

Naturalist Activity Badge Outline -- Outdoor Group

The Naturalist Activity Badge is recommended to be presented in a one month format, as outlined in the Webelos Program Helps booklet. This example outline presents the Badge in four weekly meetings.

In order to complete all of the requirements a field trip to a nature center is required. Plan this trip and alert the parents ahead of time. Make sure to telephone the parents a couple days before the field trip, which will help attendance. Deal with any transportation problems ahead of time. While this is a Den outing, it does not require one parent per Scout -- only enough to drive.

The Naturalist Activity Badge will work best if you get the parents to help their Scout set up either an insect zoo or terrarium at home. In order to get the parents involved it is a good idea to send home a description of the requirements and suggestions on how to do this. Send it home a week before the badge work begins or at the prior Pack meeting. An example is attached to this outline.

Use the Webelos book in the meeting. Have the Scouts read sections from the book. Use all the resources you have available, such as the Program Helps and the Webelos Den Activities Book. Make sure you sign off their books each meeting.

Week 1

Requirements to be fulfilled:

Do Four of These:

1. Keep an insect zoo that you have collected. You might have crickets, ants or grasshoppers.
3. Visit a museum of natural history, nature center, or zoo with your family, den, or Pack. Tell what you saw.

Discussion :

1. Read the introduction and requirements on pages 211 - 212. Discuss the requirements and how they will be worked on in and outside the Den.
2. Read pages 213 - 219 on Collecting Insects, and Your Insect Zoo. Discuss how to collect things. Some Scout may already have an insect zoo. Ask him to bring it in to show the Den next week. You may wish to satisfy this requirement by having the Den do an insect zoo. You will need the appropriate kind of container for your zoo. Have the Scouts capture the inhabitants, perhaps around your meeting location. Find out what you have to feed the zoo.

Another project that can be done is to make "Critter Keepers" -- a Quonset hut type box with window screen over the top, secure enough around the edges so that the bugs will not escape. You will have to cut the materials ahead of time and bring them to the meeting. [Make sure you try this first at home so that you know exactly how to put it together and have all tools and materials at the meeting.]

3. Plan your field trip. Pick a nature center that can specifically help satisfy some of the requirements. The intent of this outline is to choose a nature center that can help you satisfy requirements 3, 5 and 6.
4. Any Scout that has a terrarium, plan to bring it into the Den meeting next week.

Homework:

1. For those doing the insect zoo, set it up and capture your bugs.

Week 2

Requirements to be fulfilled:

2. Set up an aquarium or terrarium. Put plants and animals you have collected in it. Keep it for at least one month.

Discussion :

1. Observe the insect zoo or terrarium that was brought in.
2. Read page 220 on terrariums. Discuss how to make a dry terrarium for reptiles and a wet terrarium for amphibians. Discuss the kinds of animals you can find in the backyard or purchase to put in a terrarium. A field trip might be to a pet shop to look at such things.

What is the most important thing you need to learn if you are going to set up a terrarium? The answer is, what to feed the critters.

Find out which Scouts are already working on or will be working on a terrarium.

3. Read pages 224 - 229 on Bird Flyways, Poisonous Plants and Animals, and Watching Animals in the Wild, before the field trip.

Homework:

1. For those Scouts making either a wet or dry terrarium, do it. Bring it in to show the Den.
2. Go on the field trip to the nature center.

Week 3

Requirements to be fulfilled:

4. Watch for birds in your yard, neighborhood, or town for one week. Identify the birds you see and write down where and when you saw them.

Discussion :

1. Read page 223 on Bird Watching.
2. A good project is to put together a very simple bird feeder, such as one that is shown in the book or another simple one. Bring all the materials so that the feeders can be put together in the meeting. Purchase and arrive with a large bag of wild bird seed. Make sure that each Scout leaves with a feeder and a bunch of bird seed.

Homework:

1. If the bird feeders are made in the Den meeting, take it home, set it up in the backyard and observe the birds that feed there. Identify and write down the ones that feed there. Tell your Den what you saw at the next meeting.

Week 4

Requirements to be fulfilled:

Discussion :

1. Report on what was seen at the bird feeders.
2. Last week of this Activity Badge. Have the Scouts all bring in the things they have worked on to show everyone else in the den. Ask them what they have learned. Are they going to keep their zoo or terrarium?

Naturalist Activity Badge Work Outside the Den:

Field Trip -- Nature Center and/or Day Hike:

Requirements to be fulfilled:

3. Visit a museum of natural history, nature center, or zoo with your family, den, or Pack. Tell what you saw.
5. Learn about the bird flyways closest to your home. Find out what birds use these flyways.
6. Learn to identify poisonous plants and reptiles found in your area.
7. Watch six wild animals (snakes, turtles, fish, birds, or mammals) in the wild. Describe the kind of place (forest, field, marsh, yard, or park) where you saw them. Tell what they were doing.

Discussion :

1. Set this Field trip up ahead of time. Call the nature center and ask specifically if they can help you work with the Scouts to satisfy requirements 5 and 6. If you choose the location for this field trip wisely, you may be able to do a day hike with it and satisfy requirement 7 also. You may want to do two field trips, with the second being a day hike. Remember, Webelos Scouting is an outdoor oriented activity for boys -- you can't do too many outdoor trips.
2. Make sure you have some finder books with you -- reptiles, birds, etc., particularly if you will be working on requirement 7. When you find something have the Scouts gather around you as you go through the finder to identify it. That way they will learn how to use a finder book.

Naturalist Badge Home Activities

Your Scout will be working on the Naturalist Activity Badge during this next month. There are a couple activities that can be done at home. Please read pages 213 - 220 in the Webelos Handbook. Please help your Scout complete either requirement 1 or 2. If it will not be possible to do either activity, please let me know so that we can work on other requirements with your Scout.

Requirement 1. Keep an insect zoo that you have collected. You might have crickets, ants or grasshoppers.

An insect keeper can be purchased, or build according to the plans in the Webelos Handbook. There may be some very interesting insects in your yard that can be captured and observed for a while. You might decide to keep silk worms. You also might decide to keep Praying Mantis, which you can either find in your yard or obtain at your local plant nursery.

Requirement 2. Set up an aquarium or terrarium. Put plants and animals you have collected in it. Keep it for at least one month.

Satisfying this requirement could cost some money, but can provide enjoyment for a long time. Lots of folks have 5 or 10 gallon aquariums that are not in use. A 10 gallon aquarium can be purchased for \$10 -12 at your local pet store or department store. You can purchase aquarium gravel or just wash some sand, gravel and rocks from your yard and place them in the aquarium. That is the basic requirement to set up either a dry terrarium for reptiles or a wet terrarium for amphibians.

Dry Terrariums:

A dry terrarium can be set up for a variety of lizards, monitors, geckos or other reptiles, which you can purchase at the pet store. Beware of anything that can climb glass. You must have a snug fitting lid, preferably made of screen, not glass, so they cannot escape. Or you might find one or two lizards in your backyard to catch and observe for a while.

You must provide the correct food for these pets -- either meal worms or crickets, both of which you can purchase at the pet store. For reptiles you must provide either a light in a hood over the tank, or a "hot rock" which you can purchase at the pet store. The reason for this is that reptiles must have an external heat source in order to digest their food.

Make sure your Scout brings his terrarium into the Den meeting to show the other Scouts.

Wet Terrariums:

A wet terrarium can be set up for a variety of newts, salamanders, frogs and turtles, which you can purchase at the pet store. Again, beware of anything that can climb glass, which a lot of frogs can, or jump out. You must have a snug fitting lid, preferably made of screen, not glass, so they cannot escape. Or you might find one or more amphibians in a nearby stream or up in the mountains, which you can capture and observe for a while.

For a wet terrarium for amphibians you will need to arrange the tank so that there is water in part of it and rocks or dry gravel in another part. Amphibians spend a lot of time in the water, but must also have dry land to climb on. They also like places to hide.

You must provide the correct food for these pets -- either worms or crickets, both of which you can purchase at the pet store. Yes amphibians like crickets -- you can put a bunch of crickets in the wet tank, they will crawl up onto dry land, and then you can watch your amphibians stalk their dinner.

Naturalist Activity Badge Den Leaders Record

List Boy's Names

Date: _____

 Month/Year

Requirements

Do Four of These:

1. Keep an insect zoo that you have collected. You might have crickets, ants or grasshoppers.																				
2. Set up an aquarium or terrarium. Put plants and animals you have collected in it. Keep it for at least one month.																				
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4. Watch for birds in your yard, neighborhood, or town for one week. Identify the birds you see and write down where and when you saw them.																				
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Date Completed																				
Awarded																				