

## Planning a Den Year

### **Calendar:**

Pack 200 plans the next year's calendar in April or May. Once this task is done, make sure you have the church calendar, the school calendar, and holidays in front of you. Pack 200 recommends 2-3 den meetings a month and getting the meetings on the calendar is your next step. Brainstorm some extra outings with your parents encouraging parents to take on the outings. Our Pack Meetings are the first Monday of each month and most dens follow the Monday schedule. It is up to the dens to determine when they want to meet.

### **Den Meetings Planning:**

Planners and checklists are abundant on the National Council website [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org). The Cub Scout Den Meeting outline helps easily plan a meeting. The outline breaks out the planning into Before the Meeting, Gathering, Opening, Business Items, Activities, Closing, and After the Meeting. Keep the meetings moving. Cubs get bored quickly and need to change things up a lot. Put yourself in their shoe and recognize that after 5-10 minutes of discussion, a cub will lose interest. A loss of interest creates unhappy scouts, discipline issues, and boys acting out. Gauge the meeting with both active and non-active elements.

There are a number of resources to help you plan a meeting. *Cub Scout Helps* are published on the web, monthly *Scouting Magazine* and in magazine form containing the entire year. They are designed to plan your entire meeting; although, many leaders find *Helps* are great guidelines adding their own spin to the meeting. Leaders do not need to check off every requirement. In many cases, rank advancement is only dependent on the cub to complete a portion of the requirements. The leader needs to determine which requirements the scouts should complete the year and calendar when they each will be completed. *Cub Scout Helps* will also help you with the theme of the month.

*Cub Scout How-To Book* is wonderful and you should keep it with you at all times. It contains help on planning skits, pages of games, crafts, and suggestions with special needs kids. It will become the bling on your den meetings. The book is a good resource when planning meetings and great for those desperate moments when something does not work out.

Be Flexible! You will plan your entire year and the boys' schedules will mess it all up. That's OK! All your best efforts will pay off and a little flexibility on your part will go a long way to a successful year.

### **During the Meeting**

Keep it fun. The boys will get the good stuff you want to teach them but it must be fun. Scouting loses boys every year because they were not engaged in the program. This is a great time to let your hair down and have some fun.

With regards to order in the meeting, keep it strict early on in the year and loosen up as the year goes by. Establish a Code of Conduct at the beginning of the year with the boys' help. There are a number of ideas to help you. For example, give each boy a penny at the beginning of the meeting. If the boy violates a Code of Conduct, ask for a penny in return. If they lose all their pennies before the end of the meeting, they need to be asked to go home. The left over pennies are taken home. Post the "Code of Conduct" at each meeting and remind the boys these are their rules, not a mandate from the adults. Using the same "Code of Conduct", another idea is to light a candle during each meeting. When the discipline falls apart at the meeting, the candle is blown out. If the candle makes it down to a certain point by the end of the year, the boys get a pizza party.