

Orientation for New Boy Scout Parents

Why Boy Scouting?



First, the Scout uniform shirt is a traditional Boy Scout item. Boy Scouts have been wearing Scout uniforms for nearly a hundred years. You do not see anyone but Scouts wearing Scout uniforms.

Second, each Scout shirt is a bit different. There is a standard starting place—a blank shirt that you can buy at any Scout shop—but then each boy's shirt starts to look different. There are different sizes, different patches. All Scout shirts have the same basic shape, but beyond that there is endless variety.

Third, Scout shirts are generally decorated on just one side—the outside, the part you show off.

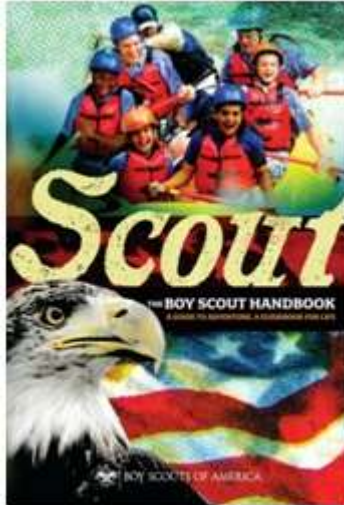
The Boy Scouting program itself is a lot like the Scout shirt.

First, it is a traditional program. Boy Scouts today enjoy many of the same activities that Boy Scouts enjoyed when Baden-Powell first created the program a century ago. There are many other things about Boy Scouting that have not changed much over time, including things like the Scout Law and the Scout Oath. The Scouting program has three aims or purposes that shape the program: character development, citizenship training, and physical and mental fitness.

Second, Boy Scouts and Scouting adults each have unique experiences. Everybody's time in Scouting is different. Also, just like patches, Boy Scouts and Scouting adults come in an almost endless variety of colors, shapes, personalities, skills, intelligence, and even political persuasions. However, they are all Boy Scouts, because they all strive toward those same three aims: character development, citizenship training, and physical and mental fitness.

Third, Boy Scouting is like a Scout shirt because it has a "showy" side and a plain side. The showy side of the program is what attracts boys—the fun and outdoor adventure. That is the fun stuff, the colorful stuff, the stuff you look at and point at and say, "That's cool—I want to do that." But the adults like us are concerned about the other side. On that other side, our eyes are not distracted by the colors and designs, by the showy stuff. We look at what the Scout shirt—the Boy Scouting program—is made of. We can feel the fabric. We see the three points clearly— character development, citizenship training, and physical and mental fitness. We are glad that the boys are drawn to the colorful stuff on the outside, but what really matters to us is on the inside.

What's In It for My Son?



This is the *Boy Scout Handbook*. In this book is pretty much everything your son will need to know to become a skilled Boy Scout. I encourage you to get a copy, if you do not already have one, and dip into it with your son. This book will tell you what Boy Scouting is really all about: hiking, camping, cooking, first aid, citizenship, nutrition, health, and fitness.

The Promise of Scouting

Taken from page 429 of the *Boy Scout Handbook*, "Welcome to the Boy Scouts of America."

Scouting promises you the great outdoors. As a Scout, you can learn how to camp and hike without leaving a trace and how to take care of the land. You will study wildlife up close and learn about nature all around you. There are plenty of skills for you to master, and you can teach others what you know. Everyone helping everyone else – that is part of Scouting, too.

Scouting promises you friendship. Members of the troop you join might be the boys you already know, and you will meet many other Scouts along the way. Some could become life long friends.

Scouting promises you opportunities to work towards the Eagle Scout rank. Scouts learn how to set positive goals for themselves and then follow clear routes to success.

Scouting promises you tools to do your best as a citizen, a student, and a member of your family. The good deeds you perform every day will improve the lives of those around you. You can prepare yourself to aid others in times of need.

Scouting promises you experience and duties that will help you mature into a strong, wise adult. The Scout Oath and the Scout Law can guide you while you are a Scout and throughout your life.

Adventure, learning, challenge, and responsibility – the promise of Scouting is all this and more. It is a doorway to adventure. It is a heritage of service and the development of character. Are you ready for the adventure to begin?

Our kids have an incredible number of activities they can pursue—all kinds of sports, music lessons, before-school activities, after-school activities, in-school activities, and they are great. However, none of them have, in one place, the fun and challenge that Scouting offers.

Our kids also have an incredible number of distractions—video games, cell phones, instant messaging, a hundred channels of mindless, tasteless television. We offer your son the chance to swap a few hours of that for a few hours of scouts.

What's In It for Me?

Have you ever asked yourself: "What would I like my son to grow up to be?" Maybe you think in terms of his career: a doctor, a big-league baseball player, a teacher, president of the United States. Maybe you think in terms of what you want him to have: lots of money, a nice wife and beautiful children, happiness. Those are all wonderful hopes for your sons. But have you ever thought about the kind of person you want him to be?

Imagine your son walking down the street 30 years from now. When people see him, they say things like: "There goes Andy—he's really been a good friend"; "There's James—you can always count on him"; "There's Bill—you'll never find a better man."

Please read the list of words below. Please determine if you would like a particular word to describe your son when he grows up:

- Trustworthy
- Loyal
- Helpful
- Friendly
- Courteous
- Kind
- Obedient
- Cheerful
- Thrifty
- Brave
- Clean
- Reverent

You have probably heard that list before. It is the Boy Scout Law. If you are asking yourself, "Why should we get involved with Boy Scouts?" think about what you would like your son to be when he grows up—and those 12 words.

The Boy Scouting Program

You may recall that the Scouting program has three aims or purposes: character development, citizenship training, and physical and mental fitness. What makes Boy Scouting unique is that it has eight methods it uses to achieve those aims. Those eight methods define Boy Scouting and show how it is different from other programs.

Ideals—The ideals of Boy Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout motto, and the Scout slogan. The Boy Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve.

Patrol Method—Patrols are small groups of Scouts who camp together, cook together, play together, and learn together. Patrols are where Scouts learn citizenship at the most basic level. They also take on responsibilities within the patrol, and learn teamwork and leadership. Patrols sort of look like Cub Scout dens, but there is one big difference: Patrols elect their own leaders, and through these patrol leaders, Scouts have a voice in deciding what activities the troop will put on its calendar. Patrols are one component of what we call youth-run, or youth-led, troop.

Outdoor Programs—Boy Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. We camp, we hike, we get dirty, and we get up close and personal with bugs and spiders. There is no way around it. Our program is largely built around outdoor activities. So, expect to have more laundry after a campout and to hear some interesting stories about wild things.

Advancement—Boy Scouting has a system of ranks in which Scouts learn progressively more difficult skills and take on progressively greater responsibilities. The highest of these ranks is Eagle Scout. Becoming an Eagle Scout is an important achievement that your son can be proud of his entire life. But turning out Eagle Scouts is not what the Boy Scouting program is all about. Advancement is probably the most visible of the Boy Scouting methods, and the easiest to understand, but it is only one of eight methods. We strongly encourage advancement, but we never

force it—advancement is the Scout's choice, and he sets his own pace. We do not do "lock-step" advancement. And many great Scouts, and great men, never became Eagle Scouts.

Associations with Adults—Boys learn a great deal by watching how adults conduct themselves. Scout leaders can be positive role models for the members of the troop. In many cases, a Scoutmaster, a merit badge counselor, or one of the troop parents who are willing to listen to boys, encourage them, and take a sincere interest in them can make a profound difference in their lives. Adult association is also part of what we call a youth-led troop. Adults understand that their role is to create a safe place where boys can learn and grow and explore and play and take on responsibilities—and fail, and get up and try again. If you were involved with Cub Scouting, this is a very different role that can take some time getting used to.

Personal Growth—as Boy Scouts plan their activities and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Boy Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. Probably no device is as successful in developing a basis for personal growth as the daily Good Turn. The religious emblems program also is a large part of the personal growth method. Frequent personal conferences with his Scoutmaster help each Boy Scout to determine his growth toward Scouting's aims.

Leadership Development—the Boy Scout program encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Boy Scout has the opportunity to lead in some way, whether as part of a team, or as the leader of his patrol or as the senior patrol leader of the troop. Leadership development is another component of the youth-led troop.

Uniform—like most sports teams, Boy Scouts wear a uniform. Like most sports teams, we expect our Scouts to wear the uniform when they are doing Scouting, and to wear it properly. It is a symbol of who we are and what we do.

Let us come back a moment to the youth-led concept of Boy Scouting. As I mentioned before, it is different than how Cub Scouting works, and it is different from the way a lot of youth activities are run, where the adults decide what to do and the youth do it. Boy Scouting is different, and it is sometimes difficult for adults to realize that we have a different role and a different goal. In Cub Scouting and in many other programs, our goal is to have fun activities and generate achievements. Our role is to make sure that the activities happen and that the achievements take place.

Boy Scouting is different. In Boy Scouting, the role of the boys is to have fun activities and generate achievements. The role of the adults is not the destination, but the journey. That is, our responsibility as adults is to promote the "process" of Scouting. What is important for us is

- Not the food on the campout, but that the boys cooked it.
- Not a sharp-looking flag ceremony, but that the boys put it together.
- Not who would make the best patrol leader, but that the boys elect one.
- Not that Johnny learns first aid, but that Billy teaches him.
- Not that we cover everything on the meeting agenda, but that the senior patrol leader is in charge.

Our goal is not to get things done, but to create a safe and healthy environment with the training and resources that the Scouts need, and then let them do it. It can be a very messy business, and painful to watch. Meetings where the boy leaders are in charge can be very chaotic. And it can be very tempting for adults to jump in and sort things out, because that is what adults do. But we have to remember that that is the process of Scouting. That is how they learn—even from disorganization and failure. We just have to remember that our business as adults is not the same as the business of the boys. It is up to them to get things done. It is up to us to make sure they have what they need, but (within the bounds of health and safety) not what they do with it.

Now, a word about Youth Protection; The Boy Scouts of America has had a very strong program in place for many years to protect our youth from abuse of all kinds. BSA requires all of our leaders to be trained in Youth Protection, and to refresh that training every two years. There are some rules we follow that you will hear about, such as two-deep leadership and no one-on-ones. That means that there should not be a situation where a Scout leader is alone with a single Scout. There are other rules and policies as well, and we encourage you to take the training and learn about Boy Scout Youth Protection.

What You Need to Know About Our Troop

Troop 894 strives to give our boys 10 months of camping, 1 week of summer camp & 1 lock in along with several other activities throughout the year. All forms and events are detailed on our Troop Website at troop894.org. We ask for permission slips and fees are paid 2 weeks prior to the event. This enables the adult leadership to secure the necessary BSA permits and arrange for food, housing, and transportation for the outing. This information is give to the Scout at least 3 weeks prior to the event but is does not always make it to the parent. We encourage you to check the website often.

As a troop we provide tents, cook gear, stoves, and lanterns. Each boy needs to provide his own sleep bag (appropriate for the weather), clothing, hygiene items, and any other personal items. The troop is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items and therefore discourages the bringing of electronic devices including TVs, Electronic Games, Cell Phones, Radios, I-pods, etc. on any and all scouting activities. Adult leaders will have phones on them in the event of an emergency.

What do I need to buy now? The wearing of the uniform is very important as explained before. However we do not ever want this to prevent a boy from participating in our program. We have few shirts that have been donated and the Crossroads Council in partnership with the Lilly Foundation has a uniform assistance program, please see the Scoutmaster for details of this program.

Uniforms can be purchased at the Scout Shop located at our council headquarters located at 7125 Fall Creek Road North or online at: scoutstuff.org.

The standard uniform consist of a short sleeve or long sleeve uniform shirt, switchback 2 n 1 official BSA pants, Official BSA socks, Scout belt & Buckle, council patch, troop # (894) and the world scout patch. If money is an issue start with a shirt and work down the list.

Scout Accounts – When a Scout joins the troop a personal no interest bearing savings account is opened with the troop funding account. We hold several fundraisers though out the year. These events allow each Scout to earn a profit from his sales which is directly deposited into his account. A scout may also chose to make deposits at Scout meetings to build up those funds. The funds in a Scout account and can be used to pay for uniforms, camp fees, camping equipment, training fees, just about any scouting item or event where funding is necessary.

The troop will provide a new scout with a handbook at the time of joining. Replacement of the book will be at the Scouts expense.

Scout Essentials – enclosed in this packet you will find a list of Scout Outdoor Essentials which we want each scout to have with him along with his handbook at Scouting events including meetings. These items can be carried in an old book bag. Please do not purchase a back pack with a frame for the younger Scouts. We have found this is difficult for them to carry and most young scouts are not developed enough for back packing.



Medical Forms – Also enclosed you will find a BSA medical form. Parts A and B are to be completed at least annually by participants in all Scouting events. These parts do NOT require an exam by a Doctor. Part C is the physical exam that is required for participants in any event that exceeds 72 consecutive hours, for all high-adventure base participants, or when the nature of the activity is strenuous and demanding. Part C is to be completed and signed by a certified and licensed health-care provider, or physician (MD or DO), nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.

Settling Into the Troop

You may be wondering—even a little nervous—about what your role is in Boy Scouting. Well, your first role in Scouting is simply to continue what you are doing: Be a parent, help your son succeed, be supportive, follow through. You are here because you see value in the Scouting program. Help that value come through. There will always be times when your son does not want to go to the weekly meeting or seems to be losing interest in advancing and doing his best in Scouting. That is when he needs a parent's encouragement. Scouting works best when the whole family is behind it.

And you are probably dreading the standard call for volunteers that you hear from school and every other organization you are associated with. Well, do not get me wrong — Scouting operates only because we have great volunteers. And yes, we hope that you will offer to help out the troop in some way. We have volunteer roles of every size and every type. Even if you only have a few minutes a month to help us out, we can use you.

Being a Scouting volunteer is not just another chore you take on because you have to. Here are some typical experiences of Scouting volunteers:

A Scouting volunteer's testimony:

"When I first got into Scouting, it was because of my son. I thought it would be a great program for him. What I didn't realize then was what a great program Scouting has been for me. I have met so many great people in Scouting and have made some great friends. It is something I wasn't looking for and didn't expect. I know I'll always be with friends at a Scout meeting or event."

"When I first got into Scouting, I expected to just drive my son to meetings and drop him off. I'm not an outdoor person. I work in an office all day. But when the committee chairman announced that they were looking for a new treasurer, I figured that would be a small way that I could contribute, so I put my hand up. Well, I was surprised to find that even my skills were needed by the troop. Everyone really appreciates what I do, and I've even started taking an interest in the outdoor stuff—I went on my first campout last month, and it was a blast!"

"With my job, I don't really have a lot of free time, and I don't have a regular schedule, so I can't really go to Scout meetings or on campouts. But they told me that as a merit badge counselor, I could meet with Scouts whenever it was convenient for me. This way I get a chance to share my woodworking hobby with these great boys, and can do it on my schedule."

"One of the things that surprised me, after I had been an assistant Scoutmaster for a year or so, was that I had starting applying things to my job that I learned in Scouting. The training for Scouting adults is excellent and has a lot of practical applications. It's a lot more than learning to tie knots."

"I don't have a lot of time I can contribute to the troop. But one thing I did sign up for is to be a troop committee member so I can sit on boards of review. Boards of review are like little job interviews, where adult committee members ask the Scouts about their experiences in the troop and what they have learned. It is so rewarding to have a real conversation with those boys."

Regardless of your skills or interests, there is something you share with all Scouting volunteers that makes your involvement priceless—your interest in having your son in the best possible Scouting program.

In this packet you will find a Troop Resource questioner, this form gives us a tool to locate those who have skill and resources we as a troop need. We encourage you to complete this form and turn it into a Adult leader.

The Hiking Stick



I would like to introduce you to an item that is a good friend to many hikers—the hiking stick. Hiking sticks come in many different styles, from the plain dead branch you just found in the woods to carved and decorated staffs to high-tech aluminum models with spring-loaded tips.

A good hiking stick can be a pretty handy thing to have with you when you are out walking in the country. Regardless of the type of stick or what they look like, they all do pretty much the same three things.

When you are going uphill, particularly if it is steep and rocky, the hiking stick can be a big help. You plant that stick in front of you, and you can use your arms to help pull you up the hill—you do not have to rely on just your legs.

When you are going downhill, particularly if it is steep and rocky, the hiking stick can really help you. You plant that stick in front of you, and it helps you keep your balance, takes a little of the weight off your knees, and gives you that little bit of extra support you need.

And when you are walking on the flat, well, the hiking stick is just a welcome companion on the trail.

Yep, many good Scouts have a hiking stick.

And just as a Scout should have a hiking stick to help support him on his journey; he must have adults who support him on his journey through Scouting.

When he is on his way up, advancing, taking in new experiences, facing new challenges, it is nice to have something sturdy he can grab onto to help pull himself up, and the encouragement of those who have gone before him to help him along.

When he is on a bit of a downhill, trying to keep his balance and stay upright, he needs that extra support and stability.

And when he has a smooth, flat trail in front of him, it is just nice to have a companion to talk to, or just to share the silence with.

One of the most rewarding things in my life is to be a "hiking stick" for Scouts, to be there when needed, not just for my own sons, but more often for other boys who need the help and friendship of an adult from time to time. We invite each of you to share that experience—whether you think of yourself as a shiny, spring-loaded model or an old dead branch, you have something to contribute.

Thank you for your time and welcome to our Scouting family. If at anytime you have a question or concern please feel free to contact:

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The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.scouting.org>