

SUCCESSFUL PACK MEETINGS



Pack meeting tonight!!! Yes, it is a big deal to Scouts and their parents, family, and friends. Scouts have been working all month to show off the den's activities and to stand up for recognition in front of the pack. This is the time parents get the big picture of the Pack rather than the Den they see each week. The gathering of the Pack is also time for Scouts to be proud wearing their uniform, and indirectly growing in maturity.

So you have the challenge of organizing a program that will be appropriate for the expectations of your Pack.

Purpose – It is always easier to perform when you know the plot and role you play in the production. So the most important point is Scout Recognition. Recognition should include individual Scout achievement, den activities, and even Pack accomplishments. The Pack meeting is also where the Pack can be kept informed about the calendar of events by announcement and Pack newsletters. Events such as Roundtable, Leader Training, District and Council activities, Pack Committee meetings, fund-raising efforts, etc. All of this can be done and you can have fun at the same time. Announcements are important, ceremonies are inspiring, but keep interest with a game, song, skit, or audience participation stunt.

General – The greatest program can flop with poor timing. Start the meeting on time. Start the meeting even though families are still arriving! A Cub Scout cannot learn timeliness if his leaders do not practice it. If tardiness is a problem, have a prize drawing for those who were there on time. A Scout who knows he may win a disposable camera will be dragging his parents through the door on time! Starting time should be announced at every meeting for the next month. Limit the Pack meeting to one hour or, at the longest, one and a half hours. Keeping the meeting opening and closing on time will leave plenty of interest and time for viewing activities before and after the meeting. Have a Pack meeting every month. Even in the summer you should at least have Pack activities that bring all of your dens together. Your best-planned Pack meeting will run smoother with a written agenda. The agenda will allow other participants to know what do and when.

Pack Meeting Place – The Pack meeting place is usually held in the facilities of the chartered organization. Depending on such things as size of room needed, another building may be required. Regardless of where you meet, confirm the dates with the institution each year. Review materials for emergency procedures, clean up, keys, etc. Some issues that could be problems include:

- Restriction on the use of fire or smoke in ceremonies
- General lighting that cannot be turned off and back on again right away
- Special Needs – PA system, projector screen, power strips, etc.

What to Take – Ceremonies and skits demand a lot of preparation. Forgetting to bring a prop can be like forgetting the punch line of a joke. Write down a check-off list of what you and others need to take to the Pack meeting. Items to take should include:

American Flag	Ceremony props
Pack Flag	Keys to facility
Flag stands	Skit props
PA components	Pack Newsletter
AV equipment	Cub Advancements
Tablecloth for Awards table	Pack Awards
Centerpiece for Awards table	Leader Recognition
Keys to lights, thermostat	Treats

Before the Pack Meeting - Dens display their projects, play special games, etc. The den in charge of setting up that month arranges the chairs in a certain pattern. Leaders go over the agenda to clarify the order in which things will happen that evening.

Opening Ceremony – Start on time!!! The den in charge of the opening should have month's advance notice so as to prepare a well-organized ceremony. Provide instruction on flag etiquette to all dens so it can be practiced in den meetings also. Not only is proper flag etiquette a part of citizenship that Scouts learn, there will be adults present who perform proper flag handling as part of their career. Other components of the opening can be the Pledge of Allegiance, the Star Spangled Banner, the Lord's Prayer, the Cub Scout Promise, etc.



Announcements – Information is unquestionably important especially to parents, but is well known to lose the attention of the youth. Have available and make reference to an announcement notice or Pack newsletter. Important parts of your announcements are: review of recent Pack events, individual recognition, special thank yous, upcoming events, and special requests.

Recognition – Recognition is the heart of your Pack meeting. Each Scout works all month for this evening. The reception of his individual advancement is important to him, his parents and leaders. Therefore, present awards to individual Cubs in an eye-catching and captivating ceremony. Ceremonies can be centered around a monthly theme, annual tradition, Indian Lore, etc. Good ceremonies recognize the contributions of parents and leaders and become memorable events for the Scout.

Costumes – Costumes are fun and add to the Pack meeting. A ceremony is really impressive when you dress according to the theme. It is fun to dress up. The boys enjoy it and the leaders may decide to dress accordingly. These are only suggestions, but let your imaginations run wild and have fun.

A boy will remember receiving his award from someone in costume faster than he will remember receiving it from the Cubmaster dressed in uniform.

Entertainment – To capture or sustain the attention of the audience, use entertainment. Den skits provide Cub Scouts an opportunity to be showmen. Pack leaders can put on a very funny skit too, but special care must be taken to keep content on a level of the Cub Scouts. To involve all Cubs and adults, plan an audience participation stunt with a story that utilizes portions of the audience for body sounds or movements whenever a certain word is said in the story. There are times when a professional entertainer or celebrity can provide entertainment. Many Cubmasters will steal the show with a special event once a year. For instance, the Cub who recruits the most new Cub Scouts at School Night For Scouting will get to put pie in the face of the Cubmaster. Of course, if there is a tie, then the Assistant Cubmaster gets pie in his/her face too.

Closing – A great Pack meeting has a great on-time closing. The American and Pack flags need to be retired with the same proper etiquette with which they were presented. Again this is a chance for the Tiger Cubs to play an active role with an older den in the Pack. A special closing may include a song, friendship circle, Cubmaster's minute.

After Pack Meeting Activities – One den should be assigned to clean up duty: returning the chairs to their proper location, putting tables away, picking up garbage, etc. Cub Scouts need to learn responsibility early in their career. Spend some time after the pack meeting reviewing amongst yourselves how the meeting went. Keep track of your accomplishments so you can repeat your successes. Likewise, seek out disappointing responses so you don't make the same mistakes twice. Begin brainstorming on ideas for next month's and next year's meeting.

Some packs serve treats after the closing. Two words about treats: Clean up! The fastest way to lose a meeting place is to leave a mess. Yes, we know boys like treats but is it fair to their parents to fill them up with sugar and then send them home immediately; it takes them so much longer to calm down and get ready for bed. Some of the younger Cubs have bedtimes of 8 or 8:30pm.

THE FUN IS JUST BEGINNING!!!