

## How to Recruit Each and Every Month

**Note:** This tool can be tailored to the program feature of the month and can be used monthly if so desired.

Youth can join Scouting any time of the year. We want to make sure each Scout troop has a true year-round recruiting plan.

Understanding how to turn every activity into a recruiting opportunity is easy, but developing a culture of inviting all to participate in Scouting can be difficult. Following a few simple steps can result in some amazing growth in your troop. Using the theme of specialty cooking as an example, teach leaders how easy recruiting can be. As noted above, this Membership Minute may be used each month by simply modifying the steps to fit your selected program feature.

### The Basic Principle

- Step 1** — Decide upon the activity to be targeted as a recruitment event. This should be something that is already on the troop's calendar and therefore does not take any additional time or resources to accomplish. Example: Dutch oven cooking.
- Step 2** — 30 days in advance of the event (Dutch oven cookout), have the Scouts make a list of invitees. This can be done by asking simple questions, such as, "If you were to have a party this weekend, who would you invite?" or "If you were going to invite some friends over to play video games tonight, who would they be?" Write down all of the names. This is similar to a brainstorming session, so do not remove any names from the list. Don't take away the right to accept the offer from any potential Scout.
- Step 3** — Within the next week (3 to 4 weeks before the activity), have each Scout deliver, mail, or email an invitation to the friends on the list you created in step 2. Extending an invitation to join may be difficult for many of our Scouts. Making the first invitation through a written format instead of face-to-face can be less intimidating and much easier for most Scouts. (See the sample invitation.)
- Step 4** — One week after the initial invitation is delivered (2 to 3 weeks before the activity), have the Scouts follow up with a phone call or text message to their friends. They may simply ask two questions. First, "Did you get my invitation?" second, "Do you think you can come?" This step opens the door for a further discussion but avoids a face-to-face rejection, which can be embarrassing for the Scout should his friend choose not to show interest.
- Step 5** — After the Scout has received a warm reception to his invitation, have him make personal contact with his friend in regard to the invitation (1 to 2 weeks before the activity). Have the Scout ask direct questions such as "Can you come?" or "Do you need a ride?"
- Step 6** — Three days prior to your event, have the Scouts get a final commitment from their friends to attend. You will need this count in order to have enough materials or supplies on hand. Using the cooking program feature as an example, you may have Scouts ask something like "We want to make sure we have enough pizza for everybody. Will you be there?"
- Step 7** — Remember, we are working with teen and preteen boys who have a lot going on. Forgetting about a scheduled event is not uncommon. On the day of the activity, have the Scouts call or make personal contact one last time to either confirm or offer their friend a ride to the activity. This should give you a definite final count.
- Step 8** — Hold your activity. Remember that this is a regularly scheduled activity, likely during a troop or patrol gathering. You want your potential Scouts to have a realistic picture of what your troop does and how things work. Include all of the usual formalities such as opening ceremonies, business items, etc.
- Step 9** — Following up your activity (within 3 days), have each Scout follow up with his friends who attended and extend an invitation to join the troop.
- Step 10**—Have each Scout follow up with those who couldn't make the activity and let them know how much fun you had and that they were missed. This opens the door for a future invitation.

Playing with fire and eating pizza—How much better does life get? My troop is having a pizza party, and I'd like to invite you to come along. Not only do we get to eat, but we'll be learning how to cook pizza Dutch-oven style.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Let me know if you need a ride or if you have any questions. I think it'll be pretty fun!

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# Retention: Six reasons Scouts drop out and how you can prevent it

*Extreme mountain biking and other outdoor activities can help keep Scouts in the program longer.*



What's the one thing the Scouting program can't live without? Scouts. The Boy Scouts of America offers the premier program for youth, but Scouts need the means and desire to stick around. To help make that possible, I asked your fellow Scouters on Facebook this question:

**What's the biggest reason Scouts drop out of the program, and how can we as Scouters keep that from happening?** So let's explore both aspects by presenting six problems and your time-tested solutions.

**PROBLEM 1:** Sports and other after-school activities get in the way

**SOLUTION:** Be accommodating

"As a Scoutmaster, I have always encouraged balance. Scouting can work with/around band, orchestra, sports and other activities. We're still around after the season is over!" (*Ron S.*)

**PROBLEM 2:** Your unit's program has gotten stale

**SOLUTION:** Don't do the same thing year after year

"[You need] a program that is boy-led and is dynamic with lots of variety and challenges. Doing a biking trip every summer is still okay, but go somewhere different each time. Don't allow the program to become stale. If the program is strong, boys will want to do it." (*Janet J.*)

**PROBLEM 3:** Lack of commitment from parents

**SOLUTION:** Get Mom and Dad invested from the start

"I see so many [Scouts] lose interest when their parents aren't involved. My husband and I tell new parents that the success of their boy depends on them. When they see how much good the program is doing and the development of fine young men, they are more likely to get behind their boy and help them through the rough patches. When they make Scouts a priority then they succeed." (*Tricia B.*)

**PROBLEM 4:** Poor fit between the Scout and his unit

**SOLUTION:** Help him find another pack or troop

"Leaders need to humble themselves, and if a family or boy need a change or the night is not a good fit, let them know about other troops or packs that might work out better. The important thing is that you are here for Scouting." (*Eric T.*)

**PROBLEM 5:** Scouting is too expensive

**SOLUTION:** Fill your year with money-earning projects and low-cost activities

"The best way to keep kids is have a fun, cheap program." (*Kay E.*)

**PROBLEM 6:** It's hard to reach today's kids

**SOLUTION:** Get your leaders trained

"Training, training, training to empower our committee members, adult leaders, and everyone so they have the tools and resources to go to." (*Kim S.*)

"Better training, more continuing education, cross-pollination of best practices are all ways to combat this." (*Skip T.*)