun, drinking and braining**, when they decided to visit friends on the opposite bank of the river. There was a small rowing boat, **licenced for two, but no lifejackets**. They figured that since they could all swim, and they could see the party on the other side of the river, it wouldn’t be a problem. They set out as it was **getting dark**. They hadn’t noticed that the **wind had picked up** and there were **small, choppy waves on the water**. Half way across the river, the little boat capsized. 3 of the kids **swam for shore**, and the 4th decided to hang on to the capsized boat. They found this teenager several hours later, alive. The bodies of the 3 others were only found the next morning.*

Talk about the events. All the phrases in bold indicate areas where a better decision could have been made. Emphasise that in a capsize situation, it is ALWAYS better to stay with the boat.

If it’s a small enough class, and you have enough time, get them to write a safety message on a strip of paper (use A4, tear it in half lengthways, then in half again, so you have 4 strips) Each child can write the safety rule that they want to remember eg. I will not go on a boat without a lifejacket. Give them a few minutes to write their messages. Then start the “chain” yourself, by reading your message aloud, stapling it into a ring, and passing it to the first child. Let him read his message, then show the class how you link the paper to start forming a chain. Keep passing it on. At the end, you have a long paper chain that the teacher can hang up in the classroom. It’s a great visual reminder.

End the lesson by saying, “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so stop and think about all the decisions you make about water. Don’t break the chain.”