Maps, Compasses, and Orienteering

Orienteering is the sport of navigation through often unfamiliar terrain and it's a great way to teach kids about reading maps and trail signs. Look for an orienteering club in your area–many hold events specifically for scouts or make their maps and courses available for free online. This activity is a great one to do on a campout where you can do the learning activities in the morning then do a hike or go orienteering in the afternoon. Alternatively you can spread it out over two meetings.

- Opening Ceremony
- Talk About Maps
    - Why is it important to know where you're going?
    - Different types of maps (topographical, street maps, etc)
    - How to read a map
    - What are some things you might use a map for?
    - Using a compass
    - What other ways can be used to tell people which way to go?
- Trail Signs
    - Have the kids practice making trail signs and following the signs others have make.
- Snack & Story Time
- Draw Your Own Maps
    - Have the kids make their own maps then trade and follow the maps that someone else made.
- Closing Ceremony

Follow Up Meeting:

- Go on a day hike/orienteering adventure
    - You'll want to do this somewhere where there is a map the kids can follow, ideally with intersecting paths
    - Have the kids figure out which way to go using the map
    - Have the kids practice using compasses
    - Have the kids practice pointing out or creating trail signs

Related Activites:

- Day Hike
- Orienteering

Items Needed:

- Demonstration Maps
- Compasses
- Martha Maps It Out or other book for Story Time
- Paper and Pencils for Map Making (Consider using graph paper)

- Clipboards
- *For follow up meeting: Maps of the area you'll be hiking/orienteering*

Badge Requirements Covered:

Blue Activity Paw

- Day Hike

Tan Handicraft Paw

- Map or Diagram

otter, day hike, map or diagram, trail signs

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