

YMCA Willson Outdoor Center Outdoor Education Curriculum Summary

The curriculum is the core of the student's experience at the Center. The classes chosen can provide students with a sampling of all academic areas or concentrate on a specific focus. Each class is built around the ideas of appropriate teambuilding, YMCA values, and *standardized test concepts*. The staff members strive to include science vocabulary, social studies concepts, and math problems in the entire Willson experience.

Many classes can be taught throughout the year, although some classes are best taught in a particular season. We hope that the program will meet the curriculum guidelines of your school and provide the students with a fun and educational experience to build self confidence and memories. Our staff can facilitate the classes or school teachers can present your favorite camp activities. We have divided the classes into unit topics for you to choose:

CRITTERS ABOUND

AQUATIC STUDIES: Students discuss characteristics of aquatic life. They go to the lake, collect samples, *identify* them under microscopes, and use a benthic macro-invertebrate chart. (Great all seasons, self-discovery oriented.)

DOWN ON THE FARM: Students have the opportunity to meet and greet our farm animals, learning about them individually. We have our own petting zoo, with goats, rabbits, sheep, chickens, and even a pig. (All seasons, outside - great for 4th grade and younger students)

FISHING: Especially great for overnight groups who do not have enough time for everyone to fish during recreation. Students will go to Lake Mac-O-Chee with fishing pole in hand to see if they can catch their "trophy fish." We encourage students not to bring their own fishing equipment as it may be broken. (Sept to mid-Oct), (Mid-April to June) Fishing may also be offered to 12 children at a time during recreation, weather permitting.

HABITAT HUNT: Students will explore Ohio native plant and animal species, and habitats through games, discussion, tracking, and hands-on activities.

HORSEBACK RIDE: This is a highlight for many with a one-hour, single-file, instructor-led ride. Two to three staff supervise each ride. Fourth grade and under will enjoy a Ring Ride and Arena Lesson. Fifth grade and up can hit the trails. There is an additional cost for this class. (See Director, all seasons) Horseback Riding Release form is required for all adults and students.

HORSE SENSE: Students discuss the physical and mental capacities of a horse. They will also learn petting and grooming, roping, and a practice ride. Horseback Riding Release is not required. This is not a trail ride, which is available for an additional charge. (All seasons)

INVENT AN ANIMAL: The class begins with a discussion of animals and their unique adaptations which enables them to live in specialized environments. The students will have an opportunity to create an organism that will be able to adapt to a fictitious environment as described by the instructor. Creations and their different adaptations will be shared with the class. (All seasons)

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS: Using collected live specimens of frogs, snakes, turtles, salamanders, and toads, students learn the *characteristic differences and similarities* between the local reptiles and amphibians. Students will learn the proper handling and care of these animals. (All seasons - indoors)

WINTER BIRDS: Using study skins and discussion, students will better understand the *characteristics* of birds and features that make them unique. The students and staff together will have the opportunity to re-create one of our fowl feathered friends in order to learn more about its habits and specializations. The students also identify common birds of the season at the bird feeders through the "window on wildlife". (November-March - indoors)

THE GOOD EARTH

ASTRONOMY: In this one hour day-time class, students will interact and explore concepts concerning the planets, *eclipses*, *moon phases*, and constellations. One study group at a time enjoys the “night sky” via our star dome. (All seasons, inside)

CONSERVATION: Students are provided with an opportunity to think creatively about environmental issues. They review our planet’s natural resources and some practical conservation ideas. Give students the opportunity to take ownership and help conserve our *non-renewable* resources. (All seasons)

EDIBLE PLANTS: Hiking around the Center, students learn and taste some local edible plants. Some poisonous plants will also be discussed. Edibles can be related to the early Ohio settlers or Survival. Time depending, teas may also be brewed. (Early Fall, Late Spring)

INSTINCTS: Through role-play activities, students learn or reinforce the concepts of *food chains*, the balance of nature, life cycles, and other environmental concepts. (All seasons)

MAC-O-CHEE MANOR: Many *science* and *social studies* topics are rolled into one activity. Give students the opportunity for in-depth decision-making choices about land use. Modeling the roles of various people and animals of the community, students discuss the future land use of Camp Willson. (All seasons, inside)

TREE ENCOUNTER: Students learn to *identify* deciduous trees using leaves and a *dichotomous key* while trying to solve a puzzle. (September to mid October, Mid April to June, 4th grade and up)

TWIG-O-MANIA: Using only buds and branches, students identify trees. Without leaves or fruit, students use a *classification system* and a *dichotomous key* to solve a puzzle. (Late Fall, Winter) (5th grade and up)

WHETHER THE WEATHER: Students use to form a better understanding of how and why the weather changes. The children will look at *air pressure*, *water cycle*, *classification* of clouds and *weather instruments*. (All seasons)

WILLSON ROCKS: Reviewing geologic phenomena, students discuss the *hardness scale*; review the *rock cycle*; and identify *igneous*, *metamorphic*, and *sedimentary* rocks. Try your knowledge on Rock Bingo. (All seasons)

A WALK BACK IN TIME

EARLY AMERICAN CRAFTS FAIR: Students learn some of the crafts and skills that the pioneers used in every day life such as candles, butter making, spinning wool, and much more. All crafts made are for the students to keep. Schools may bring their own supplies or purchase supplies (\$40 fee) from the Center. (Two hours - all seasons)

PIONEER LIFE: *New Format* Students will role-play family groups living in early Ohio. Visit our 1800’s log cabin and use authentic tools. This class will give students a better understanding of the hardships of the frontier life. (All seasons)

SHAWNEE CELEBRATION: A one or two-hour class that focuses on the ways of the Shawnee Indians of the 1700’s. The students will participate in the games, trapping, and sign language of the Shawnee Indians who lived in the Bellefontaine area. As an evening or daytime program, students will then reenact the Treaty of Greenville (1795), through role playing. (All seasons)

PHSYCIS

EGG DROP: We have an “egg-citing” new winter class to combine teamwork and physics. This activity allows small teams to draft and design an enclosure to keep an egg from breaking. We test our structures during the drop from the second story Conference Center porch. (Available December to March)

SKILL AND CHALLENGE

THE BEAST: Working on communication skills, students must build a “beast” by telling one another how it is built. This is similar to the game “telephone”, with the message being passed related to building of the Beast. (All Seasons - good evening program also - inside)

CLIMBING WALL: A rock climbing simulation activity. Paired with Dream Team, students are challenged for two hours. Staff members emphasize teamwork, trust, and cooperation. Available for groups attending 3 days or more. (Outside, weather dependent at camp) Available March 15 - Dec 1.

DREAM TEAM CHALLENGE: Promote the skills of cooperation and communication through a variety of initiatives. Challenge the students to depend on one another and to reason in order to solve mutual goals - an all time favorite. (Outside, All seasons, one or two hours)

ORIENTEERING: The students learn the basics of map and compass work. Using *charts* and simple math, they practice their new skills of paces and degrees on the sports field. (A favorite! All Seasons)

OUTDOOR COOKING: In this one-hour class, students will learn to build a fire, cooking safety, and enjoy eating their simple recipes. (Inside or out, weather dependent)

SURVIVAL: Using communication and cooperation, students discuss and practice survival techniques. We practice skills such as fire building, shelter building, and safety in the woods. (All seasons)

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: Students will have the opportunity to solve mind puzzles and complete a large tanagram. Thinking outside the box and teambuilding solutions are encouraged. (Inside, all seasons)

THE SENSORY EXPERIENCE

THE ENCHANTED FOREST: Using the senses of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell, students learn the importance of each. The class challenges the students to heighten the use of all their senses. Challenge your observation and find the objects in the Unnatural Trail.” (All Seasons)

TREEMENDOUS: Using trees, we will explore our senses of hearing, taste, touch and smell. (Fall, Spring, best with primary grades).

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

Each afternoon, the Willson staff offer a variety of recreational activities. Willson staff present a selection of activities: indoor, outdoor, active, and passive. **Teachers and cabin leaders will have a meeting at this time.** The students choose the activities in which they wish to participate. Some of these activities may include:

Juggling	Sports	Fishing
Horse Grooming	Arts and Crafts	Tobogganing
Hike around the Lake	Capture the Flag	Group Games
Paper Airplanes	Visit the Farm Animals	Minute Mysteries
Dancing or Drama	Rhythm & Drumming	and much more...

EVENING PROGRAMS

You may select one to two activities per night, depending on the length of each. A snack is provided by camp.

ALPHA-BETA: An activity where cultural diversity is explored. Students are divided into 2 groups (Alphas & Betas) and through the exchange of “ambassadors” learn of each other’s society. (Ideal for 60 or fewer students)

ALPHA WOLF: By small groups, students will role-play the communication and activities of wolves. The “packs” must travel together to search for the Alpha wolf. (Daylight savings time only)

BALDERDASH (Liar’s Club): Students are shown a variety of “strange items” and told even stranger stories for each one. They must then decide who is telling the truth. (All seasons)

CAMPFIRE: An all-time favorite singing, skits, and storytelling around the fire. (Inside or out, weather depending)

EARTH DEFENDERS: Laughter and learning are combined as students have the chance to learn about our role as stewards of the Earth outdoor activity. Different characters (staff & chaperones) will interact with them as they go about collecting “Energy Orbs” to save our planet. (Daylight saving time only)

ECODRAMAS: Challenge your students to charades based on ecological concepts. Students act out *science vocabulary* and laugh with each other during the presentations. (All seasons)

EVENING RECESS: Not enough time in your schedule for recreation? Need more of a chance to run? We meet at the Sports Field, to run and play before the second half of evening program, equipment provided.

INDIAN MEDICINE HUNT: A scavenger hunt where students must use their creativity and teamwork to find items that will help keep their “dying chief” alive. (Daylight savings time only)

NEW GAMES: Go outside for classic group games. (Daylight savings time only)

NEWSPAPER PAGENT: Small groups will create new fashions by dressing their adult leader in newspaper for the “big show”. (All seasons)

NIGHT HIKES BY STUDY GROUPS: Students explore the world after dark with stargazing, hiking, stories, and games. School teachers can lead favorite activities. (Eastern Standard time only)

RELAY RACES: Small groups race to build unity and get all participants actively involved and laughing! (Daylight savings time only)

SKIT NIGHT: Give your students the chance to perform and shine! Each cabin group creates a three or five minute skit to perform in front of an audience of peers. (All seasons)

SQUARE DANCE: A true Willson active experience. Students learn traditional dances (like the “Virginia Reel”) from one of our staff callers, while being accompanied by some great dancin’ tunes. (All seasons)

TREATY OF GREENVILLE: A quiet indoor activity, students role play Native Americans and return to 1795 to discuss whether to sell their land to the Americans or keep it and possibly go to war. (5th grade and up)

WHERE’S WALDO: A fun, run-around game where students team up to find all the clues about “Waldo” while running from the laugh-crazy Odlaw before time runs out. (Outdoors, Daylight savings time only)

THE WILLSON RACE: *New* Work together as a team to “travel the world” in search of clues and trivia about your Willson experience. (Outdoors, Daylight savings time only)