

Nature's Classroom

How to weave group management, team building,
and nature-based activities



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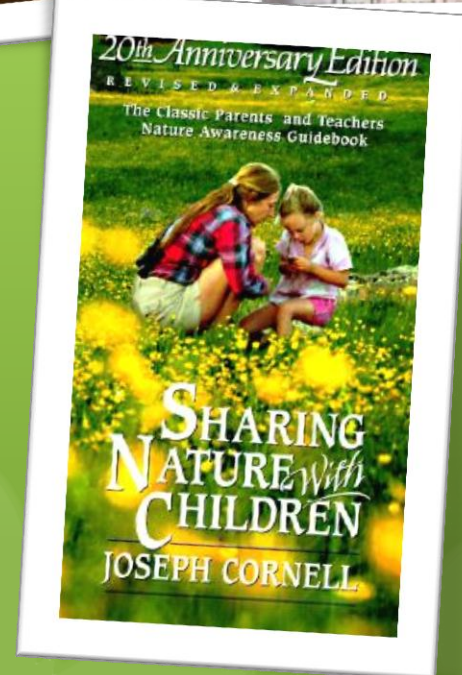
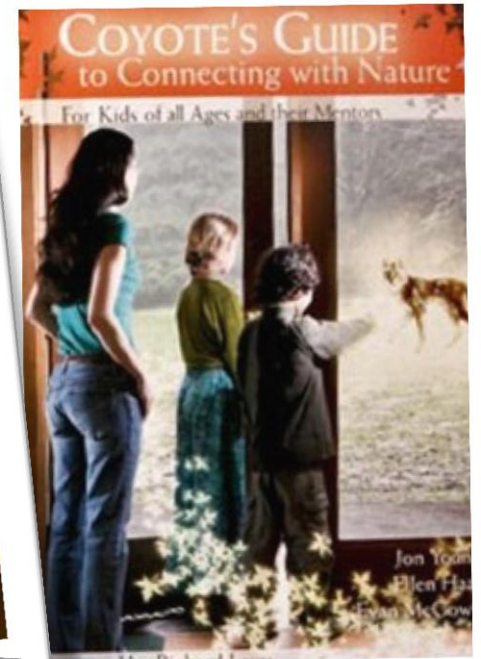
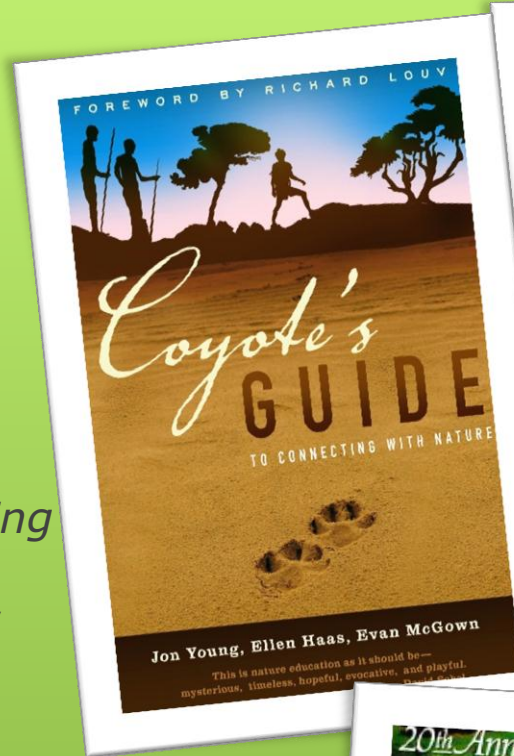
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Resources and Inspiration

❖ *Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature: For kids of all ages and their mentors*, by Jon Young, Ellen Haas, and Evan McGown

❖ *Sharing Nature with Children*, by Joseph Cornell



Field Experience

- ❖ 4th-6th grades at IslandWood outdoor school
- ❖ 14-20 year olds for Teen Eco Action
- ❖ 2nd grade geology at Black Diamond Mines



Ice Breakers

Getting to know you

- ❖ Nature names – good for outdoor school or camp groups

Various ways to do nature names activity

- ❖ “Line up like rocks” – an example for young school group

Helps you to establish group management

- ❖ Hidden Talent – good for high school aged students

Emphasizes confidence building and community



Setting Expectations

Building trust

- ❖ Classroom rules – good for school groups

Remind kids they are still in school, what are the rules?

Quiet signs – coyote, banana slug

- ❖ Community agreement – good for outdoor school/camp groups, and high schoolers

Gives the kids responsibility to the group and to take responsibility for their own behavior

- ❖ Follow through – refer to community agreement

- ❖ Set your own organization-wide rules

Be respectful, be safe, and have fun!



Be Intentional

Set yourself up for success

- ❖ Plan more activities than you could do in the allotted time

Go to materials – whiteboard, bandanas, compass, field guide, binoculars, collecting box/nets

- ❖ Each activity has a purpose or somehow relates back to a central theme or idea



Natural Cycles

Meet them where they're at

Cornell

- ❖ Awaken Enthusiasm
 - ❖ *Energetic/playful*
- ❖ Focus Attention
 - ❖ *Attentive/observational*
- ❖ Direct Experience
 - ❖ *Calm/experiential*
- ❖ Share Inspiration
 - ❖ *Reflective/sharing*



Coyote

- ❖ East – excitement/inspiration
- ❖ Southeast – orientation/motivation
- ❖ South – focus/perspiration
- ❖ Southwest – relaxation/internalization
- ❖ West – harvest/celebration
- ❖ Northwest – reflection/release
- ❖ North – distillation/integration
- ❖ Northeast – end/beginning

Debrief

Story of the day

- ❖ Yes! Circle

Affirm and celebrate all aspects of the day

- ❖ 1 thing learned, 1 thing enjoyed

Evaluate what students got out of the program



Reflect On Your Work

You're awesome

- ❖ Remember to write down or acknowledge what worked and didn't work

Colleagues can be a great place to start for feedback and ideas

- ❖ Celebrate! Reenergize!

Don't forget to pat yourself on the back and remain positive about the work that you do

