

# Babler Outdoor Education Center

## Program Offerings

**Archery** – This class allows students to try the sport of archery in a safe and controlled atmosphere. All students will learn the basics of the sport including; parts of the bow, correct shooting stance, and posture, range commands, and safety procedures. All students will have an opportunity to shoot a bow and arrow during this class.

**Forest Ecology** – This class is designed to give students a better understanding of the forest. Lessons include information on forest layers, native species identification (including poisonous plants, leaves, trees, and animal life), and life as it occurs in the forest ecosystem. Students will have an opportunity to both discuss and investigate the forest firsthand.

**Geology and Fossils** – The geology of Missouri is unique and this program utilizes an intermittent creek bed at the OEC to provide an opportunity for hands-on exploration and collection of rocks and fossils. Activities focus on rock/fossil identification, the rock cycle, and how fossils are formed.

**GPS Adventure** – Geocaching is a sport that is ever-growing in the U.S. and around the world. Students will learn the history of geocaching and gain a basic understanding of how a G.P.S. system works. After a short lesson, students will be given step-by-step instructions on how to operate a handheld G.P.S. system. Students are then separated into smaller groups to participate in a geocaching adventure around the Outdoor Education Center.

**Orienteering** - Students will learn the basics of orienteering including both maps and compasses.

**Maps:** Students will learn the difference between a topographical and geographical map and learn how to correctly read a map including distance and common symbols.

**Compass:** Students will learn the workings of a compass and have a chance to practice their new knowledge on an orienteering course around the Outdoor Education Center.

**Outdoor Cooking** – Learn what it takes to cook outside the kitchen. Students will learn proper safety when cooking outdoors, as well as procedures for cooking over charcoal or a wood fire. All students will be given a chance to take part in the actual cooking process including, preparing food, cooking, and of course enjoying the spoils of their hard work.

**Outdoor Creativity** – We live in a beautiful world with art surrounding us at each turn. Let students engage their imagination and creativity by crafting art out of nature. After a discussion that includes examples of artists, artwork, and a few safety parameters; students are limited only to their imaginations as they create original pieces of art out of sticks, leaves, nuts, seeds, and anything else they can find in nature.

**Outdoor Skills** – One of our most popular programs, this class can be programmed to include one topic, all three, or any combination you choose.

**Survival:** Learn the basics of survival in nature by discussing topics such as; appropriate gear for an outdoor adventure, how to safely prepare for outdoor exploration, how to identify dangerous situations, and what to do once you find yourself in a possibly life-threatening situation in unfamiliar surroundings.

**Fire Building:** Take starting a fire one step further by understanding how and why a fire burns. Learn the 3 things a fire needs to survive, How to safely and successfully build, maintain, and put out a fire, and why fires can be both damaging and/or beneficial to our environment.

**Shelter Building**: Students will gain an appreciation for the basic necessities in life. After and learning a few simple knots, familiarizing themselves with the materials, and discussing types of shelters students will break into small groups and work together to construct a shelter of their own from tarps and ropes.

**Pond Ecology** - Discover what life exists under the surface of the pond and what role it serves in the balance of the ecosystem. Is it healthy or polluted? Students will do the work of scientists as they lead the collection of specimens and data. Activities focus on species identification, using data to make a scientific conclusion, and the need for responsible use and protection of our resources.

**Service Project—Honeysuckle removal** – Students will learn about invasive species and their harmful impact on the forest ecosystems. They will learn to identify and safely remove Bush Honeysuckle using loppers, saws, and hand clippers. Adults will handle chemical sprays and students will have safety gear and supervision. This program can be done as a class or as a large group activity.

**Team Challenge** – Through a series of mental and physical challenges, students can work together in a positive atmosphere on topics such as leadership roles, communication skills, trust, and collaboration. Each group's challenges are designed to focus on goals and work toward the desired outcome.

## **STEM Based Programs**

*Can be scheduled as classes, evening programs or for alternative rain plans. Instructions and supplies are provided.*

**Bridges** – This program combines aspects from both the Dwellings and Tower Building activities. Students are split into teams of 4-8 and the program begins with an open discussion about the students' knowledge of bridges; types, sizes, structures, etc. Students must then create a bridge that is strong enough to support the weight of a box, but also tall and wide enough for the box to fit under. Teams may only use provided materials of newspaper and masking tape.

**Coasters** – A fun and engaging way to introduce simple physics lessons and teamwork, this program can be utilized and adapted as a 30-minute activity up to a full 1 ½ lesson. After a quick introduction students are split into teams of 4-8 and are given the task of building a rollercoaster that will support a marble. Teams must work together to plan, execute and demonstrate their final roller coaster using only foam tubing and masking tape.

**Dwellings** – This lesson focuses on teamwork, engineering, imagination, and fun. After being placed in teams of 5-10, students must create a dwelling that one team member can fit inside. Teams may only use provided materials of newspaper and masking tape. Give a short introduction on common dwellings and watch the creativity flow as students create, experiment, and problem solve.

**Tower Building** – Challenge students to create a tower using only mini marshmallows and toothpicks. Students should be placed in teams of 4-8 and must use communication and imagination to build one tower as a team. The possibilities are endless as to the final goal for this program; Which team can build the tallest standing structure, which team can build a structure that supports a marble, or maybe which team can build the strongest structure out of a given amount of materials?

## **Evening Programs**

Below are several options for self-led evening programs. Instructions and supplies are available from Babler staff for some of these programs.

### **Shaptonary**

This activity is played much like Pictionary and is best suited for students in groups of 5 - 10. Taking turns, one student from each team is designated the “shaper” and is given a password to describe to their fellow teammates. The goal is to be the first team to successfully guess the password. Shapers are not allowed to talk and must shape and mold play dough in order to give clues to their team. This activity promotes teamwork through communication and cooperation while players attempt to figure out the playdough shape!

*\*Instructions and supplies are provided.*

### **Yard Sale/Dutch Auction**

Students are asked to bring 5 items each from their cabins. Once they arrive they are told that they will be holding their own yard sale! Students are placed in teams of 5 – 10 and instructors will tell students a product that they would like to sell at their yard sale. Students must then use imagination and teamwork to “build” the product out of the items they have brought with them. This is a fun and active activity to get students thinking outside the box and working together as a team.

*\*Instructions are provided.*

### **Trivia**

Trivia will be held either in the Dining Hall or Rec Hall and a sound system (including microphone, screen, and projector) will be available for use. The school is responsible for trivia questions and topics. This can be a great way to reinforce lessons from the day.

*\*Sound System is provided*

### **Board games**

If you prefer a quieter activity for the end of the day we have many different board games available. Games can be set up in either the Dining Hall or Rec Hall and include activities ranging from classic board games, Jenga, chess, checkers, etc. There is a charge for any damaged games or missing pieces.

*\*Supplies are provided.*

### **Scavenger Hunts**

Babler staff have many different scavenger hunt topics available for both an inside or outside hunt. All groups must be accompanied by an adult. Please remember that it may be dark outside depending on the time of year. *\*Supplies are provided*

### **Night Hike** (Can be self-led or led by Babler staff)

Night Hike kits are available that can help spark discussions between participants and teachers. Sensory awareness activities during the hike will teach students how to better use their night vision and test the capabilities of all our five senses. There are many different locations around camp that will take you and your students away from artificial light. Look at the stars from the backfield, listen to the sounds of the pond at night, or even check out one of our nature trails.

*\*Instructions and supplies provided.*