

The Joe Humphreys' Fly Fishing Stream School

Warm Waters Weekend Curriculum

Youth Fly Fishing Curriculum - Ages 6-17 - Inspired by the Methods of Joe Humphreys

*"The secret of life is having something exciting to look forward to. And fly fishing is that -
you're going fishing."*

- Joe Humphreys

Warm Waters Weekend Curriculum

Weekend Retreat Curriculum

Saturday: Panfish • Sunday: Bass + Conservation

The Weekend Retreat is the program's primary format for scouting groups, church camps, summer programs, and weekend events. Two days give enough time to progress from panfish fundamentals to bass structure fishing - and to deliver the conservation story that connects everything.

Before the Weekend: Required Reading for Instructors

Read the Joe Humphreys biography section of the Program Overview

Know the Adrian story well enough to tell it without notes (Saturday morning)

Know Joe's father's bass story well enough to tell it without notes (Sunday morning)

Locate bass-holding water before Saturday - identify 3-4 specific structures to visit

Review the Spring Creek conservation story for Sunday afternoon

SATURDAY - Panfish Day

Theme: The Perfect Teacher

Saturday is built around bluegill, sunfish, and crappie. These fish are not the destination - they are the curriculum. Everything Joe Humphreys teaches about trout applies to panfish: short casting stroke, reading feeding water, presentation, observation. The difference is the fish are more forgiving, more numerous, and almost always willing.

Saturday Morning (3 hours) - Casting + First Water

Time	Activity	Notes
8:00-8:20	Program welcome - Adrian story	Tell it fully. Ask: what do you already know that you could teach someone?
8:20-9:00	Casting fundamentals on grass	Short stroke. Arm out, wrist in. Bill Koll: basics refined to perfection.
9:00-9:20	Gear overview: warm water setup, floating line, bobber rig	Simple. Everyone on the same rig.
9:20-11:00	Panfish fishing - pond, dock, or stream bank	Every student gets a fish today. Adjust until it happens.

Saturday Afternoon (3 hours) - Read the Water

Time	Activity	Notes
1:00-1:30	Bio-indicator survey: turn over rocks, identify invertebrates	What does the water say about itself?
1:30-2:00	Still water reading: structure walk, no rods	Points, weed edges, shade lines, drop-offs - where are the fish?
2:00-3:30	Panfish fishing - presentation focus	Stealth. Approach angle. Let the fly settle.
3:30-4:00	Bass preview: walk to bass structure, identify holding water	Look. Don't fish. Ask: where would you cast tomorrow?

LOOK UP - Closing Circle

Put down rods. Two minutes of silence. Find one living thing that isn't a fish.

Saturday prompt: "What is one thing about this water that surprised you today?"

SUNDAY - Bass + Conservation

Theme: The Predator and the Steward

Sunday morning is bass. Sunday afternoon is conservation - the story of how Joe Humphreys saved Spring Creek, and what that means for the water students are standing in right now.

Joe's Father - The Warm Water Bridge

Open Sunday morning with this story. Joe's father grew up on a farm in Pennsylvania. When it rained too hard to work the fields, he cut a bamboo pole, strung it, put a grasshopper on the hook, and walked to the bridge over the West Branch of the Susquehanna. Schools of bass below. He caught two or three on grasshoppers. That was the only fishing he ever did - until his son handed him a fly rod.

Every angler starts somewhere. Some start with trout. Some start with bass and grasshoppers from a bridge. The Joe Humphreys' Fly Fishing Stream School honors both. Tell students: where did your family start fishing?

Sunday Morning (3 hours) - Bass Fishing

Time	Activity	Notes
8:00-8:20	Joe's father story + bass introduction	Where do bass live? How do they feed?

Time	Activity	Notes
8:20-9:00	Fly selection: poppers, Clouser, crawfish patterns	Why does the fly matter for bass vs. panfish?
9:00-11:00	Bass fishing - structure rotation	Instructor with each student at specific holding water. Cast angle matters.

Sunday Afternoon (2.5 hours) - Conservation

Time	Activity	Notes
1:00-1:45	Spring Creek conservation story	Joe, five friends, a jackhammer, a borrowed pipe. The water came back.
1:45-2:15	Local water quality discussion	What threatens the water we fished this weekend? Who is responsible?
2:15-3:00	Student action planning	Each student commits to one action: tell a parent, pick up trash, join a club, write a letter
3:00-3:30	Final circle + graduation	Certificate, photo, what they take home

The Spring Creek Story - Required for Sunday Afternoon

In the 1960s, a highway project sent the Thompson Spring into the Penn State duck pond - which collected storm runoff from the whole town. The cold water that fed Spring Creek was now warm and polluted. The insect population crashed. The fish suffered.

Joe Humphreys sat five friends around his kitchen table. They formed the Spring Creek chapter of Trout Unlimited. With a backhoe, a jackhammer, and a donated pipe, they broke through concrete and diverted the spring around the pond.

The water came back. The Green Drake hatch returned. The trout population recovered.

Joe saved the stream that gave him his life. Every student here can do the same for the water they just fished.

LOOK UP - Closing Circle

Put down rods. Two minutes of silence. Find one living thing that isn't a fish.

Time	Activity	Notes
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Sunday final prompt: "Name one thing about this water that you want to protect - and one thing you will do to protect it."

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