

Horse Smart Leadership - Senior

We can learn a lot from horses. In this badge, you will explore how horses at Camp Sycamore Hills can teach us about ourselves and how to be a leader.

Steps:

- 1) Observe the herd
- 2) Speak their language – talk without words
- 3) Build a relationship
- 4) Be a leader
- 5) Create an action plan



Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I will know the basics of how to communicate with a horse, as well as have new tools to help me communicate with people and improve my leadership skills.

Step 1 – Observe the herd

Horses have social communities similar to humans. They have their own personalities, express emotions and communicate with each other. In this step, you will learn about the Camp Sycamore Hills horse community and about people, by watching horses interact with each other.

- A. From a safe distance, observe a group of Camp Sycamore Hills horses for at least 15 minutes and record behaviors, how horses communicated, what may have surprised you and how behaviors changed as you watched.

AND

- B. Make a list of how specific behaviors impacted other horses and compare those behaviors and responses to human behavior.

Step 2 – Speaking their language – talk without words

In this step, you will take what you have learned by observing the herd and try to communicate with a horse. Since horses do not use spoken language, you will have to think like a horse and use other ways to communicate. Be sure the horse, or horses, used in this step are safe to be around.

- A. Review safety rules for being around horses at Camp Sycamore Hills. In a safe arena or pen, ask a horse to move from one place to another without touching him (or his halter) and without using your voice. Try asking for forward movement, stops and turns.

OR

- B. Have someone knowledgeable about Camp Sycamore Hills horses review safety rules. With a small group ask a horse to go through an obstacle course or accomplish some other task in an arena or pen without touching him (or his halter) and without using your voice. If you have a large group, try using multiple horses.

Step 3– Build a relationship

Spend some one-on-one time with a horse and see what happens. Just like with people, getting to know a horse takes time and energy. In this step, you will try to build a relationship with a horse and explore the impact on how you and the horse feel and behave. Be sure the horse, or horses, used in this step are safe to be around.

- A. For safety, be sure help is close by should you need it. In a quiet place without a lot of distractions, such as a stall or hitching area, spend time petting, grooming and talking with a horse. Notice changes in yourself and the horse as you spend time together. Does he watch you? Does he change how he holds his head? Does he like the attention or does he seem bothered?

OR

- B. For safety, have an experienced horse person watch this activity. With a horse loose in an enclosed pen, spend time in the pen, watching, approaching, retreating, talking and eventually touching the horse. Notice what the horse likes and doesn't like about what you do. What do you like and not like about the horse? What makes you comfortable? What makes the horse comfortable?

Step 4 – Be a Leader

Most horses prefer to follow, but they can also be leaders. In this step, you will try to discover how relationships, body language and leadership interact. Be sure the horse, or horses, used in this step are safe to be around. If you just completed Step 3 with the horse you are using for this step, jump right into this step. If not, spend a few minutes establishing a relationship with the horse by using Step 3.

- A. Have a knowledgeable horse person show you how to safely lead a horse with a lead rope. Spend time leading the horse you have gotten to know. Include turns and stops. Does the horse change his interest in following if you change speed, direction or how focused you are?

Optional:

- B. Once the horse follows you willingly on the lead, try taking off the lead rope and repeat the process. Have you made a connection strong enough to be his leader without a rope? What might interfere with his decision to follow you?

Step 5 – Create an Action Plan

You have learned something about horses, but you have also learned how relationships, communication and leadership apply to people as well. In this step, you will create a plan to take what you have learned and apply it to the communities you live in, such as school, family and work.

- A. Make a list of ways body language impacts communication. Identify a relationship with a peer, teacher or family member where you can use body language to improve that relationship. Make a specific list of ways you will change your body language with that person in your next encounter. Did you see a difference? If not, don't give up; keep trying because it may take time for change to happen.

OR

- B. Make a list of ways you can be a more effective leader. Choose a group you are a part of at school, in sports or in your family and create a plan of action for how you will help that group accomplish a specific goal.

Add the Badge to Your Journeys

The communication, relationship and leadership skills horses can teach you will help you along the way of your Leadership Journeys.

Service:

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Teaching younger Girl Scouts the language of horses.
- Helping my troop, school or other organization to reach their goals.
- Helping other Girl Scouts build positive ways to communicate without words.