

Interest Topic: Joining Night

Cub Scout Roundtable			
Time Allotted	Activity	Assigned to	Content
30–40 minutes	General session for all participants	Cub Scout roundtable team	<p>Have the room set up as a mock Joining Night (see Resources section). Arrange in advance to have samples of council, district, and pack promotion fliers, etc., on hand. Before the meeting, set up an exhibit of these samples along with other recruiting ideas.</p> <p>Discuss the importance of having a Joining Night or other fall recruitment activity for every Cub Scout pack. Conduct an overview of the district's or council's Joining Night routine. Discuss how to recruit new Scouts to your pack.</p> <p>Review the Outline for School Talks in Resources, and allow time for unit volunteers to practice giving school talks if they're the people who will be giving them in the community.</p> <p>Share and discuss any roadblocks to successful recruiting and some possible solutions.</p> <p>Review the checklist for unit leaders (see Resources) and discuss their duties for Joining Night.</p>
10 minutes	Q&A	Cub Scout roundtable team	Opportunity to answer any additional questions.
5 minutes	Closing	Cub Scout roundtable commissioner	Present the Recipe for Cub Scouting closing (see Resources).

Takeaway: Pack leaders should know and understand what every unit needs to do for a successful recruiting season, including working with district and council volunteers and professional Scouters.

GENERAL SESSION

Introduction

We place a strong emphasis on fall recruiting when school starts, but our program allows a Scout to join at any time and begin the adventure right then. At their age, a lot of other activities don't allow that flexibility. So it's important that we educate everyone about year-round recruiting.

Cub Scout Fall Youth Recruiting Overview

We gain the majority of our new Scouts during the fall recruiting period. What do we want to accomplish during that time?

- Ensure that every youth receives an invitation to join Cub Scouting.
- Enroll prospective Cub Scouts into existing packs.
- Enlist parent participation as unit leaders and helpers.
- Organize new packs to serve youth in areas we are not currently serving.

Sample Recruiting Plan Overview

For recruiting to be successful, there are several things to think about:

- Your district may have a plan in place for where and when recruiting events occur. Your unit should work with the district executive to make these events happen.
- Each Cub Scout pack in your district may conduct its own recruitment event.
- Unit and district volunteers can work together to conduct the events using a recruitment packet.
- Ensure all new members learn at the recruiting event when their first meeting will be held (ideally within two weeks of their recruitment).
- Packs may want to schedule a time for orienting parents and recruiting adult leaders. This can be part of the first pack meeting of the school year or a separate meeting.
- Distribute fliers to every grade in every school to extend an invitation to all children. If each pack conducts its own recruitment event, make certain the correct fliers go to the children in each school.
- Provide information to religious organizations to extend an invitation to youth. Coordinate with the schools and religious organizations to avoid any confusion for families.

- Encourage chartered organizations to assist in the recruitment of youth for the units they sponsor.
- Provide simple resources for Scouts and their parents to promote their pack's program and the Joining Night event.
- Attend open houses and "meet the teacher" events at schools to provide Scouting information.
- Contact schools to arrange school talk visits in classrooms, lunch rooms, or playgrounds.

Sample Timeline for Cub Scout Recruitment Efforts

May

- Attend a district program kickoff meeting, where you may get some information to use in your promotional materials.

June

- Packs promote Scouting through local events (parades, festivals, etc.)
- Designate a unit membership/recruitment chair and new member coordinator(s).
- Hold a unit planning meeting.
- Schedule your pack's school talks and Joining Night for dates in September.

August

- Have your pack's entire recruitment team attend a district orientation/training for fall recruitment.
- Attend the August roundtable to learn any additional recruiting information or to get recruiting supplies.
- School talks and school open houses begin.
- Place yard signs and posters in high traffic sections of each community.
- Promote Scouting through local events (e.g., parades, festivals, service projects).
- Districts and packs send out news releases to local media outlets to promote recruiting events.
- Enlist parents to help by inviting families in their neighborhoods to the Joining Night.
- Confirm all pack recruiting and school talk dates.
- Deliver promotional posters to every school, place of worship, community center, library, etc., in the pack's recruiting area.
- Post the information via social media.

September

- Continue school visits and school talks by pack and district leaders.
- Distribute fliers to schools, places of worship, community centers, libraries, etc.
- Districts and packs send out more news releases to local media (see above) to promote joining events.
- Conduct a parent orientation meeting and recruit new leaders.
- Conduct Joining Night or other recruitment event.
- Preparations for Joining Night

Preparations for Joining Night

Display Table Checklist

- Pack poster with fee information
- Credit card reader or smart phone money transfer app
- Youth AND adult applications
- Boys' Life* mini-magazines
- Pack photos/albums
- Welcome to the adventures of Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA.
- Pinewood derby cars and trophies
- Handouts about the next meeting with a pack calendar
- Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear and Webelos handbooks

Room Layout

Have a table at the meeting room entrance and ask parents to sign in themselves and their child as they arrive. New Member Coordinators would be great volunteers to staff this table and provide a warm welcome. Hand out applications and direct parents to the registration table where unit volunteers will help them with filling out applications and be available to answer questions. Help parents find the youth activity table for their child.

Provide tables for various youth age groups. Separate tables Kindergarten members and 1st graders are helpful; 4th, 5th, and 6th graders can be grouped at one or more tables.

Age-appropriate activities for the Joining Night can be found in the handbooks for each Cub Scout rank. Examples include Tigers learning magic tricks, Wolves making paper airplanes, Bears playing a game of marbles, Webelos/Arrow of Light Scouts creating electrical circuits with lightbulbs and batteries. Other great activities can be taken from the STEM/NOVA information at <http://www.scouting.org/stem.aspx>.

The goal is to make registration quick and easy for everyone and to ensure parents leave with information on the next meeting date, time, and location, for the pack they are joining.

If online registration is available, use it.

Checklist for Unit Leaders

- Wear your uniform, or pack appropriate wear.
- All volunteers wear a name tag with "volunteer" under name.
- Make sure arrangements are in place for table displays.
- Make copies of your pack calendar for the year.
- Make copies of your pack information sheet (info about the first pack meeting, pack contacts, etc.)
- Communicate leadership needs to unit membership chair.
- Ensure participation from all leadership, including the new member coordinator.
- Have the pack checkbook on hand at the event.
- Arrive at the event site at least 30 minutes before registration will start.
- Set up the den/pack displays.
- Welcome guests as they arrive.

After the meeting:

- Clean up the room.
- Sign all youth and adult applications. Write one check to cover registration cost.
- Review youth applications for adult information that may suggest possible leaders to invite to the orientation.
- Print a copy of the attendance roster. Follow up with all unregistered youth on the roster, and all youth who expressed interest in Scouting.
- Be sure all information collected is submitted to the council.

Parent Orientation Meeting

Note: This meeting should be separate from the first pack meeting, as it is for new families only.

- Follow the suggested script for this meeting.
- Orient new parents, and recruit new leaders and helpers.
- Ensure the pack trainer (or designee) coordinates **Youth Protection** for all adults, and ideally New Leader and position specific training as quickly as possible.

October

- Conduct follow-up youth recruiting as needed.
- Follow up with parents who said they "might be able" to serve as new leaders.

RESOURCES

Outline for School Talks

Setting and timing—It is important that school talks happen class to class in small groups. Often a school principal will suggest that it would be easier to bring all the students together in the school and we talk to all of them at once. The reality is that the rally is less impactful way and it actually takes more time away from the classroom. The best method is for the school talk presenter to take the time to go classroom to classroom and spend no more than three minutes in each room. Since it would take a lot longer than a few minutes to put an assembly together, this method reduces non-instructional time. Coordinate with school personnel on the best time to meet each class of students. Some schools allow this to be done only at the end of recess or the lunch period. Get a map of the school so that you can easily find the classrooms.

Enthusiasm—This is the key ingredient, not the design of the flier or the sticker. Nothing can take the place of the level of enthusiasm displayed by the school talk presenter during the presentation. The presenter should practice the presentation prior to giving it.

Appearance—Look your best. Remember that you are the face of the BSA during this presentation. Wearing a Scout uniform may be appealing to younger children. If your school talk is for older students, the uniform may not be appealing, but a Scout T-shirt may be. Look like you're ready for fun and adventure. A good-looking day bag or a backpack that contains fliers, stickers and props is ideal. Fliers should include the date, time, and location of the open house, joining night, or parent meeting, along with contact information for the local pack. Stickers can show the date and time and words, "I want to be a Scout." Fun props might include a pinewood derby car or a bug sucker. If your council gives a premium item upon joining (rocket, fishing pole, coupon for a free movie, etc.), bring an sample of that. Also bring a thank you card for each teacher.

Announcements—See if you can be included in the school news, paper or electronic. An announcement about your presence at the school will ensure the teachers know you are coming.

The Element of a Good Talk

Start by entering the room and saying, "Hi! Is now a good time to talk to the class about Scouts?" Be prepared in case a teacher says, "Not now." Ask when you can come back

and mark the classroom on your school map to make a note of when to return. Once you have permission to enter, get your fliers ready.

Ask the teacher if there is a class helper for the day. This will reinforce any current class structure and avoid disappointing a child who looks forward to serving as the class helper and/or you picking someone the teacher doesn't want.

If the teacher does not have a helper for the day, pick someone at random. Do not ask if someone wants to help; it will cause disruption and waste time. Once you have identified a student to help, hand the fliers to that student. Avoid giving the teacher the opportunity to take the fliers and hand them out later. This often never happens, and the fliers don't go home.

As the fliers are being handed out, start your presentation: **Element One: The Introduction**—BIG, LOUD, and full of ENERGY! Introduce yourself by name, and tell them you are with the BSA, "Hi, everyone, my name is Anthony and I am with the BSA. I am here to invite you and your parents to a very special night."

Element Two: Time, Date, and Location—Repeat, repeat, repeat. "Thursday night in the cafeteria at 7:00 is going to be your chance to join the Cub Scouts! The cool thing about Cub Scouts is that we have a special club just for you second graders. It's called Wolf Scouts! Who here can howl like a wolf?"

Element Three: Responses—Children at this age take direction well when it's presented at the beginning. To avoid yelling, cheering, and too much disruption, inform the class how you want them to respond to your questions. "So what do Wolf Scouts do? Let me ask you what you like to do. Raise your hand if you like to ..."

Element Four: Program and Activities—This is where you should have a list of activities and events that are specific to the pack, district, and council and that are fun and exciting. Use animated hand movements whenever possible, but the tone you use and the energy level need to be high. Try elevating it with each new activity. "... Go camping?... Shoot bows and arrows? ... Build a campfire and roast marshmallows? Raise your hand if you like to build things. ... Raise your hand if you would like to build a car just like this one." This is where you would pull out the pinewood derby car out from your bag like a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat.

"In Cub Scouts you will get a chance to design and build your own car just like this one. Everyone gets together and we race them down a track to see who has the fastest car. Who thinks they can build the fastest car in the school?"

"Raise your hand if you would like to build your own rocket, just like this one!" This is where you would pull out your rocket.

"If you join Cub Scouts Thursday night in the cafeteria at 7 o'clock, we're going to give you your own free rocket to build, and then we are going to launch those rockets at our next campout!"

Stick to about five things to highlight in total—too much of this, and the group loses interest.

Element Five: Date, Time, Location—Repeat!

Element Six: The Flier Needs to Go Home Tonight—

Some will do this as a game and ask the kids to fold up the flier and put it in their pocket. The key is to make sure the students know that the flier has all the information parents need to know to sign them up so it is important that they get it. My favorite is to say, "Everyone has their flier. On the front of the flier is the cool stuff you get to do in Scouts, but on the back of the flier is all the information that a parent needs to know to sign you up so it is important that when you get home tonight that you show it to them. So, when you get home (start talking really fast) I want you to show this to everyone; your mom, your dad, your grandparents, your brother, your sister, your aunt, your uncle, your dog, your cat, your pet goldfish!" This usually gets a good laugh.

Element Seven: Date, Time and Location (Stickers)—

Repeat! Get your stickers out and get ready to walk the room. Gather your pinewood derby car and rocket. As you are talking, you are putting things away and getting your stickers out. Work your way from the front to the back toward the door.

"So remember Thursday night. What time? Where? Great! Now if you want to join Cub Scouts, stand up next to your desk and I have a special sticker for you that will help remind you and your parents about the meeting. Once I give you your sticker, sit down so I know that you got yours." Walk around quickly and hand the stickers to those standing up. Only give stickers to those students who are standing. By them standing, they are giving you permission to give the sticker to them. When you are done, all the students are at their desks ready for the teacher.

Element Eight: Thank You—The best situation is to have handwritten thank you notes that you give the teacher as you leave. Teachers can be very helpful to remind everyone on Thursday about the meeting. Be careful not to get the class too crazy, as you don't want it to be a challenge for the teacher to regain control. You want to be welcomed back next year.