

# Impact Monster

This interactive skit introduces the Leave No Trace principles by teaching Impact Monster how to leave a lighter footprint on nature.

**Grade Level:** all ages

## Objectives:

- Students will be able to list at least four of the seven Leave No Trace principles and two ways to follow each of them.

## Materials:

- Use your imagination to fashion these props. Hint - cardboard, scraps of fabric, markers and glue can go a long way!
- Impact Monster - backpack, bright clothes, boom box, toilet paper, soap, garbage, sleeping bag, thick marker, hatchet, camera, fire
- Audience costumes - frog w/ bubbles, tree, flowers, fox, bear
- Nature setting - blue tarp, fire ring rocks, sticks, Inspiration Point sign
- Narrator - Leave No Trace principle signs

## Appendixes:

- Skit Outline: Page 5

## Time Considerations:

Preparations: 15 minutes\*

Lesson Time: 25 - 35 minutes

Activity: 20-30 minutes

Conclusion: 5 minutes

\*Prop creation is not included in prep time

## Related Lesson Plans:

Trash Timeline, LNT Memory, Putting it into Context, Know Before You Go, Stop the Invasion!



## Nevada Department of Education Standards

### Health - Self Management

**7.2.1** Identify responsible personal health behaviors.

**7.5.1** Students demonstrate behaviors that avoid or reduce health risks.

## Excellence in Environmental Education Guidelines

### Strand 4 - Personal and Civic Responsibility

**D)** Learners understand that they have responsibility for the effects of their actions.

This lesson has been adapted from The Center's *Impact Monster Skit*:

Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. (2007). *Impact Monster Skit*. In *Leave No Trace 101: 101 Ways to Teach Leave No Trace* (pp. 28-30).

## Background

### Kid-friendly Leave No Trace principles:

#### Know Before You Go

- Learn about the area pre-trip
- Be prepared with a map, food, water and extra clothes

#### Choose the Right Path

- Stay on the trail, even through mud
- Avoid stepping on flowers or small trees
- Sit on large rocks instead of grassy meadows

#### Trash Your Trash

- Don't leave any trash or litter
- If you have to "go", do it away from water (100 big steps)
- If your dog is with you, pick up their poop

#### Leave What You Find

- Treat plants with respect
- Don't bring home anything

you find

- Leave things as you find them

#### Be Careful with Fire

- Use stoves for cooking
- Use only loose sticks from the ground
- Don't burn trash or food
- Check with rangers to see if its OK to have a fire

#### Respect Wildlife

- Control your pet
- Store food and trash in a safe spot
- Never feed, follow or chase wild animals
- If an animal changes its behavior you're too close

#### Be Kind to Other Visitors

- Share trails with other hikers, bikers, etc
- Step aside to let people on horses pass
- Don't yell or make loud noises

## Preparation

Two adults are needed for this skit - one to be the narrator (who leads the group discussion) and Impact Monster.

Note that Impact Monster supposedly can't see the narrator, it's just a voice, kind of like...oh say, her conscious.

Set up the forest setting before audience arrives.

Choose participants from the audience to play: bear, frog, tree, flowers, fox, sign. Give them a brief description of what they are going to be doing in the skit.

## Doing the Activity

### **Impact Monster Skit:**

**Narrator:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_ from Nevada Outdoor School. I want to start today by asking a question. By show of hands, how many of you have heard of Leave No Trace? (hopefully some people raise their hands) That's great!

OK, I have another question; can anyone tell me what an impact is? (when you change something, could be a positive or a negative change) Well when it comes to nature we want to have as small of a negative impact as possible. And that's why we follow the Leave No Trace principles.

Today Impact Monster is going on a backpacking trip and we're going to help her learn about the Leave No Trace principles. When Impact Monster does

something that doesn't follow the principles I'm going to hold up a sign that says the principle that needs to be followed and you're going to say it with me. Let's practice! *[hold up a couple of the signs to practice]* Awesome! Now remember, when I hold up the signs you're going to say it with me.

OK, now close your eyes and let me paint you a picture... We're going to go on a backpacking trip in the mountains around Lake Tahoe. It's a beautiful summer day with blue skies, a cool breeze and breath-taking views of the lake. You can feel the breeze on your face and the scent of pine trees – enjoy the experience.

**Impact Monster:** *[walks up to the trailhead with boom box blaring and singing.]* Oooohhh what a b-e-a-utiful day! I can't wait to get on the trail! Now if only I could find that map and my wilderness permit... *[searches in pack and pockets]* ...oh well. I'm sure the trail is well marked and who cares about permits anyway – we'll call it an adventure.

**Narrator:** *[holds up sign]* Know Before You Go! Impact Monster is not prepared for her backpacking trip. Without a map she could get lost and without a permit rangers wouldn't know where to find her.

**Impact Monster:** *[looks around wondering where the voice is coming from, shrugs and picks up her pack to head out on the trail]* Welp, I better get on my way.

*[walks a little way and encounters switchbacks]* Uuuugggghhhh I don't want to hike all that extra way on switchbacks, I'm just going to make my own path straight up this hill and save some time. *[cuts through the crowd instead of going around the rows of people]*

**Narrator:** *[holds up sign]* Choose the Right Path! Impact Monster didn't stay on the trail. Ignoring switchbacks can cause erosions or new-unwanted paths.



Impact Monster in the forest setting

**Impact Monster:** *[looks around wondering where the voice is coming from, shrugs and keeps walking. Sees sign for Inspiration Point]* Oh! Inspiration Point, I bet that's a pretty view. I want people to know I've been inspired! *[gets out pen and writes IM on sign]* I. M. There! Now people will know Impact Monster was here!

**Narrator:** *[holds up sign]* Be Kind to Other Visitors! Impact Monster, vandalizing property causes extra work for government employees and other visitors don't like seeing it.

**Impact Monster:** *[looks around*

*and shrugs and walks up to Inspiration Point]*

**Narrator:** While Impact Monster is standing at Inspiration Point a bear wonders into her view.

**Impact Monster:** Whoah! Look there's a bear over there!! *[gets our camera]* BEAR HEY BEAR!!! LOOK OVER HERE! SAY CHEESE BEAR! I WANT TO TAKE YOUR PICTURE!!

**Narrator:** Due to all of the noise Impact Monster made, the bear ran away to find somewhere quiet to search for food. *[holds up sign]* Respect Wildlife! Impact Monster disturbed the bear that was just trying to find berries or nuts to eat. She should learn to be respectful toward wild animals, since she is a guest in their home, next time she could use binoculars to get a better look.

**Impact Monster:** *[mumbles something about who keeps saying that stuff]* Dang I really wanted a close up picture of that bear, but I only got a picture of its butt running away. Oh well, better get on my way so I can find somewhere to camp.

*[hikes over to water]* Welp, this looks like a great place to camp! Nice and close to water, gorgeous views, yep! Perfect!

**Narrator:** *[holds up sign]* Choose the Right Path! Impact Monster should camp at least 200 feet from lakes and streams to help protect these natural resources.

**Impact Monster:** *[mumbles pff*

*I'll camp where I want...starts to unpack and trash goes everywhere]* Where is that dang thing?? *[dumps out backpack on the ground – more trash!]*

**Narrator:** *[holds up sign]* Trash Your Trash! Impact Monster is making a mess and littering; that's not good for wildlife, plus no one wants to walk miles into wilderness and see a pile of trash.

**Impact Monster:** *[grumbles fine...I'll pick it up later...sets up sleeping bag, gets a wiff of armpit]* Whoah! I'm not smelling too good after that hike! I might meet Mr. Right out here, I can't be stinky! *[grabs soap and jumps in the water]*

**Narrator:** The wildlife that use this water won't appreciate that. Look, the frog is blowing bubbles from the soapy water. *[holds up sign]* Trash Your Trash! Impact Monster wasn't thinking about the poor frog or protecting the water when she decided to use soap in the water. She should have collected some water and carried it 200 feet away from the lake.

**Impact Monster:** I'm taking a bath! Can I have no privacy?! Fine! I'll get out...*[gets out of water and goes back to camp]* Op! Do you hear that?? Nature is calling. *[grabs tp and goes behind a tree for a minute, tosses tp here and there then comes out with some stuck to her shoe]*

**Narrator:** *[holds up sign]* Trash Your Trash! Oh Impact

Monster...I don't think you dug a cat hole for your waste and you're supposed to carry out your trash – that includes tp. I know other visitors don't want to see that!

**Impact Monster:** My tp! I'm supposed to carry out my tp?!

**Narrator:** It's not a big deal, just take a plastic baggy with you and zip lock your tp safely in there.

**Impact Monster:** Voice you are so demanding...

Oh! Flowers! My day just got better! *[picks flower]*

**Narrator:** *[holds up sign]* Leave What You Find! Now Impact Monster...wildlife use those wildflowers and now other visitors won't be able to enjoy them. Why don't you take a picture of them instead?

**Impact Monster:** Opps...ugh sorry flowers. *[put flower back on ground pretending she didn't pick it and takes a picture]*

Burr! It's getting cold, did I bring my jacket? *[searches through stuff]* Uh ohhh it's going to be a cold night.

**Narrator:** *[holds up sign]* Know Before You Go! Impact Monster didn't plan ahead, even though it was a nice day when she hit the trail it gets cold at night, plus weather can be unpredictable.

**Impact Monster:** Yeah, yeah... well I'll show you voice! I can still build a fire to keep me warm. *[takes out hatchet and*

goes over to standing tree and starts chopping off a branch]

**Narrator:** [holds up sign] Be Careful With Fire! Impact Monster you're only supposed to use loose sticks from the ground for fires, remember – we're protecting the resources.

**Impact Monster:** [stops chopping] Opps...ugh sorry tree. [pats tree and starts picking up sticks from the ground and starts fire]

**Narrator:** A fox walks down to get a drink from the water.

**Impact Monster:** [whispers] Oh! A fox! I'm going to be quiet this time and get a good picture! [goes and sits by the tree]

**Narrator:** The fox gets a drink and then scampers back into the forest. Impact Monster gets up and goes back to her fire. [holds up sign] Be Careful With Fire! Impact Monster, you did really well respecting wildlife, but you left your fire unattended. One little spark and all of this could be gone.

**Impact Monster:** [the importance of LNT has just hit you] All gone...I don't want this to be gone, it's beautiful here... Thank you for teaching me about Leave No Trace, I didn't realize how big of a footprint I was leaving and how big of an impact I was making. Voice can you go over those Leave No Trace principles with me one

more time so I'll remember for next time. [sit with audience and invite helpers to sit too]

## Conclusion

**Narrator:** Alright, but you all have to help me...I'm going to hold up each principle and then you all can help me by raising your hands and naming ways we can follow that principle...

Thank you all for helping Impact Monster learn about Leave No Trace principles.

## Assessment

Informally evaluate participants' knowledge by noting how many people raise their hands to answer the questions during the conclusion and if you get correct answers.

## Extension

Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* is a great outdoor ethics story that engages youth and as an added bonus calms a rowdy group down.

## Vocabulary

**Cat hole:** The most widely-accepted method of waste disposal in the backcountry. A six to eight inch deep and four to six inch in diameter hole that is 200 feet away from water used to bury human waste.

**Erosion:** the movement of sediment from one place to another, usually from a mountain to a valley

## Sources

- Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. (2007). Impact Monster Skit. In *Leave No Trace 101: 101 Ways to Teach Leave No Trace* (pp. 28-30).

## **Impact Monster Skit Outline**

**Narrator** - intro, audience participation, paint scene

**Impact Monster** - enter noisy, can't find map

**Narrator** - Know Before You Go!

**Impact Monster** - cuts switchbacks

**Narrator** - Choose the Right Path!

**Impact Monster** - Inspiration Point sign vandalism

**Narrator** - Be Kind to Other Visitors! bear wonders into view

**Impact Monster** - Bear!

**Narrator** - bear left, Respect Wildlife!

**Impact Monster** - goes to camp by lake

**Narrator** - Choose the Right Path!

**Impact Monster** - unpacks trash

**Narrator** - Trash Your Trash!

**Impact Monster** - jumps in lake for bath

**Narrator** - Trash Your Trash!

**Impact Monster** - nature calling

**Narrator** - Trash Your Trash! yep, even your tp

**Impact Monster** - flowers

**Narrator** - Leave What You Find!

**Impact Monster** - brr it's cold!

**Narrator** - Know Before You Go!

**Impact Monster** - cut down tree for fire

**Narrator** - Be Careful With Fire!

**Impact Monster** - picks up sticks for small fire

**Narrator** - fox gets drink from lake

**Impact Monster** - goes to sit by tree and respectful to fox

**Narrator** - you did well with the fox, but fire unattended, Be Careful With Fire!

**Impact Monster** - I don't want this to be gone...tell me more about LNT

**Narrator** - goes over LNT principles with audience help