



## Activity Descriptions

### Icebreakers

Icebreakers are energetic games that allow the students to open up, have fun, and feel comfortable with each other, staff, and the camp environment. These games help the participants see that during this retreat they can have fun and learn at the same time, while showing them that Camp Gray is a safe place.

### Full Value Contract

The Camp Gray Staff will introduce a full value contract. This is an agreement made between the staff, students, and chaperones to treat each other with respect, listen intently to one another, participate by the challenge by choice motto, safety, and have fun. The students are empowered to take ownership of their own actions and think about how their individual attitudes can affect the group as a whole.

### Hike

This exploratory hike is designed to teach science concepts, foster awe and wonder in nature, and facilitate group building. Hike groups consisting of no more than twelve students are guided by one of the staff members, who will facilitate the hike activities. These activities may include prayers, games, journaling, and discussions of science concepts. The students are encouraged to take an active role in the hike by leading the group at certain times, pointing out interesting items, asking questions, and most importantly, approaching the hike with a sense of curiosity and exploration. The hike will include an outdoor picnic lunch provided by Camp Gray.

### Choice Time

At Camp Gray, we have the resources to offer the students a time to simply have fun doing things they might not normally get to do at home or at school. That's why we have choice time! During this time, each staff member offers a different activity from which the students can choose. Some typical choice time offerings include arts and crafts, fishing, canoeing, biking, archery, climbing tower, and ultimate frisbee. The variety of choices we offer is able to accommodate the moods, styles, and needs of different types of students. During choice time, Camp Gray staff will be solely responsible for the students; assuming that the 1 adult to 8 student ratio can be maintained, giving teachers and chaperones a much needed hour of rest.

### Afternoon Program

The afternoon program is an environmentally focused activity. Some of the afternoon programs include: a reading and discussion of Brother Eagle, Sister Sky (a book about taking care of the earth in the words of Chief Seattle), "Eco-Skits"(a planning and performance of student-interactive skits concerning environmental challenges), and a short field trip to the International Crane Foundation (ICF). ICF is located 2 miles away from camp and we have formed a partnership with them. We can tour the foundation during the afternoon activity time and stay through normally scheduled free time before dinner. The cost is \$2/student and \$6/adult. Payable to the International Crane Foundation. \*\*Please plan on providing your own transportation to and from the ICF unless previous arrangements have been made with Camp Gray\*\* We are also open to using this time for the teachers to lead an activity with the students.

### Evening Activity

The evening activity is designed for the students to bond and have a little wild and crazy fun. Some of the evening activities may include: Alpha Wolf (a night game in which students in small groups imitate wolf cubs in nature searching for alpha wolves by following howls), Capture the Flag (an active field game of strategy that students love!), a Scavenger Hunt (students travel in small groups around camp using team building skills, map skills, and challenge to find an end location) and a Camp Gray Campfire (a collection of funny skits, jokes, songs, and s'mores). We can arrange the evening activity times to include Mass if your group arranges for a priest.



## Activity Descriptions (cont.)

### Vespers (Night Prayer)

Vespers, or Night Prayer, gives students a chance to wind down and end the excitement of the day with a focus on Christ. Vesper activities may include an interactive candle service concerning the earth, powerful dramas, moving testimonies, and worship songs.

### Morning Praise and Prayer

Morning Praise and Prayer gives students a chance to start the day off with fun activities that praise God. These may include a combination of fun songs, bible verses, skits, stories, and testimonies. Another well-liked activity is a Solo-Hike, in which students get to experience nature while being challenged by different questions on colored cards placed along a trail as they walk alone to meet the rest of the group.

### Eco-Rotations

Eco-rotations offer students a chance to experience environmental stewardship on a more focused level by exploring scientific and ecological topics with a hands-on approach. The sciences are integrated with Catholic teaching by emphasizing our responsibility to care for all of God's creation and bringing up the links between social justice, environmental justice, and our everyday lives. All of the rotations, weather permitting, take place outside. The length of your stay and the size of your group will determine the number of rotations that can be offered. All of our current Eco-Rotations are described below. **In boldface font, you will find a list of standards from the Wisconsin Academic Standards for Environmental Education that are met by each specific eco-rotation activity. Many of these programs cross subject areas and will meet other academic standards too.**

### May the Forest Be With You (Fall, Winter, Spring) **A8.1, A8.2, A8.3, A8.4, A8.5, B8.5, B8.10, D8.2**

In this activity, students will visit two sections of forest that are specifically designated for research as part of the Camp Gray Forest Stewardship Plan. After discussing basic forest ecology and anatomy, the student-scientists work in teams to collect data and record observations on the two woodlots in order to form conclusions that will determine which section has been managed. Students will learn about the indicators of forest health, the value of biodiversity, and the benefits of sustainable forest management.

### "ExStream" Hike (Fall, Spring) **A8.2, A8.4, B8.1, B8.3, B8.6**

On an "ExStream" Hike, students will put on rubber boots to explore Harrison Creek, a stream that runs through Camp Gray. Keeping their eyes peeled for the wonders of God's creation (such as fresh animal tracks on muddy banks and natural clay deposits), students will follow a staff guide upstream. In this activity, students will discuss watersheds and the human influence on water quality.

### Survivor: Camp Gray (Fall, Winter, Spring) **A8.4, B8.1, B8.3, B8.5, D8.5**

Although the students in this activity will not be competing for a million dollars, they will participate in some hands-on activities that teach them how to survive in the outdoors with little (if any!) supplies. The group leader will begin by challenging the students to think creatively and realistically about basic human needs in extreme conditions. Depending on weather and conditions, activities can vary from fire-building to snow-shelter construction. Students will learn outdoor living skills, low-impact camping techniques, and the basic needs of a person in the wilderness.



## Activity Descriptions (cont.)

### Marsh Madness (Fall, Spring) **A8.2, A8.4, B8.1, B8.2, B8.3, B8.5, B8.6, B8.8**

In this activity, students will learn about wetland ecology by visiting a cattail marsh at Camp Gray. Using a dock that extends over the marsh, they will collect water samples to observe and identify its "critters" using handheld magnifiers and identification charts. The students will discuss the important value of wetlands, the four main functions in nature of a wetland, and their plant and animal life.

### Do the "Rot" Thing (Fall, Winter, Spring) **A8.1, A8.4, B8.2, B8.5, B8.10**

Students will learn and think creatively about waste reduction and the science of decomposition. Beginning with a fun story, students will imagine the impact of non-biodegradable waste on the natural world. They will focus on brainstorming ways to reduce garbage in the first place and exploring alternatives to just throwing something away (such as reusing and recycling). Students may get a hands-on experience with Camp Gray's compost system in which much of our food waste is turned into useable soil.

### You Have a Voice (Fall, Winter, Spring) **A8.1, B8.5, B8.10, C8.1, C8.3, D8.4**

In this role-playing activity, students will explore the issues involved in land use and development. Designed to illustrate both the value of natural ecosystems and the need for new housing, industrial facilities, and commercial buildings, students will take on characters in a mock political meeting about the "imaginary" development of Camp Gray's land. Using critical thinking skills to address multiple perspectives of a debate, students will learn about urban sprawl and the political and legislative processes of preserving natural areas.

### Group Initiatives/Team Building (Fall, Winter, Spring) **B8.5, B8.10, C8.1**

Students will apply teamwork and problem-solving skills to accomplish their mission in selected ecologically-oriented scenarios. These teambuilding initiatives will challenge students to think creatively ("outside the box") and communicate clearly and effectively with each other. After the students complete the initiatives, leaders will facilitate discussion processing the activities and focusing on enhancing group dynamics. Each student will discover how to use the individual gifts they have been given as members of God's creation for servant-based leadership according to Luke 22:26, "Let the greatest among you be the least, the leader as the servant."

### You Can Make a Difference (Fall, Winter, Spring) **A8.1, B8.5, B8.10, C8.1, D8.4**

Students will be exposed to environmental "hot topics", primarily recycling, but may include: air pollution, transportation issues, health of rainforests, etc. Students will participate in a game learning about what can and cannot be recycled. Students will also hear stories about common everyday people taking steps to make a difference. In small groups, students will have the opportunity to discuss how they can take steps to make a difference in their community and for the environment. Students may be given the chance to write letters to restaurants, legislators, companies, etc. describing what they have learned at Camp Gray and suggest a change in the way they do business to help the environment: one of our school groups in Fall 2004 wrote to Culver's restaurant encouraging them to recycle the cups they sell sundaes in since they are made of recyclable plastic. Please let us know if you have an idea for you school!

### Alien Invaders (Fall, Spring) **A8.1, A8.2, A8.3, A8.4, A8.5, B8.3, B8.5, D8.2**

Students will learn about invasive species by exploring 3 different parts of the Camp Gray forest. Students will have the opportunity to discuss what invasive species can do to an ecosystem and why this can be bad. They will also think about how invasive species travel from



## Activity Descriptions (cont.)

one place to another. Finally, the students will have the opportunity to remove some invasive species from Camp Gray (likely honeysuckle or buckthorn).

### Cranium (Fall, Winter, Spring) **B8.2, B8.3, B8.5, B8.8, B8.10, D8.2**

This new eco-rotation designed in Spring 2006 will focus on the Crane bird family. We will discuss the family as a whole and a bit about the 15 species of cranes. We will focus on hands-on activities while studying the Sandhill Crane species in detail. We will also study habitat, cranes as an endangered species, how they are now removed from the endangered species list, and how humans have positively and negatively impacted the crane family. This eco-rotation is suggested to be joined with a 2 hour field trip to the International Crane Foundation (see afternoon program description and/or talk to your retreat planner for more details).

### Winter Waterland (Winter) **A8.2, A8.4, B8.1, B8.6, B8.8,**

This seasonal program explores the wintertime ecosystem of Lake Jake, a spring-fed pond at Camp Gray. Students will investigate the life that exists beneath the frozen surface of the pond by collecting water samples from pre-drilled holes along the shore. With the aid of handheld magnifiers, they will have the opportunity to observe and identify pond life. Students will learn about the seasonal turnover and cycling of water in a pond, cold-weather adaptations of pond life, and the anatomy of a spring-fed pond.

### Winter Survival (Winter) **A8.2, A8.3, A8.4, B8.1, B8.2**

This winter program takes an in-depth look at the winter environment at Camp Gray. Students will observe how animals survive the winter through conservation of heat and energy and storage of food. Students will also investigate different adaptations that allow animals to survive the winter. Beginning with an activity that demonstrates how some types of nature's insulators are better than others and analyzing the heat conservation lessons that people have learned from nature will give students a better understanding of winter survival. Students will then evaluate different types of shelters before braving the elements and building their own winter shelter. Come bundled up and ready to have fun!

### Closing Activity

This activity wraps up the entire retreat. A staff member will discuss the covenant that God made to Abraham, promising him, "I will be your God and you will be my people." The students will be asked how they plan to uphold their part of protecting our planet, keeping the environment and creation in mind. Each student will get the opportunity to sign "Abraham's Pact," a large white banner with an earth flag in the center bearing the names of all of the other students who have ever participated in an Environmental Stewardship Retreat at Camp Gray. Once our new dining hall is built here at Camp Gray we will hang the banner for display.