

Pre-Opening Activities for SCOUT MEETINGS

The following pre-opening activities should be set up well in advance of the meeting time so that early arrivals will have some constructive, challenging and fun activities to do while the remainder of the Scouts arrive prior to the start of the meeting. These types of activities can be done no matter what time the Scouts arrive. The activities should cease as soon the meeting is ready to be started.

1 - Guess That Merit Badge

Fill a table with various merit badges and have the scouts try to guess their names. This could be done by obtaining a copy of the poster which has all the merit badges and by cutting out each one, leaving off the name, or covering up the names with masking tape. Have the Scouts number their page from 1 to 120 and see how many merit badges they can name. (Give a prize at the end of the meeting to the Scout who named the most merit badges)

2 - Disaster First Aid

Have some adults or older Scouts arrive early to the meeting and with makeup, create injuries on each person showing various first aid needs. As the Scouts arrive, let them react to the injuries as best they can with the materials that are at hand. Provide bandages, splints, and other first aid items for the Scouts to use. (Give points to the Scouts who make the correct diagnosis and points for the correct treatment. Give an award at the conclusion of the meeting for the Scout with the most points. Include such things as hypothermia, heatstroke, heat exhaustion, frostbite, dehydration, sunburn, insect stings, tick bites, snakebite, blisters, and hyperventilation, various kinds of Fractures) (Backpacking merit badge requirement, # 1; First Aid requirement, # 3 e & f: & 4 & 5; Camping merit badge requirement # 1; Canoeing merit badge requirement # 1; Cycling requirement # 1; Hiking merit badge requirement # 1; Rowing merit badge requirement # 1; Sports merit badge requirement # 1; Swimming merit badge # 1; Water-skiing merit badge # 1; Whitewater merit badge # 1; Wilderness Survival merit badge # 1)

3 - Bowline Races

Have rope available and have the boys see who can tie the bowline the fastest. Make sure they learn how to tie the bowline from around their waist as though they were being rescued. At the end of the meeting, give an award to the Scout who can tie the bowline the fastest.

4 - Litter Picker Upper

Have the Scouts go around the meeting building and pick up all the trash they see.

5 - Is it Edible or Not?

Have a table filled with various edible plants. Let the Scouts taste them if they want to. Make sure each plant has a name plate with it. Show pictures of poisonous plants with names.

6 - Tie that Knot

Give each Scout a piece of rope when he arrives and have up to twenty different knots for him to tie. The Scout who can tie the most knots without referencing a book will win a prize at the end of the meeting. (Requirement 3 of the Pioneering merit badge)

7 - Find the Article

Fill a table with newspaper clippings of auto accidents, crimes, and other accidents. Let the Scouts take the ones they like to be included in their notebooks. (Safety merit badge requirement # 1a and b: Crime Prevention requirement # 2)

8 - Draw that Map

Have available several copies of the map of your community. Have the Scouts draw a map of your community marking the points of historical interest. (This fulfills requirement # 1a of the American Heritage merit badge)

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9 - Tell a Story with a Picture

Have the Scouts tell a story by drawing a picture or pictures. Or have the Scouts draw a picture that promotes a product or an idea. (This fulfills requirements #1 and or #2 of the Art merit badge)

10 - Sketch the Moon

Have available a large picture of the full moon. Have the Scouts draw the face of the moon indicating on it the locations of at least five seas and five craters. (This fulfills requirement #1a of the Astronomy merit badge)

11 - Correct Backpacking

Fill a table with items that could be included in a back pack for a backpacking trip. Have the Scouts select those items that should be included for a backpacking trip, leaving behind unessential items. (Backpacking merit badge requirement # 2a)

12 - Design a Camp

Have paper available and have the Scouts design the layout of a typical patrol campsite. The design should show cooking spots, dining fly, latrine, and at least three two-man tents. (Camping merit badge requirement # 2)

13 - What to Take on a Camping Trip

Have the Scouts list on a piece of paper all the items they should take on an overnight campout in the summer and in the winter. (Requirement # 5 of Camping merit badge)

14 - Name that Movie

Have a video playing somewhere in the middle of the movie and see if the boys can name it.

15 - Your Community Map

Have a map of your community that shows such facilities as the chief government buildings, such as city hall, county courthouse, and public works/services facility, fire station, police station, hospitals, schools, churches, main highways to neighboring cities and towns, railroad and bus stations, airports, chief industries or other major places of employment, historical and other points of interest. (Requirement # 2 of the Citizenship in the Community merit badge)

16 - Make That Résumé

Have the Scouts write down their autobiographical resume that would be used in applying for a job. It should include a brief description of any jobs they have had. Such as paper route, mowing lawns, taking care of a neighbor's yard while they were on vacation, "caring for a pet, your education achieved so far including grade point average, if known. Also have them include the names of adults they could use as a reference. (Requirement # 7 of the Communication merit badge)

17 - I'm Important

Have the Scouts list 10 reasons why they are important to their Family. (Requirement # 1 of Family Life merit badge)

18 - Leave Your Mark

Have available fingerprint identification cards (8 by 8 inches). Have the Scouts each take a clear set of fingerprints. (Requirement # 1 of the Fingerprinting merit badge)

19 - My Family

Have available to the Scout pedigree charts. Have them write on the chart as many Family members as they know of parents, grandparents, and great grandparents, including dates and places of birth and death. (Genealogy merit badge requirement # 2)

20 - Name that Plant

Have on a table leaves from various plants and trees. Number them and have the Scouts write on a piece of paper the name of the plant next to the number. The Scout with the most correct answers gets a prize at the end of the meeting. (Requirement # 6 of First Class; Nature merit badge # 4b)

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21 - Find your Pace

Set up a 300 meter course and have the Scouts figure out how many running paces it takes for 100 meters. (Requirement # 5b of Orienteering merit badge)

22 - Throw that Rope

Have a 40 foot length of rope. Allow the Scouts to take turns coiling and throwing the rope. (Requirement # 1 of Pioneering merit badge)

23 - The Collection

Have one of the Scouts bring a collection he has for demonstration. Let the Scout look over the collection before the meeting starts.

24 -The Tent

Have a tent set up in the room for the Scouts to look at. This should show the proper way to set up a tent, including ground cloth, pegs, tether lines, etc.

25 - The Model Camp Site

Set up a model campsite for the Scouts to examine including tents, cooking equipment, patrol box, eating table, etc.

26 - The Pants Pack

Have available for inspection a pants pack. See page 167 of the Boy Scout Handbook.

27 - The NFL Quiz

Give a copy of the NFL quiz to each Scout and let him work on it until the meeting starts.

28 - Name that Bug

Have someone that has an insect collection bring it to the meeting and put it on display for the boys to look at prior to the meeting. If possible, have them guess the names of the bugs. The one with the most correct names wins a prize at the end of the meeting.

29 - 3D Pictures

Bring one or two "3D" posters for the boys to look at and guess what they are.

30 - Nail in a Bottle of Coke

Place a nail in a bottle of coke or some other cola drink. Let it stand for several days or until the nail begins to react with the drink. Have this available for the Scouts to see what affect cola drinks may have on their insides.

31 - Name that Quote

Have some famous quotes on a sheet of paper with the person on the opposite side of the page. Have them match the quote to the person who made the quote. (See page 464 in the Tenth Edition (1990) of the Boy Scout Handbook)

32 - Unscramble the Words

Write or type out the Pledge of Allegiance or another well known statement or quote. Then cut out each word and mix them up on a table. Let the Scouts put the words back in the proper order.

33 - Can You Name That Flag?

Have several versions of the flags that have flown over the United States since the 1700's. Have the Scouts see how many of them can name. Give a prize to the Scout who names the most. (See pages 471-472 of the Tenth Edition (1990) of the Boy Scout Handbook)

34 - Can you Guess?

Have a jar full of beads or some other small items and have the Scouts guess how many are in the jar. (Give a prize to the Scout that comes closest to guessing the correct amount)

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35 - Guess that Height

Have the Scouts determine the height of a tree, flagpole, or some other object. The Scout that guesses the closest wins a prize.

36 - Find the Way

Set up a small compass course or treasure hunt with clues to find the meeting room.

37 - Puzzling

Have the Scouts put together a large jigsaw puzzle working together as a team.

38 - Make your Decision

Have two people at the door of the meeting. One is yelling and trying to get the Scout to go down the hall instead of going in to the meeting. One is whispering that he should go into the meeting. If he chooses to go down the hall, have someone there hand him a boulder that he must carry with him for the rest of the meeting. Reward those who entered the meeting without the boulder with a piece of candy, a bead, or some other prized object.

39 - Choices and Consequences

Put on one side of a piece of paper the heading "CHOICES" and under the heading such items as stay up late at night, sleep in, go to bed early, get up early in the morning, don't do my homework, finish my homework, exercise regularly, don't exercise at all, pray every morning and night, don't pray, control my anger, don't control my anger, be kind to others, be mean to others, read good books, play video/computer games, think clean thoughts, entertain unclean thoughts. On the other side of the page put as the heading "CONSEQUENCES" and have the Scouts fill in the consequence next to each "choice."

40 - My Dad

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper ten things they like most about their Fathers. After they have done this, encourage them to take the paper home with them and tell their dads what they wrote.

41 - My Mom

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper ten things they like most about their mothers. After they have done this, encourage them to take the paper home with them and tell their moms what they wrote.

42 - A Scout is Trustworthy

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Trustworthy.

43 - A Scout is Loyal

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Loyal.

44 - A Scout is Helpful

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Helpful.

45 - A Scout is Friendly

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Friendly.

46 - A Scout is Courteous

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Courteous.

47 - A Scout is Kind

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Kind.

48 - A Scout is Obedient

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Obedient.

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49 - A Scout is Cheerful

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Cheerful.

50 - A Scout is Thrifty

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Thrifty.

51 - A Scout is Brave

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Brave.

52 - A Scout is Clean

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Clean.

53 - A Scout is Reverent

Have the Scouts write on a piece of paper what it means to them to be Reverent.

54 - Name That President

Have the Scouts list on a piece of paper as many of the Presidents of the United States as they can. Give a prize to the Scout who has the most correctly listed.

55 - Be a Recruiter

Have the Scouts write down the names of some of their non-member friends who might be interested in becoming a Scout. Encourage the Scouts to invite their friends to the next appropriate meeting.

56 - Do a Good Turn

Have the Scouts write down on a piece of paper several good deeds they could do for their family members.

57 - Who Am I?

Prepare sheets of paper with the name of several famous people. As the Scouts arrive to the meeting, tape the name on their backs without their knowing the name. They must then ask questions of each other to try and guess their name. Once they have guessed their name they may take the name off of their back and put it on their front. You might call on several Scouts as part of the opening ceremony to report on what they learned about their famous person from the questions they asked each other.

58 - Helping Each Other

Make very long spoons that are at least six feet in length. As the Scouts arrive, tie the spoons to one of their wrists. Place several bowls of M&M's or some other candies around the room and tell them that they can eat as much of the candy as they want but only with the spoons. They may realize that the only way they can eat any candy is by having someone else help them by feeding them with their spoon. They will then have to feed another Scout with their spoon.

59 - Symbols

Have on a piece of paper various symbols, like a dollar sign, H₂O, a musical note, a stop sign, and a wrong way sign, etc. Have them tell the meaning and purpose for the symbols represented.

60 - Undo the Pretzel

Tie about a six foot piece of rope to the right wrist of one Scout. Put his right arm behind his back and pass the rope between his legs. Then pass the other end of the rope through the legs of another Scout and tie the other end of the rope to the second Scout's right wrist. Have them do what they must without untying the rope so that the rope is no longer between their legs and they are facing each other.

61 - Magnify

Have a magnifying glass or microscope available for the Scouts to look through to see something they could not otherwise see without a magnifier.

62 - Search the Handbook or Fieldbook

Have the Boy Scout Handbook or Fieldbook on the table. Give the Scouts a specific topic to search and let them name all the pertinent skills that relate to the topic.

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63 - Time

Have the Scouts write down on a piece of paper how they spent their day today. Have them include the times of day they did things and how much time it took. Then have them assess if they wasted much time today. Encourage them to do worthwhile things during the day so they don't waste their valuable time. Help them understand that quietly trying to figure out life and the world around them is not a waste of time.

64 – Expert Demonstration

Arrange to have an “expert” demonstrate an important scouting skill or tradition to the scouts as they arrive. Try to have some “hands on” involvement during the demonstration.