

**SMART ANGLER FISHING PROGRAM**



**FISHING SKILLS INSTRUCTOR HANDBOOK**

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**Fishing Skills Instructor Handbook**

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## CHAPTER 1: PROGRAM INFORMATION

### The SMART Angler Program

Welcome to a fun program! After you complete this training workshop, you will be certified as a *Fishing Skills Instructor* (FSI) by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. This will enable you to teach the SMART Angler Program, the Commission's basic fishing skills and aquatic resource education program.

Where do you fit in as an FSI? You are the most important part! Children (and non-fishing adults) may have their first experience with fishing because of you. Participants will also enhance their understanding of the importance of water to fish, wildlife, bugs, and people and have fun doing!

Completion of the FSI training workshop results in certification as a FSI and the opportunity to deliver the SMART Angler Program. Through the training you will receive this manual, handout materials, a LOT of information, instruction in how people learn, and how to teach fishing.

The SMART Program has four goals:

1. To teach basic skills, equipment, techniques and the safety of freshwater fishing in Pennsylvania.
2. To develop an understanding of the state's aquatic ecosystems.
3. To foster an appreciation of the state's aquatic resources.
4. To encourage the wise use of the state's water resources.

All the participants in the fishing program focus on being "SMART" anglers, where the letters stand for:

**S**afety first,  
**M**anners are important,  
**A**ppreciate clean water,  
**R**eturn your catch, and  
**T**each others to be SMART anglers.

SMART Angler Program sessions include instruction on the types of fish found in Pennsylvania, fish habitats, safety, equipment, outdoor manners and protecting our water resources. Of course, each participant learns basic fishing skills and gets to put those skills to use!

As a certified FSI, you will receive the following benefits:

- the chance to help children and adults discover the fun of fishing and the importance of protecting our waters.
- access to "how-to" materials for conducting a successful basic fishing skills program.
- access to the Commission's audio-visual loan library and other educational resources, including fishing equipment.
- opportunity to participate in the Commission's Volunteer Incentive Program (VIP).

Also, as a certified FSI, you and/or your sponsoring organization, will have some responsibilities:

- teach at least one SMART Program every two years to maintain certification.
- you must have your own valid Pennsylvania fishing license to conduct a SMART Angler Program.
- ordering student materials and notifying the Commission of your class.
- follow-up reporting on your classes.
- obtaining fishing equipment and tackle (from PFBC).
- ensuring the safety of your students.
- following the formats and lesson plans of the SMART Angler Program.

### **FSI Support**

Instructors often have the need for assistance and support after completing the FSI training. The Commission has six regional educational specialists, Aquatic Resource Program Specialists (ARPS), to assist Fishing Skills Instructors. They should be your first point of contact regarding questions about the SMART program.

#### **Aquatic Resources Program Specialists:**

**Northwest** - 814-336-2426; FAX: 814-337-0579; Counties: Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren.

**Southwest** - 814-443-9841; FAX: 814-445-3497; Counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland.

**Northcentral** - 814-359-5193; FAX: 814-359-5153; Counties: Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Tioga and Union.

**Southcentral** - 717-705-7850; FAX: 717-705-7831; Counties: Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry and York.

**Northeast** - 570-477-2206; FAX: 570-477-3221; Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming.

**Southeast** - 717-626-9081; FAX 717-626-0486; Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia and Schuylkill.

Questions regarding materials, equipment or videos should be directed to the number and address on the front cover.

### **SMART Angler Programs: Target Audience**

*ANYONE*, especially children ages 8 to 12, interested in learning how to fish, can take part in a SMART Angler program. The program is easily adapted to fit a wide range of audiences. However, you should focus on setting up and recruiting participants for SMART programs aimed at families with children. Participation and involvement of parents is important for several reasons.

**NOTE: Participants 16 years and older are required by Pennsylvania law to possess a valid fishing license to fish and to collect bugs and other critters even during educational programs.** However, if you are working with high school and college students, they may be exempt from this requirement. Contact the Bureau of Administration in Harrisburg at 717-705-7900 for information on the Educational Field Study Permit. If you have a reoccurring need to include those 16 and older in your SMART programs, contact your regional ARPS for legal options.

### **Recipe for an Angler: Angler Education and Recruitment**

The Fish & Boat Commission wants anglers and boaters to be wise stewards of our aquatic resources, and fish and boat in a safe manner. The SMART Program is one way in which the Commission works toward that goal. In addition, it's important to consider the role angler education programs such as the SMART Program can play in bringing new anglers to the sport. This role becomes more important when considering that fishing license sales in Pennsylvania have been declining since 1990.

Many anglers concerned about the future of fishing are getting involved in youth fishing programs. They often believe that a decline in youth participation contributes to the decline in license sales. Or they see the changes that have occurred in society over the last 10 to 20 years and are concerned about the future of fishing. Perhaps that is the reason you are becoming a FSI.

Fortunately, several ingredients have been identified by researchers as necessary to "make" an angler. These ingredients combine over a person's lifetime and result in someone calling themselves an angler.

The ingredients in the "recipe" are:

- An introduction to fishing.
- Access to the equipment needed to fish.
- The knowledge and skills required to fish.
- The knowledge of where to fish, and access to that opportunity.
- The support of family and friends who fish.

Like ingredients in any recipe, these five ingredients can combine in different amounts, and result in the same product. However, if an ingredient is lacking, the final product isn't what was intended. That is, if one of the five ingredients is missing, it's very likely the person will not become an angler. Each one is necessary, but no one alone is sufficient to "make" an angler.

This point is important enough to mention again and again: No one single angler education program or experience will result in immediate payback—license sales or fishing participation. That is, participation in a SMART Program won't, by itself, result in new anglers. However, programs like the SMART program can provide a solid introduction to fishing, as well as enhancing the knowledge and skills needed to fish.

Much attention has been paid recently to the subject of fishing and boating participation, and the recruitment of new participants. A great deal of research has been conducted on this subject in the last 10 years. If this subject interests you, a visit to the

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation's (RBFF) website [www.rbff.org](http://www.rbff.org) will be worthwhile. Some of the more important points from this research are listed on the next page.

## **Important Points About Angler Education, Recruitment and Participation**

- Newcomers to an activity like fishing go through four phases:
  1. Awareness—they become aware the activity exists.
  2. Interest—they determine the activity might be suitable for them.
  3. Trial—they give it a try or a test to determine if it is actually suitable.
  4. Adoption—they become immersed in the sport, and participate regularly and become part of some social group that also participates.
- Fishing activity (the number of days fished) varies over a lifetime. Often, anglers are active as youngsters until their mid-teens, fish less or not at all in their mid-teens through early twenties, get back into the sport in the mid-twenties, reach a peak of activity from their mid-thirties to mid-fifties and then decline from the mid-sixties.
- If anglers fish as teens, they will likely fish as adults.
- In 1996 more than 43 percent of Pennsylvanian's aged 8 to 15 fished. In 1981 only 30 percent of this group fished.
- 66 percent of American anglers were introduced to fishing before age 9.
- In Michigan, anglers who fished more than 30 days each year were introduced before age 9.
- Approximately 61 percent of the adult population of Pennsylvania has fished at some time in their life.
- The majority of anglers were introduced to fishing by their parents or immediate family. They also received instruction from parents and other members of their immediate family. Others were brought into the sport by the parents and family members of friends who fished.
- When asked what they liked best about their first fishing experiences, the majority of Michigan anglers said they liked being outdoors and with nature. Catching lots of fish was less memorable and was the 10<sup>th</sup> most popular part of the experience.
- Anglers most often fish with family members or regular fishing companions. When those family members or companions aren't around anymore, fishing activity decreases.
- There are no differences between fishing activity of the children from single-parent households and those from two-parent households.
- Fishing participation is most closely related to the number of family members who fish. This information should better enable you to identify who your target audiences should be, as well as develop realistic expectations of the benefits of your efforts.

## CHAPTER 2: PLANNING AND CONDUCTING SMART ANGLER PROGRAMS

### The SMART Concept

This program uses the acronym "SMART" to help anglers remember important skills, attitudes and knowledge.

SAFETY First!

MANNERS Are Important.

APPRECIATE Clean Water.

RETURN Your Catch.

TEACH Others to be S.M.A.R.T. Anglers.

### SMART Program Format and Lesson Plans

Instructors must follow one of two formats for the SMART Program. The SMART two options for SMART Programs include; a half-day program (2½ hours), and a full-day format (6 hours). The 2½-hour format fits easily into an evening or Saturday morning time slot. The 6-hour/full-day format can be utilized as part of a summer camp for a single day, or divided among six different days.

The agenda and lesson plans for the 2½-hour program are found in Chapter 4, page 43. Chapter 5 contains the agenda and lesson plans for the 6-hour/full-day format, is found on page 61. The supplemental activities can be found in the 4-H Sportfishing Aquatic Ecology Curriculum. The Commission also makes available videos, fact sheets and brochures that will supplement your SMART programs.

### SMART Program Equipment and Materials

The Fish & Boat Commission will supply each Fishing Skills Instructor, **providing paperwork is submitted four weeks before the event**, with the following:

- Loan of spin cast rod and reels (up to 50 outfits).
- Supplemental handouts: fact sheets, posters, brochures (see the Educational Resource Catalog)
- Supplemental videos (see the Educational Resource Catalog). *For 6-hour only*
- A "SMART" packet for each participant.
- HACH test kits for dissolved oxygen and pH. *For 6-hour only*

In addition, tackle boxes (1 for 6 participants) may be available on a first-come first-served basis. Contact the Bureau of Boating and Education in Harrisburg about the availability of tackle boxes. FSIs are responsible for obtaining other equipment such as video cassette players and TVs, flip charts and other office supplies.

### SMART Packet Contents

While the specific contents of the SMART packets may change each year, listed below are examples of the items included in the 2½-hour packet.

1. White *SMART Angler* litter bag
2. Fish Pennsylvania Tackle Box Ruler
3. Golden Rule
4. Fish Parts Word Search

5. Fish IQ
6. Popular Sportfishes: how to, where to, when to
7. PA Fish Word Search
8. SMART Magnet or SMART Card
9. Supermarket Baits
10. SMART Angler fact sheet
11. PLAY (any issue)

Participants in the 6-hour/half-day program will also receive the Commission publication *Fishing: Getting Started*.

### **Site considerations**

FSIs are responsible for identifying and setting up sites for SMART programs. If you work at a camp or park, you may already have access to fishable water. If you are uncertain about the suitability of a site, or you need a site, contact your regional ARPS.

The learning process is affected by whatever surrounds the student, whether it is good or bad. As a result, a positive environment is important to learning. Several factors should be taken into consideration when selecting a SMART Program site, and preparing to teach a class. They include:

1. Time of day (best time is morning; worst is right after lunch and late in the evening).
2. Location of class (easy to find or well-known facilities are best—see below for specifics on fishing sites).
3. Class setting (lighting, acoustics, temperature, color and clutter).
4. Interruptions or distractions (noise, weather, movement of people or objects).

Ponds or small lakes should be used for SMART Programs. These waters provide a more open and safer site than moving bodies of water. Some other site considerations include:

- Accessibility. Is there enough parking? Can someone in a wheelchair access the area? Is it a far walk? Are the bathroom facilities close by?
- Do you have plenty of room for casting practice, fishing, activities, etc? Is there a place to sit down, get out of the weather?
- Is there shade available?
- Is water available for drinking and cleaning up?
- Is there an area to sit during the education (classroom) segment?
- What types of fish are in the water?
- Know the body of water. Where do the fish hide? How deep is it? Where are the weeds and snags, if any?
- Know the fishing rules and regulations of that specific water.
- Others?

### **Co-sponsors**

Having a service or educational organization co-sponsor the program is an excellent way to obtain a facility, advertising, and program support. Before committing to a facility, the instructor should visit the site to determine if it will meet the needs of the

class and provide a quality learning environment. Contact your Aquatic Resources Program Specialist (ARPS) for assistance in identifying an appropriate location.

### **Timing of SMART Programs**

When is the best time to conduct a SMART Program? The best answer to that question is anytime you can get a group together to fish. FSIs have conducted ice fishing SMART programs, trout SMART programs and mid-summer panfish SMART programs, for instance, so there are no restrictions—as long as you can assemble an audience.

There are, however, better times to conduct SMART programs. Many instructors time SMART programs to coincide with Fish-for-Free days in Pennsylvania. There are currently two days where anglers 16 and older don't need fishing licenses to fish. These days provide ideal opportunities to get non-fishing adults and non-fishing families involved. Fish-for-Free days in Pennsylvania typically fall on the first Saturday in June and on National Hunting and Fishing day in September. In addition, National Fishing and Boating Week occurs the first full week in June. Not only is this a nice time of year to be outside, but it's an opportunity to capitalize on other publicity associated with this event.

In determining the timing, both time of year and time of day, consider your target audience. Often, the specific audience you are trying to attract is available only on certain days or times. Again, knowing your audience enhances the educational value of your program.

### **Reporting System**

As a certified Fishing Skills Instructor (FSI), you are required to complete two forms. The first notifies the Commission of the classes you intend to offer and orders the necessary materials for those classes. The second is a time and activity report, used to report the time and mileage you spend on SMART programs and program attendance. These forms are found on page 13 and 15 respectively.

**You must submit the order form for SMART Program materials (page 13) at least 4 weeks before the date of your program. The Time and Activity Report form (page 15) should be submitted at least annually, by December 31 of that year. However, you may submit at the end of your program season or after each program. This form lets us track program numbers, and determine the total time FSIs spent on the program. The Time and Activity Report should be submitted to your ARPS. The order form should be mailed or faxed to Harrisburg Headquarters.**

**You must give at least one SMART Program class every two years to maintain certification as a Fishing Skills Instructor. Completed Time and Activity Report forms serve as the official record of your activities. If your certification lapses, you will be required to re-take the FSI training course to become certified to offer SMART Programs.**

### **Publicizing Your Program**

If you work at a camp, nature center or recreation department, attracting participants may not be a problem. But if you don't, then you have quite a challenge. Potential participants must become aware of the opportunity, consider whether they want

to attend, and make the time to contact you to pre-register (see below). So allow plenty of time for this process. Generally, though, you should start no sooner than eight weeks before the event and no later than two weeks.

Because you've likely already identified your target audience, you are armed with some information about them. The best way to reach them is probably through local community calendars. Often local radio stations, newspapers or cable access channels provide this service free as a community service. These media outlets are ideal for recruiting non-fishing participants.

Churches, mini-marts, gas stations and other places with lots of visitors are great places to post fliers or posters about your programs. If the Commission is notified of your program more than 8 weeks before the event, we may be able to publicize your event on our web site.

### **SMART Program Registration**

All FSIs should require re-registration of participants. Pre-registration gives you an accurate count of participants. It also lets you have ample equipment and supplies, and keep the group size manageable.

### **Fees**

The Fish & Boat Commission does not charge for this program, the use of loaner equipment and the materials participants receive. If your site charges a site or program fee, contact your regional ARPS before holding your first workshop. Fees may be charged, but they must be "reasonable" and cover only additional costs associated with the program (that is, site rental, snacks, worms, etc.).

### **Staffing**

WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU HAVE THESE ADULT-TO-STUDENT RATIOS:

- 8-year-olds and younger - 1 adult assistant for every 4 students.
- older than 8 years - 1 adult assistant for every 10 students.

Adults assisting you do not have to be FSIs. Assistants need to be willing to work with children, and preferably have some fishing or teaching experience.

Team teaching is strongly recommended for the Pennsylvania SMART Angler Program. It lets a group of instructors provide a variety of teaching methods and better hold the interest of the students. In addition, by working as a team, instructors not actively teaching can deal with any problems that occur in the classroom. Additional instructors can remind the teaching instructor of any topics that he/she may have overlooked, and can key off what the other person is saying to give additional information.

### **Instructor Code of Conduct**

Instructors represent the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission when teaching this course. While participating as an instructor in the SMART Angler Program, no person may:

1. Deliberately make false statements or any other comments that would degrade the SMART Angler Program, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; or
2. Deliberately conduct oneself in any manner that will discredit the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (for example, making an inappropriate remark about another instructor or a student); or
3. Deliberately perform any demonstration or act in a manner that would place any student in an unsafe situation whether the demonstration resulted in injury or not.

Failure to conform to the Instructor's Code of Conduct or the above standards while participating as an instructor in a Pennsylvania SMART Angler Program could result in the Commission revoking your certification as an instructor.

### **Volunteer Incentive Program**

The Volunteer Incentive Program (VIP) gives an opportunity for certain instructors to earn prizes by teaching programs, attending training and representing the Commission. Instructors who charge fees for profit or employees of organizations offering SMART programs are not considered Commission volunteers and are not eligible to participate in the Commission's VIP program. For more details on VIP, check out the fact sheet and forms on pages 15-19.

### **Instructor Liability Coverage**

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has many volunteer instructors who perform tasks that benefit the fishing and boating public. Under certain circumstances, volunteers have the same liability and workers' compensation coverage as employees. To have coverage, volunteers:

1. Must be certified as volunteers in program areas as identified on the Commission job description. For example, volunteer water rescue instructors must receive the appropriate training and certification from the Commission.
2. May not be acting as employees or representatives of another organization. For example, members of a sportsmen's club who work in a cooperative hatchery are not covered by our liability insurance. Neither are employees of a school or camp who are teaching a Commission program.
3. May not be receiving compensation or pay of any kind, other than allowable expenses provided by the Commission, for the program for which they are volunteering.
4. Must be assigned to perform the program or service by an appropriate Commission coordinator. For example, a volunteer Fishing Skills Instructor is covered only if he/she checks with the appropriate program coordinator to be assigned to perform a specific program at a specific time, date and location. The request to be assigned may come from the volunteer or the coordinator. All volunteer activities must be assigned IN ADVANCE. "Blanket" approvals do not meet this requirement. They must be date-, time- and location-specific, and records must be kept by the approving coordinator. The record may be kept on a "Program Request Form" or in any other appropriate format that details specific information about the program and assigned volunteer.

Volunteers not meeting the above criteria and not formally part of a structured Commission volunteer program are not covered by the state's workers' compensation or employee liability programs. The lack of workers' compensation coverage means that if a volunteer is injured in the course of performing volunteer functions, he or she is not entitled to workers' compensation or benefits.

Volunteers not entitled to liability coverage do have some protections against claims by third parties whose persons or property might be injured or damaged by act or omission of volunteers while conducting programs or performing other volunteer duties. Although they are NOT covered by the Commonwealth's liability program, they are covered by the Act of December 21, 1988 (P.L. 1862, No. 179), 42 Pa. C.S. § 8332.4, known as the Volunteers in Public Service Act. This law provides that volunteers are not subject to liability for civil damages except in limited circumstances. For a volunteer to be found liable, the party who alleges injury must prove that the volunteer's conduct fell substantially below standards applicable to the activity and that the volunteer knew (or had reason to know) the activity created a substantial risk of actual harm.

### **Reporting Claims**

Any instructor who believes that a claim, or potential claim, has been, or may be, levied against him or her is to report the claim immediately to the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission.

### **Reporting Accidents**

Instructors are responsible for notifying ARPS of any accidents that occur during SMART programs. This includes not only the participants but the instructor as well. Accidents must be reported even if no medical treatment is necessary.

### **Non-discrimination Policy**

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission receives federal aid in sport fish restoration. Under appropriate federal acts, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or handicap. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: The Office of Equal Opportunity, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

### **Participants with Special Needs**

Persons with disabilities who wish to participate in a Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission program/activity (SMART Program) and anticipate the need for special accommodations should telephone (717) 705-7833. Persons using a TTY should dial Pennsylvania Relay telephone number 711 to contact us.



## **SMART Angler Program Proposal and Order Form**



## **FSI Time and Activity Report**



## **VIP Program Summary**



## **VIP#1: Activity Report**



**VIP#2: Award Sheet**



## **CHAPTER 3: THE LEARNING PROCESS AND INSTRUCTOR TECHNIQUES**

This section is designed to assist those with little or no formal training in teaching, training or education. It includes some of the basic concepts instructors must consider, understand and apply to be effective. Much of the information was gleaned from the National 4-H Sportfishing Program Leader's Handbook. This information is important, whether you've never taught before, or taught 100 programs. As the saying goes...

*Talking ain't teaching, and listening ain't learning.*

### **The Learner**

Creating the best learning situation requires the instructor to realize that students vary in individual characteristics. Recognize that students differ in the following areas:

1. Health and fitness - Be alert to illness or fatigue.
2. Physical development - Some skills may be beyond the physical ability of some students (that is, the elderly or very young lifting equipment).
3. Intellectual development - The instructor may have to simplify and explain certain information to a student whose learning capacity is lower than that of others.
4. Personality - Emotional state, attention span, and attitude all affect learning.
5. Learning styles - People learn best in different ways. For instance, hands on, hearing, and visual learning. Incorporate all styles when teaching.

### **Important Elements for Youth Development Programs**

One of the first things young teachers are taught about creating successful lesson plans is to consider the needs of the specific audience or group of students to be taught. For programs in which voluntary participation is the rule, that is particularly important! Programs that focus on youth development or life-skills development are most often built around what is referenced as the lifestage of the intended audience. Lifestages—toddlers, adolescents, youths, teenagers, adults, seniors, etc.—are developmental stages sharing some general similarities. Often these stages are determined by characteristics of physical, mental and emotional development. These classifying items may include elements like: what a certain group of individuals can do; what is important to them; one's level of education - elementary school, middle school, junior high, high school, or college; development of coarse or fine motor skills; level of reasoning (concrete to abstract); emotional maturity; and similar characteristics.

# **What We Know About Youth Development and Fishing**

by Shari L. Dann

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## **Introduction**

Research on developmental changes of children and teens has a long history. More recently, those concerned with outdoor recreation, environmental education, and (more specifically) fishing recruitment and retention have been active in research and education. This fact sheet summarizes some of the most useful youth development research. As all youth development specialists would caution, it's important to note that not all people develop in the same way at the same age. But what we do know is that there are certain patterns to youth development—certain “ages and stages” that are commonly experienced by most people!

## **Ages and Stages of Youth Development**

**Pre-school Years (up to age 5)** - Although most 4-H and other organized youth programs rarely start with pre-school-aged youth, it's important to start our focus on youth development and fishing at this young age. During this time, the primary influences on the pre-schooler are family members and caregivers.

Physical development during this period is tremendous; young people are developing fundamental large motor skills, movement skills and language skills. Outdoor play may contribute greatly to the acquisition of these motor skills.

Thinking (or cognitive) skills are also developing rapidly. Thinking processes at this time are intuitive, and depend on perceptions instead of truly logical thought (Schiamberg 1988). Yet, pre-school children are learning to categorize, classify and organize things into categories (Piaget 1963). Children this age are curious, and ask many questions (Henderson and Moore 1979).

The child's emerging self-concept is based on what he/she is capable of doing (physically, and cognitively). By age 4 or 5, children describe themselves in relation to their possessions, and are starting to use their peers' evaluations in refining their self-image. They also are able to talk about themselves in terms of “likes” and “dislikes,” and see themselves in terms of categories such as gender, age or activity likes/dislikes.

Since many of today's anglers report that they first started fishing during these years, these patterns of early development are important to understand. Encouraging pre-schoolers to try fishing, providing them their “own” fishing rod, responding to their curiosity about fishing and water, practicing the motor skills involved in casting, and talking about fishing may help incorporate fishing into the child's early self-image.

**Childhood Years (ages 5-10, grades K-5)** - During these years, the child is much more involved with people outside the family. Although physical development is slower and more gradual than during preschool years, this is still an important time for completion of development of fundamental motor skills (Schiamberg 1988). Children still have limited mobility, and parents limit their “travels” exploring the neighborhood (Rejeski 1982).

During this time, development of the child's thinking abilities is remarkable! For much of this stage, thinking is logical and concrete (Piaget 1963). As this stage ends, (or by about age 11 or 12), thinking becomes more flexible, and the child is able to deal with more abstract concepts, solve more complex problems, test hypotheses, and see multiple viewpoints.

As an example of this cognitive development, children's conceptions of death change. At first, children do not recognize that death is irreversible; they view it as magical and occurring for odd reasons. Later, children view death in concrete terms, but by age 11 or so, they can understand the more abstract concepts of death (Keecher 1975).

As another example of cognitive change in childhood years, consider these changes in interest in the environment (Rejeski 1982). At about age 6 or 7, children are fascinated mostly with the most common and widespread (obvious) features of their environments. Children may not understand complex environmental concepts, because children this age are very "me-centered" in their views of the environment. For example, they may attribute human emotions to inanimate objects (or fish and wildlife).

Between the ages of 7-10, children are the least informed about animals (Kellert and Westervelt 1983). Later (around ages 9-10), children begin to incorporate both direct, hands-on experience and indirect experiences (e.g., reading) into their ways of understanding and making sense of their environments. During this stage, children are using their new thinking skills to classify objects and use symbols (language, pictures) to describe their world (Rejeski 1982). Now they are able to be aware of human impacts on environments.

Childhood is also an important time for social and personal development. Children's impulsive behaviors are decreasing, and their attention spans are increasing! It is during this stage that feelings of self-competence emerge. In fact, children may define themselves as "I am what I learn" (Erikson 1959). Being successful and receiving positive feedback are important to this age group. By age 8, children already evaluate themselves in comparison with others (Schiamberg 1988). This has important implications; how to handle competition (or whether to make an event or learning experience competitive) should be carefully considered (see Fact Sheet entitled "What We Know About Youth and Competition," by Hall, 1991).

Later in childhood years, the child becomes less "me-centered" and can understand better the thoughts and viewpoints he/she holds and those held by others (Schiamberg 1988). Also late in childhood, the youth is starting to emerge from the time when he/she perceive that rules are clear-cut, made by authority figures, and have to be followed for those reasons. Instead, they are beginning to make decisions on more complex moral issues based on mutual respect for others. (Around the start of adolescence, young teens take into account their own more abstract moral/ethical values, principles and ideals for specific situations.)

So all of these changes mean that childhood is a great age for development of a lifelong interest in fishing. Children this age are naturally interested in the outdoors, animals and in developing competence in the activities they enjoy. Several recreation researchers have observed that childhood participation in activities may lead to lifelong interest and involvement (Yoesting and Christensen 1978; Kelly 1977).

During childhood, physical abilities make it easier for youth to stay still longer and to use the particular skills necessary in fishing. Yet, their young age and still relatively

short attention span necessitate active learning (with hands-on or group activities). Fishing should be fun, trips should be short and planned with children's needs in mind, and the likelihood of success (catching at least some fish—not necessarily large ones or many fish) should be high.

Research in Michigan has shown that by grade 6, up to 90 percent of youth have had the opportunity to go fishing at least once (Wong-Leonard 1992). Other surveys suggest that the proportion of kids who have tried fishing is slightly different from state to state (probably depending on the amount of fishing opportunities accessible) and may be lower in highly urbanized areas. Yet, consistently, most anglers nationally report that they started fishing before their teen years. Among Michigan's most active anglers, over 91 percent say they started fishing before age 11, and a surprising 46 percent started even before age 5 (Dann 1993). So taking young children fishing is important!

Adolescence (early adolescence ages 11-15, grades 6-8; later adolescence ages 15-18, grades 9-12) is a time of transition—teens change from depending wholly on family to a life of more freedom, conflicting values, and many influences on their own views and values (Steinberg 1980). Early adolescence (from about age 10 to age 15) in particular is characterized more by change than by stability! There is also very wide variability between teens in their rates of development; some teens may seem like they are 15 years old, “going on” 20, or they may seem more like children!

This time of change in the teen years is, of course, brought on by the dramatic physical changes of puberty. These changes lead to new feelings about oneself, and greater interest in dating/courtship (Hill 1980).

Changes in thinking abilities are also dramatic. Whereas children focus on the concrete, and the “here and now,” teens are learning to consider possibilities and hypothetical situations, abstract ideas and concepts, and perspectives of others (Hill 1980, Steinberg 1980).

These abilities raise new issues for teens. This age group no longer accepts parents as always being correct (Steinberg 1980), and relationships with parents change. Early adolescents also become more reflective and introspective in thinking about themselves, and concerned about what others think about them.

Peers are increasingly important at this age. Most of a teen's time is spent with friends or classmates (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson 1984); in fact, the most popular leisure activity of teens is spending time with friends. Peers provide teens with companionship, share knowledge, provide status, provide norms to guide behaviors, provide an “escape” from family, and serve as a testing ground for behaviors, emotions, feelings, values and lifestyles (Hartup 1984, Williams and Stith 1980).

The peak time for teens to feel “peer pressure” (the pressure to conform to what other teens expect of them) is around 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade; later, this pressure is lower (Moschis 1987, Steinberg and Levine 1990). The pressure to conform to sex role stereotypes (“traditional” ways of acting based on whether you are male or female) may be especially strong during adolescence, and this pressure may be stronger for girls than for boys (Hill and Lynch 1983). In spite of strong peer pressures, most teens report that they would like to spend more time talking with parents than they do (Steinberg 1980, Steinberg and Levine 1990).

Identity (identifying with certain goals, ideals) is an important issue for teens. Teens may become more concerned with ethics, career development, and other issues of

identity (Schiamberg 1988, Steinberg and Levine 1990). They are more idealistic and future-oriented than children, and are increasingly able to understand complex issues, such as those related to government and politics (Gallatin 1980, Schiamberg 1988).

Research on fishing participation has shown that among today's most active anglers, most had the opportunity to become even more deeply involved in fishing during teen years (Dann 1993). Anglers reported that several factors may have contributed to their own increased fishing during teen years: access to a car or other transportation, more free time, friends who fish, and changing interests and preferences (Dann 1993). So retaining youth in fishing becomes critical during the teen years for developing lifelong interest in the activity!

Similarly, consumer researchers have noted that the attitudes and behavior patterns established during adolescence may carry over into adulthood and become part of a person's way of life (Moschis 1987). Since early adolescence is a key time for trying new hobbies and interests, fishing could be a positive experience for teens. These activities and learning experiences through organized clubs help youth adjust to adulthood and are important links to experiencing enjoyment in activities pursued into the adult years (Caldwell and Bence 1993).

Since teens are gaining mobility and separating from parents, they may, in fact, have a greater opportunity for venturing out to experience fishing with peers. Yet, there may also be barriers to fishing participation in teen years. Since cliques are popular, and a large amount of time is spent socializing, if fishing is not perceived as "cool" by a group, even a teen with a good introduction to fishing during childhood may "quit," perhaps permanently. Furthermore, many anglers reported that work, school and family obligations, and other recreation activities (e.g., sports), prevented them from fishing more often in teen years (Dann 1993). Girls, in particular, may have many more constraints than boys (e.g., lack of transportation, lack of skill, peer pressure to do "girls' things").

Presently, more research is being conducted to understand some of the complicated patterns of angling participation, and the potential influences of mentors and club involvement on activity and interests. Clearly, programs that specifically attract and keep teens involved in fishing are needed (perhaps much more than the programs and derbies that simply "get kids started" in fishing) (Dann 1993). There is some limited evidence that teens seek different elements of the fishing experience than do other age groups. Teens may be quite interested in adventurous fishing (catching lots of fish, catching large fish, as on a charter), or in quiet reflective fishing (as in stream fly fishing alone). So this information, and other background on youth development, is vital to those of us offering learning experiences to this age group!

### **About Youth at Risk**

This term usually refers to youth "at risk" of not having the developmental experiences necessary for success in adulthood. Risk factors are usually defined as things that may increase a youth's vulnerability to having problems during the "usual" developmental stages or to displaying problem behaviors (such as drug use, sexual activity, etc.).

On the other hand, "protective factors" are those experiences or environments that promote a youth's healthy development and competence. (For more information on youth at risk, see the Fact Sheet entitled "Youth At Risk," by Hughey, 1992.)

Much has been written about youth at risk. Certainly, youth at risk lack many of the factors or experiences described in this fact sheet that may help a youth develop lifelong interest in fishing. It is easy to see how involvement in activities such as fishing may be a low priority for families and young people just “struggling to get by.”

Constructive use of leisure time is certainly related to the risk factors and the protective factors faced by today’s youth. So there is indirect evidence that fishing can help young people develop constructive habits for their free time! It’s always essential to consider that among any population of youth and families some might be considered “at risk,” and thus have other concerns than whether or not they go fishing on a particular day. Targeting specific sportfishing learning experiences for at-risk audiences may mean: providing special transportation, working with neighborhood associations or parks programs, finding mentors for youth other than family members, providing easy access to equipment, or reaching community groups through less traditional channels (e.g., churches) instead of through the “usual” groups (e.g., sportsmen’s clubs).

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Even though there will always be some people who don't fit a subjectively chosen age and stage scheme or sets of categories (some will have developed faster or slower than the norm), the lifestage concept can be effectively used to develop outings, lessons, field trips, events and programs that will meet the needs and interests of the majority of individuals at a particular lifestage. Adaptability on the part of the volunteer working with the group allows those activities to be modified to include all youth, regardless of where they fit developmentally. The information following is included to help everyone working with youth. It can be helpful in planning and developing the overall structure of sportfishing programs for youth groups, as well as with specific activities, lessons and experiences.

## **Learning Styles<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from "Effective Leading, Teaching and Coaching", Douglas A. Hart, Extension Agent, 4-H Youth

Learning styles have been categorized into four major types: Innovative, analytical, common sense, and dynamic. All four styles are equally valuable; each has strengths and weaknesses. Each of us is most comfortable in one of these styles, and if someone is teaching us in our most comfortable style, it is easier for us to learn!

### **Innovative Learners**

- Learn by listening and sharing ideas
- Excel in viewing things from many perspectives
- Function through social interaction
- Have strong innovation and imagination
- Are idea people
- Get involved and attempt to bring unity to diversity
- Ask “why or why not?”

### **Analytic Learners**

- Seek facts
- Learn by thinking through ideas
- Need to know what the experts think
- Focus more on ideas and concepts than people
- Have a strength in creating concepts and models
- Seek self-satisfaction and intellectual recognition
- Ask “what?”

### **Common Sense Learners**

- Learn by testing theories in sensible ways
- Seek things that are useful
- Need to know how things work
- Have strength in practical application of ideas
- Seek to bring their view of present into line with the future
- Ask “does it work?”

### **Dynamic Learners**

- Need to know what can be done with things
- Learn by trial-and-error and self-discovery
- Like variety and excel in situations calling for flexibility
- Can reach accurate conclusions in absence of logical data
- Have strength in action and carrying out plans
- Want to make things happen
- Ask “what can this become?”

Teaching to all four learning styles aids in reaching all participants. We need to capitalize on the personal experiences of innovative learners to demonstrate why they should spend the time learning the information. This satisfies their question, “Why should I learn this?” That helps to motivate them and get them involved in the subject. Analytical learners (“what do the experts say/do?”) need to have the facts and expert opinions. Common-sense learners need to have an early opportunity to use the information they have

acquired in some useful way, satisfying their question of how it works really. Dynamic learners must have a chance to give input to the topic and share with others, developing a vision for what can develop and answering their “what can this become?” question.

Learning is not a destination, but a journey; and all learning is related either directly or indirectly. This applies to the things we do for recreation and those that are part of our vocations. With an expectation of learning continually and continuously, we build on previous experience to higher levels of understanding, application and conceptualization. We are also better able to relate concrete observations and experiences to concepts or other abstractions. Most of us learn better when the learning experience is experiential or when experiences provide mental “hooks” on which to hang the new information. Although experiential learning is often depicted as a cyclic diagram of observing, analyzing, comparing and discussing and concluding or applying, it is really helical. Each experience produces a higher capacity for both learning and understanding.

Tell me . . . I will forget

Show me . . . I will remember

Involve me . . . I will understand

The simple statement above has merit. Most kids learn best when they are directly involved in an activity. This involvement is called experiential learning, hands-on learning, or learning by doing. Regardless of the label used, it is really minds-on learning with opportunities for all sorts of learning styles and sensory input. Whether it is learning a new skill, understanding a concept, or thinking about an attitude, involving the kids in the learning directly through hands-on activities is vital. For example, when learning to tie a knot, first show the kids how to tie one, demonstrating with oversize materials so everyone can observe. Some learners will benefit from illustrated instructions. Next, let the learners try to tie the same knot for themselves. Have plenty of assistance available to give help where it is needed, but not before it is obvious that help is needed. Intervene before frustration sets in, but after some effort has been expended. (For many fishing knots, using rope or other extra larger materials can be helpful.) Critique the knots and procedures, positively reinforcing their efforts. Correct techniques as required by stating what to do and avoiding “you made this mistake” statements. Finally, have them show you or someone else how to tie the same knot. For some learners, stating the reasons for tying the particular knot and tying knots well will provide motivation to learn it. For others, simply learning the skill and being able to practice it will be motivation enough.

### **The Seven Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents<sup>2</sup> (A Checklist for Youth Programs)**

The Center for Early Adolescence in North Carolina has identified seven developmental needs which appear to be central in the growth of 10-15 year olds. Although they are not absolute or necessarily exhaustive in their description of young adolescents, the seven needs provide a very useful checklist framework for the analysis of youth programs.

Physical Activity - Because they are growing faster than any other time in their lives except infancy, young adolescents need to move. They will squirm and fidget when

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from an article for *News and Views*, the official publication of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents, by Judith Myers-Walls, Extension Specialist, Human Development, Purdue University, 1988.

they do try to sit still. Not being active is often interpreted as boredom. Giving them active things to do and excusing their inability to sit still are ways of recognizing the need for physical activity.

**Competence and Achievement** - Young adolescents have a strong desire to do things well and to be recognized for their accomplishments. They are very self-conscious, so rewards mean everything, and embarrassment and failure are devastating. Making success too difficult is a problem. Providing opportunities for achievable success, especially situations in which everyone can succeed in his or her own unique way, can help to meet this need.

**Self-definition** - Because of the rapid changes that characterize the teen years, young adolescents spend a good deal of time trying to figure out who they are. They need opportunities to explore being an adolescent instead of a child, belonging to the gender, race, ethnic group, or other social category in which they fit, and what their new physical and mental abilities will allow them to do. Providing for the exploration of a variety of ideas, skills, crafts, volunteer activities, careers, and games will facilitate growth in this area and help young people avoid dangerous risk-taking as a means of self-definition.

**Creative Expression** - During adolescence, young people begin to identify what makes them unique as what an individual creates, whether it is written, played, grown, painted or performed. Although not all young people are artistic or musical, all young people can create something unique and special. Excellent youth programs help young people find that creative outlet in which each can shine.

**Positive Social Interactions with Peers and Adults** - Most adults recognize and accept the fact that young people need to have positive interaction and friendships with other young people, but they are skeptical about young people's desire to be with adults. But young people themselves admit their parents, families, and other adults remain of primary importance in setting values and giving affection. The best programs offer accessible and responsible adults with whom the young people can interact, and they provide interaction with peers that is support and builds social skills.

**Structure and Clear Limits** - Young people want to know what the expectations are for their behavior and what they may and may not do. If the structure is too loose, they will not know what to expect and will react out of a sense of insecurity. If the rules are clear, they may, and probably will, test them, but they want and expect consistent reinforcement of those rules. They are also under the influence of the "personal fable" that "it can't happen to me." At this age, however, they want and can handle participation in defining those limits and setting the structure.

**Meaningful Participation** - Good youth programs are designed WITH young people, not for them. As they near adulthood, the experience of taking responsibility for programs in which they participate helps to develop adult skills and increases commitment to the programs. In addition, young people at this age begin to develop heartfelt commitments to causes and to social service. Although their commitments are likely to be short-term, allowing them a chance to participate meaningfully in their communities by doing social service projects, volunteering, or serving on advisory boards will help both the adolescents and their communities.

Programs for young people that have achieved national recognition have been shown to use these guidelines, either consciously or unconsciously. The best programs address a large number of the needs. The Center for Early Adolescence will define a

program as “good” as long as it meets the needs of young people in at least four areas, with two of those areas Positive Social Interaction with Peers and Adults and Structure and Clear Limits be non-negotiable. “Excellent” programs take into account the other needs, although they may not meet them directly.

### **Instructor Characteristics**

The instructor’s responsibility is to do everything possible to enhance the learning experience, making it as easy and enjoyable as possible. Fostering an informal atmosphere has been found to be best for teaching boating courses. The effectiveness of an instructor depends on the instructor possessing certain personal characteristics that will make the learning experience more valuable to the students as well as making them as comfortable as possible.

1. Personal Characteristics
  - a. Enthusiasm - Assume an upbeat attitude.
  - b. Leadership - The instructor is the role model and in charge.
  - c. Attitude - Maintain a professional attitude. Treat everyone fairly. If possible, learn their names and be patient.
  - d. Accept other people’s values. Learn new information.
  - e. Personal appearance - Dress neatly and appropriately. Wear your uniform (if you have one). If this is not applicable, dress a step “up” from your students. Be on time.
2. Responsible Management (Do NOT assume anything.)
  - a. Class management.
  - b. Check lighting, ventilation and temperature.
  - c. Make sure the instructor will be close enough to students to maintain good eye contact.
  - d. Check the teaching aids to be used in the class. Ensure the visual aids are the right size for the room and are placed where all the students can see them. Set up all equipment before class. Make sure it is ready. Do not forget extra bulbs for A/Vs .
  - e. When appropriate, set aside a section of the room for group practice.
3. Supervision
  - a. Plan the course with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. Let the Bureau of Boating and Education know when and where your courses are scheduled by sending in your proposal early.
  - b. Administer the course. Make sure all material is covered. Guest speakers for certain subjects may be appropriate, but their conduct is the responsibility of the instructor.

### **Non-Threatening Hands-On Instruction in Sportfishing<sup>3</sup>**

An important element of sportfishing instruction is the physical activity involved in certain skill areas (casting, fly tying, handling fish, etc.). When working with youth in

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted by Shari Dann from materials produced by James V. Peter Jr., County Extension director and agricultural agent for the Dubois County Office of Purdue Cooperative Extension, Jasper, Indiana. 4-H Shooting Sports Guide

sportfishing activities such as these, instructors may find it necessary to use their hands to position their learners or to correct a learner's position. Even though this close contact with the learner is essential for effective instruction, the instructor must be careful to avoid any action that could appear improper or cause the student anxiety.

A few simple actions can ensure a positive working relationship (and a positive learning experience) between instructor/coach and learner, without any question of anxiety or impropriety. Respectful, non-threatening treatment of learners begins with demonstration. Use a junior leader or another adult instructor to demonstrate the skill and how the instructors will handle the learner to correct the posture or position. By telling the learner what you are about to do, you can reduce his or her anxiety. Tell the learner you are going to position the torso, raise an elbow, turn the hips. Next, consider the positioning of your hands when you contact the learner. Except in an unsafe situation where immediate and decisive action is required, it is seldom necessary to "grab" a learner or the equipment. When your hands are held relatively rigid, with the fingers straight and the thumbs resting on top of the hands, they are much less threatening. Pressure from the palms of flattened hands (fingers not curled) can accomplish most positioning and coaching needs.

Summary: Simple steps to non-threatening instruction:

1. **Demonstrate** the skill and how you will position learners. Demonstrate with a teen leader or another adult.
2. **Tell the learner** what you are about to do and why, before you use your hands to position them.
3. **Carefully consider** how you place your hands to help the learner.
4. **Use flattened hands ("knife hands")**. This gesture is much less threatening to the learner. Pressure from the palms of flattened hands (fingers not curled) can accomplish most positioning and controlling needs.

### **Appropriate Behavior: Putting the Child First<sup>4</sup>**

Touching is a very important part of healthy human relationships. From the first moment of life, babies thrive when they feel the warmth of being near their mother's body. Little children like to roll around on the ground in playful rough-housing. Lonely and hurting children need to be held with caring.

Some adults have become confused and worried about appropriate touching and related behaviors to use when they are with and around children. Caring adults are aware of the expanded needs for personal space of children who approach puberty and enter adolescence. Those who understand the special needs of abused children are especially sensitive about asking for permission to offer a hug. Adults who put the needs of the children first are alert to the appropriateness of their own behaviors.

It is important to show caring and to encourage children by being warm and affectionate, especially when many of the children who come to youth groups do so to get away from their own troubled homes. An extra effort by a child deserves a friendly "pat on the back" or a "tousling of the hair." Being touched in positive and appropriate ways means "I like you" and "You belong here."

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<sup>4</sup> Source: *Put the Child First*, Canadian Council on Children and Youth, 1989

There are sensible ways for volunteers to continue to show warmth to children while still protecting their own integrity.

1. Make a point of showing affection to all your children in open places where others can see and share in the warmth. If you are comfortable with others watching what you are doing with children, you are probably OK.
2. Touch children in safe places on their bodies, avoiding private places. The back, the head and the shoulders are acceptable; the buttocks, the breasts, the thighs and the groin are not acceptable. Consider cultural differences; here, for example, touching all people on the head would not be considered appropriate.
3. If a child is hurting or feeling ill and needs to be examined, ensure that another person of the same sex as the child is present in the room while you are carrying out the examination. If possible, leave an examination of private places to health professionals. Don't force the child to remove clothing for an examination.
4. If a child is sad and needs to be comforted, show affection by placing your arm around a shoulder and giving a gentle hug or a good squeeze from the side.
5. If the child needs to have a private conversation with you, remove yourselves the necessary distance from the others but stay in view of the group or leave a door slightly ajar.
6. It is impossible to avoid situations where you must be alone with the child. But if you are to be alone, be sure that you have considered some safeguards and that parents are aware of the nature of your activity with the child. For example, when doing bed checks at camp, bring a second counselor if one is available. When traveling by car, try to take a number of children or bring along another volunteer.
7. Respect the policy of your organization concerning camping or traveling alone with a child.
8. Don't be alone and naked with the child, anywhere. If you must change at public swimming pools, use the usual kind of discretion that is appropriate for such places.
9. Be cautious about any conversations with children that involve sex. It is understood that children ask honest questions about sexuality and teenagers might seek advice. Listening with respect for the child is appropriate; it is also appropriate to distribute and discuss agency approved information which is part of a general educational program about sexuality. Joking with kids in ways that encourage promiscuity or the acceptance of sexually explicit material is dangerous for you and the children.
10. In all things, respect the integrity of the child. Allow the child to back away from your well-intentioned affection if he/she wishes. Ask the child if he or she feels OK about being touched. Abused children are sometimes fearful or distrustful of any physical contact. Most of us sense the difference between positive and caring intentions and those that are meant to exploit us. Use your common sense and good judgment to guide you in protecting the personal space of the children in your care.

### **Suggestions for Effective Communication**

Communication is the act of transferring information. Effective communication is the backbone of good instruction. To communicate effectively, an instructor should put the following into practice:

1. Get and hold the attention of the entire group at the beginning of the first class.

2. Define clearly what the students can expect to get from the course. Explain what will be happening during the session, what will be discussed, what they will learn, and when the class will have breaks.
3. Involve all class members in the discussion, but keep it under control. Do not let one student dominate the conversation.
4. Give instructions in a conversational tone and keep them simple.
5. Limit instructions to as many as the students can handle at one time.
6. Relate the subject matter to common or universal experiences, but do not overdo “war stories.”
7. Learn to think while “standing on your feet.”
8. Use words everyone knows. Define new words in a class discussion. Write the key points in advance or write them on a large sheet of paper and post it in the classroom, referring to it when needed.
9. Do not read to the students unless you need to quote something.
10. Avoid annoying verbal and nonverbal distractions (that is, jingling change, constant swaying, and verbal fillers such as “ums” and “you know”).

### **Voice**

One of the best teaching tools is the instructor’s voice. Regardless of its quality, there are many ways the instructor’s voice can be used to its best advantage.

1. Volume - Talk loud enough so all students can hear. A microphone should be used if the instructor’s voice tends to be soft or there is a large group.
2. Delivery - Vary the rate of the delivery according to the difficulty of the subject and the learning ability of the students. Speak at a natural pace, not rapidly or too slowly. Avoid speaking in a monotone.
3. Pronunciation - Pronounce or accent each syllable clearly and distinctly. Pauses and raising and lowering the voice in much the same way we use punctuation in writing are effective techniques. Be especially careful to pronounce terms properly to protect your credibility as the instructor.
4. Conversation - Instructors should realize they are not making a speech or preaching. Instructors are talking with, not at, the students. Everyone should be involved in the discussion. Try not to talk longer than 15 minutes without involving the students in some manner.
5. Clarity - Stay away from expressions such as “always,” “never,” “I say.” Instead, cite legitimate, credible authorities to emphasize a point, such as “the textbook states” or “generally.” Be as diplomatic as possible.

### **Body Language**

Body language refers to the way the body reveals feeling, intent, values, attitude, belief and motivation through the language of the eyes, facial expression, posture, and gesture.

1. Student’s Body Language
  - a. Instructors should be alert to student reactions by letting their eyes travel around the room.
  - b. Include students in the discussion who appear to be tired or bored.

- c. Direct eye contact may bring an inattentive student back to attention. If eye contact fails, take a step toward the student and direct a question to him/her.
  - d. Check posture. Students slouched in their seats may not be paying attention. A short break may be helpful.
  - e. Do anything appropriate to hold the students' attention. An inattentive student will not learn.
2. Instructor's Body Language
- a. Instructors must be aware of their own nonverbal communication.
  - b. Show a willingness to listen by leaning the head or body forward.
  - c. Show friendliness by smiling and making frequent eye contact.
  - d. Refrain from making gestures that may confuse the student or indicate anger or frustration (that is, clenched fist, frown).

### **Additional Strategies for Learning**

1. Climate setting - Provide the most favorable conditions for learning to facilitate the involvement of individuals in a newly formed group.
  - a. Arrange tables and chairs in a way that aids learning, and have them ready when students arrive.
  - b. Prepare nametags.
2. Assigning tasks - Assigning ambiguous tasks is one of the most frequent mistakes of instructors. Instructors should try to involve students in learning with clearly understood instructions so that objectives are accomplished.
  - a. Write out each task before the session (either an individual copy for each student or in large print in front of the whole group).
  - b. Review the task orally.
3. Bridging - The art of linking one section of training to the next one.
  - a. Review what has been learned in the previous session.
  - b. Relate what is going to be discussed to what has already been accomplished.
  - c. Training days may be bridged by asking participants to discuss important aspects of what they have already learned and by asking questions about unclear areas.

### **How Does Learning Happen: Teaching Strategies**

Learning involves:

**Individual Differences** - Since people learn through different methods, plan to use a variety of teaching methods while being attentive to each individual in the group. Note that this requires a fairly low youth-to-adult ratio for best results!

**Personal Meaning** - Helping learners discover a personal application for information makes learning easier. Build on the personal perceptions and knowledge of the learners to find those personal applications.

**Learning by Doing** - Plan personal involvement into every lesson and activity (the lesson plans are only a suggestion) so that the most effective learning can take place—by involvement.

**Existing Knowledge** - If you know what students know and what types of experiences they have, it is much easier to build on that personal experience from the known to the unknown. Try to learn about the experiences of your learners to help them and you!

**Feedback** - Help learners by providing feedback on their progress. Critical evaluation combined with positive reinforcement and emphasis on the positive things that must be done is essential.

**Motivation** - Learning works best when the individual wants to learn. Remember to watch for and use those “teachable moments” as they occur. Please remember, too, that you can plan them into your teaching.

**Emersion** - Experiential learning requires individuals first to be immersed in the realm of discovery. Then they can be led to focus on learning!! Johnson and Johnson (1991)<sup>5</sup> cite several authors on this topic.

**Knowing is not enough, we must apply. Willing is not enough, we must do.**  
—*Goethe*

**One learns by doing the thing, for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try.**  
—*Sophocles*

**The hand is the cutting edge of the mind.**  
—*Jacob Bronowski, Ascent of Man*

**For things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.**  
—*Aristotle*

## **Misbehavior**

Ever have a kid do something negative at every event? This can be rather nerve-racking. This may be an indicator that they are upset with you or something else and are unable to talk about it. They are exhibiting this behavior out of revenge. Look for possible reasons for this behavior and try to talk with the child. Some kids may be “complainers”; this may be a result of coming to the meeting upset over a family situation. The kid feels if he/she is not happy then no else should be happy either.

When kids feel inadequate or unable to perform a particular task they may misbehave. They may misbehave rather than admit to their fears. They are camouflaging their feelings of inadequacy.

## **Guidance Techniques**

Guidance techniques are ways to guide behaviors. There are three types of techniques that have been found to be effective when working with kids:

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<sup>5</sup> Johnson, D. W. And F. P. Johnson. 1991. *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*. Allyn & Bacon: Boston

1. Direct guidance,
2. Indirect guidance, and
3. Positive guidance.

Direct guidance means offering straightforward guidance. You deal specifically with the child and the behavior. Various types of direct guidance include:

1. **Demonstrate Expected Behaviors** - Show the kids the behavior you expect from them. If you want them to walk on paths, you should walk on paths. If you want the kids to talk versus yell, be sure you talk with them instead of yelling at them.
2. **Physically Restrain (if necessary)** - Sometimes you may need to restrain a child physically from a behavior. For example, you may have to stop a fight. Perhaps a child may not cease doing something that is dangerous, like hanging over the edge of a moving boat. This approach is used in extreme cases where safety is a concern. Just remember: Physical restraint is only used as a last resort. **Never abuse a child!**
3. **Speak at Eye Level** - As you speak with the kids, place yourself at their eye level, squat down. When you speak at eye level, you are expressing concern and respect for the child. At times, it may be inconvenient to get at eye level. If so, look them in the eye as you speak with them. There is one word of caution as it relates to looking at other directly in the eyes when you speak. In some cultures, looking someone directly in the eye is disrespectful. Please be aware of this possible cultural norm and consider it in your situation.
4. **Use Gestures** - Use gestures as you talk with the kids—in other words, use your hands as you speak.
5. **Smile** - When you smile at the kids, generally they feel that you care about them and like them. Smile as you speak with them, the other adults, their parents. But, be sure your smile is sincere. A fake smile will not go far!
6. **Communicate in Words** - Try to communicate your feelings in words. For example, if you aren't feeling well, tell the kids. Usually they will be more understanding and in fact even try harder to behave well.
7. **Keep Instructions Short** - As you speak with kids, keep your instructions simple and short. If it is time to clean up, for instance, simply say "clean-up time." Avoid lengthy lectures or justifications of why. Instructions should be limited to three requests at a time.
8. **Limit Directions** - Give directions only when necessary. Remember—coming to the sportfishing program should be fun. If an adult is constantly talking and "teaching," it can become boring. If a child is having difficulty with a certain task or project, silently observe and then offer to "help" the child.
9. **Give Choices** - Choices create situations in which kids are forced to think. Choices provide opportunities for kids to make mistakes and learn from the consequences. Choices help us to avoid getting into control battles with youngsters. And choices provide opportunities for kids to hear that we trust their thinking abilities.

### **Rules for Giving Choices**

1. Always be sure to select choices that you like. Never provide one you don't like because the child will usually select the one you don't like.

2. Never give a choice unless you are willing to allow the child to experience the consequences of that choice.
3. Never give choices when the child is in danger.
4. Never give choices unless you are willing to make the choice for the child in the event he/she does not choose. “If you don’t chose, I will.” Give them 10 seconds to decide.

*Caution!* It is very easy to turn your choices into threats: “You can either get to sleep immediately or lose your right to fish tomorrow.” This is just a little like your boss giving you the choice, “Would you rather do that report today or get fired?”

10. **Explain** - If the child has a question, be willing to explain the answer to the individual. If you don’t know the answer, try and find it. Answer all the questions and never shame or belittle a child for asking questions.

Indirect guidance means roundabout ways to offer guidance. This may involve arranging factors in the environment or using your knowledge to work with other people. Techniques you can use include:

1. **Timing** - Be sure to allow enough time for the kids to complete an activity without feeling rushed. In the same light, avoid times when the kids will get bored because of too much time allowed for an activity. When possible, avoid having kids wait. Bored waiting brews misbehavior.
2. **Number** - Be aware of the number of kids in your group activities. You may find it is better to split the group and have smaller groups. It may be helpful to split the group part of the time and at other times do activities as a whole unit. Too many or too few kids in a group can result in misbehavior.
3. **Age-Appropriate Activities** - Be sure the chosen activity is appropriate for the age of the students. Are they interested in it? Can the kids understand the activity? Is it too difficult? Too simple? These questions can prove to be quite beneficial when planning for groups of mixed ages.
4. **Schedules** - In designing schedules (for meetings, day-long workshops, field trips, etc.) mix the type of activities you offer. Balance the active times with calm times. Consider the time of day, the effect of various weather conditions, the site, the ages of the kids, and what you want them to learn.
5. **Behavior Clues** - There are clues you give without using words to tell the kids the behaviors you expect. For example, tell the kids that at night when the radios and lights go out their talk is to end. The radio and lights become behavior clues to signal the time to stop talking and go to sleep.
6. **Be Prepared** - Have the materials and supplies ready for activities. This is a behavior cue for “It is time to work.” If you have materials ready, kids do not have to wait. Being prepared reduces boredom.
7. **Out of Sight** - “Out of sight—out of mind” goes the old, but true, phrase. Suppose the kids are not allowed to drink soda pop and the adult leaders are. Problems can be easily avoided by having the adults drink their pop out of the view of the campers.
8. **Cool, Calm and Collected** - If all else fails, at least appear cool, calm and collected with the kids. There may be times when you can’t believe what is happening to you. Believe it, deal with it, and somehow calmly guide yourself

and the campers through the situation. Sigh, take a deep breath, and proceed to guide the kids in the best way you know how.

Positive guidance means offering the kids positiveness, to tell them what to do instead of what not to do. A few key points to keep in mind:

1. **State the Rules in a Positive Form** - State the rule as a “do” or an “always” instead of as a “do not” or a “never.”
2. Keep Smiling.
3. **Show Genuine Love and Concern for the Child** - This is the single most important feature of “wizards,” those who seem to be able to make programs work under difficult conditions.
4. **Use Thinking Words** - Thinking words tell the child what you will do or what they are free to do. Thinking words include telling the child when he/she can do something or telling the child the conditions under which you will do something.
5. **Call “TIME OUT” or “RENEWAL TIME”** - In a cool and calm manner, call for “time out” or “renewal time.” This gives a kid a chance to straighten out mixed-up feelings and get back a sense of personal control.
6. **Catch the Child Being Good!** - Rearrange the attention that kids receive. Make it a habit to notice good behavior. Pay more attention to them when they are cooperating and sharing.

## Checklist and Tips for Instructors

The following checklist can help you make your class go smoothly.

- Are you wearing the proper clothing?
- Have you double-checked the time and location of the class?
- Do you have all the necessary materials, equipment and instructional aids? Did you order everything you need at least one month before class?
- Make sure the tackle is in good working order before the class. Make sure there is enough line in the reels and it is in good shape. Look for loose guides, cracks or breaks on the rods.
- Check the classroom for equipment, heating, lighting, etc.
- Can the distracting influences in the classroom or in the area be eliminated?
- Did you report any deficiencies in the classroom, the instructional aids, etc.?
- During the class, use fresh bait and change it often.
- Know the waterway you will be fishing - the regulations governing the water, which fish you might catch, some of the other organisms found there, where the source of the water is and where it goes, etc.
- Know what you are going to do with the fish that may be caught - before you catch them.
- Have a first aid kit and other safety materials at hand and make everyone aware of their location.
- Make sure you have enough adults: 8 years and younger, one adult for every 4 students; older than 8 years, one adult for every 10 students.
- Have enough extra activities prepared in case the weather or the fish do not cooperate.
- If using nightcrawlers, break them in half.
- Make sure everyone - including you - has a good time.
- Complete and mail the reporting form.

## Chapter 4: The 2 ½-Hour SMART Angler Class (Half-Day)

|    | <u>Lesson Plan</u>       | <u>Time</u> |
|----|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Welcome and Introduction | 15 minutes  |
| 2. | Aquatic Ecosystems       | 20 minutes  |
| 3. | S.M.A.R.T.               | 20 minutes  |
| 4. | Casting Practice         | 20 minutes  |
| 5. | Fishing                  | 1 hour      |
| 6. | Wrap-up                  | 15 minutes  |

## **Welcome and Introduction**

### **Theme**

An introduction to instructors, the Fish & Boat Commission and the SMART Angler Fishing Program.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the students will be able to:

1. Describe the day's events.
2. Identify the agency responsible for fishing and boating in Pennsylvania.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

Sign-up Sheet

Nametags

Aquatic Charades lesson plan (4-H, page 121)

Aquatic field guide or reference book

### **Instructor References**

Fish Scale Sketch

**Time:** 15 minutes

## **Content**

## **Teaching Method**

### **Welcome and Introduction**

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| A. Welcome the group and introduce instructors and volunteers. | Discussion |
| B. Pass out a sign-in sheet.                                   |            |
| C. Pass out nametags.  |            |

### **What Is a SMART Angler Class?**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| A. Today you will be participating in a SMART angler class.   | Discussion |
| B. Everyone will learn about aquatic ecosystems and how to fish the SMART way. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Included are some fun activities, casting practice and a chance to fish.</li><li>2. Everyone will get a “goody” bag at the completion of the class and a free subscription to the Pennsylvania League of Angling Youth (PLAY) Newsletter.</li></ol> |            |
| C. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission sponsors SMART angler classes. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The Commission is responsible for fish, aquatic invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians, and it regulates fishing and boating activities in our state.</li></ol>  |            |

### **Icebreaker Activity**

- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Conduct an icebreaker activity. | Aquatic Charades (4-H, page 121) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|

## **Aquatic Ecosystems**

### **Theme**

Knowledge of aquatic ecosystems is an important fishing skill.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the essential components of habitat (water, food and shelter).
2. Describe the importance of good habitat for fish and other wildlife.
3. Define “limiting factors” and give examples.
4. Recognize that some fluctuations in wildlife populations are natural as ecological systems undergo a constant change.
5. Define carrying capacity.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

Go Fish Lesson Plan (4-H, page 105)

Paper, chalkboard or easel pad, markers and play area or gym

### **Instructor References**

Great Fishing Needs Great Habitat

How to Make a Largemouth Bass

PLAY: Natural Symbols of the Keystone State (Focus on Habitat)

PLAY: Why Fish Need Trees (Gimme Shelter)

**Time:** 20 minutes

## **Content**

## **Teaching Method**

### **Ecosystems**

During this portion of the 2½-hour class, you will have enough time to complete only one activity related to ecosystems. The selected activity focuses on the components of aquatic communities and the needs of aquatic animals.

- A. Understanding aquatic ecology is an important skill for an angler to have. Knowledge of habitats, habitat components and aquatic critters will help you become a better angler and answer the following questions:
1. Which is the best bait or lure to use?
  2. Where is the best place to fish on a lake, pond, river or stream?
  3. Where are the fish today?
  4. Where do I go to catch certain fish like bass, trout or catfish?

Discussion

### **Communities**

- A. Let's do a fun activity, which demonstrates the influence of habitat components on aquatic animals like fish.
1. The activity will also demonstrate how a fish population fluctuates and how habitat determines carrying capacity, or the number of fish that the habitat can support.

Go Fish (4-H, page 105)

## S.M.A.R.T

### Theme

The best way to fish is the SMART way. SMART is the acronym for safety first, manners are important, appreciate clean water, release some of your catch and teach others to be SMART anglers.

### Objectives

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Identify what each letter in the word SMART represents.
2. List one example of a good behavior related to each of the following:
  - a. Safety
  - b. Manners
  - c. Appreciation of clean water
  - d. Releasing your catch
  - e. Teaching others

### Suggested Course Materials

Chalkboard or easel pad

Markers

One fishing rod, pre-rigged with casting plug

One fishing rod, pre-rigged with hook

### Instructor References

Are you a SMART Angler?

Care of the Catch

Cold-Water Safety

Floaters and Fishermen

The Golden Rule

Put 'em Back Alive

Reach, Throw, Go!

Springtime Stream Dangers

Staying Safe in Winter Weather

The Toolbox: Water Safety

Wading Safely

Why Do We Have Fishing Regulations

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Content**

**Teaching Method**

**What is a SMART Angler?**

- A. S.M.A.R.T. stands for:
  - 1. Safety first.
  - 2. Manners are important.
  - 3. Appreciate clean water.
  - 4. Release some of your catch.
  - 5. Teach others to be SMART anglers.

Discussion

Write the word SMART on a chalkboard or easel pad and add what each letter stands for as the discussion progresses

**Safety Always Comes First**

- A. Be careful around lakes streams and piers.
  - 1. Don't run when carrying a fishing rod.
  - 2. Stay back from the slippery bank edges.
  - 3. Remember that cold water calls for extra caution.
  - 4. Wear your life jacket. It floats—you don't.
- B. Be extra careful when wading.
  - 1. Use waders with a felt bottom.
  - 2. Use a wading stick.
  - 3. Watch for slippery rocks, sticks and deep holes.
- C. Be careful when casting.
  - 1. Check behind you before casting.
  - 2. Keep a rod's length from people, trees and objects.
- D. Handle hooks and fish carefully.
  - 1. Always secure the hook to your rod when not fishing.
  - 2. Learn how to remove an embedded hook.
  - 3. Watch out for those sharp fins on fish.

Discussion

Question and answer

Demonstrate "casting safety zone" and a safe cast

Demonstrate how to secure hook and carry rod

**Manners Are Important**

- A. Anglers need to have good manners toward other people.
  - 1. Ask permission from and respect landowners.
  - 2. Help anglers when in need.
  - 3. Give others plenty of space.
  - 4. Don't yell, boast or brag.
- B. Anglers also need to have good manners toward

Discussion

Question and answer

the environment.

1. Don't litter or pollute (obvious trash like candy wrappers and pop cans, and not so obvious like monofilament line, old hooks, etc.).
2. Pick up trash that you find (as long as it is not dangerous like needles, broken glass or poison).

### **Appreciate Clean Water**

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| A. Learn all you can about the fish you are after and where they live. It will make you a better angler.  | Discussion                            |
| B. Without clean water, there are no fish. Become a conservationist and help do your part to protect our water resources.   | Questions and answer                  |
| C. Explain some ways that you appreciate clean water. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Don't leave litter behind.</li><li>2. Take a bag along and pick up litter.</li><li>3. Recycle fishing line.</li><li>4. Report polluters.</li></ol> | Discussion<br><br>Question and answer |

### **Release Some of Your Catch**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| A. It's OK to keep a few fish. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Keep only those fish you intend to eat.</li><li>2. Take care of your catch.</li><li>3. Don't fill your freezer to have fish go to waste.</li><li>4. Come prepared to get your fish home.</li><li>5. Make sure you know how to identify your fish and their seasons, sizes and creel limits.</li></ol>   | Demonstrate proper catch and release technique |
| B. It's also good to let a few go to fight another day. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Learn how to release your catch.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Land the fish quickly.</li><li>b. Keep the fish in water as long as possible.</li><li>c. Handle the fish as little as possible.</li><li>d. Quickly remove the hook.</li><li>e. Return fish to the water as soon as possible.</li><li>f. Revive the fish if necessary by gently moving it back and forth in the water.</li></ol></li></ol> |  |

## **Teach Others To Be SMART Anglers**

- A. The future of our sport is in your hands.
  - 1. We need your support if fishing is to remain a part of our culture.
  - 2. Why not take someone under your “fin” and teach him or her how to become a SMART angler.

Discussion

Question and answer

## **Casting Practice**

### **Theme**

Casting practice can make you a better angler.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate how to perform an accurate overhead cast.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

At least five spincasting rods pre-rigged with casting plugs

At least five hula-hoops, circles made from string or other targets

Rope or chalk to make a “casting line” marker

### **Instructor References**

Fishing, Getting Started booklet

Practice Make Perfect

**Time:** 20 minutes

## Content

## Teaching Method

### Set-Up

A field, gym or other large area must be set aside before the casting practice session. Establish and mark a “casting” line and set up hula-hoops or targets at varying distances. Rods should be rigged with casting plugs ahead of time.

### Casting Techniques

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Casting with the spincasting rod is very easy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Face forward and keep your feet planted about shoulder width apart.</li><li>2. The key to a good cast is in the arm and wrist, not the feet.</li><li>3. You control the cast just by pressing and letting go of the thumb button.</li><li>4. Remember to look behind you and make sure there are no obstacles in the way.</li></ol> | <p>Lecture and demonstration</p>                                    |
| <p>B. The overhead cast is best when space is limited (and it is the cast we recommend you use for practice).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Point at the target.</li><li>2. Draw the rod back just past a vertical position.</li><li>3. Allow the rod to flex.</li><li>4. Start forward without pausing.</li><li>5. Release line and follow through.</li></ol>   | <p>Demonstrate the overhead cast, aiming for one of the targets</p> |
| <p>C. The sidearm cast is best when there is plenty of room between anglers and there are no overhead obstructions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Point rod toward the target.</li><li>2. Draw the rod back, allowing it to flex behind and to the side of you.</li><li>3. Bring the rod forward without pausing.</li><li>4. Release line and follow through.</li></ol>  | <p>Demonstrate the sidearm cast, aiming for one of the targets</p>  |

## CASTING PRACTICE

- A. Divide the students into approximately five groups and have them line up single file (as in a relay race). Lecture
1. The first student at the front of the line will be handed a rod and have an opportunity to cast at the targets. Hands-on activity
  2. Each person will get five casts. Evaluate competency of the
  3. After five casts, he or she will move to the back of the line and give the next person a turn. students

### **Casting Olympics** (only if time allows)

- A. Set-up a casting area and arrange the hoops at a variety of distances from the casting line. Hands-on Activity
- B. Divide the group into teams of four or five students.
1. Each team should select a name, such as “The Muskies” or “The Stoneflies.”
- C. Designate five casting stations, one for each target.
1. Each team should go to a different station. Teams should also select a member to start the contest.
- D. Each team member will get two chances to land a "bull's-eye" into the target (bounce-outs do not count).
- E. The team with the highest number of bull's eyes wins the “Olympics.”
1. You may wish to award prizes (candy or stickers) to the winning team members.

## **Fishing**

### **Theme**

The best way to learn about fishing is to experience it first hand.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Bait a hook.
2. Demonstrate the ability to fish independently.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

First aid kit

Throw bag or throwable PFD in case of emergency

One instructor tackle box with scissors, spare tackle, pliers, etc.

Rods that are pre-rigged with hook, sinker and bobber

One tackle box for every six students (hooks, sinkers and bobbers)

Live bait (worms or night crawlers)

Assortment of “supermarket bait” (corn, cheese, dough balls, etc.)

Whistle

### **Instructor References**

Care of the Catch

Fishing, Getting Started booklet

Knotes on Knots

Know Your Sunfish

How to Rig a Minnow

Let's Go Fishing in Pennsylvania

Nightcrawlers

Pennsylvania Fishes Identification Guide

Pennsylvania Summary of Fishing Regulations and Laws

PLAY: Any Issue

Pocket First Aid Kit

Put 'em Back Alive

Supermarket Baits

Why Fish Strike

**Time:** 1 hour

## **Content**

## **Teaching Method**

### **Set-Up**

Each participant will get to borrow one fishing rod. Rods should be rigged with hook, sinker and bobber before the fishing session. Extra pre-rigged rods should be kept on hand to replace those that break or become heavily tangled. Instructors and helpers should make themselves available to assist with baiting hooks, tying on new hooks and removing fish.

### **All About Fishing**

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| A. Several guidelines must be reviewed before the fishing session.  | Lecture and discussion |
| 1. Review the SMART concept and stress safety.<br>2. It is OK to spread out, but all participants must remain within sight of the instructor.<br>3. We understand that tackle will sometimes break or get lost, but treat our equipment as if it were your own.<br>a. If something breaks, please let us know so we can fix it.<br>b. Keep track of all your tackle and don't forget to return it when the session is over.<br>4. The "whistle" means the fishing session is over.<br>a. Students must return promptly with their tackle in the same condition that it was given to them. | Question and Answer    |
| B. Fishing is meant to be a relaxing sport. You don't catch fish with every cast.<br>1. Patience is very important.<br>2. Use the quiet time to think about what life is like for a fish (where it lives, what it eats, etc.)<br>a. Thinking like a fish will help you catch more fish!   | Lecture and discussion |

## Using Bait

- A. One of the ways you can improve your chances of catching fish is by using live bait. Discussion
1. Although a lure will sometimes work well, live bait is usually a sure bet and it's what fish are used to eating all the time.
    - a. Nightcrawlers, minnows, maggots, grubs, crickets and crayfish all work well.
    - b. Nightcrawlers or worms are usually your best bet.
  2. Remember to take good care of your bait so that it will be fresh and lively.
    - a. Keep bait cool and out of the sun.
- B. Baiting a hook is easy.
1. Grab the worm and carefully place it on the hook. Demonstrate using a rubber worm
  2. Give it a try.
    - a. Use cheese or corn, if you don't like worms.

## Unhooking and Releasing Fish

- A. Once you have hooked a fish, you must bring it in. Discussion
1. Reel in slowly, depending on the size of the fish and the tackle you are using.
  2. With the fish close at hand you have a choice.
  3. Do you keep it or let it go (release it)?
  4. The hook is removed with the same technique either way. You should keep the fish in the water as much as possible if you plan to release it.
  5. Remove the hook the same way it went in.
    - a. Small needle nose pliers help you get a good grip on the hook.
    - b. Be careful when holding sunfish! They have spines located on their backs that are sharp!
- B. If the fish is going to be kept, place it on a stringer or in a bucket or cooler.
1. Some anglers will kill the fish before placing it in the cooler.
    - a. Give the fish a rap on the top of the head with the handle of a knife or pliers.

- C. You will want to release your fish if they are out of season, not the legal size or if you have enough to eat. Some anglers also release fish for conservation reasons, so there will be more of them to catch on another day. Remember the following rules if you plan to release your catch:
1. Time is important. Bring the fish in quickly and unhook it quickly.
  2. Keep the fish in the water as much as possible and handle it only with wet hands.
  3. If the hook is in deeply (not in the mouth), just cut the line near the fish's mouth.
  4. If the fish is not ready to swim away on its own, gently move it back and forth in the water until it can.
  5. Following these rules won't guarantee that every fish you put back will live to be caught again, but it will sure help!
- Demonstrate proper handling and release technique

### **Fishing Session**

- A. Review boundaries on the areas where the participants can fish and set time limits. Hands-on activity
- B. Remind participants to return the equipment in the same condition that it was given to them.
- C. Disperse for fishing and don't forget to fish the SMART way. Instructors and adults should circulate among the children to provide assistance
- D. Give a 5-minute warning, which will allow participants enough time to wrap up and return their equipment.

## **Wrap-Up**

### **Theme**

Wrap-up and conclusion to 2½-hour class

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Recall what SMART stands for.
2. List SMART behaviors that occurred during the fishing session.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

2½-Hour SMART Angler Packet

### **Instructor References**

Are You a SMART Angler?

PLAY: Any issue

**Time:** 15 minutes

| Content  | Teaching Method     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Wrap-up</b>   |                     |
| <p>A. Review what the letters of SMART stand for.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can any of you give specific examples of SMART behaviors that you saw today?</li> </ol>  | Question and answer |
| <p>B. Manners are a very important part of the SMART concept. We will take a minute to police the area and make sure that there is no equipment or litter lying about.</p>   | Discussion          |
| <p>C. Pass out 2½-Hour Packet. The following items are included in the packet.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PLAY Newsletter <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. PLAY stands for Pennsylvania League of Angling Youth. It's filled with lots of fishing information and fun activities.</li> <li>b. You or your parents must complete and return the application on the last page to receive this free newsletter.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Sticker ruler to measure your fish.</li> <li>3. Litter bag for future fishing trips.</li> </ol> |                     |

## **Chapter 5: The 6-Hour SMART Angler Class (All Day or Camp)**

|    | <b><u>Lesson Plan</u></b> | <b><u>Time</u></b> |
|----|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Welcome and Introduction  | 30 minutes         |
| 2. | Aquatic Ecosystems        | 1½ hours           |
| 3. | S.M.A.R.T.                | 20 minutes         |
| 4. | Equipment and Knots       | 40 minutes         |
| 5. | Lunch                     | 1 hour             |
| 6. | Casting Practice          | 30 minutes         |
| 7. | Fishing                   | 1 hour             |
| 8. | Wrapup                    | 30 minutes         |

## **Welcome and Introduction**

### **Theme**

An introduction to instructors, Fish & Boat Commission and the SMART Angler Fishing Program.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Describe the day's events.
2. Identify the agency responsible for fishing and boating in Pennsylvania.
3. Identify two of the Commission's responsibilities.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

Sign-up Sheet

Name Tags

Aquatic Charades lesson plan (4-H, page 121)

Aquatic field guide or reference book

### **Instructor References**

Fish Scale Sketch

**Time:** 30 minutes

## **Content**

## **Teaching Method**

### **Welcome and Introduction**

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| A. Welcome the group and introduce instructors and volunteers. | Discussion |
| B. Pass out a sign-in sheet.                                   |            |
| C. Pass out nametags.  |            |

### **What is a SMART Angler Class?**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| A. Today you will be participating in a SMART angler class.   | Discussion |
| B. Everyone will learn about aquatic ecosystems and how to fish the SMART way. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Included are some fun activities, casting practice and a chance to fish.</li><li>2. Everyone will get a “goody” bag at the completion of the class and a free subscription to the Pennsylvania League of Angling Youth (PLAY) Newsletter).</li></ol>  |            |
| C. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission sponsors SMART angler classes. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. It is responsible for fish, aquatic macroinvertebrates, reptiles and amphibians, and regulates fishing and boating activities in our state.</li><li>2. It was established in 1866 to return shad to the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers.</li><li>3. A lot has changed since then. The responsibilities have grown and today it:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Manages fish hatcheries and stocks fish.</li><li>b. Enforces fishing and boating laws.</li><li>c. Protects aquatic resources.</li><li>d. Educates the public about aquatic resources, fishing and boating.</li></ol></li></ol> | Discussion |
| D. This SMART Angler Class and other educational programs are supported by funds from license sales and the federal taxes you pay on fishing equipment.   |            |

### **Icebreaker Activity**

A. Conduct an icebreaker activity.

Aquatic Charades (4-H, page  
121)

## Aquatic Ecosystems

### Theme

Knowledge of aquatic ecosystems is an important fishing skill.

### Objectives

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

#### Watersheds:

1. Build a model watershed.
2. Describe a drainage basin.
3. Describe factors about landscapes, which influence the path that water takes.
4. Explain what is meant by the statement “We all live downstream.”
5. Describe how land use can influence aquatic habitats.

#### Water habitats:

1. Classify different kinds of aquatic habitats.
2. Use a flow chart and/or scientific key.

#### Communities:

1. Identify and describe the essential components of habitat (water, food and shelter).
2. Describe the importance of good habitat for fish and other wildlife.
3. Define “limiting factors” and give examples.
4. Recognize that some fluctuations in wildlife populations are natural as ecological systems undergo a constant change.
5. Define carrying capacity.

#### Critter identification:

- a. Develop and use a dichotomous key.
- b. List general characteristics of fish.
- c. List the distinguishing characteristics of fish families.

### Suggested Course Materials

Build a Watershed lesson plan (4-H, page 65)

Newspaper, garbage bag, spray bottles, food coloring or Kool-Aid and Water

Water, Water Everywhere lesson plan (4-H, page 75)

Drawing of habitat flow chart on chalkboard or bulletin board, duplicates of habitat cards, pictures of aquatic habitats, copies of flow charts and keys

Go Fish lesson plan (4-H, page 105)

Paper, chalkboard or flip chart, markers and play area or gym

Getting to Know Your Local Fish lesson plan (4-H, page 41)

Pieces of fruit, pencils, easel pad or chalkboard and markers or chalk

Fish Wall Charts

## **Instructor References**

All About Fish  
Caddis Flies  
Clams and Mussels  
Critter Collectors  
Dragons and Damsels  
Fish Get Sick, Too  
Fish Nests  
Fish Parts  
Great Fishing Needs Great Habitat  
How to Make a Largemouth Bass  
Mayfly  
PLAY: April Showers Bring May Flowers  
PLAY: Misunderstood Minnows  
PLAY: Natural Symbols of the Keystone State  
PLAY: Why Fish Need Trees  
Pond and Stream Study Guide  
Snails  
Stoneflies

**Time:** 1½ hours

## **Content**

## **Teaching Method**

### **Ecosystems**

The instructor will have time to complete four different activities during the aquatic ecosystem portion of this 6-hour class. The selected activities focus on watersheds, water habitats, communities and critter identification. The instructor has the option of conducting Aquatic Adventures (4-H, page 101) or Critter Collectors (4-H, page 124) as an alternative to the four activities. Either of these activities will take the entire allotted time.

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| A. Understanding aquatic ecology is an important skill for an angler to have. Knowledge of watersheds, habitats, habitat components and aquatic critters will help you become a better angler and answer the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Which is the best bait or lure to use?</li><li>b. Where are the fish today?</li><li>c. Where is the best place to fish on a lake, pond, river or stream?</li><li>d. Where do I go to catch certain fish like bass, trout or catfish?</li></ol> | Discussion |
|---|------------|

### **Watersheds**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| A. The landscape around us has an influence on the path that water takes. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Understanding how the land influences aquatic habitats can help us figure out where to go fishing.</li></ol> | Discussion<br><br>Build A Watershed (4-H, page 65) |
|---|--|

### **Water Habitats**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| A. There are many different types of aquatic habitats. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Knowledge of different habitats can help an angler figure out the types of fish that live in those habitats and where they can be found in that habitat.</li></ol> | Discussion<br><br>Water, Water, Everywhere (4-H, page 75) |
|--|---|

### **Communities**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| A. Let's do a fun activity, which demonstrates the influence of habitat components on aquatic animals | Discussion |
|---|------------|

like fish.

1. The activity will also demonstrate how a fish population fluctuates and how habitat determines carrying capacity or the number of fish that it can support.

Go Fish (4-H, page 105)

### **Critter Identification**

- A. An important skill of the angler is to be able to identify the fish you are trying to catch.
  1. But sometimes it's hard to remember all of them. That is why knowing the identification of a fish is not as important as knowing how to identify a fish.
    - a. Many anglers will use a key or reference guide to help them.
    - b. Anglers will also learn and remember certain features to help them "lump" fish into groups or families (like catfish, trout, bass).

Discussion

Getting To Know Your Local Fish (4-H, page 41) or  
Fashion a Fish (4-H, page 35)

## S.M.A.R.T

### Theme

The best way to fish is the SMART way. SMART is the acronym for safety first, manners are important, appreciate clean water, release some of your catch and teach others to be SMART anglers.

### Objectives

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

- A. Identify what each letter in the word SMART represents.
- B. List one example of a good behavior related to each of the following:
  - 1. Safety
  - 2. Manners
  - 3. Appreciation of clean water
  - 4. Releasing your catch
  - 5. Teaching others

### Suggested Course Materials

Chalkboard or easel pad  
Markers  
One fishing rod, pre-rigged with casting plug  
One fishing rod, pre-rigged with hook

### Instructor References

Are you a SMART Angler?  
Care of the Catch  
Cold-Water Safety  
Floaters and Fishermen  
The Golden Rule  
Put 'em Back Alive  
Reach, Throw, Go  
Springtime Stream Dangers  
Staying Safe in Winter Weather  
The Toolbox: Water Safety  
Wading Safely  
Why do We Have Fishing Regulations?

**Time:** 20 minutes

## Content

## Teaching Method

### What is a SMART Angler?

- A. S.M.A.R.T. stands for:
1. Safety first.
  2. Manners are important.
  3. Appreciate clean water.
  4. Release some of your catch.
  5. Teach others to be SMART anglers.

Discussion

Write the word SMART on chalkboard or easel pad and add what each letter stands for as the talk progresses

### Safety Always Comes First

- A. Be careful around lakes streams and piers.
1. Don't run when carrying a fishing rod.
  2. Stay back from the slippery bank edges.
  3. Remember that cold water calls for extra caution.
  4. Wear your life jacket. It floats—you don't.
- B. Be extra careful when wading.
1. Use waders with a felt bottom.
  2. Use a wading stick.
  3. Watch for slippery rocks, sticks and deep holes.
- C. Be careful when casting.
1. Check behind you before casting.
  2. Keep a rod's length from people, trees and objects.
- D. Handle hooks and fish carefully.
1. Always secure the hook to your rod when not fishing.
  2. Learn how to remove an embedded hook.
  3. Watch out for those sharp fins on fish.

Discussion

Question and answer

Demonstrate "casting safety zone"

Demonstrate how to secure hook and carry rod

### Manners Are Important

- A. Anglers need to have good manners toward other people.
1. Ask permission from and respect landowners.
  2. Help anglers when in need.
  3. Give others plenty of space.
  4. Don't yell, boast or brag.

Discussion

Questions and answer

B. Anglers also need to have good manners toward the environment.

1. Don't litter or pollute (obvious trash like candy wrappers and pop cans, and not so obvious like monofilament line, old hooks, etc.)
2. Pick up trash that you find (as long as it is not dangerous like needles, broken glass or poison).

### **Appreciate Clean Water**

- A. Learn all you can about the fish you are after and the places where they live. It will make you a better angler.
- B. Without clean water, there are no fish. Become a conservationist and help do your part to protect our water resources.
- C. Explain some ways that you appreciate clean water.
1. Don't leave litter behind.
  2. Take a bag along and pick up litter.
  3. Recycle fishing line.
  4. Report polluters.

Discussion

Questions and answer

### **Release Some of Your Catch**

- A. It's OK to keep a few fish.
1. Keep only those fish you intend to eat.
  2. Take care of your catch.
  3. Don't fill your freezer to have fish go to waste.
  4. Come prepared to get your fish home.
  5. Make sure you know how to identify your fish and their seasons, sizes and creel limits.
- B. It's also good to let a few go to fight another day.
1. Learn how to release your catch.
    - a. Land the fish quickly.
    - b. Keep the fish in water as long as possible.
    - c. Handle the fish as little as possible.
    - d. Quickly remove the hook.
    - e. Return the fish to water as soon as possible.
    - f. Revive the fish if necessary by gently moving it back and forth in the water.

Discussion

Questions and answer

Demonstrate proper handling and release technique

## **Teach Others To Be SMART Anglers**

- A. The future of our sport is in your hands.
  - 1. We need your support if fishing is to remain a part of our culture.
  - 2. Why not take someone under your “fin” and teach him or her how to become a SMART angler?

Discussion

Questions and answer

## **Equipment and Knots**

### **Theme**

An angler has to have proper equipment and know how to use it to catch fish.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Identify the parts of the rod, reel and hook.
2. Identify miscellaneous tackle like sinkers, bobbers and swivels.
3. Demonstrate how to tie one fishing knot.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

One fishing rod, pre-rigged with hook  
Miscellaneous tackle (hooks, sinkers, bobbers, swivels)  
Pieces of heavy string or old fly line for knot-tying practice

### **Instructor References**

Fishing, Getting Started booklet  
How to Rig a Minnow  
Knots on Knots  
Nightcrawlers  
PLAY: Any Issue  
Spincasting Rod or Spinning Rod: Which is Best for You?  
Supermarket Baits  
Tips on Tip-ups  
Topwater Lures

**Time:** 40 minutes

## Content

## Teaching Method

### EQUIPMENT

During this portion of the 6-hour class, you will have adequate time to go over parts of equipment, knots and rigs in detail.

A. It is important that anglers be familiar with the equipment they are using. The equipment that you will be using today includes: Spincasting rod and reel, line, bobbers, sinkers, snap swivels and hooks.

1. Reel

- a. Thumb stop
- b. Drag control
- c. Crank handle
- d. Front cover

2. Rod

- a. Handle
- b. Finger hook
- c. Guides
- d. Tip

3. Miscellaneous tackle

- a. Hooks
- b. Snap swivels
- c. Sinkers
- d. Floats

4. Bait

- a. Live bait
- b. Commercial baits
- c. Supermarket baits

5. Lures

- a. Spinners and spoons
- b. Plugs
- c. Rubber worms
- d. Flies

Discussion

Questions and answer

Illustration (review and explain the parts and use of each piece of equipment)

Refer to Nightcrawlers, How to Rig a Minnow and Supermarket Baits fact sheets

### KNOTS

A. Tying fishing knots are one of the more important skills for anglers to have. You are more likely to lose fish if you can't tie a good knot.

Discussion

- B. The easiest and quickest knot to tie is the clinch knot.
1. Pass the line through the eye of the hook. Double back and make five turns around the standing line.
  2. Thread the line through the first loop above the eye, and then through the big loop.
  3. Hold tag end and standing line while coils are pulled up. Moisten and slide tightly against the eye. Clip the tag end.

Demonstration

Refer to Knots on Knots fact sheet

- C. Another knot to tie is the Palomar knot.
1. Double about 4 inches of line and pass through the eye of the hook.
  2. Let hook hang loose and tie overhand knot in doubled line.
  3. Pull loop of the line far enough to pass over hook, swivel or lure.
  4. Pull tag end and standing line to tighten. Moisten before fully tightening. Clip tag end.

- D. We will practice these knots for a few minutes until you feel comfortable tying them. Use this as an opportunity to coach or “teach” each other (remember the Teach part of SMART?).

Hands-on Activity

Allow students to practice tying knots. Students should be encouraged to “coach” or teach one another.

## **Casting Practice**

### **Theme**

Casting practice can make you a better angler.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate how to perform an accurate overhead cast.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

At least five spincasting rods, pre-rigged with practice plugs

At least five hula-hoops, circles made from string or other targets

Rope or chalk to make a “casting line” marker

### **Instructor References**

Fishing, Getting Started booklet

Practice Makes Perfect

**Time:** 30 minutes

## Content

## Teaching Method

During this portion of the 6-hour class, you will have adequate time to include the Casting Olympics activity.

### Set-Up

A field, gym or other large area must be set aside before the casting practice session. Establish and mark a “casting” line and set up hula-hoops or targets at varying distances. Rods should be rigged with casting plugs ahead of time.

### Casting Techniques

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| A. Casting with the spincasting rod is very easy. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Face forward and keep your feet planted about shoulder width apart.</li><li>2. The key to a good cast is in the arm and wrist, not the feet.</li><li>3. You control the cast just by pressing and letting go of the thumb button.</li><li>4. Look behind you and make sure there are no obstacles in the way.</li></ol> | Lecture and demonstration                                     |
| B. The overhead cast is best when space is limited (and is the cast we recommend you use to practice). <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Point at the target.</li><li>2. Draw the rod back just past a vertical position.</li><li>3. Allow the rod to flex.</li><li>4. Start forward without pausing.</li><li>5. Release line and follow through.</li></ol>   | Demonstrate the overhead cast, aiming for one of the targets. |
| C. The sidearm cast is best when there is plenty of room between anglers and there are no overhead obstructions. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Point rod toward the target.</li><li>2. Draw the rod back, allowing it to flex behind and to the side of you.</li><li>3. Bring the rod forward without pausing.</li><li>4. Release line and follow through.</li></ol>                                    | Demonstrate the sidearm cast, aiming for one of the targets   |

### **Casting Practice**

- A. Divide students into approximately five groups and have them line up single file (as in a relay race).      Lecture
1. The first student at the front of the line will be handed a rod and have an opportunity to cast at the targets.      Hands-on activity
  2. Each person will get five casts.
  3. After five casts, he or she will move to the back of the line and give the next person a turn.      Evaluate competency of the students

### **Casting Olympics**

- A. Set up a casting area and arrange the hoops at a variety of distances from the casting line.      Hands on Activity
- B. Divide the group into teams of four or five students.
1. Each team should select a name, such as “The Muskies” or “The Stoneflies.”
- C. Designate five casting stations, one for each target.
1. Each team should go to a different station. They should also select a member to start the contest.
- D. Each team member will get two chances to land a "bull's eye" into the target (bounce-outs do not count).
- E. The team with the highest number of bull's eyes wins the “Olympics.”
1. You may wish to award prizes (candy or stickers) to the winning team members.

## **Fishing**

### **Theme**

The best way to learn about fishing is to experience it first hand.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Bait a hook.
2. Demonstrate the ability to fish independently.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

First aid kit  
Throw bag or throwable PFD in case of emergency  
One instructor tackle box with scissors, spare tackle, pliers, etc.  
Rods that are pre-rigged with hook, sinker and bobber  
One tackle box for every six students (hooks, sinkers and bobbers)  
Live bait (worms or nightcrawlers)  
Assortment of “supermarket bait” (corn, cheese, doughballs, etc.)  
Whistle

### **Instructor References**

Care of the Catch  
Fishing, Getting Started booklet  
Knotes on Knots  
Know Your Sunfish  
How to Rig a Minnow  
Let's Go Fishing in Pennsylvania  
Nightcrawlers  
Pennsylvania Fishes Identification Guide  
Pennsylvania Summary of Fishing Regulations and Laws  
PLAY: Any Issue  
Pocket First Aid Kit  
Put 'em Back Alive  
Supermarket Baits  
Why Fish Strike

**Time:** 1 hour

## **Content**

## **Teaching Method**

### **Set-Up**

Each participant will get to borrow one fishing rod. Rods should be rigged with hook, sinker and bobber before the fishing session. Extra pre-rigged rods should be kept on hand to replace those that break or become heavily tangled. Instructors and helpers should make themselves available to assist with baiting hooks, tying on new hooks and removing fish.

### **All About Fishing**

- A. Several guidelines must be reviewed before the fishing session.
1. Review the SMART concept and stress safety.
  2. It is OK to spread out, but all participants must remain within sight of the instructor.
  3. We understand that tackle will sometimes break or get lost, but treat our equipment as if it were your own.
    - a. If something breaks, please let us know so we can fix it.
    - b. Keep track of all your tackle and don't forget to return it when the session is over.
  4. The "whistle" means the fishing session is over.
    - a. Students must promptly return with their tackle in the same condition that it was given to them.
- B. Fishing is meant to be a relaxing sport. You don't catch fish with every cast.
1. Patience is very important.
  2. Use the quiet time to think about what life is like for a fish (where it lives, what it eats, etc.)
    - a. Thinking like a fish will help you catch more fish!

Lecture and discussion

Question and Answer

Lecture and discussion

## Using Bait

- A. One of the ways you can improve your chances of catching fish is by using live bait. Discussion
1. Although a lure will sometimes work well, live bait is usually a sure bet and it's what fish are used to eating all the time.
    - a. Nightcrawlers, minnows, maggots, grubs, crickets and crayfish all work well.
    - b. Nightcrawlers or worms are usually your best bet.
  2. Remember to take good care of your bait so that it will be fresh and lively.
    - a. Keep bait cool and out of the sun.
- B. Baiting a hook is easy. Demonstrate using a rubber worm
1. Grab the worm and carefully place it on the hook.
  2. Give it a try.
    - a. Use cheese or corn, if you don't like worms.

## Unhooking and Releasing Fish

- A. Once you have hooked a fish, you must bring it in. Discussion
1. Reel in slowly, depending on the size of the fish and the tackle you are using.
  2. With the fish close at hand you have a choice.
  3. Do you keep it or let it go (release it)?
  4. The hook is removed with the same technique either way. You should keep the fish in the water as much as possible if you plan to release it.
  5. Remove the hook the same way it went in.
    - a. Small needlenose pliers help you get a good grip on the hook.
    - b. Be careful when holding sunfish! They have spines located on their backs that are sharp!
- B. If the fish is going to be kept, place it on a stringer or in a bucket or cooler.
1. Some anglers will kill the fish before placing it in the cooler.
    - a. Give the fish a rap on the top of the head

with the handle of a knife or pliers.

- C. You will want to release your fish if they are out of season, not the legal size or if you have enough to eat. Some anglers also release fish for conservation reasons, so there will be more of them to catch on another day. Remember the following rules if you plan to release your catch:
1. Time is important. Bring the fish in quickly and unhook it quickly.
  2. Keep the fish in the water as much as possible and handle it only with wet hands.
  3. If the hook is in deeply (not in the mouth), just cut the line near the fish's mouth.
  4. If the fish is not ready to swim away on its own, gently move it back and forth in the water until it can.
  5. Following these rules won't guarantee that every fish you put back will live to be caught again, but it will sure help!
- Demonstrate proper handling and release technique

### **Fishing Session**

- A. Review boundaries on the areas where the participants can fish and set time limits. Hands-on activity
- B. Remind participants to return the equipment in the same condition that it was given to them.
- C. Disperse for fishing and don't forget to fish the SMART way. Instructors and adults should circulate among the children to provide assistance
- D. Give a 5-minute warning, which will allow participants enough time to wrap up and return their equipment.

## **Wrap-Up**

### **Theme**

Wrap-up and conclusion to 6-hour class

### **Objectives**

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. Recall what SMART stands for.
2. List SMART behaviors that occurred during the fishing session.
3. Describe how habitat influences fishing.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

6-Hour SMART Angler Packet

### **Instructor References**

Are You a SMART Angler?

PLAY: Any Issue

**Time:** 30 minutes

| Content  | Teaching Method     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Wrap-Up</b>   |                     |
| A. Review what the letters of SMART stand for.<br>1. Can any of you give specific examples of SMART behaviors that you saw today?  | Question and answer |
| B. Manners are a very important part of the SMART concept. We will take a minute to police the area and make sure that there is no equipment or litter lying about.  | Discussion          |
| C. Your fishing experience does not have to end here. We encourage you to take advantage of the many other fishing opportunities.<br>1. Our state has countless streams, rivers, lakes and ponds where you can fish. What are some fishing spots near you?<br>2. Consult one of the Commissions maps or contact the Commission to find out about fishing spots near your home.<br>3. There are also tackle loaner sites that will let you borrow fishing tackle. Contact the Commission to find out more information about tackle loaner sites near you. | Discussion          |
| D. Pass out 6-Hour Packet. The following items are included in the packet.<br>1. PLAY Newsletter<br>a. PLAY stands for Pennsylvania League of Angling Youth. It is filled with lots of fishing information and fun activities.<br>b. Your parents must complete and return the application on the last page to receive the free newsletter.<br>2. Sticker ruler to measure your fish.<br>3. Litterbag for future fishing trips.<br>4. Fishing: Getting Started.  | Discussion          |