

Evening Activities

A Note about Activities

Many of the activities in this section were adapted from *The Nature Specialist: A Complete Guide to Program and Activities* written by Lenore Hendler Miller published by the American Camp Association (ACA) in 1996. This book is available from the ACA Bookstore by calling 800/428-CAMP. There are a number of games in *All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders (Classic Edition)* published by Group Publishing (ISBN 0-7644-2020-8) would be appropriate for evening activities as well. These include: Pass the Bean, page 23; Amoebae Crawl, page 37; Clay Creations, page 58; Instant Family, page 62; Miracle at Midnight, page 66; Four Corners (of the Earth) Shuffle, page 78; Night Crawlers, page 82; Pumpkin Olympics, page 86; and Group Impressions (see the variation on insects, page 100).

Day One: Garden Earth

Post-a-Quote

Have cabin groups prepare a sign to hang in their cabin using the quotation by Stevenson. Have them decorate the poster using glue and things they find in nature: leaves, small rocks, and/or wild flowers. These may be things they actually go find on the campsite, things they create using scissors and colored paper, or things they cut out of magazines.

We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil; all committed for our safety to its security and peace; preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work and the love we give our fragile craft. —Adlai Stevenson

It's a Small(er) World

To help campers get to know one another and to demonstrate what technology and population growth have done to our “garden earth,” provide each cabin group (or create small groups of 6—8) with three (cardboard circles with 36”, 24”, and 12” diameters (approximate — make smaller with smaller groups). Have them draw the world on each one and color the landmasses, oceans, and poles in the appropriate colors. After all groups have completed the coloring, have the groups stand on the 36” circle and explain that thousands of years ago there were many more natural resources than people, but as population grew there became fewer resources for people.

Challenge the groups to now stand on the 24” circle with no body parts touching outside the circle for a count of five. Repeat again emphasizing the continued use of natural resources. Afterward, have the groups discuss how they managed to accomplish the task and compare this with things they could do to help take care of God’s earth in their life.

Hang ‘Em Out to Dry (flowers, that is!)

Note: This activity will need to be adapted to your camp’s specific environment. High humidity will slow the drying time and perhaps not make it possible to complete at camp. Larger flowers will also slow the process, Take these things into consideration before including this event in your camp’s activities.

Have campers pick small, wildflowers from an undeveloped area of the campgrounds. Hang the flowers upside down on a string or wire you have hung, in the sun if possible, using clothespins

or paper clips. Allow four to five days to dry. The flowers may be used for an activity on Day Five or they can be sent home in airtight plastic bags.

Can't See the Forest for the Trees

Note: This activity may be adapted to your camp's specific environment by using some other natural-occurring object such as flowers or rocks.

Select a cleared out wooded area. Pair up campers. Have one camper blindfold the other. The sighted camper selects a tree and leads the other camper to it. The blindfolded camper examines the tree in any way they can (touch, taste, and smell). When finished, they are taken back to the starting point by a different route. The blindfold is removed and the camper attempts to find his or her tree. Reverse roles and repeat.

Create-a-World

The object is to create a balanced aquarium where the elements — plants as producers, fish as consumers, and a snail as a scavenger— carry out their life processes in the presence of sunlight for photosynthesis. Gases are exchanged and food is produced within the miniature world. With nothing coming in or out, just as on our planet, the balanced aquarium serves as a model of the balances of life on earth.

Materials: One-gallon, wide-mouth glass jar with lid; small amount of sandy soil or 1/4-inch aquarium gravel; pond water; four to six water plants; one snail; two small fish (less than one-inch long), plastic wrap

Procedure: Put the soil or gravel in the bottom of the jar; push the plant roots into it; fill with pond water to within two inches of the top of the jar; let sit for three to four days to allow for settling; add the snail and fish; place plastic wrap over jar and screw on lid; put the jar in good light (not direct sunlight).

When You Take Care of the Child...

To close out activities, demonstrate the phrase, "When you take care of the child, the world will take care of itself" by taking one of the circles from the It's a Small(er) World activity and drawing a child on the back. Then cut it into simple puzzle pieces.

Get everyone's attention and say the phrase slowly, then demonstrate by taping the pieces of the puzzle together with the child image facing the campers. Turn the picture around showing the world put together as well.

More Ideas for Day One, Two or...

Find a local potter and have them demonstrate that it takes clay and water together to make a creation.

If it is customary to have a dance (*not recommended for younger campers*), have a barn dance or garden party (outside). Decorate with as many natural items as you can. Serve fresh vegetables or edible flowers as a part of the refreshments.

To become more aware of caring for the earth, one evening (or one entire day) could be devoted to a service project in a city or town near the camp. If possible, transport campers to an area that needs to have trash picked up or to help at a recycling center.

To become aware of the scope of creation, consider taking the camp to a botanical garden or nature center. This could be an evening or full-day event.

Day Two: Earth Web

Post-a-Quote

Have cabin groups prepare a sign to hang in their cabin using the quotation by Chief Seattle. Have them decorate the poster using glue and things they find in nature: leaves, small rocks, and/or wildflowers. These may be things they actually go find on the campsite, things they create using scissors and colored paper, or things they cut out of magazines.

Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons and daughters of the earth. Humans did not weave the web of life; we are merely strands in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

— Chief Seattle, 1854 (adapted)

Oh, the Web We Weave

This activity emphasizes interconnections and interdependence.

Materials: Multiple sets of 10—12 index cards, enough for each person with the name of some aspect of the environment (air, soil, water, sun, trees, specific plants, fungi, bacteria, animals, food plants, insects, birds, bees, carnivores, herbivores, etc.). For younger campers consider providing some sort of explanation for its connection with the rest of the environment (sun: provides light so plants can make food; provides heat.).

Have campers get into groups of 10 to 12 persons and form circles. Hand out cards to each camper. Each camper reads aloud what is on the card and puts it down. Campers are then to grasp the hand of another person in the circle who is related in some way to what was on their card. This includes really everything you could think of, but encourage campers to explain how they are connected. Proceed around the circle twice in this manner until all campers are grasping the hands of two other people. Then untangle the web without letting go of the other hands.

Hunt for Web, Rock, Toad, or...

Form groups. If campers are younger, assign one male and one female counselor to each group. Campers will have a certain amount of time to collect as many items as possible on the following list. They are to return to the starting point at the agreed time with the winning team determined by the person in charge of the activity. All animals are to be ALIVE, NOTHING is to be damaged. Adapt to the local environment as necessary.

1. Apple (from a tree)
2. Bird feather
3. Empty bird's nest
4. Berries
5. Clamshell
6. Grasshopper
13. Moss
14. Moth cocoon
15. Moth or butterfly
16. Mushroom
17. Red elf salamander
18. Seeds from three different plants

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| 7. Earthworm | 19. Spider |
| 8. Evergreen cone | 20. Tree leaves |
| 9. Fern | 21. Something smooth |
| 10. Flower | 22. Something bumpy or rough |
| 11. Lichen | 23. Rock |
| 12. Milkweed pod | 24. Toad |

Weave Me Alone (Nature Weaving)

Materials: 8" by 8" piece of corrugated cardboard for each participant; yarn or cord; rulers; scissors; natural plant material such as grasses, flowers, reeds, twigs.

Measure and mark off one-half inch on top and bottom of each cardboard piece. Using scissors make slits at the marks. String up and down the columns, catching the yarn or cord in the slits. Weave in and out, first with the yarn or cord and then incorporating the natural materials. When completed, tie and remove from the cardboard, Use twigs to suspend the weaving as a wall hanging.

Day Three: Earth Watch

Post-a-Quote

Have cabin groups prepare a sign to hang in their cabin using the quotation from Revelations. Have them decorate the poster using glue and things they find in nature: leaves, small rocks, and/or wildflowers. These may be things they actually go find on the campsite, things they create using scissors and colored paper, or things they cutout of magazines.

Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees. .—Revelation 7:3

Whoops, There Goes Another Rubbing Tree

This activity is designed to help campers be aware of the texture of tree bark through art,

Materials: newsprint; thick crayons with paper removed; masking tape, poster board frames (or make them from poster board).

Tape paper to tree bark. Rub with crayon until pattern appears. Identify the type of tree, if desired. Mount the paper in a poster board frame.

Micro Hikes

To gain the perspective of an ant's view of the world, have campers participate in this activity by crawling along a 10-to 20-foot string (length dependent on camper age) from a central point in teams of two, one on each side of the string. Using craft sticks, twigs, or some other marking device, have campers indicate interesting finds along the way. Have them get into groups of four and share their finds, then into groups of eight (or cabin groups). Option: Have them classify what they find: living, nonliving; plant, animal, mineral; natural, processed.

Lorax to the Max

The Lorax by Dr. Seuss is a great book with an important message. Get a copy of the book and read it before camp. Plan to use this book in one of the following ways: __

1. Read it aloud with as much dramatic expression as possible
2. Have a drama class prepare it and present it to the entire group as a part of Day Three's

evening activities with campers playing roles, memorizing parts, creating and wearing costumes, and making props

3. Read it aloud; assign groups of campers to respond to certain words or names with sounds and/or actions

Enough and to Spare?

Fill a large jar with popcorn. Mark fourteen slips of paper (or same percentage for different-size class). Print “You” on two slips. Print “Your Kids” on four slips and print “Your Grandkids” on eight slips. Put slips into a sack and have campers draw a slip out. Tell them the popcorn is the world’s supply of popcorn. Have the two “You” kids come up to the popcorn jar and take as much as they want. Then invite the four “Your Kids” and have them take as much as they want. Whatever is left is divided among the eight “Grandkids.” Was there any left? Discuss what happened to the popcorn supply when it wasn’t renewed (continued to be harvested and grown). How is that like using up the rainforest, certain plants, and other things in nature? We will only have enough and to spare if we are good stewards.

Day Four: earth Quake

Post-a-Quote

Have cabin groups prepare a sign to hang in their cabin using the quotation from Kuan-Tsu. Have them decorate the poster using glue and things they find in nature: leaves, small rocks, and/or wildflowers. These may be things they actually, go find on the campsite, things they create using scissors and colored paper, or things they cut out of magazines.

If you think one year ahead, plant a seed. If you think 10 years ahead, plant a tree. If you think ahead 100 years, educate the people. — Kuan-Tsu, 3rd century B.C.E.

Rock Creation

Begin this evening’s activities with a creative project while the campers gather, Have campers bring a rock with them, ask them to go out and find one when they arrive, or provide them. Set out felt, scissors, glue, moveable eyes, pipe cleaners, for campers to create some sort of creature, Peach or apricot seeds, pinecones, or other local items may be substituted for rocks.

Millennial Picnic

Materials for each cabin group: one grocery sack; an aluminum can; glass jar; an aluminum tray; small paper bag; waxed paper; plastic bag; plastic fork or spoon; Styrofoam cup; paper cup; waxed paper cup; empty plastic bag; empty tin can,

Explain to the campers that they are going on a Millennial Picnic. Any food left over from the picnic would be eaten by animals or decay in a short time. However, what is left in their sacks will be around for a long time — some of it through the next millennium. Their goal is to take all the items out of the sack and place them in correct order from what will decompose in the shortest to longest amount of time. After each group has finished, announce the best guess, based on the information provided below. Have each group come up with alternatives to what was in the sack for their next picnic. Discuss other ways to prevent such litter in the future: alternative products; recycling; etc. Finally, ask the group to validate the concept that there are three stages people go through in enjoying and using the outdoors: 1. Leave something — debris, graffiti; 2.

Take something — rocks, plants or trees; 3. Do nothing — attempt to leave it as you found it. Close with the thought that you want to leave nothing but footprints, and take nothing but pictures.

Estimates for Decomposition

Paper products-	5 years
Plastic products -	250 years
Aluminum products-	500 years
Glass products -	1,000,000 years

Garden Games

Create a night of Olympic-style games using things “out of the earth.” Here are some ideas to get started:

Water Lily Race - Have campers jump from one raft to another in the pool or lake.

Greased Watermelon Grab - Send teams after a few of these fruits!

Plant Your Crops - Have campers dig a length of ground with a sturdy stick; then plant flowers.

Seed Spitting Contest - Have campers see who can spit seeds the farthest.

Fruits & Veggies Relay - Have groups of campers see who can eat a basket of fruits/veggies first.

If the camp schedule doesn't permit these activities, videotape the contest with individuals or small groups, have them promise to keep it a secret who wins, and show the video at some other time. Stop the video before it shows who wins and ask the campers who they think will or do it as a part of the video. Then show the remainder of the video.

Day Five: Harvest Earth

Post-a-Quote

Have cabin groups prepare a sign to hang in their cabin using the quotation from Ovid. Have them decorate the poster using glue and things they find in nature: leaves, small rocks, and/or wildflowers. These may be things they actually go find on the campsite, things they create using scissors and colored paper, or things they cut out of magazines.

Nature has made neither sun nor air nor waves private property: they are public gifts. — Ovid

Dried, But Not Forgotten

Using the dried flowers from Day Ones evening activities, have the campers “harvest” the flowers by taking them off the line where they are drying and use them in one of the following art projects.

1. Frame it. Glue the flowers and other natural materials like bark to a piece of cloth or paper and put it into a pre-purchased frame. Another option is to fasten the cloth around a stick at the top and bottom and tie a piece of string or cord to the ends of the top stick to hang.

2. Shingle It. Attach the materials to a wood shingle or cedar shake, Decorate with pieces of cloth under the flowers. Attach ribbon or bow.

3. Bowl It. Using a small cube of florist's foam, attach the flowers and glue the cube in the bottom of a glass bowl. Cover the bottom of the bowl, including the cube of foam, with colored gravel.

Potpourri: Don't Bug Me

Materials: calendula flowers, ½ lb.; French lavender, ½ lb.; Uva Ursi petals, ½ lb.; powdered calamus or orris root (to hold the scent), 4 oz.; a bottle of French lavender oil; 6" squares of cloth cut with pinking shears; ribbon cut to size; small plastic spoons, paper cups.

To make a moth proofer/insect repellent sachet, measure one-fourth teaspoon of each of the first three items listed above, one-eighth teaspoon calamus root, and two drops oil. Mix in a paper cup. Place in a square of cloth, pull up the corners and tie up with a ribbon.

Environmental Charades

In groups, have the campers act out one of the environmental concepts listed below, or create their own. Give each group ten minutes to figure out how they will do it. When all groups are ready, have each group perform for the others. After they have completed their presentation, allow the others to guess the concept they were illustrating. Possible concepts:

1. harvest
2. seasons of the year
3. evolution
4. gardening
5. creation
6. floods
7. high tide/low tide

More Ideas for Day Five

With the theme "Harvest Earth," this would be a good evening to have a banquet. Have Thanksgiving in the summer! Arrange for the menu to be turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie, or whatever you have in your area to celebrate the harvest. If the camp has been videotaped, show the video after the meal and celebrate the personal harvest through sharing stories of things that have happened at camp; close with personal testimonies of how Jesus Christ has touched campers during the week.