

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1) How do we visit the troop?

- Visitors are welcome at any of our Troop meetings.
- The Troop's weekly meetings are on most Tuesday nights during the school year, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm in the Scout Room on the lower level of the Parish Life Center at The Church of St. John the Divine (Episcopal), our chartered organization since 1939, at 2450 River Oaks Blvd.
- Contact the Scoutmaster at [scoutmaster@troop55.org](mailto:scoutmaster@troop55.org) or Troop Committee Chair at [tcc@troop55.org](mailto:tcc@troop55.org) so we can welcome you.
- If your son knows a Scout in Troop 55, encourage your son to talk to him and have your son join his friend at one of our meetings or events.
- Check the Troop 55 website and calendar for scheduled meetings, campouts, and events ([www.troop55.org](http://www.troop55.org)).

### 2) How does my son register to join?

- Boys between the ages of 11 and 17 (inclusive) may join Troop 55. Cub Scouts who have completed the Arrow of Light may join the Troop at age 10 ½.
- You and your Scout will need to complete:
  1. BSA registration form: Available from the Troop Registrar, the Troop Committee Chair, or the Scoutmaster.
  2. Health form: Required for each Scout, and for each adult on extended trips; available as a fill-in PDF form at the [BSA Web site](#) or through the Troop 55 website.
  3. Consent to Treat form and Waiver of Liability form: Available at the Troop's Web site via links to [Documents & Forms/Medical Forms](#).
- The above forms must be current and on file with the Troop before a Scout attends any campout, Scout camp, or activity.
- Everything needed to join is available at the Troop's website through the link [Documents & Forms/Joining Info & Forms](#)

### 3) How many registered and active scouts?

- Troop 55 is considered large relative to most BSA Troops with a regular membership of over 200 scouts. The large size affords Scouts with ample leadership opportunities and a wide variety of activities including monthly campouts and summer trips that span merit badge camps, midand high adventure trips throughout the US and internationally.

### 4) Is the age distribution balanced?

- Scouts range in age 11 to 17. The large size of our Troop results in a good distribution of boys in all grades. Naturally, some boys become less active as they get older; however, the Troop has a substantial number of older scouts leading its patrols and the Troop.

## **5) How are patrols organized?**

- New Scouts are organized into New Scout Patrols for their first year.
- The Troop also has several permanent Mixed Age Patrols that provide various leadership opportunities for Scouts. Each Mixed Aged Patrol has a wide range of ages and attained advancement levels from 1<sup>st</sup> Class to Eagle.
- New Scouts join one of the "New Scout Patrols" for their first 9 to 18 months with Troop 55. After this initial period, scouts join one of the permanent, Mixed Age Patrols. Scouts can be a member of these older patrols up to their 18th birthday.
- Each Patrol is led by one or more older, experienced Scouts serving as Patrol Leader, and each patrol has at least one adult serving as Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster dedicated to supporting and coaching the Patrol's scout leadership.

## **6) Who runs scout meetings?**

- The weekly Troop meetings are run by the Scout Senior Patrol Leader with assistance from the Patrol Leader Council.
- We strive to have a Scout-run Troop led by the Patrol Leader Council, which is headed by the Senior Patrol Leader (who is elected by the Scouts). The Troop's Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters provide adult supervision and mentorship to the Scout leaders.

## **7) How many Assistant Scoutmasters and Troop Committee members?**

- Each patrol has at least one adult serving as a Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster (PASM). The PASM is a dedicated resource for the scouts in their patrol and for the parents of those scouts. The PASM also provides coaching for the youth leaders of the patrol.
- There are many registered and trained adults active as Assistant Scoutmasters serving in various capacities including camping, merit badge counselors, and administration.

## **8) What are the Aims of Scouting and how are these Aims accomplished?**

- The Boy Scout program offers the Scout the opportunity for
  - i) Adventure
  - ii) Learning
  - iii) Challenge and
  - iv) Responsibility
- By offering the above opportunities, Scouting aims to provide
  - i) Character Development
  - ii) Citizenship Training and
  - iii) Mental & Physical Fitness
- Scouting uses the following methods to accomplish these Aims,
  - i) Ideals
  - ii) Patrols
  - iii) Outdoor Experience
  - iv) Advancement

- v) Adult Association
- vi) Leadership Development
- vii) Personal Growth
- viii) Uniform

**9) What type of service projects does Troop 55 do?**

- We believe that young people develop a "spirit of service" through being regularly involved in helping others. Whether it's helping with an Eagle project, participating in Troop sponsored community service projects, or assisting each other in outdoor activities, our scouts are developing life-long habits of service to others.

**10)How is rank advancement managed?**

- Scouts advance in rank at their own pace by completing the requirements for each applicable rank (see the Boy Scout Handbook for details).
- Older Scouts assist in teaching skills to newer Scouts and the Scoutmaster and Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster (PASM) oversee the older scouts and assist scouts in reviewing their advancement progress.

**11)What are the guidelines for new Scouts up to First Class?**

- New Scouts begin by working on the First Class Trail, a 12 month program that assists Scouts in completing all the requirements to advance to the First Class rank in their first year. While most Scouts attain their First Class rank in 12 months or less, some take slightly longer.
- Our First Class Trail program runs continuously and is designed for boys to join the troop at any point in the year.

**12)How are Merit Badges managed?**

- Troop 55 typically offers 20-30 merit badge classes each year. In addition, Scouts can earn merit badges at District Merit Badge Fairs, at Summer Camps, and through a select few local museum programs.
- The Troop has a merit badge counselor available for virtually all merit badges.

**13)How many scouts earned Eagle in the past few years?**

- We regularly have 12 to 25 of our scouts earn the rank of Eagle each year.
- Our Troop has active adult leaders coaching scouts that choose to attain the Eagle rank.

**14)What high adventure trips have been completed recently?**

- Troop 55 goes camping every month. Our weekend campouts have a

variety of activities including backpacking, shooting sports, canoeing & kayaking, and climbing.

- We also sponsor a wide range of summer camping experiences including backpacking throughout North America and occasionally internationally.
- During the summer of 2013, our scouts attended Philmont Scout Ranch, Buffalo Trails Scout Ranch, Buffalo River Canoe Trip, Colorado River Canoe Trip, Galveston Sea Base, Florida Sea Base, National Jamboree, Blue Ridge Scout Reservation, Glacier National Park, and Bolivia & Patagonia (service plus backpacking).

### **15)What is needed from Parents?**

- Encourage your Scout to take responsibility for his own participation in the Troop and in his patrol and for his advancement and leadership activities.
- Lend a hand with the indoor and/or outdoor adult work that keeps the Troop running.\*
- Attend the monthly Troop Committee meetings whenever possible.
- Sign up to be a counselor for a merit badge or two; you don't have to be an expert, just willing to help the Scouts teach themselves.\*
- Take the BSA's introductory training courses for adult leaders. Refer to the Adult Boy Scout Training links on the Troop 55 website as well as on the Sam Houston Area Council (SHAC) website link, [www.shac.org](http://www.shac.org). Once on the SHAC website, click on Training/Leader Training/Boy Scout Leader Training. On this page you will find a schedule of adult Boy Scout Leader Training Classes as well as a chart that shows the training required for each adult leadership position.
- Give your Scout some room to make mistakes — let his Patrol Assistant Scoutmasters (PASM's) decide if more coaching is required, and then let them do the coaching.
- Recognize that we strive for a Scout-run Troop; except in an unsafe situations. Please resist the natural instinct to "fix it." Scouting allows Scouts to learn by planning and doing for themselves.

*\* Per BSA policy, before being registered as an adult leader or serving in any 'direct contact' leadership capacity, you MUST complete a quick online Youth Protection Training course.*

### **16)What fundraising is done?**

- Scouts have opportunities to earn some or all of their dues and expenses by participating in Troop fundraising activities.
- Typical fundraising activities include selling Scout Fair tickets & Popcorn.
- Each scout has an account maintained by the Troop Treasurer to track fundraising and to apply funds earned toward summer camping trips.

### **17)What are the costs?**

- Dues are \$150 per year per Scout (\$125 for second and subsequent Scouts in the same family). This covers a Boys Life subscription, the annual BSA registration fee, and the premium for BSA-provided insurance. The Troop pays the BSA annual fees for adult leaders, but they are encouraged to contribute \$15 per year to offset that cost.
- In addition to dues, each Scout should expect to pay approximately the following: Uniform: \$80. Campouts: \$12 per campout for food, plus \$10 to \$15 per campout for travel meals, spending money, and sometimes \$50 for charter bus transportation (special activities such as canoeing, boating, shooting, etc., may have additional costs).
- Summer camp: Typically \$200 to \$500 for a week of merit-badge summer camp (excluding transportation). High-adventure camps for older Scouts typically will cost more.
- Scouts have opportunities to earn some or all of their dues and expenses by participating in Troop fundraising activities. In addition, partial scholarships may be available upon request.

### **18)What equipment is provided?**

- Troop 55 provides each new Scout who has paid his dues with an embroidered Troop 55 neckerchief and a Boy Scout Handbook.
- All other personal gear is the responsibility of the Scout and his parents.
- The Troop furnishes each patrol with a stove, propane, cooking gear, a dining fly, and a lantern. (The Troop also owns a fleet of canoes, kayaks, climbing gear, and other common equipment.)

### **19)How is family communication managed?**

- The Troop's Web site, [www.troop55.org](http://www.troop55.org), contains a great deal of useful information, including forms, calendar, contact lists, each Scout's advancement status, and more. Scout and adult personal information is password-protected.
- Troop 55 makes heavy use of email; it's extremely important that you go to the Troop's website and [sign up](#) for the Scout and adult mailing list after joining.

### **20)Does the Troop participate in district Webelos Woods?**

- Webelos Woods is a campout specially focused on helping Webelos learn more about Boy Scouts. There are opportunities to meet Boy Scouts from a variety of Troops in the Twin Bayou District.
- Check the Troop's [Calendar of Events](#) on the home page for details.