

Start on time. If you aren't there 10 minutes early, you are late. Know the trail before you hike with a group. Look for "teachable moments" scat, tracks, a bird that has been hanging out

Look professional. No sunglasses, no gum, no chew/ dip/ vapes. Wear a watch, don't use your phone. Wear a shirt/ jacket that isn't stained or torn.

Get the attention of the group. Face the sun if necessary so your participants aren't.

Welcome them. Introduce yourself... This may be their first experience with your park, make sure it is positive.

Tell them what the plan is... what we are learning about, where we are going, what the terrain is like, when we will be back. Have a plan/ stick with a theme... habitats/ animal signs/ edible plants... having a theme helps to narrow down what you need to know/ look for on the trail

Let them know where the restrooms/ other facilities are AND how/ when you want them to utilize them.... Make them aware of "dangers" poison ivy/ stinging nettles/ ticks and how to deal with them.

Tell them the what your expectations are for the group

Raise hands or don't

Talk while walking or not

Tell people stand where when we stop

Handle vegetation or don't

Stay on the trail?? Stay behind me??

Adults/ chaperones/ teachers... let them know what you **need** them to do

These are the consequences for not following those boundaries/ expectations

Ready to go

Count heads... start hiking. Maybe walk in a blob to the trailhead then a single or double file line. At this point you need to have a good idea who your audience is. If it isn't who you expected to show up, **YOU** need to change your plans to match your group.

Stop and teach.... Position yourself so everyone can hear and see. Middle of line. You might be off the trail. Tall people behind the short people in a double file line. Tell your group "when your feet stop... so does your mouth". Your volume will set the volume for the group.

Teach... touch... maybe assign a task... move on. If the group is moving at a pace you don't like, maybe hold hands with the first kid/ kids

Stop at intersections. Rinse and repeat.

Things to be thinking about.

Is my group comfortable?

Are the bugs terrible... can we change locations?

Is the wind making it hard to be heard... how can I teach so that it is less of an issue?

Are my participants dressed appropriately for the location I am going or for the activity I was planning? If they are not, how can I adjust my plan?

Am I sticking to the schedule? You might need to speed up/ cut things out or possibly slow down and take more time. Getting done on time is important. Too early and too late are disrespecting their time.

What is the group chatting about while we walk? This may help you focus your lesson to what they are finding interesting.

Bag of tricks

Biofacts to pass around – fur, turtle shell, goose foot, antler

Pictures or models to show

Pint-sized activity to do – micro hike, nature circles, scavenger hunts

Answer questions with questions... What is that? What made you notice that?

Do not make something up ... *I don't know or let's figure that out together* is fine

Have too many things to share. It's better to have too much than not enough. You may not get to everything.

Simple first aid kit/ wet wipes or hand sanitizer if your restrooms don't have that

Write out your plan even if you never look at it again.

Use humor as is appropriate.

Ask questions, don't just spew information.

Get excited. If you are excited about a thing, chances are your group will start getting excited about that thing too.

Don't

Show up late or unprepared

Make the audience feel like they are a burden/ a waste of your time

Put yourself down, apologize or admit you are nervous

Lower the audiences' expectations.

Use rough language or technical jargon.

Say one thing, but do another – model correct behavior/ actions

Panic when things go "off script"