



Help develop well-rounded youth, better prepared for success in the world.

How to Run a Family Gathering – Afternoon Hike

It is nice to get everyone together in the outdoors. Invite the whole family, parents, siblings, grandparents and aunts/uncles. It is a great way to involve the family and get to know your youth's families.

Keep in mind these family members could be potential future Scouters or helpers.

Pick a Date & Time

- Pick a date that is best for your Section and families. If you need to do a survey to find a day that works best, then do so. The goal is to get as many people to attend as possible.
- Time: Early afternoon is typically best. Usually, a warmer part of the day after everyone has had time to have lunch prior to arriving.
- About 2-3 hours is a good timeframe for a family hiking event.

Weather

- Check the weather forecast. Hiking in the rain or bad weather might not be the best time to do this. If your Group plans to go ahead in the rain, ensure everyone is in proper raingear.
- Have a backup date in case weather conditions cause you to reschedule your event.
- Let families know that you will communicate by a certain date/time & how (email, ScoutsTracker, etc.) if the date of the event will be changed.

Prepare

You need to communicate details of the day and how to prepare for the hike. Not everyone has experience and knows the what, how and why of hike preparation.

You can do this by having a meeting or sending out a letter or email or ScoutsTracker message.

- Scouters will need to plan:

Paperwork	Are there washroom facilities	Learn and teach the 7 no trace principals
Time to start & end hike	Is there cell phone service	Buddy system
Attendance	Bring first aid kit	How long of hike? km
Safety concerns: wildlife or other	ERP: Nearest hospital, etc.	Appropriate clothing/attire

and anything else you think might be appropriate.

- Be sure to include:

How	Where	What to bring	Why
To dress	Meet place & time	Water	To enjoy some family time
Proper footwear	The hike route	Snack	To get outdoors & enjoy nature
To pack	Safety Plan (ERP)	Hiking staff/stick, hat, sunglasses	To learn about the outdoors
		Bug spray and sunscreen	
		Backpack to carry your belongings	



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Pick the Trail

- Pick a simple trail (not too long), as you will have all kinds of abilities of hikers and you want everyone to enjoy it.
- A simple trail will also allow for several stops/breaks along the way.
- Visit the trail beforehand to ensure suitability.

Paperwork

You need to do paperwork to be prepared in the event of an incident/emergency.

- AAF (Adventure Application Form)
- ERP (Emergency Response Plan Form)
- Physical fitness for non-members
- Have MyScouts registration sheets available for all your members
- Leave a plan with someone not attending

The Hike

- On the day of the hike, meet at the starting point.
- Do a safety brief to cover rules, safety and ensure everyone is prepared. Remind everyone how to be a good hiking neighbour by stepping to one side when there are people passing by. Group stretching would be a great idea to prevent injury.
- Take attendance and set up the buddy system.
- You might want to invite someone on the hike who knows about track, tree and plant identification to educate participants along the way. Things like recognition of poisonous plants, what you could eat, identifying animal tracks and scat. If you don't have anyone, there are phone applications you could use to do this (ex. iNaturalist).
- Have a couple of safe games planned to play along the trail to add to the fun.
- Ensure you stop along the way to be silent and listen to the natural soundscapes. Use all your senses along the hike: See, Smell, Touch, Hear & Taste where safe to (being mindful of any allergies).
- These tips will help you and the Group/Section enjoy the full experience of the hike.

Event Review - A short reflection at the end of the trail to get feedback on your hiking event.

- How did everyone enjoy it?
- Would they do it again?
- Did they learn anything?
- Was it a suitable length of time (or should it be longer or shorter)?
- Would you change anything?
- Can you think of other questions to ask?
- **Remember to thank everyone for coming!**