

Online Troop Leader Resources

Two of the newest BSA websites are designed to make it easier for youth and adult troop leaders to plan meetings that are fun with positive outcomes.

Troop Leader Resources (www.troopleader.org) is designed to do this in a colorful and informative way, aided by videos and photos of real Scouts in real troops that are engaged, involved, and obviously having a great time.

From the outset, the web developers' vision was to provide an online one-stop shop for troop leaders, both new and experienced, that was accessible, friendly, and would make planning effective meetings easier.

The website contains the following sections:

- **Troop Meeting Agenda.** This section breaks down each segment of the troop meeting plan with 11 short videos from actual troop meetings along with a description of each part of the agenda. There's also a fillable troop meeting planning sheet, if the patrol leaders' council chooses to fill out meeting plans online.
- **Program Features.** This is the website's major section, presenting each of the 48 program features with explanatory information as well as ideas for troop meetings and monthly main events. Each program feature has its own navigation bar linking to corresponding subsections.
- **Program Resources.** This section provides a gateway to the Program Resources website (see below) which contains the following:

Scout meeting activities including Scout skill challenges, troop and patrol games, and teambuilding opportunities

- A learning library of campcraft skill videos
- An assortment of troop ceremonies
- A large compilation of leader's minutes

Planning. This gateway offers information pertaining to annual and monthly planning, including an illustrative video of a real patrol leaders' council in action.

Training. This is a gateway of information for both adult and youth troop leaders.

Outings. General information is provided here along with sections for camping equipment, troop site setup, and camping trip activities.

General Troop Information. This repository features topics that are relevant to running a troop. Each topic has its own page with links to subsections on troop positions, the patrol, boards of review, courts of honor, fundraisers, and the Scoutmaster conference.

Troop Program Resources (www.programresources.org) is designed to serve as a planning tool for troop leaders. Its aim is to provide resources that contribute to making parts of the troop meeting more meaningful, engaging, and fun. These resources include:

- **Troop Meeting Activities.** This is the ideal place for the Patrol Leaders' Council to plan Scout skill challenges, team-building opportunities, patrol games, and troop games that fit well with a specific theme and add a lot of fun to the meeting. There's also an extensive collection of troop meeting activity videos.
- **Campcraft Skill Videos.** This reference library has videos demonstrating general campcraft skills, firebuilding skills, woods tools skills, basic knots, pioneering knots, lashings, and pioneering skills. These videos can assist Scoutmasters, assistant Scoutmasters, and junior leaders who want to become more confident in their ability to present campcraft skills.
- **Troop Meeting Ceremonies.** For the Scoutmaster, senior patrol leader, and individual patrols, there's information about presenting impressive ceremonies along with a collection of ideas and examples.
- **Leader's Minutes.** This extensive library of thought-provoking sample minutes will help the Scoutmaster and adult leaders capture and hold the troop's attention near the meeting's end.

Stuck in the Troop Meeting Rut?

June 10, 2014 By Clarke Green

Like Hannibal Smith “I love it when a plan comes together” and I think planning is an important skill, but the repetition of the same plan, over and over again, can wear a rut in the floor.

Somewhere in the dim, dark past the Troop meeting plan was created; preopening 10 minutes, opening 5 minutes, instruction 20 minutes, patrol meeting 20 minutes, game 20 minutes, closing 5 minutes.

There’s a lot Scouts can get out of meetings that follow a predictable plan, but there’s also room for breaking the mold now and again. Breakout meetings can be just for fun, but any savvy group of Scouts can build in lots of skill-based elements to help Scouts advance.

With a little imagination, your Patrol Leader’s council can plan something new, here’s a few ideas;

Trek Meetings

Get out and about! If your regular meeting place isn’t ideally situated for a trek think about using a local park or other open location.

Challenge Trail

Patrols begin at the meeting place and follow a map that takes them to different destinations where an activity is planned (a skill demonstration, game, or challenge) and loops back to the meeting place.

Scavenger Trail

Patrols are given a list of locations and or objects to find in the area around the meeting place. They can take a snapshot of the item or answer a descriptive question to prove they’ve found it.

Man Hunt

Several people have become lost in the neighborhood of the meeting place. Here’s where they were last seen, what they were wearing and what they were doing, the patrol who rescues them (a couple may need to be carried on a stretcher!) wins.

Covert Operations

Your Patrol must arrive at the rendezvous point marked on this map in 30 minutes without being detected by the agents dispersed throughout the area. You lose ten points each time an agent detects and photographs your patrol. The agents are equipped with cameras, and report to the rendezvous point in 30 minutes to tally the score for the winning patrol.

Beat the Clock

A race to move your patrol (with their backpacks, a stretcher or what have you) from point A on the map to point B.

Maker Meetings

Set aside the whole meeting time to make something useful or something fun. The choices are endless but here are a few suggestions:

1. Paracord bracelets or neckerchief slides.
2. Fire starters
3. Kites
4. Pioneering projects
5. Hiking Sticks
6. First aid/survival kits.

Campfires

Build fires and cook dinner, end with a campfire program.

Parent’s Open House

Each patrol prepares a couple of demonstrations, games or events that parents can participate in.

Do those ideas get the wheels turning? At your next patrol leader’s council meeting ask the Scouts what ideas they have for getting out of the troop meeting rut.