

YOUTH EXPLORER BUTTON SERIES

Name

School



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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/ 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.

trash find know wildlife careful kind right

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 be 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 team 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.

Activity 2: First Aid

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.

<p>1</p> <p>I'm #1 - Before approaching a person who might be hurt, assess the scene to make sure nothing is there that can hurt you.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>What happened to you? While you're assessing the scene, try to look for clues as to what happened.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Are there any more? Check to make sure you notice if there are any other victims that you should be aware of.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>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?</p>	

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.



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.

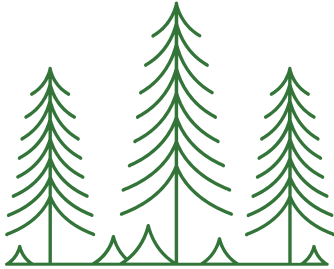
Activity 4: Outdoor Yoga

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.



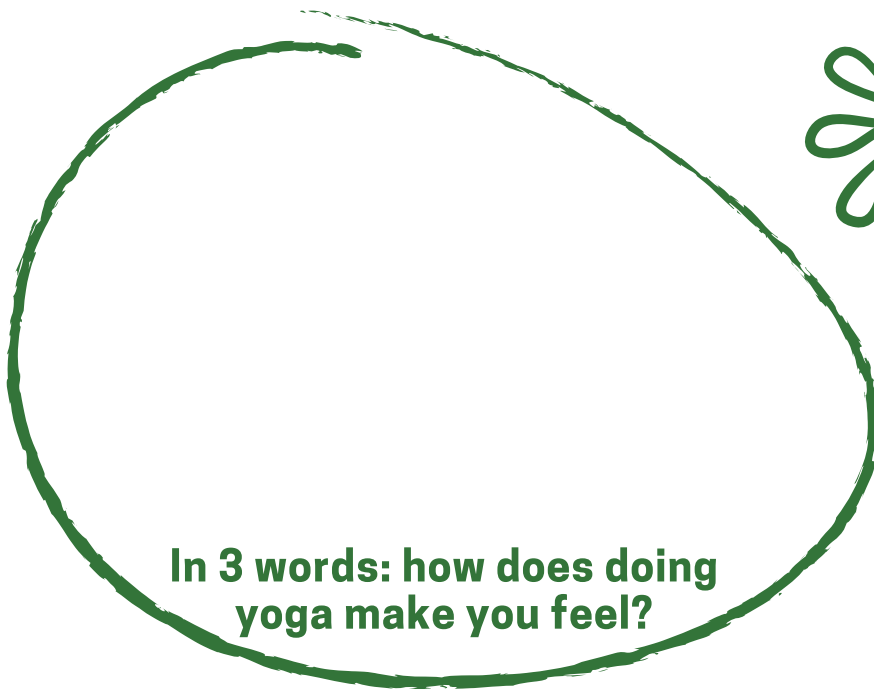
Bee (Hero Pose)

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?

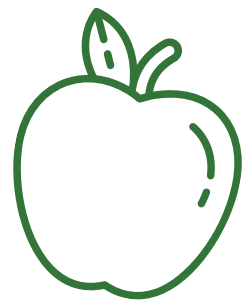
Activity 5: Recycling & Composting

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.

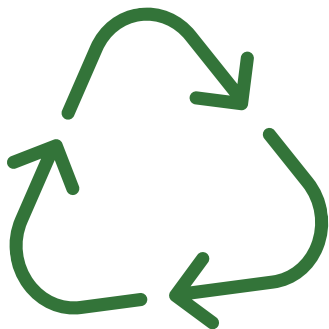


COMPOSTING

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

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.



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

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.*

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!

Item	Time to Decompose	Item	Time to Decompose
 Apple core		Wool sock 	
 Bone		 Computer or cell phone	
Tin can 		Glass bottle 	
 News-paper		 Coffee grinds	
Pork chop 		Water bottle 	

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.



MIMCRY

PATTERNS

COUNTERSHADING

**BACKGROUND
COLORATION**

DYNAMIC

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)**

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)**


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!

Animal	Sketch	Notes	Camouflage	Count
Robin (Bird)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Light brown belly- hopped on ground- caught worms	YES Counter- shading	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:

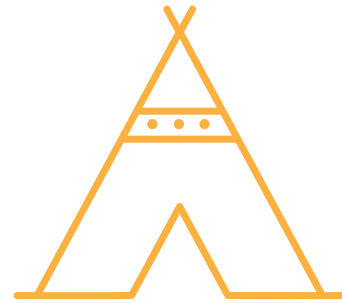
..... **LEND IN**

..... **OW TO THE GROUND**

..... **NSULATED** (to keep you warm)

..... **AFF** (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 **B**lend in, be **L**ow to the ground, be **I**nsulated, **S**afe, and **S**ecure. 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.



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

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!

Item	Time to Decompose	Item	Time to Decompose
 Apple core	2-5 wks	Wool sock 	1 year
 Bone	A few months to a few geologic eras!	 Computer or cell phone	2 million years
Tin can 	50 years	Glass bottle 	1 million years
 News-paper	2-5 wks	 Coffee grinds	6 months
Pork chop 	2-5 wks	Water bottle 	450 years

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)**

PATTERNS

Animal has traits that look like other, more dangerous animals **(ex: a monarch butterfly)**

COUNTERSHADING

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

BACKGROUND COLORATION

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

DYNAMIC

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