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## JOIN NIGHT LEADER GUIDE

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## PARENT ORIENTATION GUIDE

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Recruitment resources may be found at [www.crossroadsbsa.org/resources/recruitment](http://www.crossroadsbsa.org/resources/recruitment)
MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA VISION

The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.

PROMISE TO PARENTS

Scouting in the Boy Scouts of America offers family fun and adventurous things to do! This fun and adventure will help youth develop leadership skills and values important to good citizenship and service to others.

JOIN NIGHT INFORMATION

Your pack’s Join Night event has two goals:

1. REGISTER THE YOUTH WHO HAVE BEEN RECRUITED THROUGH CUB TALKS, OPEN HOUSES, FRIENDS, ETC.

2. MAKE SURE PARENTS HAVE INFORMATION FOR THE UPCOMING EVENTS, ESPECIALLY THE NEW PARENT ORIENTATION MEETING.

A well-planned, organized event will help ensure the long-term success of your pack. Join Night events in the fall are the largest youth recruiting drive by the council during the year. They are conducted in the fall to correlate with the start of school. It is best to hold the event within a few weeks of school starting. This helps get families introduced to Scouting before they commit to other activities.
As a pack, plan three recruiting event dates for the fall.

As a council, the goal is for every pack to have a Join Night for Scouting between August 1st and August 31st. This date will be selected for a school district by the district membership chair. Be sure to work with your district executive to determine your date.

The second Join Night can be at a pack meeting or activity in September. This gives families that missed the earlier date the opportunity to join.

The third could be a meeting in October. Remember, youth can join Scouts at any time during the year so never let a youth miss an opportunity to learn about Scouting programs.

Join Night is an exciting time. This is the first impression families get of your pack and the Cub Scout program. It is critical to make a great impression for new families to get involved and join Scouts. By using this guide, and working with your district executive, your pack will have a successful recruitment.

Every pack is prepared to receive new youth when the leaders have:

- A program calendar and budget for the next year with input from youth and families.
- A unit fundraising plan in place to keep costs low.
- A well-planned Join Night meeting that promotes the benefits of Scouting.
- A succession plan to determine the leadership positions that need to be filled and a plan for recruiting parents to fill those vacancies.
- A plan to contact each of the families after the Join Night to remind them about the New Parent Orientation meeting.
- Scheduled den and pack meetings starting immediately.
- A plan to follow-up with families of youth who did not attend the first meeting.
- A fun outdoor activity within 30 days of joining.
- A strong relationship with the pack’s school, based on service projects like Adopt-a-School, is important.

This guide will help packs be prepared for a successful fall recruitment by giving step-by-step advice on how to attract and welcome new families into the Scouting adventure.
MAY
• Pack recruits a Join Night Chair who will work with your district executive (DE) on developing your pack’s customized 12-step membership plan. District executives will meet with each pack to help complete a customized membership plan (meetings occur between April and June).
• Pack leaders attend District Roundtable to receive information and training on Join Night recruitment plans.

JUNE – JULY
• Pack leaders hold their pack planning conference to plan the 2020-2021 Ideal Year of Scouting calendar and annual budget by July. Please upload a copy of your calendar and budget at www.crossroadsbsa.org/IYOS in advance of your membership rally.
• Pack leaders attend their District Membership Rally (date TBA by district) in July to pick up yard signs, sign-up materials and slime kits.
• The pack and district leadership confirm date of school open house / back-to-school / ice cream social with the school’s principal.
• Packs have an information table at school open house / back-to-school / ice cream social and meet the teacher nights to collect leads and get youth and their parents excited about joining Scouting (July or August).

AUGUST
• Yard signs placed in high traffic areas in each community.
• Pack leaders attend August District Roundtable to secure additional materials.
• Join Night event within four weeks of the beginning of school, 6:30 to 8:00PM.
• Packs conduct New Parent Orientation meeting within two weeks of the Join Night.

SEPTEMBER
• Packs conduct New Parent Orientation meeting and Unit Popcorn Kickoff (if not completed in August).
• Den meetings start.
• Second chance joining opportunity at packs’ September meeting. Since fewer youth will attend, this can be done 30 minutes prior to the pack meeting or as part of the pack meeting. Target recruitment for dens with fewer than eight youth. All Lion and Tiger Dens should have five or more youth.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
• Exciting Outdoor program – one example is “Cub Fun Days” coordinated at Council Camps – should be planned for either September or October.
• A third opportunity to join should be planned in October, which could coincide with the unit’s outdoor event.
What to bring to your Join Night event:

- Supply box of materials
- Supplies and mixing directions for making slime
- Volunteers (recruit leaders, parents and the local Scout troop to help at your joining event)
- Treasurer with pack checkbook
- Handbook for each level (see your district executive if you need assistance)
- Display board with pictures from your pack’s events (adventures, pinewood derbies, etc.)
- Uniform examples (Scout shirt, pack t-shirt)
- Pack calendar with leader contact information
- Joining cost information for new parents
- Enthusiasm and fun!

Across Central Indiana, packs are holding come-and-go or “open house” style events, which are strictly sign-up events. These are designed to be fast for today’s busy parents and the key to making them successful is pre-planning.

The following is an outline of how to execute this type of event. This model features four stations that give parents information about Cub Scouting, get them signed up and provide everything they need to know, including when the first meeting is, who the leaders are and more.

**STATIONS**

The following is an outline of what happens at each station. Depending upon anticipated size of turnout and available volunteers, packs may combine stations as needed.

**KEY**

- Included in recruitment box
- Provided by pack
**STATION #1: WELCOME**

This is the first spot potential Cub Scouts and their parents will stop. Here they sign in while the greeter provides a brief overview of the process. This is a great station for your pack’s New Member Coordinator.

- Greet every family that comes to your station and ask them to sign-in.
- Provide them with the BSA Youth Application.
- Tell each family that there are four stations that they will visit to complete the sign-up process and that it will take approximately 20-30 minutes.
- Have volunteers ask youth if they would like to go make some slime and escort them to station four.

**Materials:**

- Station #1 sign
- BSA Youth and Adult Applications
- Name tags and markers
- Parent Attendance Roster
- Pens

**STATION #2: WHAT WE DO AND LEADER Q&A**

This is where you will share the excitement of Cub Scouting and your pack activities in a conversation with the interested family—consider speaking to several families at once. Talk about what makes your pack special. Include a pack display board with pictures. Leaders at this station should make sure parents know where the first meeting is and answer any questions parents may have.

- Try to have as many den leaders and assistant den leaders on hand to talk about their dens and give families a chance to get to know them.
- Answer questions about the type of activities their child will be doing.

**Materials:**

- Station #2 sign
- Den Fact Sheets
- Pack fact sheet that includes calendar listing meetings and major events, leader contact information and cost to join
- Parent Information Trifold Display Board
- Scout Shop Guide to the Uniform

**STATION #3: REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT**

This is the sign-up station where parents complete the application and make a payment.

- Have extra BSA Youth and Adult Applications, Family Talent Surveys and pens.
- Be prepared to answer questions about pack fee payment plans and/or financial assistance options. In addition to any assistance your pack may provide, the council offers need-based assistance programs to partially cover registration, uniform and summer camp expenses. Contact your district executive for more information.
- All parents should complete and turn-in a BSA Youth Application for their child, even if the parent is unsure of joining.
• Make sure the BSA Applications and Family Talent Surveys are properly completed.
• Collect fees for BSA registration and *Boys’ Life* subscription.
  – August 2020 through December 2020
    - Registration Fees: $27.50
    - New Scout Fee: $25.00
    - Insurance Coverage (required): $5.00
    - *Boys’ Life* Magazine Subscription (optional): $5.00
    - **Minimum Total: $57.50**
  – Forms and payments should be collected, signed by the Cubmaster, and put in the Cub Scout Recruitment Report envelope
• Hand out New Family Orientation Guides

**Materials:**
- ✓ Station #3 sign
- ✓ BSA Application sample with required information
- ✓ BSA Youth and Adult Applications
- ✗ Calculator
- ✓ Cub Scout Recruitment Report envelope for applications and fees
- ✓ Family Talent Surveys
- ✓ New Family Orientation Guides
- ✗ Pens
- ✓ Registration Table Sign with fee information
- ✓ Square Reader to accept payment by credit card (This is encouraged; various options available for accepting cards)

**STATION #4: SLIME PARTY**

This is where all the children at the Join Night event can make slime. Each pack will receive a slime kit. This is a great place to have your Scouts BSA troop help.

**Materials:**
- ✓ Station #4 sign
- ✓ Slime building kits

**Note:** Make sure that each station sign is clearly visible to help ensure things go as smoothly as possible! Also included in your Join Night box are meeting room signs.
THINGS TO AVOID
- Arriving late
- Starting late
- Poorly lit parking area
- Poor signage at entrances
- Locked, unattended doors
- Uninviting rooms
- PowerPoint presentations or presentation of any kind
- Overwhelming new families with information
- Kicking off your popcorn fundraiser that night
- Recruiting new leaders that night
- Sending families home to apply online later
- Sending families home with applications to submit at a later meeting
- Not following up with families after your Join Night
- Not having an outdoor event within 30 days of your Join Night

ONLINE PRESENCE

SOCIAL MEDIA
Our most important marketers are parents, who interact with potential parents everyday through social media.

The BSA Social Media Playbook, found at www.scoutingwire.org/social-media-guidelines, will be your guide as you seek to use social media to communicate, recruit, retain and inspire those in your community. The best place to find social media collateral to share on your pages is through the BSA Brand Center at scouting.webdamdb.com.

BEASCOUT.ORG

Beascout.org is a resource from the National Council that allows potential families to search zip codes and find local units. It’s imperative that packs update their beascout.org pin to reflect the most accurate information about their unit. Packs can customize their pin so it shows the best contact information for the pack, a pack’s website, and even a short description about what makes your pack unique. You can also use beascout.org to receive online applications.

To update your unit’s pin and manage your online application settings, you must be a member of the pack’s key-3 (cubmaster, committee chair, or chartered organization representative).

From your my.scouting.org page, click “Menu” then “Organization Manager”. From here, you will be able to click “Unit Pin” to update your unit’s pin (e.g. contact information, website, etc.). Under “Settings” you can configure online applications and mark whether your unit is boy only, girl only, or full family.
WHAT TO DO

**Before the Meeting:** Prepare a separate activity for parents AND Scouts. You will need your new parents’ undivided attention, so make sure to hold the orientation in a space where you can separate into two large groups – one for new parents and one for new Scouts.

**For the New Scouts:** A common activity for new Scouts while their parents are in orientation is to create a “Bobcat Trail”. Split the portions of the Bobcat badge into separate stations, and choose a den leader to lead each station. New Scouts then rotate through each station. By the end of the night, they have completed their Bobcat rank, with the exception of the parent portion about protecting your child from child abuse.

BE PREPARED

Show up with the following:

- Document that explains the cost for the uniform
- Family Talent Surveys
- Pack calendar
- Popcorn information (optional – you will go into more detail at the Popcorn Kickoff)
- Rank books for new Scouts (if your pack provides them)
- Sign-in sheet, BSA Youth and Adult Applications, and pens (you will always have some that haven’t yet registered)

SUGGESTED TIMELINE

**6:00PM** Arrive early, make sure the room is set up, and there is a welcome / sign-in table for new parents to pick up materials.

**6:30PM** Start time. Have a gathering activity as new families arrive and check-in.

**6:35PM** Open with the Scout Oath and Law. Have some Scouts prepared ahead of time to lead this portion in uniform.
6:40PM  Split the parents and new Scouts into groups. Have the new Scouts follow their den leader outside for the Bobcat Trail and begin the New Parent Orientation meeting for the new parents.

7:15PM  Bring the new Scouts and the Den Leaders back. Give the families a chance to sit together by den, and introduce the Den Leaders.

7:20PM  Adjourn. Allow for time to mix and mingle.

DO’S AND DON’TS

**DO:** Have an opening with all families together that includes the Pledge of Allegiance and Scout Oath and Law. You may want to include a brief fun activity for the whole family, like a camp song, before you break out into groups.

**DO:** Sell the magic and excitement of Scouting. Tell personal stories about the benefits for your family. Hype upcoming events, such as a fall campout. Explain what makes your pack special.

**DO:** Explain the way a Scouting year works. The easiest way is often to take the parents through the building blocks of the pack’s calendar: What is a den meeting and how frequent are they? What is a pack meeting and how frequent are they? What major events should we keep an eye on throughout the year (i.e. Pinewood Derby, Blue and Gold Banquet, pack campouts, Summer Camp, etc.)?

**DO:** Introduce the way advancement works and give a brief orientation to the Scouts’ books. Discuss the Scouting App.

**DO:** Explain what the pack charges and everything that covers. Explain to parents how to purchase the uniform and the associated costs.

**DO:** Briefly explain the Popcorn fundraiser – that it is the one and only fundraiser for the pack and pays for all the adventure they will have all year.

**DO:** Set expectations for family members. Explain that Scouting is a full family event, and that while parents are required to attend den meetings for Lions and Tigers, they will enjoy being at meetings regardless of their child’s rank. Explain that Scouting, unlike sports, is an activity that parents do alongside their children. If you are missing any volunteer positions – briefly explain what they are and what is needed.

**DO:** Have a plan for all your dens for the first month, even if you don’t have all your den leaders. Your plan should never be, “We’ll recruit a new leader and let them decide what to do.” Make a plan so that you can give yourself time to ease a new leader into his or her position.

**DO:** Discuss how the pack communicates and where it stores information. Is it on Facebook? Is it through Scoutbook? Is it through Band or some other communication app? The method does not matter, just make sure it’s clear for parents, and they understand how to sign up for it if they need to opt in.

**DO:** Allow time for questions and answers.

**DO:** AFTER the orientation, introduce your den leaders, who may have been in separate area leading the Bobcat Trail.

**DO:** Provide a few minutes at the end for parents in a particular den to get to know each other and their den leader.

**DON’T:** Try and recruit new leaders that night. This will typically turn off new parents. If you have needs, explain them briefly. Let the parents see how much fun their Scout is having before striving to recruit them into leadership roles.

**DON’T:** Try and explain everything about the Popcorn fundraiser. You should have a SEPARATE meeting to explain that, the Popcorn kickoff.

**DON’T:** Overwhelm parents with all the information they could ever need. They don’t need to hear about Wood Badge the very first night. Give them what they need to get started.

**DON’T:** Be negative. Every pack has their challenges but now is the time to focus on your strengths!