Table of Contents

- How to Use This Packet ........................................... Page 1
- Leave No Trace ...................................................... Page 2
- First Aid ............................................................... Page 5
- Nature Mindfulness ................................................ Page 7
- Outdoor Yoga ......................................................... Page 9
- Recycling & Composting ......................................... Page 12
- Decomposition Competition ..................................... Page 14
- Animal Camouflage ............................................... Page 16
- Shelter Building ..................................................... Page 18
- Prize Submission Form ........................................... Page 20
- Answer Keys .......................................................... Page 21
How to Use This Packet

This series is great for families who want to feel more comfortable getting outside or are looking for more ways to engage the kids outdoors!

The Button Series is comprised of 8 different activities designed for **youth ages 5-11 and their caregivers**.

Complete each component in the series to earn a button. Complete all activities to earn a special prize.

**Each component includes:**

- Introductory lessons
- Discussion questions
- Space for kids to sketch, draw or write out their thoughts and responses
- Tables and charts for kids to complete with family or friends
- Tips and pointers

Activities include:

**LEAVE NO TRACE**

**FIRST AID**

**NATURE MINDFULNESS**

**OUTDOOR YOGA**

**RECYCLING & COMPOSTING**

**DECOMPOSITION COMPETITION**

**ANIMAL CAMOUFLAGE**

**SHELTER BUILDING**

**All finished?**

You can e-mail or mail a form to Venture Outdoors so your child can receive buttons for each activity and a special prize for completing all eight!

**Want to continue the learning?**

Using your phone, scan the QR code (right) or visit [ventureoutdoors.org/virtual-outdoor-experiences/](http://ventureoutdoors.org/virtual-outdoor-experiences/) and select “Explorer Button series” for additional resources and links.
Activity 1: Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace (LNT) is an outdoor ethics code that informs people of potential impacts to keep in mind when going outdoors. The principles can be adapted to any outdoor experience—recreation, commuting, walking, and more!

Use the word box below to fill in the blanks to reveal the 7 Leave No Trace Principles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>trash</th>
<th>find</th>
<th>know</th>
<th>wildlife</th>
<th>careful</th>
<th>kind</th>
<th>right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. _____________ Before You Go
2. Choose the _____________ Path
3. Trash Your _____________
4. Leave What You _____________
5. Be _____________ with Fire
6. Respect _____________
7. Be _____________ to Other Visitors

Draw or write out: What do you think are some examples of these principles?
Activity 1: Leave No Trace

A closer look at the 7 Leave No Trace Principles used to help us minimize our impact when we spend time outside.

1. **Know Before You Go**
   Prepare for the weather, bring/wear the right equipment, tell others where you’re going.

2. **Choose the Right Path**
   Stay on the trails to keep the rest of nature as natural as possible.

3. **Trash Your Trash**
   If you take anything outside with you (food, tissues, etc.) throw it away in a trash can!

4. **Leave What You Find**
   Leave flowers, rocks, sticks, and other pieces of nature where they are.

5. **Be Careful with Fire**
   Build fires on solid ground, in designated fire areas, with no leaves or other flammable material around.

6. **Respect Wildlife**
   Rule of Thumb: You’re at a safe distance if you can cover the entire animal with your thumb.

7. **Be Kind to Other Visitors**
   Be respectful, quiet, and courteous to other people on the trail.

---

**Did you know?**
Nine out of every 10 people in the outdoors are unaware of how they are impacting the environment.

**How can you help others become more aware?**
Activity 1: Leave No Trace

The Layering Game

Group size: 4-12   Age Group: 2nd-5th Grade   Activity Time: 10-15 minutes

Developmental Goal: Teamwork, communication, proper outdoor gear

Equipment Needed: One large assortment of appropriate and inappropriate clothing. There should at least two pairs of socks, base layers, shirts, shells, hats, gloves, anything you might wear outside

Before you Start: Place the clothes in a large pile about 20 yards away. Split the group into two teams behind a designated starting line.

How to Play:
- Each team will pick a model (who will also be the team leader), and then the rest will be runners.
- Line up one runner from each time to race out to the pile.
- When they race to the pile, they have to root through to find the specific article of clothing they were assigned. There are multiples of each article, they should pick the one that’s best suited for going into the outdoors in the Autumn.

Example: Joe & Jen line up to race first, and they are told to bring back a pair of socks for the team. 3….2….1 GO! and they take off to the pile. When they get there they have to find the pairs of socks, and bring back 1 pair. There will be low and high cotton and wool socks in the pile. They bring back whatever they think is best.

Race for: Socks, pants, shirts, jacket, hats; or race for different seasons or activities.

Replacement round: If you have extra kids, you can send them out again to get an item to replace their existing item. i.e. round 7 is sock replacement, if you’re not happy with the socks your team has you can run out, drop what you already had, and then find a replacement. The other team can steal what you drop when you drop it. Keep going until everyone has except the model/team leader.
- Once the rounds are complete, the models will have to put on all the clothes.
- When the models are dressed, the game is over.
- Talk through each layer and what should be worn outside.
Odds are, we are all going to witness an emergency in your life. It is important to feel comfortable with first aid, so when a situation does arise, you know how to react calmly.

**Directions:** Write a phrase or draw a picture that represents each step in the "Oh, Snap!" 5-step process that will help you react to an emergency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I'm #1 - Before approaching a person who might be hurt, assess the scene to make sure nothing is there that can hurt you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What happened to you? While you're assessing the scene, try to look for clues as to what happened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Don't get it on me! Put on your gloves before you get any closer! You should not ever touch blood or other bodily fluids with your bare hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Are there any more? Check to make sure you notice if there are any other victims that you should be aware of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>What's the vibe? Determine what the severity of the situation is. Will you have to ask someone to call 9-1-1? Is the person conscious?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 2: First Aid

Write either True or False (T/F)

This is how you should act if an incident (or an emergency) occurs.

_______ If an emergency occurs, I should respond to it on a gut level.

_______ It is important for me to stay calm when something happens.

_______ In the event of an incident or emergency, I should focus only on the victim and not worry about anyone else.

S.T.O.P. for any situation:

S.T.O.P is an acronym that helps us remember how to respond to an incident.

What does stop stand for?

_________: Stop and assess the situation. Is there any chance of injury? Is anyone else in danger?

_________: Consider the likelihood of the situation becoming worse and potential options to alleviate the situation. Do you need other resources, like an ambulance? Stay calm to keep your thoughts clear.

_________: Pay attention to scene safety and possible sources of other injury. Are you safe? Is the environment safe? What is the weather?

_________: Decide how to move forward. What are the immediate needs of the group? Will you call the ambulance?
Activity 2: First Aid

**Directions:** Act out, write out, or draw how you would react to each of the scene safety scenarios below.

You and your family are going for a stroll in a park near your house. You hear a person shout from behind you. You turn around and see that they are at the bottom of a hillside. **What do you do next?**

You and your cousin are biking along a trail in your neighborhood. You see something from far away - as you get closer, you realize there is a person lying on the side of the trail, grabbing their leg, with a bike next to them. **What do you do next?**

You are playing outside during recess and your friend runs up to you, saying he thinks he was stung by a bee. His face looks red and swollen. **What do you do next?**
**Activity 3: Nature Mindfulness**

**Mindfulness** is noticing what is happening in the present moment. It is a technique that involves making a special effort to help connect your body and mind to your surroundings. Practicing mindfulness can help you become more aware, feel calmer, and be kinder to yourself and those around you.

**Draw or write:** What do you do to calm yourself down?

**Draw or write:** What does being mindful of others mean?

**Draw or write:** When we feel angry, what does our body look like?
Activity 3: Nature Mindfulness

**Practicing Mindfulness**

- **Location:** Anywhere
- **Age Group:** All ages
- **Activity Time:** 2-20 minutes

**Sitting/Laying Option**

**Directions:** As you listen out your window or on a park bench, give these instructions in a low, gentle voice, always phrasing as an invitation and not as a demand:

- As you sit in a chair or lay on the ground, I invite you to notice how your body feels.
- Pay attention to how your legs, feet, and arms feel as you sit still.
- If you are sitting, feel the contact of your body against the chair. If you are lying, feel the contact of your body against the ground.
- If you become lost in thought as you continue to be still, use the next step as an opportunity to regain focus.
- Using your sense of sight, look around and notice every detail.
- Use your sense of smell and notice any scents.
- Using your sense of touch, notice the solidity of the ground or chair.
- With openness and curiosity, notice any sensations, thoughts, and feelings that arise, without lingering on anything in particular.

**Walking Option**

**Directions:** As you walk slowly, give these instructions in a low, gentle voice, always phrasing as an invitation and not a demand:

- As you walk, I invite you to notice how your body feels.
- Pay attention to how your legs, feet and arms feel as you move.
- Feel the contact of your foot as it touches the ground, and the movement of your body as you move into the next step.
- If you become lost in thought as you continue to walk, use the next step as an opportunity to regain focus.
- Using your sense of sight, look around and try to notice every detail.
- Use your sense of smell and notice any scents.
- Using your sense of touch, notice the solidity of the earth beneath your feet.
- With openness and curiosity, notice any sensations, thoughts and feelings that arise, without lingering on anything in particular.
Activity 4: Outdoor Yoga

Yoga Poses

Expand on mindfulness with nature by practicing yoga! Yoga and mindfulness help create a deeper connection between the mind and body. Yoga encourages you to pay attention to your breathe and bodily sensations.

Tree (Tree Pose)
Stand on one leg, bend your opposite knee, place the sole of your foot on your inner thigh, and balance. Sway like a tree in the breeze.

Bird (Warrior 3 Pose)
Stand on one leg. Extend the other leg behind you. Bend your torso forward and take your arms out in front of you to pretend that you are flapping your wings like a bird.

Use this space to make your own yoga nature pose!

Flower (Flower Pose)
Come to sit on your buttocks with a tall spine, lift your legs, balance on your sitting bones, touch the soles of your feet together, and weave your arms under your legs. Pretend to blossom like a flower.

Butterfly (Cobbler’s Pose)
Sit on your buttocks with a tall spine, bend your legs, place the soles of your feet together, and gently flap your legs like the wings of a butterfly.
Activity 4: Outdoor Yoga

Yoga Poses (Continued)

Relaxing in the Park (Corpse Pose)
Lie on your back with your arms and legs stretched out. Breathe and rest. Close your eyes and imagine the sights and sounds in the park.

Sun (Sun Salutation)
Stand tall, look up, reach your arms up to the sky, and place your palms together.

Rain (Forward Fold)
From Sun Pose, bend your upper body, reach for your toes, and hang your arms like the falling rain.

Bee (Hero Pose)
Come back to rest upright on your heels, buzz with your arms, and practice a humming breath.

Planting a Garden (Squat Pose)
Come down to a squat and pretend to plant seeds in the garden.

In 3 words: how does doing yoga make you feel?
Activity 5: Recycling & Composting

Every day, the average American produces almost 5 pounds of trash, almost 2,000 pounds of trash a year. Some of that trash can be disposed of in other ways. **Directions:** Draw a picture or write an example for each of these ways in the boxes below.

**REDUCE**
Use only what you need and try pick objects that have the least amount of packaging.

**REUSE**
Use objects that you can use more than once. For example, use a water bottle that you can refill.

**RECYCLE**
Some objects, like metals and glass, can be used to make new objects. For example, glass can be melted and formed into new objects.

**COMPOSTING**
is when we recycle organic materials (used to be alive) to create soil for our gardens.

Where do you think garbage goes?
### Activity 5: Recycling & Composting

**Environmental Lunch Log Worksheet**

**Directions:** Work together as a family to determine which parts of a meal or in your trash can be composted, recycled or reused. Or if you can find replacements!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reuse</th>
<th>Recycle</th>
<th>Compost</th>
<th>Landfill</th>
<th>Could Replace With</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banana peel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole orange</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juice box</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reusable bottle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This activity was "reused" from the "Do the Rot Thing" teacher guide, 1997.*
## Activity 6: Decomposition Competition

**Directions:** Use the word bank below to estimate the decomposition rates (how fast something will break down) for each of the items. **Answer Key on page 22.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Time to Decompose</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Time to Decompose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple core</td>
<td>2-5 weeks</td>
<td>Wolf sock</td>
<td>450 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>2-5 weeks</td>
<td>Computer or cell phone</td>
<td>1 million years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin can</td>
<td>2-5 weeks</td>
<td>Glass bottle</td>
<td>2 million years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Coffee grinds</td>
<td>A few months to a few geologic eras!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork chop</td>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>Water bottle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2-5 weeks | 2-5 weeks | 2-5 weeks | 6 months | 1 Year | 50 years | 450 years | 1 million years | 2 million years | A few months to a few geologic eras!
Activity 6: Decomposition Competition

**Stewardship Clean Up Activity**

**OBJECTIVES:** Kids will understand decomposition and the importance of keeping our planet clean.

**LOCATION:** Backyard, neighborhood, park

**TIME:** 45-60 minutes

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** trash bags, gloves, hand sanitizer, safety vests (optional)

**SAFETY POINTERS:** Kids should not pick up sharp objects or anything they can’t identify - instead inform an adult. Avoid going into the street or onto private property to pick up trash.

**ACTIVITY OUTLINE**

1. **Introduction:** Discuss: What is decomposition? How does that relate to why we should recycle/compost? **Explain:** Manmade objects take much longer to decompose than things from nature.

2. **Stewardship Hike.** Go outside in gloves and vests to pick up some trash around your site. **Tip:** Split into teams and make it a competition of who can pick up the most!

3. **Decomposition Competition.** Ask kids to guess how long what they just picked up takes to decompose. Split into teams and use decomposition cards to match decomposition rates to objects.

4. **Discuss.** Look up decomposition rates you don’t know - some results can be shocking! **Ask:** If we didn’t pick up this trash today, how long would it have stayed on the ground?

**LOCATIONS YOU HELPED CLEAN:** _____________________________

**TRASH COLLECTED:** _____________________________ pounds
Activity 7: Animal Camouflage

When walking through your neighborhood, you pass by many animals without even seeing them. Some are hiding, but some are in plain sight. The critters in plain sight are using camouflage to hide their locations. Learn about how animals use different types of camouflage and motion to protect themselves.

**Directions:** Match the type of camouflage with the correct description. 
*Answer Key on Page 23.*

- **MIMICRY**
  - Spots and stripes on an animal make it more confusing for predators to see *(ex: a tiger)*
  - Animal has traits that look like other, more dangerous animals *(ex: a monarch butterfly)*

- **PATTERNS**
  - An animal that can change its color or shape *(ex: an octopus)*

- **COUNTERSHADING**
  - Contrasting colors on opposite sides of the animal *(ex: a Great White Shark)*

- **BACKGROUND COLORATION**
  - An animal that is colored to blend in with its environment *(ex: a polar bear)*

**Draw** or write about examples of animals or insects that use camouflage for protection.
### Activity 7: Animal Camouflage

**Species Identification (ID) Hike**

**Directions:** In your backyard or on a stroll around your neighborhood, see how many species of animals, birds and insects you can find!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal (Species)</th>
<th>Sketch</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Camouflage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Robbin (Bird)    | ![Sketch](image) | - Light brown belly  
                  - hopped on ground  
                  - caught worms  | YES  
                  Countersharding | 3     |
Activity 8: Shelter Building

What if you were out camping in the woods and your shelter broke? Knowing what to do in life-threatening situations can give you the peace of mind. Building a shelter can protect you from the sun, insects, and weather conditions.

Use the word "B-L-I-S-S" to remember the basics of building a good shelter outside:

- LEND IN
- OW TO THE GROUND
- NSULATED (to keep you warm)
- (nothing falls apart when you go inside)
- ECURE (should withstand rain and wind)

**Rule of 3:** You can survive without shelter for 3 hours (in a harsh environment), water for 3 days, and food for 3 weeks. **Shelter is your #1 priority in the outdoors!**

List **five materials** you might find outside that you can use to build your shelter:

1) ____________________________________________
2) ____________________________________________
3) ____________________________________________
4) ____________________________________________
5) ____________________________________________

How can we practice **Leave No Trace** when we build a shelter?
Activity 8: Shelter Building

Build an Outdoor Shelter

OBJECTIVES: Learn the importance of water, food, and shelter for survival. Learn to tie knots and use them to build shelter.

TIME: 45-90 minutes

LOCATION: Backyard, neighborhood, or park

MATERIALS NEEDED: Various building materials (tarp, rope, bandanas, sticks), rope for knot-tying, water in a cup/bottle

SAFETY POINTERS: Be aware of LNT Principle #2 and ask students to build shelters on durable surfaces (no flower beds, etc.)

ACTIVITY OUTLINE

1. **Introduce today's activity.** Remember the "Rule of 3" - shelter is your #1 priority in the outdoors!

2. **Learn Basic Knot-Tying (optional),** using a piece of rope, a stick, and a book or videos to learn the basics.

3. **Learn BLISS.** Shelters should Blend in, be Low to the ground, be Insulated, Safe, and Secure. Explain you'll be testing these shelters by pouring water ("rain") on them and fanning them ("wind storm")!

4. **Build Shelters** using BLISS and knot-tying skills. Once shelters are built, take a full-group "tour" around to each shelter and test out their durability in a "storm!" by using a water bottle to pour water and fanning paper or an object to create wind.

Sketch your outdoor shelter:
Prize Submission Form

You’re an outdoor expert!

Earn a button for each activity completed; complete all activities to earn a special prize. Buttons and prizes will be mailed to participants.

Have an adult complete this page and email it to kelly@ventureoutdoors.org or mail to:

Venture Outdoors
Attn: Kelly Sarkis
33 Terminal Way, #537A
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Activities

Mark an “x” next to each one completed

_____ Leave No Trace  _____ Recycling & Composting
_____ First Aid  _____ Decomposition Competition
_____ Nature Mindfulness  _____ Animal Camouflage
_____ Outdoor Yoga  _____ Shelter Building

Participant's Name: _________________________________________________________
Street Address: _____________________________________________________________
City: _____________________________________________________________________
State & ZIP: _____________________________________________________________________
Phone Number: ____________________________________________________________
Adult Signature: ____________________________________________________________

Please contact kelly@ventureoutdoors.org for more information.
Activity 2: First Aid

ANSWER KEY

Write either True or False (T/F)
This is how you should act if an incident (or an emergency) occurs.

___False____ If an emergency occurs, I should respond to it on a gut level.

___True____ It is important for me to stay calm when something happens.

___False____ In the event of an incident or emergency, I should focus only on the victim and not worry about anyone else.

S.T.O.P. for any situation:

S.T.O.P is an acronym that helps us remember how to respond to an incident.

What does stop stand for?

_____S_____: Stop and assess the situation. Is there any chance of injury? Is anyone else in danger?

_____T_____: Consider the likelihood of the situation becoming worse and potential options to alleviate the situation. Do you need other resources, like an ambulance? Stay calm to keep your thoughts clear.

_____O_____: Pay attention to scene safety and possible sources of other injury. Are you safe? Is the environment safe? What is the weather?

_____P_____: Decide how to move forward. What are the immediate needs of the group? Will you call the ambulance?
### Activity 5: Decomposition Competition

**ANSWER KEY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Time to Decompose</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Time to Decompose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple core</td>
<td>2-5 wks</td>
<td>Wool sock</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>A few months to a few geologic eras!</td>
<td>Computer or cell phone</td>
<td>2 million years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin can</td>
<td>50 years</td>
<td>Glass bottle</td>
<td>1 million years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>2-5 wks</td>
<td>Coffee grinds</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork chop</td>
<td>2-5 wks</td>
<td>Water bottle</td>
<td>450 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 6: Animal Camouflage

**ANSWER KEY**

**Directions:** Match the type of camouflage with the correct description. 
*Answer Key on Page 22.*

**MIMCRY**
- Spots and stripes on an animal make it more confusing for predators to see *(ex: a tiger)*
- Animal has traits that look like other, more dangerous animals *(ex: a monarch butterfly)*

**PATTERNS**
- An animal that can change its color or shape *(ex: an octopus)*
- Contrasting colors on opposite sides of the animal *(ex: a Great White Shark)*

**COUNTERSHADING**
- An animal that is colored to blend in with its environment *(ex: a polar bear)*

**DRAW or write about examples of animals or insects that use camouflage for protection**