

# Piers & Places

## Fishing Along the Shore

By Nadine Meyer, Aquatic Education Specialist

May 2012

[Download this article](#) [PDF](#)



Many of my fondest fishing memories from my youth are from docks and shorelines. I remember the reedy leaves of cattails waving in the wind, the hollow sound of my footsteps on the wooden dock, the pure joy of catching a wriggly bluegill or perch or bullhead, and the calm I felt inside while there. Often I was with my grandmother or mom, but many times I was fishing on my own. Having the freedom to go fishing when I wanted made me feel empowered as a child and helped build my

self-esteem.

The beauty of shore fishing with kids is that it is relatively easy, it is relatively inexpensive, and often accessible for youth even when you are not available to take them fishing. Once you share the basic fishing skills, knowledge, and rules with your youth, they are ready to actively participate in fishing on their own.

### Shore Fishing Skills Basics

- Demonstrating and practicing casting is an essential piece of knowledge you'll need to share. [Lesson 5:2 - Casting a Closed-face Rod & Reel Combo](#) [PDF](#) (21 pages | 2.6 MB) provides easy to follow instructions on safe casting techniques.
- Show the best methods for removing a hook from a snag.
  - Use the fishing line - not the rod - to gently pull on the snagged hook
  - Try to pull the line from the opposite direction that you snagged the hook, even 90 degrees in the opposite direction can help dislodge the hook.
  - Be sure to pull the line away from your body, not towards your body. If the hook releases from the snag quickly it could fly right at you and hook you.
  - If you cannot dislodge the hook safely, cut the line as close to the hook as possible, and tie on new tackle.
- Demonstrate and practice tying a fishing knot. [Lesson 5:2 - Casting a Closed-face Rod & Reel Combo](#) also provides directions on how to tie an Improved Clinch Knot. As your youth master tying this knot you can expand their repertoire. There are many resources available that demonstrate different fishing knots.
  - [Take Me Fishing.org Knot Tying](#)
  - [Animated Knot Tying](#)
  - [Illustrated and animated knot tying](#)
  - You can also do a key word search "Tying Fishing Knots" to find other sources including videos
- Show how to safely remove a hook from a fish and release it or put it on a stringer if you are able to prepare fish for cooking.
  - Catch & Release tips & techniques by the MN DNR: [Trout](#), [Walleye](#), [Muskellunge](#)
  - [Catch and Release Guidelines](#) provided by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Don't forget to show how to bait a hook using a variety of live and fake baits. [Lesson 6:4 - Piscatorial Palate](#) [PDF](#) (14 pages | 1.1 MB) gives suggestions on baits you can try out

and provides an activity to help keep track of your bait's success/fail ratio.

## Shore Fishing Safety

- Give clear boundaries for fishing along a shore of a lake or river. Point out safety hazards such as steep slopes, unstable rocks, slippery mud, and shoreline drop-offs in the water.
- If fishing on a pier make sure your youth are keeping their feet firmly on the platform. Do not allow them to sit or stand on the guard rails. If they cannot reach over the guard rail to hold their rod, show them how to cast and then feed their rod through a lower space in the guard rail so they can sit down to fish.
- Enforce walking and keeping hands to yourself. Pushing, horseplay, and running may lead to accidents and potential hooking. Plus the noise may scare the fish away.
- [Lesson 6:1 - Safety and Fishing at the Water's Edge](#)<sup>PDF</sup> (37 pages | 3.5 MB) provides a comprehensive outline of how to prepare yourself, your students, and your selected fishing location for a safe fishing trip.

## Shoreline Activities

Here are some other activities you can do with your youth while fishing along the shore or on a pier.

[Lesson 1:4 - Water Habitat Site Study](#)<sup>PDF</sup> (43 pages | 8.3 MB) This lesson provides identification keys for aquatic invertebrates, plants, and other organisms found along the shore.

[Lesson 2:3 - Fish Families](#)<sup>PDF</sup> (23 pages | 3.4 MB) Using illustrations of fish, youth learn how to classify common game fish into families.

[Lesson 4:1 - Fishing Regulations and Sportsmanship](#)<sup>PDF</sup> (24 pages | 1.6 MB) Take a little scavenger hunt through the fishing regulations book to familiarize yourself and your youth about the rules for fishing in Minnesota.

## Preparing for Your Fishing Trip

[Lesson 6:3 - Planning a Fishing Trip](#)<sup>PDF</sup> (19 pages | 2.4 MB), gives youth an opportunity to use the [MN DNR LakeFinder](#) and to learn more about the lake they are going to visit using a variety of resources available on the internet.

Our [Featured Fishing Spots](#) include shoreline fishing opportunities in Cook County, this website is updated regularly with new features that include shoreline fishing and fishing piers across Minnesota.