

Is Scouting Right For Our Son?

Written by Scoutmaster
Thursday, February 24 2011 19:00



“In A Word: YES!” The Boy Scouts of America® program is an excellent way for young pre-teens and adolescent young men to build character, confidence and place them on a path for success in life.

The real question a parent needs to ask is: "Is this troop RIGHT for my son?" Every troop is different just as the boys and leaders who make up the troop are different. We come from varying cultural and economic backgrounds, with a diverse educational, skills and business background. Just as every father or mother is different, so are our scout troops.

What Troop 333 would like to stress is we want scouts and families that WANT to participate, be together whenever possible to witness their son's development and form lasting friendships. We feel that scout skills and the methods of scouting are wonderful and we actively promote the boy lead troop concept. But even that can mean different things to others depending on their perspective.

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Our Troop Is Inclusive

Our troop welcomes all children and parents. We INCLUDE women in leadership roles, or even acting as assistant scoutmasters. Other troops may lose 50% of a troop's talent when they omit women from serving in all but administrative capacities. We have heard the rationale that the boys need to be out camping with the men, but we've also seen troop activities where the men don't even pay attention to the boys. And having witnessed this disconnect our troop wanted to make sure that we have actively engaged leaders.

We have also heard the arguments about "roughing it" and "not having mom around". We believe the mothers in our troop are fully capable of creating the proper distance in any situation.

As far as camping, we have yet to visit a location that didn't have accommodations for both sexes, and that includes Boy Scout reservations and campsites. They've all had bathrooms, showers and the necessary facilities. Our troop may in the future have wilderness treks, in which case, some women might not want to join us, BUT we will leave that decision to them. If you agree with that philosophy then we might be a good fit!

Our Troop Is Guided But Not Rigid

Troop 333 follows the Boy Scout principles but is not militaristic. We pledge allegiance to the flag, conduct ceremonies, and monitor behavior as all troops do, however, and we stress this, our troop is very careful about how it disciplines scouts, and how we assist their emotional development. Often overlooked in troops is the concept of using modern conflict resolution methods, like those many of us MUST employ at work. Being placed out in a remote area with new friends and leaders can be stressful. Normally well-behaved scouts can sometimes react poorly to their environment. HOW the leaders work with the scouts is important. There are troops that just let the boys work things out on their own. For many situations and personalities that IS possible. For others, it isn't appropriate.

Knowing when to take charge is exactly what this troop hopes to accomplish in those situations. Teaching interpersonal relationship skills and how to deal with others you may not agree with

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can be as useful as any camping skill we learn. It is especially important in young men who may overreact from hormones and other pressures in their lives. If you agree that we should work together as a team, and help each other succeed with the least conflict possible then please consider our troop.

Our Troop Has A Written Conduct and Behavior Code

Troop 333 follows the Boy Scout oath and law. We want to have everyone "on the same page" so we also incorporate a simple code that prohibits certain behaviors: No teasing, harassment, hazing, roughhousing, vulgarity, fighting, or incitement to fighting will be allowed. Vulgarity includes chanting song lyrics that would be offensive, for example, and scouts may hear such music at home but will not be sharing it among their friends at our events. There are several other items regarding conduct contained in our by-laws which we all follow and will be glad to discuss with parents. All parents and scouts should know these rules before committing to our troop. If you want a troop that allows freedom to succeed but monitors improper behavior then we might be right for you.

Modern Culture and Electronics

Various troops are very strict about use of electronics on trips. We want scouts to be able to function well, and form strong relationships. While we could blanket eliminate all access or use of electronics during trips we feel that is heavy handed. Scouts will not be allowed to use them in transit when they should socialize, nor during daily camp activities. However, once we recess from any evening activities, they will be allowed to use them before lights out. All volumes would be kept to a minimum. What some troops should recognize is that video games, app pads, and the ability to text are an integral part of modern life for these scouts. A reasonable approach to using these tools is preferable to halting their use entirely. If a scout abuses the privilege, as with any privilege, we will be able to address that individually.

The Patrol Method and Troop Morale

The patrol method used by the Boy Scouts is very important, but just as every scout is an individual, our leadership does not believe in penalizing everyone for a single scout's lack of adherence to rules. For example, if a scout breaks with his patrol during a hike and violates

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basic backwoods rules of conduct, we do not want to punish the whole patrol. This is not the military. All that does is breed resentment. And while some say it will achieve conformity, we think it will more likely result in hurt feelings and a scout leaving the program. Graduated response and individualized counsel is a better option to gaining the respect and cooperation of a scout. Our goal is to integrate patrols to work together, not punish groups to create dissatisfaction.

Parents, while able to observe and encourage their scout, may not interact with the scouts in person or in troop email, without first being approved by the committee to do so, then take the appropriate scoutmaster training, both indoor seminar and outdoor leadership skills. No parent may ignore BSA policy regarding youth protection nor our Chartered Organization requirements listed here and throughout our troop materials.

What Do I Have To Do As A Parent?

There are troops that operate almost like drop-off services. Some scoutmasters actually get offended if a parent remains in the room when the scouts are working. They consider it a distraction and parents are asked to leave. Not in Troop 333. There will be scout conferences, patrol meetings, and other times when the scouts will be engrossed in their work. There are also casual times when having others around should not be an issue. Our scoutmaster feels a balance can be maintained. We are adults and parents can be gently reminded if the scout needs some space. Again, we are not fans of blanket policies that deter strong relationships.

Parents are expected to assist where practical. If a demonstration is called for and a parent has knowledge in that area, we want to use those skills. Wherever possible, we want the scouts teaching the scouts, but there is no sense in scouts repeating misinformation, however well intentioned. This is very important in topics like first aid. Troop 333 will have adults knowledgeable and ready to prompt young scouts so that the information given is appropriate. Great training produces great results. Inaccurate training can be damaging. If you want to participate in your scout's career then please read on...

Parents should plan on reading all available scout materials even if they are not training to position as a scoutmaster. Please read your scout's manual, the scout field guide, the guide to safe scouting and the role/position manuals for the individual troop positions. Parents should also read and approve each merit badge book and inform the troop of any limitations their scout

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may have in completing the tasks.

Required of Every Family

All available parents are required to work with the troop. Troop 333 wants one parent actively on the committee and another working with scouts as an assistant scoutmaster or in another capacity. We do not require constant participation as we know schedules vary, but the core founders of this troop are very adamant about obtaining a high level of participation. We want parents to feel necessary, appreciated and enjoy watching the activity. Troop 333 is not a drop-off service. We realize other troops exclude parents, but we require their participation. If a parent cannot attend, then another qualified relative approved by the committee may attend. However, the person in charge of each scout must be a legal guardian.

Will I Have To Go Camping?

Yes. Every new scout will be required to have one parent join us on the first few camp-outs and more if a need is determined. This is not only to ensure a smooth integration for the scout into the troop dynamic, but also builds a bond of trust among all the leaders and parents, by demonstrating our styles and skills to each other in the actual working environment of the camp-out. Troop 333 feels it is important that our leaders earn your trust. Once a scout demonstrates they are fully capable of working independently, without other issues, the parent is welcome to bow out of trips.

We want informed and active parents who will read materials about scouting and follow their son's career with interest. The bonds we form as a troop will be closer, and as we progress to more challenging trips and activities, all the parents of our troop will have confidence in each other - what we can do, how we conduct ourselves, and how we deal with all our sons in the field. Once parents see the troop in action, we hope they will feel comfortable they made a good decision.

All parents will be required to join the troop as registered leaders, and obtain Youth Protection certification (available online at BSA - an approximate 20 minute course covering acceptable adult and scout interaction), submit their vehicle and insurance information, and to serve at

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times to transport either scouts or equipment. BSA rules require parents to open an online account and take the Youth Protection course before they can submit an application.

Will This Cost A Lot?

Our troop is dedicated to creating fundraising opportunities so that during the year the scouts will have the chance to earn everything they need to pay their own way. We believe that this helps prepare them for the realities of life. While parents may have to pay initial costs, we hope that each family will recover those funds from their scout's Personal Scout Account as he earns the money necessary to pay for his scout career.

The Mom Rank

While some troops have an attitude that the scoutmaster is supreme, ours does not feel the need to be in charge of every detail. He is not a drill sergeant. His job is to guide the scouts into making good decisions and let them fail where there is no safety issue. He does not contradict a parent's concern nor make demands just because of his leadership role, but he will intervene as needed to make sure parents are not overprotective or not complying with BSA and our Charter Organization policies. Working with parents is very important to our troop and our scoutmaster. He will be an advocate for the scouts in situations where they need support.

We are aware that any organization has politics, but we hope to build a unit as free from those kinds of pressures as possible. We want to focus on the success of the boys above all else. This is the kind of scouting we know we can create.

Special Needs

While our troop endeavors to cater to a wide range of scouts, any scout that has been

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determined to be unfit by reason of medical condition which we are not able to successfully manage may be asked to leave the troop at any time. Parents are required to put in writing all specifics relating to any special conditions, medications, programs or other scout needs prior to joining, and list any changes to these items after joining. This ensures leadership is fully aware of scout needs and able to address them. Failure to inform the troop of any outstanding medical issues could place your scout and our organization at risk. In this case, parents will be required to directly join their scout at all meetings, events, merit camps, etc. and monitor their child's condition. This also requires that a parent register, take youth protection training, and train as an adult leader to position within the first year of joining the troop. To do so, they must complete the indoor Scoutmaster training component and the Outdoor Leadership Skills component.

Joining Us

If you decide that Troop 333 might be right for you, please feel free to contact any adult member and they will be glad to talk to you and answer questions. We are less formal than some troops, and in some ways more strict than others. But ultimately, we want every parent to feel like they made a good choice for their family.

Thank you - Troop 333

If these ideas appeal to you and your son, please contact us using [THIS EMAIL FORM](#)

You will be notified of meeting place and time.