

TRAINING TREKS

Stakes who conducted a training trek are better prepared both physically and spiritually for their pioneer trek. The training trek is a dry run for the youth conference and through this experience many of the small problems can be ironed out.

Training Treks are usually held two or three weeks prior to the trek. Leaders often choose from either an overnight training trek on a Friday evening and Saturday, or one day of training on Saturday, depending on which site they will trek at, and the plans of the trainers there.

Purpose

To help the leaders prepare both physically and spiritually for the Pioneer Trek.

Objective

To give the Ma's and Pa's an experience in group discussion/reflection, prepare them for the camping experience, and help them catch the spirit of trek; to train the support staff on the property and routes; and to allow the medical crew to test their communication and transportation systems.

Who Should Attend

The Trail Boss, Company Captains, Support Staff and a representative from all of the other committees should be present. This allows the Support Staff to become more familiar with the route and different access roads. Someone will need to haul a 2-unit portable toilet trailer, and a trailer for a water buffalo. There should also be someone who can provide medical support.

All the Ma's and Pa's should attend and bring the gear they plan to take with them on the trek. They will be divided into families and certain couples assigned to be the **Training Ma's and Pa's**. The leaders will load their handcarts and pull **4-5-mile** of their route including the Woman's Pull section if possible. The training could cover the following material:

Medical/Safety

- . •Emergency Action Plans
- . •Communication systems-Trail Boss to support staff
- . •Learn to circle up, count off and have the buddy system
- . •Review basic first aid and environmental dangers
- . •Learn how to deal with problem children and sleeping arrangements
- . •Handcart safety

Review basic camping skills

- . • Instruct on how to build fires if applicable and “No Trace Camping”
- . • Make sure everyone has proper sleeping and rain gear
- . • Practice building shelters using tarps and the handcarts
- . • Review different meals they will have to prepare

Activities

- . • Experience a successful group discussion/reflection time
- . • Learn how to incorporate pioneer stories and the principles they teach
- . • Learn various games and activities that will be part of the trek
- . • Experience a Women’s Pull

SAMPLE OVER NIGHT TRAINING TREK ITINERARY

The following is a sample itinerary for a training trek. It is important that groups customize their training trek to fit the objectives of their trek, the outline of what they will be doing on trek, and the time restraints of the Ma’s and Pa’s and everyone involved.

Day One

TIME	ACTIVITY
3:00 PM	Arrive at Stake Center: All Ma's and Pa's bring their personal gear and meet at Stake Center; check gear; obtain maps; say prayer. (Couples should bring all their gear even if it is just Saturday training. They will need to have the opportunity of loading and pulling full handcarts). Leave for trailhead.
4:30 PM	All Ma's and Pa's arrive at trailhead: unload personal and family gear. Orientation and final preparations; family food bags distributed (Trail Boss, and others they assign, are responsible to meet the participants as they arrive at the trailhead and guide them to an appropriate area for Training Trek. Ma's and Pa's put their personal and family gear in a designated place with tarps and rain ponchos at the "ready".)
5:00 PM	Welcome and Orientation by Trail Boss: When everyone has arrived, the Trail Boss welcomes the group. Most groups incorporate the following: Rules of the Road (by Trail Boss), singing, and their Trek theme. At the end of the orientation, the Trail Boss introduces the Training Trek Ma’s and Pa’s who will then announce the members of their family.

5:30 PM	<p>Family Time; Introductions, Create individual and Family Name, Create Family Yell, and Share Pioneer Stories: 1. Introductions and Family Name. Coming up with a family name helps the group to develop an identity and can be a lot of fun. Ask the participants to think of something fun, positive, and appropriate. (For example: the “Stormin’ Mormons”, the “Rollin Rocks”, or “Noah’s Ark Family”). Some groups use Pioneer names, if so explain a little of the family’s history. 2. Come up with a family yell. 3. Establish the buddy system. To keep track of your family, assign everyone a number with Ma as number one and Pa as the last number. Remember to count off fairly often. 3. Share Pioneer Stories: Talk about what it was like for the pioneers to leave their homes and go to Zion and why they would make that choice. 4. Training Pa's and Ma's pick a big brother and big sister to be in charge and make assignments. The trainee Ma's and Pa's are responsible to make sure it happens, like loading the cart, getting the water or switching people around for pulling or pushing the cart.</p>
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TIME	ACTIVITY
6:00 PM	<p>Obtain handcarts and food boxes. Prepare Personal Gear—Each family member removes the following items from their duffel bag: tin cup or water bottle, insect repellent, chap stick, rain poncho, and sunscreen. The tin cup should be hooked or tied to the belt or apron. The Training Ma & Pa should have the above items and also these additional items in a small backpack: a small First Aid Kit, handy wipes, feminine products, a water bottle, a flashlight, and a granola bar or other food which can be used for someone who might need food with medication, etc. along the trail. Keep this backpack accessible. This is also a good time to prepare the Ma’s and Pa’s for the different weather conditions they may face. It is important to keep the rain gear out and put it in a corner of the handcart for easy access. If rain is a threat all gear should be in garbage bags inside the duffel bags. They should also have their tarps and coats at the top of their bags so they can grab them first. Medication issues should be communicated to the Ma’s and Pa’s by the medical staff.</p>
6:30P M	<p>Trek Prayer- Ma's and Pa's gather families for prayer. Pull begins on signal from the Trail Boss and generally lasts about 5 miles. Ma’ and Pa’s should also be prepared with a number of different pioneer stories or quotes that they can share along the way and discuss as a group. While the Ma’s and Pa’s are pulling, the support staff can drive over the route again and then set up their camp for the night. One medical vehicle will need to stay with the trekkers, practicing staying out of sight and keeping in radio contact.</p>
8:00 PM	<p>Break (snack--to be provided by Stake Food Committee) The Trail Boss will decide the time and place for this break. Training Ma’s & Pa’s discuss short faith promoting experiences and ask the family to share some of their own. Distribute the snack to your family (remember to have everyone wash their hands). The Training Ma’s & Pa’s should meet quickly with the Trail Boss to discuss how the families are doing and to review how the Women’s Pull experience will be carried out.</p>

8:30 PM	Woman's Pull/The Mormon Battalion The Trail Boss or someone from the support staff comes and calls up the men. They ask everyone to be silent as the men line up and march off over the hill. The men meet and talk about following the prophet, the priesthood, and treating women with respect. The women meet and discuss following the prophet, being a sister in Zion, and the power of the priesthood. The women pull up the hill in silence. The men watch but keep silent. They join their family but do not pull until the Trail Boss gives the word. After the Women's Pull, the group sometimes sings songs like "Come, Come Ye Saints", "I am a Child of God" and "How Great Thou Art". Trail Boss bears his testimony.
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TIME	ACTIVITY
9-10 PM	<p>Pull into camp.</p> <p>At the designated camping site, the Trail Boss directs the families to form a circle or line with the handcars. If the group comes in after dark the support staff should have lanterns hung near the restrooms and around the camp to provide some light.</p> <p>Usually on the training trek everyone eats together when they get into camp. Some groups serve the leaders what they are going to give the youth the first night. Others have a big meal prepared for the Ma's and Pa's when they come into camp that night. Either way the food committee discusses with the group what will be served the first night when the trekkers arrive with their families.</p> <p>If you have single adults as the Ma's & Pa's, the men will sleep outside the circle and the women on the inside. Couples find their spouse and sleep together for the night.</p>

Day Two:

TIME	ACTIVITY
6:00 AM	Meeting: The Trail Boss, Training Ma's and Pa's, and committee members meet to review the day's events.
6:30 AM	<p>Families Set Up Spread out and set up individual family camp areas for breakfast, scripture study, and Pioneer Stories. After breakfast each family member should clean his/her own utensils, and dump leftover food into a garage bag. Nothing should be cleaned directly onto the ground.</p> <p>Remember, "No Trace Camping."</p>

8:00 AM	Family Reflection and Discussion: Discuss the handcart pull and invite your family to think of a parallel to life, their relationship with their Father in Heaven, their own families, or any gospel principle. Consider the following basic principles in conducting a family processing discussion: 1. Begin with concrete questions. What is one word to describe the experience yesterday? What part do you <i>remember</i> most? What did you notice the most? And so on. 2. Next ask questions about how they felt about these events. How did you feel about the family? How did you feel during the hardest parts of the pull? 3. Ask them what they learned from the experience and to think of similar situations in their own lives. What did the pull teach you? What did you learn about yourself from the pull yesterday? How is our trek through life similar to yesterday's experience? 4. Create an environment of agency; do not force anyone to talk if they do not feel comfortable. This is a time for the Ma's and Pa's to share their testimony of being a part of the trek. 5. Close this reflection time by bearing your testimony and expressing gratitude to your family.
9:00 AM	Activity Committee Presentation: Discussion of the different activities scheduled for the trekkers, in addition to pulling the handcarts, such as games, firesides, hoedown, etc. Teach the Ma's and Pa's fun games they can play with the youth during the down time. Don't just talk about the games; play them so that the leaders can teach them to the youth. Ask the Ma's and Pa's if they have any games they know the youth would enjoy. Excitement, energy and attitude can make the difference to the whole experience.
9:30 AM	Food Committee: Leaders review meals, cooking equipment and other cooking concerns. Some groups prepare another meal that they will eat for lunch later that day.

TIME	ACTIVITY
10:15 AM	Medical Staff: They should review the emergency action plans. They discuss how people can prevent medical issues by identifying the warning signs, how to treat those issues, and how to contact the staff along the trail and in camp. The main medical problems that should be covered are dehydration, heat exhaustion, blisters, allergies, asthma attacks, hypothermia, and sprains and cuts. They also talk about helping the youth to wash their hands before they eat. The group should also discuss different weather and fire danger procedures.
10:45 AM	Build Shelters: The families should have an opportunity to set up different tarp tents using the handcarts, twine and some stakes. This will help them prepare in the setting up of their own tent during the trek.
11:30 AM	Pioneer Devotional from the Group leaders
12:00 AM	Solo- Leaders have a short opportunity to spiritually prepare for the pioneer trek
12:30 PM	Review- As the group eats lunch, the leaders can go over last minute matters, equipment items or last minute changes that the Support Staff have made during the training trek.
1:00 PM	Pack-up and clean-up Everyone should do a sweep of the area and practice "No Trace Camping."
1:30	Transport Trekkers: Support staff will have shuttled enough of the vehicles to the camp to transport trekkers back to

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their vehicles for their travel home.

SAMPLE ONE DAY TRAINING TREK ITINERARY

The following is a sample itinerary for a one day Ma and Pa Training Trek. It is important that groups customize their training trek to fit the objectives of their trek. Circumstances and outside influences may necessitate changes in the order of activities.

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:15AM	Meet at Stake Center: All Ma's and Pa's bring their personal gear and meet at Stake Center; check gear; obtain maps; prayer. (Couples should bring all their gear even if it is just one day training. They will need to have the opportunity of loading and pulling full handcarts).
7:30AM	Leave for trailhead
9:00 AM	Arrive at trailhead: All Ma's and Pa's arrive at trailhead; unload personal and family gear. Orientation and final preparations; family food bags distributed (Trail boss, and others they assign, are responsible to meet the participants as they arrive at the trailhead and guide them to an appropriate area Training Trek Ma's and Pa's put their personal and family gear in a designated place with tarps and rain ponchos at the "ready".)
9:30 AM	Welcome and orientation: This is given by the Trail Boss. When everyone has arrived, the Trail boss welcomes the group. Everyone sits as close as they can to each other. The orientation can be different for each group. Most groups incorporate the following: announcements, singing, rules of the road, and Trek Theme. At the end of the Welcome and Orientation, the Trail Boss introduces the Training Trek Ma's and Pa's, using "Guess Who Name Games". Then everyone chooses individual names or discusses the pioneer name they have been assigned. The trek family name or pioneer family name and family yell are chosen. Instructions and challenges: The Trail Boss then talks about the theme of the trek and challenge everyone to achieve the goals. He can also challenge them to make a goal to get closer to their Heavenly Father in some way during this trek. Finish this discussion with a prayer. This is also a good time to prepare the trek family for the different weather conditions they may face. It is important to have the youth keep their rain gear out and put in a corner of the handcart for easy access. If rain is a threat all gear should be in garbage bags inside their duffel bags. They should also have their tarps and jackets at the top of their bags so they can grab them first.

10:00 AM	<p>Prepare personal gear, obtain and load handcarts: Prepare Personal Gear—Each family member removes the following items from duffel bag: tin cup, insect repellent, chap stick, rain poncho, and sunscreen. The tin cup should be hooked or tied to the belt or apron. The Training Ma and Pa should have their own small backpack, which they keep accessible. Along with the items listed above, they should have their small first aid kit, handy wipes, feminine products, a water bottle, flashlight, and a granola bar or other food that someone might need along the trail (for someone who might need food with medication etc.) Load handcarts: personal and family gear, food boxes, and water jugs. Before loading the handcart, have each family member keep out the items listed above. Also make sure that the water jugs are easily accessible. Once the tarp is on the handcart and tied down, it is difficult to get off.</p>
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10:30AM	<p>Trek Prayer: - Ma's and Pa's gather families for prayer. Begin pull on signal from Trail Boss and pull about 5 miles. Trail Boss decides how often to stop for water breaks and other trail issues. Training Ma's and Pa's should be prepared with numerous pioneer stories that they can share along the way, which teach principles that can be related to our time. They should also encourage the other participants to share what they have learned. While the Ma's and Pa's are pulling the support staff can drive over the route again. They can go ahead of the group and set up their end point. One medical vehicle will need to stay with the trekkers, practicing staying out of sight and keeping in radio contact.</p>
11:30AM	<p>Break: (snack--to be provided by Stake Food Committee) The Trail boss will decide the time and place for this break. When the carts stop, Ma & Pa's will want to discuss a short faith promoting experience and ask the family to share some of their own. You will distribute the snack to your family. The Training Ma's and Pa's should meet quickly with the Trail Boss to discuss how the families are doing and to review how the Women's Pull experience will be carried out.</p>
12:00PM	<p>Discussion: The Trail Boss and Trek Chairman discuss the best place for the practice Woman's Pull. The Mormon Battalion comes into the group and calls up the men. They ask that everyone is silent as the men line up and march off over the hill. The men meet and talk about following the prophet, the priesthood, and treating women with respect. The women meet and discuss following the prophet, being a sister in Zion, and the power of the priesthood. The women then pick up the cart again and pull up the hill in silence. The men join their family but remain silent, and do not pull until the Trail Boss gives the word. After the Women's Pull the group sings songs like "Come, Come Ye Saints", "I am a Child of God", and "How Great Thou Art". Trail Boss bears his testimony. If there is time individual trek families take a few minutes to discuss their feelings.</p>

1:00 PM	<p>Setting up camp and Meal Details: Pull to a stopping point. Trail Boss discusses setting up camp during the trek and what the Ma's and Pa's will do when they get to this point on the trek with the youth. Eat lunch as a group and discuss meals and scripture study As a group the Food Committee Leaders review meals, cooking equipment and other cooking concerns. Some groups prepare some of the meals they will be having on Trek and eat it for lunch that day. After lunch each family member should clean their utensils, and dump leftover food into a garage bag. Nothing should be cleaned directly on the ground.</p>
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2:00 PM	<p>Family Meeting: Reflecting on their short handcart pull. Training Ma's and Pa's invite the other trekkers to think of a parallel to life, and their relationship with their Father in heaven. 1. Begin with simple questions. "What is one word to describe this experience?" 2. Next ask questions about how they felt about these events. "How did you feel when you were called as a Ma or Pa?" "How did you feel about the other Ma's and Pa's?" "How did you feel about the pioneers?" 3. Ask them what they learned from the experience. Ask them to think of similar situations. Close this discussion by bearing your testimony and express gratitude to your family. Close with a prayer.</p>
2:45 PM	<p>Activity Committee: The Activity Committee teaches the Ma's and Pa's fun games they can play with the youth during the down time. Ask the Ma's and Pa's if they have any games they know which the youth would enjoy. Don't just talk about the games; play them so the leaders can teach them to the youth. Excitement, energy and attitude can make the difference to the whole experience.</p>
3:15PM	<p>Medical Staff: The Medical Staff should the review the basics; how people can prevent medical issues by identifying the warning signs, how to treat those issues and how to contact the medical staff along the trail and in camp. The main medical problems that should be covered are dehydration, heat exhaustion, blisters, allergies, asthma attacks, hypothermia, and sprains and cuts. The group should also discuss different weather and fire danger procedures.</p>
3:45 PM	<p>Shelters: The families should have an opportunity to set up different tarp tents using the handcarts, twine and some stakes. This will help them prepare to set up their own tarp shelter or tent during the trek.</p>
4:00 PM	<p>Pack-up and clean-up. Everyone should do a sweep of the area. Practice "No Trace Camping". Support staff should have shuttled enough of the vehicles to the camp to be able to shuttle trekkers back to their vehicles. Everyone travels home.</p>