

CHILD in the WILD

Wilderness Survival Skills

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Teacher's Guide

Winter Program: Child in the Wild

Grade Level: Fourth – Eighth Grade

Program Length: 1 hour

INTRODUCTION

What basic information and skills are necessary to survive in the wilderness? How do you build a secure, safe shelter? Is there a better way to make a fire than another? What plants are edible and which ones can be used for medicinal purposes? Why is water such a crucial piece of understanding how to survive in the wild? All these questions about wilderness survival are answered with this winter in-school program. As well, students are shown what to include in a survival pack for backcountry hiking and introduced to other important aspects of understanding survival knowledge and skills.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the basics of surviving in the wilderness, if by choice or by accident.
2. To develop knowledge and skills enabling students to build a simple debris hut, to stack a tepee fire, to purify collected water, and to search for food sources in the most efficient way.
3. To strengthen students' appreciation for the natural world and to help them understand relationships in the natural environment.
4. To identify wild edibles in the plant world throughout the four seasons in our native Illinois ecosystems.

THIS PROGRAM HAS THE POTENTIAL TO MEET THE FOLLOWING ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS:

Learning Area	Goal	Standard	Benchmark
Language Arts	4	A	2a, 2b, 3a, 3b
		B	2b
Science	12	A	2a, 2b, 3c
		B	2a, 2b, 3a, 3b
	13	A	2a, 3a

		B	2d, 2f, 3e
Social Sciences	16	E	2a, 3a

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREVISIT ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to brainstorm a list of what they would feel they would need to survive if found in the wilderness alone. Be specific with respect to bioregion of the world and season of the year.
2. Use the list generated with the activity above to begin research on different survival needs in different regions of the world. Generate a discussion if basic survival needs change if lost in different wilderness regions of the world, desert vs. mountains vs., jungle, vs. woods, etc.
3. Read any of the books suggested in the Resource List of the Teacher's Guide and discuss in small groups.

DESCRIPTION OF LINCOLN MEMORIAL GARDEN PROGRAM

Basic survival skills needed in the wilderness are introduced through lecture, discussion, and hands-on activities. The "big four" needs – shelter, water, fire and food are introduced to students in order of survival requirements. Seasonal wild edibles and medicinal plants are included in the presentation. If outdoor space is available, a debris hut of sticks and leaves can be constructed and fire starting techniques demonstrated. Activities to help students understand the importance of "lostproofing" when hiking in natural areas can be organized with access to the outdoor environment.

SUGGESTIONS FOR POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

1. Ask each student to write an essay detailing what the most important aspects to remember **wherever** one might be lost when considering survival skills. Encourage students to remember physical and emotional needs and the ways to address the needs. This is an important lifelong learning that can carry far beyond an intermediate grade school classroom lesson.
2. Create posters or dioramas integrating all that they have learned about wilderness survival skills after choosing a specific geographic region of the world. Encourage artistic enhancements, specifically

- when considering what type of shelter to build, as well as, the terrain of the bioregion.
3. Write a short story using the model of one of the fictional literary works included to weave accurate survival skills and knowledge into an entertaining and exciting adventure.
 4. Create a meal of wild foods to share in the class. Use one of the wild edible guides included in the Resource List for food and drink ideas according to the seasonal availability. (In spring, think greens. In fall, think nuts and berries.)
 5. Schedule a field trip or an overnight camping trip in a natural area with the class so they can practice their new survival skills and apply their newly acquired knowledge about wilderness survival.
 6. Have students create a survival pack that they could use when and if they go hiking in a remote natural area.

RESOURCE LIST FOR CHILD in the WILD: Wilderness Survival Skills

Brown, Jr., Tom. *Tom Brown's Field Guide to Nature and Survival for Children*. Berkley Publishing Group. 1989

Brown, Jr., Tom. *Tom Brown's Science and Art of Tracking*. Berkley Publishing Group. 1999

Duffy, Kevin F. *Harvesting Nature's Bounty: A Guidebook of Wild Edible, Medicinal, and Utilitarian Plants, Survival and Nature Lore*. Airleaf Publications. 2004, 2008

Elbroch, Mark and Pewtherer, Mike. *Wilderness Survival: Living Off the Land With the Clothes on Your Back and the Knife in Your Belt*. Ragged Mountain Press. 2006

Gibbons, Diane and Elbroch, Mark. *Stories in Tracks and Sign: Reading the Clues That Animals Leave Behind*. 2008

Granum, Hal. *The Great Eagle Spirit*. Publish America, Inc. 2006

O'Dell, Scott. *The Island of the Blue Dolphins*. Yearling: Random House, Inc. 1960

O'Dell, Scott. *Zia*. Dell Laurel-Leaf: Random House, Inc. 1976

Olsen, Larry Dean. *Outdoor Survival Skills*. Chicago Review Press, Inc. 1967, 1997

Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet*. Scholastic Books. 1987

Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet: 20th Anniversary Edition*. Simon and Schuster Books, 1987, 2007

Paulsen, Gary. *The River*. Dell Yearling: Random House, Inc. 1991

Paulsen, Gary. *Brian's Winter*. Doubleday Dell: Random House, Inc. 1996

Paulsen, Gary. *Brian's Return*. Dell Laurel-Leaf: Random House, Inc. 1999

Rezendes, Paul. *Tracking: The Art of Seeing*. HarperCollins. 1999