BASIC LEADER TRAINING
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Boy Scout Leader

Fast Start Viewer Guide

B E P R E P A R E D



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

A Program With a Purpose

For nearly a century, the Boy Scouts of America has been dedicated to developing character; instilling duty to God, citizenship, and patriotism; and promoting physical, mental, and moral fitness in the youth of the United States. By learning new skills and forming lasting friendships through the BSA program, generations of Boy Scouts have grown up to become some of our nation's most outstanding leaders.



As new Scout leaders and parents, you are joining our Scouting family, and we want you to understand how the program works. This guide and the accompanying video will help explain. These materials were created as Fast Start training—a quick orientation to get you ready for your first Boy Scout meeting. Welecome to Scouting!

An Overview of Scouting

Delivering the promise of Scouting doesn't happen by chance. Scouts are organized into patrols—grouped by age and skill level—and they meet periodically as a troop to further their experience in the Scouting program. The Boy Scout troop is structured so that it is led by the youth members themselves, with guidance from adult leaders behind the scenes. As a Scout develops the necessary skills through participation in weekly meetings and outdoor experiences, he moves up the ranks in troop leadership.

To help meet our promise of fun and adventure for Scouts while achieving Scouting's aim of encouraging character growth, moral development, citizenship, and mental and physical fitness, eight fundamental methods are used to deliver the program:

- The ideals
- The patrol method
- The outdoors
- Advancement
- Association with adults
- Personal growth
- Leadership development
- The uniform

The Scout troop functions best when all eight methods are employed.

What's Covered in the Video and Guide



The first thing a new leader or parent should know is that there is an abundance of help and resources out there to give you further information on anything you need. This tape and guide will give you the basics to get started as a leader in Scouting. They will cover the following topics:

- The seven parts of a troop meeting
- Conducting an outdoor program
- How the troop committee relates to the troop

Each section will be accompanied by a list of further training and resources—your next step in guiding today's youth to become tomorrow's leaders.



The Troop Meeting

New Scoutmasters need not worry about planning and conducting troop meetings—they have plenty of help from the troop committee, the assistant Scoutmaster, and the boys themselves. The process begins each year with the annual program planning conference and continues monthly at patrol leaders' council meetings.



The three volumes of *Troop Program Features* contain easy-to-follow outlines that will ensure every meeting is complete. Each of the seven parts of the troop meeting is assigned as a task to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly and is fun and meaningful for the Scouts. The seven parts of the troop meeting include:

- Preopening
- Opening ceremony
- Skills instruction
- Patrol meetings
- Interpatrol activity
- Closing
- After the meeting

PREOPENING

The preopening activity is designed to keep the Scouts together and occupied while everyone arrives. It is usually a game or organized activity, and it could be held indoors or outdoors.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony brings the troop together for the formal start of the meeting. The senior patrol leader presides over the meeting, leading the troop members in the Scout Oath to help remind them of their promise to live by a specific life code. The Oath—as well as the full Scout uniform and the patrol method of operation—are reminders to the youth and adult leaders alike that they set the example for the rest of the troop.

The Patrol Method

Remember that Scouting is a boy-led program. The adults work with the youth leaders to provide guidance and advice. The very essence of Scouting is to train boys to be leaders.

For troop meetings and other activities, the boys are divided into patrols—groups of six to eight boys each. Each patrol elects its leader, who serves on the patrol leaders' council. Through the patrol method, boys learn to delegate responsibility and the importance of teamwork. Patrols give the boys a purpose and allow each boy to play an important part in the troop function.

Each patrol has its own identity, including a patrol name, a patrol yell, and a patrol flag that are all unique to that group. Having a patrol identity helps form a strong bond among patrol members.

SKILLS INSTRUCTION

Scout skills are an integral part of the Boy Scout advancement process. The Scouts learn the basics skills in an organized setting like the troop meeting, and then they are able to apply their skills in the outdoors—perhaps on a troop campout. Not all Scouts will be at the same skills level at any given time, so the troop might need an instructor to teach basic skills to new Scouts—knot tying, for example—and others to teach older Scouts more advanced skills—lashing or climbing, for example.



Skills Instruction Methodology

All skills instruction should follow the same methodology: First, the instructor demonstrates the skill to the Scout. Then, each participant has a chance to try the skill himself. Mastery comes with practice!

PATROL MEETINGS

After skills instruction, the Scouts break into their patrols. The patrols are where the real work is done during the troop meetings—the members plan and prepare for their roles in upcoming troop activities, pay their dues, and take care of other administrative tasks within their patrols.



The Senior Patrol Leader

The senior patrol leader is elected by the members of the troop to serve a six- to 12-month term. While in the position, the senior patrol leader presides over troop meetings and patrol leaders' council meetings and is responsible for planning troop meetings and activities, mentoring less-experienced Scouts, and leading the troop members under the guidance of the Scoutmaster.

INTERPATROL ACTIVITY

The interpatrol activity is a short game or skills competition between the patrols. The goal is to help reinforce the Scout skills they have learned. It also teaches the patrol members how to work together as a team.



CLOSING

The Scoutmaster's Minute is the highlight of the closing. The Scoutmaster addresses the troop, imparting a bit of wisdom to motivate the Scouts until the next meeting. Don't worry; there's help here, too. A variety of Scoutmaster's Minutes can be found in *Troop Program Resources.* After the Scoutmaster's Minute and any last-minute announcements, the troop members are dismissed.



AFTER THE MEETING

The weekly meeting is an important tool to the troop. After the Scouts have been dismissed, the Scoutmaster, senior patrol leader, patrol leaders, and assistant Scoutmasters come together to discuss what went well, what did not, and what plans need to be in place for the next meeting.



FURTHER TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Taking adult training to the next level enhances youth interaction and makes leading a group of Scouts even easier. New adult leaders and interested parents are provided formal training on the roles of the Scoutmaster and other adult and youth leaders in the following courses:

- New Leader Essentials
- Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training
- Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills



Printed resources that will help new leaders plan troop meetings and better understand each player's role include:

- *Scouting* magazine
- *Troop Program Resources,* No. 33588
- *Patrol Leader Handbook,* No. 32502A
- *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook,* No. 32501A
- *The Scoutmaster Handbook,* No. 33009A
- *Troop Program Features, Volumes I, II, and III;* Nos. 33110, 33111, and 33112



The Outdoor Program

Boys are attracted to Scouting by the fun and adventure if offers. Both are centered in the outdoor program, which focuses on exciting outdoor activities like camping and hiking, studying nature and watching wildlife. Scouts learn to Leave No Trace and to care for their environment, and they master new skills while exploring the outdoors. At the same time they are demonstrating the impact of the outdoor program and the value of their Scouting experience by demonstrating leadership and teamwork.

Scouting promises boys adventures in the great outdoors. The outdoor program allows Scouts to grow closer to nature while providing an opportunity to better understand their spirituality and to develop a deep appreciation for our country.

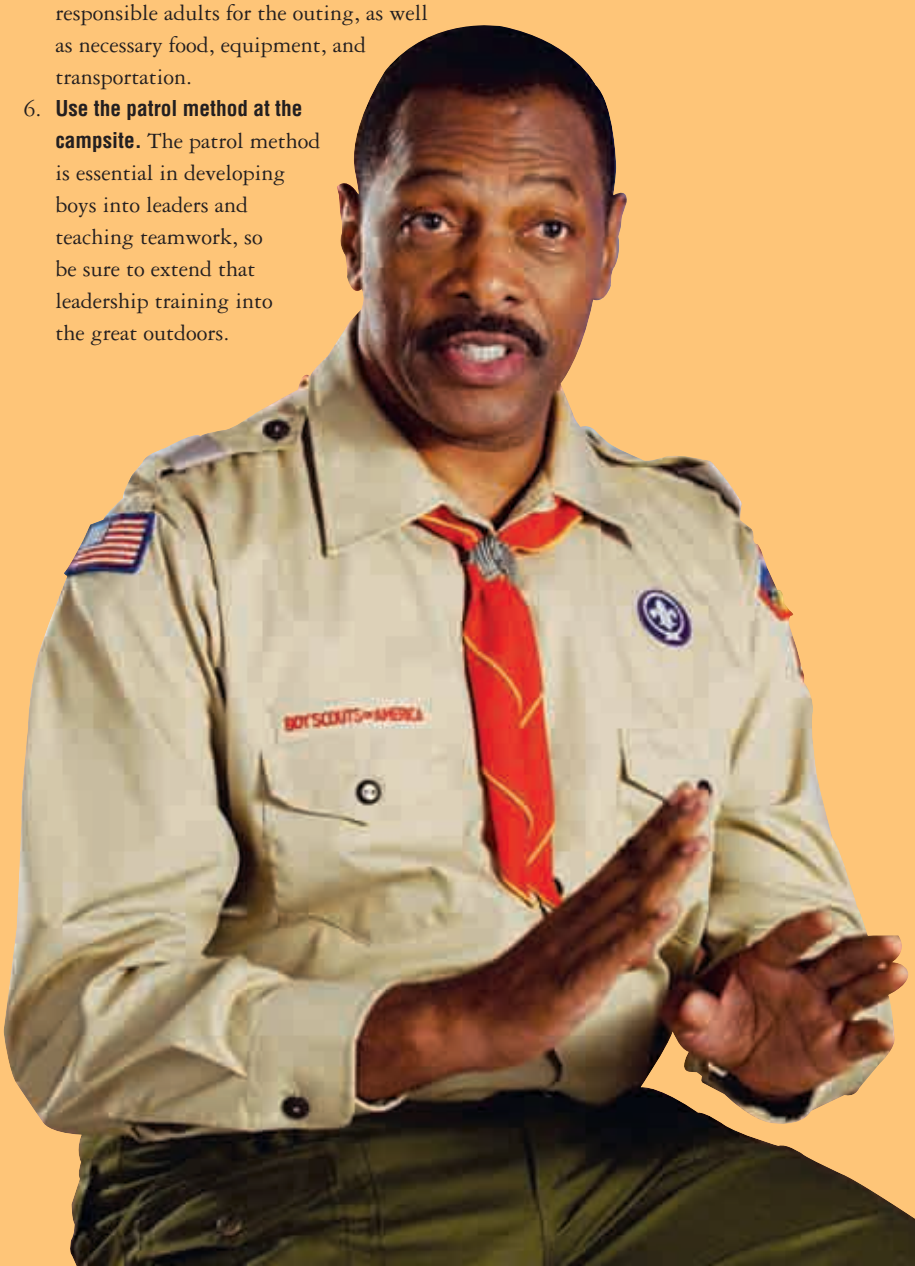
Outdoor activities for Scouts can include high-adventure challenges like rafting and climbing in a national park or even sleeping under the stars in their own backyard. No matter what the venue, a well-planned outing can be a fantastic Scouting experience.

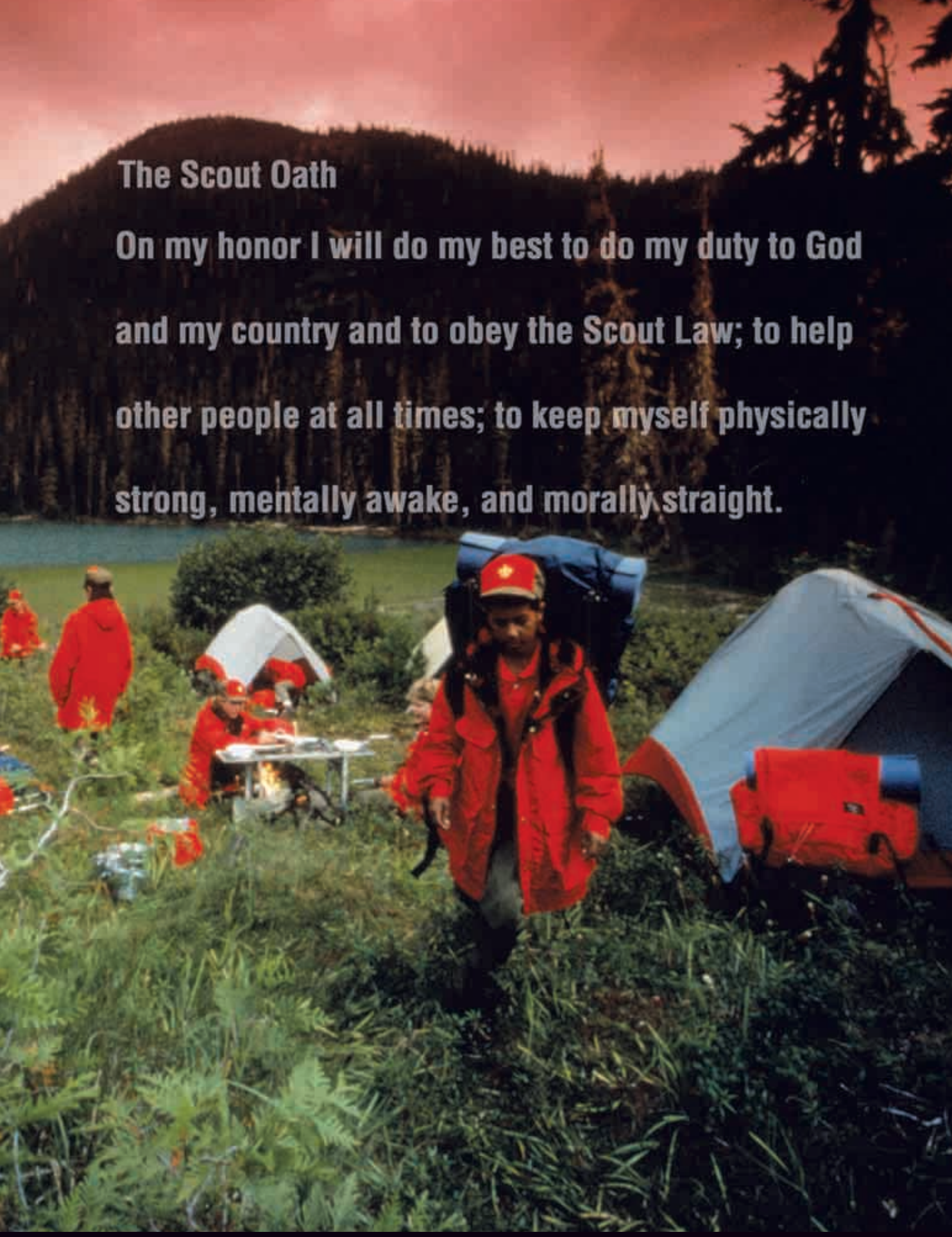


SIX STEPS TO OUTDOOR ACTIVITY PLANNING

A great outdoor program doesn't just happen. The following six specific steps will help a troop plan a safe and exciting trip.

1. **Establish a purpose for the outing.** Decide your objective for the trip, whether it is building knowledge, completing advancement requirements, or using newly learned skills.
2. **Select a site.** Determine the exact spot for your outing, even if it's close to home, and make the necessary arrangements to camp there.
3. **Build a program of activities.** Plan a schedule that will keep the Scouts engaged and enable them to meet their goals for the trip.
4. **Provide two-deep leadership.** Safety is always the top priority in Scouting. Two or more adults are required for every activity.
5. **Take care of physical arrangements.** Complete a troop program plan, listing the dates and responsible adults for the outing, as well as necessary food, equipment, and transportation.
6. **Use the patrol method at the campsite.** The patrol method is essential in developing boys into leaders and teaching teamwork, so be sure to extend that leadership training into the great outdoors.





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FURTHER TRAINING AND RESOURCES

New adult leaders can learn more about how to conduct Scouting's outdoor program by taking the next step in the BSA training continuum: Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills. This course is designed specifically to prepare adult leaders with basic outdoor camping skills to enable Scouts to experience the full value of their camping experiences.

The following printed materials will help you plan a safe and effective outdoor adventure:

- *The Scoutmaster Handbook,* No. 33009A
- *The Boy Scout Handbook,* No. 33105
- *Fieldbook,* No. 33200
- *Troop Program Features, Volumes I, II, and III;* Nos. 33110, 33111, and 33112
- *Troop Program Resources,* No. 33588
- *Guide to Safe Scouting,* No. 34416C
- *Scouting* magazine



The Troop Committee

There is more to Scouting than the Scoutmasters and the youth members. Adult volunteers play a pivotal role in the troop's operation. The assembly of adult volunteers that support a Scout troop is called the troop committee; it handles all the paperwork and the business end of troop operation. Its role is vital to enabling the Scoutmaster to spend his or her time where it has the greatest impact: working directly with the youth. The troop committee is formed from the following people:

- **Troop committee chair.** Responsible for the total operations of the troop committee in supporting the Scout troop.
- **Treasurer.** Ensures the troop budgets are adequate and well-followed, and allocates troop resources to fund programs and activities.
- **Finance chair.** Handles the troop's fund-raising events, which help support programs and activities, and procures necessary donations when feasible.
- **Equipment manager.** Ensures the troop has all the necessary equipment when it embarks on its activities.
- **Committee secretary.** Keeps records of the troop committee meetings, and works with the Scoutmaster to keep parents informed of and involved in troop activities.
- **Advancement chair.** Ensures the troop members have the resources needed to meet requirements for advancement and merit badges, and makes sure the boys are recognized for their accomplishments.
- **Outdoor activities coordinator.** Coordinates adventurous trips into the outdoors, where troop members can put their skills into action.
- **Training coordinator.** Ensures troop leaders and committee leaders receive opportunities to further their Scouting leadership skills through training courses.
- **Chartered organization representative.** Each troop is operated by an organization that has been granted a charter by the BSA, and that organization appoints one person to oversee its interests as troop liaison.

FURTHER TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Developing the troop committee into a working team ensures the delivery of a strong Scouting program to youth. New adult leaders can learn more about the troop committee's role by reviewing the New Leader Essentials course and by participating in the Troop Committee Challenge, the position-specific training for troop committee members.



The following printed materials will further your understanding of how the troop committee functions with the troop:

- *Troop Committee Guidebook,* No. 34505B
- *Scouting* magazine

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