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Fishing Equipment & Skills

Youth who are exposed to fishing can learn patience, gain self-esteem, find time for reflection, learn problem-solving skills, and develop an appreciation for the outdoors and for our natural resources.

What Will the Students Learn?

Students will learn how to tie knots, make their own fishing rigs, cast a closed-faced (spin-casting) rod and reel, and select correct baits, lures, and fishing locations based on fish habitats and food preferences.

Fishing is a lifelong activity that takes people outdoors and provides opportunities that develop awareness, knowledge, and enjoyment of ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams. Fishing brings families together and builds friendships by strengthening bonds between those who share experiences and special memories.

Chapter Concepts



Fishing is a strong tradition in Minnesota. Approximately 36 percent of Minnesotans fish, and people from many other places come to fish in Minnesota waters as well. More than two million anglers fish in the state each year.

Anyone can fish. Knowledge of skills and equipment presented in this chapter, combined with concepts learned in each of the previous chapters, make anglers of every experience level more successful. Above all, instructors can ignite students' enthusiasm for the sport of fishing and aquatic stewardship by empowering them with angling skills. Fishing will leave a lasting impression!

Rigs, Rods, and Reels: You Can Keep It Simple!

Lesson 5:1—Freshwater Rods and Reels

Lesson 5:2—Casting a Closed-face Rod and Reel Combo

Lesson 5:3—Pop Can Casting

Lesson 5:7—Making Ice Fishing Jiggle Sticks

Minnesota's more than 5,400 fishing lakes, 15,000 miles of fishing streams and rivers, and 160 fish species offer unparalleled opportunity to explore the benefits of fishing—yet many people never learn to fish. Angling doesn't have to be expensive to be enjoyable. Fishing rigs can be made from pop cans, and bait can be found in your own backyard. One basic fishing knot keeps a hook or lure securely attached to a line, and placing a hook, bobber, and sinker on your line is as easy as can be! Part of the adventure of fishing is discovering how truly simple and accessible it can be.

Light and Sight

Lesson 5:5—Flashy Fish Catchers

What color lure should you choose? Students learn that water quality affects how light travels through water and that the colors that fish can see are affected by water depth. A demonstration shows that turbidity affects the way in which light travels through water. Students use what they've learned to make a lure designed to attract a certain type of fish in specific water conditions.

Baits and Lures

Lesson 5:4—Tackling Your Tackle Box

Lesson 5:5—Flashy Fish Catchers

Students will learn how lures mimic the foods that fish eat. Why would a largemouth bass chase a fluorescent, dancing spider jig? A jumble of items overflowing from tackle boxes can be daunting, confusing, and overwhelming. Deciding which equipment and lures you need in your tackle box is really quite simple—if you select them based on the fish you want to catch and the conditions at your fishing location.

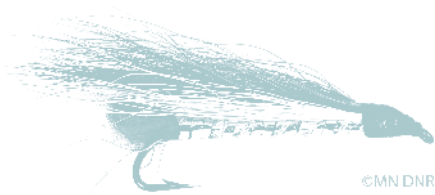
Casting

Lesson 5:1—Freshwater Rods and Reels

Lesson 5:2—Casting a Closed-face Rod and Reel Combo

Lesson 5:3—Pop Can Casting

Safety always comes first when fishing. Students learn to carry a rod and reel and cast safely. They'll learn to cast for cover—to where fish are hiding. With a little practice, students will be able to aim their casts with consistency and accuracy. Pop can casters are a *can*-do activity, and casting a closed-face reel rig is as simple as a jig!



Fly Fishing

Lesson 5:6—Fool Fish With Flies

Students play a card game to learn how flies mimic the various types of food that fish eat. Aquatic macroinvertebrates are an important part of the food chain for fish in streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes. Understanding their life cycles and developmental stages increases anglers' success in catching some types of invertebrate-eating fish in given habitats at certain times of the year. Flies have to be convincing for fish to bite them. Match the hatch and you'll get the catch! Learning what fish eat is an important step in understanding the art of fly angling.

Ice Fishing

Lesson 5:7—Making Ice Fishing Jiggle Sticks

Minnesota winters provide an entirely different setting in which to enjoy the fun and excitement of fishing. Students learn about the special tackle and equipment needed, as well as safety considerations for ice fishing. They make their own jiggle sticks and learn how to rig their lines!

Stewardship: Spreading the Word

Service-learning Appendix

Experiencing the wonders of nature first-hand will endow students with a greater enthusiasm for participating in outdoor activities and a deeper interest in the stewardship of our environment. Capping your fishing unit or program with a service-learning project enables students to share their knowledge of Minnesota fisheries resources, Minnesota fish and fishing skills, and the importance of sustainable use of aquatic and fisheries resources with schoolmates and members of their communities. Your students could choose to teach fishing skills to a group of younger students or

“If people concentrated on the really important things in life, there'd be a shortage of fishing poles.”

—Doug Larson

hold a fishing clinic for families at a neighborhood lake. They could adopt a “grandparent” from a local senior facility, take them fishing, and find out what kind of equipment and lures the grandparent may have used earlier in life and hear Minnesota fishing stories from long ago. They could choose to interview anglers, conduct research, assemble a display illustrating the history of fishing equipment in Minnesota, and present it at a local museum or history center.

It's exciting to see students sharing their enthusiasm for fishing and knowledge of aquatic resources. They can engage others in learning the fishing skills that will “get them in the habitat” and establish deeper connections to the natural world. Those who fish—and wish to continue to do so—learn the importance of resource stewardship. The people that your students encourage during a service-learning project could possibly be inspired to participate in environmental and community action as well, ensuring that future generations of Minnesotans will enjoy the state's rich legacy of fishing.

“Give a person a fish, and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to fish and you feed them for a lifetime.”

—Chinese proverb