



Appalachian Mountain Club Youth Opportunities Program



**Activities, games and outdoor skills
for leading Youth Adventures**

Table of Contents

Name Games.....	3
Icebreakers.....	8
Initiatives.....	19
Trail Games.....	31
Canoe Games.....	37
Natural Connections Activities.....	41
Night Hike Activities.....	52
Outdoor Skill Building (incomplete).....	59
Appendix: Riddles & Mysteries.....	60
Appendix: Readings.....	63

I. Name Games

Name Speedball

Objective: To learn individuals' names in the group while also beginning to challenge their skills working as a group. This game should be played for multiple rounds, challenging the group to beat their previous times.

Materials: A ball for tossing to other group members (i.e. tennis ball); a watch for timing

Audience: Groups of at least 6

Duration: 10 minutes

Directions: Group all the students together in a *wide* circle and have each person introduce themselves and say their favorite _____.

- The group must pass the ball across and around the circle, ensuring that every student touches the ball *only once*. You may not pass the ball to a person standing directly to your left or right.
- When someone passes the ball, they must call out *who* they are passing to, or else the game starts over. Everyone must remember *who* they passed to, because in each successive round, the order in which the ball is passed must remain the same.
- The time starts when the ball leaves the facilitators hands, and ends when it is returned to them.
- Time the first round, then ask the group if they think they can beat that time.
- After a second round, ask "How else can we beat our time?" (hint: move in closer so you can simply hand the ball off)

Modifications: Introduce multiple balls into the game, making participants continue passing in the same order (*see Group Juggle*)

Debrief/Discussion: Once the ball has returned to the facilitator, and you feel like the goal of improving times is achieved, ask the students:

-Do you think you'd be able to name everyone in the group?

-What does this game tell us about working as a group?

Handshake Partners

Objectives: To have participants interact on an individual way that is silly and begins to break down a physical barrier. Participants also get a chance to chat and interact each time they pair up.

Materials: none

Audience: Youth who have not yet met, or who have not had much time to get to know each other. Great for the beginning of any adventure. At least 8 participants.

Duration: 10 minutes

Directions: Begin by arranging the group in a large circle so that you can give instruction

- Instruct participants to start walking in a circle, or aimlessly around for a few seconds
- Call out “find a new partner!” Youth should pair up, ideally with someone they don’t know, and will perform a unique handshake of your choosing
- Some ideas for handshakes: “floppy fish,” “typewriter,” “elbow partner,” “footshake,” “hip bump,” “turkey,” “jelly fish,” etc. Get creative!
- Once everyone has performed the unique handshake, instruct the group to start walking around in a circle again, until you call out “find a new partner!” again.
- Give these new partners a new handshake to perform.
- Repeat these steps until just about everyone has gotten a chance to meet each individual person
- Then, ask them to walk around again. This time, instruct them to find their _____ partner and perform that handshake. Do this a number of times—running around the find people to do each silly handshake will get people giggling and energized.

Modifications: Get creative with handshakes! You can ask participants to introduce themselves by name each time they partner up. Additionally, you may ask them to discuss some simple topic with each partner to extend the length and purpose of this activity.

Debrief/Discussion: As this is a quick and simple get-to-know-you game, it’s not necessary to debrief unless you see fit. You may simply want to ask “what was your favorite handshake?” or “do you know any other handshakes we could have done?”

Peek-a-Who

Objectives: To facilitate the learning of names by challenging youth to recognize peers’ names by sight.

Materials: 1 large tarp

Audience: Youth who have met or at least have had the chance to be introduced to one another. Works for medium and large groups (6+)

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Directions: Divide the group into 2 teams and have them stand on either side of a tarp the you and a co-facilitator are holding between them.

- Instruct participants on the rules and goal of the game: when the tarp is raised between the teams so that the two sides cannot see one another, each team will send one representative to stand directly behind the tarp. When each team has sent someone up, the facilitator will count to 3 and drop the tarp. Whoever calls out the person on the other side of the tarp by their name *first*, wins. The loser joins the opposing team
- Continue to do this, with youth switching sides each round.
- Mix things up by sometimes sending 2+ youth up to the tarp at a time, making things more challenging.
- When there is only one youth left on a side, you've reached the final round. When the tarp goes up, secretly instruct the large team to ALL come up to the tarp.

Modifications: Allow youth to stand elsewhere besides at the center of the tarp each round to add misdirection into the game.

Debrief/Discussion: Again, this is a quick game, so it's not necessary to debrief unless you see fit for your group. You may want to ask "did you learn names quickly?" or "how did it feel going up to the tarp and not knowing who was there?" For the final person standing, you may ask "how did it feel going up for the final round?"

Bop the Shmoo

Objectives: This game works as a light and quick energizer, as well as a name game after youth have already been introduced to each other. It may be paired with other name games or used for groups who have already established connections.

Materials: none

Audience: 6+ participants

Duration: 5 minutes

Directions: Ask all participants to stand in a circle with their right hand out in front of them, palm up, with their elbow at your side.

- One person will begin in the middle of the circle as the "bopper" He or she shouts out the name of a person in the circle and tries to slap their hand.

- That person tries to shout out the name of another person before the “bopper” slaps their hand. If their hand gets slapped before they have the chance to call out someone else’s name they are the “shmoo” and enter the circle as the new “bopper”
- If their hand does not get slapped before they call out another name, they are safe. In this case, the bopper remains in the center and tries to bop someone else.

Modifications: You can play this game so that each round the bopper changes. To do so, the person who the bopper tries to slap must call out someone else’s name *and* slap their hand. If they are successful, the next person has a chance to do the same, and so on. No repeating names! Likely, someone’s hand will get slapped before all names are called, and the bopper will rotate out accordingly.

Debrief/Discussion: This game is meant to energize and facilitate name learning quickly, so debriefing may not be needed.

Nametag Swap

Objectives: This is a longer name game meant to both introduce participants to one another, and learn a bit about each person.

Materials: nametags and markers or pens to start

Audience: Best for groups who are slightly older (14+). Works great for medium-large groups (8+ participants)

Duration: 15 minutes

Directions: Ask the group to arrange themselves in a large circle, with nametags on while you provide the instructions.

- Each person must think of 3 facts about themselves that they will share with their first partner of the activity.
- Begin the game by asking participants to pair off. Once they pair off, they will each share their 3 facts with one another.
- When they have shared facts, the pair will switch nametags and find a new partner. With that new partner, they take on the personality (and facts!) of the person whose nametag

they are wearing. This will be challenging for some to remember the facts of the person they last spoke to. Switch nametags at the end of this round.

- Repeat this until everyone has been introduced to one another. Some people may be paired up with the same nametag multiple times—no problem!
- When everyone has met, have the group return to a circle formation. Individually, they will share the 3 facts they received for the person on their name tag. Likely (hopefully!) things will get lost in transmission, and some hilarious facts will be shared about each person.

Modifications: If the group knows each other well, at the end you may remove the nametags before sharing facts and see if people can guess who each individual is based on the facts alone.

Debrief/Discussion: You may encourage folks to correct their facts if they'd like. Or you can let the silly facts stand as a mystery. Encourage participants to use what they learned about people in this activity as the basis for conversations throughout their outing.

II. Icebreakers

Activities that give youth an opportunity to dig a little deeper by inspiring them to interact in creative and silly ways.

People 2 People

Objectives: To break down a physical barrier between trip participants while getting them moving about.

Materials: none

Audience: Great when paired with name games or other icebreaker activities. Best in larger groups (10+ participants)

Duration: 5-10 minutes, depending on group size/how long you'd like to play!

Directions: Start by having everybody mill around in a large circle while you (and they) chant, "People to People."

- After enough mixing up has happened, call out two body parts (elbow and knee, or hip and foot, for example). Everyone has to find someone to pair up with and coordinate how to make sure those two body parts are in contact.
- Have the group mill around again, then call out two more body parts the people have to group together and make contact.

- After a few rounds, start by calling out 3, 4, and 5 body parts so that youth have to pair up in large groups.
- You may also call out things like “two elbows and a hand,” or some other combination to mix things up.

Modifications: Add a conversational component to this activity by giving each set of partners a topic for discussion.

Debrief/Discussion: Ask the group how they felt at the beginning of the activity as opposed to the end—were they more enthusiastic about finding a partner quickly?

A Strong Wind Blows

Objectives: To encourage participants to start getting active for their trip, and to make them enthusiastic about sharing things about themselves.

Materials: markers (enough for all participants, minus 1)

Audience: a small-medium sized group of youth who have not gotten to know each other or have only met briefly. Can be used for groups with established relationships as well,

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Directions: Arrange markers in a large circle that defines your play area. There should only be enough markers so that each participant can stand on one, with one person in the middle of the circle (this person can be you for demonstration purposes).

- The person in the middle says, “A strong wind blows for anyone who (something that is true about them).” For example, “A strong wind blows for anyone who loves pizza.” Everyone who loves pizza must move to a new marker. The person in the middle moves to an open spot in the circle while people are running to find a new spot. *You cannot simply move over one marker.*
- Whoever is unable to find a marker is now in the middle and says “A strong wind blows for _____.”
- Play this for as many rounds as you’d like, and encourage participants to make the strong wind blow for both silly and more serious things. An option for this game is to start removing the spots so more than one person is in the middle and they come up with something that is true about both of them.

Modifications: Start removing the spots so more than one person is in the middle and they come up with something that is true about both of them.

Debrief/Discussion: Ask the group if anyone noticed anything that a lot of people had in common or that very few people had in common. This can aid group unity *and* create topics for discussion later in the trip. Challenge youth to pay attention by each saying a fact that they learned about somebody during the game.

Whose Story?

Objectives: To get people to share silly and creative pieces of themselves. The stories that get shared may surprise participants and give them a chance to learn something about their peers they hadn't previously known.

Materials: pens and pieces of paper

Audience: A group with a decently established connection. The participants should already know a little bit about one another so that it's possible to use what they know about a person to try to connect them to their particular story.

Duration: 20 minutes

Directions: Pass out a pen and a piece of scrap paper to each participant. Ask them to write a short, true story about themselves. It can be something funny, embarrassing, scary, or amazing that happened to them. Encourage youth to be personal about their story, but only as personal as their comfortable with sharing.

- Gather the papers and quickly read all of the stories to make sure that they are appropriate.
- Mix the papers up and pass them back out randomly (it is OK if someone get their own story back).
- Take turns with each person reading the story they've been passed, out loud. The group can then discuss among themselves and make a guess at who each story belongs to. If they are correct, hand their story back to them. If they are incorrect, move on to the next storyteller and the group will have another chance to guess later.

Modifications: You can play this game with fantasies instead of stories. You can also make this a team game: divide the group in 2. When you collect the stories, read them *all* aloud. One team

begins by matching a person with a story. If they are correct, the owner of that story joins their team, and they continue to try matching stories. If they are incorrect, the other team takes over matching people with their stories until all are figured out.

Debrief/Discussion: This activity is meant to get people sharing, so encourage them to continue conversations about these stories. Whose story surprised them most?

Two Truths and a Lie

Objectives: A classic, this game combines personal sharing with creativity and deception. It will give participants a sense of one another and give them things to discuss throughout their trip.

Materials: none

Audience: Works well for groups who are just being introduced or groups who already know each other. Appropriate for any size group.

Duration: 10 minutes, or indeterminate if you want to make it a guessing game for the length of your trip!

Directions: Simple! Have participants think up 2 truths and a lie about themselves.

- Go around in a circle and have each person share their 2 truths and a lie in any order
- You can have the group try to guess the lie as people share, *or* make this a challenge for the length of the trip. In that case, have youth try to figure out each person's lie on an individual basis, but tell them not to share with everyone else! At the end of the trip, reconvene and see how many people have been figured out!

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: Use this as a conversation starter for your trip

Silent Line-Ups

Objectives: A silent activity to get the group working together. See who emerges in different leadership roles by providing them with this series of challenges.

Materials: none

Audience: Any size group. They can either know each other or not

Duration: 10+ minutes

Directions: Another simple one. The only rule is *absolutely no talking*. All communication must be non-verbal

- Challenge the group to arrange themselves in a line according to different categories that you call out: shortest to tallest, by birthday month, etc.

Modifications: Make the categories tougher each round so that the group has to arrange based on categories that *require* some sort of information sharing. They must figure out how to communicate through creative gestures.

Debrief/Discussion: Discuss how leadership played out in this game. Did one person take charge? How were decisions made? How did they get over the hurdle of sharing information without talking.

Pru (Proo-ee)

Objectives: Encouraging youth to interact physically while relying on senses other than sight to push their sense of space and safety.

Materials: blindfolds for each participant; a decently large sized playing area

Audience: Any size group. Ideally, they have met before or have played a few name games and/or icebreakers beforehand

Duration: 10 minutes

Directions: Arrange the group in a circle while you pass out blindfold and explain the activity.

- Instruct everyone to beginning milling about on the play area blindfolded. Assure them that at least one person will not be blindfolded to ensure that they don't bump into anything unsafe. "Pru" is unblindfolded and will hide somewhere in the playing area.
- When a participant bumps into someone else, they must shake hands and say "Pru?" Pru won't respond if you come in contact with him (that's how you know you've found him!). If the person who they bump into responds "Pru," that means they have not found Pru, and must continue their search.
- Once participants find Pru, they can remove their blindfold and join the Pru by linking elbows.
- Continue until everyone is part of Pru (or if people are very spread out and it looks like the game will go on forever!)

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: Ask the group how it felt to be wandering around without their sense of sight? What else did they rely on, if anything? For the last few people, how did it feel the longer you looked for Pru? What can the group learn this practice about space, their senses, and leaving people behind?

Veggie Phone

Objectives: Mostly just to get the group laughing and ease any nervous tension that might exist before the trip.

Materials: none

Audience: Medium to large sized group; any age. Great for groups who haven't gotten to know each other much yet, just to get them verbally interacting and laughing.

Duration: 10 minutes

Directions: Have everyone sit down in a circle. Everyone must think of a vegetable (or fruit) to be called in place of their name.

- Go around the circle twice stating your vegetable. With their lips covering their teeth, the facilitator begins by saying their vegetable twice, then calls another vegetable. (ex. "Avocado avocado, calling eggplant eggplant.")
- That person then call another vegetable, and so on. If shows their teeth while laughing, they are out.
- The final two contestants have shown how serious they can be in the face of absurdity, and must compete in a final Veggie Off. Those contestants stand in a corner while the group thinks of a new vegetable or fruit. The two remaining have a showdown, standing back to back and taking 3 steps away from each other. Upon the third step, the groups shouts the vegetable they've chosen, and the contestants must do their best interpretative performance of that veggie. The group then decides who has won.

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: Meant to just get youth to interact initially, so not built for debrief.

Rock Paper Scissor (variations)

Objectives: A twist on an old classic, introducing energy into something that otherwise strikes participants as childish (you *want* people to be able to be childish at times!)

Materials: none

Audience: A medium-large sized group of any age.

Duration: 15 minutes

Directions: Rock, paper scissors rules, with some additions

- “Biggest Fan”: People pair off to play a game of Rock, Paper, Scissors. The loser then gets behind the winner to cheer them on while they fight another winner in the group. The winner of each game adds the loser (and all of that person’s cheerleaders) to their legion.
- “Evolution”: Everyone starts as an egg to play against other eggs. The winner grows into a chicken while the loser remains an egg. A chicken who wins becomes a Velociraptor. A Velociraptor who wins becomes a Wizard. A Wizard who wins becomes the Supreme Being (winner). An egg can only battle another egg, a chicken can only battle another chicken, etc. If you lose at any level, you must devolve. Act out each level!
- “Mosquito, Salmon, Bear”: Bear eats salmon, salmon eats mosquito, mosquito bites bear. This one is fun to act out!

Modifications: These *are* modifications!

Debrief/Discussions: none

Yurt Circle

Objectives: A favorite for many youth programs, this introduces trust and teamwork to groups who may not have already had the chance to get to know each other well.

Materials: A large, thick rope, tied into a loop; or none if you do this activity holding hands

Audience: An even number of participants, ideally a bit older (14+).

Duration: 10 minutes

Directions: Ask the group to arrange themselves, evenly spaced somewhere on the outside of the rope.

- Instruct the group to bend down and pick up the segment of the rope in front of them with both hands. Then, count off as ones and twos. Have everyone step back so that the rope is decently taut.
- When you say so, all the ones lean back and all the twos lean forward to balance the group out. Then switch, having all the ones lean forward and the twos lean back.
- Do this a few times, then challenge the group to sit down on the group, together, by all leaning back on the rope.

Modifications: If the group is comfortable with physical contact, this game can be played by holding hands.

Debrief/Discussion: Did you feel comfortable relying on your peers?

Group Juggle

Objectives: To provide a quick challenge to the group and get them to start working together.

Materials: a number of throwable

Audience: Good for larger groups (10+) of any age.

Duration: 5 minutes

Directions: Circle set up. Assign one person as the "starter" – most likely the facilitator.

- Give that person an object and have that person throw the ball (for example) to anyone not directly on either side. The starter is the first person to throw the ball and the last one to catch it.
- Once the starter has thrown the ball, the ball should continue to be thrown at random to different people until everyone has caught the ball ONCE, and once only. The easiest way to make sure of this is to have the group members raise their hands after they have thrown the ball.
- Once the pattern has been established, repeat by having the group throw the ball around without raising their hands to get a feel of the pattern. Once the ball has gone around once, add a second ball to the pattern, using the starter once again. Add a third, and a fourth, and continue adding objects.

Modifications: This flexible activity can be played and tweaked to satisfy any/goal/challenge etc. (ie. competing for group's best time). Can also be played with just one ball.

Debrief/Discussion: If you turn this game into a challenge, discuss with the group how they may improve their time between each round (hint: make the circle tighter! The fastest way to do this is if everybody simply hands the object to one another).

Snowflake

Objectives: Introduce the idea of different personalities and learning styles to your group using this game. It's simple, quick, and raises productive ideas about interpretation.

Materials: 8.5"x11" paper and scissors for each participant

Audience: Works for small, medium, and large groups; any age. Great for groups who have never met *or* have already established relationships.

Duration: 15 minutes (with discussion time)

Directions: Circle set up, and have all participants turn around and face outward. Hand everyone a piece of paper. "Listen very carefully—I will only give the directions once: there are only 5 of them. You have your own piece of paper, so do not worry about anyone else's paper—just focus on yours!

1. Now, hold it as if you were reading a newspaper: fold it in half: tear off the upper right hand corner.
2. Now, hold it as if you were reading a newspaper: fold it in half: tear off the lower left hand corner.
3. Now, hold it as if you were reading a newspaper: fold it in half: tear off the upper left hand corner.
4. Now, hold it as if you were reading a newspaper: fold it in half: tear off the lower right hand corner.
5. Now, unfold your piece of paper, turn around, and hold it up to show everyone."

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: Take a look at each other's end result. Why do they look different? How did people interpret the facilitator's instructions? Do you think, if you did this activity again, your own snowflake would even look the same? What does this activity tell us about each other, and how might this play out on the trip?

III. Initiatives/Team Challenges

Activities that require and inspire communication, teamwork, leadership, and creativity.

Portal

Objectives: This challenge involves multiple steps from planning to actual execution, so it is great for getting the group to communicate and practice leadership.

Materials: a loop of bungee rope, p-cord, or a hula-hoop

Audience: Medium-large groups who have had a little experience working together already

Duration: 10 minutes+

Directions: The goal of this game is to get the whole group through the magic portal without using their hands.

- Provide the group with the only game material (bungee, rope, or hula-hoop). Tell them that they must all get through the rope without using their hands. All other body parts are in play. That's it!

Modifications: You may do this as a timed activity. You may also introduce multiple obstacles to extend the length of this activity. You can make things even harder by saying that *no* body part may touch the loop, except for the people holding the object up/open (no more than 2 people).

Debrief/Discussion: What leadership roles did people take? What problem solving tactics were used? Do you think you could do this even quicker if we played another round?

Hula Hoop Pass

Objectives: Providing youth with a team challenge that is silly, requires weird body movements, and breaks down physical barriers.

Materials: 1 hula-hoop

Audience: Groups of any age or size. Ideally they will already have been made comfortable with physical contact.

Duration: 10+ minutes, depending on group size.

Directions: The group stands in a circle and everyone holds hands. One pair lets go so that a hula-hoop can be placed between them.

- Reconnect the circle with the loop between two participants. The challenge is for the hula-hoop to travel around the group without anyone letting go of hands.
- After the group has figured this out try timing it.

Modifications: Add multiple hula-hoops, or a hoop traveling in the opposite direction.

Debrief/Discussion: This is more of a silly game than one that's great for debriefing, unless you see fit.

Human Knot

Objectives: Challenge your group to work together and communicate effectively while breaking down physical barriers

Materials: none

Audience: This game gets harder the more people are involved, so ideally use this activity for small and medium groups.

Duration: 10-20 minutes depending on group size

Directions: Have everyone stand in a circle, facing inward.

- Grab the right hand of someone across the circle. Then join left hands with a different person.
- The group must now try to untangle themselves without letting go. Hand positions may be changed to avoid twisting wrists!

Modifications: This game can be played using a rope instead of handholding. Place a loop of rope, bunched up, on the group in the middle of the group. Everyone reaches down to grab the rope in two random spots, then tries to untangle it.

Debrief/Discussion: Discuss leadership and how it played out in this game. Was the group effectively as communicating?

Cradle Tag

Objectives: Inspire one-on-one teambuilding with a competition for speed, while pushing the physical boundary.

Materials: none

Audience: Ideally a large group, slightly older as it requires supporting each other's weight.

Duration: 10-15 minutes, depending on group size.

Directions: Have everyone find a partner to work with for this game. They should be able to support each other's body weight.

- One set of each pair will walk in a large circle, clockwise; the other partner will walk in a smaller circle inside that circle, counterclockwise.
- When you yell "cradle!" the partners must find each other, and one must get themselves in a position where they are entirely off the ground (how they should go about doing this can be established beforehand).
- Whichever group is last to do this is out. Play the game until there are only two teams left. The winner of that round wins the game!

Modifications: Make things tougher by switching who is off the ground each round—despite their size!

Debrief/Discussion: How did your pair decide to work together? Did you try multiple ways of supporting each other?

Alaskan Basketball

Objectives: A silly way to get teams energized and working together by introducing competition to a game involving group and individual coordination.

Materials: 1 basketball-sized ball

Audience: An even-numbered group of any size. Best for slightly older youth (13+) who already have established connections. Great as a first challenge for said group.

Duration: 15 minutes; or as many as 9 “innings”

Directions: Divide the group into two teams. Ask a trivia question to determine which team will start off by throwing the ball.

- The game begins with that team throwing the ball somewhere in the direction of their opponents. The other team needs to get the ball, line up back to front, and pass the ball over, under, over, under... until it reaches the end of their line. Once it reaches the last person, they must throw the ball back towards their opponent.
- While one team is passing the ball through their line, the other team huddles up in a circle with one person running around the group racking up points (1 lap=1 point).
- Continue this game for a number of innings (1 inning=each team gets a chance to score points), or a set amount of time, or up to a certain number of points (30 is a good number).

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: Did your group have a strategy for determining who would pick up the ball or who would run? How were decisions made in this fast-paced game?

Tarp Flip

Objectives: Getting your group to work together creatively to accomplish an otherwise simple task.

Materials: 1 10'x12' tarp

Audience: A medium-large group of any age. Works well as a first challenge for a group.

Duration: 15 minutes

Directions: Lay the tarp or ground sheet flat on the ground, and instruct everyone to step onto it. Without touching the ground the team must flip the tarp over and stand as they are now (on the other side of the ground sheet). That's it!

Modifications: To increase the challenge, fold the ground sheet in half or quarters so the surface area is much smaller.

Debrief/Discussion: Discuss how the group worked together to achieve their goal.

Islands

Objectives: Challenge youth to expand (by shrinking!) their spatial boundaries, as they communicate and work together to “move” from one island to another.

Materials: 1 2x4 and small wooden platforms (previously made); improvise with cardboard!

Audience: Medium-large sized groups of any age. Should have had some experience working together already. Great as a teambuilder mid-way through a longer outing.

Duration: 15 minutes

Directions: Provide the group with the materials for this challenge, and explain the activity to them: simply, use the materials to get each member of the team from island to island (the islands should get progressively smaller) *without touching the ground*.

- All participants must be on a piece of wood at all times. The 2x4 should act as a bridge between islands.
- There may be a point where the whole group can't fit on the island, so their teammates may have to coordinate holding them up!

Modifications: Spreading the islands apart more will make this activity more challenging.

Debrief/Discussion: Discuss leadership roles and how each participant took on a particular role. How were decisions made as the islands got smaller?

Weevil

Objectives: Asks youth to engage all senses while developing leadership and communication skills.

Materials: A bag of random items or throwables of different sizes (at least 10)

Audience: Group must be a multiple of 3. Or, one youth may act as spotter. The group should know each other already and have established some trust in one another.

Duration: 20-25 minutes

Directions: Ask the group to arrange themselves into groups of 3 for this activity.

- One person in each group can see but not speak; another will be able to speak, but will not be able to see the field of play; the third will be blindfolded in the field of play, responding to their teammates instructions.
- Set up the field of play in an open space: Use rope to mark a line between the blindfolded participants and their teammates. Scatter the random items throughout the field. The blindfolded participants will have to pick them up after the game begins.
- The speaker should have their back to the field of play; the seer should be looking at their blindfolded teammate, so they can signal instructions accordingly
- Give the group a few minutes to discuss communication strategy: the speaker will be yelling out instructions signaled to them by the seer. The blindfolded participants will do their best to follow those instructions.
- When you say go, the groups will have to work together to help the blindfolded teammate pick up as many items as possible, and deposit them on the other side of the rope one by one. At the end of the game, the team with the most items wins!

Modifications: Play a few rounds of this game so that everyone has a chance to play each role; ask the group to consider trying other signaling systems.

Debrief/Discussion: Share with the group your team's method of communication and if it was effective. Did you trust your teammates? How did leadership play out in this activity?

Toxic Waste Dump

Objectives: To encourage creative problem solving through clear communication and leadership management.

Materials: 1 kitchen pot with strings tied to the handle (same number of strings as number of participants), 1 bungee cord loop, 1 large loop of rope to mark the toxic area, throwables inside the pot

Audience: For a larger group (8+) who has already had experience working together—this is a challenging activity!

Duration: 20+ minutes

Directions: The objective of this activity is to retrieve an object from within a circular radiation zone, to the outside of the circle where it can be “neutralized,” using only the props available. As many knots as they desire can be tied in the ropes, but the ropes cannot be cut. No one may enter the toxic area marked with by the circular area. If the retrievable object touches the ground the game starts over.

- Mark a 30’ diameter circle with the students outside the circle.
- When the game begins, the group will have the use the props to extract the toxic waste bucket from the center of the radiation zone. This will require the use of bungees and the rope in some fashion.

Modifications: limit each person to the use of one hand

Debrief/Discussion: How did leadership play out? Was communication effective? Was there frustration and/or disagreement? How did the group work through this?

Helium Pole

Objectives: To facilitate teambuilding and communication skills with an activity that is built to introduce confusion and frustration to what seems like a simple task.

Materials: 1 hiking pole *or* a length of tent poles

Audience: A medium to large sized group of youth who have not had much experience working together yet. Group can be split into multiple teams if necessary

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Directions: While explaining the activity, explain that “you have added some liquid helium to the pole, which immediately turns into a gas inside the pole.

- Using middle and index finger only, the topside of these two fingers (knuckles) are the only point that can make contact with the pole. Those fingers must always remain in contact.
- From about shoulder height everyone must arrange themselves so they can make contact with the pole. The goal for the group is to lower the pole to the ground whilst keeping straight finger in contact with the pole.
- The facilitator puts a little downward pressure on the pole to ensure good contact and then the facilitator lets go and steps away.
- Facilitator must reset the pole and start over if there is not enough contact or the pole is sailing way up in the air or across the field (after all it is filled with helium).

Debrief/Discussion: Why did the pole seem to magically rise when everyone was trying to lower it to the ground? How did the group communicate?

Modifications: none

Tank/Porcupine Projectiles

Objectives: Engage in playful, silly competition while building trust and encourage sensory perception.

Materials: blindfolds (enough for each pair to have 1), soft throwables (enough for each group to start with 2)

Audience: A medium to large sized group (8+) of youth who have worked together, but not very much. This can also double as an icebreaker activity.

Duration: 20 minutes

Directions: Start by asking everyone to pair off, and decide which partner will be wearing a blindfold for the first round.

- Once blindfolded, scatter the throwables around an established playing area (look out for any hazardous objects).

- Instruct the group to spread out and establish a *silent* communication system that will allow the unblindfolded partner to direct their partner.
- When the game begins, the pairs will start to *walk* around in an attempt to throw the throwables at other groups (like blindfolded dodgeball).
- If a group is hit, their blindfolded partner loses one throwing hand. If they are hit twice, they are out and must sit down until the next round.
- Switch after the first round so that each participant gets a chance to play each role.

Debrief/Discussion: Did you trust your partner? What communication system did you develop?

Modifications: none

Ten-Step

Objectives: To push communication, teambuilding, and leadership skills for the entire group.

Materials: Counters with the numbers 0-9 written on them

Audience: A group of any size, but easier if there is at least 10 so that each person can be responsible for a number. Best for slightly older groups with varying amounts of experience together.

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Directions: Arrange the squares in any order (3x3 with one elsewhere). The facilitator writes down a 7 digit number that is the “code” your group of robbers needs to get through the bank vault. The goal is to figure out the code, then have each member of the group dial it to get through the vault without being detected.

- The group starts by sending one person to stand on a number and “press” it. If it is the correct first number in the sequence, the facilitator will make no noise. If not, they will make a buzzing sound and you must try again. This will be true for each number in the sequence.

- Pay attention to numbers as you find them, because each time you set off the buzzer, you must start from the beginning.
- Once the sequence is discovered, make each person on the team “type it in” to get through the bank before the police arrive!
- The facilitator should set a time limit as an extra challenge (usually 15 minutes total)

Modifications: Play this game silently for an added challenge.

Debrief/Discussion: How were decisions made for this game? Who took on leadership roles in this game? Were there any frustrating aspects to the activity, and how were they overcome?

IV. Trail Games

A collection of no-prop and low-prop games to keep your group busy on the trail.

Ambulators/Trail Chatter

To get participants walking and talking with brain teasers and activities requiring communication

Zen Count/Ambulating Numbers

Materials: none

Directions: Group must count as high as possible out loud, with only person saying a number at a time. There can be no planning, and no one can speak again until everyone has spoken at least once (i.e., if 10 people in your group, person who says “1” can’t speak again until “11” at earliest).

Modifications: You can also play this by reciting different lists: months of the year, the alphabet, etc.

Alphabet Categories

Materials: none

Directions: Walking... pick a topic – music, movies, vegetables, animals etc. Starting with the letter ‘A,’ next person ‘B’ next ‘C’ and so on - go up and down the line giving an example from your topic that begins with your letter.

Modifications: Double letters can reverse direction e.g. **Micky Mouse**. Be creative.

Green Glass Door

Materials: none

Directions This is one of those silly frustrating but simple code games. The Green Glass Doors are very special – many things can go through them and many things cannot go through them.

You have to try and figure out what can and can’t go through. If you know the secret code – don’t share, just give us an example. For example, a tree can go through the green glass doors but a leaf cannot. I never give the answer up, Sorry.

Modifications: none

4 is the Magic Number

Materials: none

Directions This truly is magic. Give me any number and I can take it through a logical sequence that will ALWAYS end in 4. Start with numbers between 1 -10. For example; ‘Two’. My response; two is three, three is five, five is four, four is the magic number! Hint: there is a reason I used letters here rather than numerals. Sorry, I never give away the secrets. You can go above 10 and it still works, takes me longer to respond however.

Modifications: none

Popcorn Story

Materials: none

Directions: This is a classic for all youth programming (you probably even played it with your friends at some point). Choose an order in which to tell your group’s popcorn story depending on where you are playing this game—presumably on a hike!

- Have one person start the story by saying either 1 word, phrase, or sentence. The next person follows by adding their own word phrase or sentence.
- Then the next person, and so on until everyone has had a chance to contribute. You can keep going around the group if the story isn’t over!

Modifications: This works well as a way of reflecting on the day’s events during a debrief.

French Toast

Materials: none

Directions: One person begins by thinking of an object. The object doesn’t have to be visible.

- One participant begins by asking if that object is more like French Toast, or more like some other object of their choosing (car keys, or a sabertooth tiger for example). The

person who thought of the object the responds saying what their object is more similar to.

- Participants then take turns trying to hone in on that object by continuing to ask “Is it more like _____ or _____?” until the identity of the original object is found out.

Modifications: none

Ecology/Outdoor Skills

*To reinforce sensor/environmental awareness. See **Natural Connections** section for more*

Tick Game

Materials: 1 clothes pin, caribeaner, or other item that can be clipped onto things

Directions: Introduce this game to youth before hitting the trail, or at a break.

- Show them the clipable item, informing them that “This is a tick.” Then discuss what a tick is, how to look out for them, and how to do a tick check (which you are required to do every 12 hours!).
- You will then sneakily clip the tick to another participant’s clothing or backpack while they are walking. Everyone needs to be on the lookout so that they don’t get caught with the tick at the next break.
- At the next break, the location of the tick will be pointed out—it may have moved many times since the last break!—and the person with the tick must share something about themselves or do a silly task of your choosing (of course, keep this appropriate).

Modifications: none

Flash Flood! or Bear Attack!

Materials: none

Directions: This game is meant to keep people on their toes throughout the duration of an adventure. Introduce the game to youth before an outing begins so that it can be played for the entirety of your day's activity.

- It's simple. At any point, when you call out "Flash flood!" or "Bear attack!" everyone must quickly do something to get their feet off the ground—jump on a rock, hold on to a thick tree branch, climb atop a log, etc.
- The last person to do so has to share something about themselves or do a silly task of your choosing.

Modifications: none

Circle Games

To keep up the fun on long breaks, on summits, at camp, or at to be used as energizers

Ninja

Materials: none

Directions: Clearly establish what is appropriate contact for this game—we're not trying to hurt each other! The group starts bunched up very tightly.

- Everyone yells out "hiiii-yah!" and jumps backwards into their best karate stance.
- Then, each person takes a turn trying to tag another ninja in the group by making contact with one of their hands with one single, swift motion.
- The person who is targeted gets two moves: one to dodge, then one to try tagging another opponent (or they may reposition themselves).
- Go around the circle, clockwise, trying to tag each other. If you are tagged, you lose the use of that hand. If you lose both hands, you are out.
- The person left with one or both of their hands in use when everyone else is out is the winner.

Modifications: none

Screaming Toes

Materials: none

Directions: The groups starts by standing in a circle.

- When you say “Look down” everyone needs to look down. When you say “Look up” everyone needs to look up to the sky. When you say “eyes!” everyone must look directly into the eyes of someone in the circle.
- If two people make eye contact, they are out and must to step out of the circle.
- Continue until there are only two people left.

Modifications: For a little more silliness, when you make eye contact with another participant, scream loudly to signal your demise!

Zip-Zip-Boing

Materials: none, *or* a small ball

Directions: The group starts by arranging themselves in a tight circle.

- One person begins by saying “zip,” and looking left to pass clockwise. At any point, a person can reverse the pattern by saying “boing.” The challenge is to keep the pattern moving and not mess up.
- Whoever messes up either by breaking the pattern, missing a cue, or saying something that doesn’t correspond to their motion, is out. This is harder than it sounds, especially after picking up some speed.

Modifications: Add a new rule: you can also break the pattern by saying “zoom” and looking at someone across the circle who has to then begin the patter from their spot.

Big Booty

Materials: none

Directions: Have everyone sit in a circle with their legs crossed. The Instructor starts as “Big Booty,” then everyone else is assigned a number (count off 1, 2, 3, etc.).

- Big Booty starts keeping a rhythm by slapping knees and clapping hands. Everyone joins in singing, “Big Booty, Big Booty, Big Booty. Aw yeah. Big Booty.”
- Big Booty then “passes” to another person by saying, “Big Booty, Number ___.” That person has to keep the rhythm and respond and pass to another number or Big Booty: “Number __, Number __,” and so on.
- If someone messes up the rhythm, they must take the place of the highest number while everyone shifts to a lower number. The goal is to dethrone (mix up) Big Booty.

Modifications: none

Flinch

Materials: a small ball

Directions: Have everyone stand in a circle, with one person in the middle.

- The person in the middle has the ball, and random picks people to either throw to or fake out.
- If the person flinches, and the ball is not thrown, that person is out. They are also out if they don't catch the ball.

Modifications: Make people clap or jump, or clap *and* jump, before catching the ball.

Riddles/Mysteries

See the Riddles/Mysteries appendix for more

Examples

Riddles

Q. What travels around the world, but stays in a corner?

A. A postage stamp

Q: A man hiked through the woods with his dog and saw three coyotes, six wolf cubs, seven bunnies, nine squirrels and thirteen chipmunks. How many total feet were there?

A: Two. The man has two feet. The rest of the animals have paws.

Mysteries

Q. A cowboy rides into camp on Tuesday, stays three days and leaves on Tuesday. How is this possible?

A. The cowboys horse is named Tuesday

Q: A man walks into a bar and asks for a drink. The bartender pulls out a gun and points it at him. The man says, "Thank you," and walks out.

A: The man has hiccups; the bartender scares them away by pulling a gun.

V. Canoe Games

In- and out-of-water activities for paddlers of all levels, to reinforce skills and for pure fun.

Parts of Boat

Objectives: An out-of-water activity to teach the different parts of a boat (knowing them may be helpful for paddling instruction later on).

Materials: 2 sets of notecards with different parts of the canoe written on them; 1 canoe per team

Audience: For beginner paddlers before they've entered the water; at least 2 teams

Duration: 15 minutes

Directions: Break into however many teams as you'd like, and have each team arrange themselves around their canoe.

- Give each group a stack of cards with different parts of the canoe written on them. They should divide them up among themselves
- The facilitator will then call out a part of a canoe, and whoever is holding that card in each group must stick it on the corresponding part of their canoe.
- The first person to do so wins a point for their team.

- The game is over when the entire canoe has been properly labeled. The team with the most points wins.

Paddle Pass

Objectives: An out-of-water activity to facilitate the learning of paddling commands.

Materials: 1 paddle per canoe participant

Audience: For beginner paddlers before they've entered the water; at least 4 paddlers.

Duration: 10 minutes

Directions: Start by arranging everyone in a circle, at arm's length distance from each other, holding their paddles in front of them with blades on the ground.

- You will then begin calling out a series of commands for participants to move in different directions
- When you yell:
 - "Port!" everyone must leave their paddle and jump to the left to grab hold of their neighbor's paddle before it hits the ground
 - "Starboard!" everyone must do the same to the right
 - "Bow" everyone must step away from their paddle and bow, then catch the paddle before it falls
 - "Stern" everyone must step away from their paddle and spin in a circle, then catch the paddle before it falls
- If someone performs an instruction incorrectly or drops a paddle, they are out for that round

Simon Says

Objectives: A quick, easy, and controlled way to reinforce paddling techniques in the water.

Materials: none

Audience: Any number of canoes; great for beginner paddlers

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Directions: Easy! Corral everyone into an area of water (perhaps a 30' radius from the dock) so that everyone can see you and there is enough room to maneuver.

- Then play a normal game of Simon says, calling out different strokes and boat directions.
- Those who move without you saying "Simon says," or if they perform the wrong maneuver, are out of that round. Play until canoes are eliminated.

Stinky Fish

Objectives: A fun competition, active competition between boats (and an easy way to make canoes flip for some extra laughter).

Materials: 4+ floating rubber rings (more for larger groups)

Audience: At least 4 canoe pairs, should have exhibited decent grasp of paddling skills

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Directions: Divide group into two teams and set some boundaries for the game. Canoes tend to space out during this activity.

- The goal is to get as many points as possible by throwing rubber rings into your opponent's canoe. The rings can be passed either with hands or a paddle.
- Each time a rubber ring lands in a canoe, the team that threw the ring scores a point.
- If the ring lands in your canoe, you must then go try throwing into another canoe. If the throwing team misses however, they must retrieve the ring and try again.

Modifications: Play an ongoing game with the ball where you don't want it in your boat and have to pass it to another boat (similar to hot potato). The canoe with the stinky fish at the end of the day (or when you take a break) has to either share a joke, sing a song, do the dishes (or some other fate you can determine on your own).

Tug of War

Objectives: A quick, classic competition moved onto the water

Materials: 1 15' painter (rope) tied between two canoes, with a bandanna tied in the middle

Audience: Any group of an even number of canoe, with any experience level

Duration: 10 minutes

Directions: Another easy one! Using the painter, attach two canoes by their bows or sterns depending on whether you want to work forward strokes or back strokes (do not play this game with pry and draw unless you want the boats to flip!).

- Establish a center line in the water that the bandanna will start directly above. Then set a line that each team will try to pull past.
- When you say go, each canoe will work together to try to pull the bandanna past their line, just like a normal game of tug of war.

Duct Tape Tag

Objectives: A fun competition that can help develop finer paddling techniques as it requires quick, dynamic movements.

Materials: 1 roll of duct tape

Audience: At least 3 canoe pairs, should be decently comfortable in canoes, as light collisions are likely.

Duration: 15-20 minutes

- Each canoe gets a few lengths of duct tape (the same amount on each canoe).
- The object is to remove the tape flags from the other canoes while not having your own removed.
- If a canoe loses all flags they must then paddle with their hands to stay in the game until they steal another flag.
- The game is over when a team gets a pre-determined number of flags or removes all the flags from other canoes.

Lacrosse/Canoe Football

Objectives: An easy game that can help develop paddling efficiency as it requires racing to projectiles thrown by other paddlers.

Materials: 2 sponge balls tied into a nylon sock to serve as a throwable

Audience: At least 3 canoe pairs of any level of experience beyond basic paddling.

Duration: 15 minutes

Directions: Start with all canoes lined up side-to-side. Choose one canoe pair to “kick off,” perhaps by asking a trivia question.

- One person in that canoe must hold the throwable using the blade of their paddle, and hurl it as far as they can in any direction they so please.
- Everyone must then chase after it, and the canoe to pick it up out of the water using the blade of their paddle earns a point.
- They then “kick off,” and everyone races again to try scoring the next point. Play this game either to see who can rack up the most points in a set number of minutes, or until one team score 5 points.

Canoe Golf

Objectives: A team activity that requires canoes to coordinate

Materials: enough rubber rings for each team to have 1

Audience: At least 4 canoes (2 teams of 2) of any level of experience beyond basic paddling

Duration: 15 minutes

Directions: This game is played in a series of rounds, similarly to how golf is played in a number of holes.

- For each round, establish a point that will serve as the hole. Canoe teams will try to reach that point in the least number of “strokes”
- A stroke consists of one canoe throwing a rubber ring, and another paddler catching that ring around their arm
- If they do not catch the ring, they must throw again from that spot and take a 1 stroke penalty (this will encourage people to throw shorter distances each stroke.
- The team with the least number of strokes to each hole wins

VI. Activities: Natural Connections

Activities that involve interacting with the environment by inspiring sensory awareness.

Unnatural Trail

Objectives: To focus the group's attention on natural vs. foreign objects in hopes of increasing environmental awareness and inspiring LNT practices.

Materials: ~20 "unnatural" objects w/ a list of those objects (have a bag designated for items)

Audience: A group of any size and any age. Great for the beginning of any hike or a startup activity after a longer break (that'll allow you the time to set up)

Duration: 20 minutes, plus set-up time

Directions: This one is best if you have a bag of 20 or so "unnatural" objects of different sizes/colors/textures; make a list of those objects to be sure to collect them all at the end of the activity!

- Ahead of time (before the beginning of a hike, during a water/snack break), place the objects along a stretch of trail so they are visible from different angles, heights, etc.—some easy and some challenging.
- Have the students walk along the trail and count as many unnatural objects they see along the way, but don't let them ruin it by pointing them out!

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: How many did each person see? What should we do with foreign objects we find? Great way to open up LNT discussions and inspire environmental awareness

Clockless Minute

Objectives: To push awareness of the passing of time in an environment with a different set of distractions compared to participants' home communities.

Materials: 1 watch to keep time

Audience: A group of any size, age, and experience

Duration: 5 minutes

Directions: Have your group sit in a circle in an area with relatively low noise pollution. Everyone closes their eyes, you give them a signal to start and ask them to raise their hands when they think a minute has passed *without using a watch*.

Modifications: Have the group simultaneously count the number of noises that they hear during that minute. This gives them something else to focus on so that they must "sense" a minute's time rather than counting it out. It also provides individuals the opportunity to identify sounds they might not hear in their home environments.

Debrief/Discussion: Who came the closest? Do other organisms use time (days/seasons/years)? What kinds of things change our perception of time?

Meet-A-Tree

Objectives: To increase sensory and environmental awareness while building trust between participants.

Materials: none

Audience: A hiking group (no bigger than 12) that has had the chance to work together already, so that some trust is already established.

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Directions: Divide the group into pairs.

- One student closes their eyes or is blindfolded while the other spins him/her in a circle and leads him/her on a roundabout route to tree. Have them stay within a given area, and make sure the ground is somewhat clear and flat!
- The blindfolded student may take a few minutes to explore the tree using the senses of touch—and perhaps smell.

- The other student then leads him/her back to the starting point via a different route, removes the blindfold and gives him/her a chance to find the tree! *Reiterate safety expectations before playing.*

Modifications: To provide an extra challenge, you may stress this activity as a trustbuilder as well as promoting sensory awareness. Encourage your group to make the walk to their tree an adventure of its own—have them confuse their partner with misdirection and obstacles *within safe parameters*. Individuals may choose to guide their partner by hand, OR simply by vocal cue if deemed appropriate by the facilitator.

Debrief/Discussion: What senses did you utilize in this activity? What was different about how you interacted with the environment in this activity vs. other experiences?

Sound Map

Objectives: To focus on auditory awareness in an outdoor setting.

Materials: pen/pencil and paper for each student

Audience: A small-medium sized group (to keep down noise pollution) of any age or experience.

Duration: 20 minutes

Directions: Supply each student with a piece of paper or journal and ask them to sit quietly a short distance apart.

- Have them make an x in the middle of the paper to represent their position in the environment.
- Then, ask them to listen to and draw the sounds they hear in relation to where they are. They may use symbols, pictures, words, etc. to “map out” each sound.

Debrief/Discussion: What did people hear? How many noises? Was it easy or hard to locate sounds? Is it really more quiet in the outdoors? What noises acted as distractions?

Modifications: Gather the maps, mix them up and hand them back. Have the students see if they can find the location of someone else's X by reading the map.

Hide the Pen/Pencil

Objectives: To introduce youth to environmental awareness with a simple and fun activity.

Materials: 1 pen/pencil/unnatural object

Audience: A group of any age or experience level—all will find this activity challenging!

Duration: 15+ minutes (depending on how many rounds are played)

Directions: Set a *small* designated playing area for this activity, being careful not to make an impact if you choose an area that is off-trail. Have the group turn away as you walk through the area to hide a pen, somewhere on the ground in plain sight.

- When the pen is hidden, give participants two minutes to walk around the area looking for it. Instruct them to **not** point out the pen once they have found it. Instead, ask them to simply walk out of the playing area while others continue to search.
- Play another round in which you hide the pen above ground, still within the designated area. Some youth may be stumped as their expecting the pen to be on the ground!

- Play another round in which you stand in the playing area with the pen tucked behind your ear.

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: How many people did you stump? Does this change people's perception of or attention to the environment/nature?

Change One Thing

Objectives: A quick activity to lead off any outing. Prepares participants for sensory awareness by asking them to pay attention to minute details.

Materials: none

Audience: A group of any age or experience level. Works well as an icebreaker as well, so it's not required that the group have extensive experience together.

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Directions: This is a great activity to present right before you take off for an adventure, as it emphasizes participant's awareness to their surroundings. Ask students to pair up and face their partner.

- Give them about 15 seconds to observe as many details as possible about their partner. Then, each person must turn away from each other and change one thing about their appearance (ex. untie a shoe, zip up a jacket, etc.).

- When the pairs turn back to one another, have them look around to see what their partner has changed!

Modifications: To make the activity more difficult, have the group play multiple rounds and make them change one more thing each round.

Debrief/Discussion: What things did you pay attention to? How much can you really take in, even when you're asked to focus on details about a single object (your partner)?

Nature's Perfume

Objectives: To interact with the natural world in a creative way while pushing sensory awareness and creativity

Materials: none; OR a cup for bottling the "perfume"

Audience: A group of any size and age, with some outdoor experience

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Directions: In teams, each team member collects 1-2 thing from the forest (dead & down, or one leaf from a plant) and crushes them in their hands or a cup.

- Teach them how to sniff by waving their hand over the cup toward the nose ("wafting").
- Once they have made their fragrance, they must come up with a marketing scheme for the product: a brand name, a tag line, a celebrity to endorse them, etc.
- Have each team share their scent and marketing campaign with the group.

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: What ingredients did they use? Do some things smell more than others? Any familiar scents? Introduce Leave No Trace principles beforehand to inspire best practices.

Scavenger Hunt/Wild Edibles

Objective: To educate youth on the environment they are exploring, and encouraging them to interact with it.

Materials: Materials: a handout of local flora/fauna for each participant

Audience: A small to medium sized group (to limit impact) of any age and experience level.

Duration: The length of your outing!

Directions: Before embarking on your outing, research the local flora and fauna of the location you're heading to. Create a simple document with pictures of some of the wildlife that your group might encounter.

- Provide each student with a copy of this handout so that they can refer to it throughout their trip.
- You may choose to label each organism or not, so that you may quiz the participants during or after the outing.

- Some objects may be edible or smell-able, in which case you may encourage participants to make their scavenger hunt more tactile (if you feel comfortable doing so). Regardless, *provide instructions and safety guidelines at the top of the document and refer to those instructions beforehand!*

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: Discuss safety measures for interacting with and consuming *only* what you know is safe. Make sure to have briefed your group on LNT practices beforehand.

Polaroid

Objectives: A creative activity that requires paying close attention to memory and sense of sight.

Materials: paper; pens/pencils/crayons/markers; 1 blindfold for each pair

Audience: A group of any size, age, or experience level.

Duration: 20 minutes

Directions: Ask youth to pair up for this activity. The first student closes their eyes or is blindfolded while their partner leads them towards an object or a scene/landscape.

- When the blindfolded participant arrives at the “scene,” the sighted partner tells them to open their eyes for a second, taking a mental snapshot of what they see.
- Switch partners and repeat these step.
- When each pair returns, pass out drawing materials, and ask everyone to draw what they saw in as much or as little detail as they’d like. They can then share their “Polaroid” with the group.

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: How easy or hard was it to remember everything you saw? What things did you focus on? What did you think about the scene you were provided with?

Natural Art/Andy Goldsworthy activity

Objectives: A creative activity that gets youth to interact with the environment in a personal and artistic way

Materials: non, *or* a handout with examples of Andy Goldsworthy's artwork

Audience: A small to medium sized group (to limit impact) of any age and experience level.

Duration: 30 minutes

Directions: Simple! Ask students to create a scene, picture, sculpture, etc. using ONLY (or almost only) natural materials. Ask them to be respectful of the environment as they select materials, keeping LNT principles in mind. You may provide them with examples by showing them pictures of Andy Goldsworthy's artwork which inspired this activity.

Modification: This activities is similar to building fairy houses, which is a great creative activity to do in pairs or groups

Debrief/Discussion: Have each participant share their piece of art and explain how they came about making it.

Solo Walk

Objectives: To offer participants a chance to interact with their surroundings on a personal level, with the silence and space needed to do so.

Materials: ~10 notecards with various prompts instructing students to observe, think deeply, or be silly/creative.

Audience: A group of any size, provided there is enough space between participants. Works well for any age towards the end of an outing.

Duration: 20-30 minutes, depending on how many cards you use and what the prompts require

Directions: This activity can fit anywhere into an outing, especially on hikes and night walks. Find a quiet trail for the group to walk on. The purpose of this activity is to give your students quiet time on the trail and experience nature alone while knowing that the group and safety are close by.

- Start out by setting guidelines for this activity: no talking, each participant should walk at a slow pace down the trail 1 minute apart.
- Place cue cards along the trail, every 30 steps or so.

- At the end of the trail prompts, step off to the side of the trail and wait quietly for the rest of the group to come.

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: What were people's favorite prompts and why? Did you enjoy the solo activity, or did it unsettle you in some way?

VII. Nature at Night

Games and activities for night walks or around the campfire.

Smellies

Objectives: An activity that makes youth focus on sense of smell.

Materials: 5+ film canisters filled with smellable items such as kitchen spices

Audience: A group of any size, age, and experience, perhaps on their first overnight outing.

Duration: 5 minutes

Directions: Place several fragrant items in separate canisters—perhaps cooking spices for one round, then outdoor objects for an added challenge!

- Take turns holding the canisters under each participant's nose. Have them guess each scent. You might also pass the canisters around the group and only ask for guesses at the end so everyone gets a chance.
- Play another round where you wet your nose before smelling each scent.

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: Which was easier to ID, the spices or the natural materials? What made it easier? Show them how to waft scents using their hand. Did wetting your nose make it easier or harder to smell? Discuss how animals with wet noses, like dogs, have great senses of smell.

Night Drawing

Objectives: A creative activity that forces youth to follow instructions with a diminished sense of sight.

Materials: crayons, pens, or markers; 1 piece of paper for each participant

Audience: A group of any size, age, and experience.

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Directions: Each person is given a crayon and a small sheet of white paper.

- The instructor gives directions for drawing a house with windows, a door, a yard, a fence and so on to create a fairly detailed picture. Telling a story as part of the drawing helps to make it even more fun.
- Once everyone is done, have them write their names on the back and the color of the crayon that they think they have been using.
- The instructor can then collect the drawings so that the group can take a look at them later.

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: What did it feel like drawing without being able to see what you were drawing? Are your drawings still accurate or identifiable?

Triboluminescence/Bioluminescence

Objectives: To educate youth on details of nocturnal organisms and other ecological phenomena.

Materials: wintergreen LifeSavers, quartz rocks, fireflies if they're out

Audience: A group of any size, age, and experience, perhaps on their first overnight outing.

Duration: 5 minutes

Directions: Divide the group into partners and give each student a wintergreen lifesaver.

- Instruct them to take turns eating their lifesaver with their mouth open so that their partner can see what happens. By crunching on the lifesaver, they will break the chemical bonds in the candy, which will release energy in the form of little sparks; this is called tribo-luminescence.
- Compare to bioluminescence such as dinoflagelates in seawater, fire flies, etc., which create their own light to some extent.

Modifications: Pair with other ecology lessons and games that play on night time adaptations

Debrief/Discussion: Can you think of other animals that adapt in the night? Do they benefit from tribo- or bioluminescence, or some other adaptation?

Bat-Moth

Objectives: A playful way of envisioning the phenomenon of echolocation.

Materials: 1 blindfold

Audience: A group of any age, size, with some time spent outside at night

Duration: 10 minutes, or as long as people want to keep playing!

Directions: Have all students, except two, in a circle, with arms extended.

- One of the two remaining students is the bat, and is blindfolded, the other is the moth, and is not blindfolded. Both must remain in the circle.
- Anytime the bat says, "Bat" the moth must reply "Moth". The object is for the bat to mimic "echolocation" to find and tag the moth.

Modifications: Make this game "Bat-Tree-Moth" by allowing participants on the outside of the circle to say "tree" both as a distraction and to inform the bat to steer clear.

Debrief/Discussion: Did you notice a change in your sensory awareness when blindfolded? How well can humans rely on just their sense of sound?

Owl Hunter

Objectives: To focus on auditory awareness with a game that is challenging and fun for everyone involved.

Materials: 2 water bottles or other similarly-sized objects, 1 blindfold

Audience: A group of any size, age, and experience.

Duration: 10 minutes, or as long as people want to keep playing!

Directions: Blindfold one student, give him/her a flashlight (with red filter on it,) and place them in the center of a circle which the remaining students have formed.

- The instructor will point to students in the circle to try to get the water bottle at the feet of the blindfolded student.
- If the blindfolded student hears a sound, he/she should click on the flashlight in the direction of the sound, and the student trying to get a water bottle must go back to the circle. The person who gets the last water bottle becomes next blindfolded person.

Modifications: none

Debrief/Discussion: Was it harder stealing, or trying to protect your items? How good are humans at moving stealthily compared to other animals? Owls would be much better at this, given their amazing eyesight as well.

Magic Eyes/Disappearing Face

Objectives: To educate youth on humans' visual adaptation capacity given changing light conditions

Materials: none, *or* a lighter/headlamp/flashlight

Audience: A group of any size, age, or experience

Duration: 10 minutes, plus time to acclimate to night time conditions

Directions: This activity will kill your night vision, so do it right at the end of your night walk.

- Have all students cover one eye, so that no light can enter. Light a candle, and have everyone stare at the flame for couple minutes. (Tell a story or review how the eye works.)
- Then have everyone uncover the eye. Look up into the trees with one eye, then the other, camera 1, camera 2 – go back and forth between the 2 comparing. What happened?

- Then, have students partner off, and stand directly across from their partners. Ask them to stare directly at their partner's face.
- Pretty soon their partner's face should start to disappear. Discuss cones versus rods, peripheral vision.

Debrief/Discussion: Explain why strange things happened during this activity: the differences between rods and cones. Which are more important at night and why?

Modifications: Add to this color cards, asking youth if they can identify different colored pieces of paper. Can they do it? Why or why not?

Solo Walk

Objectives: To give youth a chance to experience nature at night without the distraction of their peers, increasing their sense of awareness to an environment they don't often experience.

Materials: none, *or* a rope to that lines the length of trail you will walk (>30')

Audience: A small to medium sized group of any age and experience, provided they have proven themselves attentive enough to stay safe during this activity.

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Directions: Define a section of trail or a field that you will walk for this activity. It can be as short as 30' or as long as you'd like.

- If it makes sense for your group, run a rope the length of your trail, so that participants may hold on to it to aid them as they walk with no light. In this case, wrap the rope around trees and on top of small obstacles to make the activity more challenging and exciting.
- Leave a good amount of space between participants, as you send each individual along the path alone.

- Instruct them to pay close attention to all of their surroundings and senses as they walk.

Debrief/Discussion: Have each participant report back on what the experience was like—what they saw, heard, smelled, felt, or thought. Did they notice things they wouldn't have noticed during the day or with a headlamp on and people chatting?

Modifications: use cue cards like the Solo Walk described in the Natural Connections section.

VIII. Outdoor Skills/Activity Tags

What to Pack: Hiking

Day hike/Short Hike

Backpacking

What to Pack: Canoeing

Layering System

Leave No Trace (LNT) overview

Trail Etiquette???

Camp Set Up

Tent Set Up

Camp Kitchen

Set Up/usage

Waste/Dishes

Bathroom Management

Orienteering

Firebuilding

Appendix: Riddles & Mysteries

Riddles

Q. What happens once in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in a thousand years?

A. The letter "m"

Q. What is round on both ends and hi in the middle?

A. Ohio

Q. What travels around the world, but stays in a corner?

A. A postage stamp

Q: There are three men and a judge. The judge has 5 hats. Three of them are red and two of them are white. The judge says "Close your eyes, I am going to place a hat on each of your heads, who ever can guess what color hat they are wearing can go free." Facts: 1. The three men are standing in a line facing the judge. Where person three can see person two, one and the judge. Person two can see person one and the judge, person one can see the judge. Person three opens his eyes first, then person two, then

person one goes last. 2. Each person can hear the others response. 3. The additional 2 hats are not visible 4. Person one guesses correctly. What color hat is person one wearing, and how do you know?

A: Person 1 is wearing a red hat. He knows his hat is red because: 1. If person three does not know, it means that when he opened his eyes, he didn't see two white hats in front of him. 2. Person two knows that person three did not see two white hats. The only way he could know what color hat he was wearing is if he opened his eyes and saw a white hat. (which means he saw a red hat) 3. Person one knows he is wearing a red hat because if person three doesn't know, then both him and person two don't have white hats. Person would only know what color his hat was if person one was wearing white. Person one knows all of this and concludes his hat is red.

Q: A man hiked through the woods with his dog and saw three coyotes, six wolf cubs, seven bunnies, nine squirrels and thirteen chipmunks. How many total feet were there?

A: Two. The man has two feet. The rest of the animals have paws.

Q: What has three feet but no head?

A: A yard stick (it's 3 feet long).

Q: Which word is always spelled wrong?

A: The word "wrong"

Q: This is a four-part brain teaser.

1. How do you put a giraffe into a refrigerator?
2. How do you put an elephant into a refrigerator?
3. The Lion King is hosting an animal conference. All the animals attend except one. Which animal doesn't attend?
4. There is a river you must cross but it is used by crocodiles and you don't have a boat. How can you cross safely?

A:

1. Open the refrigerator, put the giraffe in and close the door. It's not complicated.
2. Open the refrigerator, take out the giraffe, then put in the elephant and close the door.
3. The elephant. He's still in the refrigerator. After all, you just put him there.
4. Jump into the river and swim across. The crocodiles are at the Lion King's animal meeting.

Q: You have a fox, a bunny, some lettuce, and a boat with which to ferry them across a river. How do you get them all across the river safely? You can only bring one animal at a time in the boat. The fox and the bunny can't be left alone because the fox will eat the bunny. The bunny and the lettuce can't be left alone because the bunny because the bunny will eat the lettuce.

A: Take bunny across first. Go back alone and get the fox. Bring the fox across, and bring the bunny back across. Pick up the lettuce and leave the bunny back at the start. Travel alone back to pick up the bunny and bring him across to join the fox and lettuce.

Mysteries

Q. A man leaves home, takes three left turns and returns home to find two people in masks waiting for him. Who are the people in masks?

A. It's a baseball game, the two people in masks are the catcher and umpire

Q. A cowboy rides into camp on Tuesday, stays three days and leaves on Tuesday. How is this possible?

A. The cowboy's horse is named Tuesday

Q. A woman pushes a car up to a hotel and realizes she is bankrupt. How can this be?

A. The woman is playing Monopoly

Q: Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice all live in the same house. Bob and Carol go out to a movie, and when they return, Alice is lying dead on the floor in a puddle of water and glass. It is obvious that Ted killed her but Ted is not prosecuted or severely punished.

A: Alice is a goldfish; Ted is a cat.

Q: A woman comes home with a bag of groceries, gets the mail, and walks into the house. On the way to the kitchen, she goes through the living room and looks at her husband, who had blown his brains out. She then continues to the kitchen, puts away the groceries, and makes dinner.

A: The husband killed himself a while ago; it's his ashes in an urn on the mantelpiece that the wife looks at.

Q: A man lives on the 33rd floor of an apartment building. Every morning he wakes up, gets dressed, eats, goes to the elevator, takes it down to the lobby, and leaves the building for work. In the evening, he goes through the lobby to the elevator, and, if there is someone else in the elevator (or if it was raining that day) he goes back to his floor directly. However, if there is nobody else in the elevator and it hasn't rained, he goes to the 27th floor and walks up the last 6 flights of stairs to his room.

A: The man is a midget and can only reach as high as the number 27 in the elevator. If someone else can push the button for him, or if he can use his umbrella as an extension, he can take the elevator all the way up to his floor.

Q: A man walks into a bar and asks for a drink. The bartender pulls out a gun and points it at him. The man says, "Thank you," and walks out.

A: The man has hiccups; the bartender scares them away by pulling a gun.

Q: A man goes into a restaurant, orders albatross, eats one bite, and kills himself. ****this one is frustrating***

A: The man was in a ship that was wrecked on a desert island. When there was no food left, another passenger brought what he said was albatross but was really part of the man's wife (who had died in the wreck). The man suspects something fishy, so when they finally return to civilization, he orders albatross, realizes that what he ate before was his wife, and kills himself.

Q: A man is found hanging in a locked room with no furniture and a puddle of water under his feet.

A: He stood on a block of ice to hang himself.

Q: A rope breaks. A bell rings. A man dies.

A: A blind man enjoyed walking near a cliff, and used the sound of a buoy to gauge his distance from the edge. One day the buoy's anchor rope broke, allowing the buoy to drift away from the shore, and the man walked over the edge of the cliff.

Q: A man is sitting in bed. He makes a phone call, says nothing, then goes to sleep.

A: He is in a hotel, and is unable to sleep because the man in the adjacent room is snoring. He calls the room next door (from his own number he can easily figure out his neighbor's, and from the room number, the telephone number). The snorer wakes up, answers the phone. The first man hangs up without saying anything and goes to sleep before the snorer gets back to sleep and starts snoring again.

Q: Two men, one big and burly and the other short and thin, enter a bar. They both order identical drinks. The big one gulps his down and leaves; the other sips his slowly, then dies.

A: The drinks contained poisoned ice cubes; the man who drank slowly gave them time to melt, while the other didn't.

Q: A man gets onto an elevator. When the elevator stops, he knows his wife is dead.

A: He's leaving a hospital after visiting his wife, who's on heavy life-support. When the power goes out, he knows she can't live without the life-support systems (he assumes that if the emergency backup generator were working, the elevator wouldn't lose power).

Q: He couldn't find a chair, so he died.

A: The man was a lion tamer.

Appendix: Readings

Attitude and Commitment

The Quitter

When you're lost in the Wild, and you're scared as a child,
 And Death looks you bang in the eye,
And you're sore as a boil, it's according to Hoyle
 To cock your revolver and . . . die.
But the Code of a Man says: "Fight all you can,"
 And self-dissolution is barred.
In hunger and woe, oh, it's easy to blow . . .
 It's the hell-served-for-breakfast that's hard.

"You're sick of the game!" Well, now, that's a shame.

 You're young and you're brave and you're bright.

"You've had a raw deal!" I know -- but don't squeal,

 Buck up, do your damndest, and fight.

It's the plugging away that will win you the day,

 So don't be a piker, old pard!

Just draw on your grit; it's so easy to quit:

 It's the keeping-your-chin-up that's hard.

It's easy to cry that you're beaten -- and die;

 It's easy to crawfish and crawl;

But to fight and to fight when hope's out of sight --
 Why, that's the best game of them all!
And though you come out of each grueling bout,
 All broken and beaten and scarred,
Just have one more try -- it's dead easy to die,
 It's the keeping-on-living that's hard.
- Robert Service

Winners

Winners take chances.
Like everyone else, they fear failing, but they refuse to let fear control them.
Winners don't give up.
When life gets rough, they hang in until the going gets better.
Winners are flexible.
They realize there is more than one way and are willing to try others.
Winners know they are not perfect.
They respect their weaknesses while making the most of their strengths.
Winners fall, but they don't stay down.
They stubbornly refuse to let a fall keep them from climbing.
Winners don't blame fate for their failures nor luck for their successes.
Winners accept responsibility for their lives.
Winners are positive thinkers who see good in all things.
From the ordinary, they make the extraordinary.
Winners believe in the path they have chosen even when it's hard, even when others can't see where they are going.
Winners are patient.
They know a goal is only as worthy as the effort that's required to achieve it.
Winners are people like you.
They make this world a better place to be.
-unknown

Being First

Being first is not my style
I like to stop and fee awhile
Under the moon's thin-lipped smile
I find a peace that lasts for miles.
By myself I'm not alone
No TV guide, no telephone
The quite noise in the trees
Cuts my bonds, put my mind at ease.
You know my journey never ends
Long as I am I will be traveling
To know myself and know my friends
To heal some hurts and make amends
Down this rocky trail I find
The roughest path is in my mind
Down this rocky trail I find
The roughest path is in my mind.
- Dan Baker

Growth

Growth is a never-ending process that can be accomplished under the most adverse circumstances. Growth can be achieved from one's attempts to... "Go for the perfect try."
-Sarah Smeltzer and Joe Petriccione, Golden Nuggets

A Memorable Day

That was a memorable day to me, for it made great changes in me. But it's the same with any life. Imagine one selected day struck out of it and think how different its course would have been. Pause, you who read this, and think for a moment of the

long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bound you but for the formation of the first link of one memorable day.

- Charles Dickens, Great Expectations

I Believe

"I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge.

That myth is more potent than history.

That dreams are more powerful than facts.

That hope always triumphs over experience.

That laughter is the only cure for grief.

And I believe that love is stronger than death.

-Robert Fulgrum

Our Nature

Our nature, freed from the torturous reactive modes that we ourselves create, reveals itself to be joyous, loving, and filled with gratitude, the roots of celebration.

- States of Grace

Smiles

In our daily lives, we love smiles, I especially love a genuine smile. . . I consider the genuine smile something really precious.

- Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama

The Ultimate Measure of Man

The ultimate measure of man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

- Martin Luther King Jr.

You Must Not Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will, when the road you're trudging seems all uphill, when the funds are low, and the debts are high, and you want to smile, but you have to sigh, when care is pressing you down a bit, rest if you must, but don't quit.

Life is odd with its twists and turns, as everyone of us sometimes learns and many a failures turns about, when he might have won had he stuck it out. Don't give up though the pace seems slow, you may succeed with another blow.

Success is failure turned inside out, the silver tint of the clouds of doubt. And you never can tell how close you are. It may be near when it seems so far. So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit. It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

- unknown

A Child's World

A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength.

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

- Rachel Carson, A Sense of Wonder

You Look at Where You're Going

You look at where you're going and where you are and it never makes sense, but then you look back at where you've been and a pattern seems to emerge. And if you project forward from that pattern, sometimes you can come up with something.

- Robert Pirsig

On Living Life, Setting Goals, and Pushing Yourself

To me a peanut butter and jelly sandwich after an hour or two's row is a damn luxury. A chug of water after an hour's climb up a mountain is a luxury. Jesus! You run a couple of miles and any kind of food is delicious. Yeah, and you deserve it; your body

needs it and your mind as well. Use your body, push it, break it. Boy does it feel good afterwards. Use your mind, learn things, acquire new skills. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, you'll learn from them. Till your mind, work your body. They're a team, keep it in shape. Don't sit around for the rest of your life watching TV. All that does is fill your mind with crap, where better more creative thoughts could have been born. Don't waste away your life eating sundaes and driving goddamn automobiles, you'll accomplish nothing, you'll become fat and useless. You'll lose self-respect. Go out, set a goal, fight to reach it. Hurt to reach it. Wow, will you feel good when you're there. Don't run and hide from problems. Strive and suffer to overcome them. So what if you lose a little, think of what you'll have gained. When I get old and I'm lying in my death bed, I'll want to be able to look back and think: You'll never see me sitting on my ass waiting for something nice to come my way; I went out and worked and hurt and sweated for it. Jesus, was I happy when I got it.

- Hurricane Island Outward Bound Student

Living in the Present

I believe that only one person in a thousand knows the trick of really living in the present. Most of us spend 59 minutes an hour living in the past, with regret for lost joys, or shame for things badly done (both utterly useless and weakening)—or in a future which we either long for or dream. Yet the past is gone beyond prayer, and every minute you spend in the vain effort to anticipate the future is a moment lost. There is only one world, the world pressing against you at this minute. There is only one minute in which you are alive, this minute—here and now. The only way to live is by accepting each minute as an unrepeatable miracle. Which is exactly what it is—a miracle and unrepeatable.

- Storm Jameson

Excellence

EXCELLENCE can be attained if you . . .

CARE more than others think is wise . . .

RISK more than others think is safe . . .

DREAM more than others think is practical . . .

EXPECT more than others think is possible.

- AMC wall (Hawk's office)

Courage is the Complement of Fear

Courage is the complement of fear. A person who is fearless cannot be courageous.

- Robert Heinlein, The Notebooks of Lazarus Long

The Courage to Say I'm Afraid

Many would say, "I'm afraid," if they had enough courage.

- anonymous

Men Wanted For Hazardous Journey

Men wanted for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful, honor and recognition in case of success.

- Sir Ernest Shackleton, 1906, advertisement for expedition to the South Pole

Never Give Up

When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hang on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.

- Harriet Beecher Stowe

Returning and Transitions

You Cannot Stay on the Summit

You cannot stay on the summit forever; you have to come down again...

So why bother in the first place? Just this: what is above knows what is below, but what is below does not know what is above.

One climbs, one sees. One descends, one sees no longer but one has seen. There is an art of conducting oneself in the lower regions by the memory of what one has seen higher up.

When one can no longer see, one can at least still know.

...At the end I want to speak at length of one of the basic laws of Mount Analogue. To reach the summit, one must proceed from encampment to encampment. But before setting out for the next refuge, one must prepare those coming after to occupy the place one is leaving. Only after having prepared them can one go on up. This is why, before setting out for a new refuge we had to go down in order to pass on our knowledge to other seekers.

- Rene Daumal

Why Not Stay Out There in the Wilderness – Version 1

Why not stay out there in the wilderness the rest of your days...? Because that's not where men are...The final test for me of the legitimacy of the experience is "How well does your experience of the sacred in nature enable you to cope more effectively with the problems of mankind when you come back to the city?"

- Willi Unsoeld, charismatic and inspiring spokesperson for the outdoor education movement in North America

Why Not Stay Out There in the Wilderness – Version 2

...Why don't you stay in the wilderness? Because that isn't where it is at; it's back in the city, back in downtown St. Louis, back in Los Angeles. The final test is whether your experience of the sacred in nature enables you to cope more effectively with the problems of people. If it does not enable you to cope more effectively with the problems - and sometimes it doesn't, it sometimes sucks you right out into the wilderness and you stay there the rest of your life - then when that happens, by my scale of value; it's failed. You go to nature for an experience of the sacred...to re-establish your contact with the core of things, where it's really at, in order to enable you to come back to the world of people and operate more effectively. Seek ye first the kingdom of nature, that the kingdom of people might be realized.

- Willi Unsoeld, The spiritual values of the wilderness. A keynote presentation at the 3rd AEE Conference in Estes Park, Colorado, 1978

You've Got to Set Your Sights on Something Higher

...You've climbed the highest mountain in the world. What's left? It's all downhill from there. You've got to set your sights on something higher than Everest.

- Willi Unsoeld

Change and Growth

Experimenting

Change and growth take place when a person has risked themselves and dares to become involved in experimenting with their own life.

- Herbert Otto

May Your Trails Be Crooked

May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds.

- Edward Abbey

Changing a Youth's Inner Life

The experience of helping a fellow man in danger, or even of training in a realistic manner to be ready to give this help, tends to change the balance of power in a youth's inner life with the result that compassion can become the master motive.

- Kurt Hahn

Take Risks

Take risks: if you win, you will be happy; if you lose, you will be wise.

- Author Unknown

Consequences

In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments. There are consequences.

- R. G. Ingersoll

Defying the Odds

The great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do.

- Walter Bagehof

Responsibility

Each of us has the right and the responsibility to assess the road which lies ahead and those over which we have traveled, and if the feature road looms ominous or unpromising, and the road back uninviting, then we need to gather our resolve and carrying only the necessary baggage, step off that road into another direction.

- Maya Angelou

Education

Experiential Teacher's Paradox

It's as though the teacher said something like this: "I can tell you that there's something you need to know and I can tell you that with my help you can probably learn it. But I cannot tell you what it is in a way that you can now understand. You must be willing therefore, to undergo certain experiences as I direct you to undergo them, so that you can learn what it is that you need to know and what I mean by the words that I use. Then and only then can you make an informed choice about whether you wish to learn this new competence. If you are unwilling to step into this new experience without knowing ahead of time what it will be like, then I cannot help you. You must trust me.

- Donald Schoen, From an address at Queen's University

The Art of Teaching

The art of teaching is the art of answering questions and saying enough but not too much.

- John Holt

The Great Teacher Inspires

The mediocre teacher tells.

The good teacher explains.

The superior teacher demonstrates.

The great teacher inspires.

- William A. Ward

A Spark Will Catch Fire

Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire.

- Anatole France

Must We Always Teach Our Children With Books?

Must we always teach our children with books? Let them look at the mountains and the stars up above. Let them look at the beauty of the waters and the trees and flowers on earth. They will then begin to think, and to think is the beginning of a real education.

- David Polis

Learning From Experience

There is only one thing more painful than learning from experience and that is not learning from experience.

- Archibald McLeish

What is There Beyond Knowing

What is there beyond knowing that keeps calling to me?

I can't turn in any direction but it's there.

I don't mean the leaves' grip and shine

or even the thrush's silk song,

but the far-off fires, for example, of the stars,

heaven's slowly turning theater of light,

or the wind playful with its breath;

or time that's always rushing forward,

or standing still in the same- what shall I say- moment.

What I know I could put into a pack

as if it were bread and cheese,

and carry it on one shoulder,

important and honorable, but so small!

While everything else continues, unexplained and unexplainable.

How wonderful it is to follow a thought quietly to its logical end.

I have done this a few times.

But mostly I just stand in the dark field,

in the middle of the world, breathing in and out.

Life so far doesn't have any other name

but breath and light, wind and rain.

If there's a temple, I haven't found it yet.

I simply go on drifting, in the heaven of the grass

and the weeds.

- Mary Oliver

What I Have Learned So Far

Meditation is old and honorable, so why should I not sit, every morning of my life, on the hillside, looking into the shining world? Because, properly attended to, delight, as well as havoc, is suggestion. Can one be passionate about the just, the ideal, the sublime, and the holy, and yet commit to no labor in its cause? I don't think so. All summations have a beginning, all effect has a story, all kindness begins with the sown seed. Thought buds toward radiance. The gospel of light is the crossroads of — indolence, or action.

- Mary Oliver

Maintaining Awareness and an Open Mind

While we are born with curiosity and wonder and our early years full of the adventure they bring, I know such inherent joys are often lost. I also know that, being deep within us, their latent glow can be fanned to flame again by awareness and an open mind.

- Sigurd Olsen

The Outdoor Classroom

There is no more stimulating setting than the 'outdoor classroom'. This classroom is equipped with expandable walls that extend as far as the learners legs want to carry him, and a floor that varies from locale to locale - sometimes rocks, or water, sometimes forest floor. Its ceiling, too, is varied with ever changing cloud shapes, or a night with a myriad of star patterns waiting to be explored. No schoolroom ever had the books or maps or charts to rival the vividness of the real world.

- Lord Chesterfield

The Exploratory Drive

The exploratory drive is perhaps the most powerful form of motivation in childhood. The child learns because he must.

- Discovering the Physical World

Curiosity Leads to Understanding

I believe that if you can get people to be curious, they may begin to ask questions; answers will come and more questions, all leading to understanding, knowledge and caring.

- Anne Zwinger

Good Judgment

Good judgment comes from experience, experience comes from bad judgment.

- unknown

All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten

Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school. These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup — they all die. So do we.

And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: LOOK. Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and sane living. Think of what a better world it would be if we all — the whole world — had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up our own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

- Robert Fulghum (Contributors: Brian Pritchard and Jim Moll Gold Nuggets)

Group Dynamics

Lessons From the Geese

Fact 1: As each goose flaps its wings it creates an uplift for the birds that follow. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson: People who share a common direction and sense community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Fact 2: When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Lesson: If we have as much sense as a goose we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

Fact 3: When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

Lesson: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

Fact 4: The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson: We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek.

Fact 5: When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

Lesson: If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

- unknown

Community

Community.

Somewhere, there are people

to whom we can speak with passion

without having the words catch in our throats.

Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us,

eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us

whenever we come into our own power.

Community means strength that joins our strength

to do the work that needs to be done.

Arms to hold us when we falter.

A circle of healing. A circle of friends.

Someplace where we can be free.

A Group Becomes a Team

A group becomes a team when each member is sure enough of himself and his contribution to praise the skills of others.

- Norman G. Shidle

A New Manner of Thinking

We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive.

- Albert Einstein

When I Walk on the Beach and Enjoy the Sunset

When I walk on the beach and enjoy the sunset, I do not call out: "A little more orange over to the right, please," or "Would you mind giving us a bit less purple in the back?" NO, I enjoy the always different sunsets, as they are. We do well to do the same with the people we love.

- Carl Rogers

One Man Cannot Make a Team

One man can be a crucial ingredient on a team, but one man cannot make a team.

- Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

Expedition Behavior

An awareness of the relationship of individual to individual, individual to group, group to individual, group to other groups, individual and groups to the multi users of the region, individual and group to administrative agencies, and individual and group to local populace. Good expedition behavior is the awareness, plus the motivation and character to be concerned for others in every respect as one is for oneself. Poor expedition behavior is a breakdown in human relations caused by selfishness, rationalization, ignorance of personal faults, dodging blame or responsibility, physical weakness and in extreme cases, not being able to risk one's own survival to insure that of a companion.

- Paul Petzoldt, The Wilderness Educator

Making a Contribution

When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Leadership

If He is Indeed Wise

If he is indeed wise, he does not bid you to enter the house of wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.

- Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

Pointing Out What is Right

A person who points out what is wrong renders only half a service unless he can point out what is right.

- unknown

Listening

Nature gave man two ears but only one tongue, which is a gentle hint that he should listen more than he talks.

- unknown

To Laugh Often and Much

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Being a Midwife

The wise leader does not intervene unnecessarily. The leader's presence is felt, but often the group runs itself.

Lesser Leaders do a lot, say a lot, have followers, and form cults. Even worse ones use fear to energize the group and force to overcome resistance.

Only the most dreadful leaders have bad reputations. Remember that you are facilitating another person's process. It is not your process. Do not intrude. Do not control. Do not force your own needs and insights into the foreground.

If you do not trust a person's process, that person will not trust you. Imagine that you are a midwife; you are assisting at someone else's birth. Do good without show or fuss. Facilitate what is happening rather than what you think ought to be happening. If you must take the lead, lead so that the mother is helped, yet still free and in charge.

When the baby is born, the mother will rightly say: "We did it ourselves!"

- The Tao of Leadership, Lao Tzu

I Went on a Search to Become a Leader

I went on a search to become a leader. I searched high and low. I spoke with authority; people listened. But alas, there was one who was wiser than I, and they followed that individual. I sought to inspire confidence, but the crowd responded, "Why should I trust you?" I postured, and I assumed that look of leadership with a countenance that flowed with confidence and pride, but many passed me by and never noticed my air of elegance. I ran ahead of the others, pointed the way to new heights. I demonstrated that I knew the route to greatness. And then I looked back, and I was alone. "What shall I do?" I queried. "I've tried hard and used all that I know." And I sat down and pondered long. And then, I listened to the voices around me. And I heard what the group was trying to accomplish. I rolled up my sleeves and joined in the work. As we worked, I asked, "Are we all together in what we want to do and how to get the job done?" And we thought together, and we fought together, and we struggled towards our goal. I found myself encouraging the fainthearted. I sought ideas of those too shy to speak out. I taught

those who had little skill. I praised those who worked hard. When our task was completed, one of the group turned to me and said, "This would not have been done but for your leadership." At first, I said, "I didn't lead. I just worked like the rest." And then I understood, leadership is not a goal. It's a way to reach a goal.

I lead best when

I lead best when I help others to go where we've decided to go. I lead best when I help others to use themselves creatively. I lead best when I forget about myself as leader and focus on my group...their needs and their goals. To lead is to serve...to give...to achieve together.

- Anonymous

Self-Reliance and Self-Care

Spend a Lengthy Period Alone in the Forest

Spend a lengthy period alone in the forest or mountains, a period of coming to terms with the solitude and non-humanity of nature is to discover who, or what, one really is - a discovery hardly possible while the community is telling you what you are, or ought to be.

- Alan Watts, Nature, Man and Woman

Getting it Done

Man who say it cannot be done should not interrupt man doing it.

- Old Chinese Proverb

The Art of Solitude

It is difficult today to leave one's friends and family and deliberately practice the art of solitude, for an hour or a day or a week. And yet, when it is done, I find there is a quality of being alone that is incredibly precious. Life rushes back into the void, richer, more vivid, fuller than before . . . It is not physical solitude that actually separates one from other men, not physical isolation, but spiritual isolation. It is not the desert island nor the stony wilderness that cuts you from the people you love. It is the wilderness of the mind, the desert wastes in the heart through which one wanders lost and a stranger. When one is a stranger to oneself then one is estranged from others too. If one is out of touch with oneself then one cannot touch others. How often, in a large city, shaking hands with my friends, I have felt the wilderness stretching between us. Both of us were wandering in arid wastes, having lost the springs that nourished us—or having found them dry. Only when one is connected to one's own core is one connected to others.

-Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Wilderness & Discover

We Shall Not Cease From Exploration

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

-T.S. Elliot, "Little Gidding"

Conservation Means

Conservation means the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest time.

- Gifford Pinchot

I Went to the Woods Because I Wished to Live Deliberately

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life; living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness out of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience. . . .

- Henry David Thoreau

Prelude to Daily Bread (1908)

As one, at midnight, wakened by the call

Of golden-plovers in their seaward flight,
Who lies and listens, as the clear notes fall
Through tingling quid of the frosty night—
Who lies and listens, till the wild notes fail:
And then, in fancy, following the flock
Fares over slumbering hill and dreaming dale,
Until he hears the surf on reef and rock
Break, thundering; and all sense of self is drowned
Within the mightier music of the deep,
And he no more recalls the piping sound
That started him from dull, undreaming sleep:
So I, first waking from oblivion, heard,
With heart that kindled to the call of song,
The voice of young life, fluting like a bird,
And echoed that wild piping; till, ere long,
Lured onward by that happy singing-flight,
I caught the stormy summer of the sea,
And dared the restless deeps that, day and night,
Surge with the life-song of humanity.
- Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

On Preservation

Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clean air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free from noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste. And so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to the other animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong in it. We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope.
- Wallace Stegner

Keeping Nature's Influence Close

The old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's heart away from nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too. So he kept his youth close to its softening influence.
- Touch the Earth, McLuhan

The Earth Speaks in Magic

The Earth speaks in magic, the magic of rainbows and waterfalls and frogs. It is the magic of interacting sunlight and air and water and soil creating a constantly shifting kaleidoscope of wondrous riches on our turning planet. In fact, for someone visiting Earth for the first time, the real treasures here would all be free. The smell of a sunlit prairie, the taste of a cold cup of spring water, the crunch of trackless snow underfoot, these are some of Earth's supreme treasures.
- Steve Van Matre

Now I See the Secret

Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons. It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth.
- Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass

Man's Impact on the Earth

Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.
- Chief Seattle

Exploring and Finding Common Ground

Always in the big woods when you leave familiar ground and step off alone into a new place there will be, along with feelings of curiosity and excitement, a little nagging of dread. It is the ancient fear of the unknown, and it is your first bond with the wilderness you are going into. What you are doing is exploring. You are undertaking the first experience, not of the place, but of yourself in that place. It is an experience of our essential loneliness; for nobody can discover the world for anybody else. It is only after we have discovered it for ourselves that it becomes common ground and a common bond, we cease to be alone.

- Wendell Berry

Be Aware of the Possibility of the Search

The search is what everyone would undertake if he were not stuck in the everydayness of his own life. To be aware of the possibility of the search is to be onto something. Not to be onto something is to be in despair.

- Walker Percy

When Men and Mountains Meet

Great things are done when men and mountains meet; This is not done by jostling in the street.

- William Blake, Notebooks (1793)

Breakage

I go down to the edge of the sea.
How everything shines in the morning light!
The cusp of the whelk,
the broken cupboard of the clam,
the opened, blue mussels,
moon snails, pale pink and barnacle scarred—
and nothing at all whole or shut, but tattered, split,
dropped by the gulls onto the gray rocks and all the moisture gone.
It's like a schoolhouse
of little words,
thousands of words.
First you figure out what each one means by itself,
the jingle, the periwinkle, the scallop
 full of moonlight.
Then you begin, slowly, to read the whole story.
- Mary Oliver

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things
-Mary Oliver

NIGHT READING

The Cherokee tell of a time when there was no Sun in the sky, a time when it was always dark. It was a problem for all the animals and they called a meeting to decide what could be done about it. Woodpecker said that he had heard that people on the other side of the world had light, and perhaps they would give the animals some. Fox said that such people must be greedy people, to have all the light, and that the animals would have to just take some.

Possum offered to be the one to go. He said he could hide the bit of light in his bushy tail, and so he set out. Possum traveled for a long time until finally he saw light in the sky. The closer he got to the light, the brighter it was and the more it hurt his eyes and possum began to squint, and that is why even today a possum squints and only comes out at night. But possum kept going until he reached the Sun, and snatched a piece of it and hid it in his tail. The bit of Sun was very hot however, and it burned off all the fur on Possum's tail and the light went out. When possum got home, all he had was a tail with no fur, just like today!

Next, buzzard offered to go, he said he would balance the piece of Sun on his fine head feathers. Quickly buzzard flew off and when he reached the Sun, he dove down and grabbed a bit in his feet and placed it on his head. But the Sun was so hot it burned off his head feathers, and that is why buzzard is bald today!

Now the animals were ready to give up. Just then Grandmother Spider spoke up in a voice so small she was hard to notice. But she offered to go, and the animals, though they did not have much hope, wished her luck. Grandmother spider spun a bit of web the whole way to the west, and when she reached the Sun, she spun a tiny web and placed a bit of the Sun on the web. Then she began the journey back home. Imagine the surprise and delight of the animals when they saw that first light spreading across the sky!

The animals thanked Grandmother and promised to always honor her. And that is why today, the web of the spider is shaped like the disk and rays of the Sun!