



Brightwater Site

Leading a Night Hike at Brightwater

Group students mentioning the 'Group Up' phrase which means to come together as quickly as possible. Teach the students my voice so I do not have to raise it. Discuss the beauty of the night world mentioning that our eyes have cones for color for the daylight and the rods at the back of the eyes work more during the night. So coyotes, owls and mice have different adaptations for living in the crepuscular or dusk world. Discuss some of the fears (wild animals, getting lost, darkness) and provide reassurance as appropriate. Celebrate the beauty of the nighttime environment by helping participants to trust each other and this element of nighttime. That is why we do this program in the first place!

Lucky Stone

Take a walk about on the trail encouraging no talking. Intersperse adults between kids with an adult 'sweep' at the back. Some kids might benefit from holding a lucky stone passed out to hold on to help pass a slight feeling of nervousness. Walk along the trail just to get used to walking in the dark.

Vision Check

Stretch your arms in front of your eyes and the slowly move them until you cannot see them with your peripheral vision. Note how far your arms move. Then try it again with your arms outstretched but your fingers wiggling. Generally the motion is detected by your peripheral vision more easily. Our light sensitive rod cells (the ones that are used for night vision) detect the movement and images in dim light (p. 36 – Keepers of the Night).

Now start the hike by reminding kids to stay quiet, not to be too close to others and to walk the path looking around, not just at the feet. Some leaders insist students walk about 4 meters from the next person and do not talk for entire hike. Others just ask for silence and stop and do activities along the way. You will find your own style as you lead night hikes.

At a long point in the trail (after the staircase around the slump zone), pass about sit upons (Blue pieces of foam pad) and sit silently for a few moments. Group up together and share observations and experiences.

In the area by the chimney, in the clearing....

Play the 6th Sense game.

Partners stand about 5 meters apart. One plays the role of the predator that will sneak up on the prey. The prey needs to guess when the predator is approaching. Prey stands with both arms outstretched like for frozen tag. The challenge is to pull in arms before the predator tags one of them. Senses used include the sense of hearing but not sight because eyes are closed and prey is not facing predator. Animals use a sixth sense that is a deep knowing that something is there. Then they need to make a decision whether to stay hidden or flee. Pulling in arms too many times would suggest that the animal is using a lot of energy to flee from possibly nothing at all.... Call the group back in after each partner has played both roles. Encourage silence at the outside as the squeals of capture escalate.

Star Gazing - nice to do in the open area by the old chimney

Continue the walk about to a clearing where constellations can be pointed out such as the big dipper, Casseiofia, Orion, Leo, Pleides sharing stories about each. Excellent resources about the legends are listed in the reference list. Remember that out of respect, Indigenous legends are only told when the flowers and plants do not tell their stories – during winter.

Wintogreen Sparks – do this at the top of the road before you see the lights from the cabins. Pass out the Wintogreen lifesavers to each open hand. On command, they can put the candy in the mouth and chew with mouth open to see sparks. It is fun to work this up with a preamble beforehand such as the stars within us or too bad we did not see stars but we have another chance. Sometimes kids want to know why/how this phenomenon happens. Sometimes there are just some neat experiences that are like magic. The kids can brainstorm reasons or they can check the following website – [not sure if one exists but will try to find one....].

Walk back to the chalet quietly or with hands linked in a long chain (like red rover) lead by the only person who has eyes open, the leader. This can be a peaceful way to end the hike. Debrief the experience sharing reasons for walking in the night generated by the walkers. As we walk in the night, we are more reflective and seek each other for mutual support while discovering a foreign world. Walking silently as described in the book, *Sharing Nature with Children* (new edition), page 146 as well as 156 speaks of the sense of harmony and deeper connection with nature, life and our self through a growing awareness of the night world.

Topics for discussion during a night hike:

Animal adaptations

Physiological Adaptations

Other cool games to set up and play

Myrtle Myrtle

Three to four 'Its' go hide with coloured markers or tokens. Every now and then they need to say Myrtle Myrtle or some other odd little word. When the students find the Myrtle, they get a token or mark on a paper or hand. The goal is to connect with all the Myrtles. Ring in the bell to start a new game or to end the current one. Set clear boundaries of where the Myrtles can hide and where the finders ought to look. This is a game that should cause little impact on the site.

Sardines

It goes and hides. Finders need to find 'It'. When they find 'It', they need to hide QUIETLY with it and then other finders will join them. Pretty soon you will have a giggling group of sardines trying to hide from the last finders.

Mission Impossible is a blast! Play it in a field where it is on top of a hay bale of other raised object. The beam of light on the incoming player eliminates the player from that round. Hiding behind hay bales, and other obstacles, players to make it back to the centre before being tagged by the light beam. Usually 'it' needs to count to 60 or so to give players time to run away and hide.

Searching for Night Eyes

Plant wooden animal silhouettes along the trail with eyes painted on by luminescent paint/ reflective paint or stickers. Beaming a flashlight on the eyes will reveal the animal. Keep track of how many eyes you noticed. Painting a letter on the silhouette may also be a fun treasure hung to unscramble at the end of the trail.

Sources of activities and Stories:

Keepers of the Night: Native Stories and Nocturnal Activities for Children by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac. 1994. ISBN 1-895618-39-8

Keepers of the Earth: Native Stories and Environmental Activities for Children. by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac. 1989. ISBN 0-920079-57-1

Knowing the Outdoors in the Dark by Vinson Brown. 1972. Lib Con # 71-179605

They Dance in the Sky: Native American Star Myths. 1987 by Jean Guard Monroe and Ray A. Williamson. ISBN 0-395-39970-X

When the Morning Stars Sang Together. By John S. Morgan. 1974. ISBN 0-7725-5079-4

Sharing Nature with Children by Joseph Cornell. 1998. ISBN 1-883220-73-4