

# The Wonder of Bugs

**Theme:** Fun, examining insects and observing their behavior through a novel medium.

**Age of campers:** 6-11

**Time allotted/actual:** 30-60 minutes

**Location:** Any open, outside location where you can hang a sheet and access electrical outlets easily.

**Props/Materials/Symbols:** Black lights, a white sheet, pins for hanging, jars (optional), net (optional)

**Prep done:** Hang the sheet flat and wide as though it is on a clothesline to dry, and set out the black lights to shine on to the sheet brightly; turn them on 45 minutes in advance to warm up and let the bugs find the sheet.

**Opening/Mood set:** Bring the campers to the location and show them the sheet. Likely there will be hundreds of bugs flying on and around it. Set up some ground rules about how to treat the bugs and preserve the energy of the event.

## Questions/Activities:

**1<sup>st</sup> activity:** Have each camper who is comfortable catch a bug and begin a round of discussion based on observations of them. What is unique about each? What is special about them? How do their intricacies mirror ours and why do we find them fascinating?

**2<sup>nd</sup> activity:** What are the most interesting bugs you can find? Are they worth looking up to find out what they are?

**3<sup>rd</sup> activity:** Getting deeper, what makes us more advanced or more intrinsically valuable than bugs? How do we measure it? Can we ever know how a bug thinks?

**Closing:** Ask the campers if they feel they are as worried about bugs in the cabin or at home now?

**Were other people involved?** Yes, it helps very much to have someone else run and set up the lights and sheet, given how much earlier than meeting time it needs to be done.

**Thoughts on pacing?** The medium of bugs may or may not be cool. Time can vary greatly depending on the campers. Plan accordingly if you are uncertain how they will respond.

**What would you change next time / what did you learn / how would you enhance it?** Optional jars and net are listed for bug catching, IF it is desired. Letting the campers catch with their hands can become a hazard. If catching is a part of your event, then be mindful of your philosophy on engagement with the bugs and what was in the rules in advance.

**Camper feedback:** Less anxiety about bugs and spiders later on, though certainly not gone.