



Into the Wild by **Jon Krakauer**

2008-2009 College Book
presentation by
Sheryl Herchenroeder

Book Summary

“In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given \$25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet and invented a new life for himself...”



Themes

- Spiritual journey
- Coming of age
- Nature / environment
- Alaska / wilderness / travel / adventure
- Courage & survival
- Loneliness & isolation
- Family & relationships

Related Books

- *Walden* - Thoreau, Kerouac, London & Tolstoy
- *Descent into Madness: The Diary of a Killer*
- *Mad Trapper of Rat River*
- *Back from the Land: How Young Americans Went to Nature in the 1970s and Why They Came Back*
- *Riding with Strangers: A Hitchhiker's Journey*

Possible OBOC Events

- Documentaries and fictional films about Alaska and the wilderness such as:
 - *Grizzly Man*
 - *Alaska: Spirit of the Wild* (originally on IMAX)
 - *Into the Wild* (now on DVD)
 - *Castaway*
- Gallery exhibits on nature and self portraiture
- Offsite book discussion (REI or park setting)
- Local conservation project

- Discussions
 - Loneliness vs solitary by choice
 - Relationships (long term vs short term)
 - Who are you? What defines you? What's in a name? What material possessions could you give up? What would you take with you to a deserted island?
 - Psychology of survival – what happens during/after isolation – PTSD
 - Hitchhiking & train jumping as transportation

- Display on McCandless' trip from Atlanta to Alaska – map, regional photos, etc.
- Lectures by adventure backpackers and rock climbers
- Discussions and activities to bring light to hunger and starvation both locally and worldwide
 - Donation Drive for food/money
 - Fasting for a set period of time
- Cooking and eating “in the wild” - foraging