Unlocking the Past
leave no trace activities for teenagers

Group Size: Groups of any size
Age Group: 12 and older
Time: Up to 1 hour
Objective: Participants will learn that what they find while outdoors tells a story. If you “leave what you find,” others can enjoy the story, too.
Materials: “Artifacts,” masking tape

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Introduction

(2 to 5 minutes)

Introduce yourself and welcome your participants. Ask how many participants have been hiking, mountain biking, skiing, snowboarding, camping, fishing, rafting or climbing. Ask if they have any favorite outdoor places to visit and why. Ask if they have heard of Leave No Trace outdoor ethics. Explain that Leave No Trace is the information and skills that help us reduce our impacts on the natural places that we visit (e.g. parks, trail systems and campgrounds). Read and briefly describe each principle. This activity will focus on the principle “Leave What You Find.”

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The Activity

(20 to 30 minutes)

Before your group arrives, scatter the “artifacts” in a selected area. Examples include: a broken dish or cup, a rusty tin can, a fence post, natural objects or even camping equipment. When the group arrives, explain that you'd like to learn about what might have happened at this site. Assign them the roles of archaeologists, and tell them that their mission is to look for clues to the past. Point out the boundaries of the search site and give them 15 to 20 minutes to scout the area for clues. Give them masking tape to mark the objects that they find.

After the group has finished searching, discuss what might have happened there, based on the clues that they have found. Examples: a broken dish might indicate a home site, or a fence post in the woods might suggest that a pasture once existed.

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Wrap Up

(3 to 5 minutes)

Ask what they could have deduced if none of the artifacts had been there. If you took everything you found home with you today, what would a hiker tomorrow be able to deduce? Discuss the amount of visitors on public lands each year. What if every individual took something home with them? Point out legal restrictions as well, such as the U.S. Antiquities Act. Ask for suggestions on how people can enjoy the “treasures” they find while outdoors, without removing them (e.g. taking a photograph). Explain how the Leave No Trace principles can teach people to lessen their impacts on natural and wild lands, while enjoying the outdoors. Read the seven Leave No Trace principles again. Ask for any last questions and thank them for their time and attention.

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Extension

(10 minutes)

Split the group into two. Allow the first group to view the entire collection of artifacts. Ask the first group to write down what they think might have happened at the site. Once the first group is finished (5 minutes), remove ¼ the artifacts and have the second group visit the site. Ask them to write down what they think might have happened at the site. How do the “stories” between the two groups differ now that the site has been altered? Discuss how removing objects from the site can change the historical, natural or cultural context of the site. Come up with original slogans or signs for how we can remind others to “leave what you find.”

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Group Size: 10 or more (20 or more is ideal)
Age Group: 13 years & up
Time: 45 minutes to 1.5 hours
Objective: Participants will be introduced to the Leave No Trace principles and explore their own outdoor ethic
Materials: A list of the seven Leave No Trace Principles or a Flip Chart or Dry Erase
Seven Leave No Trace plastic ethics reference cards (included)

introduction
(3 to 5 minutes)
Introduce yourself and welcome your participants. Ask how many participants have been hiking, camping, fishing, rafting, mountain biking, kayaking, skiing, snowboarding, fly fishing, trail running or climbing? Ask if they have any favorite places to visit and why? Ask who has heard of Leave No Trace outdoor ethics? Explain that Leave No Trace is information and skills that help us reduce our impacts on the natural places that we visit (e.g. parks, trail systems, climbing crags, rivers and campgrounds). Read and briefly describe each principle.

the activity
(45 minutes to 1.5 hours)
Divide the whole group into seven smaller groups and assign a principle to each group. Give each group a plastic ethics reference card. Describe to the whole group that they will have 15 minutes to prepare a 5-minute presentation or skit that will be based on the principle that their group has been assigned.

Have each group give their presentation and then follow up each presentation with a few minutes of discussion to add any relevant information that was left out. Explore ideas that the conversation generates. Encourage participants to discuss their own personal outdoor experience and how the Leave No Trace principles were either a part of the experience or how could they be in the future. Detailed information about each Leave No Trace principle can be found in the enclosed Skills and Ethics booklet or on the Leave No Trace website: www.LNT.org

detail supplement
To make the activity more engaging try to collect some items for participants to use as props. Here are a few ideas: map, compass, repackaged food, a copy of local park regulations, rain gear, first aid kit, hiking boots, camp shoes, tent, photos of pristine and high-impact areas, zip-lock bags, trowel, food strainer, biodegradable soap, photographs of cultural heritage sites (i.e. rock art, early American logging and railroad sites, cliff dwellings), photographs of natural environments and objects (e.g. seashells, feathers, antlers and petrified wood), photographs of invasive species (plants and animals), headlamp, camp stove, fire pan, bear bag hanging supplies, binoculars, dog leash, radio, headphones, etc.

wrap up
(3 to 5 minutes)
Explain how the Leave No Trace principles can help people enjoy the outdoors responsibly by lessening their impacts on the land while partaking in the activities that they enjoy. Point to the flip chart or ethics cards and read each principle again. Ask for any last questions and thank them for their time and attention.

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The Activity
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Wrap Up
(3 to 5 minutes)
Explain how the Leave No Trace principles can help people enjoy the outdoors responsibly by lessening their impacts on the land while partaking in the activities that they enjoy. Point to the flip chart or ethics cards and read each principle again. Ask for any last questions and thank them for their time and attention.
how prepared are you?
leave no trace activities for teenagers

Group Size: Groups of any size
Age Group: 12 and older
Time: 30 minutes to 1 hour
Objective: Participants will understand the importance of planning ahead and preparing for outdoor experiences. They will also identify ways to get information about the areas they plan to explore.
Materials: Writing utensils, paper, Scenario #1 & #2 (examples provided)

introduction
(2 to 5 minutes)
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the activity
(20 to 30 minutes)
Divide students into two groups. Describe the following scenario: The group is going on an overnight backpacking trip, river trip, day hike or other relevant outing. The leaders have written down two descriptions of the trip they will be taking. Make the scenarios applicable to the group (e.g. an outing with the school’s outdoor club, a scout group, or other organized group). Scenario #1 gives exact details about the trip. Scenario #2 is very general and vague. Each group will look at the trip description and then write down two lists:
• What gear they should bring
• What questions they have for the trip leaders

Give groups 5 to 10 minutes to read the scenario and write down the answers. Call groups back together. Have one group read their scenario, their gear lists and questions. If a whiteboard or flip chart is available, write down their answers. Have the second group do the same. It is helpful to make lists so that the answers from each group can be easily compared. After reports have been given, ask the group which trip they would feel more comfortable going on. Emphasize the importance of planning ahead and preparing for individual trips, as well as for group trips.

wrap up
(3 to 5 minutes)
Ask the group how they can find out more information as they plan for their own trips. Write down ideas on the whiteboard or flip chart. Some suggestions are: calling the agency or park ahead of time, talking with someone who has been there, reading books, doing research on the internet, stopping by the visitor center, etc. Explain how the Leave No Trace principles can teach people to lessen their impacts on natural and wild lands while enjoying the outdoors. Read the seven Leave No Trace principles again. Ask for any last questions and thank them for their time and attention.
extension

(20 to 30 minutes)

Have each group research and create a trip itinerary for the other group. Provide items such as road atlases, regional maps, and travel guides as reference materials. Make sure each group chooses a specific destination, provides background information about the location (e.g. climate, terrain, flora/fauna, etc.) and creates a detailed gear list. Allow each group to review the other group’s itinerary, ask questions and provide suggestions.

Example scenarios:

#1 — “Your Outdoor Club has arranged an overnight camping trip for next weekend, Sept. 25-26. Your group will be hiking and camping in Shenandoah National Park, starting at 10:00 a.m. in the Meadow Springs Parking Area. The first day’s hike will be two miles to the campsite. The next day, after breaking camp, there will be a four-mile hike out to the parking lot, arriving back by 6:00 p.m. The first day’s hike will be mostly downhill. The return hike will be mostly uphill. Temperatures during this time of the year can range from 90 degrees during the day to 30 degrees at night. The weather is predicted to be mostly sunny, but it is important to be prepared for any weather, including rain. The planned campsite area is out of sight of the trail, several hundred yards from a river that has running water, which needs to be filtered for drinking (we will provide filters). No open fires are allowed in the backcountry, so all cooking will be done on backpacking stoves. The club will provide tents, water filters and stoves. All other gear must be brought with you. Be prepared for a wonderful time! See you there!”

#2 — “Your Outdoor Club leader arranged an overnight camping trip in a local park for next weekend. Your group will be hiking a couple of miles to a beautiful camping spot. We’ll have a great time! See you there!”
**Introduction**

(2 to 5 minutes)

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1. What you do when no one is looking
2. A set of beliefs that encourage appropriate conduct
3. A theory or a system of morals
4. The study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by a person; moral philosophy
5. The rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession: medical ethics.

**The Activity**

(10 to 20 minutes)

Place three ethics situation cards on the ground in three different spots. As you set them down read the situation to the group. Once all three situations have been read then ask the participants to stand next to the card that has the situation that offends them the most. Once all of the groups have been formed, have each group discuss why they feel the way they do about their particular situation. After a group has presented their opinions, open up the discussion to the rest of the group for further debate. Repeat this activity as many times as is desired (three times is recommended). Be sure to keep the debate/discussion in check – there are no right or wrong answers.

At the end of each round, collect the ethics situation cards from the group that had the most people. Save these cards as the “worst-of-the-worst” until the end of the activity. When the main game is completed, put the worst-of-the-worst cards in three different piles to see which situation is viewed by the group as the absolute worst.

**Wrap Up**

Explain how different people can have different reactions to various impacts that they may find outdoors. The Leave No Trace program encourages people to understand their own values and ethics when it comes to enjoying the outdoors responsibly. The principles teach people to lessen their impacts on natural and wild lands while enjoying outdoor activities. Point to the flip chart or ethics cards and read each principle again. Ask for any last questions and thank them for their time and attention.
TRASH on trail
evidence of soap in streams
wildlife attracted to humans in search of food
water sources fouled by human waste
pets off leash
people picking wildflowers
Erosion
carved
half-burned
vandalized
caused by people
in trees
food and trash
cultural area
artifacts
cultural or
devoid
historic site
of artifacts
along the trail
habitats
nuisance
for hikers
these are
from: