

Helpful Hints for Den Leaders

The following are some hints that will help you better plan and execute your den meetings.

Plan Your Meetings in Advance

Plan your meetings ahead of time with emphasis on the flow of activities. Pay special attention to “After the Meeting” sections of den meeting plans for preparation and materials needed for the next meeting. Alternate between quiet and more vigorous activities. Boys have a lot of energy to expend, so be sure you have an active game or other activity to help channel some of that energy.

Den Rules and Code of Conduct

At the beginning of the year, establish the rules that the den will follow and the consequences for breaking those rules. Boys should participate in the decision making process. By helping decide what can and can't happen in the den, boys will feel a sense of responsibility toward how the den is run. They will feel that the den is “theirs.”

Have them sign a poster on which the code of conduct is written and display it at your meeting place. Or make two copies: one that boys can keep at home and one to be displayed at the den meeting after both the boy and his parent have signed it.

Ceremonies

Ceremonies are important for marking the beginning and end of each meeting. They are also a time for reinforcing the aims and purposes of Scouting and bringing the boys together. As boys finish achievements toward their badges, simple ceremonies during the den meeting will serve to congratulate them on their accomplishments.

Immediate Recognition Kits

Use of the immediate recognition kits for Tiger Cubs and Cub Scouts is a method of encouragement along the advancement trail. Set aside time in den meetings to award beads representing completion of achievements. Congratulate boys enthusiastically for their efforts.

A den doodle is an object for the boys to use to show off their accomplishments and achievements. The *Cub Scout Leader How-To Book* has many ideas for den doodles. Your den of boys can design and create their own den doodle as a den meeting activity at the start of the year. Use the den doodle to keep a visual reminder of activities the den has completed and shared.

Treats

Boys love goodies! Simple nutritious refreshments add a finishing touch. Give everyone a chance to share his favorite treats with the den. Discuss food allergies with families and share the information with the den if appropriate.

Den Scrapbook

Fill the scrapbook with sample artwork boys do as den activities, stories about their adventures, and pictures taken of boys with their completed projects. The den scrapbook will be a treasured memento proudly displayed at the boys' Eagle Scout court of honor in just a few years!

Your First Den Meeting

The tone you set at the first meeting will determine, to a large extent, the success of your year. Key to setting the right tone is to consider the following

- Wear your adult uniform to all meetings and remind boys to wear their uniforms.
- Be completely organized before the start of the meeting.
- Explain clearly to the boys the behavioral expectations. You may wish to use the “good conduct candle” approach (*Cub Scout Leader How-To Book*). Be friendly but firm with the boys.

Ask the host team (Tiger Cub and adult partner who will assist at the meeting, your parents helping and assistant den leader(s)) to arrive at least 15 minutes before the starting time of the meeting. They can help you with final preparations before the rest of the boys arrive.

A snack at den meetings is optional. Set the example with healthy, nutritious snacks. Be aware of any food allergies of den members and communicate these to adult partners who may be assisting with the snacks.

One best practice to facilitate communications and involvement is to distribute a family information letter at the conclusion of each meeting. The letter tells families what was completed at each meeting and provides information on upcoming den and pack meetings and activities.

Field trips are an important part of the Cub Scout experience. They are a time not only for fun but for learning. And they are critical steps in your boys earning their badge of rank. It is important that you plan in advance for these field trips. Planning should include the following, at a minimum, for each field trip:

- Arrange for the visit with the place you will be going (if needed).
- Work with the adult partners in the den to arrange transportation or get an adult to do the planning for this.
- A tour plan should be filed with the council service center. (MANDATORY)

A field trip as a first meeting over the summer can be a good way to break the ice for a new den.

You could, as a den, have an outing to complete **Elective 22: Picnic Fun**; **Elective 29: Safety in the Sun**; and **Elective 35: Fun Outdoors**. (See the *Tiger Cub Handbook*, No. 34713.) Have a den family picnic, use sunscreen, and play an outdoor game at the picnic. This is a great way for the Tiger Cub families to get to know one another. It is also an optimal time to recruit new Cub Scout adult volunteers.

Distribute the Family Talent Survey Sheet to the parents, asking them to complete it and return it to you at the next meeting. (The Family Talent Survey Sheet can be found in the New Scout Packet or online) The survey serves as a useful tool for you to identify family resources within your den.



Open each den meeting by saluting the U.S. flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Then, while showing the Cub Scout sign, recite the Cub Scout Promise and Law of the Pack. See *Cub Scout Ceremonies for Dens and Packs*, No. 33212, for detailed guidelines and ceremony examples.

Beyond the Basics

- Encourage the boys to earn the religious emblem of their faith. This emblem is both an important part of the boy's (and family's) faith journey, but is also considered a premier award within the Scouting community.
- Talk with your boys and their adult partners about earning the National Summertime Pack Award and the Cub Scout Outdoor Activity Award. These are important group awards that build a sense of team for your boys.
- Cub Scouting's Leave No Trace Awareness Award defines the standards of behavior for Scouts during outdoor activities.

Scouting Resources

There are many great resources available to our Den Leaders, some of them are print resources, while the others are available electronically.

Print resources include:

The Cub Scout Leader Book
The Cub Scout Leader How-To-Book
The Cub Scout Academics and Sports Guide
The Webelos Leader Guide
*The Cub Scout Den and Pack Meeting Resource Guide**
The Cub Scout Song Book
Group Meeting Sparklers
Trail and Campfire Stories

*Available for download at www.scouting.org

Electronic resources include:

www.scouting.org - This is the official website of the Boy Scouts of America. There are great electronic resources available to Den Leaders, Scouts, and parents. All of the most up-to-date information about the Scouting program can be found here.

www.padutchbsa.org - This is the official website of the Pennsylvania Dutch Council, BSA. Here you can find information and resources about local Scouting in Lancaster and Lebanon counties. You can find information about local camping opportunities, events, and download the most current calendar.

www.usscouts.org - This is a great resource where you can connect with Baloo's Bugle, clipart, advancement tracking sheets, activities, and general information about all the levels of the Scouting program.

www.cubmaster.org - This is an affiliate site with usscouts.org, but has a lot of great resources geared specifically for Cubmasters and for Den Leaders.

www.boyscouttrail.com - This site has resources gear towards both Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts. The Boy Scout resources can especially be helpful for those planning to take their Scouts camping or those responsible for a Webelos Den.

www.scoutingmagazine.org - Scouting magazine is a great resource that will be delivered to your house if you are a registered leader. This website includes some great ideas and information about upcoming news for the Scouting movement. It also features the blog BRYANONSCOUTING. This blog announces the most current information for the Scouting program.

www.scoutermom.com - This resource is geared for both adults and youth and is written by Scouters for Scouters. It includes information for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers.

www.insanescouter.org - Looking for an exciting activity or a new idea? InsaneScouter has a lot of great resources that you can use to add variety and more fun to your Den Meetings.

www.meritbadge.org - Though it has a lot of great information on Merit Badges, Cub Scout leaders will like the worksheets for belt loops. The worksheets help to keep track of each individual boy's progress as they work on various parts of the Cub Scout Academics and Sports program.

Face-to-Face Resources:

Roundtable - Roundtable is a monthly event that takes place in each of our Scouting Districts. Cub Scout leaders can attend and get new ideas, hear announcements about upcoming events, and share some of their best practices with other leaders.

Conestoga River - The first Thursday of each month at Lampeter United Methodist Church, 1651 Book Road, Lancaster, PA 17602 - 7:30pm
Horse-Shoe Trail - The first Thursday of each month at Cedar Crest Middle School, 101 East Evergreen Road, Lebanon, PA 17042 - 7:00pm
Harvest - The second Tuesday of each month at Mountville Church of the Brethren, 60 Clay Street, Mountville, PA 17554 - 7:00pm

Training - There are an assortment of training options for new Den Leaders. Each new registered member of the BSA must first complete Youth Protection Training. Youth Protection Training and all other core trainings can be completed either in person or online at <https://my.scouting.org>. In the Pennsylvania Dutch Council, a leader must complete full training for his or her position within the first 12 months after joining. To find out about local training opportunities you can talk to your local training volunteers:

Conestoga River - Beth Katz bethkatz@comcast.net
Horse-Shoe Trail - Sam Potter samuelpotter3@gmail.com
Harvest - Nikki Rohrback harvest.training@hotmail.com

Unit Commissioner - Each unit in the Pennsylvania Dutch Council has an experienced volunteer mentor known as a "commissioner" associated with their unit. This person may be a "Unit Commissioner" or may be part of a "District Commissioner" staff. To find out about your unit's commissioner you can contact your District Commissioner:

Conestoga River Ed Van Arsdale aevll@epix.net
Horse-Shoe Trail Mark Hartman troutbum@ptd.net
Harvest Mark Forth MForth6144@aol.com

Pledge of Allegiance

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America
and to the republic for which it stands,
one nation under God, indivisible,
with liberty and justice for all.

Cub Scout Promise

I, (name), promise to do my best
To do my duty to God and my country,
To help other people, and
To obey the Law of the Pack.