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Partnership for  
nature and people

## Hobbit Nature Adventure

„The treasure of sweetness has also long been taken by the dragons. After their adventure with Bilbo, the dwarfs got encouraged to get this treasure back, too. A long way lays ahead of them, on which they have to prove again their skills. UP! it goes.

Gandalf will be on your side. He will guide you when his time comes. He will watch you. But, to receive his guidance you have to find the clues.“

This is a literature based cooperative nature adventure, linked to the novel of T.R.R. Tolkien. The format is a scavenger hunt. The children receive hints to find the direction and have to solve small challenges on their way, linked to the adventures from the book.

To create the right atmosphere for this activity, you should pick an area that kind of reminds of the locations described in the book. Therewith there should be some alternation along the trail. A combination of meadow, forest and ravin is perfect. Even more, if the terrain is hilly or mountainous. The trail itself should be a little adventure to provide the nature experience the story offers.

The best time for this activity is autumn, to provide the matching atmosphere. However, if you schedule this as an outdoor learning activity for your class in connection with the book, it is suggested to have the outdoor activity within timely proximity to the class reading.

The challenges you find in this description can easily be exchanged. More important is, that the challenges match with the environment you conduct this adventure in, and that you find a reasonable link to the story.

### *Time need:*

The time requirement depends on the length of your trail. The experienced ideal length is 2 km. Nevertheless, depending on your group, you can integrate this easily in a real long hike. It also depends, on how easy the group solves the problems and how much time the elements need, which you integrate.

Calculate with a minimum time of 2 hours.

### *Requirements:*

- Participants should be familiar with the story.
- Participants should be able to walk over 2 - 3 km in mountainous terrain.
- Suitable clothing according to weather situation, includes appropriate walking shoes.
- Each participant should carry on their own water bottle.
- The perfect maximum number of participants is 10. Should not be more than 15.
- The best age is from 8 to 12 years old.

### *Material:*

Trail markers, ropes, „Sword“, flat rocks, pens, willow twigs, blindfolds, 2 cloth (snakes tails), clothespins, filled treasure box

### *Preparation:*

It is absolutely necessary to walk the trail before, look for outstanding landmarks, and take notes, which will later help you to make the clues. Lookout what the landscape provides for challenges that somehow are in line with the original story. If you are familiar with the area, it is recommended to possibly re-walk the course short before the actual adventure. Seasonal changes might provide you with different options for clues.

As our terrain is not everywhere really clear, we chose silhouettes from Eagle to clarify the trail when necessary. Silhouettes from Thrushes indicate the place where a clue is hidden. To make the clues weatherproof, we use the yellow eggs from kinder as container.

Prepare a treasure box.

On the day of the adventure, mark the trail, hide the clues and set up the challenges before.

### *Adventure:*

The following is meant as an inspiration and give you an example. Adjust to your likings and to your given situation!

Welcome the group as Gandalf. If you have the option for masquerade, it will add to the overall atmosphere.

Gandalf transmits the message:

„The treasure of sweetness has also long been taken by the dragons. After their adventure with Bilbo, the dwarfs got encouraged to get this treasure back, too. A long way lays ahead of them, on which they have to prove again their skills. UP! it goes.

Gandalf will be on your side. He will guide you when his time comes. He will watch you. To receive his guidance you have to find the clues.“

Ask, if they remember the name of the sword Bilbo received. They will receive it for their protection, but have to make it compliant first.

„UP“ refers here to the given territory in our case and therewith gives the first direction.

(ORKIST) We have a wooden sword we give them.

Explain, that magic swords have their own personality. You have to gain the power over it so it obeys you. While you are telling this, you act as you are having a hard time to keep it from flying up.

The travel companions stand in 2 lines opposite each other and point their index fingers on the level of their faces. They have to stand as close, that the sword can be placed on all of their fingers at the same time. They have to lay the sword on the ground by balancing on all of their index fingers at the same time. It is not allowed to touch it in any other way.

Tell them, that there are many dangers along the way. They have to stick together and be quite not to attract the attention of the evil creatures!

Remember the birds!

Ask: Which are the birds, that helped Bilbo and his friends during the first journey (THRUSH, RAVEN, EAGLE)

They will guide you. The Thrushes help you find the clues. The eagle shows you the right path. Towards the woods we go! Follow the squat, gnarled tree with black berries. A similar one will be at the other side. Find the message!

... example how we formulate clues:

Take the left path to the open land! Do not cross the open land!

Find the silvery tree for the next message!

Into the forest, cross the dry water!

Follow the small path to the crossing of many trails. Take the steepest climbing trail.

Down the Troll Trail, to the Slow River. Follow the course of the river into Misty Mountains.

Follow the trail sheep have past (here sheep wool was on the ground an in the bushes)

follow the trail to the forest, poisson guides you (autumn crocuses)

...

### Challenges:

Dig in your toolbox of experimental education and you will certainly find more games and activities you can link to the Hobbit adventure. The key is, to find the reasonable link to the story. The given elements are the landscapes they travel through, the different ,tribes' they have to cope with, and their characteristics.

This is the selection of challenges we use. The order is given by the circumstances of the terrain we play in.



Dwarfs have been caught by trolls. They have frozen them to rocks. You need to free them before you can continue your journey!

### Instruction:

Hand out a flat rock to each participant. You pile them at the station on your pre-walk. And a marker / pen.

1. Everyone has to draw a face on the rock.
2. Line the rocks in a distance of around 2 m.



3. Hand out the willow twigs. They have to form a ring.

4. Line up the participants in an opposite row to the frozen dwarfs. Choose the distance manageable for your age group, the characteristic of your group, and the quality of the rings. (The willows available might be limiting).

5. The rings are now used to throw over the dwarf. They have 3 minutes time.



Dwarfs are extremely fast!

Do you remember how they speed up the travel?

The group now continues their journey by carrying each other piggyback to the next station.



Riddle (Gollum loves riddles)

A riddle has to be solved before they can continue their journey. If they can not answer all questions, they have to continue the journey piggyback until a given point.

Example for riddle question:

What is the name of Gandalf's sword - **GLAMDRING**

What is the name of the dragon laying on Thorins treasure - **SMAUG**

What is the favorite tree of Elves - **BEECH**



You enter Mirkwood. You have to hold on the rope and follow it. Otherwise you will be lost for ever!

Chose a place with a defined structure. Fix a rope that leads through the place. Ideally the rope is 10 m long. Set up before you start the game!

- (We have a top-rope available for games, which has been taken out of service from climbers due to some damage, but is ideal for all sorts of experimental games.)

Blindfold all participants. Let everyone experience the rope walk alone. Some people do not feel confident in that situation and need more time than others. Give them the chance to experience this without pressure. Therefor make sure, everyone is let on the course with enough distance!



Entering Mirkwood



Exeting Mirkwood



You can only leave the Mirkwood through this web of the giant spider!

Every hole can only be used once! Everyone has to get through a different hole!

If you touch the web, the spider wakes up and you are lost!

Chose a place with two trees standing apart from each other in a way you can weave a spider net with ropes. Make sure the web has one opening for each participant. Set up before you start the game! The principle of the game is, that they can only manage to get to the other side by cooperating with each other!



Before you enter the path of the trolls you have to build an eagles nest at the entrance. Only this way the eagles can help you.

When this task is given, make sure there are enough deadwood around. Ask, what an eagle use to make a nest and remind them of the size!





You are stopped by the wolfs!

Chose an open space where they can move safely when blindfolded.

1. Explain the communication system of wolfs.
2. Handout blindfolds.
3. Let participants spread out in a defined area (set borders).
4. Now let them blindfold.
5. Change your position.
6. When you give sound, they answer you and have to find you. Repeat after a short time.

If they do this very easily, change your position ;-)

*Grey wolfs are social predators that live in nuclear families consisting of a mated pair, their offspring and, occasionally, adopted immature wolfs. Wolfs have a distinguished communication system, that includes different sounds. When a single wolf wants to locate the rest of the pack, it howls once or twice and gest response from other wolfs in hearing distance.*



A spell transforms the team in 2 giant snakes. They get 5 Minutes to catch the tail of the other snake. The team catching the other tail first continues piggyback on the team who lost the tail. A snail has to move as one!

Split the group in two teams. Each group has to form a snake by holding on the shoulders of the person in front. The last person gets a cloth attached on the back (belt, backpack, ...). Face the snakes by the head. Give a start signal.



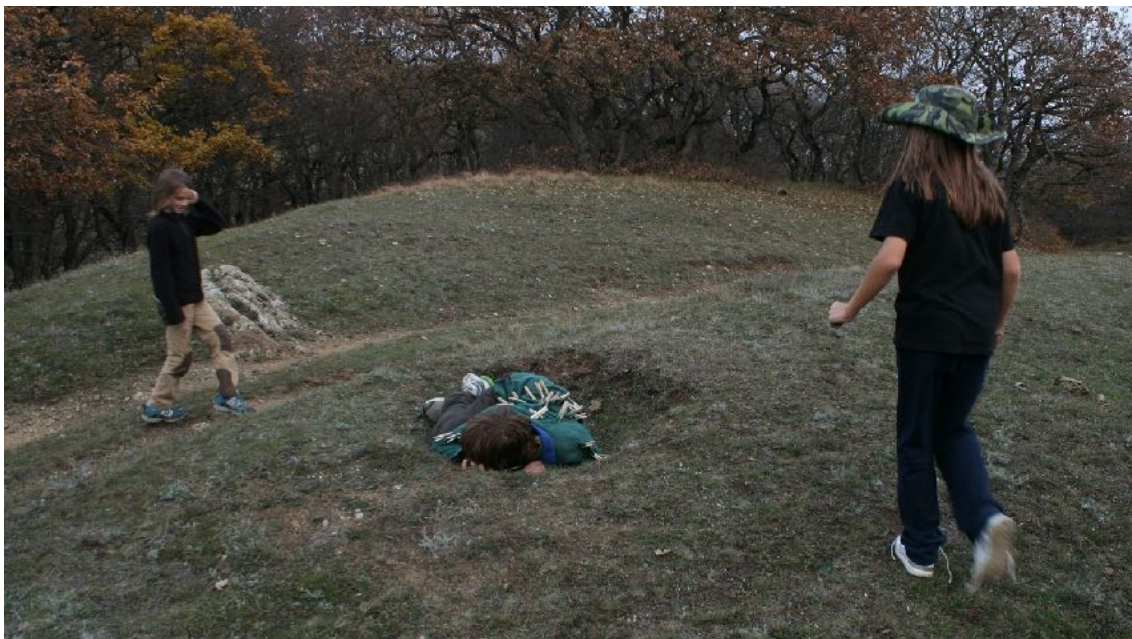
Pick out the diamonds from the back of the dragon.

If he wakes up, you are lost.

If you get all the diamonds, you get the treasure.

You need a person that hides as a dragon. He or she is laying there already when the group arrives. The person should wear a shirt or coat prepared with clothespins. The dragon is blindfolded. The treasure box is with the dragon.

If the dragon feels a clothespin is taken, he wakes up. He starts trying to catch the players, being blindfolded.



Smaug: original drawing from T.R.R. Tolkien