

Patrol Leader:

So, you have just been elected Patrol Leader and you need some ideas for patrol activities during Troop meetings and camping trips. Well, you've come to the right place. Here are the Scoutmaster's gross ideas that you can use (gross as in 144 of them). If you don't see anything that strikes your fancy, use your imagination – there are millions of possibilities. If you want some more ideas, the Scoutmaster has a large amount of resource materials you can use. Likewise, other scouts and leaders can have some great suggestions.

The 15-20 minute Patrol time during Troop meetings can be the best and most productive portion of the meeting. In many cases, you will need to use this time to prepare for upcoming trips and activities. This is the most important stuff and should come first (before play). Preparation activities may include:

1. Review plans for upcoming meetings and trips.
2. Select and practice a new flag/opening ceremony for an upcoming Troop meeting.
3. Select and practice a new flag/opening ceremony for the next Court of Honor.
4. Do your Menu Plan (at least 1 week before next camping trip).
5. Do your Duty Roster (at least 2 weeks before next camping trip).
6. Select and practice a skit for the next Court of Honor or campfire.
7. Have the Assistant Patrol Leader conduct a uniform inspection (it's one of his duties).

You will probably have meetings where you do not have to take care of the important stuff. In that case, you should have some good ol' constructive fun. While the Troop meeting time allocated to Patrol activities will usually be 15-20 minutes, there is no reason you can't do a longer activity (just stretch it over a number of meeting nights). Also, on many camping trips, additional time (1-2 hours) will be allocated for Patrol activities – you can use these ideas for that time as well.

8. Practice your knots – maybe get a jump on the next month's 'Knot of the Month'.
9. Practice your lashings.
10. Invent and build a new camp gadget out of natural materials.
11. Have a Yo-Yo trick night.
12. Help someone with a difficult rank requirement.
13. Go through your Patrol equipment – clean, inspect and repair it.
14. Review Outdoor Cookbooks – look for something new to eat or a new way to cook on camping trips.
15. Make a 5-minute outdoor meal and eat it.
16. Build a no-match fire.
17. Practice your compass and map reading skills.
18. Exercise – have a push-up and sit-up contest.
19. Work on a Patrol Cheer.
20. Go on a Find-It Hike in the woods – see who can find the ugliest stick, the roundest rock, the biggest leaf, etc.
21. Perform a 'quickie' service project for the church – rake leaves, pickup trash, etc.
22. Come up with a list of a dozen trip ideas for the Troop to consider in the future.
23. With a Field Guide in hand, go on a hike to birdwatch, identify trees, etc.
24. Learn a new scout song to sing for the Troop.
25. Do a pioneering project – lash a campsite gateway, chair, table, etc.
26. Work on a merit badge together.

27. Learn how to juggle.
28. Do one of the hundreds of Scoutmaster's Challenge games.
29. Build a shelter out of natural materials.
30. Make a Patrol first aid kit.
31. Make a Patrol survival kit.
32. Read Boys Life magazine.
33. Work on first aid wrappings and carries.
34. Make your own rope.
35. Have a Patrol portrait taken.
36. Build and fly kites.
37. Go on a star gaze – identify constellations.
38. Make a horror film – show it at a Troop meeting.
39. Finger paint.
40. Make sculptures with playdough.
41. Do soap carvings.
42. Sew patches on your uniforms.
43. Build birdhouses and hang them in the church woods.
44. Do a pressed leaf collection.
45. Put together a puppet show for the Troop.
46. Leather stamp a belt.
47. Write letters to military stationed overseas.
48. Learn how to change a tire on a car.
49. Sharpen an ax and/or knife.
50. Come up with a secret Patrol code and use it for messages.
51. Make a Turk's Head neckerchief slide.
52. Tie a Monkey's Fist knot.
53. Whittle.
54. Put together shoebox care packages for St. Vincent dePauls or Helping Hands.
55. Build a raft and then try it one weekend.
56. Make a scout recruiting poster.
57. Practice magic tricks – give a magic show for the Troop.
58. Weave a basket.
59. Learn the Scout Law in sign language.
60. Make a nice walking stick – debark, sand, carve, stain, polyurethane.
61. Have a marbles tournament.
62. Read a scary story out loud in the dark woods.
63. Learn Morse Code – practice it using flashlights.
64. Learn how to say 'hello' in 12 languages.
65. Learn and practice semaphore.
66. Make candles.
67. Build a rescue signal on the ground to be spotted from an airplane.
68. Research and play Native American games.
69. Play tabletop football, basketball, soccer.
70. Make a fuzz-stick – use it to start a fire.
71. Go on a mini safari – rope off an area 3'x 3' and identify as many living organisms as you can.
72. Build a friction lock bridge (Program Features Vol. I, page 127)
73. Build a long legged puddle jumper (Program Features Vol. I, page 126)
74. Design and play a round of Frisbee golf over the church property.

75. Grow a plant from seeds – bring it in each week over a year.
76. Make a fishing rod out of natural materials – use it on the next trip.
77. Make a sling shot.
78. Vacuum the Troop's trailer.
79. Create and add to a Patrol Scrapbook to be passed on to future generations.
80. Pack the perfect Pack for a backpacking trip.
81. Learn how to check tire pressure, oil, transmission fluid, washer fluid and air filter on a car.
82. Create an inspirational trail on the church property.
83. Decorate the city cemetery with small American flags (Memorial Day).
84. Make and practice hanging a bear bag.
85. Lash together a ladder.
86. Design an orienteering course on the church property or local park for the Troop to use.
87. Learn how to dance the 'Electric Slide'.
88. Go sledding (with or without snow).
89. Learn and play a new card game.
90. Design and build a ceremony prop for the Troop.
91. Learn how to properly poop in the woods - and try it.
92. Meet with a scout visiting the Troop.
93. Write an article for the newsletter.
94. Do some tin punch art.
95. Create a patrol band with homemade instruments – perform for the Troop.
96. Have a checkers tournament.
97. Make a Patrol hammock out of rope.
98. Pitch pennies.
99. Do some fast and easy (and nonexplosive) science experiments.
100. Create an obstacle course for the Troop to try.
101. Make up a brand new original game for the whole Troop to play.
102. Carve and paint a Troop or Patrol totem pole from a log.
103. Build a model.
104. Play needle and thread tag.
105. Have a birthday cake and party for a Patrol member.
106. Look through the Troop's History files and write a past troop member.
107. Seam seal new Patrol tents.
108. Scrub the Patrol cookware – again and again and again.
109. Make a Klondike sled – then participate in a derby.
110. Make an animal trap in the woods and see if you catch anything the next week.
111. Fix-up one of our canoes.
112. Make a sit & reach box for a Personal Fitness merit badge counselor.
113. Create string artwork.
114. Study the Leave No Trace principles.
115. Burn the Scout Promise into wood.
116. Carve and decorate Patrol neckerchief slides.
117. Carve and paint a wood decoy.
118. Practice building different fire lays – chimney, teepee, a-frame, friendship
119. Have a guest speaker on some topic of interest.
120. Make and walk on stilts.
121. Practice throwing a rescue line to a victim.
122. Make archery stands out of PVC pipe.

123. Learn how to play a tune on a harmonica.
124. Perform a safety inspection of our meeting place.
125. Make hot air balloons out of trash bags, string and candles.
126. Tap a maple tree.
127. Plant a tree to honor someone special.
128. Make and bury a time capsule.
129. Find some poison ivy, sumac and oak.
130. Refresh your CPR skills.
131. Hold an athletic meet – try to qualify for the events of the Athletics merit badge.
132. Read and discuss the meaning of the Declaration of Independence.
133. Have a show & tell of the Patrol member's collection.
134. Borrow a speed gun and see how many people are speeding on Wadsworth Road.
135. Have patrol members take turns being blind at a Troop meeting.
136. Make a catapult capable of launching small pumpkins.
137. Brew your own root beer.
138. Bring in a lawnmower – change the oil and sparkplugs.
139. Study and take the Illinois written driver's test.
140. Plan a 10-mile hike and do it.
141. Work with an Eagle Scout candidate on his project.
142. Make a craft for Mother's day.
143. Play charades.
144. Bring in old Pinewood Derby cars and re-race them.

Bonus activities

- A well-known method of crossing a river is by means a sheer legs. The sheer legs are constructed on one bank and placed in the middle of the stream. Then using another spar the sheer legs are pushed into an upright position with a Scout on board. Once across he sends the sheer legs back for the next Scout.
- Patrols are challenged to either pitch their tents on a platform as high above ground as possible or at least 4 yards away from the bank of a river or lake.
- Top Secret Research - Arrange for an important looking person to arrive at the Scout hall and request the help of your Scouts with a research project. The project could involve some Scouting activity like designing a bridge that can be constructed using 3 poles or the best knots to use for tying up wild horses.
- Trading post. The Leader provides the where with all in the form of ropes, spars, compass and maps etc. to enable the Scouts to complete a number of basic skills, which are listed on the trading post chart. Each Scout who completes an item is awarded a number of tokens or points. The Patrol with the largest number of tokens is the winner.
- Reactor transporter - Each Patrol is requested to make a tripod, which has its legs, lashed apart in such a way that it resembles a pyramid. From the top of the tripod, a small cooking pot is suspended on light string. A rock is also suspended so that it dangles in the middle of the small cooking pot. Patrols have to carry the Transporter around a course without allowing the rock to come in contact with the small cooking pot.
- A river is created using sisal lines 4 yards apart. In the -river-are placed a number of mousetraps.
- Patrols have to make fishing rods and catch as many 'snappers' as possible in a given time.
- Above ground - Starting at a point say 2 yards above the ground, how far can you get without dropping below that height. Allow a period of time for Patrols to prepare.
- Cooking on water - Challenge your Patrols to make a cup of tea in the middle of a lake or river.