



YMCA **Camp** **Crosley**

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Trail Leader's Guide



The role of Trail Leader is the single most important role affecting the care and enjoyment of the individual students/hikers. The attitude and personality of the Trail Leader influences the cabin and the class, the meals and the magic that takes place. We at Camp Crosley thank you for joining us in making this more than a field trip, more than a walk in the woods, but truly an experience in learning unlike anything the students will encounter the rest of their academic year. As a Trail Leader you will help set the pace of learning and keep the hikers' spirits high as they walk a new path of understanding. This Trail Leader's Guide is intended to help you as you prepare to have the time of your life as we, together,

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE.

Thanks,
-YMCA Camp Crosley Staff



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The Trail Leader is crowd control, safety manager, role model, star pupil, and camp counselor all rolled up into one key position. You will not have to lead any classes, but you will have to attend classes and assist the instructor with crowd control and course management. If students are struggling with concepts or answers you may need to volunteer answers to keep the course material moving along. You will be expected to set an attitude of cooperation and interest as a role model and take your cues from the instructor as how best to enhance the learning experience of the students.

In the cabin and dining hall you will be needed to assist in developing group dynamics. You will sleep and eat with your cabin, ensuring that each hiker is included in a positive, affirming environment for spirit, mind and body. You will need to participate in silly camp songs and skits to encourage group involvement, and you will need to remember that you are serving the higher good of creating a great camp experience for the students/hikers.

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

is an adventure in natural balance and symbiotic relationships,
free of self-centered human pretensions.



Specific Responsibilities

- To provide supervision for all students/hikers during the school's visit, and especially those assigned to your cabin. One Trail Leader is to be with any group of hikers at all times.
- To be an active member of the adult team (camp staff, teachers, chaperones) responsible for providing a safe environment for the students
- To ensure that each students' personal needs are met (dressed properly for weather, are eating, staying clean, restroom breaks, etc...)
- To make sure that your hikers arrive to classes and meals on time
- To assist instructors as needed in class and evening programs
- To provide a positive role model for students
- To have a whoppin' good time!

Equipment Needed

- Same items as the students plus:
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Watch and Alarm Clock
- Money (for soda, camp store, etc.)
- Garbage bags for wet clothes and wet weather



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Special Notes for Adults

- **Camp is a smoke free environment.** Please remember students are everywhere and we are trying to provide them with an atmosphere that promotes healthy living. If you must smoke find a place outside, downwind and out of site of students.
- **In case of an emergency,** insure that students are safe and then send someone to contact Camp Crosley staff immediately. **The Crosley staff will assume the role of leadership** once informed of the emergency. Your job is to keep the students calm and safe.
- **Feel free to ask Crosley staff for help** when you need it. We are experienced in working with groups of children in this environment, and we more than willing to help.
- **“Take A Walk on the Wild Side” is still a school event subject to all school policies and expectations.** Alcohol, illegal drugs, firearms, fireworks, foul language, sexually explicit materials or harassment are not permitted.

Establish Rapport with Your Hikers Early

If the group/cabin is to be happy and mutually helpful, it is important for the Trail Leader to attempt to build the proper attitudes in the minds of the students. When this is done, most problems of discipline fail to materialize. The personality and attitude of the cabin leader is the primary factor in developing a feeling of trust and respect.

- Have a genuine liking for each of your hikers as individuals.
- Treat hikers with **caring, honesty, and respect**, but remember that you are still **responsible** as the Trail Leader.
- Be extremely fair in your decisions, and lead by example.
- If students are busy doing things they enjoy, behavior problems will not usually arise.
- **Exhibit** sympathy and an understanding of their problems.
- Be an active **member** of your group, not an observer.





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Practical Suggestions for Positive Hiker Discipline

- **Avoid making threats.** You may not be willing or able to carry out your threats causing you to lose credibility.
- **To quiet a small group,** avoid yelling. Instead, when you feel that you have to yell to be heard try talking even more softly to those around you, and then to the whole group.
- **To quiet a large group** use the sign of the deer. Raise a closed hand with thumb and pinky extended and say, "sign of the deer!" The hikers will have been instructed to raise their hands in the sign and to immediately be quiet. Other adults may reinforce the sign by repeating the words "sign of the deer" as they raise their hands.
- **If a hiker is being disruptive** assert your authority quietly by going to the child's side. If this does not correct the behavior, take the hiker a short distance (15'-20') aside for a quiet talk. Ensure that the rest of the group is still supervised and that you stay within easy view.
- We encourage you to **listen to your hikers** and to affirm them in their perceptions, even if it means admitting that you were wrong about something.
- **Laugh with (not at) those around you.** Everyone will be in a new setting and feelings can be easily hurt. Laughing with builds a group up, but laughing at tears it apart.
- **Avoid sarcasm.** Most children do not "get" sarcasm, and can end up confused and feeling like the butt of a joke when it is used with them.
- **Be aware of your words.** Please keep it clean and account for the age of your hikers.
- **A few sincere words** of encouragement or affirmation when jobs are genuinely well done will **help children develop morale and confidence.**
- **Make and enforce the rules you want/need early in the group life,** and then relax them as dynamics improve. Starting as everyone's buddy and then becoming the leader is hard.
- **Do not play favorites.** Respect variations in feelings of children toward you. Some children must challenge authorities, they are acting out their needs, and it is not an attack on you or your personality.
- **Accept your own emotions as something you are capable of managing.** Seek the help of a teacher or staff member before an emotionally charged situation escalates.

Thank you for your help!

We love our jobs at Camp Crosley and we cannot do this without your assistance. You, as the Trail Leaders, set the pace of

"TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE"

by having fun, following rules, and getting excited about learning.

Enjoy the moment.

We will see you soon!



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<i>When Students:</i>	<i>Cabin Leaders:</i>
Are at Meals	Leaders go into the dining hall first and at least one adult sits at every table. Help control the students, encourage manners. Keep hikers seated unless it is necessary they get up. Set the example. Assign jobs and supervise dining hall clean up.
Are in Class	Check with the staff where you can assist or lead. Make sure all students are present, on time to class and dressed properly. Let students answer questions. If they can't answer them, be supportive in the class. Be sure to check for the lost and found at the end of each class.
Have time between classes	Make sure everyone goes to the bathroom and gets a drink of water. If the next class location is close, plan an activity to keep them occupied. Also see Fun time filler in Cabin Leader guide for suggestions. Please arrive to class at the scheduled start time to allow 15 minutes prep time for the class.
Are at recreation	Attend a meeting with other adults, teachers, and staff to discuss any problems, good points that have been happening; find out what is happening with evening program and other topics.
Are showering at the shower house	Provide supervision so they will not cause damage. Supervise that they shower and change clothes. If using showers in the shower house as discussed in afternoon meeting with teacher permission, supervise them also. Check for lost and found items before leaving.
Are getting ready for bed	Begin to slow them down, talking softer, and hurry them into bed. Warn them before turning out the light. Talk softly and tell them a story. Do not tell ghost stories.
Having behavior problems	Never use physical punishment such as hitting or make them do pushups. Reason with the child. Separate the poor behavior child and talk to him/her individually. Ask the teachers or staff for suggestions. Give compliments for good behavior.
Are ill	Contact staff member or teacher for further help. Keep in mind your safety as well as the child's safety.
Are injured	If serious, do not try to move them. Stay with the student and send another adult or two students to either the staff or the lead teacher. If during the day send someone to get any staff, teachers, or the office.



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<i>When Students:</i>	<i>Cabin Leaders:</i>
Are homesick	Talk to them. Get them involved. Have their friends cheer them up. Keep them busy. Don't let them mope around too long. Ask the staff or teachers to help.
Wets the bed	Keep the situation very low key. The entire cabin will not become aware unless it is announced. Quietly ask the student if he/she needs awakened during the night, so he/she does not repeat. You can get him/her new sheets, etc. from the staff. You may also bring the student's soiled sheets in a garbage bag to the dining hall to a staff member, if needed.
Are asleep	Children must have adult supervision, especially at night. Do not leave the cabin. Keep the cabin quiet and calm so everyone gets a good night's sleep. In the morning, wake students at the proper time and motivate them to clean the cabin and prepare for the day.
Are at evening program	Set the example for the group and participate. Get to know the students from all cabin groups. Help quiet the students when necessary.
Sing	Participate and set the example for the students. The songs might be silly songs but students follow your example.
Clean the cabin	Help the students and delegate responsibilities. Don't do all tasks for the students, but make them fun and exciting for the students. Make the staff aware if the supplies are low.
Are at campfire	Set the example and participate in the campfire. Whether it's a song or skit be involved because the students will follow your example and it will make the student's time here even more enjoyable. If there are s'mores after, promote concern for safety around the fire. Ask staff if they need any help.
Pack to leave	Help them, making sure all items in the cabin are claimed. Turn mattresses on the side to make sure nothing is caught underneath. Check the bathrooms thoroughly. Supervise the sweeping and bathroom cleaning jobs. Help them move their luggage.
Confuses you or are causing problems	Ask teachers and staff for help.





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Cool Games and Icebreakers

- Name game: Have everybody sit in a circle. The person to your right starts by saying their name and something they like that starts with the same letter as their name. Then the next person does the same until everybody has gone. **Variations:** The second person has to repeat the first person's name and favorite thing and then adds his/hers. The third person has to repeat what the first and second person said and so on, until the last person will have to remember everybody's name and favorite thing. You can have them add anything you want to their name, to funnier the better for example: favorite toothpaste, food, clothing, pet....
- Spider Web: Have a big spool of thread or yarn available. Again sit in a circle and have the yarn ready to go. You will throw the ball to somebody while saying his/her name (and anything else you would like to add, something positive you noticed about that student). That person then holds onto the string but throws the ball to the next person, saying that person's name. So the third person then holds on to her/his part of the string and throws the ball. This goes on until you have a spider web of yarn connecting everybody. For older kids it could be a challenge to try and wrap it up from the end, to roll the yarn back up on the spool and thereby maybe even recalling what was said to each person.
- Silent telegraph: One person is it and stands in the middle of the circle. Everyone else joins hands, and the hands must be visible to the person in the middle. Somebody start sending a message by squeezing either hand to their left or right. The person that feels their hand being squeezed can either pass the squeeze on or return it, thereby making it go the other way around. The person in the middle has to find out where the message is so he or she needs to watch the hands very closely to see where it is and of course those who pass it try to make it as invisible as possible.
- Human Knot: Everybody stands in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. They close their eyes and reach with the right hand into the middle of the circle. When they feel somebody else's hand they grab it and keep hands. Now they reach with their left hand into the circle and grab somebody's hand. Make sure when grabbing hands you don't grab the person next to you and when reaching for the other hand that you don't grab the same person. Once everybody has both hands linked, the challenge is now to untangle the knot without letting go of hands.
- Cabin 'wall of art': Put a large piece of paper up on the wall. Explain that this is going to be there the whole time and that everybody can write anything on it (except for put downs and dirty words) such as their names nicely decorated, poems, or messages of encouragement.
- Circle Walk: All the members of a group are tied together at the waist in a circle. They have to walk a set distance. For added challenge have them carry something such as a person in the group or a canoe.
- Human Cards: Everybody sits on chairs in a circle. You need one deck of cards, and you will hand one card to each person and ask them to remember the suit. Then you'll collect the cards and shuffle the stack. Call out the suit of the top card. Everybody that had this suit may move on chair to the right. If somebody is sitting there, they just sit on the person's lap. Then you call out the next card and those with that suit can move up on chair. The goal is to be the first to go around the circle. But they cannot move if somebody sits on their lap, they'll have to wait until they are free.



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