

Parent Guide

TROOP



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All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind are convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.
--Aristotle

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Boy Scouts of America and Troop 350! By becoming a parent of a Boy Scout, you are setting your son out on the grand adventure of scouting. This is a tremendously important and rewarding endeavor that you will be able to share with him.

What is it all about? What will be expected of you? What does it cost? We have prepared this booklet to answer these questions.

The following pages describe the organization of a troop and the advancement pattern that each boy will follow. Reading this will help you understand how your son can progress through the ranks with your help. It will help you understand how you can help, and what the various adult volunteers are doing to make the troop successful.

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

There are three aims to scouting:

- To build character
- To foster citizenship
- To develop fitness

These three aims are the bedrock of the American scouting movement. They represent the long-term outcomes we want for every boy.

It is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America to serve others by helping to instill values in young people, and in other ways to prepare them to make ethical choices over their lifetime to achieve their full potential.

The values we strive to instill are based on those found in the Boy Scout Oath and Law.

SCOUT LAW

A Scout is:
 Trustworthy
 Loyal
 Helpful
 Friendly
 Courteous
 Kind
 Obedient
 Cheerful
 Thrifty
 Brave
 Clean
 Reverent

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.

Since 1910, these principles have been taught in an atmosphere of recreation and fun, which allows young people to develop self-confidence, leadership and moral character. More and more men, trained as scouts, are taking their places in today's world as responsible adult leaders. Men who earned badges as scouts sit on the Supreme Court and in the chambers of congress. Others hold important offices in our government, business and industry. Most of the members of Congress were scouts, as well as most of the astronauts who have walked on the moon. The long list of famous scouts includes:

President John F. Kennedy	Boy Scout	Neil A. Armstrong, first Eagle Scout to set foot on the moon
President Gerald Ford	Eagle Scout	Steven Spielberg Eagle Scout
J. Willard Marriott, Jr. President of Marriott Corporation	Eagle Scout	William C. Devries, M.D.; transplanted first artificial heart Eagle Scout
Sam M. Walton Chairman/CEO, Wal-Mart	Eagle Scout	Barber B. Conable, Jr. President, World Bank Eagle Scout

The Boy Scouts of America is the largest youth oriented organization in the United States. More than 4 million boys and leaders are currently registered in the Boy Scouts of America.

Unlike Cub Scouting, which many of you are familiar with; Boy Scouting is a youth-lead organization. The boys learn how to organize and lead the troop. After training, and with supervision from the adult leaders, the boys run the show.

The boys in the troop will be working to progress through the First Class rank and then on to Eagle. As they travel on their trail to Eagle, they will not only learn how to lead a team to a goal, but they will actually lead teams of scouts in a number of situations. Many Eagle Scouts put their scouting accomplishments on their resumes and find these are often considered in obtaining acceptance into college or the work force.

Scouting also teaches citizenship; enhances the development of physical, mental and emotional fitness; and provides for growth of moral strength and character. This is all done in the spirit of fun and adventure.

Please take a few minutes to read chapters 1 and 2 of your son's *Boy Scout Handbook*.

ORGANIZATION

Troop 350 is a participating member of the Talakto District of the Greater Alabama Council, Boy Scouts of America. The troop's organization consists of a chartered organization, a troop committee, the troop, and the troop's parents. More information is available in the Troop 350 Policies and Guidelines document.

Chartered Organization

Every troop is sponsored by an organization. The chartered organization for Troop 350 is St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. The chartered organization shares our objectives for the boys and insures that there is adequate, trained leadership. A *Chartered Organization Representative* acts a liaison between St. John's and the troop.

Troop Committee

The Troop Committee supports the troop program. But you ask, "What does the Troop Committee do?" The Troop Committee does the following:

- Advises the Scoutmaster on policies relating to scouting and the chartered organization.
- Carries out the policies and regulations of the Boy Scouts of America.
- Encourages leaders in carrying out the program.
- Is responsible for finances, adequate funds, and disbursements in line with the approved budget plan.
- Obtains, maintains, and properly cares for troop property.
- Provides adequate camping and outdoor program (minimum 10 days and nights per year).
- Sees to it that quality adult leadership is recruited and trained. In case the Scoutmaster is absent or is unable to serve, a qualified substitute is assigned.

The Troop Committee meets on the 2nd Monday of every month at 6:00 p.m. in the church library. The meetings are open, and attendance is encouraged by all parents and other interested adults.

Troop 350

Troop Meetings

Troop 350 meets on Monday from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the church basement. Changes to the meeting schedule will be announced as early as possible to allow for proper planning. Troop 350 does not meet on school holidays.

Adult Leadership

The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters are the adults responsible for the day-to-day activities of the troop program. They work closely with the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC) in developing weekly, monthly, and yearly schedules. The Troop Committee encourages each adult leader to receive BSA certified training appropriate to his/her office offered by the local scout council. Minimum training required for Scoutmaster includes Boy Scout Fast Start, Boy Scout fundamentals, Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster specific, Outdoor Leader Skills training, and Youth Protection Training. It is most desirable for the Scoutmaster to also complete Wood Badge. Minimum training required for Assistant Scoutmaster includes Boy Scout Fast Start and Youth Protection Training. All Assistant Scoutmasters are encouraged to become "fully trained" by completing Boy Scout fundamentals, Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster specific, and Outdoor Leader Skills training. The troop pays the BSA registration fees for our adult leaders.

Patrols and Patrol Leaders

The troop is organized into several patrols. Each patrol consists of a Patrol Leader and no less than four scouts and no more than ten scouts. The boys in a patrol elect their Patrol Leader who in turn appoints the Assistant Patrol Leader.

The Senior Patrol Leader is an elected position that includes 6 months of "on-the-job" training as an Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. Troop 350 elects a new Assistant Senior Patrol Leader twice each year, usually in June and December. After 6 months, the elected Assistant Senior Patrol Leader becomes the Senior Patrol Leader. As each new senior Patrol Leader takes office, he appoints a second Assistant Senior Patrol Leader and then appoints members of the Troop leadership team. Appointed troop leaders include the Scribe, Quartermaster, Troop Guides, Instructors, Librarian, Historian, Chaplain Aide, Order of the Arrow Troop Representative, and Bugler. The Patrol Leaders, with the Senior Patrol Leader as their head, form the PLC, which plans the activities and runs the troop meetings. Elections for Patrol Leaders and Senior Patrol Leader are held every six months.

Troop Parents

The role of parents within Troop 350 is to be supportive of the troop's efforts and to provide the atmosphere scouts need to learn and excel. All parents are encouraged to support the troop in some way with their time and talents. Opportunities abound, including being a registered adult leader, teaching a merit badge class, assisting at other activities or service projects, or many others. Parents should try to:

1. Read their scout's handbook and understand the purpose and methods of scouting.
2. Actively follow their scout's progress (or lack of) and offer encouragement and a push when needed.
3. Show support to both the individual scout and the troop by attending all troop Courts' of Honor.
4. Assist, as requested, in all troop fund-raisers and other such activities. All such assistance lowers the cost of the program we offer to the scouts and, therefore, lowers each family's cash outlay for their scout(s).
5. Be aware of the troop program and annual calendar.

ADVANCEMENT

There are many definitions of advancement, but the scouting definition might well be, simply, "the art of meeting a challenge." For that is exactly what the Boy Scout advancement program asks the boys to do. The Boy Scout advancement program provides a ladder of skills that a scout climbs at his own pace. As he acquires these skills he moves up through a series of ranks, for which he is awarded badges: Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle. The higher he climbs the more challenging his tasks -- and the more rewarding.

Achievements include:

- Learning skills that qualify for scouting's more rugged and exciting outdoor challenges.
- Developing body and mind, growing self-confidence, and helping younger scouts climb the advancement ladder.
- Discovering how it feels to go-further--In so many ways -- than he ever thought he could.

We don't look at advancement as a goal, but as a natural outcome of a planned, quality troop program.

There are four steps of advancement:

- The Boy Scout learns.
- The Boy Scout is tested.
- The Boy Scout is reviewed.
- The Boy Scout is recognized.

Advancement Through First Class

From the time the scout enters the troop through the time he earns advancement to First Class, he is learning basic scouting skills to enable him to camp, hike, swim, cook, tie knots, administer first aid, and perform other tasks in the outdoors and to work as a member of a team. With those first steps the scouts begin to build themselves physically, mentally, and morally. He will start to live with the scout oath and law as his guide. Soon he will learn the symbolism inherent in the scout badge; he will learn that there are three points of the trefoil, which stand for the three parts of the scout oath: duty to God and country, duty to other people, and duty to self.

The goal of this troop is for the scout to achieve the rank of First Class within his first year in the troop. This is a sign that the scout has mastered the fundamentals of scouting and can begin to start the long process of learning to lead others, refining the learned skills and learning additional skills.

Advancement from First Class to Eagle

As a First Class scout working toward Eagle, the scout will be demonstrating leadership, performing service projects, earning merit badges and using the skills learned while achieving the rank of First Class. The next ranks he will earn are Star and Life. These ranks are harder to obtain than the earlier ranks, but are also more interesting for the older scouts. Upon completion of all the requirements for Star and Life the scout will be eligible to work towards Eagle. The original principals, the scout oath and law, now have fuller meaning for the scout and their understanding of them is much greater. The final steps towards Eagle are filled with leadership experiences.

Details for advancement are contained in the Boy Scout Handbook, which every scout should obtain as soon as possible after joining the troop. Take a look at chapter 1. There you will find a summary on ranks and advancement.

Merit Badges

The goal of the merit badge program is to expand a scout's areas of interest and to encourage the scout to meet and work with adults in a chosen subject. Merit badges are earned by a scout working with a registered Merit Badge Counselor. The scout is required to contact the counselor to arrange for times and places to meet with the counselor. When the scout completes the work on the merit badge the counselor will inform the Scoutmaster that the scout has completed the requirements for that badge. Merit badges earned will be presented to the scout during the troop's next Court of Honor.

All parents of Troop 350 scouts are encouraged to become Merit Badge Counselors. Please fill in the attached troop resource survey and return to the Troop Committee Advancement Chair.

Boards of Review

When a scout has completed all the requirements for a rank, he appears before a board of review composed of members of the Troop Committee. The purpose of the review is not an examination. Rather it is to determine the scout's attitude and acceptance of scouting's ideals; to ensure that the requirements have been met for advancement, to discuss the scout's experiences in the troop and the troop's program, and to encourage him to keep working towards advancement. A board of review may also be held to counsel a boy about his lack of progress toward advancement.

Court of Honor

Troop 350 will conduct a Court of Honor on a regular basis. The Court of Honor recognizes all scout appointments, elections, awards, and advancements since the last Court of Honor. Adult recognition may be presented prior to the opening of the troop Court of Honor. It is the responsibility of the PLC and the Troop Committee to plan and conduct the troop Court of Honor.

The Court of Honor is a public ceremony, and is a chance for the scouts to be publicly recognized for their achievements. Parents and all other interested individuals are encouraged to attend.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Rechartering and Fees

The process of rechartering is the annual collection of registration fees for the scouts and leaders. Rechartering takes place in December of each calendar year. The troop also makes a formal visit to the chartering organization to renew their commitment for the coming year.

Annual Registration Fees

Scout dues are variable per year depending on enrollment and expenses, but typically are in the neighborhood of \$50 to \$70. Parents are encouraged to pay annually during the rechartering process which begins in November and ends in early December. Dues for new scouts joining at other times of the year are pro-rated for the remaining months of the year. The Greater Alabama Council also charges \$10 per year to cover the national registration fee and insurance fees. Scouts transferring from another Troop or bridging from a Cub Scout Pack pay \$1 to transfer membership to Troop 350. The Troop dues schedule applies to all scouts regardless of status. The subscription to

Boy's Life magazine is optional but encouraged.

Fees for Outings I Activities

Individual activities may have fees associated with them. If so, the parents will be notified by their scout, and it will be posted on the troop web site.

Fundraising

Additional funds are raised by the boys through various fundraising activities. In addition to popcorn sales, the troop plans one major fundraising project each year — the annual chili supper and silent auction normally held at St. John's in February. Every scout family can expect to be asked to participate by contributing at least 1 pot of chili.

Friends of Scouting

Each year, the council operates its Friends of Scouting (FOS) campaign to raise money for the council operations. The council is responsible for maintaining the council camps, the University of Scouting, the council camporees, as well as other council activities, local BSA administration and local advertising. Contributions are voluntary, but the troop has a fair record of support for this activity. As years go by, FOS is becoming a critical source of BSA funding.

UNIFORM

The scout uniform helps to achieve the objectives of scouting. The uniform by itself cannot make a good scout or a good troop, but its use has been proven to improve both the scout and the troop because it is a visible symbol of scouting and unity. Each scout is required to have and wear, within a reasonable amount of time after joining the troop, the following uniform items:

Field Uniform (aka "Class A")

- Tan scout shirt with appropriate insignia and patches (Greater Alabama Council strip, red shoulder loops, World Scouting crest, and patrol emblem.)
- Troop number (obtained from troop)
- Troop 350 neckerchief (obtained from troop)
- Neckerchief slide (can be purchased or made by scout).
- Olive scout pants or shorts (encouraged, but not required), or non-faded jeans blue denim. Pants or shorts must be single color with no stripes, athletic shorts/pants are not allowed and all pants must be free from holes and rips.
- Boy Scout hat (optional).
- Scout web belt and buckle or BSA- related belt.
- Tennis shoes or hiking boots. Socks are required.

Activity Uniform (aka “Class B”)

The Activity Uniform is worn as instructed by troop leadership, when activities may cause damage to the field uniform.

- Troop 350 or scouting-related T-shirt (obtain from troop).
 - Tennis shoes or hiking boots (closed toe). Socks are required.
 - Scout pants or shorts (encouraged but not required), or non-faded blue denim.
- Pants or shorts must be single color with no stripes, athletic shorts/pants are not allowed and all pants must be free from holes and rips.

Scout web belt and buckle or BSA- related belt.

Uniforms and insignia are worn a certain way. The troop leaders and staff at the scout shop will be able to answer any questions you might have on where to put what badge. Inside the cover of the Boy Scout Handbook there are guides for badge placement. You can purchase scout uniforms and supplies at:

Huntsville Scout Shop

2211 Drake Avenue
Huntsville, AL
256-883-7071

TROOP 350 WEBSITE

<http://troop350.org> is where you can always find:

- Meeting information
- Important dates in the troop calendar
- General program plans
- Weekly meeting announcements. (If your scout has to miss a meeting, please check the web site for announcements.)
- Special event notes
- Campout information and dates
- Court of Honor dates
- Eagle ceremony dates & times
- Troop 350 Policies and Guidelines
- Activity Highlights — a photo album of some of our activities
- Summer Camp information
- And links to other scouting resources.

Our web site is updated weekly. Please check it often, and especially if your scout has to miss a regular weekly meeting. Email any questions to webmaster@troop350.org

TROOP 350 Mailing Lists

The Troop makes extensive use of email to communicate information on upcoming events, meeting activities, last-minute schedule changes, etc. Due to the large number of people in the Troop, centralized distribution lists for email have been established. Currently, there are mailing lists for:

- Troop: This is intended to include all Troop members
- Committee: For Troop 350 Committee members
- New Scouts: Intended for news and information for newly joined scouts and families
- Adult Leaders: For the Troop Adult Leadership
- PLC: For members of the Patrol Leaders' Council
- DoubleH: For scouts and scouters attending Double H High Adventure
- Philmont: For scouts and scouters attending Philmont
- OAmembers: For scouts and scouters that are members of the Order of the Arrow
- VenturePatrol: Troop 350 Venture Patrol members

Subscribing to a list

It's easy to sign up to any of the above mailing lists and receive all the Troop news! There are two main ways to sign up:

- 1) Send an email request to the Troop 350 webmaster at webmaster@troop350.org
- 2) Go to the Troop website and click on "Mailing Lists" on the top header. Click on the list name of interest (e.g., Troop, or Philmont). On the middle of the page, enter your email address and name (optional) and select a password (don't worry, you will rarely need it and it doesn't need to be a super-secure one – in fact, make sure you don't use one of your super secure ones!).

What will happen next? If you selected option (1), you should receive a confirmation after the webmaster has responded. If you selected option (2), the webmaster needs to confirm who you are in order to protect the integrity and control access to the distribution list. The confirmation will come in the form of an email question to just confirm who you are.

Unsubscribing from a list

Follow instructions to "Subscribing to a list" above under option (2), and select the mailing list from which you want to unsubscribe. At the bottom of that page, you'll see an "Unsubscribe" button – just type your email address in that box.

Posting a message to a list

Want to send a note to the Troop? Send an email to troop@troop350.org

Want to send a note to the Committee? Send an email to committee@troop350.org

Want to send a note to the Philmont list? Send an email to philmont@troop350.org

Get the idea?

There is one catch: only list members can post a message to a list. This can be a problem if, say, you want to ask the Committee a question, but you are not on the Committee. When you do send a note to a list on which you are not a member, the webmaster gets a note asking if it is OK to post the message. The webmaster is very receptive to this and will almost always allow the message to be posted. The reason for this complexity is simple: SPAM. It turns out there are a LOT of messages that try to get posted to our mailing lists that we wouldn't want our scouts (or scouters) to see!

TROOP 350 Calendar

Every attempt is made to keep the many and varied Troop 350 activities and meetings current on the Troop Calendar. The Troop 350 calendar is a public Google calendar, and may be able to subscribed to through your own calendaring program. You can also see the calendar on the Troop 350 website. Click on Calendar link at the top of the page to view.

If you have an activity or meeting to add, or see an error on the calendar, just send the webmaster an email at webmaster@troop350.org

AND FINALLY

You are joining a great organization that includes tens of thousands of adult leaders, interested parents, and the BSA professional staff. Scouting is much more than enjoying the outdoors. The troop teaches leadership skills and community skills. Scouting also shows the boys how they can keep themselves strong and healthy and make the most of school. With hard work and dedication, your son will be able to serve as a leader in the troop and advance in rank along the trail to Eagle.

Above and beyond anything else said in this package, the boys and us “big kids” are in scouts to have fun!

For more information, contact:

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