

SAINTS GLOBAL
LEADER GUIDE

BACKPACKING

PHYSICAL CORE

Version 2026.1





PURPOSE & IDENTITY

SKILL BADGE PURPOSE

To develop physical endurance, self-reliance, stewardship of the outdoors, and trust in God through real-world backpacking preparation and field experience.

DEVELOPMENT CORE: PHYSICAL

This badge develops physical attributes through focused activities and reflection. Saints will grow in this area while building practical skills.

CORE FOCUSES

- Backcountry self-reliance
- Physical endurance and load management
- Navigation and situational awareness
- Stewardship of God's creation
- Team responsibility and leadership under strain

TIME COMMITMENT

4-6 weeks (suggested)

RECOMMENDED AGE

13+

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

SUPERVISION

Ensure appropriate adult supervision for all activities following Saints Global guidelines. Never leave youth unsupervised during badge activities.

PRIVACY

Respect personal experiences and information shared during activities. Maintain confidentiality and help youth understand appropriate boundaries.

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

Assess outdoor locations and weather conditions before activities. Ensure proper shelter, hydration, and protection from hazards appropriate to the environment.

FIRST AID

Maintain a first aid kit and ensure at least one leader is trained in basic first aid. Know the location of the nearest medical facility and have emergency contact information readily available.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Troopmaster: _____

Emergency: _____



THE DPAR METHOD

Saints Global uses the DPAR method for skill badge completion. As a leader, you should practice DPAR yourself when preparing to teach.

D

DISCOVER

Learn foundational knowledge and concepts. Research, study, and explore the topic.

YOUR ROLE AS LEADER:

- Immerse yourself in the material before teaching
- Study each requirement—understand what AND why
- Anticipate questions saints might ask

P

PLAN

Create a personal action plan with goals and timeline.

YOUR ROLE AS LEADER:

- Design your teaching approach for each requirement
- Gather materials and prepare discussion questions
- Consider how to adapt for different learning styles

A

ACT

Execute through hands-on practice with leader guidance.

YOUR ROLE AS LEADER:

- Shift from teacher to guide—step back
- Create safe space for practice and mistakes
- Model the skills yourself when helpful

R

REFLECT

Review what was learned and share experiences gained.

YOUR ROLE AS LEADER:

- Facilitate meaningful conversations
- Ask open-ended questions, listen more than speak
- Celebrate growth and help saints see their progress



STEP 1: DISCOVER

LEADER PREPARATION

- Review all DISCOVER requirements thoroughly
- Gather necessary resources and materials
- Prepare discussion questions and activities
- Identify potential challenges saints may face

STEP 1: DISCOVER — TEACHING GUIDE

Requirement 1a: Explain how common backpacking health risks occur and how to prevent them, including dehydration, hypothermia, heat illness, blisters, insect or tick exposure, and improper sanitation.

HOW TO TEACH

- Walk through each risk using a real trail scenario instead of a textbook definition
- Show photos or examples of warning signs (early hypothermia shivering, blister formation, tick attachment)
- Have the Saint pair-quiz another youth on the first three actions for each risk
- Ask which risk he has personally seen on a trip and how it was handled

Completion: Saint can clearly explain causes and prevention without reading notes.

Requirement 1b: Describe the purpose of Leave No Trace principles and explain how they reflect stewardship of God’s creations.

HOW TO TEACH

- Walk the seven principles and have the Saint give one concrete example of each
- Discuss the difference between LNT as a checklist and LNT as care for other users
- Ask the Saint to name one habit he's already doing and one he could improve
- Connect stewardship to responsibility for ground that is borrowed, not owned

Completion: Saint explains both environmental and moral reasons for LNT.

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STEP 1: DISCOVER — TEACHING GUIDE (CONTINUED)

Requirement 1c: Identify essential backpacking gear categories and explain how each contributes to safety, mobility, and endurance.

HOW TO TEACH

- Lay out a real pack and group the contents by category (navigation, sleep, insulation, illumination, first aid, fire, repair, food, water, shelter)
- Compare a budget setup and a premium setup for one category and discuss the tradeoff
- Have the Saint defend one item in his pack against being removed for weight
- Reinforce that weight, safety, and comfort are three pressures that always compete

Completion: Saint explains why each category matters, not just what items exist.



STEP 2: PLAN

LEADER PREPARATION

- Review all PLAN requirements thoroughly
- Gather necessary resources and materials
- Prepare discussion questions and activities
- Identify potential challenges saints may face

STEP 2: PLAN — TEACHING GUIDE

Requirement 2a: Plan a short backpacking route that includes distance, elevation considerations, water sources, and weather risks.

HOW TO TEACH

- Use a real paper topo map of the actual planned route, not a phone screen
- Walk pace baselines together: 1.5–2 mph flat, 1 mph climbing, slower with a loaded pack
- Have the Saint identify two weather contingencies and what each would change
- Discuss why writing the plan down beats trying to remember it under fatigue

Completion: Route plan accounts for terrain, load, and conditions.

Requirement 2b: Prepare a personal pack layout showing how gear and food are organized for balance, access, and safety.

HOW TO TEACH

- Demonstrate a wrong-order pack (heavy on top, jacket buried) before showing the correct load order
- Have the Saint pack his own gear and walk the loaded pack around the room
- Adjust the hip belt so 70-80% of the weight rides the hips, not the shoulders
- Discuss what belongs in the lid (rain shell, headlamp, map, first-aid) vs. the bottom

Completion: Pack layout shows intentional weight distribution.

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STEP 2: PLAN — TEACHING GUIDE (CONTINUED)

Requirement 2c: Explain how a small trek group should be organized and how risk is minimized through planning and roles.

HOW TO TEACH

- Name the four trek roles (lead navigator, tail saint, water lieutenant, cook) and what each owns
- Run a scenario where one role fails — water source dry, twisted ankle — and rehearse the response
- Have the Saint identify which role he wants and which he is least suited for
- Discuss how distributing roles holds the group together when fatigue arrives

Completion: Saint demonstrates understanding of group dynamics and safety.



STEP 3: ACT

LEADER PREPARATION

- Review all ACT requirements thoroughly
- Gather necessary resources and materials
- Prepare discussion questions and activities
- Identify potential challenges saints may face

STEP 3: ACT — TEACHING GUIDE

Requirement 3a: Hike a loaded backpack on a backcountry or trail route long enough to experience sustained physical strain and explain afterward what was most difficult.

HOW TO TEACH

- Set a distance realistic for the Saint's experience and pack weight, not adult standards
- Watch for early fatigue, blistering, or dehydration during the hike, not after
- Have the Saint narrate what is hard while it's happening, not only in the debrief
- Discuss what shifts when a pack is loaded vs. day-hiking — pace, breathing, foot placement

Completion: Saint completes the hike and can articulate physical and mental challenges.

Requirement 3b: Demonstrate navigation skills by using a map and compass or GPS to identify your position in the field at multiple points.

HOW TO TEACH

- Confirm compass declination is set correctly for the trip area before starting
- Set up multiple test points and have the Saint locate his position at each independently
- Require him to orient the map to ground himself — do not orient it for him
- Reinforce that a compass works when batteries die and signal drops

Completion: Saint accurately establishes position without prompting.

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STEP 3: ACT — TEACHING GUIDE (CONTINUED)

Requirement 3c: Treat water using two different field methods and explain when each would be appropriate.

HOW TO TEACH

- Set up two stations with real murky water — a filter at one and chemical tablets at the other
- Have the Saint run both methods and explain the limitations of each
- Discuss when to choose filter vs. tablets (cloudy water, virus risk, backup)
- Require him to state aloud when water is safe to drink

Completion: Water treatment is correctly performed and explained.

Requirement 3d: Prepare a complete trail meal using backpacking equipment and demonstrate safe stove operation and food sanitation.

HOW TO TEACH

- Inspect the stove for fuel leaks and damaged seals before any flame
- Walk the safe-light sequence: clear ground, six-foot perimeter, valve closed while priming, blue flame
- Have the Saint cook a real dehydrated meal and clean up using grey-water disposal
- Reinforce that fuel handling near food prep is where most camp injuries start

Completion: Meal prepared safely with clean practices.



STEP 4: REFLECT

LEADER PREPARATION

- Review all REFLECT requirements thoroughly
- Gather necessary resources and materials
- Prepare discussion questions and activities
- Identify potential challenges saints may face

STEP 4: REFLECT — TEACHING GUIDE

Requirement 4a: Explain how carrying responsibility for your own survival changed how you thought, planned, or acted on the trail.

HOW TO TEACH

- Give the Saint a moment of silent reflection before answering
- Ask for a specific moment when he had to make a decision without an adult helping
- Discuss the difference between fear of the trail and respect for it
- Avoid correcting the Saint's reflection — listen and affirm

Completion: Saint reflects honestly on personal change.

Requirement 4b: Describe how backpacking can build gratitude, discipline, and reliance on God.

HOW TO TEACH

- Begin with a brief personal example to model honest reflection
- Ask the Saint to name one moment of physical strain that connected him to gratitude or prayer
- Discuss how preparation and dependence on God are not opposites
- Keep the connection grounded in the Saint's own experience on this trail

Completion: Saint connects experience to faith and character.

RESOURCES & CONTACT

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Saints Global Resource Library — Online materials and guides
- DPAR Method Quick Reference — Printable guide for leaders
- Child and Youth Program Guidebook — LDS Church Official Documentation for Children and Youth
- For the Strength of Youth — A Guide for Making Choices

SAINTS GLOBAL CONTACT INFORMATION

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Thank you for leading Saints Global!

Your dedication makes a difference in the lives of our children and youth.