

Troop 728

Scout and Parent Orientation Guide

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TROOP 728

SCOUT AND PARENT ORIENTATION GUIDE

“If you give a man a fish, he’ll feed for a day. If you teach him to fish, he’ll feed for a lifetime”.

The Boy Scouts of America are teaching young men to fish.

As parents, we have charged ourselves with raising our children to be good, responsible, patriotic, religious, and self-supportive individuals. By involving your son in Boy Scouts, he will learn to live the Scout Oath and the Scout Law, and you will be contributing to his growth and accomplishment of those virtues. Scouting is rewarding and fulfilling, and as we watch our sons develop and grow, make their own decisions, take care of themselves in the outdoors, and become resourceful leaders, we know that we have done our best. What is exciting about Scouting is that we all have so much fun!

Welcome to Troop 728!

Troop 728 was founded in February of 1958. Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church is our chartering organization, and we draw many of our Scouts from Saint Paul School. However, we also reach out to our surrounding community to help provide our troop with a well-rounded mix of boys. Our “Scout run” troop offers a diverse Scouting program for boys from ages 11 through 17. Troop 728 enjoys a tradition of high achievement in rank with over 50 Eagle Scouts. Many of these Eagle Scouts have earned at least one Eagle Palm. Our troop provides programs to encourage the advancement of the Scout toward the rank of Eagle Scout, while still having fun and supplementing their growing needs.

Troop 728 promotes religious award programs (*Ad Altare Dei* and *Pope Pius XII*) and a large variety of camping and merit badge opportunities. A moderate sized group, our Troop is very successful with its camping program (over 50 nights camping multiple times), complemented with cooking, advancement, fishing, service, and religious award opportunities. Our Troop is ecumenical in nature, having welcomed Scouts of many different faiths to participate fully, providing Troop 728 with a richer experience in faith.

Our Adult Leaders are an integral part of the Troop. Scouting programs need Adult Scouters, and without them the Scouting programs cannot be accomplished. Our Scouters are dedicated to supporting the Scouts in the programs decided by the Scouts. Training and participation in the Camping Program are privileges the Scouters in Troop 728 take seriously and enjoy. Without dedicated Scouters participating in our Camping Program and our Advancement Program, the Scouts would not be making the accomplishments necessary for Rank Advancement, Merit Badge Accomplishments, Religious Awards, and Life Enrichment. Troop 728 needs Scouters so we can meet the needs of the Scouts.

We are glad you are here with us!

General Information:

Registration and Getting Started

You will need a Scout Registration form, from our Troop Secretary, to complete for your Scout. We also need an Adult application for anyone having contact with the boys.

In addition, please ask the Troop secretary for an “Annual Health and Medical Record” form, or download one via the internet from the Circle 10 Website (<http://www.circle10.org>), so when your son goes camping with us, we will already have the information we need about his medical condition. The parent should review this form in January of each year. The form has three parts: Parts A and C must be completed annual by all Boys Scouts of America unit members, adults and boys. Part A is a medical history and list of medications. Part C is a parental informed consent form and hold harmless/release agreement. Part B is also required for longer or more strenuous camps, and has to be completed by a certified and licensed health care practitioner.

All Scouts and adults attending BSA functions or camping with Scouts should complete the Annual Health and Medical Record form **yearly**.

Please also see the Troop secretary and ensure she has the Scout and the parents’ names for the roster of our Troop members. We also add home addresses, telephone numbers (work, home, and cell), and preferred e-mail addresses. Our Troop uses e-mail extensively to communicate upcoming events and important information to our parents and Scouts.

Troop Meetings

Sunday nights, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of the St. Paul the Apostle Catholic School located at 720 S. Floyd Road, Richardson 75080.

We normally do not hold troop meetings the Sunday of a campout weekend. We do hold troop meetings in the summer, as Scouting is a year-round activity.

Troop calendars are uploaded to our website: <http://www.troop728.net>.

BSA Organization

The Boy Scouts of America national headquarters is located in Irving, Texas. The United States is divided into Councils, the Councils are divided into districts, and the districts are divided into units. Units are Cub Scout Packs, Boy Scout Troops, and Venture Crews. We are in the North Trail District (which covers University Park, Highland Park, Richardson, and parts of north Dallas) of the Circle Ten Council, which covers most of North Texas. North Trail District is the largest district in the Circle Ten Council, in terms of number of participants. It is an extremely active district.

Circle Ten Council owns and operates four Scout camps:

- ▶ **Camp James Ray** at Lake Texoma
- ▶ **Camp Constantin** at Possum Kingdom Lake
- ▶ **Camp Wisdom** in Duncanville
- ▶ **Camp Cherokee** in East Texas near Athens

Each district, and the national organization, keeps records of which units participate in district and BSA events, and each year they recognize troops who are the most active. Troop 728 has regularly earned Quality Unit Awards, District Service Gold Awards, and various National Camping Awards, reflecting the high level of participation and commitment consistently reached by our Troop. Our Troop is an active one, offering high adventure camping to locations such as Philmont, Camp Orr, Chisholm Trail, Steele Island, and the Grand Tetons. We take pride in our participation in Summer and Winter Camps and attempt to make our District level Camporee, where many of

our Scouts compete with other troops in numerous camp skills. For Summer Camp held at Camp Constantin, we have won Best Camp multiple times (most recently in 2007), 1st place in sailing regatta, and championed the raft building/race. For Winter Camp, the principal camp to work on Cooking Merit Badge, our troop has excelled in multiple cooking competitions, fishing and, without a doubt, has THE BEST feast around (cooked by the boys)!

Our special awards and individual championships include Cavalry Reenacting at Chisholm Trail, Order of the Arrow (Honor Campers), and Bass Master Troop and Best Fishing Troop.

Campouts

We plan a weekend campout once a month, except for December and June or July (Winter Camp is in late December, and Summer Camp runs in June/July). The campouts are usually from Friday evening until Sunday mid-morning. We usually meet Friday at 6:00 p.m. in the parking lot of the St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Class A uniform with personal gear and a sack dinner for Friday night. Based on the distance to travel, we may make one rest stop on Friday night and usually stop for fast food on the way back home on Sunday. Your Scout is encouraged to bring money for a snack or food when attending campouts. The Troop provides two-man tents for camping.

What each Scout needs to provide for himself for Campouts:

- A good sleeping bag, with pad or air mattress (no cots in our tents)
- Folding camp chair
- Mess kit and drinking cup or mug (*must be marked with Scout's name*)
- Water bottle ("Nalgene") or canteen (*must be marked with Scout's name*)
- Flashlight
- Scout Handbook
- Toiletries

As Needed:

- Cold weather gear
- Bug repellent (non-aerosol)
- Sunscreen
- Rain gear (poncho or rain suit)

What NOT to bring (Campout Contraband):

- Fireworks or sparklers
- Firearms, ammunition and archery equipment
- Sheath knives, axes, long-blade pocket knives
- Tobacco or illegal drugs
- Alcoholic beverages
- Inappropriate literature or magazines
- Radios, tape players, TVs, CD players, electronic games or any other electronic equipment
- Laser pointers
- Cots (*except for Summer Camp*)
- Aerosol cans of any kind
- T-shirts or other clothing with inappropriate decals, rock bands, or language

- Camouflage clothing (*it is prohibited at BSA activities – the BSA tries very hard to extinguish anything that would give a “paramilitary” image.*)

Troop Equipment

Our troop is fully equipped for overnight camping with equipment trailers, tents, patrol cook boxes, tables, lanterns, rain flies, stoves, and tools.

Troop Finances

The Troop is financed a number of different ways. Each Scout pays monthly dues of \$15.00, which covers most of the costs of his food while camping and the cost of his merit badges and awards earned while actively participating in the troop. You should pay monthly dues in advance of the month they are due. Dues may be paid monthly, quarterly, or annually. Occasionally, you will incur extra costs relating to Summer, Winter, or High Adventure camps, or if we do something that requires extra expenses for a special activity. **Unique to Troop 728 is our Training and Certification Reimbursement Program:** if a Scout or Scouter receives approval to take a Training or Certification Course by the Committee or Scoutmaster, once the training is complete and the Certification is attained, part of the Tuition or Fees associated with the training is reimbursed. This only includes Tuition and Fees, but can add up to a considerable amount.

We participate in BSA annual fundraising activities and events, such as popcorn sales. The Troop keeps a portion of the proceeds for the items we sell. We also have special fundraisers to assist with the high adventure and district camps including hosting a Spring golf hole in one shoot out and other programs. These fundraisers are key and critical to the financial well being of the Troop and account for over a third of our budget.

Uniform and Handbook

Your son will need a complete Class A uniform (as described below) and Boy Scout Handbook, which will cost about \$75 altogether. For Courts of Honor, your Scout will need a merit badge sash after he begins to earn merit badges.

Troop 728 provides each new Scout with a olive green shoulder loops, a troop neckerchief, troop number patch, neckerchief slide, and “Class B” Troop t-shirt.

Our Troop has “Class B” t-shirts to purchase. Please ask one of the uniformed adults for additional information on costs and styles.

The Scouts are expected to wear olive green uniform shorts or pants with their uniform shirt. This “Class A” uniform is required for BSA sponsored camps (Camporee, Summer & Winter Camp, etc.)

You can purchase your son’s uniform at the *Scoutfitter*, in the Circle Ten Council office at Harry Hines Boulevard and Regal Row or at the Scout Shop in Allen (on McDermott just West of Central Expressway). The district also has a “clothes closet” of second hand, gently used uniforms available at a lower price. See <http://www.Circle10.org> for details.

Class A Uniform

Scout uniform shirt, with olive green shoulder tabs, Circle Ten Council insignia, Troop 728 number, current rank patch and other insignia (*this is the same as the tan Webelos shirt, if you used*

that).

- Troop 728 neckerchief and neckerchief slide (or woggle)
- Scout shorts or pants
- Scout belt
- Scout socks

The Class A uniform should be worn to all official BSA functions and troop meetings.

We wear our Class A on Friday nights when we travel (an insurance requirement) to the campsite, on Sunday morning for the return drive home.

When in doubt about what is appropriate, wear the Class A.

“Class B” Dress

- Troop, Scout camp, or BSA t-shirts or sweatshirts.
- Appropriate pants or shorts (blue jeans or olive green/khakis).

“Class B” allows for a Scouting-related t-shirt or Scouting-related polo shirt. Summer camp t-shirts, Troop t-shirts, high-adventure t-shirts, BSA polo shirts, etc. are all acceptable. T-shirts from a rock concert, with political slogans, or anything inappropriate to Scouting goals and ideals are not acceptable. *(BSA does not officially recognize a “Class B” uniform. This is a troop discretionary subject.)*

Adult Uniform

Registered adult volunteers (called “Scouters”) always wear their Class A uniforms to any adult leader training activities and Roundtables (Monthly District sponsored information trading meetings), and are encouraged to wear a Scout uniform to all troop functions. The Key Training Mantra is: *Setting the Example*.

Boy Scout Handbook

A new, current, Boy Scout Handbook is **required**. Not only is it the best reference for rank advancement requirements and the information needed by all Scouts, it serves as the permanent record for the Scout’s accomplishments as he progresses through the program. Your Scout will take this book to all meetings and campouts, so we recommend you get a good protective cover (usually with a Velcro closure) at the same time you get the book.

Scout Ranks

In order, they are:

- ★ Scout
- ★ Tenderfoot
- ★ Second Class
- ★ First Class
- ★ Star
- ★ Life
- ★ Eagle

The first four ranks focus primarily on Scout skills. As the Scout advances to Star and beyond, the focus shifts to leadership. Historically, *more than half* of our Scouts have made Eagle. Eagle

requirements must be completed by a Scout's 18th birthday. All Scouts, regardless of rank, can earn merit badges, which are required for advancement through the ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle. We attempt to make our program rewarding for all Scouts, regardless of rank.

Acronyms, Terms, and Abbreviations

The following are some of the most common abbreviations you may see or hear:

ALT: Adult Leader Training (formerly called Scoutmaster Fundamentals)

SM: Scoutmaster

ASM: Assistant Scoutmaster

SPL: Senior Patrol Leader

ASPL: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

CM: Committee Member (adult leader)

MC: Committee Member in the Council vernacular

COR: Charter Organization Representative

OA: Order of the Arrow

PLC: Patrol Leaders' Council

QM: Quartermaster (both Scout and Scouter)

TFC: Trail-to-First Class (first year Scouts)

Wood Badge: Adult Scouter Training of the highest order

Oak Leaf: Initial boy Leadership Training

Golden Acorn (GA): Junior Leader Training and required to be SPL

National Junior Leader Instructor Training (NJLIT): Highest level of Leadership Training for Scouts

Summer Camp

It is important for your son to attend summer camp, especially in his first years in Scouting. Troop 728 usually attends summer camp the third or fourth week of June at one of the local Circle 10 or Longhorn Council camps. With boys of varying age we try to incorporate Summer Camp programs that offer unique experiences for older boys. Your son will get to know Scouts of various levels of maturity, sit down with a group of adult leaders in Boards of Review, and learn to work together in teams or Patrols. Troop 728 has a dedicated Troop Guide for first-year scouts, Scout Instructors to help teach the skills of scouting, and a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, (usually an older Scout that is Eagle or Life rank who works with the adult Scoutmaster to carry on the troop's programs). Summer Camp tends to be the primary springboard to direct the first-years through the initial Scout ranks. Summer camp is also an excellent opportunity to work on fun merit badges learned in an outdoor environment. The friendships that are developed at Summer Camp are without measure. Cost is currently running around \$200 for the entire week.

First Year Program

The Trail to First Class (TFC)

The overall goals of our first-year Scout program are to ensure that your son:

- Has fun
- Participates in troop and patrol activities
- Learns teamwork and Scouting skills

- **Advances in rank**

An Assistant Scoutmaster will be in charge of the first-year Scout program. Your son will be assigned to a patrol with other first-year boys and learn the *Patrol Method*, where each Scout will be given a position of responsibility in the patrol, and learn to work as a team at campouts. During weekly meetings, Scouts will break out into “Patrol Corners” to work on skills, and plan coming activities and campouts. Our Troop plans some activities on campouts exclusively for first-year Scouts. We integrate our first-year Scouts (not separate from) into the rest of the troop for these activities. Much of what your son will learn during his first year will come from interaction with older Scouts. One of the best ways to learn something is to have to teach it. Whenever possible we let the older Scouts teach the younger Scouts. While it educates and trains the younger Scouts, it polishes the skills and knowledge base of the older Scouts, making them leaders that are more effective. Our goal is to have a Boy-Lead Troop, and your son will have his part to do.

We gear our Troop 728’s program toward helping new Scouts achieve their First Class rank. The Trail to First Class is designed to teach Scout skills (camping, cooking, first aid, citizenship, knots) to the first year Scouts. Each boy will progress at a different pace, but by the end of his first year, most of them attain their First Class rank. Each summer camp venue offers a TFC program specially designed for new Scouts, where Scouts achieve approximately 75% of the requirements from Tenderfoot through 1st class. This is why it so important for first year Scouts to attend summer camp. The remaining items will be achieved at troop meetings, campouts, and other planned activities. Several months before we go to summer camp, we find out which TFC requirements will be available there, so we can fill in other areas before they go. By the end of summer camp, most all Scouts have achieved some level of advancement and only lack a few requirements for the next.

Statistics prove that the degree of parental involvement has a direct influence on how a Scout advances in rank. Troop 728 believes that the quality of the learning experience is more important than speed.

Campouts

Troop 728 plans campouts to usually fall on the third weekend of every month, except for months when we go to Summer camp, Winter camp or special High Adventure camps. We may also have months with more than one camp due to religious retreats or other planned activities (like backpack training). We try to incorporate variety in our camp locations and themes, and may camp at a Boy Scout site, state park, or even on private land.

The troop leaves the church parking lot on Friday evening (usually at 6:00 p.m.) and returns mid-morning Sunday. All Scouts need to have eaten or bring a sack dinner to eat Friday night. Full Class A uniforms are required for travel (this is required by insurance: we are covered by through Circle Ten Council).

Each patrol will plan and purchase food for that weekend’s camp. At this time we budget \$9.00 per Scout. One or two of the boys will do the shopping for the patrol and bring the groceries to the church on Friday night, perishables being stored in ice chests. The money for camping expenses and troop equipment comes out of Troop funds (which in turn come largely from monthly dues).

Each patrol works as a unit: to plan their menu, buy food, prepare fires, cook meals, and clean up. In addition, Patrols prepare their camping area and tent together (two Scouts to each Troop-provided tent). The only Scouts who may use personal tents are those who have earned that privilege through advanced rank. The Troop provides enough tents, in good repair, to house all camping Scouts. Adult Scouters are expected to provide their own tents and only share a tent with other adults by prior agreement. Please ask for advice before purchasing a tent so an experienced Scouter can give you tips on what is best for the kind of campouts we go on.

All campouts have a theme: sailing, canoeing, biking, hiking, orienteering, advancement; sometimes we'll just schedule a fun event like catapult building. For the Trail to First Class Scouts, some form of advancement activities will always take place. **The main goal, though, is to have fun and enjoy the outdoor experience.**

On Sunday morning, the Scoutmaster will inspect the camp followed by (at a BSA facility) a camp Ranger. Once camp is "broken down", we hold a final assembly to wrap up the weekend's activities, before the drive home.

Troop Organization

Patrols. Patrols are the basic building block of every Boy Scout troop. All other troop organization is designed to serve the patrols and the Scouts that are their members. Patrols are groups of six to ten boys who work together as a team. Each patrol elects its own leader. The patrol leaders, with the elected Senior Patrol Leader (who is the youth leader of the troop), Assistant SPLs, and other Troop officers, make up the Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC). The PLC plans and runs the troop program and meets once a month, normally at the first or last meeting of each month.

Patrol Leaders Council Meetings. PLC meetings are normally held following a camp weekend. The PLC reviews the execution of campout planning, refines planning for next month's troop activities and provides a forum to discuss the Scouts' ideas for improving their troop. The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) chairs this meeting, and each Scout in a troop leadership position attends. Always present at this meeting is the Scoutmaster, or an appointed Assistant Scoutmaster, acting as a guide.

Troop Committee Meetings. The troop committee (which consists of all parents who are not the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster) generally meets on the first Sunday of every month, prior to the regular troop meeting. We meet at the school in classroom 9 or 11 at 5:00 p.m. Every scout parent is encouraged to attend and be part of their son's Troop. Every registered adult leader is a voting member of the troop committee. At troop committee meetings, the primary purpose is to conduct the business of the troop, review financials and calendars, and discuss campouts and planned activities for the upcoming months.

Troop Elections. We hold elections for the boy leadership positions of the troop twice a year. Each Senior Patrol Leader, and other youth leaders serves in that position of responsibility for six to twelve months.

Courts of Honor. We hold Courts of Honor three or more times a year. Often, we plan our Courts of Honor around a potluck supper or a snack for all parents and family members to attend. At a Court of Honor, we recognize your son for any rank advancement he has earned since the last Court of Honor. Merit badges are presented and special awards or accomplishments are

recognized. It is a special time for your son, so please plan to attend and show your support for your son and his troop.

Leaders

The Boy Scouts of America's goal is to prepare young men to become leaders, not just in Scouting, but throughout their lives: leaders in the community, leaders in the workplace, leaders in spirit. The best way your Scout can acquire these skills is through hands-on experience. Therefore, the Boy Scouts, not the adults, hold the primary leadership positions in the troop.

Senior Patrol Leader ("SPL"). The Senior Patrol Leader, who is elected by the Scouts, is the top boy leader in and the recognized leader of the troop. When the troop or Patrol Leaders' Council comes together for a meeting or an activity, the Senior Patrol Leader is in charge. The SPL is assisted by the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL).

Patrol Leaders. Patrol leaders are the foundation of troop leadership. Each patrol elects its own leader. A patrol leader appoints each member of his patrol to a job so all can share in positions of responsibility. The patrol leaders plan and steer patrol meetings and activities, represent their patrols at the patrol leaders council, and report to the patrol the decisions of the PLC.

Troop Guides. Troop Guides are older Scouts, at least First Class in rank, who are appointed by the Scoutmaster. Their responsibility is to work with the younger Scouts in developing their Scouting skills.

Other Scout positions of responsibility. Other positions in the troop include Den Chiefs, Troop Quartermaster, Instructor, Troop Scribe, Troop Historian, Troop Librarian, Bugler, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, and Chaplain's Aide.

Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster is the "grand consultant" to the boy leaders who are running the troop. One of his most important responsibilities is to oversee and guide the youth leaders to make sure the *troop program* is properly followed. The troop program is the plan where the Scouts learn (and are taught) the principles of Scouting in accordance with BSA policies.

Assistant Scoutmasters. Assistant Scoutmasters are adult leaders and the chief aides to the Scoutmaster, usually holding responsibility in different areas of the program. Assistant Scoutmasters are trained individuals, having completed BSA-offered training courses such as Fast Start, Adult Leader Fundamentals, Committee Training, Scoutmaster Fundamentals, and Wood Badge (advanced leadership). Training is also available in Climbing & Rapelling, Archery, Shotgun, Safe Swim & Safety Afloat, CPR, and Health & Safety, to name a few. Some training, like Youth Protection, is required for all adults involved in scouting. For information on training opportunities, visit www.circle10.org or www.northtrail.org.

Just like the Scouts do, trained adults report their training information to our Advancement Chairman for input into the *Troopmaster* database.

Troop Committee Chair. The troop committee chairman manages the group of registered adult leaders (the troop committee) whose main job is to support the Scoutmaster and help him run a good troop. Committee members help with advancement and the outdoor program, handle troop finances, work with parents, raise funds, keep records, recruit other adult leaders, run boards of review and Courts of Honor and oversee troop communications. In short, the troop committee

and its chairman have two primary responsibilities—supporting the troop program and handling troop administration.

In Troop 728, every registered adult Scouter is a voting member of the troop committee.

Frequently Asked Questions

Always feel free to ask questions.

How do I stay informed? Our troop offers various ways to stay informed on what the troop is doing:

- If you provide our Troop Secretary your e-mail address, you will receive regular notices of camps, committee meetings and special events.
- Come to the troop meetings on Sunday nights.
- Check our website: <http://www.troop728.net>. Also see the Circle 10 Council website at <http://www.circle10.org> and the North Trail District website, at <http://www.northtrail.org>.
- For those Scouts who are a part of the Order of the Arrow organization, you can review the following website: <http://www.yanush.org>. (Note that adults can also become a part of the Order of the Arrow, nominated by the troop committee members.)

Who does what in the troop? Our troop consists of a Scoutmaster, several Assistant Scoutmasters, Committee Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Advancement Chairman, Camp Coordinator, Fundraising Chairman, Chaplain, plus other important support personal. Please meet each of these individuals, and ask how you can help.

How can I understand more about how a Scout troop works? Troop Committee Fast Start training is available on the Council website. This introductory resource will help you to understanding how a Scout troop is organized, (boy) run, and functions (through various committee members). All registered adults should visit this site.

Can I go camping with the troop? All registered adult leaders are welcomed and encouraged to go camping with the troop. BSA policy mandates that Youth Protection (now available online) be completed. Please plan to camp regularly, and participate in the outdoor experience with your son. Adult leaders bring their own tents, but the troop does have a limited supply that can be borrowed if necessary. The Scouts need adult leaders to sit on Boards of Review (we would like to eventually see you in uniform) and to lend a hand with camp activities. It's a lot of fun and you'll make some of the best friends you've ever had. We also have a yearly campout that is open to families and try to plan a second family event in the summer. We have even gone snow skiing!

Can parents who are not registered adult leaders go camping with the troop? We try to have at least one family campout each year for all parents and siblings to attend. With prior arrangement through the Scoutmaster, you may be able to attend other campouts, depending on the planned activities and the location of the campout – but it's easier to fill out the one page BSA document and be officially registered.

How much do campouts cost? Funding for campouts comes directly from monthly Scout dues. The Troop budgets a fixed fee per Scout for meals. Each patrol is responsible for making its own menu, purchasing groceries, and cooking meals. Usually, there are no extra charges for troop

campouts, but on occasion we might conduct an activity that requires an extra fee (e.g. canoe rental).

Do I need a Scout uniform? We'd like registered adults (both men and women) that have more than casual contact with Scout to wear uniforms. The adult uniform is identical to your son's.

Will my son receive leadership training? Just as adults working with the Scouts are encouraged to attend BSA training, your son is also given the opportunity to attend multiple leadership training courses. Our North Trail District is exceptional in its offerings. The two primary leadership-training courses, Oak Leaf and Golden Acorn, are offered throughout the year. Both leadership-training courses take place over a weekend on a BSA campground. Requirements for Oak Leaf are that a Scout be 13 years of age, hold a rank of First Class or above, have a minimum amount of overnight camping, plus have the Scoutmaster's approval. The cost is small and is eligible for reimbursement upon successful completion. The course is a short weekend experience. Requirements for Golden Acorn include having completed Oak Leaf training, attended a National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) orientation meeting, and attending the NYLT course, which is a more comprehensive coverage of Scout leadership and usually runs a full week in the summer. The troop currently will reimburse \$40 of the \$175 fee, which includes food for the entire period. The Scout will be given two t-shirts, one special hat, and all their training materials.

What type of events will we be involved in dealing with the church? You and your Scout have an opportunity to participate in service projects relating to the church such as Scout Sunday (in February), the Catholic Scouting Committee Awards Banquet (Bishop's Dinner), Catholic Camporee Retreat (in March), and the St. Paul Parish Community Sunday (usually in February). Troop 728 also offers the *Ad Altari Dei* Award for boys 13-14 years old, but we do encourage anyone older than 14 who are interested in earning this award to join us. As well as earning the *Ad Altari Dei* Award, the Scouts can also work on their *Pope Pius XII* award.

Why does my son need a current medical form on file? BSA requires that each Scout have a current "Annual Health and Medical Record" form on file. The form is updated each year by parents to ensure that current medical, contact, and insurance information is correct. This allows us to be better caretakers of your sons when they are away from home.

Can I come to troop committee meetings? Yes! Please do. In fact, your input will help manage the troop affairs. See above for details. We try to keep the meetings under 90 minutes in length. The Troop Secretary will keep minutes and shares important decisions via e-mail or web. Meeting agendas go out prior to each gathering to allow officers a chance to prepare discussion.

Can I come to troop meetings? Yes! We hope you will. The troop often needs your help as Patrol Mentors, to sit on advancement Boards of Review, or teach a skill, merit badge or advancement topic. We hope that as you become more involved you will wear the same scout uniform we require of the boys.

How will I know what merit badges my son is working on? Our troop works hard to keep the parents informed of what merit badges are being offered. Many times, the merit badge counselors will inform the parents of their Scout's status and any outstanding requirements that may need to be met for completion. Ultimately, it is a part of the Scout's growth to know what merit badges he is working on and what assignments need completion.

What is the “Totin’ Chip” and the “Fireman’s Chip?” Your son must earn the “Totin’ Chip” before he can carry a pocket knife or use a saw, axe, or hatchet at any Boy Scout activity. To earn the Totin’ Chip, he must demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of knife, axe, and saw safety. Your Scout must earn the “Fireman’s Chip” before using a gas stove or building a camp fire. Normally, our Scouts earn these “chips” in the Trail to First Class program at Summer Camp. Many times, an older Scout, overseen by an adult, will teach these skills.

What troop positions can I hold? If you are a registered Scouter, you are automatically a voting member of the troop committee. You can be a merit badge counselor. The troop committee chairman may ask you to serve in a yearly position, or on a subcommittee for a special event. Adults should seek out training to work with the Scouts; we are blessed with being in a District that offers a wide array of opportunities, from the specialized Adult Leader Training (ALT) that is specific for Committee members or Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster positions, to the activity-type training for Archery, Climbing, Water, and Shotgun. Adult Leader Training is a fun and informative training program that introduces adults to the structure of Scout troop. This program culminates in a weekend camp outing where ideas are exchanged among individuals from a wide range of area troops. The North Trail District or Circle 10 Council website is the best place to find out more. Also offered is an online FAST START program (www.circle10.org) that every adult in the troop should review. In addition, if you see some adults walking around with beads around their neck, or wearing a mauve-colored scarf at formal occasions, these adults who have completed Scouting’s highest level of training, the Wood Badge. This is a two weekend (or one full week offered each Summer in the mountains of NE New Mexico) training session. The Wood Badge provides adult leaders a chance to get invaluable training which is not only applicable in our scouting lives, but in our every-day business lives as well.

What is the Order of the Arrow? The Order of the Arrow is a fraternal, honorary camping society within the Boy Scouts of America. Emphasis is on service to others. Members of the OA are elected by their fellow Scouts upon completion of First Class rank. These scouts should have shown exceptional Scout spirit, completed a minimum number of nights camping, and be judged to be individuals that are willing to serve in the name of scouting. Elections are held once a year in the spring. The OA induction, or “tap out”, is held on Friday night at Summer camp plus at other district camps. Order of the Arrow Scouts are asked to assist in the planning and staffing of the district level Camporee held each spring. In addition, there are many opportunities to be involved in various service projects and camping activities outside one’s home troop.

What is a Scoutmaster conference? A Scoutmaster conference is a meeting between your son and the Scoutmaster or one of the Assistant Scoutmasters to discuss his progress in Scouting and to set goals for his next rank. A Scoutmaster conference is required for each rank advancement, and is a way for Scouts to vocalize their experiences, offer their criticisms, and know that they have a voice in the Troop. Scouts are encouraged to share their concerns or suggestions with the Scoutmaster, other adult leaders, and older scouts to build a best possible program for all.

What is a Board of Review? A Board of Review is required for each rank advancement beyond Scout. Your son must have completed all of the requirements and his Scoutmaster conference for that rank before he can have a Board of Review. Boards consist of at least three adults, who are registered adult leaders in the troop or adult leaders of the district or council. They talk with your son about his Scouting experience (likes and dislikes), his accomplishments in attaining the rank

advancement, his goals for the next rank, and what the Scout Oath and Law mean to him. We strive to have Scout input into all aspects of the program, and Boards of Review are an excellent opportunity to work things out.

How can I help my son along in Scouting?

1. For starters, just like your son will do, you can memorize the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, and Slogan.

The Scout Oath: On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty, to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law, to help other people at all times, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

The Scout Law: A Scout is: Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent.

The Scout Motto: Be Prepared.

The Scout Slogan: Do a Good Turn Daily.

When we say a Scout must “show Scout spirit” (which is a requirement for each rank advancement), we are saying, “act in accordance with these doctrines.” Aren’t these the same values we as parents want to instill in our children?

Scouting is a “safe haven” where your son can come and be respected as a person, and not be teased or ridiculed. We do not tolerate belittling others, pushing, hitting, or any other type of activity that is not appropriate for a Scout. Your son will always be invited and encouraged (but not forced) to participate in every activity. He achieves credit when he does his best.

Our Troop practices the same values and virtues you practice at home within the troop activities.

2. *Give him responsibilities at home.* Let him practice being **helpful** (the third item in the Scout Law).

A child who is responsible around the home will be more responsible at school, work, and in society. Let him accomplish assigned tasks with little, if any, help from you. This will instill the skills of responsibility, autonomy (I’m in charge of my job), perseverance (mistakes teach lessons, let him mess up), time management, initiative, self-reliance (I can do it myself), and resourcefulness.

Responsibilities provide the opportunity to develop a positive self-worth, i.e., **SELF-ESTEEM!** (from John Rosemund, *Ending the Homework Hassle*)

In Boy Scouts, we teach by getting the boys to do. In addition, the boys decide what needs to be done, and the boy leaders assign the other boys (and themselves) responsibilities for accomplishing those tasks. When they leave the nest, they’ll be ready. If they choose to not be a leader, then they’ll be good followers. We have a saying in Scouts: “If a boy can do the job, let him do it”.

3. *Demand respect as the adult head of your household. Teach him to respect all forms of authority. Let him practice being **obedient** (the seventh item in the Scout Law).*

In order for one person to learn something from someone else, that person must figuratively “look up” to the other. A respectful person will pay attention better, will want to please his teachers or leaders, is curious, participates more, does more than the minimum, obeys the rules, and learns, learns, learns! (from John Rosemund, *Ending the Homework Hassle*)

We will emphasize these things in Scouts, but they will sink in deeper if they are first learned and practiced within the family environment.

Can I help my son earn requirements? Yes, we encourage you to get in there and participate with him, but let him do the real work. The Troop plans activities for campouts and Troop meetings, usually something that has to do with advancement so the Scouts can achieve some requirements. We do a lot, but do not expect the Troop to oversee every step of his advancement. Do not just drop him off, and expect that the Troop is taking care of everything. You can help him achieve things also at home or on family outings. If he misses a Troop meeting, or a campout, or some other Troop planned activity, then he may not get a chance to earn those credits until it rolls around again, which might be the next year, unless you and he plan the activity yourself. Don't sit around waiting for the Troop to do it all. A parent or guardian needs to tell the Advancement chairman or the Assistant Scoutmaster that is supervising his patrol about the requirements he has achieved. Be prepared to describe in detail what he did, or bring physical evidence (if possible) to show what he made or did. We normally require more than just the boy's word.

What is a Scout Account? Every Troop 728 Scout has opportunities to earn credits for an individual account that he can use to defray the cost of his Scouting activities. We identify these fundraisers as opportunities to add to his account. Popcorn and other sales are General Fund Fundraisers. Particular events, like a High-Adventure Expedition, may have special fundraisers run in order to help the Scout allay his costs. When these happen, we invite all Scouts to participate. The money earned by the Scout in these fundraisers is applied to his expenses as they are incurred (e.g., Summer Camp fees, monthly dues, etc.). Money left over in a Scout's Account, once he leaves the troop, becomes part of the Troop's General Fund. It is not paid to the Scout. There are exceptions, as in equipment needs for High Adventure, but they are identified specifically prior to new fundraisers.

Who will my son tent with at campouts? Your son can select a tent mate with mutual consent. It is BSA policy that he tent with a Scout near his own age, and generally from his own patrol. Adults are prohibited from entering a Scout's tent, unless it is an emergency and unless there is another adult present.

Is Summer Camp important? Yes, especially so for first-year Scouts. Attending summer camp will help your son get to know the other Scouts in the Troop soon after he joins. He will begin to learn to work together with other Scouts as a patrol. He will complete many of the requirements for his First Class rank advancements and earn a merit badge or two. Please plan on his attending summer camp. Summer camp normally costs about \$250, and includes all meals. The Scout is responsible for payment of camp fee to the troop's treasurer. Remember that his fundraising activities can offset the cost of this camp.

Is Winter Camp important? Yes, for all Scouts. Attending winter camp provides your son with activities that are very different from our regular camping activities. The emphasis is on great outdoor skills, dealing with somewhat more diverse weather, and cooking for oneself for an entire week. For all new Scouts, winter camp is a wonderful place to learn; our experienced Scouts have an opportunity to lead, and attend cooperative leadership games (COPE). Activities for winter camp include unique merit badges such as Leatherwork, Blacksmithing, Soil and Water Conservation, American Culture, Indian Lore, Pottery, and offers an opportunity to participate in special programs such as “Mountain Man” or Indian Village. In addition, scouts can earn the Paul Bunyan and Polar Bear awards. Winter camp normally costs about \$125, which includes meals and camp fees. Parents can take part for all or part of this week-long event held between Christmas and New Year’s Eve. If you haven’t heard about our Winter Camp feast, ask one of the veterans in the troop (Turkey, dressing and all the trimmings.)

Are the requirements for high adventure camps different than summer and winter camp? Yes. Scouts participating in high adventure camps are required to be 13 or 14 years of age, regardless of rank. High adventure camps provide opportunities for the Scout to participate in more strenuous activities. Chisholm Trail, Camp Orr, Steele Island, Philmont, Grand Tetons, and even snow skiing are some of the highlights of our program.

What is *Scouting for Food*? Scouting for Food is a BSA level service project held each year that helps to feed thousands of families throughout the area. Sponsored by notable organizations like Tom Thumb grocery stores, Scouts distribute food bags in their neighborhood to be filled and collected the succeeding weekend. This event takes place in early February and is a good way for our Scouts to acquire service hours.

When will my son make Eagle Scout? Every Scout advances at his own pace. After attaining First Class rank, the road to Eagle is rigorous, so the quick answer is, “When he motivates himself to earn it.” Be there for him, but do not push your son beyond what he wants to do. Not all Scouts will become Eagles, but Troop 728 provides all the programs and resources your son needs to attain this rank. Scouts must earn their Eagle before turning 18.

BE PREPARED!