

Trail Rider – Cadette

Tennessee has wonderful opportunities to experience the out-of-doors from the back of a horse. Earning this badge will introduce girls to the wonder of seeing the natural beauty of Camp Sycamore Hills from horseback.



Steps:

- 1) Safety First
- 2) Chuck Wagon
- 3) Trail Tie
- 4) Mount Up!
- 5) Terrain on the Trail

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I will know the basics of how to ride a horse safely on the trails at Camp Sycamore Hills.

Step 1 – Safety First

Like anything that weighs 1000lbs or more, horses can be dangerous if you don't know and learn the safety procedures to keep yourself and your horse safe from harm. In this step, you will learn and practice the procedures designed to keep you safe while working with and handling horses.

- A. Learn six safety rules for being in the barn or around horses. Be able to give reasons why these rules are important and in place. Give examples of what problems could happen, if these rules are not followed.

OR

- B. Learn, explain and demonstrate how to approach a horse safely in a stall or tied to a fence.

Step 2 – Chuck Wagon

Proper nutrition is important for both horse and rider. In this step, you will learn about the feed that a horse needs to eat to stay healthy, or you will plan and cook a meal over a campfire.

- A. Learn about the horse feeding practices at Camp Sycamore Hills. What kind of grass and hay are they fed? Where does it come from? What feeds are used and why? Compare the supplements different horses get, and find out why those supplements are used for particular horses.

OR

- B. Eat 'on the trail' like a real cowgirl. Plan a meal that can be cooked entirely over a campfire. Shop for your ingredients, and cook your dinner over the fire. Remember to clean up the entire area, and make sure your fire is completely out before you leave.

Step 3 – Trail Tie

In the movies, horses stay in one place when a rider dismounts and drops his reins on the ground. In reality, horses need to be tied in one place in order to stay safe on the trail. In this step, you will learn how to tie a release knot and learn why tying with the reins can be dangerous.

- A. Have an experienced instructor show you how to tie a quick release knot. Practice with a lead rope until you can tie and untie the knot quickly. Learn why this knot is important.

AND

- B. Play the Bit Game. With a partner, practice steering using different bits with reins to see how much pressure it takes for your "horse" to feel your instructions. One partner will be the "horse" and one the "rider." The "horse" holds both hands out front with her thumbs up and holds the bit between her index fingers and thumbs, while the "rider" stands behind the "horse" and holds the reins as if she is riding.

While playing the Bit Game, think about why a horse should never be tied with the bridle reins.

Step 4– Mount Up!

It's time to ride! In this step, you will learn how to safely mount and dismount from your horse, how to correctly steer your horse and commands to start and stop your horse.

- A. Watch a demonstration on correct mounting, steering and dismounting. You will have to learn to “speak Camp Sycamore horse,” so be sure to pay attention, even if you are an experienced rider. Understanding how a horse is accustomed to being given directions will help you have a better ride.

AND

- B. Learn and demonstrate the basics of ring riding: Mount your horse, correctly hold your reins, ride at a walk, guide your horse effectively and dismount safely. Practice ‘rating’ your horse’s speed (*rating is when you control how fast your horse is going at a walk or trot*) in the arena, so you can maintain a proper distance between your horse and the horse in front of you.

Step 5 – Terrain on the Trail

Tennessee has varying terrain all over the state, from plains to mountains to plateaus. At Camp Sycamore Hills, trails wander through woods, near the creek and along the edge of the grasslands. An observant rider may identify many different kinds of trees and plants, including the sycamore tree that gives the camp its name. In this step, you will learn the principle of how to ride over various types of terrain and then go out on a trail ride.

- A. Learn some of the different ways you can help your horse while riding over various types of ground. For example, what is the best way for you to move your body while going uphill? Downhill? Learn the proper etiquette for riding when the trail is narrow or in an open field.

AND

- B. Take a trail ride, and put into practice the techniques you learned about riding on varying terrain and rating your horse to maintain your spacing. Identify as many different plants, including trees, on your ride. Did you find a sycamore tree? (*In the case of inclement weather or unsafe trail conditions, the trail ride may be modified to a “trail-like” obstacle course in the arena.*)

Congratulations! You have earned the *Trail Rider* badge! You can add this badge to your Journeys.

You might collect ideas for a Take Action project involving horses, or talk to one of the riding instructors about their role with the horses and then add them to your casting-call log!

Service:

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

- Becoming a *Vaquera* at Camp Sycamore Hills and assisting with horse programs.
- Becoming an assistant to a Girl Scout Brownie troop and help them with earning the *Loving and Grooming* or *Pony Ready Try-It*.
- With permission and supervision, finding a volunteer group that uses horses or local equine rescue, and volunteering my time to groom the horses or help with barn chores.