



The OA and Cub Scouting

Increasing Engagement for Our Future

Session Objectives

- **Explain** the importance of the OA's involvement with Cub Scouting
- **Demonstrate** ways that the OA can provide support to the Cub Scouting program
- **Guide** participants in coming up with ways that the OA can increase Webelos-to-Scout transition rates
- **Enable** participants to implement various programs to increase OA support of Cub Scouting in their local council

Session Length: 50 Minutes

Appendix Resources

- OA Arrow of Light and crossover ceremonies (<https://oa-bsa.org/article/official-arrow-light-and-crossover-ceremonies>)
- Order of the Arrow Involvement in Cub Scouting handout (<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/13-069.pdf>)
- Northeast Region Cub Scout Task Force materials (<http://northeast.oa-bsa.org/resources/cub-scout-support>)

Required Materials

- Flipchart with easel
- Markers
- Overhead projector (optional)
- Computer with projector (optional)
- Small prizes for participation (optional)

Trainer Preparation

This session was designed to provide conclave participants with background and information on Cub Scout program. An effective trainer for this session should be someone familiar with all aspects of Cub Scouting, ideally, someone who has experience or involvement with their council's Cub Scout program. The trainer should also be highly energetic, enthusiastic and leverage his past training experiences in order to create enthusiasm among the participants.





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Session Narrative

Introduction

7 Minutes

Trainer Tip: The session trainer should introduce himself and the topic. He should provide information on his Scouting and Order of the Arrow experience (especially his knowledge and background with regard to the Cub Scout program), what lodge and city he is from and any other relevant items of interest. Please note: although this session narrative is written in the first person, trainers should not read directly from the syllabus and work to develop their own style of delivery while maintaining the integrity of the content.

At this time, I'd like to ask all of you who were in Cub Scouts, to please stand up.

Trainer Instructions: Ask some Arrowmen who were Cub Scouts why they joined the Boy Scouts? This exercise is meant to show the number of Arrowmen who started in the Cub Scout program and describe some of the reasons why they joined a Scout troop. Ideally, a large portion of participants will have been Cub Scouts clearly demonstrating its importance to the Boy Scout program.

As we just saw, a significant number of Arrowmen here today were Cub Scouts and it was probably a positive Cub Scout experience that served as a key factor in their decision to continue on into Boy Scouting. However, there are thousands of Cub Scouts who don't take the next step and leave the program prior to joining Boy Scouts. Unfortunately, total Cub Scout Membership has dropped 40% in the past 15 years from 2,114,420 at the end of 2000 to 1,261,339 at the end of 2015.

Today we are going to discuss the importance of the Cub Scout program and the role you and your lodge can play in supporting dens, packs, and the Cub to Boy Scout transition. However, before we discuss the opportunities the OA has to support the Cub Scout program, we should understand why it is so important to extend our service to Cub Scouting.

As Scouting's National Honor Society, we can provide service to the entire Scouting movement by enhancing various Cub Scout programs to encourage these young people to continue on in the Scouting program.

So, why should the Order of the Arrow care so much about Cub Scouts? Actually, the answer is pretty simple. Support of Cub Scout program is a key priority for the Order of the Arrow. The Cub Scouts of today are the Arrowmen of tomorrow. Just as people invest money in a bank to ensure future financial security (A Scout is Thrifty), so too should the Order invest time and resources in promoting and supporting Cub Scouts. Cub Scouts are the foundation to Boy Scout troop membership and thus the Order's membership.





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Cub Scout Program Background

8 Minutes

Trainer Tip: This section contains summary information about the Cub Scout program. While there is a great deal of background information that could be discussed, it is critical not to dwell on these points and take up too much time during your presentation. It is important to take the time to understand the information below and summarize.

Before we can discuss the opportunities the OA has to impact the Cub Scout program, let's take some time to understand more about Cub Scouting. After all, it has probably been a few years since many of us were involved and active in the Cub Scouting program and there have been a lot of changes in the last five years.

Since 1930, the BSA has provided a quality program designed for younger boys who are in the first through fifth grade, ages 7-10. And beginning in 2018, the program is now open to girls. Cub Scouting is a family program with parents, leaders and organizations working together in advancement and activities to achieve the aims of Cub Scouting: citizenship training, character development and personal fitness. Cub Scouting is the largest of the BSA's three membership divisions (the others being Boy Scouting and Venturing).

Cub Scouts join a pack, commonly affiliated with their school, church, or other community organization. They are assigned to a den, a neighborhood group of 6-8 boys or girls who meet weekly under the guidance of the adult den leader. Once a month, all of the dens and family members gather for a pack meeting, led by the Cubmaster and pack committee.

Advancement

The Cub Scout advancement plan provides fun for the boys and girls, a sense of personal achievement and strengthens family understanding as adult family members work with the youth on most advancement projects. Cub Scouts work with their adult partner to complete requirements that explore age appropriate indoor/outdoor activities, becoming more difficult and challenging as they advance through the Lion, Tiger, Wolf and Bear ranks. As a Webelos, they begin working on activity pins and become more familiar with the Boy Scout program as advancement focuses on the transition into a Scout troop. All advancement culminates with the Arrow of Light: Cub Scouting's highest award.

Where Boy Scouts work with their patrol and older youth in their troop to advance, Cub Scouts work with adult family members and their den leader. Cub Scout advancement focuses on building simple physical, mental, and citizenship skills in the family structure, while Boy Scouting provides surmountable obstacles and steps to build self-confidence, self-reliance, and the ability to help and lead others.

Camping

Age-appropriate camping programs focus on theme-oriented activities to introduce Cub Scouts to the great outdoors. It usually begins with day camping in the neighborhood and progresses with overnight resident camping, both developed within an adventurous and exciting theme. Many camps provide theme inspired structures (forts, castles, ships, etc.) to turn their campers' imaginations into reality.





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Camping occurs in local scout camps and at council-approved camping facilities. For most Cub Scouts, this will be their first camping experience, so they require different camping facilities. To insure a good experience, it is generally a “soft” camping location with flush toilets, cabins, permanent tent/sleeping structures, indoor shower facilities, etc. To help ease Cubs into the outdoors, many councils require more adults to participate in the experience.

While the Boy Scouts require only two adult leaders for all activities, Cub Scouts often further require one-to-one or two-to-one adult-to-cub ratio for camping. Because of this, many councils provide overnights for Cubs and an adult partner. Cub packs and some districts also organize family campouts, where other non-Scout siblings are often invited to increase parent participation. Webelos dens are also encouraged to participate in overnights with local Boy Scout troops. Sometimes these events are organized at the district level, with Scout troops providing Webelos-friendly activities.

Cub Scout activity requirements and advancement has changed over the years, but the intent remains the same: develop strong youth-family relations and establish a strong foundation of citizenship, leadership, self-awareness, and maturity that will grow and flourish once the Cub crosses over into Boy Scouts.

Current Support of Cub Scouting – Brainstorming Activity

10 Minutes

As the characteristics of Cub Scouting were discussed, I am sure many of you thought about your past experience as a Cub. You may have also considered opportunities that exist here the Order of the Arrow can assist in enhancing the Cub Scout program.

Let’s take time to list some of the Cub-Scout support initiatives our lodges or chapters are currently involved in. Please be specific as its through best-practice and resource sharing that we can improve and advance our support programs by learning from the success of others.

Trainer Instructions: The purpose of this activity is to discuss ways lodges are supporting the Cub Scout program. Solicit feedback from participants. Your goal will be to develop and encourage participation. Consider asking for review and recap of a really interesting support mechanism. Keep notes of what is discussed. This is to be run in a roundtable/open discussion format.

Increased Opportunities for the OA in Cub Scouting

20 Minutes

Trainer Tip: Budget the time in this section to allow for comments and questions from your audience. It is the intent to spark new ideas in each lodge for increased engagement in their Cub Scout programs. format.

Now that we’ve had a chance to list some of our ideas, let’s take a moment to discuss selected activities in-depth. These opportunities will be implemented differently throughout the country, catering to the various needs of the local council, lodge, districts, and Cub Scout packs.

Through various surveys, we know that Cub Scouts who have more opportunities for advancement and outdoor camping are more likely to join a Scout troop.





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Support Outdoor Cub Scout Pack and Den Activities

The OA can serve their local Cub packs by supporting their outdoor programs. Outdoor training for Cub Scout leaders is not nearly as focused as the outdoor skills training for Boy Scout leaders. In addition, for many Cub Scout leaders, it is often the first time that they have volunteered with Scouting or been involved in the program. For many of those leaders, camping and outdoor activities can be a daunting challenge.

Members of the Order of the Arrow are known for their leadership ability and outdoor camping skills. Furthermore, as “honor scouts,” we possess a great wealth of knowledge to share with our up-and-coming friends in scouting.

Ask any new Cub Scout why he or she joined Cub Scouts and camping is almost always one of their top reasons. Unfortunately though, it is all too often an activity that is rarely offered to the new Cub on a local level.

As OA members, we are well suited to provide training or assistance to Cub parents, leaders, and the Cub themselves on basic camping skills and equipment. It could come in the way of offering to make a presentation at a Pack Meeting, offering a team to actually camp with a Pack on a Pack campout, or teaching age appropriate outdoor skills and advancement at Den Meetings.

Support Council and District Outdoor Cub Scout Activities

Supporting district and council Cub Scout outdoor programs can come in many forms. Who better than OA members to assist the District Training Team in presenting BALOO training for Cub leaders? Many councils offer specific Cub Scout camping opportunities throughout the year such as Family Camp weekends, Mom&Me, Lad & Dad, Tiger Growl, Webelorees, etc. In many councils, these events are often short on staff. OA members are great candidates to help fill that void. Assisting with Cub Scout camping activities provides a great opportunity for your lodge to help support the local Cub Scouting program, retain Cub Scouts and help promote the transition into Boy Scouts.

Cub Day Camp/Resident Camp Support

Every council should have a Cub Scout day camp and overnight resident camping program. The two greatest opportunities your lodge has to support these programs are providing effective promotion efforts throughout the year and quality staff for the summer.

While the title may differ for each council, most lodges and Boy Scout summer camp programs utilize an OA Camp Chief position. This position can be easily adapted for Cub Day Camps and Resident Camps as well. By doing so, an OA Camp Chief on the Cub Camp staff can create a link between packs and the lodge. With so many packs in camp, this provides an excellent time for the lodge to communicate with the Youth in Blue and promote both the OA and Boy Scouting.

Working with the event leadership, OA members are well suited for any number of staff positions – whether it be direct program staff, logistical staff, a service corps, conducting campfires/shows, and much more.

The OA is accustomed to camp promotions – we do it annually in regards to Boy Scout summer camp. But how often do we promote Cub Scout Camping? Cub Scouts who attend day Camp and Resident Camp, are more likely to attend summer camp as a Boy Scout a few years down the line.





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Den Chiefs and Adult Volunteers

While weekly interaction with Cub Scouts by the OA as a lodge is impossible, we can still strive to have weekly contact with them through our individual members.

The Den Chief position has been around as long as Cub Scouting itself. Unfortunately, it is not a position that is embraced by all troops and packs. For troops themselves, the ones that do not provide Den Chiefs are losing out on one of their most valuable recruiting tools. As lodges, we could offer Den Chief training, promote the position to Pack and Troop leadership and probably most importantly, lead a concerted effort to have our individual members be willing to serve in the position back home.

Unlike a Boy Scout troop, a Cub Scout pack is adult driven. The sheer number of adults needed to present the program can be a challenge for many smaller packs. However, we as Lodges have a great, often under-utilized resource that can help to fill those gaps. How many OA lodges are challenged with finding roles for their young adults 21-25? These “tweeners” are no longer youth in the OA but because of their relative youthful status, are often overlooked by fellow adults in regards to adviser positions. These early adult years can be a drifting experience for many active, young OA adults looking to find a niche. Assisting Cub Packs by serving as Den Leaders and assistants, or on Pack Committees could be a great way for them to stay involved in Scouting. For those who volunteer to work with Webelos dens, the impact can be even greater, and the relationship between the OA and these soon-to-be Boy Scouts strengthened even more.

Cub-Specific Activities and Council Events

Your lodge can sponsor an event specific to Cub Scouts. One such event might be an Activity Pin midway. Council-wide activities are a great opportunity to reach out to a large number of Cub Scouts. From our discussion earlier, it sounds like many of our chapters and lodges are supporting this type of Cub Scout involvement.

Additionally, new member orientation or pack open houses provide a unique opportunity for the Order of the Arrow to engage Cub Scouts and their parents. The youth-parent experience during these initial encounters with Scouting will determine whether or not the Cub chooses to proceed with the program. The first step to joining Cub Scouts is selecting what pack to visit.

Once the Cub selects a pack to visit, they typically attend an open house or orientation with their parents. These meetings create a unique way for the OA to engage with Cub Scouts. As experienced Scouts who can speak to the fantastic opportunities that the Scouting program provides, we are ideal presenters to lead these orientations into the Scouting movement. Delivered by Arrowmen, new member presentations offer parents a glimpse into what doors Scouting can open for their child.

Financial Support

Program costs can sometimes be an inhibiting factor in a child’s (or parent’s) decision to join Cub Scouts. As a lodge, we can contribute funds directly towards supporting membership and activity costs. For instance, consider establishing a campership fund to support Cubs going to camp.

A less costly effort that can be undertaken by a lodge could be to host a uniform drive. Most of us have our old uniforms stuffed away in a closet. There are many in-need Scouts who would use what we have and are not using. Remember a Scout is Helpful and Thrifty.





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Additional financial support could come in the form of Cub-based service projects. As a lodge, we can contribute funds or direct man-power support of these projects. Ideas for such projects would be to develop theme-based structures/adventure areas in your council camps focusing on Cub Scouts, developing campsites to fit the needs of Cub Scouts, and/or providing quality bathroom/shower facilities. Remember, the OA National Service Grant is available to lodges seeking to make facilities improvements at their local camp; these include Cub-related facilities.

Webelos-to-Scout Transition Activities

First, it is critical to understand the importance of the Webelos-to-Scout transition. As a Cub Scout, crossing over into Boy Scouting is the culmination of years of their hard work; it is a major milestone for a Webelo and his parents. Recognizing these Scouts in a special way is crucial to keeping younger Cub Scouts involved in the program and promoting the transition into Boy Scouting.

Most lodges probably offer to provide ceremony teams for Arrow of Light Ceremonies and Cross Over Ceremonies. But are there other ways we can assist with the Webelos-to-Scout transition? Studies indicate that the largest drop in Scouting membership occurs during this transition phase, so as concerned honor members of the organization, we must do our part to ensure a successful future.

While the OA is not directly involved with the “transition”, there are steps we can take to generate a smoother, more successful process. The Webelo to Scout transition begins when the Webelo makes the decision to continue on into Boy Scouting. Parents naturally want their child to be as successful as possible so convincing the parents of the importance of Boy Scouting in their child’s life is crucial to ensuring that they remain with the program. With sports, school, and everything else that a youth can participate in, why choose Scouting?

We as Arrowmen can serve as role models to the future members of our organization. Having OA members serve in the Den Chief role can provide this valuable link between the OA and Cub Scout. When a Webelo is Den is ready to cross over into a troop, having the Den Chief cross with them switching over to a Troop Guide position can help provide some solidarity during a time often found daunting for new Scouts.

Lastly, consider offering pack presentations designed for parents and their child which outlines the importance of Boy Scouting and the influence it can have. When delivered by a youth Arrowman, parents are able to see the presenter, know the importance of Scouting to him, and will want the same for their child. Much like the open house/orientation presentations, having Arrowmen present this content allows a parent to observe the type of leader that their son or daughter is able to grow into and showcases some of the exiting opportunities available to the Webelos upon joining a troop.

Conclusion

5 Minutes

Thank you for your participation and input today. We discussed some specific ideas that can positively impact your council’s Cub Scouting program, as well as hopefully sparked ideas for new programs. However, these ideas will be useless unless you take them back home and apply them in your chapters and lodges. The Order of the Arrow has a long history of outreach and support to Boy Scout troops and local council Boy Scout programs and activities. We have long realized that Scout troops are the lifeblood of our organization. However, we have not had as much realization and success in doing the same for Cub Scouting. Boy Scouts are the life blood of the Order, but Cub Scouts are the life blood of the Boy Scouts. Statistics show that more than 90% of Boy Scouts





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started as Cub Scouts, yet we lose large numbers of Cub Scouts each year who do not cross over to Boy Scouting. The health of our troops depends on the health of our Cub Scout packs.

