

# Casting

One of six Stations in the Passport Program: an Introduction to Fishing and Boating

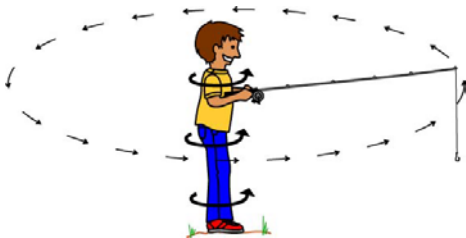
**In order to participate in the casting activity all persons receiving instruction should wear sunglasses and a hat.**

## Read before the Event

### Objectives:

At the end of this station participants will:

- ✓ Know the importance of using sunglasses, a hat, and sunscreen while fishing,
- ✓ Understand basic safety for casting,
- ✓ Be able to use a fishing rod with a push button spincast reel,
- ✓ Understand casting from a boat.



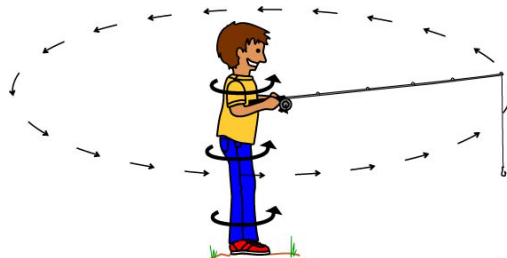
# Background for the Volunteer:

This station uses a fishing rod and a push button spincast reel to cast a weighted plug toward a target. The rod has small line guides, a reel seat for mounting the reel on top of the rod and pistol grips on the handle to fit your fingers. A push button spincast reel has a cover over the line. The reel releases the line for casting when your thumb releases the button. There is skill required to use this outfit, but a little practice is usually all that is needed. Participants find this station very engaging and exciting, joining in with enthusiasm and glee while they make the casting plug sail through the air. When you are setting up for your event, we recommend you locate this station in a wide-open area where stray casting plugs cannot get caught in trees, fences, power lines and other hazards.

We are teaching overhand casting. It is most useful in wide open situations. If you are in an area where bushes and trees make overhand casting difficult or on a boat with other casters, then pitch casting using a pendulum swing in front of you is recommended. Pitch casting instructions appear in the Extensions section for this activity.

For learning casting we recommend a plastic casting plug at the end of the fishing line. Casting plugs come in a variety of sizes and shapes but none of them have hooks and so are easier and safer for practice. An easy substitute is a 1 to 3 inch section cut from an old garden hose.

In a real fishing situation casting with hooks requires a great deal of caution. Since we are preparing the participants for a real fishing experience, instructing children to keep their eyes on the hook or plug at all times, even when it is behind them, helps avoid accidents. The chance that an angler will hook other people, bushes, power lines, or animals is greatly reduced by keeping his/her eyes on the hook or plug. Positioning the angler at least one fishing-rod-length from anyone else also helps avoid accidents. Participants should hold out their rods and turn around to mark an imaginary “safety circle.”



For casting, all participants should wear a hat and sunglasses for protection from a flying plug. Both items can also be useful in fishing. If the glasses are polarized they not only keep hooks away from eyes and protect you from the UV radiation of the sun, but also reduce the glare on the surface of the water. Reduction of the glare aids seeing below the surface of the water, helpful when looking for fish. A hat with a visor also shades the eyes, not only protecting the head from collecting a flying hook but also aiding vision. Sunscreen is also recommended protection for skin in an outdoor situation. If, in spite of your best efforts, an accident occurs, do not try to remove a hook embedded in someone. Let professional medical personnel take care of the situation.

Fully rigged fishing rods and reels have lines with hooks on the end and must be carried carefully from place to place. To keep the hook from catching flesh rather than fish and to keep the line from getting tangled, place the hook into one of the circular line guides on the rod and tighten the line until there is no slack. Even fewer tangles will result if this tightened line is first wrapped a few turns around the rod. Ask event participants to hold their rods at the first line guide with the rod tip pointing toward the sky. This discourages “jousting tournaments” and avoids trouble when you are handling a two piece rod. It is easiest to carry the fishing rod to the destination and then attach the bait.

If the hook has been baited so it cannot be slipped into the line guide, have the participants reel the line up as far as possible, letting the hook and bait dangle from the end of the rod. If the angler stumbles or falls, or the line gets tangled in a branch, the hook will not be jerked into his hand.

When a fish takes the bait, an angler drives the hook into the fish’s mouth by slightly jerking up and back on the rod. This is called “setting” the hook. The tip of the rod needs to be kept up in order for this to work. “Rod tip up” is an important message for these new anglers to understand.

Casting from a boat provides lots of interesting challenges if there is more than one angler aboard. Staying seated in the boat and casting is an additional skill. In this situation, you have lost your safety circle and now must consider how to cast without hooking your buddies. Either fishing without casting, by dropping a line over the edge of the boat, or changing to pitch casting (see Extensions) are both options meet the challenges in this situation. Tight quarters can also be handled by reeling your line in to make room when someone else catches a fish and taking turns overhand casting.

The Casting activity to be presented at this Station follows the Materials section below. It appears in two forms, a script and an outline. Choose the one that will help you most with your presentation. If you feel more comfortable using a script, the part directly following the Materials section is for you. The left column has room for your notes as you prepare. Those presenters who would rather read through the script and then use an outline as a guide will find a suggested outline following the script.

# Teaching Tips for Casting:

Group instruction at the beginning of this Station should take only 2 to 3 minutes. The rest of the time available in a 15 minute program should be devoted to practice and to dealing with some challenging situations set up at the end. It may take 10 to 12 minutes for the participants to catch on to all of the motions needed to cast. For those who have mastered the coordination easily and do not need the additional practice time, there are new ideas to try near the end of the script.

You will need a supply of new sunglasses to distribute at this station to those who forgot to bring their own. Unfortunately, borrowing or sharing sunglasses is considered a health hazard because eye infections are easily and frequently transmitted, particularly among children. Perhaps a sponsor could donate some extra sunglasses for you.

It is fun to cast and the targets are appropriate for both kids and adults. Engage everyone in your activity. Adults generally need to be invited to participate. A talking group of parents in the background can be very distracting. If you do not have enough equipment for the parents to participate by themselves, tell the kids to let their parents take a turn and try it after a few minutes.

Casting is not only fun and exciting up close, but it is also fun to watch from afar. If possible, you may want to locate this station away from the other stations to avoid distractions.

Make sure all of the needed props and equipment are handy. Lay them out so you can find them easily, but not on the ground. If you are hosting 10 participants at one time, rig 12 rods and reels so there are substitute ones in case tangles or equipment failures happen.

If you need the script for the first couple of times through the program, you might consider putting it on a clipboard with a rubber band to keep it from flapping in the wind.

Give positive reinforcement. Mistakes will be made but a little understanding, humor, and fun will keep them from being a problem.

When casting at the targets, let the participants know that they are trying for good technique and accuracy, rather than distance. You will undoubtedly have those who

are thrilled that they can throw the casting plug clear over the fence. Redirect them so they can work on control rather than distance.

Coach participants to look behind them as they are casting, watching the hook. Keeping your eye on the hook (or casting plug) at all times takes care of a number of hazardous situations. It also lets you know that the plug and line are not wrapped around the tip. Tell your participants that the rod and reel will not work if the line is looped around the end and using their eyes to make sure it is all right is helpful.

If you are running out of time, switch to a demonstration so everyone can see what you are trying to teach even though they may not get a chance to try it.

# Materials needed:

- Comfortable and attractive life jacket for the presenter to wear throughout the program
- 12 push button spincast rods and reels with either a plastic casting plug (may be ordered with the *Passport Materials Kit* through [www.NationalFishingandBoatingWeek.org](http://www.NationalFishingandBoatingWeek.org)), or a 1" to 3" piece of garden hose
- 5 targets for casting. We suggest any of the following:
  - hula hoops
  - cardboard boxes with weights in them
  - washtubs with water
  - a rope circle fastened to the ground with tent stakes or tape
  - painted plywood stand-up targets with an open-mouthed fish illustration around the target hole in the middle
  - “Backyard Bass” (*a fish shape that can be caught by a casting plug - order from the Future Fisherman Foundation, 703-519-9691 or online at [www.futurefisherman.org](http://www.futurefisherman.org)*)
- Chairs to sit in to simulate casting from a boat (at least 4 chairs, more if you wish)

# SCRIPT STARTS HERE

Estimated time for **Casting Instruction**: 2 to 3 minutes

**Casting Practice**: 9 to 10 minutes

**Special Casting Situations**: 3 minutes

**Presenter says words in bold, participants give answers in italics**

Presenter and participants do the actions in the boxes.

Watch for check marked “√ **Objectives**” in the left column to see that you are covering the essential information.

**Tips, Objectives,  
Your notes, etc.:**

## SCRIPT:

Introduce yourself enthusiastically. Say:

● **What do you need to do to catch a fish?**

● **Who wants to learn to cast?**

**It is great fun. First, an idea or two about safety:**

**Nobody likes sunburn so we wear hats and sunglasses and use sunscreen.**

● **Hats and sunglasses keep hooks away from your face too. This is one activity where you do not need to wear a helmet!**

● **Sunscreen protects your skin from the burning rays of the sun. When you are close to the water you not only get rays directly from the sun but you also get sun reflected off of the water. So, protect your skin and eyes.**

Line everyone up along one edge of your casting area.

√ **Objective:**

**Know the importance of using sunglasses, a hat, and sunscreen while fishing.**

► **Teaching Tip:**

Involve the parents if you have enough equipment. If not, let them have a turn after the kids.

We will be using a push button spincast rod and reel.

- To cast, you push the button down to hold the line.
- Lifting your thumb releases the line so that your rig will fly off toward the water.
- That's called "casting."

Before you try casting let's practice releasing the line.

- Use your writing hand to cast
- Make a fist with your thumb on top like a lid
- Your thumb is pushing the button down on the reel
- Bring your hand up to your ear
- As you bring your arm forward, make your thumb pop up

- Let's see you do it

When everyone can do it you can move on.

If someone needs special help tell them it is just like opening your hand when you are throwing a ball. Your thumb pops up as you would release a ball.

When they have it: Thumbs up. Great Job!



✓ Objective:  
Understand basic  
safety for casting

Now, two more items and we can go cast.

First:

- You should have an imaginary safety circle around you so no one else gets tangled up in your equipment.
- To make a safety circle hold your rod out like this and carefully turn around. You should be at least that far from anyone else.

Demonstrate a safety circle

**Second:**

- **The safe way to carry a rod and reel is like this.**
- **Hold the rod at the first line guide with the tip pointing at the sky and walk without poking anybody**

Show where the first line guide is on the rod.  
Demonstrate how to safely carry the rod and reel, holding it at the first line guide.

**Now, what were those two things to remember?**

*Make a safety circle*

*Hold the rod at the first line guide when you walk*

**Good. Listen carefully to these instructions.**

- **One at a time**
- **starting at this end of the line**
- **go get a rod and reel**
- **carry it safely back to your place**

Distribute the rods and reels.

**Good job. Here's how a rod and reel works:**

Demonstrate casting as you say the instructions.

- **Reel in the plug by turning the handle on the side around and around until the plug hangs no more than 4 inches from the rod tip.**
- **Keep your feet on the ground, slightly apart, facing forward. Do not step forward as you are casting.**

✓ **Objective:**  
**Be able to use a fishing rod with a push button spincast reel.**

- **Face the target.**
- **Keep your eye on the plug or hook at all times.**
- **Press and hold the button down on your reel with your thumb.**
- **Bring your hand up to your ear.**
- **As you bring your arm forward, release the button just like we did with your thumb and fist. Just like you open your hand when you are throwing a ball**
- **Follow through by pointing the tip of the rod at the target.**
- **When you catch a fish, set the hook, rod tip up.**

**Remember that we are not trying to throw the plug as far as it will go. We are trying to have enough control to hit the target.**

**Watch the plug, even when it is behind you. Sometimes the line can get looped around the end of the rod and your cast cannot work that way.**

**Okay, it is time to practice. I will come around and help each of you individually if you need it.**

Let everyone try it.  
Help everyone. Early releasers will have plugs flying too high into the air; late releasers will have plugs slamming into the ground.  
Acknowledge the participants when they hit the target.

## **Practice Casting**

✓ **Objective:**  
**Understand casting from a boat.**

► **Teaching Tip:**

If time is short, try a demo to show how to fish from a boat.

► **Teaching Tip:**

For participants who are already able to cast:

- Introduce pitch casting (see Extensions)
- Try casting facing backwards
- Try casting with your other hand

When they can cast with some success try this:

**When a fish takes your bait you need to set the hook by quickly lifting the rod tip upward. Always hold the tip of your rod up but this is a slight jerk to set the hook.**

- **Holding the tip up is very important. Set the hook, rod tip up.**
- **One snap is all that is necessary to pull the hook into the fish's jaw so it can be caught.**
- **I will try to catch your line and give you a chance to feel what setting the hook is like.**
- **Once the fish is caught you reel it in.**

Let individual casters send the casting plug toward you. You catch the plug to give them a chance to try to set the hook.

When you have 3 minutes left set up chairs so participants can try casting sitting down as though they were in a boat.

**When you cast from a small boat you have lost your safety circle.**

- **How do you think you could adjust your casting so 4 of you could be very close together?**

*Take turns, keep your eye on the hook when you cast*

Demonstrate pitch casting and just dropping the line over the side of the boat as possible ways to deal with a small space without a safety circle.

**Our time is up.**

- **Reel in your plugs,**
- **Remembering your safety lessons, bring the rods and reels back and put them here.**

**I know you will have fun fishing.**

**Your Group Guide will ask you some questions and then take you to your next station. Bye.**

## **Group Guide's Questions**

Ask these questions before taking the group to the next Station:

**There were three things that you always wear to protect you when you are fishing? Can anyone remember them? *Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen***

**How do you know you are far enough away from another angler to cast safely? *Safety circle***

**What do you need to think about when casting from a boat? *lost safety circle, cast sitting down, keep your eye on your hook***

# OUTLINE STARTS HERE

Introduce yourself and the program

Who wants to learn to cast?

It is fun when you do it safely

- Wear sunscreen because nobody likes sunburn
- Water reflects the sun too so you get many rays
- Hats and sunglasses keep a hook or plug away  
(No need to wear a helmet)

✓ **Objective:**  
**Know the importance of using sunglasses, a hat and sunscreen while fishing.**

We will use a push button spincast rod and reel

- When you push the button down on the reel it keeps the line from going out
- During the cast you lift your thumb off of the button so your rig can be cast into the water
- Demonstrate letting thumb off of fist
  - Use your writing hand
  - Make a fist with your thumb on top like a lid
  - Bring your hand to your ear
  - As you bring your arm forward, make your thumb pop up
  - Let's see you do it.

✓ **Objective:**  
**Understand basic safety for casting**

Make an imaginary safety circle around you before you cast

The safe way to carry a rod and reel is at the first line guide - demonstrate

What do you need to remember?

*(Make a safety circle, carry at first line guide)*

Distribute rods and reels

Rod and reel work like this:

- Reel in plug by turning handle until the plug hangs about 4 inches from the tip
- Keep feet on the ground, no stepping forward
- Face the target
- Keep your eyes on the plug or hook at all times

✓ **Objective:**  
**Be able to use a fishing rod with a push button spincast reel**

- Press and hold the button down with your thumb
- Bring your hand up to your ear, plug directly overhead
- As you bring your arm forward release the button
- Follow through by pointing the tip of the rod at the target
- When you catch a fish, set the hook, rod tip up

Remember:

- We are not trying to throw the plug as far as it will go.
- We are trying for control and to hit the target.
- Watch the plug, even when it is behind you – line can get looped around end

Everyone try it. Help everyone.

Toward the end

- Grab the plug when they cast to simulate a fish taking the bait and them setting the hook
- Cast sitting down as though you were in a small boat (lost your safety circle)
- How do you think you would adjust your casting so 4 of you could be very close together?  
*Take turns, keep your eye on the hook*
- Demonstrate pitch casting and dropping the line over the side of the boat

For participants who are already able to cast:

- Introduce pitch casting
- Try casting facing backwards
- Try casting with your non-dominant hand

Time to stop.

Remember how to carry a rod safely and put the rods here.  
Your Group Guide will ask questions and take you to the next Station.

Bye.

✓ **Objective:**  
**Understand casting from a boat**

# Extensions: (If you have more time . . .)

**Pitch Casting:** A second way of casting is good in situations where there are bushes or trees around that make overhead casting difficult, and it works just as well as overhead casting. If you have time you may wish to teach both methods.

- **Hold the rod out in front of you**
- **Use the weight of your rigging to swing the line like a pendulum**
- **Bend your elbow and throw the line forward as you straighten your arm**
- **Release the button on your reel when the hook reaches the far swing of the pendulum**

**Casting from a Boat:** Sit four chairs close together as though they were seats on the same small boat. Have 4 participants with rods and reels try to work out a system so they can all cast and fish from these locations. They need to figure out how they can work it out. Staying organized and seated in a small boat is necessary. Once they have decided on a system so they can all fish, have one of the participants “catch a fish” and the others get out of the way.

## **Target Games:**

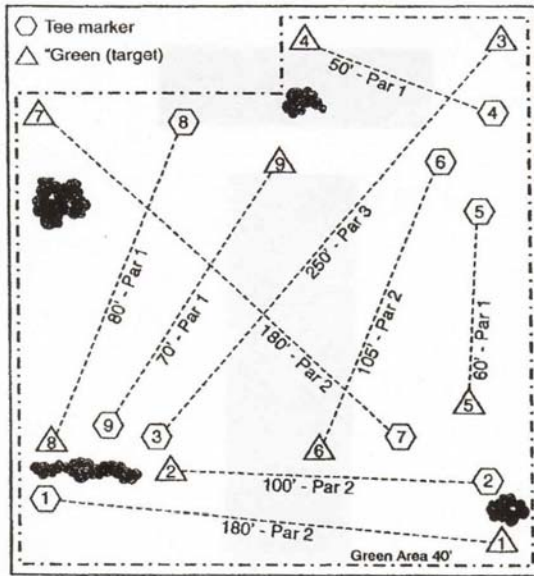
### **F-I-S-H** (*Adapted with permission from Fish Iowa*)

F-I-S-H is played like H-O-R-S-E in basketball. One target will be needed for each group of two to four children. The first player casts from a certain location. If the caster hits the target, the next player must cast from the same location and hit the target. If the second player doesn't hit the target he will receive the first letter in the word F-I-S-H. Each of the players repeats the cast until someone misses and receives a letter. The player next in line after the player who missed his cast gets to decide the location of the new cast. If nobody misses, the original caster gets to select a new casting location. The last person to spell F-I-S-H wins.

### **Plug Golf** (*Adapted with permission from Fish Iowa*)

This game is very similar to golf, but spincasting rigs and casting plugs are used in place of golf clubs and balls. A plug golf course is complete with tee markers, greens and hazards. Participants “cast off” from a tee marker. Instead of reeling the plug back to themselves, they walk toward the plug as they reel (for young children, you may wish someone to hold the plug as the child “reels” towards it). They cast again from this point and head for the “green” where the golf cup is replaced by a dishpan or similar object. Participants cast until they hit the target. Score is kept by counting each

cast as a point and the low score for the course wins. Courses can be any number of holes” that you wish and participants can compete as individuals, partners, or teams.



Plug Golf Score Card										
Scorer	_____			Attested	_____			Date	_ / _ / _	
Hole Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Distance (feet)	180	100	250	50	60	105	180	80	70	
Par	2	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	