So You're a New Den Leader

I Signed Up; What's Next?

Now that you are registered as a Cub Scout den leader, you will receive *Scouting* magazine, which includes *Cub Scout Program Helps* and other information to assist you as a leader. Ask your Cubmaster to furnish you a copy of the current *Cub Scout Program Helps* to use until your subscription begins. These steps will get you started:

1. **Complete Fast Start training for Cub Scout den leaders.** Your pack leadership (pack trainer) will facilitate this video–based training, or you can complete the training online under Cub Scouts/ Adult Leaders/Training at www.scouting.org. Youth Protection training for all Scouting volunteers is available through your local council Web Site.
2. **Begin reading the *Cub Scout Leader Book*.** (To start right away, you may need to borrow a copy briefly; until you can get your own.) This book describes your role as a den leader and will give more information on the following steps.

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3. **Get acquainted with your Cubmaster and pack trainer.** These leaders will see that you have the information and material you need to get started off on the right foot.
4. **Plan your first month's den meetings. This is much easier with the help of the pack trainer, assistant den leader, den chief (an older Boy Scout or Venturer helper), and *Cub Scout Program Helps*.** The key to success is "KISMIF" (Keep It Simple, Make It Fun."
5. **Get acquainted with the families of the boys in your den.** Hold a family orientation meeting. The *Cub Scout Leader Book* has a recommended agenda. You will be needing the families' help, so get to know them early.
6. **Get acquainted with the boys in your den.** Establish a den code of conduct so that they will know what you expect of them. See the *Cub Scout Leader Book* for details.
7. **Ask your Cubmaster to help you secure a den chief.** Give your den chief meaningful responsibilities right away.
8. **Obtain and begin wearing the Cub Scout leader uniform as soon as possible.** It is attractive, comfortable, and suitable for all Cub Scout meetings and activities. Wearing the uniform properly is important in setting a good example for the boys. Your Cubmaster or pack trainer can tell you where to obtain the uniform and insignia.
9. **Attend the monthly planning meetings held by your pack.** These meetings are led by the pack committee chair and the Cubmaster, and are where pack plans are made.
10. **Attend the monthly district Cub Scout leaders' roundtable.** You will receive many good program ideas based on the monthly theme, and become acquainted with leaders from other packs, who will share ideas and experiences with you. Your Cubmaster or pack trainer can tell you when and where the roundtable meets.
11. **Attend Cub Scout leader basic training as soon as possible.** There are two components to this training— Den Leader Specific Training, a specialized session to help you successfully plan a fun and exciting den program, and This Is Scouting, which is attended by leaders in all program areas. These will give you the foundation you need to become an effective and successful leader. Every boy deserves a trained and qualified leader. Your Cubmaster or pack trainer can give you information about training sessions.

Don't hesitate to ask for help. There are many people who want to help you provide the finest possible Cub Scout experience for the boys in your den.

By the time you have completed these steps you will be well on your way to becoming a successful den leader.

You, The Den Leader

You were selected as a den leader and approved by the pack committee because of your interest in helping boys. By making the commitment to serve as a den leader, you have accepted the following responsibilities.

- Give leadership to carrying out the pack program in the den.
- Lead the den in its participation at the monthly pack meetings.
- Work in harmony with the other den and pack leaders.
- Cooperate with the Cubmaster and pack committee in recruiting new boys.
- Help orient the den chief and guide him to work with the Cub Scouts.

- Use *Scouting* and *Boys' Life* magazines, *Cub Scout Program Helps*, and other Cub Scouting literature as sources of program ideas.
- Collect dues and turn them in to the pack secretary/treasurer.
- Encourage boys to earn the advancement awards. Keep accurate records, and see that they receive recognition for their achievement.
- Help the den earn the National Den Award.
- Establish good working relationships with den families, taking advantage of their skills and talents.
- Take part in the annual pack planning conferences and the monthly pack leaders' planning meetings.
- Follow the policies of the Boy Scouts of America.

Your Cubmaster or pack trainer will be glad to explain any of these responsibilities that you do not understand.

The Cub Scout Den Meeting

Den meetings are usually held in the afternoon, after school, or in the evening, once each week, in a home, church, or school. The meeting day, time, and location are set by the den leader and should be the same each week to prevent confusion. Den meetings last approximately one hour. Leadership responsibilities are shared by the den leader, assistant den leader, den chief, and denner (a selected member of your den).

The den meeting program includes the following:

1. **Before the meeting.** The den leader, assistant den leader, and den chief make final preparations while the denner helps set up the meeting place.
2. **While Cub Scouts gather.** The den chief or denner could teach a stunt, trick, or game as the boys arrive, while the den leader and assistant den leader collect dues and check achievements and electives.
3. **Opening.** Have a simple opening ceremony such as a song, yell, pledge to the flag, or uniform inspection.
4. **Business Items.** Discuss den activities and plans and make announcements. Refreshments may be served at this time.
5. **Activities.** Have games, tricks, handicrafts, or other activities related to the monthly theme. Prepare for the den's part in the pack meeting.
6. **Closing.** Give reminders, the den leader's closing thought, and a brief inspirational closing ceremony.
7. **After the Meeting.** The den leader, assistant den leader, and den chief discuss plans for next week's meeting, while the denner puts the room back to order.

What Do You Invest in Cub Scouting?

- One afternoon or evening each week for a den meeting
- One evening each month for the pack meeting
- One evening each month for the Cub Scout roundtable
- One evening each month for a planning meeting with other pack leaders
- Time spent in research and planning each month on such interesting subjects as native Americans, knights, the circus, or whatever the next monthly theme will be

- Time spent in Cub Scout leader basic training
- Cost of the Cub Scout leader uniform
- The registration fee

This adds up to a small investment, compared to the dividends you will receive. And of course, the more you invest, the more you can expect to receive in return.

What Do You Receive in Return?

- One lively, never-dull afternoon or evening each week when you have the good fortune to view the world through the eyes of boys
- An evening each month of fun and fellowship with pack families, sharing their pride in their sons' accomplishments
- The privilege of helping to enrich and strengthen families
- A sense of pride as you watch the Cub Scouts receive recognition for their accomplishments
- An opportunity to share your ideas and experiences with other adults who share your interest in and concern for boys
- A chance to read about subjects that you haven't taken time for in years, and the opportunity to put your ideas into action at den meetings
- The privilege of getting to know boys in your neighborhood a little better and watching them all grow strong in mind and body
- The opportunity to help boys learn good citizenship and to help shape them into men who have strength of character and are sensitive to the needs of others
- The knowledge that all boys are alike in many ways, and yet each one is a very special, unique individual
- A chance to help stimulate boys' imaginations and to help them learn to "do their best"
- The satisfaction of being a member of a worldwide movement, and pride in being publicly identified as a part of this organization by wearing the uniform, which is a visible means of showing that you believe in and stand for its ideals and objectives

You will discover many other dividends that will enrich your life as you dedicate your time, talent, and enthusiasm to Cub Scouting.

All leaders bring to Cub Scouting their own talents and skills, their own backgrounds and interests. Your key to becoming an effective leader is to use your own abilities and interests, along with what you learn about Cub Scouting to plan and conduct the best possible program for the boys. What happens in the life of each boy during the formative years will determine to a great extent the kind of man he will become. What a tremendous opportunity and challenge for you, the den leader!

510-239
2009 Printing