



MEETING PLANS & IDEAS: HIKING

Hiking	Information	Troop Meetings	Main Event
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OBJECTIVES

This month's activities should:

- Lead to improved physical fitness.
- Teach Scouts to understand, prevent, and mitigate hazards that may be encountered while hiking.
- Teach first aid for injuries that may occur while hiking.
- Help Scouts grow in skill and confidence in their ability to take care of themselves on the trail.
- Foster a sense of communion with nature and God.
- Lead to greater appreciation for the outdoors and a strong determination to follow the Outdoor Code.
- Build increased understanding of and commitment to no-trace methods for hiking.

LEADERSHIP PLANNING

During your planning meetings, you and your leadership team may want to discuss the following items when choosing hiking as your program feature.

- Where do we want to hike—where will our main event be?
- What other activities do we want to do during our hike?
- What type of program do we want, and which group should be in charge?
- What equipment will we need?
- Should we plan a meal or lunch in small groups or as one large unit?
- Who needs to learn orienteering and map-and-compass skills?
- Are permits or other forms of permission required to hike on public or private land?
- Where can we acquire maps for the route of our hikes?
- What should be changed on the sample meeting plans to meet our needs?

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	DATE
Planning	Plan the hike route and activities.	
Materials	Map, compass, first aid kit, water, etc.	
Other	Permits, weather forecast, etc.	

Click above for fillable troop meeting planning form.

PREOPENING IDEAS

[Preopening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

- If it is dark enough, practice following directions by using the North Star method (see the *Boy Scout Handbook*)
- Have Scouts arrive in the shoes or boots they plan to wear hiking. Inspect their shoes or boots and make recommendations (e.g., break in new boots, choose shoes with better ankle support, etc.).
- Display an array of hiking guidebooks and maps for your area. Encourage Scouts to explore

possible destinations for future hikes.

- Set up a station where Scouts can make trail mix from individual ingredients. Have other kinds of trail foods available for Scouts to sample.

OPENING IDEAS

[Opening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

GROUP INSTRUCTION IDEAS

Hiking 101

- Have the troop brainstorm as many types of hikes as they can. (See the *Hiking* merit badge pamphlet for ideas.) Describe any unusual hikes the unit has done in the past (night hikes, urban hikes, etc.).

Stuff to Bring

- Demonstrate different types of packs for hiking: fanny packs, day packs, backpacks. Point out advantages and disadvantages of each. Explain features Scouts should look for, such as well-padded shoulder straps and accessible water bottle holster.

Hiking Techniques

- Teach and practice Slack-legging: As you walk, let your back leg go slack momentarily as you take weight off of it to reduce fatigue.
- Teach and practice the Caterpillar (for climbing steep trails): When the leader needs a break, he steps off the trail and lets the second hiker take over. The new leader does the same thing when he needs a break. Continue in this manner until the original leader is back at the front.

Food, First Aid, and Outdoor Ethics

- Review the [principles of Leave No Trace](#).

SKILLS INSTRUCTION IDEAS



ESSENTIAL



CHALLENGING



ADVANCED

Hiking 101



- Practice reading a compass and learn how to set a pace.
- Review the rules and particulars of trail, cross-country, and back-roads hiking. (See the *Hiking* merit badge pamphlet).



- Review the above skills.
- Review the rules and particulars of night and urban hiking. (See the *Hiking* merit badge pamphlet).



- Review the above skills.
- Review the rules and particulars of snow, tundra, and desert hiking.

Stuff to Bring



- Practice figuring the heights and widths of objects (refer to *Boy Scout Handbook*, “Navigation” chapter).
 - Review the Scout Basic Essentials.
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- Work on packing up for a group hike; study maps of the hike route.
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- Review unit equipment needed for a group hike. Make plans to acquire any equipment needed.

Hiking Techniques



- Practice reading topographic maps.
 - Review what to do if lost (refer to *Boy Scout Handbook*, “Navigation” chapter).
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- Plan a game for the troop to use during the hike. Use a topographic map of the hike’s destination and lay out an area to play the game. [Troop Games: Large Area](#)
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- Help younger Scouts with map-reading skills.
- Review options for extra activities you can do during the hike (scenic overlooks, historic sites, recreational opportunities, etc.).

Food, First Aid, and Outdoor Ethics



- Learn how to prevent and treat blisters.
 - Learn how to treat a sprained ankle.
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- Review the above skills, along with the other first aid techniques described in the *Hiking* merit badge pamphlet.
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- Review the above skills.
- Discuss how to avoid getting lost and how to get found if you are lost, including leaving a travel plan with someone at home, emergency signaling, and using GPS-based emergency locators.

BREAKOUT GROUP IDEAS

Getting Ready for the Main Event

- Discuss plans for the hike this month and make sure everyone knows what his assignments are and what to bring for the outing.
- If any members have not been hiking yet, make plans for a training hike.
- If the main event is going to be an overnigher, begin to make plans for equipment distribution and tent needs.
- Menu Planning (if applicable)
- Duty Roster Planning (if applicable)

Preparation for the meeting’s game or challenge

GAME AND CHALLENGE IDEAS

CLOSING IDEAS

- [Leader's Minutes](#)
- [Ceremony](#)

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TROOP LEADER RESOURCE LINKS

[Advancement Resources](#)

[Awards Central](#)

[Boy Scouts](#)

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#)

[SCOUTBOOK](#)

[Scouting Forms from the National Council](#)

[ScoutCast](#)

[Scouting Magazine](#)

[ScoutStuff.org \(Retail Site\)](#)

[ScoutingWire](#)

[Sign in to MyScouting.org](#)

[Take Youth Protection Training](#)

[The Outdoor Adventure Planning Guide](#)

[Troop Leader Guidebook Appendix](#)

[Uniforms](#)