

Choosing group night activities all together

Woodcraft Folk groups of all ages work together in many different ways to plan their programmes of group night activities. Here are a few activity ideas, inspired by groups from Cambridge, Bromley and Hinckley. The activities are suitable for groups from Elfins through to Venturers, although they may also be useful planning tools for DFs and adults too!

Badge activity for Elfins or Pioneers

One group found a way to include Elfins in planning their own programme, by turning the activity into a craft session. This activity might also work well with Pioneers.

Each Elfin designed a new Woodcraft Folk badge, based on their favourite group night activity, or something they would really like to do with their group. The Elfins spent most of the session making beautiful, creative badge designs, and discussing their favourite activities as they worked.

After this, there are a number of ways to pull their ideas together into a programme. The designs could be displayed and the Elfins could explain their badges and the activities they represent to the rest of the group. Elfins could vote on the activities they want to do (either by putting their hands up, or by 'dot voting' next to each picture), and group leaders could take the most popular ideas and slot them into the term's programme.

A very democratic planning process for Pioneers and Venturers

A Pioneer group wanted to be able to include everyone in the group in planning their programme and to make it as democratic as possible. A couple of Pioneers in the group came up with a system, which they now use each term, to plan the following term / half term's activities (so it involves looking a little way into the future).

This system has worked with a pair or three of Pioneers (although it would be good with Venturer or DF groups too) to lead it, and it runs in the background of sessions throughout the term, rather than taking up a session on its own.

Members of the group start off by putting ideas in a suggestions box for a week or two. After this the small group leading the process write up all the suggestions on a big piece of paper, leaving space for more things to be added if necessary. It's then their job to bring this along to a succession of group nights, put it out in a corner and encourage the other members of the group to vote for the activities they most want to do the following term, at the beginning and end of meetings.

The group who started this tried to consider when they last did certain activities and any other factors that might help their decisions as they narrowed down the list. By the end of the term (or half term), they'd have a shortlist of sessions that could be slotted into the upcoming programme.

Poster activity for Pioneers or Venturers

Another group use a similar idea, but add in some running around to make it more active. This, and similar activities, has been used a lot with Pioneers and Venturers.

Their ideas for activities were written on lots of big sheets of paper and posted up all around the hall. After a signal, the Pioneers all ran around to stand by their favourites in order to vote for them, having nominated someone to count up how many votes each activity got.

There are lots of variations on this.

1. The process could be repeated a number of times so that each young person gets more than one vote.
2. It could be made into more of a drama game, by moving between posters to cast the next vote in the style of... a monkey....a footballer...an ice cream van....(someone calls out the theme each time)
3. For a less energetic version (and without the need to someone to count the number of people at each station each time), group members could be give a certain number of stickers each, which they could stick on their favourite ideas.
4. As they cast their votes, the Pioneers or Venturers could add notes and detail to the big poster. For example, if the idea is cooking they could write more specific suggestions of what they'd like to make around the edge and others could indicate which of those suggestions they like the most.



Activities selected for Venturer group nights after running a poster activity with dot voting and comments (variations 3 and 4, above)