

THE BASIC 8 SKILLS OF OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

(Some ideas for some easy ways to practice them at troop meetings)

Skill 1: Know and practice good outdoor manners in town and in the country. Discuss how far camp is from home. Look at a map of the camp. Talk about how you will get there and back. Discuss proper traveling behavior. Vote on where to take a walk and then do it.

Skill 2: Know how to dress for the outdoors in your locality, considering weather forecasts. Discuss the weather and what kinds of clothing are appropriate for camping. Learn to make a bedroll. Do a "Dress for the weather" relay with lots of clothes for the girls to layer.

Skill3: Know how to tie, use, and release a square knot and a clove hitch. Divide the girls into groups. Give each girl two pieces of rope, each about a foot long. Clothes line or venetian blind cord is best, but any rope is adequate. Line the girls up, back to back. Show one group how to make a square knot. Another person shows the other group how to make a clovehitch. When a girl has mastered her knot, she raises it in one hand. When the girl behind her masters her knot. The "partners" then turn around to face each other and teach their knot to the other. Or practice knot tying with licorice string. Don't eat the knot until you've tied it right!

Skill 4: Know how to handle and care for a knife. Discuss some of the important rules of knife-handling use and care to half the troop while half does some other project. When the second half returns to the circle, have the first half explain what they learned to them. Start practicing with cardboard/paperboard knives. Then move on to the real thing. Practice opening and closing a knife and whittling a point on a stick. Let each girl try. Practice proper handling by carving a soft bar of soap (try a soap boat with a bar of floating Ivory soap with a toothpick and paper sail).

Skill 5: Know simple first aid for cuts, insect bits, skinned knees. Play "Kim's Game" with first aid kit items. Cover with a cloth before the girls arrive. Pass out paper and pencils. Uncover the items for a minute and give the girls a chance to look them over, then recover. Have the girls silently list all the items they can remember. After five minutes let the girls share their lists and discuss what each item would be used for. Talk about jellyfish, mosquitos, personal hygiene, and basic first aid skills.

Skill 6: Know how to make, use, and put out a fire for outdoor cooking. Learn to waterproof matches. Learn about tinder, kindling, and fuel. Learn about types of wood fires. Demonstrate a foundation fire. Make firestarters. Practice building fires with "edible" materials. Learn the do's and don't of fire building. You may break the girls into groups for this and then have each group do a demonstration.

Skill 7: Know how to cook something for yourself, something for the patrol or troop. Have one lunch or supper meeting for the whole troop. Have one patrol cook, one set the table, and one sing and prepare the beverage. Make s'mores for dessert and share the clean up duties.

Skill 8: Know how to protect the natural world. Discuss what measures should be taken to protect the natural world. Play the "food web" game or the wide game, "Predator and Prey". Think of a clean-up project your troop can do or a way your troop can publicize caring for the environment locally.

Remember: "Don't put your hands or feet where your eyes can't see."

Camp Skills at Your Meeting

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I believe in going to camp prepared, and I include the girls in as much advance planning as I can. That way, when they arrive at camp they can test out their new skills, instead of just learning them. During the year I try to have at least one meeting a month (more if I can) that contains some activity teaching outdoor skills. I encourage everyone to plan now, and have fun later. Here are some activities I use during the year:

Round Robin

Set up 3 or 4 stations. Each station is monitored by a parent or Guider and limited to one patrol at each station. Stickers, stamped "passports", laminated cardboard depicting the stations can be earned and worn on the camp hat. Stations could include challenges in: knots, compass, gadgets, tracks, trails, environment, tents, etc.

What to pack

Girls learned what to pack with a game. We cut out pictures of objects that should be packed and included some that should not. The girls put the objects in the appropriate pile in a relay game. We made up cards with pictures of Camp Terms to teach things like latrines, dish pan, rain gear, etc. We also demonstrated how to do a bedroll. This was more for the benefit of the parents who came a half-hour early to be a part of the meeting. We went over the menu and proper behavior while parents are there. We also made situpons with the girls too.

Build a Model Campsite

Brainstorm with the girls for a list of everything they might find at camp. Write the list on a large sheet of paper. Include everything: tents, camp building, flag pole, waterfront, boats, campfire, trees, rocks, grass, raccoons, campers, etc. Next have the girls, either individually or by patrols, volunteer to make specific items on the list. Have available all scraps of construction paper, fabric, Popsicle sticks, cardboard, twigs, glue, play dough or plasticene, paint, yarn, scissors, and so on. The girls create the objects, then glue them on a piece of plywood (18x24 inches or 45x60 cm. is a good size). This makes a great display for an end of the year banquet. This activity could be done over two weeks....brainstorm one week, build the next.

Camp Terminology

On strips of paper print words such as: pitch, strike, guy ropes, runners, grommet, upright, ridge pole, tent pegs, tinder, kindling, latrine, gadget, inspection, etc. Stick the papers around the room. Girls go in small groups to define the words. Call everyone together and have a quick group discussion to clear up any misinterpretations. (Also a good gathering activity)

Duties

Gather a number of articles, such as a can-opener, tin of soup, dishcloth, flag, songbook, box of matches, stick of wood, scrub brush, ladle, scouring pad, pail, etc. Place all items in a pillow case. Write the names of camp duties (Cook, Clean-up, Colours, and Campfire, Wood and Water, Sanitation, or whatever is appropriate for your camp) on pieces of paper. Before starting the activity discuss the different duties that have to be done at camp. Girls then take turns reaching into the pillow case, pulling out one item, and telling which duty it goes with. Some items may be used by more than one duty patrol or six.

Mystery Bags

Seal nature items in cloth bags. Pass them around the group. After everyone has had a chance to feel the objects, have the girls take turns telling what they think they felt. Let everyone have a look at what was in the bags and then search for similar items around your campsite or meeting place.

Camp Gadget

Build a plate rack, mug tree, boot scraper, clothes hanger, sun dial, chopsticks, firewood rack, pot hook, fire tongs, or an above-ground wet pit. Use souvlaki sticks, pencils, twigs, thin dowels etc. You'll need some twine or wire twist ties for these projects.

Cooking Competition

Give each patrol a package of food, a stove, pots and fuel to cook a small meal. Make sure each patrol includes both young and older Guides. Let them go and see what culinary treats they create. This can be accomplished (with permission) in the parking lot of a school or church.

Budget Wise

Give each patrol a set amount of money to buy food for a single meal. They must plan, purchase and prepare a nutritious feast for all members.

Candle Cooking

Give each patrol some oil, a candle, a coat hanger, some tin foil, an egg and two slices of bread. Challenge them to cook a fried egg sandwich.

Board Game

On a piece of cardboard, draw a track divided into sections, each one about the size of a quarter. On each section draw a symbol which is used in legends on a map. Use dice and markers. Guides move along the track. If the player can tell the meaning of the symbol on which she lands, she may stay there. If not, she goes back three spaces. First player to reach the end, wins the game.

Story

Each patrol is given a set of cards. On each card a symbol used in legends is drawn. The patrol is in its corner with the cards spread out in front, face up. The Guider tells a story (eg. The Robin Patrol is going on a hike. They first cross a bridge " Guider pauses). The first patrol to send up a Guide with the card showing the correct symbol for bridge gets a point and the story continues.

Make a Map

Give the Guides a picture that includes trees, a lake, etc. and a beautiful sunset behind a hill far away. Ask them to reproduce the picture using mapping signs with the correct directions marked. Will they see the clue that the sun sets in the West?

Map Treasure Hunt

Each patrol draws a sketch map to show where they have hidden a treasure. Exchange maps with another patrol and look for their treasure.

Cut-up Compass

A cardboard circle cut into 16 "pie" pieces, each labeled with one of the compass points, can have many uses (eg. individual competition between two Guides to see who can put it together first, relay games in patrols, etc.)

Compass Kim's Game

Draw a large compass on a sheet of paper. Label the points. At each point place an object. Then play Kim's Game, asking such questions as, "Where was the flower?"

Gone Fishin'

The basic equipment consists of a magnet with a hole in the middle, a length of string, and pieces of cardboard with a paperclip attached to each. Cut the cardboard pieces into squares and write on a knot name or compass direction. In the knot game, players run up, fish for a marker, tie the knot named, and race back to give the fishing line to the next player. Add a paper plate to the equipment for the compass game. Players race up to fish for a marker naming a compass point, place the marker in correct position at the edge of the plate, and race back to pass the fish line to the next player.

Cat's tails

Cut 30 pieces of string of the same length. Hide all but three or four pieces. Divide the girls into three or four teams of equal size. Each team chooses a "cat" who is given one of the extra pieces of string. At a given signal, all players except the "cats" scatter to hunt for the hidden strings. As a girl finds one, she takes it back to her "cat", and uses a reef knot (or a knot of your choice) to tie it to the string tail the "cat" is holding. The team with the longest cat's tail wins.

Enjoy the activities! Many can be adapted from Brownies to Senior Branches or used at trainings for adults. Even sparks can recognize camp items that they "fish" for and then match up the item in a type of concentration game.