

MAKING MEETINGS FUN WITH POSITIVE OUTCOMES

— INTRODUCTION —

For increased retention, and membership growth in our units, the program we deliver needs to be fun! One of the BSA's main objectives is to ensure Scout leaders (both adult and youth) have fun meetings with positive outcomes. In order to consistently accomplish this, a Scout unit must plan, prepare, and then effectively present a program that is diversified, unique...and FUN!

A Scouting program consists of what-Scouts-DO! All Scout activities, meetings, outings, and special events should each add colorful brush strokes to the grand painting illustrating how Scouting is fun with positive outcomes.

What contributes to a meeting that retains troop members and attracts new Scouts?

A. It's Fun.

When fun is happening, we always know it. We can hear the laughter and make note of the happy remarks and exclamations. We can acknowledge the impressive display of focussed attention by observing the level of enthusiasm and involvement. It's obvious the Scouts want to be doing what they're doing!

The kind of fun Scouts experience when they are actively involved is **Active Fun**, e.g. they are actively participating, like when they are one of the the head cooks engaged in the process of baking apple dumplings in a Dutch Oven. Enjoying a sport as a player is **Active Fun**.

The kind of fun Scouts experience when they are not actively involved, but definitely appreciate what's happening is **Passive Fun**, e.g. observing all the preparations and smelling the apple dumplings baking. Enjoying a sporting event as a spectator is **Passive Fun**.

A rich Scouting program constantly offers plenty of opportunities for both Active and Passive Fun.

What else?

B. It's Engaging.

The Scouts are fully focused on what they're doing. They choose to pay attention because what's happening motivates them to do so.

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C. It's Unique.

For the most part, the activity or material has a quality that is associated with the Scouting experience (not found anywhere else). It has a "feel-good, Scouting flavor," seasoned in an atmosphere of camaraderie, discovery, and adventure.

D. It has Positive Outcomes.

Scouts:

- put an acquired skill or skills into action
- experience a sense of belonging
- nurture their self-esteem
- exercise their resourcefulness
- exemplify teamwork
- share responsibility
- feel successful
- learn a life lesson

E. Planning and Preparation

These are *necessary* components of any good Scouting program. With all the program resources and program features, along with the excellent training available for Scout leaders, planning programs that are fun should be a simple proposition. But, even with plenty of hands-on learning opportunities and the newest, colorful online media, the process will always require motivation, organization, and a good dose of eager creativity to deliver the promise of Scouting through a super program.

BUT, it's well worth everything it takes, because when the program is fun with positive outcomes, Scouts come away from a meeting, outing, or special event feeling happy, invigorated—feeling good about Scouting, and good about themselves—and the ultimate realization of Scouting's mission is the natural result.

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