

## NiN Rank Lesson Plans



### Suggested Daily Flow

1. Students arrive/trickle in activity
2. Opening circle/welcome/intro skill of the day
3. Play a game
4. NiN Skill of the day
5. Game (can repeat the one above if you like)
6. Closing circle: review what they learned. Have students demonstrate and honor accomplishments.

### Day 1

NiN Skill	Game
Sword Evasion	Sword Dodging

### Day 2

NiN Skill	Game
Match Challenge	Bear, Salmon, Mosquito

### Day 3

NiN Skill	Game
Invisibility/fox walking	Stalking Game

### Day 4

NiN Skill	Game
Awareness: silence, plus review previous skills (in silence!)	Otter steals the fish

### Day 5

NiN Skill	Game
Give NiN test, award certificates	Steal the Chi

**Note-** depending on your group and available time, you may be able to complete the skills in fewer days. It's up to you.



## Detailed Sample Day

### Meet and Greet

Much of this first day is about “meeting and greeting” the students as they arrive. This is a great chance to say “hi” to each new student and parent/guardian. It is also an opportunity to check in about any medical information (ex. Allergies) or other things “good to know”, plus remind the adult about pick-up time/location.

### Trickle In

Typically most students arrive at different times. We often begin our class with a “trickle-in” activity as students arrive at staggered intervals. This activity typically takes the form of an “active” movement game or a “focused” activity, or both if you have an assistant(s).

An active trickle-in could be one of the games that we share in the Level 1 Ninstructor course, which you can repeat later or any other game of your preference. These can be smaller group circle games, or larger “run around” style games. Often on Day 1 we play a name-game as an “ice breaker”.

For a focused trickle in activity, this can be as simple as having some interesting objects for students to come check out, such as interesting nature objects, field guides, things you have made from nature (that give a preview of what they may learn down the training path). Or if you are coming from a martial arts background it could be martial arts training objects (pads, hanbos, etc. for them to look at, hold, but not train with yet). This is where your creativity comes in.

For pathway courses where we do wood carving, we often have an instructor at a trickle in station so students can continue to carve the wood they are working on with their knives.

Remember, a trickle in activity is designed as something organic, to inspire and create a welcome sense of fun, as students arrive at different times. It is also an opportunity to burn off a little energy before you group up for an opening circle. You may choose instead to begin with an opening circle and overview/introduction.

### Opening Circle

To begin your program, it is helpful to circle everyone up, and if possible have everyone sit down (reduces fidgeting energy). This first opening circle is an opportunity to introduce yourself, other staff, and each student. We often like to pass a “talking object” around the circle to have each student introduce themselves. A talking object can be a unique stick (aka a talking stick), a cool martial arts or nature object, or even something “invisible” that each student transforms when they get it. Individual student/staff introductions can be things such as:

- Name
- Where they are from
- Where they go to school
- Favorite \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank- such as place, animal, summer vacation spot, pizza topping, etc.)
- One thing they are grateful for



## **Program Overview**

During this first opening circle, it is a good opportunity to explain a little about the NiN Program. You can mention things such as where the program comes from (the fusion of nature and ninja skills). Describe how the process works: they learn the skills for each rank, then at the end, those students who want to take the rank test can do so. You can mention the 5 rank levels (NiN, Turtle, Firebird, Tiger, and Dragon). If/when they complete a rank you can mention the Rank Shirts and patches that they can earn. As instructors we often wear the NiN Rank shirt to show students. It is also helpful to tell them about the four skills required for the Level 1 Rank of NiN (sword evasion, fire, fox waking, and silence).

## **Games and skills**

After sitting and talking it's good to get moving. This is a good time to play a group game to get the kids motivated. Often there will be kids who don't want to play a game. We usually enlist their help as "referees" to help monitor, and keep the game safe. Once the energy peaks with the game, it is good to shift to the focused skill. If you have a landscape to transition into, it's good to change locations, and go on a short hike into the woods for example. We often have a "secret ninja camp" somewhere out in the forest that we transition to. The students learn that this is our "home base" where we do our focus skills that are part of rank requirements.

## **Focused Rank Skills**

The focused skill time, such as teaching sword evasion, is a chance to bring everyone together and refocus the group. This is a good time to circle up, and get everyone seated so you can explain the specific skill they will learn. For example, if you are teaching sword evasion techniques, you can demonstrate the moves and bring up volunteers to try the technique, then answer questions. This could be followed up with students lining up and doing the skills. After the focused skill of the session it is fun to end with one of the group games that was played earlier, such as the sword evasion game.

## **Closing Circle**

At the end of your teaching session this is a good time to regroup and have a closing circle. If you have just hiked out of the forest, it allows you to get everyone back in one big group. This is an opportunity to:

- Recap what you learned during the day
- Make logistical announcements (ex. "Next class we will do \_\_\_\_\_. Make sure to bring...")



- Honor accomplishments— you can recognize individual students who you noticed did well, were focused etc.
- Pass a talking object. This time you can have students say things such as favorite thing of the day, one gratitude for the day, someone they want to honor for their accomplishments/skills they witnessed, etc.

### **Guardian/leader check-out**

It's really important to check in with whomever is picking up the kids or the person/ teacher you are handing the kids back off to. This is a great chance to reflect how they did during the day, any injuries or mishaps that happened, or reminder for the next training day (ex. Bring a water bottle etc.)

Use this flow design as a template to add your own creativity to each gathering for each of this skills of the curriculum. Once you lead the students through all of the skills, you are ready to give the NiN Rank test.

