

SCOUTING INVITATION METHODS



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Cape Cod & Islands Council



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Preface

There is no greater task, no more noble endeavor than to raise our young people to be adults of high standing and good character”

- Tecumseh (1768-1813), Chief of the Shawnee

Since 1910, the Boy Scouts of America has been helping turn our young people into honorable adults; adults of high standing and good character. But to derive the benefits of Scouting, our boys, young men, and young women must be members.

Will Rogers said, “The only problem with Scouts is there aren’t enough of them”. What you do is important for our young people, our communities and our nation. The following material has been prepared to assist you in inviting new families to join the Scouting program.

From the Scout Executive

Dear Scout Leaders,

You have probably heard the poem, “One Hundred Years From Now”. It concludes with the line “One hundred years for now it will not matter what kind of car I drove, how big a house I lived in, or the size of my bank account. What will matter is that I was important in the life of a boy.”

As leaders, you have become very important in the lives of many boys, young men and young women. You know it takes work to make a successful Scout program. And you also know it takes people, the more the merrier! That is the purpose of this booklet, to help you find more people to make your program more successful. Because it is by recruiting young people that we identify and recruit new parents and leaders. We know every year we are going to lose members to graduation, relocation, and other activities. If we are not actively seeking to replace them and add more, individual programs suffer.

It is by recruiting young people that we identify and recruit new parents and leaders.

The guidebook has been created to assist you by offering a series of quality invitation methods to reach each and every eligible young person in our communities. Our goal is to give every eligible youth on Cape Cod and the Islands the opportunity to join Scouting. This collection of invitation ideas will help us ensure no one is left out. We challenge you to use these ideas, to use your imagination and help spread the excitement of Scouting.

Thank you for all you do for young people and their families.

Yours in Scouting,



Michael R Riley

Scout Executive

Methods of Invitation

The following invitation methods may seem obvious. They are easy to do yet easy to overlook. You and your Scouts can use these and your own creative ideas all year long in a variety of settings while creating an awareness of Scouting in your community.

Scouts and Leaders, wear your uniforms often.

Materials Needed: Your uniform

Timing: Whenever possible

Steps: Wearing the uniform is like a walking billboard, and can get the attention of youth and adults. The uniform also serves as a conversation piece. Scouts and leaders should wear their uniforms to school, church, the grocery store, library, sporting events, any place you can think of. The uniform (or any Scout attire) is a great way to show the presence of Scouts in your community and spread the excitement. Be sure every member of your pack, troop, crew or ship wears the uniform to school on the day of your Join Scouting event, open house or firstnighter and for Cub Scouts, to school, on the days your den and pack meets. Remember the uniform is not complete without the person inside. Be knowledgeable about what all the patches mean and share the excitement of Scouting.

Encourage Scouts to talk about Scouting with their friends.

Materials Needed: Experiences and stories to show how and why they enjoy Scouting.

Timing: As often as possible

Steps: Word of mouth is one of the most powerful and lasting forms of advertising. Youth talking to others about the fun they have is a great way to spread the excitement among youth. Use the “recruiter” patch or create your own incentive program to reward Scouts who bring a friend to join Scouting.

Adults should do this too (*Word of Mouth*)

Materials Needed: Voice, conversation and excitement of Scouting.

Timing: As often as possible.

Steps: Scout families consistently see the value of Scouting in their own lives and by this they are our best sales people. Share Scouting’s benefits and excitement with other parents. Most families are looking for programs filled with excitement and opportunities for leadership development and positive values. Most families are involved in lots of activities including sports and church. Use these forums to interact with parents as participants in their children’s activities and not just spectators.

Peer to peer is the most effective form of advertizing and recruiting. That means youth to youth, and parent to parent.

Show and Tell

Materials Needed: Photographs, awards, uniforms, pinewood derby cars, climbing gear, camping equipment and any other exciting visuals.

Timing: Before the Join Scouting event and any time during the school year.

Steps: Encourage youth to use Cub Scouting as part of their “show and tell” opportunities in school. Peer-to-peer recruitment is very successful and this is a great forum for Scouts to share their stories and the excitement of Scouting. Be sure they are prepared with a story or exciting information. If possible, provide stickers or handouts for the Scouts to distribute to friends or after a presentation.

Wow! We had a great time. You should have been there!

Develop a Unit Information Sheet

Materials Needed: Paper, pen or computer, key information for your pack, troop, crew or ship.

Timing: Have a fact sheet prepared to give (e-mail, fax or send) to any family at any time throughout the year (in addition to your Join Scouting event).

Steps: This is your opportunity to brag about your unit. Include information such as date, time and location of meetings, contact information for key leaders (with phone numbers and e-mail addresses), list upcoming events. Provide your chartered organization a copy of the fact sheet so they can answer questions they might receive regarding their Scouting programs. Ensure all adult leaders and parents have the same information. If produced as a brochure or pamphlet, include exciting pictures and details about why you are involved.

Join Scouting Event Information Fliers

Materials Needed: Your District Executive can order council-provided flyers or you can create your own. Be sure to include the date, time and location of your recruitment meeting and a contact name and phone number.

Timing/Steps: Plan your fall join Scouting event within the first few week of the school year. Meet with faculty contact early to get your meeting booked. Order your fliers through your District Executive by mid-August. Before your join Scouting event, be sure fliers are delivered to the school(s) and any other outlets seven to ten days prior to the meeting.

NOTE: Pre-stacked fliers for classrooms will facilitate distribution to teachers’ mailboxes and ensure timely delivery.

Personalized Invitation Letter

The direct mail, targeted approach is especially effective with Boy Scouts and Venturers/Sea Scouts.

Materials Needed: Target market mailing list, envelopes and postage. Use Scouting themed stationery or cards. Work with school officials, PTA, church or sports teams to secure mailing/distribution lists.

Timing: Mail or deliver seven to ten days prior to the join Scouting event.

Steps: Boys and girls love to receive their own mail! Personalize letters or cards with individual recipients' names and addresses. Include your program information; event date, time and location plus contact names and numbers.

NOTE: Use e-mail addresses if you have them.

Telephone Call to Families

Materials Needed: Telephones, list of numbers, volunteers

Timing: Two to three days prior to your join Scouting event.

Steps: A phone call to the parents of a potential Scout is an effective way to recruit new families (especially as follow up to a direct mail or personalized letter). Be prepared to answer questions and share specific benefits of Scouting. Names and numbers may be obtained through school, church or organization directories, telephone books or the internet.

Be courteous and identify yourself and what association you might have with them. For example, "Our sons are in the same class at school."

SAMPLE TELEPHONE SCRIPT

"Hello, my name is ____ and I'm calling to invite you to our join Scouting event. My son ____ and your ____ are in the same class."

Share facts: Scouting is a character education program reinforcing family values, the #1 extra curricular program in America, and Fun!

Close the call with "We look forward to seeing you at the meeting. How many from your family will attend?"

Display Cases and Bulletin Boards

Materials Needed: Program calendar with contact names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers, photographs, awards, and any other exciting visuals.

Timing: The beginning of the school year is critical. This is when families decide to join new activities. The display should be maintained year-round and changed monthly.

Steps: Look for any location with a display case; school, church, recreation center, or other organization. Have one person responsible for maintaining the display on a regular basis. Use monthly themes supported by eye-catching display items. Make it Fun and informative. Keep it fresh!

School PA or TV Announcement

Materials Needed: Use National Council produced PSAs, pre-record your own or go on live.

Timing: The week of the join Scouting event and throughout the year, especially the day of pack, troop, crew or ship meetings.

Steps: Visit school administration regarding playing a tape/disc or allowing a leader to make a special announcement. Deliver any material in a timely manner and with a thank-you note.

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT

“All boys are invited to bring their parents to learn about Boy Scout Troop (#) which meets right here at (location). If you like swimming, hiking, field trips, challenging outdoor activities and having fun with friends, you’ll have fun with us. The meeting starts at ___PM in the cafeteria. Hope to see you there.”

School, Church, Community or Business Newsletters and Websites

Materials Needed: Information or announcement regarding your program

Timing: Any time throughout the year, especially in the first month of school, a week or two prior to your join Scouting event.

Steps: Begin promoting your event two weeks prior to the date. Include information which will attract the reader’s attention while sharing logistical information about the unit. Post on the school’s website if they have one. Send press releases to local new outlets.

School, Church, and Civic Functions

These events are great public exposure for your program. Be there and look sharp. A poor public appearance will leave a poor impression of you and the program.

Materials Needed: Display table with pictures (include video) and items particular to your program and activities, fliers with join Scouting event or unit meeting information, leadership roster, sign in sheets, youth and adult applications.

Timing: Set up display at all school open houses, back-to-school nights, curriculum nights, carnivals, parent/teacher conferences and other church or civic events.

Steps: Get permission from the school administration or church early enough to secure the best, most visible location. Complete set up 45 minutes to one hour prior to prospective family arrivals. Staff displays with uniformed leaders and Scouts. Leaders need to be sufficiently informed to answer questions about unit operations and should introduce themselves to prospective families as they arrive. Invite families to sign up at that time. Use sign in sheets to capture contact information for follow up. Make follow up calls to all who sign in and invite them personally to any upcoming recruitment event or local activity.

Sunday School, Classroom, and Lunchroom Visits

Materials Needed: Scout uniform, invitation flier with join Scouting event information, Scouting visuals

Timing: The day before or the day of the join Scouting event.

Steps: Work with the church or school to arrange visits well in advance. If doing classrooms, ask for a map so none is missed. Arrive on time and check in at the office. Ask the teacher or pastor to introduce you. Time is precious so keep it short, fun, positive, and to the point. Conclude by giving every boy a flier, thank them and the teacher. Check out at the office.

As leaders, you have become very important in the lives of many boys, young men and young women.

Sample Presentation

You can see by my uniform that I am a Cub Scout. Does anyone know what the word eligible means? ... Right. It means you are old enough; and you *are* old enough to be a Cub Scout like me.

As a Cub Scout you get to build things like this pinewood derby car. You can sleep on a battleship, go on hikes, go camping and fishing, and play sports too. And all this is with your family and friends.

Now if you want to be a Cub Scout like me, you need to tell your mom and dad tonight that you are old enough to be a Cub Scout then make sure they see this flier you'll have in your take home folder. We'll see you tomorrow night.

Program Champions

These are teachers, principals, coaches or religious and community leaders who provide program endorsements.

Materials Needed: A highly influential teacher, member of PTA/PTO, principal, coach or pastor who has his or her finger on the pulse of the organization.

Timing: Program champions begin endorsing Scouting during the first week of school. Statements of support are extremely helpful before, during and after join Scouting events.

Steps: Educating administrators on the benefits of Scouting to families, the school and the community is very important. Endorsements may be through the newspaper, during an assembly, a public forum, or at a join Scouting event. Direct mail can include a quotation or it can be on his or her letterhead. Past or present association with Scouting adds credibility.

Institution Head Visits

Materials Needed: Handouts on the Aims & Methods of Scouting, a clear written statement of the objectives of chartered partner support and the benefits to the organization gained through support of Scouting programs.

Timing: Contact the chartered partner at least three weeks prior to the join Scouting event.

Steps: Meet your chartered organization's executive officer (institution head) with a well organized set of support material tailored to the program knowledge and experience of the individual. Tell the institution head about the benefits derived by the institution through its support of Scouting as well as thoughts derived by the organization's youth.

News Releases to Local Newspapers and Community Cable Stations

Materials Needed: A news media directory with contact information as well as publication dates and deadlines.

Timing: Information released too soon will be forgotten; too late will not be published.

Steps: The first line of a press release is the attention getter immediately followed by clear and concise what, when and where. Include your unit's contact information. A press release is one page used to promote your join Scouting event or feature an activity or other event.

Business Window/Counter Displays

Materials Needed: Eye catching poster or brochure with all pertinent information including contact information.

Timing: Year round, but specifically the weeks prior to a join Scouting event.

Steps: Solicit support for your program with local businesses and organizations willing to display posters and brochures. Be prepared to comply with their restrictions for placement and timing. Be prepared to restock as needed.

Yard Signs

Materials Needed: Drive-by signs are viewed for 5 second or less. Large, bright logos clearly identify your program. Keep the message on drive-by signs to the absolute minimum (e.g. "Join Here") with a phone number in 4-inch, easy to read, block numbers.

Timing: Post signs prior to the beginning of the school year and for at least one month before and after a join Scouting event.

Steps: Check for any local signage regulations. Post signs in high traffic areas and in the vicinity of a join Scouting event. Signs should not advertize a past date. Viewers will think they missed it and it is too late to join.

A sign-in sheet at all events where the public is invited is critical to enabling follow up.

Special Events

Materials Needed: Posters, general information, fliers, sign-in sheets, and youth and adult joining applications.

Timing: Display public invitations and mail direct invitations to families two weeks prior to your event. Follow up with phone calls to invited families two days prior.

Steps: If possible secure a public location for events like pinewood derbies. Have a dynamic agenda with lots of activity. Be sure to capture follow up contact information on anyone who shows interest.

Church, School, or Business Marquee

Materials Needed: Eye catching message.

Timing: Change the message regularly to keep it fresh.

Steps: Be clear on the duration of use and any other restrictions or requirements. Look for opportunities like scrolling messages in school lunchrooms as well as public and private locations.

Pack, Troop, Crew and Ship Websites

Electronic media has become a primary source of information and advertizing. WebPages and websites need to be fresh and interesting every time a user visits. A good unit website can be a valuable internal communications method as well as advertizing medium.

Materials Needed: Website host, internet provider, at least some basic computer skills and comfort.

Timing: Year round

Steps: Build a website containing information for internal consumption and to promote your program to the public. Pictures are great for generating excitement but be sure to have talent releases before publishing photos and be familiar with and follow BSA and Council website security and privacy policies. Ask schools, churches and community and civic organizations to link to your site.

Announcements in Church, Neighborhood, Subdivision, Company, City, School District, or Recreation Center Newsletters

Materials Needed: Promotional material about your program including contact information.

Timing: Distribute promotional material two weeks to a month in advance of your event.

Steps: Create something interesting to read and generate excitement about joining Scouting. Provide material in the format required for each publication and in time to make the desired publication date.

Halloween Candy

Materials Needed: Scout uniform and a large bowl of mini chocolate bars each labeled "Join Scouting" with contact information for your unit or the Council.

Timing: Afternoon and evening of October 31st.

Steps: Wear your Scout uniform to welcome trick-or-treaters. Give out Scouting candy. Preparing the candy bars can be a fun activity for your youth members. Have the Scouting candy given out by all unit families.

Follow Up Join Scouting event

For those who missed the join Scouting event information, were out of town, or just couldn't get there for some reason, schedule a second opportunity.

Most families are not aware they can join Scouting at any time, year round.

Materials Needed: Recruitment fliers with date, time, location and contact person name and phone number.

Timing: Immediately after the primary event, publicize a second opportunity to join Scouting. The second date should be within two weeks of the first.

Steps: Prior to the second event, follow up with any families attending the first event who have not joined. Most families are not aware they can join Scouting any time, year round or they may have been indecisive about joining.

In Conclusion

Thanks for your efforts ...

As Scout Leaders you are very important to the success of the program. We applaud and thank you for taking an active interest in your community's youth.

The Cape Cod & Islands Council, your Unit Commissioner, and your District Executive are here to support you. They are available to assist you with all aspects of your program including recruiting, training, planning and money earning.

The Cape Cod & Islands Council will support the Join Scouting events, open houses and firstnighter efforts of all our packs, troops, crews and ships through the possible use of television, newspaper and radio public service announcements, as well as other effective and efficient means of advertising. If you have an idea of a resource which would help to further these efforts, please contact your District Executive at 508-362-4322.

Give every eligible boy, young man and young woman the opportunity to join Scouting as a Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Venturer or Sea Scout.

In addition, the council marketing committee, along with leaders from some of the council's most successful units, seeks other ideas (your ideas) for marketing Scouting throughout the council and in your neighborhood. Ideas range from truck-mounted signs to aircraft-towed banners. To participate in this effort, contact the marketing committee through the Council Service Center.

The next question is, "What do we do now?"

- ✓ Begin to plan your Join Scouting event, troop open house, or crew firstnighter. Select the date and decide which methods of invitation you will use.
- ✓ Contact your District Executive to share your recruitment plan
- ✓ Conduct your recruitment event
- ✓ Register new youth immediately following your event so they will be eligible to participate in your program.

Register new youth immediately following your event so they will be eligible to participate in your program.

These items and services are available from the Council Service Center, your District Executive and your Unit Commissioner:

- ✓ Recruitment flyers and posters
- ✓ Parents Orientation Guides "What Parents Should Know About Scouting on Cape Cod and the Islands"
- ✓ Volunteers for in-school Join Scouting presentations
- ✓ Current youth and adult joining applications (Do not use obsolete forms).
- ✓ General information regarding Scouting programs

Your Ideas