

## Night Hikes



A night hike can be a fun and exciting experience, and one to do to wind things down after a long day.

A few things:

- Bring or wear a jacket unless you know it will be hot.
- Bring a flashlight, but they may not use it except in an emergency. (Impress on them that they are not to turn it on unless you say so.) Prior to the hike, take a piece of the red cellophane and rubber band and cover each flashlight.)
- You will travel some of the time holding onto a rope so that no one gets frightened.
- You will need at least one adult to take up the rear to make sure no one is left behind, but, depending on size and age of the group, more adults may be needed.

### **Night Hike Instructions**

Everyone **MUST** wear long pants, closed-toed shoes, and socks. First, know the trail that you plan to take them on. Try to do it once ahead of time, and again at night if possible to look for any flood lights, etc., that could obstruct night vision. Prior to the hike, either you or someone should double check for any obstacles and make noise to frighten off any possibility of snakes.

Wrap your flashlight in a double layer of red cellophane. Also wrap anyone else's flashlight the same, but tell them to keep them OFF unless you tell them it is okay, or it is an emergency.

You will need at least one helper to hold up the script and other things for you.

You also must have another adult at the end of the group for any stragglers, or frightened girls. There should be several adults along depending on the size of the group you are taking.

### **What you will need:**

- A small backpack or fanny pack to carry your supplies.
- Flashlight, covered in 2 layers of red cellophane
- Matches
- Rubber bands to cover the flashlights
- Worry stones for security if they need it
- Wintergreen Life Savers
- Rope (enough for all to hold onto if they need it)
- Candle and holder
- Markers
- Pirate eye patches
- White index cards (3 x 5)
- Several small bottles with lids, i.e. pill bottles, each filled with a different scent. I used vanilla with a cotton ball, eucalyptus oil with a cotton ball, peppermint oil with a cotton ball, lavender oil with a cotton ball, and one garlic clove). You can use any kind, just good distinguishing smells.
- One small bottle with a lid filled with plain water and covered with a lid.

### **Night Hike Script**

“Experiencing nature at night can be fun and exciting.”

POEM:

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.

To know the dark, go dark.

Go without sight and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings.

And is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.

“What do you think that means?” Allow time for a little discussion.

**What are our five senses?** Sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell.

We use these to receive information about things outside our body. Normally we depend on our eyesight more than any other sense. At night our vision is limited so we must depend more upon our other senses. Nighttime is a good time to find out how keen our other senses are.

Rules: Please, no speaking. Everyone must stay with the group and hold onto the rope. No lights at all. Why do you think that is? I am using this light with the red cellophane so that I don't forget all that I have planned for you. Why red?

\*Leader: Only use the flashlight with the red cellophane when you need to. Otherwise, keep the flashlight turned off.

Night is full of different sounds and smells than during the day. Temperature drops and humidity rises.

“How many of you are afraid of the night? Do you ever venture outside at night where there are no lights?”

“This night hike will test many of your senses and help you to overcome many of your fears.”

\*If anyone is afraid of the dark, give them a “worry stone”. In order to fully develop our night vision – do not turn on flashlights.

“It takes 15 minutes for our eyes to adjust enough to walk about at night and 45 minutes for full night vision. Our night vision can be as good as a deer, and better than rabbits. However, one bright flash of light ruins it and means several minutes of readjustment, even for animals. You can put them in jeopardy by shining a bright light into their eyes. Hence, the red cellophane.”

### **Quiet and Listen**

“Our eyes can play tricks on us. You may first feel that you need your feet to feel the bumps more than your eyes.”

### **Disappearing Heads:**

Pair up. Each focus on partner’s face. STARE! Heads begin to disappear. Shift eyes back and forth to make them reappear.

Why? Rods and cones. Cones – center of eye, need light to work, allows us to see color. Rods – around eyes, peripheral vision (use this to avoid getting lost at night).

### **Burning Retina:**

Have a match ready to strike. You may have to repeat this a couple of times.

Have them close their eyes first, then open to watch you draw the shape with the lit match.

Then close their eyes and they will see the shape on their eyelids.

### **Listening for Sounds:**

Why are some animals active at night and not during the day?

Name some: bats, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, owls, mice and rats, snakes. Why? Competition for resources and protection from predators.

These animals have developed a high sense of hearing for hunting their prey. Many use sound for hunting their prey and also use sound to communicate at night and to find a mate, defend their territory, or find their young.

### **Deer Ears:**

Cup hands behind ears and push ears forward. Think of nocturnal animals with large ears: bats, deer, foxes. Alternate between “deer ears” and human ears.

Sounds travel farther at night because of the wind dying down. We are also more acutely aware of sounds as our world closes in due to the darkness.

What animals communicate at night? Frogs, insects, birds all call to attract a mate. Other ways: moths use scents to attract mates while lightning bugs flashlight patterns.

Check on everyone's night vision. Has your vision improved since we began? Can you see any colors? Light allows us to see color, using the cones in our retina. Rods give us night vision but only allow us to see shades of gray.

Pass out crayons and index cards. Have them write their name on the index card and guess the color of the crayon. Have them write the name of the color they guessed on the card. Return crayons, but have them keep the drawing/paper in a pocket.

### **Pirate Vision:**

I have a question. You all have seen pirates in movies or in books, right? Well, why do they wear a patch over their eye?

Circle up and pass out the patches. Light the candle. Have them look directly at the flame while you tell the story.

At night, pirates attack other ships. They go on board and immediately put out all the lights and simply switch their eye patches to the other eye. The pirates have a great sight advantage and take all the treasure.

Once upon a time there lived two rival pirates, Captain RedBeard and Captain BlackBeard. Both traveled far and wide throughout the Great Lakes in search of lost treasure. But only one had the treasure map!

Captain RedBeard took great care to protect the treasure map from Captain BlackBeard so that he might be the first to find the hidden treasure. On a night much like tonight, Captain RedBeard went below deck to study his charts and treasure map, believing he was now only a few days' journey away from the treasure.

What Captain Redbeard did not realize was that Captain BlackBeard's ship had been following him in the dark night, plotting to take over Captain RedBeard's ship and steal the treasure map. At that very moment, Captain BlackBeard's crew attacked, coming aboard the ship. Captain RedBeard heard the commotion above deck and quickly hid the map and waited for Captain BlackBeard below.

As soon as Captain BlackBeard came into the light, Captain RedBeard blew out the candle and switched his eye patch to the other eye and used his night vision to fight poor Captain BlackBeard who was surprised by the candlelight and immediately lost his night vision.

What do you think would have happened if Captain Blackbeard had also worn an eye patch?

### **Blow Out The Candle:**

Have them switch their eye patch to the other eye. Which eye has better night vision?

It actually takes about 45 minutes to fully develop your night vision, so that is why pirates kept one eye in the dark all day under a patch.

### **Sense of Smell:**

Nocturnal animals have developed their senses to see and hear better in the dark, right? Let's talk about canines for a minute. Do you know what animals fit into the canine category? Foxes, coyotes, and dogs, for instance. These animals have cold, wet noses that attract and hold scent molecules, making them excellent odor detectors. Have you ever noticed how dogs like to keep their noses to the ground a lot? Or sometimes lift their heads and keep their noses high in the wind?

#### **Magic Sniffing Potion:**

Pass around a mildly scented or natural object (small bottles filled with different scents soaked into cotton balls). Let them all try to identify the different smells.

Then pass around a small bottle of water and have them stick a finger in and wet their noses. Now have them smell again.

#### **Solo Hike:**

Line up and walk up the trail, holding onto the rope if they wish with space between hikers. This is a great way to experience oneness with the night and overcome fears of the dark.

Review what they have learned. What was their favorite part?

Remember: We can have a very negative impact on nocturnal animals with noise pollution and light pollution. Could too much light affect their habits? We are daylight creatures and are not physically adapted for life in the dark.

I have one last story to tell you that may help you to better understand how much better it is to learn to see in the dark.

#### **Sparks Fly:**

I have one last story to tell you that may help you to better understand how much better it is to learn to see in the dark. Pass out the Winter Green Lifesavers.

Have them open lifesaver package and face a partner. Breathe in deeply several times with your mouth open to dry out your mouth. Then, facing each other, place the lifesaver in the back of your mouth and bite down with your mouth open. Upon doing this, they should see sparks in each other's mouths.

Lifesaver Note: These come individually wrapped, so be sure that each girl either puts the wrapper in her pocket or hands it to one of the adults.

#### **Check Your Color:**

When you have returned to the light, have them pull out their index cards and check what color they wrote on it and see if it is correct. Chances are, most will not have it right.