

Squirrels

Squirrels choose, try and tell - short, visual choices that lead to something real.

Ages 4-6

Drey

Drey Forum

YouShape Award available

Run the session

Total: 55 minutes

0:00	Arrival and choosing Two activity pictures on the wall. Each Squirrel puts a sticker under the one they want to do at the end of the night.	PLAN
0:05	Opening One Squirrel takes a turn leading the opening. Name what is happening tonight and why.	LEAD
0:10	Wide game - Quarter Ball Every point caught means one idea for another week - an adult scribes.	PLAN
0:25	Main activity - Basecamp Bricks labelled with camp features. Build, then take away what matters least. Finish with three favourites.	PLAN
0:45	Sometime Use a big clock on the floor. Stickers on daytime for yes, night-time for no.	REPRESENT
0:52	Star Jars One marble each on the way to the circle. Three stars, two stars, one star.	REPRESENT
0:55	Closing Say out loud one thing they chose that is definitely happening, and when.	CLOSE THE LOOP

Volunteer cue: the point of the night is not just to collect opinions. Finish with a real decision, a clear next step and a date for when the section will hear back.

How to run each activity

Use this page alongside the timeline. The steps explain the practical set-up, what the facilitator says or does, and what must be recorded before moving on.

Arrival and choosing

0:00

1. Put two realistic activity pictures at Squirrel height before anyone arrives. Only offer options you can genuinely deliver soon.
2. Give every Squirrel one sticker. Briefly explain both choices, then ask them to place their sticker under their favourite. Adults can help with the sticker but should not steer the choice.
3. Leave the pictures up all evening. Count the stickers before the closing so the result can be announced.

Record: Record which activity wins and when you will run it.

Main activity - Basecamp

0:25

1. Prepare blocks or cards labelled with possible camp features such as games, tents, campfire, food, exploring, crafts or a night walk. Use pictures as well as words where helpful.
2. As a Drey, build the "best camp" by adding the features they want. Then explain that the camp cannot have everything.
3. Take one feature away at a time. Ask which matters least and keep going until only three favourites remain. Let the Squirrels decide; adults only explain practical words.

Record: Record the final three camp features and any strong comments.

Opening

0:05

1. Ask one Squirrel in advance, or invite a volunteer on the night, to help lead the opening. Give them one or two simple lines to say.
2. Explain in child-friendly language: "Tonight you are helping choose what we do next." Point to the activities and choices they will make.
3. Make it clear that adults are listening and that at least one choice will become a real activity.

Record: Record who helped lead and the decision you have promised to act on.

Sometime

0:45

1. Lay out a large clock or a simple DAY / NIGHT floor graphic. Choose one activity or experience that could work at different times.
2. Give each Squirrel one sticker and ask whether they would rather do it in the daytime or after dark. Demonstrate both places before voting.
3. Count the stickers visibly and tell the Drey what the preference is. If the choice cannot be followed exactly, explain what can happen instead.

Record: Record the daytime/night-time preference and what it will influence.

Wide game - Quarter Ball

0:10

1. Stand in a circle or use a safe open space. Use a soft ball and keep the game moving quickly.
2. Each time a Squirrel catches the ball, scores a point or completes the agreed action, ask for one idea for a future Squirrel night. "I don't know" is fine - they can pass.
3. An adult writes down the idea using the Squirrel's own words. Do not discuss whether it is possible yet; the point is to generate lots of ideas.

Record: Record every idea, including repeated ideas - repeats show strong interest.

Star Jars

0:52

1. Label three clear jars 3 stars, 2 stars and 1 star. Ask one simple question, for example: "How much did you enjoy having a say tonight?"
2. On the way back to the circle, each Squirrel drops one marble into the jar that matches their answer. Keep it private and do not ask them to explain unless they want to.
3. Look at the pattern after the meeting and use it to improve the next Drey Forum.

Record: Record the jar totals and one change you will make next time if needed.

Closing

0:55

1. Bring everyone together and name the result of the arrival vote and at least one other decision made during the night.
2. Give a real date or meeting when the promised choice will happen. Avoid vague phrases such as "soon".
3. Thank the Squirrels for choosing and remind them that their ideas have changed the programme.

Record: Record the promise, date and who is responsible for making it happen.

Prep, record, close the loop

Before they arrive

- ✓ 2 activity pictures that you can genuinely run soon
- ✓ Stickers
- ✓ Ball for Quarter Ball
- ✓ Bricks/blocks labelled with camp features
- ✓ Large clock face or DAY / NIGHT layout
- ✓ Marbles and three labelled jars
- ✓ Paper/clipboard for an adult scribe

What to record

- ✓ Which arrival activity won
- ✓ New ideas shouted during Quarter Ball
- ✓ The three Basecamp favourites
- ✓ Daytime/night-time preference
- ✓ Star Jar result
- ✓ The choice you promised to deliver, and the date

Facilitation notes

- Keep every choice visible and concrete.
- Offer only options that are genuinely possible.
- Adults can scribe, but should not translate an answer into a different one.
- End by naming a decision they made and when they will see it happen.

End-of-night check

- ✓ Did young people make at least one genuine decision?
- ✓ Did somebody young lead part of the session?
- ✓ Have you named what happens next?
- ✓ Have you said when you will update them?

Keep it going next meeting

Two pictures, one sticker

Put two realistic activity photos on the wall at Squirrel height. Everyone gets one sticker; run the winner next week and say they chose it.

Name the chooser

When an activity came from a Squirrel, say so: "We are doing this because someone in the Drey asked for it."

Close the loop

YOU SAID

WE DID

WE COULD NOT YET

NEXT UPDATE

Use these four headings at the next meeting, on a noticeboard or in your parent/carers update. Showing what happened after young people spoke is what makes the next forum worth taking seriously.