

Maps, Compasses, and Trail Signs

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?
- 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 Activities:

- [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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