

*Taken from the Volunteer Toolkit Badge Year for Brownies
Hiker 1*

Overview

Note to Volunteers The excitement and fast pace of running troop meetings for the first time can sometimes leave us tongue-tied. For that reason scripting is included for guiding girls through a meeting; these "lines" are under the heading "**SAY**." However, you're the expert. If you feel you don't need the script, do what makes sense for you and your girls.

Prepare Ahead

- Get your badges [here](#).
- Gather sticks or pencils, stones, pinecones —enough material to create 10 signs.
- Print out **Trail Signs** — enough for each girl.
- Copy each of the signs on 10 separate pieces of paper, one set only.
- Create a simple trail map of the area around your troop's meeting place. Don't include vegetation or landmarks, just the simple route (roads or paths) leading to the meeting place.
- The best way for girls to earn their hiker badge is to get outdoors and walk a trail. Even in an urban setting, you can plan a hike around a neighborhood or even in a yard! Make sure your activities are accessible to everyone. Ask in advance if Brownies need special accommodations.
- If you are planning to go outdoors, check out ways to stay safe with the Girl Scout safety guidelines and checkpoints.
- If you are planning a hike for Meeting 2, print out a copy of the **Hiking List Handout** and give to adults when they drop off or pick up their Brownie.

Get Help from Your Friends and Family Network

- Find out if anyone has interest or expertise in hiking that they can share as a guest speaker or activity leader.
- See if anyone wants to lead or support an activity or meeting.

Award Connection

- In this session, girls complete activities toward earning the Hiker badge.
- They will earn their badge after completing activities at the end of the second Hiker badge meeting.

Meeting Length

90 minutes

The times given for each activity will be different, depending on how many girls are in the troop.

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Plus, girls may really enjoy a particular activity and want to continue past the allotted time. As much as possible, let them! That's part of keeping Girl Scouting girl-led!

Materials

Activity 1: As Girls Arrive

- Sheets of paper
- Markers, crayons
- **Hiking List Handout**

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony

- **Girl Scout Promise and Law**

Activity 3: Follow the Trail

- Sticks or pencils, stones, pinecones — materials enough to create 10 trail signs
- **Trail Signs**
- Separate copies (or drawings) of 10 trail signs

Activity 4: What I See

- Poster boards
- Markers, crayons
- Note paper
- Pens, pencils
- Trail map or map of the area girls are walking

Activity 5: Leave No Trace Snack

- Snack items you might take on a hike, such as granola bars, bananas, apples, water

Activity 6: Take Action Pause

- Paper
- Pen or pencil

Activity 7: Closing Ceremony

- None

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Detailed activity plan

Activity 1 : As Girls Arrive

Time Allotment

10 minutes

Materials

- Sheets of paper
- Markers, crayons
- **Hiking List Handout**

Steps

SAY:

You are going to draw where you live as though you are flying above and looking down. What does your home look like from up there? For example, is there a driveway or alley that leads to a street? Are there buildings nearby? How about trees?

Note to volunteer: If you are planning an actual hike for the next meeting, make sure parents have the **Hiking List Handout**, which you can distribute during drop off or pick up.

Activity 2 : Opening Ceremony

Time Allotment

15 minutes

Materials

- **Girl Scout Promise and Law**

Steps

Girls gather in a circle. Welcome them to the first Hiker badge meeting.

Girls say the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law together.

SAY:

Every trail leads to a new adventure! Your adventure begins now as you earn your Hiker badge!

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Can anyone answer: What do you love about the outdoors? What's the best part about looking at nature? Have you ever been hiking? If so, what did you bring on your hike? What did you see?

Activity 3 : Follow the Trail

Time Allotment

20 minutes

Materials

- Sticks or pencils, stones, pinecones — materials enough to create 10 trail signs
- **Trail Signs**
- Separate copies (or drawings) of each of the 10 signs

Steps

Give each girl a trail sign — make sure to distribute the 10 trail signs. If you have a larger troop, group them so each team gets a different sign. If possible, go outside and have girls or teams create their signs in a dirt area, just like a trail sign might look. Just be sure to follow safety-wise tips.

SAY:

Have you ever seen signs on a roadway? What do those look like? They might say or show pictures that mean stop, go, turn left, turn right, slow down, or curves ahead. Roadway signs help you get to where you want to go safely. That's the way trail signs work, too.

Take sticks and stones from the pile to create the sign you have. Don't let the other teams know what your sign means...yet!

Have girls look at each team's trail sign and guess what it means.

Now give girls the printout of the trail signs. Divide girls into 2 groups. Have each group create a trail around (or inside) your meeting place, using the materials and signs you provided. Girls will swap and follow the other group's trail.

SAY:

What signs were the easiest to make and follow?

What worked and what didn't?

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Why and when do you think trail signs are useful?

Activity 4 : What I See

Time Allotment

20 minutes

Materials

- Poster boards
- Markers, crayons
- Note paper
- Pens, pencils
- Trail map or map of the area girls are walking

Steps

SAY:

At the beginning of this meeting, you created a sky view of where you live. If someone wanted to visit, would this help them find where you live? Drawing this way is how maps are created.

Divide girls into three groups and give each group the trail map that depicts a trail around your meeting place. Each group will go outside to follow the trail. (If you can't go outside, have girls pretend that they are walking on an outside trail.)

SAY:

Now that you understand what a trail is, let's practice a hike. But first, each group has a role:

One group is the Plant Detectives — you will write down all the plants you see on the walk.

The second is the Animal and Bug Detectives — you will write down all the animals and bugs you see. The third is the Trailblazers — you will leave a trail sign at each place you think needs one. (If girls can't go outside, they can draw this on their simple trail map.)

When girls have walked the trail, ask each group to share their findings.

- *What bugs and animals did you record seeing? Did you include birds in your list?*
- *What plants did you see along the way?*
- *How helpful do you think the trail signs you left will be for the next person walking the trail?*

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- *Where is it safe to walk and what should you avoid? (Sample responses: busy roads, unmarked trails, poisonous plants, snakes, bees.)*

Keep It Girl-Led Tip

Girls can decide on other groups they want to form, such as a Night Sky group that makes notes about stars and night creatures.

Activity 5 : Leave No Trace Snack

Time Allotment

10 minutes

Materials

- Snack items you might take on a hike, such as granola bars, bananas, apples, water

Steps

SAY:

Your snacks are things you might bring on a hike. Imagine you are on a hike and seeing all the beautiful things around you. You play a big part of keeping that area clean and beautiful.

How? Have you taken a seashell from the shore? A pinecone from the forest? Left an apple core behind? No big deal, right? Now imagine hundreds, thousands, potentially millions of outdoor visitors all doing the same. Different story. So how do we respect and appreciate the natural environment? By leading a "leave no trace" outdoor experience.

Leave No Trace applies to your backyard or local park as much as hiking trails. You would never think of trampling your neighbor's flowers, putting soap in your drinking water, or carving your name on your garage door. When you visit other natural environments, the same things apply.

What are some things you can do?

Plan Ahead. *Know the regulations for the place you are visiting. For example, the trail may say No Dogs or Bicycles Allowed, or No Picking Plants.*

Stay on the trail.

Carry out what you carry in. *What do you think this means when it comes to your snack?*

Leave nature as you find it. *Why should we do this?*

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Be careful with fire.

Respect wildlife.

Be considerate of other visitors. *What do you think this means?*

Activity 6 : Take Action Pause

Time allotment

10 minutes

Materials

- Paper
- Pen or pencil

Steps

SAY:

As you earn badges this year, you're going to think about how you can use the skills you're learning to take action. Then you'll come up with a small Take Action Project that you can do in a meeting later in the year.

While you are planning your outdoor trek, can you think of some Take Action ideas you could do that would help people on a hike?

If girls need a prompt, **SAY:**

For example, putting up signs that show poisonous plants? Designing a way for handicapped people to enjoy the trail? Making posters for Share the Trail so bikes and hikers can hike safely together?

How about projects for the things you learned about Leave No Trace?

If girls need a prompt, **SAY:**

You might want to find ways to make hikers aware of endangered plants or species along a trail, or to remind hikers to take their trash off a trail to dispose in a proper place.

Note to volunteer: Write down the girls' Take Action ideas throughout the year as they work on badges. You'll use this list later to remind them of their ideas and help them choose one to do.

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Activity 7 : Closing Ceremony

Time allotment

5 minutes

Materials

- None

Steps

Girls form a friendship circle and share one thing they are most excited about for their hike.

Ask girls to bring trail mix items for the next meeting. This could be raisins, nuts (check for allergies, first), Cheerios, dried fruit, goldfish, and pretzels.

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