



## If Tackle Could Talk, Oh What (BIG FISH) Tales It Would Tell

Kelly Carter<sup>1</sup>

<p><b>Objectives</b> Participating youth and adults will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and categorize tackle box items.</li> <li>2. Learn and describe different tackle purposes.</li> <li>3. Describe the purpose of tackle items and use this information to also describe the tackle box owner.</li> <li>4. Have fun while learning.</li> </ol> <p><b>Youth Development Objectives</b> Participating youth will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice and develop observation skills.</li> <li>2. Practice and develop deductive reasoning skills.</li> <li>3. Practice and develop the art of story telling.</li> <li>4. Gain confidence and self-esteem as they interact in a group.</li> </ol> <p><b>Roles for Teen and Junior Leaders</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assist younger members with identifying and describing tackle gear.</li> </ol> <p><b>Potential Parental Involvement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bring in their tackle boxes and other fishing equipment and paraphernalia for youth to identify.</li> <li>2. Relate actual fishing stories to youth in</li> </ol>	<p><b>Best Time:</b> Early in the formation of your group, as a mixer to get acquainted.</p> <p><b>Best Location:</b> Anywhere</p> <p><b>Time:</b> Dependent on the size of the group, allow 5-10 minutes for each member to talk.</p> <p><b>Equipment/Materials:</b> Each member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle box or a supply of fishing gear (this activity works best if the tackle belongs to the participating youth members, but borrowed gear from someone they fish with or know well works too)</li> <li>• Fishing related paraphernalia (i.e. fish postcards, hats, recipes, etc.)</li> <li>• Paper and pens (enough for each member)(optional, younger youth may need to write their thoughts down, while older youth may feel more comfortable talking in the group more spontaneously)</li> <li>• Paper bags (optional)</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> it helps to have someone available who is knowledgeable about tackle and tackle</p>
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<p>a walk down memory lane.</p> <p>Evaluation Activities/Suggestions</p> <p>1. Youth should be able to identify and describe tackle gear and the type of fishing it is used for. Youth will be able to describe how other members of their group like to fish.</p> <p>This activity has been adapted from the 4-H Sportfishing “<i>Museum in a Tackle Box</i>” activity by Lu Anne Kozma.</p>	<p>history.</p> <p><b>Safety Considerations</b> The atmosphere should be open and respectful. Members should be careful while handling hooks and other sharp objects. Members should take care when handling old, valuable or delicate items.</p> <p><b>Recommended reading:</b> <b>References:</b> Lyons, Nick. 1974. <i>The Legacy In Fishing</i></p>
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1. Kelly S. Carter, Graduate Research Assistant  
Michigan State University, Dept. Of Fisheries & Wildlife, East Lansing MI 48824-1222

**Lesson Outline**  
**Presentation**

1. Collect tackle boxes
  
2. Gather in a circle
  
3. Distribute tackle boxes (and pens and paper if needed)
  - Respect for tackle box items
  
4. Explain activity
  - Record thoughts
  - Respect for tackle box owner
  
5. Exchange “fish tales”
  - keep the box

**Application**

When your group first gathers together, **COLLECT** their tackle boxes and set them aside with the leader. You may want to put the tackle boxes inside paper bags -- the idea is that youth don=t know whose box belongs to whom.

Have youth **GATHER IN A CIRCLE** (a table is optional).

Randomly **DISTRIBUTE** the tackle boxes or gear to each member. Be sure that a member does not receive their own gear.

**EMPHASIZE** that each participant should **RESPECT** the tackle boxes and gear: treat items with care and attempt to maintain the original order.

**EXPLAIN** that they will be looking through the tackle boxes and examining the gear to determine who the box belongs to. Have them **RECORD** their thought on a slip of paper (they will leave this recording of the AFish Tale@ in the tackle box for the owner to keep, revisit and enjoy later).

**EMPHASIZE** that participants should demonstrate a **RESPECT** for the owners feelings while reviewing the tackle items and describing the owner: what is said about them, etc.

Advise that they don't shout out whose box/gear they think they have, this will keep the activity interesting for the whole group. This activity should be done with talking kept to a minimum. Youth will have plenty of time to share the treasures that they find amongst each other when it comes time for them to tell their "fish tale."

- Things to consider while examining boxes

Suggest that they look at the type of tackle in the box and consider the following questions:

- what type of fishing does the owner like to do?
- how is the tackle organized (or not organized!)? does this say something about the type of person this tackle belongs to?
- can they decipher any "stories" out of the gear or other items they find in the tackle box? (i.e. fishing license - maybe it's out of state, maybe it's new or extremely old...)
- what type of box (or container) is the gear in? why might this be? does it suggest how the owner likes to fish? or what the owner fishes for?

One at a time, have each youth tell their "**FISH TALE**" by describing the gear in their tackle box: what the gear means and what it says about the owner. They should keep the box in front of them, pull out tackle and other items and talk about these treasures! They will return the box to the owner after the whole group has taken a turn talking.

Also, it can be more suspenseful and fun if they **GUESS WHO THE OWNER IS** *after* discussing all the gear and **TELLING THEIR "FISH TALE."** For example:

*"This person is probably a bass angler. See, they have plugs and spinner (etc.) tackle. And just look at this old Devle Bug (or old original make Heddon River Runt)! Geez, you don't see many of these around. Maybe this angler is 60+ years old...or maybe their dad or mom or grandparent gave it to them. They*

Things to **CONSIDER**:

*either don't want wrinkles, are fair skinned or just safety conscious because they have a tube of sunscreen in their tackle box. They have a tape measure in their box, so they are either an ethical angler -- want to be sure that they are following size limits, or, maybe they just like to see if they've caught a trophy fish. This person is really organized. Just look at this box!...or, this person is more interested in the fishin' than in how his/her box is organized.....from what I see, I think that this box belongs to..."*

**NOTE:** it helps to have someone available who is knowledgeable about tackle and tackle history.

While youth are exchanging "fish tales," the leader should make sure that **YOUTH DON'T GET RUDE OR DISRESPECTFUL**. The leader should advise youth that someone else will be analyzing their box too, and making assumptions about what the tackle says about them as well.

Once each member has had a turn at telling their tackle tale, have them **RETURN THE TACKLE BOXES** or gear to the rightful owner. Don't forget to have the storyteller leave their fish tale in the tackle box!

- reveal owners name after the tale

Note: Leader as guide

6. Return boxes to owner

7. Tackle box owner describes themselves and their fishing interests

The rightful owner should reveal himself or herself. They can take a minute or two to **TALK ABOUT THEMSELVES** and how they heard themselves described, or about specific tackle items that were highlighted.

**Summary Activity:**

Using observational skills, youth will identify, categorize and describe the tackle in someone else's tackle box. They will use this information to determine what type of fishing this person enjoys and how the tackle and other paraphernalia in the box can leave clues about other interesting characteristics about the tackle box owner.

**Lesson Narrative:**

"...What was here to be found was not a thing. Things separated from their stories have no meaning. They are only shapes. Of certain size and color. A certain weight. When their meaning has become lost to us they no longer have even a name. The story, on the other hand, can never be lost from its place in the world for it is that place."

-- Cormac McCarthy, 1994 in *The Crossing*.

Read: *The Legacy*, by Nick Lyons in *Fishing Widows*, 1974. Published by Crown Publ. Inc. New York, NY

(This is a wonderful story about a young man who has a chance to learn about his absent father after inheriting his fishing gear).

**Exhibit or Sharing Suggestions:**

Create a tackle box display, writing the "tackle tale" on small cards next to the tackle items.

Write about your "tackle tale" and submit it to a local newspaper or place it in your journal for future reading.

**Community Service and Giving Back Activities:**

Help a local museum or library create a fishing display (use local or regional made fishing gear, photos and "stories" (either published or those you write up after interviewing local anglers, "old-timers" or fishing celebrities), home-made tackle (lures, flies, etc.).

**Extensions or Ways of Learning More:**

1. Conduct the following 4-H Sportfishing People and Fish activities: "Museum in a Tackle Box" and "Fishing for Stories."
2. Invite "old timers" to your meeting and have them tell tales about the fishing experiences. Encourage them to take a "walk down memory lane" by bringing their boxes, describing their tackle, where they got it, fish they caught (or didn't catch!) with it and other interesting stories related to fishing.
3. Collect lures and other paraphernalia: conduct the "Museum in a Tackle Box" again!

**Links to Other Programs:**

4-H Sportfishing People and Fish activities: "Museum in a Tackle Box" and "Fishing for Stories"; 4-H FOLKPATTERNS activities.