



Leading a night hike – out under the stars

AT A GLANCE



Place

Outdoors on a familiar, safe route away from roads



Key idea

Planning and leading a night hike safely and marvelling at God's greatness under the starry sky



Effort

Materials 10 min · Preparation 45 min



120 minutes



6–16 scouts



16 and over



recce the route by day



Materials

- ☐ head torches, ideally with a red-light mode
- ☐ a route checked in daylight, with a map
- ☐ first aid kit and a charged phone with emergency numbers
- ☐ star chart or star app (screen in night mode)
- ☐ sleeping mats or blankets to lie on



Schedule

0–20'

Planning – Agree the route, timings and roles: a leader at the front, a “back marker” at the rear. Count heads before setting off.

20–30'

Rules – Stay together, point torches downwards, keep quiet – we are guests in the animals' habitat.

30–75'

Night hike – Walk part of the route without lights; eyes need about 20 to 30 minutes to adjust fully to the dark.

75–100'

Starry sky – Lie on mats and look for constellations: the Plough (Big Dipper), the Pole Star, Cassiopeia.

100–120'

Devotion and return – Psalm 8:3–4: “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers ... what is mankind that you are mindful of them?” Then everyone returns together; count heads at the finish.



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How it works – simply explained

- 1 Walk the route beforehand in daylight: no unprotected drops, water or roads.
- 2 A leader at the front, the back marker at the rear; count heads regularly.
- 3 Finding the Pole Star: extend the line of the two end stars of the Plough about five times.
- 4 Use red light – white light undoes your eyes' adjustment to the dark.
- 5 For younger groups, plan the programme so that nobody has to be afraid.

 **Example:** "Everyone switch off your lights and wait. After a few minutes you will see more and more stars. God made them – and he still knows you by name."

Safety

- Scaring people, dares and frightening games have no place in the programme – the safeguarding policy applies at night too.
- Check the weather and cancel in thunderstorms, gales or icy conditions; respect access rules for woods and nature reserves.
- For younger participants, inform parents in advance; nobody goes alone, nobody is left behind.

Variations

- Silent walk: one section of the route without any words, just listening.
- Constellation stories: everyone invents their own story for a constellation.

Something to think about

When did you last marvel at God's greatness?