Life Skills:
  Wise use of Resources, Communication

What to Do:
  Introduce youths to weather tracking in the United States and around the world.

Measuring Success:
  Youths will be able to track weather in various parts of the country or world.

Audience:
  4th – 8th grades

Time Involved:
  30 minutes to several weeks for tracking weather. Could re-introduce activity at various times throughout the year/seasons.

Group Size:
  5 - 30

Preparation and Materials
  • Newspapers that feature a daily weather report for your local area or state
  • Weather charts for each young person
  • Possible access to Weather Channel (cable TV) and Internet

Introduction
  One of the most common conversations people have is about the weather. "It sure did pour yesterday." "Wasn't that wind something?" "The weather is supposed to be perfect tomorrow." Your plans often revolve around the weather, which can be a minor inconvenience or a major catastrophe. Does anyone have a story to tell about how weather has affected you? This might include anything from the rainout of a ball game to living through a tornado or experiencing a dust storm or extreme heat. (Have youths share stories. If they don't have any, ask them to share recent stories in the news about weather-related incidents.)
The Activity
We’re going to divide into groups of two or three and review the weather sections of several newspapers. (Give groups several minutes to divide up and distribute newspapers.) Have you had enough time? I’d like each group to report its findings about today’s weather and what is predicted for the next few days. Was the forecast accurate for today? (If possible, watch the weather Channel or connect with weather information on the Internet. Examine radar images, jet streams and other methods of prediction. Discuss how to predict weather and how youths would use that information to make plans for the day. Distribute the weather chart and ask each young person to select a place in the United States and track the weather on the chart for a week. Try to cover all areas of the nation.)

Reflect/Discuss
Share What You Did
(At the next meeting, ask each person to share his or her weather chart and report findings.) What surprises did you find? Did the weather you tracked have any connection with the weather where we live?

Tell What's Important
Let's combine the weather charts and analyze what happened across the United States last week. Did the weather create problems for any areas?

Generalize to Your Life
How would you use weather prediction and tracking in your own life? How can you prepare for severe weather? How would you react to weather if you lived in another part of the world? For example, the people in India depend on monsoons (the summer rains) to water their crops. With rain coming only several months a year, people in Africa often experience droughts.

(In small groups, track the weather in another country for a week. Report findings at the next meeting.)

Apply What You Learned
How will you use this information about tracking weather in your daily life? What can you do to prepare for traveling to another area of the United States or another country?

More Challenges
• Invite a local meteorologist to your group.
• Visit local TV/radio stations to discover how local broadcasters predict the weather.
• Invite guests who have experienced severe weather to share their experiences and explain how youths can prepare for severe weather. What is severe weather? What happens when severe weather hits an area?
• Keep a scrapbook of weather-related stories in newspapers.
• Describe and explain terms on the weather chart.

(See Weather Chart on the next page)