

Signs, Signals, and Codes

Prepared By:

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Target Group:

Any Scouts

Time Allotted:

One, 1-hour block

Pre-Requisites:

None

Materials Needed - Staff

Merit Badge Book
ASL Sheets
Morse Code Sheets
Semaphore Flags
Nautical Flag Meaning Sheets
Braille Sheets
Trail Markers
Paper
Pens
Topographical Map

Materials Needed - Scout

Merit Badge Pamphlet

Instructional Goal:

This activity will instruct scouts on a variety of signs, signals, and codes used in scouting and everyday life. Scouts will practice using different codes and create their own.

MONDAY

Materials

Merit Badge Book

Paper and Pencil

Objectives

1. Discuss with your counselor the importance of signs, signals, and codes, and why people need these different methods of communication. Briefly discuss the history and development of signs, signals, and codes.
2. Explain the importance of signaling in emergency communications. Discuss with your counselor the types of emergency or distress signals one might use to attract airborne search-and-rescue personnel if lost in the outdoors or trying to summon assistance during a disaster. Illustrate these signaling examples by the use of photos or drawings.
8. For THREE of the following activities, demonstrate five signals each. Tell what the signals mean and why they are used:
 - (a) Sports official's hand signs/signals
 - (d) Cyclist's hand signals
 - (e) Restaurant hand signals

Directions

Discuss why signs, signals, and codes are important. Where do we see them in life? Why do we need them? What is the history of Signs, Signals, and Codes? Famous examples of each.

Transition to emergency signals and their importance. What signals can be used to get assistance during a disaster? When lost? Attract airborne Search and Rescue personnel?

The scouts will draw examples of these emergency signals.

Instruct the scouts on the following hand signals:

Sports Officials: Touchdown, First Down, Safe, Out, Disqualified/Being tossed out of the game

Cyclists: Left turn, Right turn, Slow down, Stop, Road Hazard

Restaurant: VIP, Celebrating a Birthday, Tap Water, Sparkling Water, Table needs cleaned

Have them demonstrate each. This will be good to review with them many times.

Tuesday

Materials

Morse Code Sheets

American Sign Language Sheets

Braille Sheets

Paper and Pencil

Objectives

3. Do the following:

- (a) Describe what Morse code is and the various means by which it can be sent. Spell your first name using Morse code. Send or receive a message of six to 10 words using Morse code.
- (b) Describe what American Sign Language (ASL) is and how it is used today. Spell your first name using American Sign Language. Send or receive a message of six to 10 words using ASL.

5. Explain the braille reading technique and how it helps individuals with sight impairment to communicate. Then do the following:

- (a) Either by sight or by touch, identify the letters of the braille alphabet that spell your name. By sight or touch, decode a braille message at least six words long.
- (b) Create a message in braille at least six words long, and share this with your counselor.

Directions

Show the scouts the ASL phrase “**Good Afternoon, What is your name?**”. Allow them to try and guess what it means. Show them the ASL alphabet. Have them identify the letters of their name and sign them to the counselor.

Show them Morse Code. Have them identify the letters in their name. They will “send” the message “**Camp Geiger is so much fun**”

Finally, show them the Braille sheets. They will write down their name in Braille. Then they will write out a 6-10 word, scouting appropriate message and show it to the counselor.

Wednesday

Materials

Merit Badge Book

Semaphore Flags

Nautical Flag sheets

Topographical Map

Objectives

4. Do the following:

(a) Give your counselor a brief explanation about semaphore, why it is used, how it is used, and where it is used.

(b) Explain to your counselor the difference between semaphore flags and nautical flags.

(c) After 4(a) and 4(b) have been completed, then do the following:

(1) Spell your first name using semaphore. Send or receive a message of six to 10 words using semaphore.

(2) Using illustrations or photographs, identify 10 examples of nautical flags and discuss their importance.

6. Do the following:

(a) Describe to your counselor six sound-only signals that are in use today. Discuss the pros and cons of using sound signals versus other types of signals.

(b) Demonstrate to your counselor six different silent Scout signals. Use these Scout signals to direct the movements and actions to direct the movements and actions of your patrol or troop.

9. Share with your counselor 10 examples of symbols used in everyday life. Design your own symbol. Share it with your counselor and explain what it means. Then do the following:

(a) Show examples of 10 traffic signs and explain their meaning.

(b) Using a topographical map, explain what a map legend is and discuss its importance. Point out 10 map symbols and explain the meaning of each.

(c) Discuss text-message symbols and why they are commonly used. Give examples of your favorite 10 text symbols or emoticons. Then see if your counselor or parent can identify the meaning or usage of each symbol.

Directions

Discuss Semaphore and its uses. Describe the difference between it and Nautical flags. Have them practice spelling their names. Give them this message in Semaphore to decode **“Scoutcraft is the best area at Camp”**

Discuss sound-only signals. Pros and Cons to them. They include: Fire Alarms, Train Horns, Buzzers, Sirens, etc.

Demonstrate the following Silent Signals: **Spread out, Move Forward, Hurry, Patrol File, Return, Full Circle**. Practice these with the whole group.

Have the scouts list 10 different traffic signs/signals and what they mean.

Using the Topographical map, explain what a legend is. Have them Identify 10 map symbols

Have them list their 10 favorite emojis, and what they mean. Keep this part scouting appropriate.

Thursday

Materials

None

Objectives

7. On a Scout outing, lay out a trail for your patrol or troop to follow. Cover at least one mile in distance and use at least six different trail signs and markers. After the Scouts have completed the trail, follow no-trace principles by replacing or returning trail markers to their original locations.

Directions

Take the group on a hike around north camp. At different turns, make various trail markers to designate which way you go (Turn Right, Turn Left, Straight forward, Not this way). The hike will roughly be a mile long. Once you have done six markers, practice leave no trace, and return.

If time remains, practice signals already discussed in the activity.

Friday

Materials

Paper

Pens

Objectives

10. Briefly discuss the history of secret code writing (cryptography). Make up your own secret code and write a message of up to 25 words using this code. Share the message with a friend or fellow Scout. Then share the message and code key with your counselor and discuss the effectiveness of your code.

Directions

Discuss secret code writing. Where it has come from, and how it is used.

Scouts will work together to create their own code, and make a message no longer than 25 words. They must explain how to break the code. Allow them to get creative with this.