Backyards & Beyond

Club Leader CURRICULUM

CURRICULUM SAMPLE

Backyards & Beyond Neighborhood Nature Club Curriculum Sample © July 2012, Arizona Cooperative Extension, Arizona 4-H Youth Development
For full curriculum visit http://neighborhoodnatureclubs.arizona.edu/ or contact Arizona 4-H Youth Development, Extension.arizona.edu/4h/

Backyards & Beyond brings to life the 4-H initiative to connect youth with the outdoors, a timely and imperative endeavor spearhead by Dr. Kirk A. Astroth, Director, Arizona 4-H Youth Development, University of Arizona College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Cooperative Extension, *http://extension.arizona.edu/4h/*. This initiative is in collaboration with 4-H National Headquarters, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USA-National Phenology Network, and Children & Nature Network.

The Backyards & Beyond Club Leader Curriculum, Club Explorers' Journal, and Neighborhood Nature Clubs Community Organizational Guide & Tool Kit were developed and written by Suzanne Dhruv, Co-Director, Ironwood Tree Experience, *www.ironwoodtreeexperience.org.*

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If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

~ Rachel Carson

A Sense of Wonder

Club Leader Curriculum

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A 4-H WELCOME

Dear Neighborhood Nature Club Leader, Parent, Grandparent, or Mentor:

Welcome to **Backyards & Beyond**, a national 4-H initiative to connect youth with the outdoors, in natural areas near where they live. Your interest and enthusiasm to explore, discover, and share nature with youth of all ages are timely and necessary. Your involvement strengthens an international movement to inspire children and youth, with their families, friends, and neighbors, to go outside where they can spend quality time in nature. Doing so improves personal health and wellness; fosters good neighbors; increases knowledge and understanding of place, as well as environmental awareness and affinity; and enhances youth civic and environmental action and leadership. Best of all, it is naturally fun for everyone.

Backyards & Beyond builds upon a strong 4-H tradition of environmental education and outdoor programming. Inspired by Richard Louv's book, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder (2005), **Backyards & Beyond** invites neighborhood nature clubs to explore and discover the great outdoors close to home, throughout the neighborhood and community, and beyond!

Supporters of this effort are Arizona 4-H, 4-H National Headquarters, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USA-National Phenology Network, and Children & Nature Network. These organizations are forging a future that unites children, youth, and adults and the natural world.

Thank you for joining the movement. **Happy Trails!**

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INTENTION OF BACKYARDS & BEYOND

At its heart, **Backyards & Beyond** connects youth with the outdoors through creative, active, and meaningful experiences in nature. To create these connections this 4-H program provides guidance to start a neighborhood nature club—a club with the motto, "Get into the outdoors." Read Neighborhood Nature Clubs Community Organizational Guide & Tool Kit to start your club today.

The Backyards & Beyond Club Leader Curriculum is designed as a network of neighborhood "nature trails" with outdoor activities led by a dedicated youth or adult, whom we call the Neighborhood Nature Club Leader. Neighbors of all ages who join the club are called Club Explorers. Together, they explore the outdoors, in natural areas near where they live and document their discoveries, reflections, and questions in the Backyards & Beyond Club Explorers' Journal.

Club Explorers are active in nearby habitats that thrive in backyards (or front yards or side yards), along sidewalks and alleyways, within neighborhood lots and fields, and throughout the community. They discover the sights, sounds, scents, textures, and tastes of the natural world. They explore and reclaim natural places and shared spaces where they can play safely and create freely; construct forts; discover wildlife; observe butterflies, ants, or flowers; measure and record rainfall or snowfall; and plant a community garden or care for wildlife habitat. Club Explorers initiate and contribute to environmental projects and scientific research, and they conserve natural resources. They hone leadership skills and truly become environmental stewards. This connection with the outdoors can endure throughout their life, and beyond their neighborhood.

Weaving it all together, youth, with their family, friends, and neighbors, share experiences and inspire others to "get into the outdoors."

The intention to connect youth with the outdoors is coupled with the needs to

- nurture a child-nature relationship;
- inspire a sense of wonder;
- instill a sense of place;
- engage youth in environmental action and develop environmental leadership.

Child-Nature Relationship

As rain falls, a child skips from one puddle to another. She spies a toad and clumsily attempts to scoop it up in her small hands. It leaps away. Laughing, she tries again. The sound of happiness rises into the air.

Across the street, a group of youth gathers resources from a neighborhood lot. A make-believe home is furnished with a chair, table, and rug—imagined from real-life stumps, branches, and leaves. The table is set with plates, bowls, and food—each made from mud and shaped by hands. Grown-up roles are acted out within this child-created space. Imagination, creativity, and self-expression are practiced.

Further afield, a parent walks with her child along a neighborhood trail from school to home. They notice a flower rising up from a crack in the sidewalk. Looking closely at the petals they see a speck of yellow with eight legs! A spider has made a home. Concerned for its safety the child places a rock beside the flower to keep others from stepping too near. Awareness and affinity for plants and wildlife are strengthened.

These glimpses convey experiences that nurture a child-nature relationship. Through such experiences, children learn more about themselves and others (humans and non-humans), their neighborhood and community, and the natural world.

Children of all ages benefit from quality time outdoors. Youth development and health professionals, educators, scientists, parents, and other community leaders advocate for consistent, diverse, and positive experiences in nature, declaring benefits of enhanced youth health and wellness;

emotional and social development; academic performance (from art to science, and every discipline in between); community pride and engagement; ecological awareness, understanding, and concern; and environmental action and leadership.

To reap these benefits, **Backyards & Beyond** promotes the significance of more time in nature, encouraging youth to go outside on their own, with one other, or in a group; during the day or night; before, during, and after weather events; and in every season. It is with great intention that the activities within this book nurture a healthy child-nature relationship, an everlasting partnership that shines brightly through the years of childhood, and then into adulthood.

Sense of Wonder

During the mid-20th century, Rachel Carson, a beloved aunt, marine biologist, nature-writer, and environmental advocate, shined a light on the importance of inspiring wonder in children. Wonderment is the emotional ingredient that stimulates children to be curious, to question, to explore, and to seek answers; to imagine, discover, and create; and to be awed and excited about the world.

Carson was a firm believer that the natural world, with its ability to incite the senses, was the best medium to inspire wonder. The smell of the ocean, touch of the sand, sound of the waves, sight of a marine critter, and the taste of saltwater were all best received by children (and adults) through personal, sensory interactions. This is true not only within the oceanic environment most explored by Carson, but for all bioregions, ecosystems, and habitats, even urban habitats.

To inspire a sense of wonder in children, Carson suggested the following:

- Go outside.
- Discover through sensory explorations.
- Notice details.
- It's more important to feel than to know.
- Experiences ought to be shared with children and at least one adult who can help them re-discover the joy of nature.

Today, Rachel Carson's words of wonder ring true, calling attention to the benefits of childhood experiences in the natural world. Her words challenge us to behave responsibly, to protect, and to care for all things natural not only in protected areas a distance away, but the overlooked places that are near our homes, in cities, suburbs, and towns.

Sense of Place

Where are you now? Are you settled at home, school, or work? Perhaps you are outside in your yard, neighborhood, a city park, or a protected natural area? These places are part of a community. How do you see your community? What significance and value does your community invoke?

Community represents a place with unique and important ecological, social-cultural, and economic characteristics. To have a sense of place is to be aware of, and to value, these characteristics. A sense of place connects us to our community and motivates us to care for it and protect it.

Backyards & Beyond inspires a sense of wonder in youth and instills a sense of place. As youth explore, discover, and share the natural world they will become aware of the unique and important community characteristics: plants and wildlife; humans (those who came before and those who are here now); bioregions, ecosystems, habitats, and niches; natural events like seasonal patterns, weather, and life cycle events; and natural resources (renewable and non-renewable).

Instilling a sense of place is an exciting educational endeavor that is best reached through direct, sensory explorations over many outdoor experiences. It requires regular and diverse explorations that begin in childhood, yet continues into adulthood.

Environmental Action and Leadership

The **Backyards & Beyond** Club Leader Curriculum has four units that progressively advance the connections youth make with the outdoors. Unit One begins with the development of an awareness and affinity for the natural world; Unit Four calls on youth to make a commitment to environmental action and leadership. Environmental action is the active participation in, and the personal contribution to environmental projects or "green" projects that emphasize environmental education, sustainability practices, natural resource conservation, citizen science, community development, and environmental enhancement. Over many experiences, youth will develop necessary life skills (teamwork, communication, responsibility, and civic engagement) and job skills (project planning, design, implementation, and promotion) to be environmental leaders for their neighborhood, school, community, and planet.

WHAT IS 4-H?

4-H is the youth outreach program of each state's land-grant university and is a part of Cooperative Extension, a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, state governments, local county governments, and tribes. 4-H members are boys and girls who participate in Extension-sponsored educational programs, which are open to all youth regardless of race, creed, color, sex, handicap or national origin.

The goal of 4-H is to educate youth and adults for living in a global and ever-changing world by using the resources of land-grant universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4-H uses educational, learning-by-doing projects, club meetings, community service projects, events and activities for young people and adults as they work toward

- fostering positive self-concept;
- learning decision-making and responsibility for personal choices;
- developing an inquiring mind;
- relating to self and others;
- acquiring a concern for communities—local and global.

The emblem of the 4-H program is a green four-leaf clover with a white "H" in each leaf. The four "H's" stand for Head, Heart, Hands and Health and represent ways to develop the five life skills.

HEAD: Learning to think, make decisions, understand the "whys," gain new and valuable insights and knowledge.

HEART: Being concerned with the welfare of others, accepting the responsibilities of citizenship in our local and global communities, determining values and attitudes by which to live and learning how to work with others.

HANDS: Learning new skills, improving skills already developed, instilling pride in work and respect for work accomplished.

HEALTH: Practicing healthful living, protecting the well-being of self and others and making constructive use of leisure time.

This four-fold development is vital to every individual. All four of the "H's" should be an important part of the goals youth identify as they participate in 4-H sponsored programs and educational activities.

4-H AND LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Youth development is a process of mental, physical and social growth during which young people prepare to live a productive and satisfying life. Youth development experiences of high quality don't just happen. The best experiences are carefully planned to encourage life skill development while delivering subject matter content, and to achieve specific outcomes.

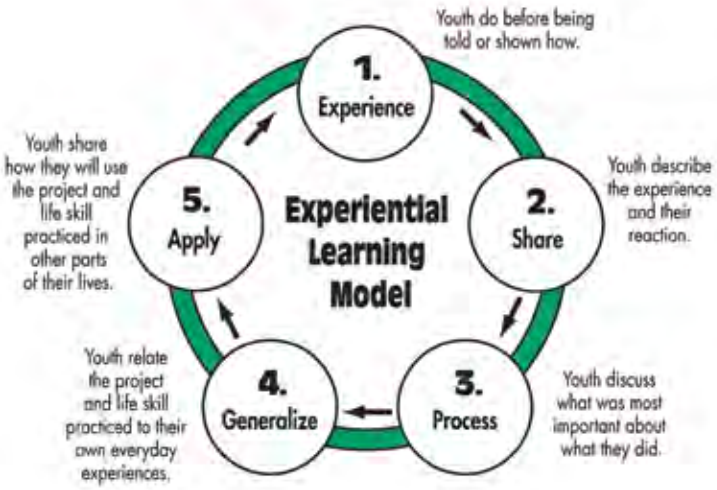
A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Life skills help an individual to be successful in living a productive and fulfilling life. 4-H's Targeting Life Skills Model categorizes life skills on the basis of the four "H's." Each of the four headings includes two general categories of skills:

HEAD: thinking and managing
HEART: relating and caring
HANDS: working and giving
HEALTH: being and living

4-H has identified a number of important life skills in each of the general skills categories (see the Targeting Life Skills Model).

TARGETING LIFE SKILLS MODEL

Iowa State University, University Extension. "Targeting Life Skills Model." *http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/explore/lifeskills.htm* ***(accessed May 9, 2012).***



Pfeiffer, J.W., & Jones, J.E. "Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals" © 1983 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL

The **Backyards & Beyond** Club Leader Curriculum and the Club Explorers' Journal support the experiential learning model endorsed by 4-H. Each curriculum unit emphasizes a Do/Reflect/Apply philosophy, encouraging youth and adults to

1. experience the activity by going outside to explore and discover the natural world near where they live, in neighborhoods, and throughout communities;
2. share the results, reactions and observations of their outdoor discoveries with family, friends, and neighbors;
3. process the experience through activities, discussions, or reflections, or through other creative expressions;
4. generalize to understand how the experience connects with or represents real-world examples;
5. apply what was learned to diverse situations and through consistent practices and experiences outside with others in the natural world.

4-H POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: THE "SIX C'S"

To offer an optimal youth development program, **Backyards & Beyond** includes elements of the recommended six C's.

1. Competence—A positive view of one's actions in the specific areas of social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational development. Competencies within these areas refer to interpersonal skills or conflict resolution skills; decision making; school performance—grades,

attendance, test scores; nutrition, exercise, and rest to keep oneself fit; and work habits and explorations of career choices.

2. Confidence—An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy.
3. Connection—Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in exchanges between the individual and his or her peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.
4. Character—Respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity.
5. Caring/Compassion—A sense of sympathy and empathy for others. In **Backyards & Beyond** this refers to our human society and to non-human life. Researchers theorize that young people whose lives incorporate the 5 C's will be on a developmental path that cultivates a sixth C:
6. Contributions—To self, family, community, and the institutions of a civil society.

4-H NATIONAL MISSION PRIORITIES

Backyards & Beyond is developed in the spirit of the 4-H National mission priorities: science, healthy living, leadership and citizenship, and connecting youth to the outdoors.

Science

The history of 4-H is rooted in citizen science—engaging and empowering youth and adults to understand and apply scientific concepts and techniques while improving communities. To prepare the next generation of scientists, 4-H uses the expertise and resources of the 106 land grant colleges and universities and offers youth opportunities in many fields of science—animal science, ecology, entomology, phenology, water quality, natural resource management, technology, and more.

Healthy Living

As the official youth development program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 4-H strongly promotes healthy living among youth and their families through educational opportunities that optimize physical, social, and emotional wellbeing. With the rise in childhood obesity and sedentary lifestyles, 4-H puts a priority on healthy living programming for improved human health and wellbeing.

Leadership and Citizenship

4-H citizenship is the knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation that give youth the capacity to move beyond one's individual self-interest and to be committed to the well-being of some larger group. 4-H has had an historic commitment to youth leadership and citizenship through citizenship and service learning projects and programs such as the 4-H Citizenship-Washington Focus program, National 4-H Conference, international cultural immersion programs and inter-state exchanges, mock legislatures, and numerous community service projects. Leadership development is a central element of the 4-H experience and develops community leaders for the future.

Connecting Youth with the Outdoors

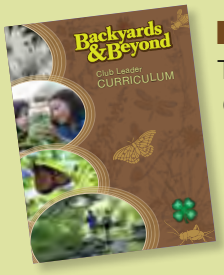
4-H has a strong tradition of connecting youth with the outdoors through such programs as resident and day camps, wildlife education, water conservation, outdoor adventure, forestry, fishing, ATV safety, shooting sports, and many other projects that teach young people about our natural world. While the previous programs have been successful, new strategies and approaches must be developed that will appeal to current and future generations of young people and that are creative, innovative, and interactive. 4-H is putting increased priority on connecting youth with the outdoors through several new initiatives that include the **Backyards & Beyond** Club Leader Curriculum, Club Explorers' Journal, Neighborhood Nature Clubs Community Organizational Guide & Tool Kit, and Family Camp Best Practices: A Guidebook for Youth Professionals.

HOW TO NAVIGATE BACKYARDS & BEYOND

BOOKS

There are three **Backyards & Beyond** books, which complement one another and can be used together or separately.

1. Backyards & Beyond Club Leader Curriculum
2. Backyards & Beyond Club Explorers' Journal
3. Neighborhood Nature Clubs Community Organizational Guide & Tool Kit



LEADER CURRICULUM

The *Backyards & Beyond Club Leader Curriculum* is designed as a network of neighborhood "nature trails" with outdoor activities that are led by the Neighborhood Nature Club Leader. To navigate these trails, note these components:

Sample Neighborhood Nature Trail

The Sample Trail (p. 8) provides an example of a network of neighborhood nature trails. The actual trails to be explored will be up to Club Explorers' imagination and level of adventure.

Trail Units

Backyards & Beyond Club Leader Curriculum has four units with eight trails that progressively advance the connections youth make with the outdoors.

Unit One Backyard Nature Connection
- Trail #1: Sensory Safari
- Trail #2: Seasons' Greetings

Unit Two Neighborhood Nature Trails
- Trail #3: Playing Naturally
- Trail #4: Where Are The Wild Things?

Unit Three Community Natural Pathways
- Trail #5: Natural Treasures
- Trail #6: Growing Naturally

Unit Four Beyond!
- Trail #7: Eco-Action!
- Trail #8: Green Livin'

Trails

Each trail includes one to five outdoor activities. Note these sections:

Trail Guidepost: Review the Trail Guidepost to prepare for each activity. It includes:

- Objectives: Learning objectives
- Trail Location: Suggested places to explore that are close to home
- Exploration Time: Suggested time for each activity
- Gear: Helpful materials and equipment
- Club Explorers' Journal: Corresponding journal entries

Introduction: An introduction to the trail's theme

Background: General information that supports the trail's theme

Go Outside! A how-to-start for Club Leaders and Explorers

Explore: Suggestions on where to explore

Discover: Suggestions on what to discover

Share: Suggestions on how to share discoveries

Reflect: Suggested questions that may prompt Explorers to share stories about their experience

Question: An opportunity for Explorers to ask questions that emerged during the activity

Explore Further: Additional activities or information that may inspire Explorers to go outside more often

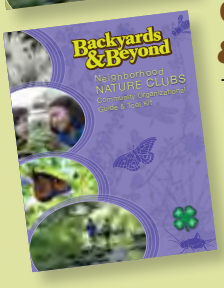
Trail Marker: Marks the end of the trail and measures the learning objectives

Concepts & Words: Outdoor concepts and words are italicized in the text and listed in the glossary

Copy Me Icon: Indicates pages in the Explorers' Journal to photocopy ahead of time for future use.

EXPLORERS' JOURNAL

The *Backyards & Beyond Club Explorers' Journal* is a collective-learning tool for Club Explorers to document their discoveries, reflections, and questions that arise from their time outdoors.



ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDE & TOOL KIT

The *Neighborhood Nature Clubs Community Organizational Guide and Tool Kit* is intended for Club Leaders or others who would like to organize and start a club in their neighborhood. It includes:

- A Club Leader Welcome
- Five Steps to Start a Neighborhood Nature Club
- Go Outside Tips
- Club Explorers' Commitment Pledge
- Nature Event Calendar

UNIT 1
BACKYARD NATURE CONNECTION

If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life.

~ Rachel Carson
A Sense of Wonder

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the natural world with youth of all ages is enjoyable and rewarding. Discovering plants, animals, and other natural features is easy, since nature is literally everywhere—in a city center, suburban neighborhood, or rural area. Within these human spaces, you can find nature right outside the door, in a front yard or backyard, on a balcony or stoop, or in other nearby places. Get into the outdoors, and you'll notice nature close to home!

Animals and plants will take advantage of nearby nature, regardless of the size, shape, or color. Animals and plants thrive wherever they can find food, water, shelter, and space to interact and raise young. Similar to national parks, wildlife refuges, or conservation areas, the places humans live can be havens for certain types of plants and wildlife. Regular outdoor visits will reveal an array of natural beauty and charm.

As a Neighborhood Nature Club Leader, invite Explorers to join a sensory exploration of the signs of nature and an investigation of the seasons. Follow Trail #1 and Trail #2:

TRAIL #1 SENSORY SAFARI

Fine-tune your senses to sharpen an awareness of the natural world.

Trail #1 Activities:

1. Sight Safari
2. Sound Safari
3. Touch Safari
4. Scent Safari
5. Taste Safari

TRAIL #2 SEASONS' GREETINGS

Discover the unique characteristics of spring, summer, fall, and winter and the rhythms of seasonal cycles.

Trail #2 Activities:

1. Signs of the Season
2. Focus on the Season

TRAIL #1
SENSORY SAFARI

Sensory Safari fine-tunes Explorers' *senses* by getting them outdoors right where they live and where they can find and observe animals, plants and other natural features. Awakening the sense of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste inspires a sixth sense, a *sense of wonder* and will lead Explorers to ask, "What is happening outside today?"

BACKGROUND

Safaris are adventurous expeditions usually associated with wild lands in faraway places, where *habitats* are explored in search of large animals like elephants, giraffes, and lions. Trail #1 Sensory Safari is an adventurous expedition too, but in wild lands right outside Explorers' homes. Here, Explorers are in search of natural sights, sounds, scents, textures, and tastes that will lead them to animals, plants, and other natural features that live nearby.

Natural habitats in front yards, backyards, or areas around homes are often surprisingly unexplored, yet great things can live here—like squirrels, ants, birds, flowering plants, and more. These things may go unnoticed by Club Explorers, yet they are always right before their eyes, within earshot, or under their noses. As a Club Leader you can encourage Explorers to be aware of their surroundings by engaging their senses.

Fine-tuning our senses enhances our *sensory awareness* and helps us notice what is happening around us and make sense of our environment. We use our senses to collect information from our environment; then our perception of this information causes us to respond. For example, a strong, hissing sound may be a signal that we perceive as danger. We may respond by calmly and safely stepping away from the sound. The sweet smell of a peach may be a signal that we perceive it to be ripe and ready to eat. We may respond by taking a bite. Or the opening of a bright pink flower may be perceived as a beautiful work of art. We may respond by sharing it with others. How we respond to such signals helps us survive and thrive in the natural world.

When we tune in to nature's signals we notice subtle things such as ants marching in a single file, a bird singing to a potential mate, or the scent of an approaching rainstorm. These *observations* connect us with the natural world, influence how we interact with nature, and open the door to a world of wonder. To strengthen a connection with nature, practice using all five senses and the sixth one too—a sense of wonder!

TRAIL GUIDEPOST

OBJECTIVES

- Practice using the sense of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste
- Find and observe animals, plants, and other natural features
- Demonstrate a sense of wonder through questioning

TRAIL LOCATION

Near to Explorers' homes, in a backyard, side yard or front yard

EXPLORATION TIME

60 minutes minimum

GEAR

Helpful gear: binoculars, collecting jars or bug boxes, colored paint swatches, colored pencils, glue sticks, magnifying hand-lenses

CLUB EXPLORERS' JOURNAL

Journal Entries #1–#7, and ***Nature Discoveries*** (See activities with the "Copy Me" icon for suggested photocopies.)

Start Here, Explorers' Journal p. 2

Photos, Journal Entry #1, Explorers' Journal p. 3

GO OUTSIDE!

- Club Leader: Begin Unit One, Trail #1 with Neighborhood Nature Club Explorers in an outside location near their homes. Choose a backyard, side yard, or front yard, or other nearby natural area.
- Hand out the Club Explorers' Journal and ask an Explorer to read out loud the ***Start Here*** section of Trail #1. ***(See Explorers' Journal p. 2)***
- Share photos of different types of homes where nature can be explored and discovered. Explain that nature is all around in a city, suburb, or rural area and can be noticed when our senses are engaged. ***(See Explorers' Journal p. 3)***
- Engage Explorers in a group discussion about what they already know can be found near their homes. Choose an Explorer to read and record the group's responses to Journal Entry #1 in the Club Explorers' Journal.

JOURNAL ENTRY #1 ***(See Explorers' Journal p. 3)***

- Trail #1, Sensory Safari includes five trail activities:
  1. Sight Safari
  2. Sound Safari
  3. Touch Safari
  4. Scent Safari
  5. Taste Safari

TRAIL #1 ACTIVITY #1 SIGHT SAFARI

Explore

- Lead Explorers on a sensory exploration to see what is happening outside.

Discover

Helpful gear: binoculars, collecting jars or bug boxes, colored paint swatches or colored pencils, glue sticks, and magnifying hand-lenses.

- Find *SHAPES*, *PATTERNS*, and *COLORS* in nature.
- Look high, low, and at eye level to notice the SHAPE, overall form, and outline of a tree, flower, leaf, nest, mammal, bird, insect, or plant. Notice the SHAPE of specific parts of an animal or plant. For example, notice the SHAPE of a bird's beak, feet, head, or wing.
- Engage the Explorers' imagination and creativity! Gaze overhead for animal-shaped clouds, search the ground for heart-shaped rocks, or imagine tree people.
- Seek PATTERNS in nature. Notice distinctive markings or characteristics in nature such as a jagged edge of a leaf, the striped feathers of a bird, or the checkered bark of a tree.

- Challenge Explorers to find multiple colors in nature. Match colored paint swatches or colored pencils with found natural objects.
- Look closely to see details. Help Explorers find something natural to observe up close, like an insect. Use magnifying hand-lenses if you have them. Carefully examine the eyes, wings, legs, antennae, or the belly. An array of shapes, patterns, and colors can be found on one insect. Try other natural objects too. Look closely at a flower, leaf, bird, moth, worm, or rock.

Share

Allow Explorers to record all shapes, patterns, and colors onto the ***Signs of Nature*** notepad in their Club Explorers' Journal. Provide colored pencils to capture the many colors of nature and use glue sticks to adhere small found objects to the page to create a three-dimensional art piece.

JOURNAL ENTRY #2: Signs of Nature

(See Explorers' Journal p. 5)

Reflect

Lead a group storytelling session about the Explorers' experiences with this activity. Ask them:

- What did you see up close that you wouldn't have noticed from far away?
- What did you notice overhead in the sky or in a tree?
- Which color did you see most often?
- Which discoveries were most surprising, enjoyable, or unpleasant?

Question

- Encourage Explorers to write questions that emerged during this activity, or that they would like to answer next time they explore. Write these questions in the Club Explorers' Journal.

Explore Further

- Share ***Butterfly Wings*** with Explorers and then challenge them to discover butterflies of various shapes, patterns, and colors.

Butterfly Wings

Why are butterflies so eye-catching?

Butterflies have scales on their wings that form unique shapes, patterns and colors that are used to attract mates and avoid *predators*.

Some butterflies are *camouflaged* with cryptic wing coloration. Others have an alarming eye-spot pattern to scare away predators.

In some parts of the world, butterflies avoid detection by looking like a leaf. While others show off bold colors of yellow, red, orange and black. These are warning colors that say they taste bad. Some butterflies have transparent or see-through *wing scales* and others have multiple brilliant colors.

The structure of the wing scales scatters light, creating magnificent colors of iridescent blue, green, and purple.

Handle butterflies with care because the scales are loosely connected and come off easily. Capturing a butterfly with your hands may leave a glittery dusting of wing scales on your fingers.

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Backyards & Beyond

Club Explorers' JOURNAL

ACTIVITY SAMPLES

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Backyards & Beyond

Club Explorers' Journal

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Sensory Safari

START HERE. Nature abounds in the places around our homes. We will use our sense of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste to discover animals, plants, and other natural features. We don't have to go far, we can explore right where we are, and we can begin today!

TRAIL #1 ACTIVITY #1 SIGHT SAFARI

DISCOVER
Find shapes, patterns, and colors in nature.

SHARE
Record all shapes, patterns, and colors. Use words, drawings, and tracings, or use glue to attach small natural objects that you found on the ground.

DO JOURNAL ENTRY 2

REFLECT
Tell group stories about your experiences with this activity.

- What did you see up close that you wouldn't have noticed from far away?
- What did you notice overhead in the sky or in a tree?
- Which color did you see most often?
- Which discoveries were most surprising, enjoyable, or unpleasant?

QUESTION
What do you wonder? Write a few questions that came up during this activity or that you would like to answer next time you explore.

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

SHAPES

PATTERNS

COLORS

JOURNAL ENTRY 2

SIGNS OF NATURE

Shapes

Patterns

Colors

Seasons' Greetings

START HERE. We can see the signs of spring, summer, fall, and winter by paying attention to natural events that occur every day, right outside our home. We will explore our environment for seasonal events such as temperature, wildflower blooms, *precipitation*, change in leaf color, and animal *migration*.

TRAIL #2 ACTIVITY #1 SIGNS OF THE SEASON

DISCOVER

Find signs of the current season in animals, plants, humans, and other natural features.

SHARE

Record all the seasonal signs that you observed. Use words or drawings.

DO JOURNAL ENTRY 9

REFLECT

Tell group stories about your experiences with this activity.

- What seasonal signs did you observe?
- What is most enjoyable about this season? Most challenging?
- How does it feel to be outside during this season?
- Which signs are common for this season? How was today similar to the common signs of this season?
- Which animals did you find this season? What are plants doing in this season?
- What do you anticipate will be the common signs of the next season?

QUESTION

What do you wonder? Write a few questions that came up during this activity or that you would like to answer next time you search for seasonal signs.

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

JOURNAL ENTRY 9

SEASONAL SIGNS & OBSERVATIONS

COPY ME

On this date: _____ and in this season: _____,
we observed these signs of the season.

Animals (birds, reptiles, insects, etc.)	Plants
Sounds and Scents	Celestial Bodies (stars, constellations, moon phases)
Shapes, Patterns, Colors	Humans
Textures	Tastes
Forms of Water (ice, snow, flowing water, etc.)	Weather Patterns (rainfall, snowfall, wind, etc.) Temperature