

Make a Water Filter

Scouts make and use a water filter, to help understand the issues around access to clean water.

Section: All
Time: 30 minutes
Where: Home, Den, Camp



PLAN

When scouts are out on activities like hiking or camping, they have to carefully plan for having enough water with them, or being able to access clean water. For others around the world, they face these challenges on a daily basis. Discuss this with the scouts, then set them the task of making their own water filter with materials which they have to hand.

Materials:

Funnel or plastic bottle, kitchen roll or filter paper, sand, pebbles and other porous material for testing.

DO

If the scouts have a funnel, they can use that. If not, they could make one by cutting an empty plastic bottle in half and using the top. To make the dirty water, mix a bit of soil into the water. In the bottom of the funnel, place some porous paper such as kitchen roll. Make sure it is not going to get pushed out through the hole. Then build up layers of other filtering materials, such as sand followed by pebbles. The scouts could also try other materials, including fabrics, potting compost, and anything else that they think might work. The aim is to see what works best, to make the clearest water.

This water WILL NOT BE FIT TO DRINK, not matter how clear it looks. To understand that this kind of filter will only take out the big bits, add a few drops of food colouring to the water and run it through the filter. The result will show that the water is not pure, so various bacteria can still be present. To be drinkable, the water would need to be boiled for five minutes.

REVIEW

Chat with the scouts about what worked well, and what didn't. Bring the conversation back around to the issues people face with access to water in other parts of the world. The scouts themselves will probably realise that turning dirty water into clean water for a family every day would take a lot of time and resources for that family, and it would be much better if they could access clean water as required.



In a nutshell...

- Scouts think about access to clean water.
- They make their own water filter and try a few experiments.
- In considering the outcomes, they imagine if they had to do this every day to have clean and safe water.



Follow-on

Check out the other activity sheets under SDG 6, including Turn Off That Tap where scouts look at reducing water wastage in their own home. Scouts could do some research to find out about projects to bring clean water to communities in need, and maybe decide to do some fundraising to support this work.



SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation

SDG 6 aims achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all. This activity can help scouts to understand the importance of this issue and empathise with those who currently don't have this access.



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