



# 2023-2024

## Program Guide





# JPPI Outdoor Lab

## Catholic Outdoor Education

### Encountering Christ in Creation

JPPI Outdoor Lab provides outdoor experiential education within the context of the Catholic faith. Through an authentic encounter with Christ in his Creation and sacraments, students are inspired to deepen their relationship with God, thus shaping their relationship with themselves, others and Creation. Students will further learn to apply faith and reason while exploring the wonder and beauty of the Rocky Mountains.

### Our Program

Founded in 2008, the John Paul II Outdoor Lab was inspired by Pope Saint John Paul II's encyclical Fides et Ratio. We are a three-day Catholic outdoor education program for middle and high school students, offered September through May. Students participate in inquiry-based lessons, exploratory hikes, small-group discussions, campfire activities, stargazing, Mass, Adoration, and Reconciliation.

JPPI Outdoor Lab is a program of Annunciation Heights Catholic Youth and Family Camp located at the base of Longs Peak in Estes Park, Colorado, two miles north of historic Camp Saint Malo. Our programs regularly make use of both beautiful properties as well as nearby Rocky Mountain National Park and National Forest trails.

### Your 3-Day Program Includes Choice of One Track Option

#### Every program includes:

- Lodging & Meals
- Altum Institute Missionary for each small group of 10-12 students
- Sacraments
  - Mass, Reconciliation, Adoration
- Lessons/Activities
  - Four Relationships Lesson
  - Hike (with snowshoes in winter) at Camp Saint Malo or Rocky Mountain National Park
  - Evening Programming (Campfire & \*night lesson according to track)
- **Optional Sub:** Human Wilderness Survival or Low Ropes for any lesson in any track

#### Hike Themes:

6th Grade: Identity and Gift  
7th Grade: Virtue  
8th Grade: Saint Stories

#### Lesson Track Options:

##### Earth Sciences (suggested for 6th grade)

Human Wilderness Survival (3 hour)  
Colors of Creation with JPPI  
Geology & Mining  
Mountain Meteorology  
\*Astronomy

##### Life Sciences (suggested for 7th grade)

Forestry  
Elk Ecology & Environmental Stewardship  
Animal Signs & Survival  
Botany & Pollination  
Life in the Water  
\*Nocturnal Hunters

##### Physical Sciences (suggested for 8th grade)

Archery & Motion Mechanics (3 hour)  
Low Ropes & Leadership (3 hour)  
Orienteering  
\*Night Hike

# ► JP II Outdoor Lab Sample Schedule

Time	Activity
<b>Day 1 – Wednesday</b>	
11:00	Arrival, Settle into Cabins
11:15	Group Welcome
11:30	Group Game // Chaperone Meeting
11:45	5 Senses, Sack Lunch, & 4 Relationships Lesson in Small Groups
1:25	<b>Lesson</b>
3:05	<b>Lesson</b> (new lesson or previous lesson continued)
4:35	Choice Time – Camp Store, Activity Shed, & Mt. Tabor Open
5:30	<i>Dinner in Dining Hall</i>
7:00	<b>Night Activity</b>
8:30	Small Groups
<b>Day 2 – Thursday</b>	
7:45	Mass
8:30	<i>Breakfast in Dining Hall</i>
9:30	<b>Lesson</b>
11:00	<b>Lesson</b> (new lesson or previous lesson continued)
12:30	<i>Lunch in Dining Hall</i>
1:30	<b>Hike</b>
4:00	BOB Time in Lodges
4:30	Choice Time – Camp Store, Activity Shed, & Mt. Tabor Open
5:30	<i>Dinner in Dining Hall</i>
6:45	Adoration & Confession
7:55	Small Groups
8:20	Campfire & S'mores
<b>Day 3 – Friday</b>	
8:15	T-Shirts & Group Photos
8:30	<i>Breakfast in Dining Hall</i>
9:25	<b>Lesson</b> // Team Lead Meeting with Ayla
11:00	Closing Mass
11:45	Evals, Final Small Group, Sack Lunch
12:30	Departure

## ► Earth Sciences Track

The “Earth Sciences” track is designed with 6th graders in mind. Each lesson invites students to observe and interact with creation in a new and unique way, invoking wonder and discovery. In the Earth Sciences track, students will build forts and fires, create watercolor art, find “gold”, and explore the weather patterns of the mountains.



### **Human Wilderness Survival (3 hour)**

Our Creator wants us to explore His beautiful wilderness! Students will learn how to assess an emergency calmly and methodically in the wilderness. Through hands-on activities, students will gain skills for keeping themselves warm and dry, building a shelter, and using available resources to get water and food. This knowledge and these skills are essential for learning and playing in the outdoors while honoring God in the process.



### **Colors of Creation with JPII**

Our own creativity is a gift and reflection of the Divine Artist. In this lesson, students learn about Saint John Paul II and engage their own creative abilities through sketching and water color.

## ► Earth Sciences Track (Continued)

### **Geology and Mining**

This. Lesson. Rocks. We can see how God's loving design is at work in the presence of His vital mineral resources. In this lesson, students will demonstrate how igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks are formed and related and will be able to distinguish between them.

### **Mountain Meteorology**

After a yearlong hiatus, Mountain Meteorology is back! Through a series of experiments, students will explore air density and pressure to reveal how the weather around us is formed. Students will then become detectives and figure out what different types of clouds can tell us about the weather to come.



### **Night Class: Astronomy**

This lesson is out of this world! This content will inspire wonder and awe about our universe, as well as explore the harmonious relationship between faith and science. Students discover the phases of the moon and other cosmic objects through exploration and discussion, concluding with stargazing. When available, we hop on the camp bus for an epic evening at the [Estes Park Memorial Observatory](#).

# ▶ Life Sciences Track

The “Life Sciences” track is designed primarily for 7th grade students. During this track, students will explore God’s creation by making connections with the world around them. Throughout these lessons, students will learn about various plants, animals, and ecosystems that shape our environment. Upon leaving Outdoor Lab, students will discuss how they can make a difference and take care of God’s creation.

## **Forestry**

Forests are important for a variety of human and ecological needs. How do we sustain a healthy forest and act as good stewards of God’s creation? In this lesson, students learn to identify the important roles each part of a tree plays in our lives and in the life of a forest. Students will also learn how to identify various kinds of trees. This leads to a discussion about land management issues and how to meet the human need for resources while caring for the forest ecosystem. Students will also discover how trees are used throughout Scripture as a metaphor for the Christian life.



## **Elk Ecology and Environmental Stewardship**

Elk have a long history with the Rocky Mountain region. In this lesson, students learn about the characteristics and behaviors of elk, along with the interplay between food resources and reproduction. Student’s will also focus on what actions can be taken to know, love, and take care of God’s creation, as stewards.



# ► Life Sciences Track (Continued)

## **Animal Signs and Survival**

By investigating God’s design of various Colorado animal species, students will view nature with new eyes! Skulls, hides, and bones facilitate discovery of local animals’ abilities to survive harsh climates. Learning about predators and prey will spark discussion about our human role in the circle of life.



## **Botany and Pollination**

Students’ knowledge will bloom as they investigate the inner workings of God’s beauty in plants. While dissecting flowers, students will explore the role of pollination and God’s design for the life cycle and reproduction of plants. In an activity called “BBQ to Bees,” students will plan an unlimited BBQ, but their food shopping will be a challenge because bees are being threatened by extinction. Without bees, will any food be left to eat?

## **Life in the Water (Fall/Spring only)**

Water is a limited and life-giving resource on our planet. Students will learn about water availability, water sources, and water treatment systems through a variety of hands-on and critical thinking activities. Students will come away with an understanding of the sacramental nature of water and how God teaches us to be good stewards of this resource.

## **Night Class: Nocturnal Hunters**

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be an owl prowling through the night? Or a tiny mouse hiding in the snow? Take this lesson to learn about Colorado raptors and the adaptations they possess. We will talk about owls and their special abilities to hunt in the dark. We will finish off with a game of “Owl and Mouse” hide and go seek, in the dark!

## ► Physical Sciences Track

In combination with longer, more technical lessons and the undertone theme of leadership, the “Physical Sciences” track is suggested for 8th grade students. While students participate in this track, they will enjoy some of our most popular lessons offered. Students will have the chance to shoot a bow and arrow, navigate through the woods with a compass, and work together as a team to complete a series of challenges while learning their own leadership style.

### **Archery and Motion Mechanics (3 hour)**

The fundamental laws that God has created to govern our physical world can be seen in a variety of activities. In this lesson, students will learn the basics of archery range safety and how to shoot a bow & arrow. They will also explore what this ancient sport can teach us about both physics and virtue, leading to a greater understanding that working in accordance with God’s designs helps us “hit the mark” and become who He created us to be!





## ► Physical Sciences Track (Continued)



### **Low Ropes and Leadership (3 hour)**

With our unique gifts and abilities, each of us are called to be leaders in the Kingdom of God! Through team building activities, students will be challenged to develop their authentic style of servant leadership. This lesson will teach group dynamics and communication skills. Watch your students increase in self-knowledge and in the service of others.

### **Orienteering**

Lacking direction? In orienteering, students will learn how to navigate the land around them using a map and compass. This lesson sparks an illuminating discussion about how God helps us navigate the twists and turns of life.

### **Night Class: Night Hike and Stargazing**

The night hike is the perfect opportunity to challenge students to disconnect from the distractions of the world and spend some time reflecting on God and His creation. In this activity, students will complete a 1 mile silent night hike. Afterwards, students will be guided in a meditation and finish off the night with some stargazing in the dark skies of the Rocky Mountains.

## ► Registration

To register, submit an online Inquiry Form at:  
<https://annunciationheights.org/outdoor-lab/inquiry-form/>

For more information, contact Ayla Erickson, Director of JPPI Outdoor Lab, via email [ayla.erickson@annunciationheights.org](mailto:ayla.erickson@annunciationheights.org) or via phone (970) 586-5689.



“Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of the truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.”

► Pope Saint John Paul II

*Fides et Ratio*

*On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason*