

# Trek Activities: Making it Memorable!

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## 1) Music and Dancing

**Trek Band:** Create a “trek band” using the talent in your stake. Learn who can play instruments (especially among the youth) such as fiddles, violins, violas, banjos, guitars, etc. Encourage them to learn songs (hymns as well as “hoe down” type songs for dancing) before trek begins. At rest stops or at night around the campfire, the “trek band” can play for everyone’s enjoyment.

**Square Dancing:** One night, learn a simple square dance (or Virginia Reel, etc.) and get everyone involved. Use a “caller” to call out the moves and have the Trek Band accompany the dance.

**Trek Choir:** Similar to the Trek Band, ask for volunteers to be in the Trek Choir. Before trek, they should gather and learn a few pioneer hymns to sing. They could perform at morning or evening devotionals or during rest stops. If you do not have enough bodies to form a choir, form a quartet.

**Family Songs:** Instruct each family to write a song based upon experiences of the trek. Use common tunes and just change the words (for example, “The Brady Bunch Theme” or “Called to Serve” or “In the Jungle”). Tunes can be assigned, or let them choose their own. Suggest whether it be more humorous or more spiritual – maybe one of each. Alternative: Develop a family cheer.

## 2) Pioneer Toys

Make or provide some pioneer toys to play with:

**Whirligig:** Thread some thin string through the button holes of a large, two holed button and tie the ends to make a loop. The loop should be as long as your shoulders are wide. Hold the ends of the loop so that the button hangs between your hands. Swing the button around in one direction to wind up the string. Once the string is wound up, quickly pull both ends of the loop outward at the same time. Move your hands together and apart. The button will keep spinning and humming.

**Cup and Ball:** Attach a ball to a string. Attach the other end of the string to the bottom of a cup. The object is to get ball in the cup by holding onto the cup and swinging the ball.

**Battledore and Shuttlecock:** This is similar to our modern day bad mitten. Use a battledore (paddle) to hit a shuttlecock (ball) into the air while repeating a rhyme (or just back and forth). One, two, or more players can participate.

## 3) Pioneer “Photos”

Somewhere along the trail, stop for a picture break. Have each “family” stand in front of a handcart and pose for a picture—no smiling allowed! After trek, print the pictures in a sepia or black and white tone and give each participant an “authentic” picture of their pioneer family.

#### 4) **Mormon Battalion**

Arrange for some “riders” (including Captain James Allen) to come intercept your party of pioneers— and deliver President Polk’s request for a battalion of 500 volunteers to fight in the Mexican War.

Point out that this is important for the saints to do, because they were pleading for the government to help them. By providing soldiers for the war, the saints were hopeful that at last their petitions would be heard. (Also let them know that they eventually march from Iowa to California, although they never actually had to fight.)

Enlist ALL of the boys and men to “depart” for a short time as the Mormon Battalion. During this time, the women and girls should pull the handcarts all by themselves.

#### 5) **The Pony Express**

Arrange for horse riders to ride in as the Pony Express. Have them deliver a (pre-written) letter to each youth from their parents.

#### 6) **“Remember the Journey” Pre-Trek Fireside**

Start your trek off with a bang—book Jenny Phillips to present “Remember the Journey” for your stake! Or, consider the option of using the talent in your stake to put the program on yourself.

After the fireside, serve one or more of the following pioneer treats as refreshments:

##### **Mormon Johnnycake**

2 eggs, beaten  
2 cups buttermilk  
2 tablespoons honey or molasses  
2 cups cornmeal  
1/2 cup flour  
1 teaspoon soda  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons butter

Beat eggs until light. Add buttermilk and honey or molasses. Combine dry ingredients and stir into batter along with melted butter. Pour into buttered dripper pan and bake at 425° F. for about 20 minutes. Cut into squares.

##### **Honey Candy**

2 cups honey  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup cream

Combine all ingredients and cook slowly to a hard-ball stage. Pour onto buttered platter. When cool enough to handle, grease hands and pull until a golden color. Cut into pieces.

##### **Pioneer Lettuce Salad**

1 head lettuce  
1 cup heavy cream  
1/4 cup vinegar

1 teaspoon sugar  
1/4 teaspoon salt

Cut lettuce into wedges or shred. Whip cream and blend with vinegar, salt, and sugar. Serve over lettuce.

### **Rice in Cream**

3/4 cup uncooked rice  
1 teaspoon salt  
4 cups milk  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 teaspoon almond extract  
1 cup heavy cream, whipped

Cook rice and salt in milk over boiling water until rice is soft and mixture is thick (about 1 1/2 hours). Add sugar and almond extract. Chill, then stir in whipped cream. Can also be served with berries.

### **Molasses Candy**

1 1/2 cups molasses  
3/4 cup sugar  
1 tablespoon vinegar  
1 tablespoon butter  
1/8 teaspoon soda  
1/8 teaspoon salt

Combine molasses, sugar, and vinegar and cook to a hard-ball stage. Add butter, soda, and salt; remove from heat and stir until soda is blended, then pour onto greased platter. When cool, pull between greased fingertips until white and stiff. Cut into pieces.

## **7) Pioneer Games**

Here are ten popular (and easy) pioneer games you can play anywhere on the trail.

**Drop the Handkerchief:** Drop the Handkerchief is similar to Duck-Duck-Goose. Form a circle of players facing each other. The person that is "it" will go around on the outside of the circle. The person that is "it" will drop a handkerchief behind one of the other players. The person that drops the handkerchief will race around the circle in hopes they won't get caught by the person the handkerchief was dropped behind. The people around the circle has to keep checking to see if the handkerchief was dropped behind them. The person where the handkerchief was dropped picks up the handkerchief and chases after the person. The first one to sit in the empty spot wins. The one who loses will be "it" next.

**Blindman's Bluff:** The game is similar to Marco Polo and is played 2 ways. One person is blindfolded, and calls out "Blindman's Bluff," like in Marco Polo. One person is calling Blindman and the other calls out Bluff. The person blindfolded has to locate who is calling out bluff. The second way is the person not "it" is silent. The person who is "it" has to find the other one. When they find you, they tag you and guess who it is. Then they are "it".

**Old Sow:** To begin, give each player a stick and a base marker. Use an old can as the old sow; drive a stick into the ground or use a barrel or bucket as the pen. The person who is it tries to steal another player's base or hit the old sow into the pen. The other players try to keep the old sow from getting to the pen and at the same time protect their bases

When the old sow hits the pen, all of the players, except the person who is 'it', run to a designated line or fence, touching it with their sticks, and then run back to their bases. While they are running, the person without a base has to chase the old sow and be 'it'. Players can steal another player's base.

**Circle Dodge:** One team stands in a circle on the floor, and the other team stands outside the circle, throwing a soft rag ball at the players inside the circle. When a player is hit with the ball, he leaves the circle. When all the players on the team inside the circle are eliminated, the teams change places. The winning team is the one that remains in the circle for the longest period of time.

**Fox and Geese:** Mark four squares, 10 feet across each square, on the ground. Every player stands on one of the lines forming the square. A signal is given and the person who is 'it' has 10 seconds to touch as many players as he can. Players who are tagged sit down in the marked area. All players must stay on the line while being chased.

**Post Office:** In this game each player chooses the name of a city. One player is the postal clerk. The rest of the players sit in a circle. The clerk calls out "The mail is going from Salt Lake City to Chicago" (or any other two cities). The players who chose those cities have to exchange seats without letting the postal clerk steal either of their seats.

**Ring Taw:** Draw a large ring in the ground. Draw a smaller circle inside it and place several small marbles, called nibs, in the circle. The players crouch outside the large ring. From there, each player takes a turn flicking a large marble, called a shooter, into the circle. The goal is to knock other marbles out of the circle. Each player keeps the marbles he or she knocks out. The winner is the player with the most marbles.

**Button, Button, Who's Got the Button:** Get a button. Leader walks around the circle with a button in folded hands pretending to drop the button in each player's folded hands. Another player has been asked to watch this procedure. When the leader has gone to each person, the leader asks, "Button, button, who's got the button?" The player guessing chooses someone. If after 3 guesses the player has not located the button, the guesser becomes the new leader. If he chooses correctly, then the leader remains the same and repeats the process with a new player guessing.

**Stick Pull:** This was a favorite activity of the Prophet Joseph and no one ever threw him. Equipment needed: A stick 3' (1M) long, about 1 1/2" diameter. Two people sit on the ground facing each other, feet to feet. Both grab hold of the stick and at a signal, both pull on the stick and see if they can pull the other person from his/her sitting position. The one who remains seated the longest is the winner.

**Ring Roll:** Equipment needed: A 12-16" diameter ring (possibly a small bicycle wheel) and a 3' long stick for each team. A clear space 80-100 feet across (25-30 M). Run as a relay. At a signal, a team member rolls the ring across the distance, using only the stick to direct it. A team member at the other side rolls it back using only the stick.

And don't overlook the old standbys: **sack races, three legged races, and tag**—all of which were enjoyed by pioneer youth.

## 8) Other Fun Group Games

**Water Pass:** Equipment needed: A 5 gallon bucket full of water and an empty 5 gallon bucket for each team. One 7-8 oz plastic or paper cup for each person. Teams of 12-15 people. Team members line up facing the full bucket. The idea is for the front person to fill the cup and pour the water over the shoulder into the cup of the next person. #2 person pours to #3, #3 to #4, etc. The last person in the line pours the water into the empty bucket. #1 person dips more water as soon his/her cup is emptied so it becomes a paper cup fire brigade. The winner is the team that has conveyed the most water to the second bucket during a given time (2-3 min. Experiment a little with the time).  
Alternative: One person pours the water over the shoulder, #2 between the legs, #3 over the shoulder, #4 between the legs, etc.

**Thimble Game:** Everyone sits in a circle. One person stands in the middle of the circle with a thimble full of water. He announces, "I am thinking of a color" (or fruit, state, sport, month, etc). He walks around the circle, pausing at each person to hear their guess of what he is thinking of. When someone guesses right, the leader throws the thimble of water on them. That person is now the leader in the middle. He fills the thimble back up with water and announces, "I'm thinking of a vegetable" (or whatever). Play continues.

**Throw the Wicket or Steal the Pickett:** Played with a large number of players and a stick two feet long. The stick is placed against a tree. The hunter hides his eyes and counts to 50 while the others hide, then yells, "Bushel wheat, bushel barley, who's not hid holler Charley!" If no one hollers, the hunter begins searching. The object is to catch all the players without anyone getting to the tree and taking the stick and throwing it away. He must return it to the tree and start over again. The game ends when all are held captive at the same time. The "hunter" is the one who hides his eyes and places the stick by the tree

**Run My Sheepie, Run!:** Divide into two teams, each with a captain. One team is the "sheep" and hides from the other team. The sheep captain watches and gives verbal clues as to where to hide safely while the other team searches for them. When it is safe for the sheep to make it "home", the captain yells, "Run my sheepie, run!" If any sheep are caught by the other team, they become part of the other team.

**Last Couple Out:** A leader is chosen. Other youth pair up and line up side by side behind the leader. The leader yells, "Last couple out!". The last couple in the line separate, one running along the right side and the other running along the left side. They try to reunite hands before the leader tags one of them. If one of them gets tagged, he becomes a partner to the leader. The untagged partner then becomes the leader and the new couple takes their place at the head of the line.

**States:** Players sit in a circle and everyone chooses a state (or fruit or famous person, etc.). Go around the circle twice, having each person name their state so that the players can memorize them. IT stands in the middle with a hat or bandana and approaches a player who must name another state (belonging to another player) before IT hits them on the head with the hat. IT must hurry to the person whose state was named and try to hit

her before she can name another state. Whoever is hit on the head before naming another's state is IT. If a player says his own state or a state not included in the game, he becomes IT.

**Tangle:** Stand in a tight circle. Have everyone put their right hands in the middle and instruct them to join their left hands with someone else's right hand. No one should join two hands with the same person. Now, without letting go, the group must become "untangled".

**Mingle:** Have the group wander around in a close area while you yell, "Mingle, Mingle". At a good point, yell out a number under 10. The people must then get in groups of that size. Anyone not in a group of that size is out and must wait till the game is over to participate again. Continue mingling and yelling out numbers until only two remain.

- 9) **Duty to God/Young Woman Recognition:** Remember that MANY of the things required of the youth on trek can count to pass of requirements for Duty and God and Young Women recognition awards. Don't overlook physical requirements, service opportunities, and social and spiritual goals. Let these activities count!