

THE BROTHERHOOD HIKE

The Hike takes place just before the Brotherhood Ceremony, and is an experience for Brotherhood candidates designed to strengthen in them a feeling of fellowship and a sense of purpose. The experience combines physical activity, group interaction, and personal reflection in a natural setting. It is not the time for "Brotherhood testing." Through an effective program during the Journey to Brotherhood, the lodge must already be assured that each hiker has satisfied the requirements for Brotherhood.

The Hike begins about 2 hours before dark, after the candidates have eaten supper. Each patrol of from one to five candidates is led by a Nimat ("brother") or a separate planned route of not more than four miles to an isolated area in the vicinity of the ceremonial ring. The Hike is not an endurance test, and modifications may be made for handicapped or other persons who cannot make the hike.

Each hiker brings a poncho. The Nimat carries a poncho, a flashlight, a canteen of water, and a knapsack containing fruit (apples, oranges, raisins, etc.) for himself and his patrol.

The Nimat makes sure that everyone in his patrol knows or introduces himself to every other person. He asks them to observe silence during the time of hiking.

A. Theme: LEADERS

1. When they are ready to go, the Nimat says:

- "Now, I would like you to think about Scouting. Think of some of the best times you've had. Think of some of the people who have meant the most to you, and who have influenced you in Scouting."

The Nimat may use his own words here, and throughout the Hike.

2. They then walk at a relaxed pace in silence for about 20 minutes, after which the Nimat will signal a halt and remove the knapsack.

3. The Nimat then begins a conversation which should focus on specific people in the Scouting lives of the hikers in his patrol. He might say:

- "You've had some time to think about Scouting, and those who perhaps walked with you or before you on the Scouting trail. Would anyone like to tell about a person who has meant a lot to him?"

The Nimat tries to draw out all patrol members, and should coordinate and not dominate the talk. If necessary, he may share an experience of his own to break the ice. If he does this, it should set a serious, personally meaningful tone. Friends, patrol leaders, older Scouts, Scoutmasters, camp staff, fathers, etc. may come up during the talk, and the Nimat could gently guide the insights of the patrol so that they begin to verbalize the qualities of a good leader.

B. Theme: LIVING THE OBLIGATION

1. After about 15 to 20 minutes of discussion, the Nimat says:
 - "OK, let's hike again in silence. Think about the part you have played in your troop since you took the Ordeal."
2. The Nimat puts on the knapsack and hikes with them. If one offers to take the knapsack, he will let him carry it, but will take it back at the next break, unless another offers. If the Nimat is asked about it, he will say "It is fuel for the fire. It is for all of us." After hiking for about 20 minutes, the Nimat signals a halt. The canteen should be passed around this time, or as often as desired.
3. The talk focuses on experiences they have had in their troops since their Ordeal. The Nimat asks for a recitation of the Obligation (to have it said, not to have it said perfectly nor to have it said by each individual.) He asks "what are the three traditions of the Order of the Arrow?" (Answer: Brotherhood, Cheerfulness, and Service.) He then says:
 - "By taking certain aims in the period since your Ordeal, you each must have had some memorable successes and failures as you learned about applying the traditions of Brotherhood, Cheerfulness, and Service in your troop. Would you share some of those now?"

Again the Nimat may break the ice by telling an experience of his own if he wishes. The object is to get the patrol to talk about themselves, to be themselves, and to share with others.

C. Theme: LEADERSHIP

1. After about 15 or 20 minutes, the Nimat says:
 - "OK, let's hike again in silence. This time, think about the younger Scouts following you on the Scouting trail. They look at you just as you looked at your older friends or patrol leaders. I would like all of us to think about a new role we are beginning to play in Scouting: each of us is becoming the older friend, the guide, the leader by example...for others, as others were for us. I want this to be clear. Does anyone have a question?"

The Nimat clarifies the theme of contemplation if necessary.
2. They walk for a third time for about 20 minutes. This brings them to the area set aside for reflection. Nimats should decide on sites far enough apart so that patrols do not disturb one another, and from which ceremonial preparations cannot be seen or heard.
3. Conversation this time should not be limited to this theme, but might move to questions the hikers have about the Order, the Induction, and opportunities for service in the lodge or chapter. The Nimat distributes the fruit and the patrol eats together.

D. REFLECTION

When everyone has eaten, the Nimat puts the trash into the knapsack and asks for silence.

Then he lead them one by one to sites which can be within view of one another, but should be at least 50 feet apart. To each he says "What is the Admonition?" If the reply is correct, he says "Think now about its meaning."

The time remaining, prior to the ceremony, should be a period of reflection. When the ceremony is ready, the Nimats gather their patrols in silence and lead them to a place near the southern end of the circle, where they are met by Kitchkinet.