

To Recruit Boy Scouts, You Must Sell the Sizzle

Fall is a good time to recruit boys into Boy Scouting in conjunction with all of the Cub Scout recruitment events at schools. But Scout-age boys need more than just a flier distributed at school to be invited to join a Scout troop. With a little help from local troops, you can bring to life your Boy Scout recruitment efforts by focusing on Scouting's outdoor activities.

To recruit Scout-age boys successfully, you must spark their interests with an appealing presentation. Boys like camping gear such as backpacks, tents, cooking gear, and high-adventure equipment. Demonstrating a model campsite – complete with a camp kitchen with a peach cobbler in a Dutch oven – will get great results. Demonstrating a skill such as starting a fire with flint and steel and getting boys actively involved are effective ways to interest prospective new Scouts.

If you're recruiting boys in a community for several troops, a shopping mall, a movie theater, or a large retail store with heavy youth traffic are great places for prospects. In such a setting, you must have a list of area troops with the location and time of troop meetings and the Scoutmaster's name and phone number. Have the prospect fill out a high-adventure survey, which will give you the boy's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address. A display of outdoor gear will get boys' attention as they enter and exit the shopping area. The more outdoor gear you display, the better chances of having something that grabs a boy's interests. A portable climbing wall manned by several older Scouts will guarantee a gathering of boys eager to try their hand.

Follow-up with potential Scouts is vital. A phone call to remind them of the troop open house or the next troop meeting will increase your recruiting results.

After any recruiting effort, a troop should have an activity planned for the new members. Boys join for action and activities, and they will expect to do something soon after they join.

By Joe Glasscock, associate director Boy Scout Division