

Webelos to Scout Transition: A Parents' Guide

Boy Scouts is a whole lot different than Cub Scouts or Webelos Scouts. The idea of graduating from a Cub Scout pack to a Boy Scout troop may be intimidating for some Webelos Scouts and their parents. Some Webelos may not be sure they want to cross over into Boy Scouts because they believe it will just be more of the same thing that they did in Cub Scouts.

The best way to make your decisions, to choose the right troop, and to get your questions answered is to visit several troops that meet close to your home. This guide is designed to help the Webelos Scout, his parents, and his den begin the Webelos to Scout transition.

SOME DIFFERENCES IN THE SCOUTING PROGRAMS

	Cub Scouts	Boy Scouts
LEADERSHIP	Adults plan and direct everything	Scouts plan activities. Adults provide guidance. The key leader is a Scout, the Senior Patrol Leader.
ADULTS	Adults run activities & central to process	Adults stay off to side & guide. Adults should only step in when safety is a factor. Sometimes we have to let the youth fail, otherwise they do not learn to adapt.
ACTIVITIES	Indoor, day trips, family camping.	Outdoor, away from home, more physical. Older youth go on High Adventure trips.
ADVANCEMENT	Parents sign off.	Youth Leaders & other adults sign off. Parents encouraged to help, but with other Scouts invited to share knowledge.
PROGRAM FOCUS	Fun, entertaining activities. Age appropriate life skills	Fun. Life skills that build maturity. Value based learning. Making ethical decisions. Leadership.
PROGRAM PACE	Program well developed for the group.	Paced by Youth Leadership. Changing interests will vary.
AGE MIX	Grouped by ages	Constant interaction among 11-17 year olds.

BELOW ARE SOME ITEMS TO CONSIDER AS YOU VISIT AND EVALUATE THE TROOPS.

Troop Overview:

- Troop Focus: Most troops have established a focus or theme, like Indian folklore, backpacking, kaya king, etc. Each troop sets its own activity calendar and decides what to focus on.
- Troop Meetings: When and where the Troop meets must fit with the overall family calendar. Some troops meet weekly, some less often. Some events may be mandatory, so it is important that your son's schedule allow him to participate. Most troops have optional meetings, which allow flexibility for homework, sports, etc. Most troops realize that your son is involved in other activities.
- Troop size: The number of active scouts in the troop has an impact on the number of activities that can be offered, the level of "intimacy" of the troop, and the potential demands on parents to lead trips.
- Rank advancements: Advancements are be strongly emphasized in some troops. Other troops focus less on rank advancements, a good environment for boys less motivated by ranks and more interested in activities and doing.

Troop Leadership:

Troops can be run by the Scouts, by the Adult leaders or some combination thereof.

- Troops that are run by Scouts develop strong leadership skills but can be somewhat chaotic at times while the boys are learning these skills.
- Adult run troops are more structured and predictable but offer less opportunity for Scouts to learn by leading.
- Areas where the leadership ownership must be determined within a troop may include running the weekly meetings, establishing the annual calendar, organizing outings, and conducting the rank advancement classes.

Type and Breadth of Activities Offered:

Boy Scout troops typically offer a wide range of outings; however each troop generally develops an activity profile that reflects the level and type of activities that the Scouts in the Troop prefer.

- High Adventure: These are trips that can be physically demanding and generally require substantial preparation. Examples include long (50 plus miles) backpacking trips and class 4 white water rafting.
- Outdoor Outings: Included here are such events as camping, shorter backpack trips, day hikes, caving and rappelling, submarine trips.
- Educational Activities: These tend to be activities that focus on the mental and skills development rather than on physical skills. Examples are CB Radioing, woodworking, tours of local businesses and museums.
- Service Projects: All Scout troops offer some level of service projects. They can range from Scouting for Food to Trail repair to visitations at senior centers.

Parental Participation

There are two elements to research here. Note that Scouting can provide one of the best ways that parents can stay involved with their son and his friends as the boys reach teenage years.

- What level of involvement is expected from each family? Troops can vary from expecting every family to be actively involved to desiring but not requiring involvement.
- What parent opportunities are available within the troop? Typically the opportunities are leadership/committee, Activity support, or general support roles (merit badge counselor, Public Relations, quartermaster)

Social Element

- Are any of your son's friends or schoolmates involved in the Troop? It has been found that if your son has at least one friend in the Troop he is more likely to embrace Scouting and the Troop.
- Are there adults in the Troop that you know? This may or may not be important to you.

THE FOLLOWING LOCAL TROOPS HAVE CONTACTED PACK 870 WITH AN INTEREST IN OFFERING WEBELOS TRANSITION ACTIVITIES:

- **Troop 23 Dormont** **Dormont United Methodist Church** **Tuesdays 7:00 PM**

Scoutmaster: Darren Frederick

Darren.Frederick@allscripts.com

Activities Coordinator: Mandi Taylor

mandibeth17@aol.com

- **Troop 28 Mt. Lebanon** **Bower Hill Community Church** **Tuesdays 7:30 PM**

Scoutmaster: Mike Fuson 412 343-3143

Webelos Transition Contact: Emily Kerr 412-571-3456

erksh@yahoo.com

- **Troop 215 Bethel Park** **Bethel Presbyterian Church** **Mondays 7:30 PM**

Scoutmaster: John Welsh 412 835-2257 jmw1959@verizon.net

Webelos Transition Contact: Cindy Snyder cyndi.snyder@seubert.us

- **Troop 238 Mt. Lebanon** **St. Bernard Church Gym** **Tuesdays 7:15 PM**

Soutmaster: Kerry Marks 412 563-4846

Webelos Transition Coordinator: Karen Gottschall karengott@verizon.net 412-388-1585

UPCOMING CAMP AND VISITATION OPPORTUNITIES

TROOP 23 — WEBELOS II INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

Troop Meeting: Oct 27th, tentative focus on knots and tent skills

Campout: Agape Lutheran Camp visit is scheduled November 20—22.

More details to follow...Please Contact Darren Frederick or Mandi Taylor with questions.

TROOP 28 — WEBELOS I and II INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

Troop Meeting Visit: Tuesday, Nov. 3rd

Campout: November 6th-8th

You are invited to Camp Guyasuata, approximately 25 minutes from Pittsburgh. Webelos I's and II's will sleep in the Adirondack shelters (wooden houses with fireplace fronts). Activities offered are to include climbing, knives, orienteering, ranges and cooking. **RSVP to Emily Kerr by October 31st.**

Additional Campout: December 4-6th, Camp Anawana

You are invited to join us for our Gourmet Cooking weekend, as patrols battle for the title of Best Chefs. Enjoy sledding and winter hiking during the day and a hot, 7-course meal for dinner. Cabin space for sleeping. **RSVP to Emily Kerr by Nov. 31st.**

TROOP 215 WEBELOS II'S INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

Troop Meeting: Troop 15 holds several mid-winter Parent and Scout info nights. The boys will interact with the scouts from the troop while the parents will attend an informative meeting. Details to follow. **Contact Cindy Snyder with questions.**

Activity: Turkeyfest at Heritage, Saturday November 14th, beginning at 9AM

Turkeyfest a Webelos II Funday, with Scout-based activity stations and a Turkey dinner.

TROOP 238 WEBELOS I'S AND II'S INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

Troop Meeting: Scouts are invited to visit Troop 238 on any Tuesday. Please call Karen Gottschall to arrange.

Campout: Oct, 16-18th, Boivin Farm in Ohio

The Troop travels annual to visit Keith Boivin's property in Ohio. Special meals, games and outdoor fun are planned. Travel takes about 1 and 1/2 hours. Webelos I and II are both welcome with their parents. Contact Karen Gottschall to RSVP.

Additional Campout: Chestnut Ridge, West Virginia Trip in February

Sled riding, hiking, Scout skills and special meals prepared by the adults. Heated cabin for sleeping. Dates and more info TBA.

