

## Drama Hike: Land of the Hully Gullies

by Jerry Jordison

Designed for primary and junior students, the Drama Hike is a real walk into the woods: smelling, feeling and seeing Nature. It is also an imaginative search for ancient civilizations, in this case the "Hully Gullies." Since we know little about the Hully Gullies, the purpose of the trip is to discover what these people might have looked like, their social habits, religion, sports and so on. We will use Nature and all of her formations as clues in our search.

### Preparations

The hike leader should scout out the area beforehand, although I have led children on such a hike without knowing in advance where we were going. The benefit of exploring the area is increased familiarity. Are there fallen trees? Are there large rocks, a hill, an earth mound or grassy area? It is best to organize the hike in a circular fashion so that you end up near to where you started.

After you are familiar with the lay of the land, take a few minutes to prepare your script; for example, a group of three birch trees could be called "The Three Sisters;" a slope with places to sit might be called "The Sea of Tranquility," or an open area could be the "Olympic Stadium." If you have a few of these identified beforehand you will feel more confident and relaxed.

### Before the Actual Hike

Gather the students together and tell them that they are going on a Drama Hike, and then tell them what you discovered last night. Make up a story about cleaning up the attic and discovering an old, dog-eared book with pages missing. You tell them that this book was handwritten and therefore very rare and at the same time very hard to read, because of the faded writing. You have discovered, though, that the author was an archeologist or a

paleontologist (discuss the meaning of these terms) and seemed to have written notes about his (or her) discovery of an ancient people he called the Hully Gullies. Tell students there was a map in the front of the book and you were surprised to discover that this was the very area he was searching in. You are very excited and suggest that all of you go on a hike to see if you can discover something about these ancient people. You didn't bring the book along because it was so old that it is falling apart and you want to get it repaired. You did, however, spend some time skimming the book and found out a few facts. Much information was missing or illegible and will need to be filled in as you go on this hike.

### The Actual Hike

Make your way to the entrance of the forest and stop. Tell the students that the book mentioned that this was a very sacred area and protected by the tree spirits. To enter with any expectation of discovering anything, permission must be obtained. Have groups brainstorm a song that they could sing to ask permission. They can use popular tunes and change the words, or make up their own song. After a few minutes, have them sing their songs of permission. Listen for an acceptance and enter (acting is need here).

As the facilitator, it is a good idea for everyone to follow behind you. When you come upon an interesting formation in Nature, stop the group, give it a name (as you try to remember what you read in the book — acting again) and ask students to tell you how the area was used and what happened there. Students will delight in expressing their bit of creativity. Accept all answers and remember them for later add-ons. When the discussion is exhausted, move on to the next site and repeat with a similar story and questions.

Depending on the time and length of the hike, from six to ten sites can be chosen and each one presented with a different slant so that different information can be presented. One site could be a living area, another could be used for recreation, religion, work, hunting, meditation, battles or ceremonies. Students will even want to identify some sites themselves and brainstorm their use. When you reach the last site and before you exit the forest, have students review their research and come up with a comprehensive profile of the Hully Gullies. How big were they? What did they eat? I often stop at a patch of wintergreen berries and pick a few (or just the leaves) to give everyone a taste.

Before the final exit, break students into their groups again to have them come up with a "rap" to say thank you for the privilege of entering the Land of the Hully Gullies.

### **Follow Up**

As a follow up activity, stories can be written about the Hully Gullies: describe the trip you have taken, summarize what you think the Hully Gullies looked like and why they behaved as they did. Pictures of the Hully Gullies are always fun to draw.

Don't underestimate the value of this hike. The students will love it, and may want to play Hully Gullies the next day. They are all enthusiastic to express their creativity.

### **Suggestions for Creative Sites**

A flat plateau could be an area for games, or battle or a garden area.

Groups of trees can be called "The Three Buddies," "The Four Grandmothers," or "A Power Center."

A hole in the ground may be referred to as a cave: "The Mysterious Cave," "The Forbidden Cave" or "The Entrance." Use your imagination and the students will use theirs.

Rocks and rock formations can be given names such as "The Fallen Grandfathers," "Thor's Supply Area," "Building Quarry," "A Communication Center" or "Resting Area." A particular name will initiate discussions in a certain direction.

Language: From an old worm eaten tree, a "pudding rock," or a massive bunch of fallen branches, have the students "translate" the message that the Hully Gullies left for us.

Numbers: Use twigs in a fun game to discover the math of the Hully Gullies.

You don't have to search for the "Hully Gullies." You can look for the "Fern Dwellers," "Earth People," "Windy Wanderers," "Glomming Dusksies" or any other creative name you can think of.

### **Other Tips and Suggestions**

Make sure the children are protected from black flies, mosquitoes, and so on. Make sure they have proper clothes for hiking, including appropriate footwear.

Depending on the length of the hike, it might be a good idea to have water bottles or a snack for them.

Safety is important. Don't run in the bush. Be careful on hills and rocks.

Make sure every child gets a chance to contribute to the hike.

The hike could even be done in a suburban location with a few changes in stories and landmarks. With imagination, any location will be successful for the Drama Hike.

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*Jerry Jordison is a long-time COEO member. He presented the Drama Hike during the recent COEO conference held at Camp Wanakita.*