

# Pathfinder Leader's Handbook



**Outdoor Service Guides**  
Scouting for Everybody!



This Pathfinder Leader's Handbook is intended to be a supporting document to help adult leaders of Pathfinder Sections be successful in managing and leading a Pathfinder Section.

OSG would like to thank the authors of this Handbook. Laura Sowdon and Melanie Willett. We are grateful for your service and dedication.

OSG would like to thank the members of the *Pathfinder Handbook* Committee: Donathan Dedolph, Sola Whitehead, Jeff Welch, Laura Sowdon, Chance Michaels, Eric Giacchino, and Victoria Grimme. We are humbled and honored by your service.

Pathfinder Leader's Handbook  
Copyright 2023 Outdoor Service Guides  
All rights reserved.

This book may be reprinted and shared by registered members  
of Outdoor Service Guides.

[www.outdoorserviceguides.org](http://www.outdoorserviceguides.org)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	1
<b>1   Understanding the Pathfinder Program . . . . .</b>	<b>2</b>
Tenderfoot . . . . .	2
Second Class . . . . .	3
Beyond Second Class. . . . .	4
Upper Level of the Program: Senior Scouts. . . . .	5
The Uniform . . . . .	7
<b>2   The Patrol Method . . . . .</b>	<b>9</b>
Choosing Patrol Leaders. . . . .	9
Setting Up Your Patrol Leaders for Success . . . . .	10
Preventing Mutiny . . . . .	11
Breaking it Down by Ages. . . . .	12
<b>3   Meeting Guidelines . . . . .</b>	<b>15</b>
How often should you meet? . . . . .	16
Co-Leading and Meeting Planning . . . . .	17
<b>4   Camping, Tenting, and Parents . . . . .</b>	<b>18</b>
Basic Camping Guidelines . . . . .	18
Tenting . . . . .	19
Backpacking and Campaigning . . . . .	19
Parents. . . . .	20
What to Bring Camping . . . . .	21
While At Camp. . . . .	22
Patrol Boxes . . . . .	22
Cooking at Camp . . . . .	24
<b>5   Fund Raising . . . . .</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>6   Bronze Arrow Training. . . . .</b>	<b>30</b>
What Happens at BAT . . . . .	30
Beyond Bronze. . . . .	31
<b>7   Gender Inclusion, Sexism, and Periods . . . . .</b>	<b>32</b>
Girls. . . . .	32
Boys . . . . .	33
All Together Now . . . . .	33
Leaders Set the Standards . . . . .	34
Personal History Matters . . . . .	34
ALWAYS Be Prepared . . . . .	35
A Deeper Look at Menstruation . . . . .	35
<b>8   Making First Class Scouts . . . . .</b>	<b>40</b>
Badges to Help Them Prepare . . . . .	40
Biking and Boating . . . . .	41
The First Class Journey. . . . .	42
Celebrate Their Success . . . . .	43

<b>9   Failing and Scout Led Challenges . . . . .</b>	<b>44</b>
Recovering From Their Mistakes. . . . .	44
Say Yes More . . . . .	45
Scout Led . . . . .	45
Letting Go. . . . .	45
<b>10   Ceremonies and Traditions . . . . .</b>	<b>47</b>
Investiture as a Pathfinder . . . . .	47
Investiture Into Your Group. . . . .	48
Formal Campfires . . . . .	48
Other Traditions . . . . .	49
Investiture Ceremony Script . . . . .	50
First Class Ceremony Script . . . . .	51
<b>11   Special Needs Scouting . . . . .</b>	<b>53</b>
Adjusting Badge Requirements . . . . .	53
Neurodiverse Patrol Leaders . . . . .	55
Looking for More Support? . . . . .	55
<b>12   LGBTQ Tips for Scoutmasters . . . . .</b>	<b>56</b>
Vocabulary . . . . .	56
Understanding Identity . . . . .	57
Sexuality is complex. . . . .	57
<b>13   In Conclusion . . . . .</b>	<b>58</b>

## **Introduction**

**B**eing a Pathfinder leader, examiner, and Scoutmaster is both rewarding and challenging. The ages of 11 to 17 are a time of great growth and change for most young people. As a result, leaders need to be both flexible and consistent to help Pathfinders find their way through this difficult time of life.

While the *Pathfinder Handbook* is written directly to the Pathfinder, it is still a wealth of information. Be sure to read it for directions and ideas. That book is designed to be a resource both for you and your Pathfinders.

What does this book cover that the *Pathfinder Handbook* does not? This book is written to you as a leader to give you more insight into working with youth and explains the theory of scouting from an adult perspective. While the Pathfinders are focusing on learning skills, you as the adult are helping them learn far more than is obvious. Keeping Pathfinders engaged and appropriately challenged isn't always easy. This book is written to help you.

This book also covers the details of how the program is designed to challenge scouts. Some badges and advancements are designed to build on each other. This book seeks to give you a deeper understanding of those, too.



# 1

## UNDERSTANDING THE PATHFINDER PROGRAM

**T**he Pathfinder program is designed to be one where scouts gradually learn skills and become more and more independent with those skills. If you have scouts who were Timberwolves, they may move very quickly through the introductory skills. However, youth who have never done any scouting before may need more time to work through the first part of the program.

Your job is to both understand the program and to work with it to help your scouts progress. Leaving it up to a new Pathfinder to figure out is a recipe for disaster. Many new Pathfinders will quit before they can grasp the program if they are left to figure it out on their own.

### Tenderfoot

---

The Tenderfoot rank is the first badge a Pathfinder should work towards. As the Scoutmaster you should make sure that the Tenderfoot skills are ones that your program uses and reviews often. If you have a new group of Pathfinders, you should act as their Patrol Leader and teach them these skills. Be sure to demonstrate in a way you want to see them teach other scouts later. Be patient. Be kind. Be encouraging. These Pathfinders are going to someday be Patrol Leaders, and they will imitate your style. Make sure you are worth imitating.

Making it interesting is key to teaching Tenderfoot skills that can seem to be boring or drag on for new Pathfinders. Scouting is a game we play, so try to make it fun.

#### Games to Reinforce Tenderfoot Skills

- Play a game show or quiz game about the scout law, motto, and promise. You can make it like various TV game shows, or play Pictionary with the elements of the scout law.
- In general, a 3'x5' flag is the one most groups will choose to have, fly, and fold. Work on flag folding with bigger or smaller flags to make it more interesting. Tiny paper flags or huge 10' long American



flags should all be folded with the same trifold style. Changing up the size creates a new challenge. If affording a flag is a challenge, many places will donate flags to scouting groups, so get creative and ask around.

- Create relay races to tie together ropes and neckers to work on those Tenderfoot knots. Have each scout tie the correct knot to create a rope to pull the Scoutmaster in a wagon, for example, makes learning knots into a fun and silly game. Tie your scout staff to the front of the wagon, and have two teams of scouts work to create a rope on each side so they can drag you. Other relays include tying together ropes and dragging buckets of water or gear from a single point to the outside of a circle.
- Do relays to have all your Pathfinder pass along the scout handshake down a line and back. Having two teams see who can pass along the handshake first, adds competition. Passing it around a circle works better for scouts who are new or need help figuring this out.

## Keeping It Moving

Once your scouts make Tenderfoot, you should have a special ceremony and invest them as Pathfinders. See the chapter on Ceremonies for ideas on what an investiture ceremony should look like.

Your scouts can now earn up to two Special Proficiency badges before completing Second Class. For some groups, this is an important element in keeping Pathfinders engaged. Make a plan to work on Second Class skills for several meetings, but break it up by letting the group choose one of the easier badges to work on. Some leaders may find it easier to choose for your group based on knowing what your Pathfinders enjoy, while others may want to let the Pathfinders choose from a curated list of options, instead of the entire book, which can be overwhelming.

Some groups of scouts may take many months to work through the Second Class skills, so earning a badge or two in the meantime helps scouts feel they are making progress and stay engaged in the program.

## Second Class

Second Class skills, along with those of Tenderfoot, should become things your group reviews periodically as long as you have Pathfinders. These are basic scouting skills that you can also create games around and play with.

Many of these skills are best done on a camping trip, so if scheduling a camping trip is challenging for your group, think ahead. Plan on how best to use your time to also earn those two allowed in-between badges and which skills you can accomplish at your regular meetings. As the scoutmaster, you need to decide how best to use the time to help your scouts meet the goal of achieving Second Class.

Some ideas for making Second Class skills more interesting:

- Once scouts choose to work in ASL, Morse Code, or Semaphore, play with it instead of just drilling it. Learn a song in ASL. Give them a message to decode in Morse Code, the Scout Law is a long one, and a good way to review a Tenderfoot skill while working on Second Class. Have them send messages across camp with semaphore. Go ahead and encourage them to use the same shorthand they would use for texting while sending those messages. This just means it is double-encoded.
- Make lashing relevant to them. Build a lean-to shelter by lashing a scout staff to two trees and draping one side with sticks, a poncho, or a tarp. Or be creative and have them lash together a



catapult, set of monkey bars, or chairs. Lashing can also be done in miniature size or huge. Just be sure the rope thickness matches the spars. Spars are the young trees or poles that are used for pioneering projects. They can be created with a variety of diameters.

- Have a fire-building competition. Using some stakes, run a string over a portion of a fire ring at about 24 inches off the ground. Assign your scouts each a place under the string to create a fire, with the goal being to be the first to burn the string and break it. Each Pathfinder should build their fire with tender leaves, twigs, and sticks they can find within a set amount of time. Then they are all given 2 matches and must all try to start their fires at the same time.

## Beyond Second Class

Once your scout makes Second Class, there are several things to consider before deciding what direction the program will take next. Younger and newer scouts may need you to continue to act as the expert to the group and serve as a Patrol Leader while they start Special Proficiency badges. Be sure that even if you are doing the work of teaching, the Pathfinders have some say in which badges they will work on. Earning badges as a group can provide a lot of interesting options for meetings and create a simple structure for your program.

Once they have achieved Second Class, many groups are also ready to jump into having a Patrol and a Patrol Leader. While your Pathfinders may have attempted to work in the Patrol Method before now, the skills of Second Class really allow them to do more without your guidance. Working as a Patrol is an essential part of the Pathfinder program and key to building the leadership skills that scouting is so renowned for. Read the section on Pathfinder Patrols to better understand how to work with this system with your group.

All scouts who have completed Second Class can now work on Special Proficiency badges. These badges are grouped into four categories:

- Outdoors Skills (green)
- Community and Civics (red)
- Arts, Crafts, and Performances (yellow)
- Life Skills (blue)

As the adult leader or scoutmaster, you should read through all the badges and understand that these are to be used as tools to help your Pathfinders become interested in trying new things and exploring new skills.

Some Pathfinders may want to try something, but not complete the badge work. That is fine. For example, your group can go kayaking for fun, without completing the badge. Badges are there to create challenges for your Pathfinders, they should not become an obstacle to the fun of scouting.

While we are an outdoor-based program, most Pathfinders will benefit from trying badge work in many different areas. The well-rounded Pathfinder will earn badges from each category but may choose to focus more on skills they enjoy or find interesting. This is expected. Hopefully, your Pathfinders will work together to earn several that allow them to take turns trying things outside of their comfort zone.

If your Pathfinders seem adrift and unsure how to choose what to work on, be prepared to make suggestions of what you think would be fun to do. Youth don't always know how to ask for what they need, so if a badge requires that an adult help them set up an adventure or travel, they may not realize





they can ask you for that. Once you offer your willingness to kayak, rock climb, or purchase supplies, they will begin to see the possibilities. Younger Patrol Leaders won't be ready to lead their Patrols through things they have never done, so for specific badges, you will again need to step into the role of teacher and expert.

Pathfinders who are 14 years old or ones who are experienced may want to jump into working on the First Class skills. The First Class program is designed to take longer to achieve than Second Class and ends with a challenging camping trip. If your scouts want to work on that part of the program, be sure to read the second part of the *Pathfinder Handbook* and understand the complexity of how to help a Pathfinder learn all the skills they will need to safely take that journey. There is also a section in this guide to help you help your scout on their quest to become a First Class scout.

Once a scout is 14 years old or has achieved First Class, they can begin working on the Senior Special Proficiency Badges. These badges are structured similarly to the regular level, but designed to present challenges that appeal more to high school students. Some of these badges require earning other badges before completing them. When your scouts start this level of the program, you should spend some time looking at these badges. You will need to act a bit like a guide, pointing your scouts towards badges that may interest them or challenge them.

## Upper Level of the Program: Senior Scouts

The Senior level of the program is designed to interest scouts who are 14 and up, or those who have already completed First Class. The Senior level Special Proficiency badges are more challenging than the regular level. Many of these badges also include learning about career possibilities or skills scouts will need for adult life.

While scouts are encouraged to continue to earn the regular level of badges, the Senior badges create bigger challenges for older scouts. The Outdoors skills badges are generally designed to be the next level up from the regular level badges.

Keep in mind, that these senior level badges are written to help engage scouts who are in high school. Some badges that seem too hard or uninteresting to a 14-year-old, may be far more appealing at age 16 or 17. Scouts are going through a lot of self-discovery at this age. Hopefully, the Pathfinder program will support them in that journey.



## The Pillars

The upper-level Pathfinder Program has four Pillars or pathways that scouts can complete to earn a higher-level award. The details of those pillars are in the *Pathfinder Handbook*. Each Pillar corresponds to one of the four categories of badges and areas of focus: Torchbearer for Civics and Community, Voyager for Life Skills, and Trailblazer for Creative Arts. Becoming a First Class Scout is the fourth Pillar, and corresponds to Outdoor Skills. Each Pillar has unique requirements that include earning badges in the corresponding area of study as well as some additional requirements.

Once your scouts are 15 or 16, you may want to spend a meeting talking to them about if they want to complete any of the upper-level awards and making a plan for how to do that. Earning First Class

is a great achievement that would be wonderful for every scout to earn. However, for a wide variety of reasons, some scouts may not be able to complete a First Class Journey or meet some other requirement of this badge. That's where the other Pillars come in. We want every Pathfinder to be able to choose their own adventure when it comes to their scouting endeavors.

Scouts who earn three Pillars earn the Polaris Award, our highest honor. Figuring out how to pace a scout through earning the Pillars they choose may require some effort. Having regular check-ins with your scouts about their progress may help. While some Pathfinders will intuitively understand how to select badges to achieve a pillar, others may need some guidance. The Polaris Award should be listed on college and job applications and be work that a Pathfinder can take pride in.

## Special Interest Pins

In addition to the variety of badges and the Pillar awards, there are also pins available to earn for scouts who do concentrated work in a single area of interest. Collecting a set of badges in a theme means the scout can wear the corresponding pin instead of the set of badges. This may make it easier for scouts to display their accomplishments without having to transfer badges onto new uniforms as they grow. This addition to the program is a form of gamification.

In gamification, people are awarded for completing challenges they otherwise might not complete. This works in video games as people will play a video game longer or in specialized ways to attain little "badges", icons, and intangible rewards. This is really how teens are used to interacting with things. This means this new style of rewards should be familiar to them.

These Special Interest Pins encourage a scout who has earned one badge in an area of interest to pursue the other badges in the set. It also encourages scouts to pursue badges that are at the Senior level, as most of these require badges at both levels.

This is neither a replacement for nor a requirement for earning Pillars. These are just encouragement for scouts who want to do a deeper dive into an area of interest. You can choose one of these the way scouts choose to do optional quests in video games.

**Bonus Points for Pins:** They can easily be transferred to new shirts as scouts outgrow uniforms, making it unnecessary to wear all the badges they earned to get this pin.

The specific pins offered are listed in the *Pathfinder Handbook*, after the Senior Special Proficiency badge section. Most pin sets require scouts to earn senior level badges, and some require more than one. For this reason, you may want to delay discussing these until your scout starts the senior level of the program at age 14. However, badges earned at younger ages still count towards the Pins. There is no time requirement for how fast or slow a set must be completed, beyond what is required by the badges.

The pins are also chosen to represent a wide range of interests. Once a scout has earned a pin, you may want to point out that they are well on their way to completing a pillar. This smaller, in-between step may help some scouts bridge the gap from just earning badges, to earning a Pillar award.



## First Class

The skills required to be a First Class scout are extensive and may take quite a bit of work and planning to complete. Once your scouts have completed Second Class, you should spend some time looking at the First Class requirements and thinking about how you can help your scouts learn those skills. You may not actually know how to do all of them yourself. They may need to take outside classes or you may need to find other instructors to help them learn specific topics. Discuss with the leaders of your group to see who knows how to do what. Seek out other Pathfinder leaders for instructions if you need to.



Your scouts may want to spend several years working on just earning Special Proficiency badges and not go straight into a plan to earn First Class. As a scout-led program, that is fine. They don't have to earn First Class. However, as the leader, it is best if you look ahead so you will be ready to help when the time comes. You may also decide that covering some First Class skills adds interest to camping trips or meetings when your scouts are not working on other goals.



You will also want to think about whether your scouts need to do any fundraising to pay for their First Aid training or the gear they need for their journey. There is further information about fundraising in the *Pathfinder Handbook* and later in this Leader's Guide in Chapter 5.

Read the section in this book on the First Class Journey (in Chapter 8) for more information on completing that requirement and more guidance on how to use the badge program to prepare your scouts for First Class, by earning other green badges first.

## The Uniform

The Pathfinder uniform is a gray, long-sleeve shirt that buttons up and has 2 pockets and epaulets on the shoulders. In addition to the uniform shirt, Pathfinder uniforms include a group necker, sturdy pants for outdoor adventuring, and good sturdy shoes, preferably waterproof ones. Pathfinders may choose to wear a campaign hat or beret. And they may have a scout staff. Badges and patches are sewn directly to the uniform shirt.



While OSG has an official standard uniform, there are OSG groups that have adapted the standard to suit the needs of their groups. For example, some of our warmer weather groups have found they are happier in t-shirts, and sew badges to them the way that Timberwolves do. This is also a great option for groups that have scouts with fine motor issues who cannot fasten buttons. It is more important that a Pathfinder can put on their own uniform than that it is the standard one. One group chose to have the entire Pathfinder troop use T-shirts because it was more inclusive that way. T-shirts are also more sensory-friendly.



2nd Class Pathfinder Uniform

There is also one long-standing OSG group that badges up Columbia shirts that button up and have 2 pockets. That group wears shades of gray and blue, depending on what they can purchase when adding new guides. They prefer the fit and function of the Columbia shirts and the 50 SPF of those shirts. They are also quick-drying and long-lasting.

If your group chooses not to wear the standard gray uniform, please make sure that your troop does NOT wear the colors of another organization for the same age level. For example, khaki should be avoided. We also request that you not dress your Pathfinders in green, as that is reserved for Rovers.

Here are some pictures of what your Pathfinder uniforms may look like at various levels.



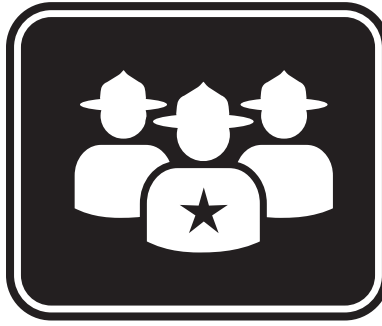
New Pathfinder



First Class and Patrol Leader



Senior Patrol Leader, Polaris Award Earned



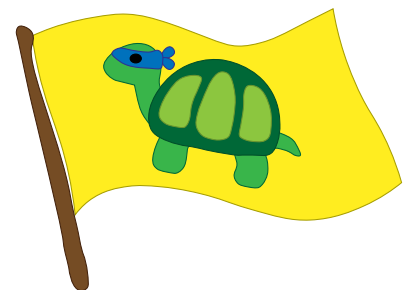
## 2

## THE PATROL METHOD

**T**he Patrol Method is a small-group learning technique where a group of four to eight scouts form a team to work together to meet their goals. As teams have colors and mascots, a Patrol selects colors and a Patrol animal to represent them. The Patrol also invents a call or a fun way to yell for the group to get together while scouting.

The call generally has a call and reply element, but not always. Traditionally, the Patrol animals were real animals, and the calls were animal sounds. However, a modern Patrol may mix and match to create something that resounds with them. Scouts may choose a fictional animal like a unicorn, and have a call and reply relevant to a show or book the Patrol likes. One of my favorites was the Turtle Patrol that had the call “Turtles in a Half Shell” and the reply was “Turtle Power!”

This combination of colors (generally worn as ribbons pinned to the left shoulder), animal, and call help establish a Patrol identity and playfulness that makes the game of scouting more fun. Scouts also may make flags to carry on hikes or to hang by their tents when camping to identify them by Patrol. If your Pathfinder group is large, this means your scouts have a fun way to divide into smaller groups for hikes, camp chores, badge work, and adventures. However, even if you only have enough Pathfinders for one Patrol, the elements of fun and Patrol identity still matter as it helps the scouts define and bond with their team.



### Choosing Patrol Leaders

Now that your scouts identify themselves as part of their Patrol (their scouting team) they will need a leader. If your scouts are very new, an adult may fill this role for a few months while the scouts are getting the hang of scouting and learning what it is all about. During that time, they will hopefully earn their Tenderfoot badge and get to know each other. If you have older or skilled scouts, you can ask your Patrol to select a leader and an assistant leader or second for the Patrol.

As a scout-led organization, you should see if the scouts can sort this out for themselves. If they struggle, as multiple scouts want to lead, or no one wants to step up, you can help. One solution for both of these is rotating and letting either all of the scouts, or all interested scouts, lead a meeting as the Patrol Leader. You can also help the scouts to have a secret vote by writing on paper their votes where you tally them. This can be a solution when scouts don't feel comfortable letting friends know who they voted for. The Patrol Leader should have some say in who their second in command is, as you want them to be able to share the work.

## Setting Up Your Patrol Leaders for Success

---

How much can you really rely on your Patrol Leader to lead? This honestly depends on the scouts you have. As the adult, it is your job to set up your scouts for success. So, if you have a young group of Pathfinders, you will need to plan to provide lots of coaching and assistance. Even older Pathfinder Patrol Leaders benefit from being given plans to follow, checklists for chores to assign, and help with creating schedules for camping trips.

One point of failure for a group can be when the adults give either too much or too little help to your Patrol Leaders. Just like we know that younger scouts need time to grow into doing things for themselves, so do your Pathfinders. If your Pathfinders have never been on a camping trip, they aren't going to know how to plan one nor what to do when they get there. It will still be on you to teach your Patrol Leader, second, and any older scouts the skills they need.

This lack of knowledge is also true of canoe trips, longer expeditions, or backpacking if your scouts haven't done those. Part of your job as the adult is to educate your scouts on what to expect and discuss how to plan an event and how to divide work, along with what to bring. If you work with them on a few trips, gradually doing less and less, you will soon have a group that can plan a trip and do the work of camp while you sit by the fire.

Does this mean that you should never let them fail? No. Part of the beauty of scouting is that it creates a safe place to make mistakes and fail at things. But be careful what you let them fail at. It is okay if they plan an ambitious meal and have to eat really late while camping. It is okay if they burn dessert, or forget to make it. It is not okay to let them make a plan that is unsafe or that will cause any of them harm. If you have a Pathfinder with severe allergies, your Pathfinders can't be allowed to make a dinner plan that will harm or kill one of them.

If you are unsure whether your Pathfinders are making a bad plan, give them some time to question each other. Instead of just telling them what you want them to do, consider asking them questions that help them see the problem that you are seeing. "What about Ash? They are allergic to wheat. What are they going to eat?" This lets them find the solution, even though they didn't see the problem.

The Scoutmaster supports the Patrol Leader in their effort to learn leadership skills by passing instructions, when appropriate, for them to provide to the Patrol. Also, individual scouts learn many leadership lessons from working with and watching the Patrol Leader. This is how they learn how to be a Patrol Leader when it is their turn in the scouting game.

Don't feel you have to move too fast. A slow-moving scout leader gives Pathfinders a chance to figure out their problem for themselves. By lingering by the fire a moment, or taking your time moving towards their "problem" you give them a few more minutes to consider what they need to do. This of course does not apply to emergencies, or dangerous situations. However, resolving conflicts among themselves, figuring out how to light the fire, or set up a tent, may be things they can resolve with just a few more minutes to

work on it.

Once your Patrol is working well, you can sit by the fire, making sure your scouts are learning good leadership skills. Encourage your Patrol Leaders to be fair about chore assignments (though open rebellion can also occur as a motivator on this front) and to help younger scouts. You want your Patrol Leader to develop the skills you wish your boss at work had. This is a chance to test out leadership, and for scouts to explore how to motivate others. Some scouts excel at this, others need a lot of coaching. A lot. But these are life skills that will take them far beyond scouting.

The Patrol Leader will ideally want to teach skills to newer scouts and listen to their Patrol. They will help lead the group through badge work during regular meetings, and help check off newer scouts on skills. As the adult, you will want to check on your Patrol, create challenges for them, and give them direction when they are adrift. There is nothing wrong with letting Pathfinders have time to play or relax together, so be sensitive to whether your Patrol really needs direction, or not. Part of the joy of scouting is being with your friends.

Mature pathfinder patrol leaders may be able to take initiative to organize events, email reminders, and plan activities for their patrol. Your greatest challenge as a scout leader is to figure out how to give just the right amount of support. You want your pathfinders to be empowered. You will likely start with needing to give a lot of directions to everyone. Then ease back to only instructing the patrol leaders. Eventually, you may find you have quite a bit of time to sit back while your patrol leaders work with patrols to do everything.

## Preventing Mutiny

---

What about Pathfinders who have trouble following directions given by other guides? It is important that you discuss with those Pathfinders why they are struggling. Sometimes, taking directions from a sibling or friend is difficult. Helping these Pathfinders think about what they should do with their feelings, and whether they are truly being treated unfairly is important. Sometimes, siblings really need to be in separate Patrols. Many an older sibling's life has been saved by giving his younger sibling a separate Patrol to work with. It also is up to you to mediate when Pathfinders have trouble getting along. Making sure guides can safely voice their feelings and concerns, and that the group will take those seriously and try to help fix the problem, is important.

One guideline that is important to follow: Never make a guide be the only one of their gender, race, religion, or other factor in a mixed group if you don't have to. While it may be enticing to put one girl in each of your 2 Patrols, the 2 girls will likely be happiest in a Patrol together. That said, you also don't need to divide by gender and have a boy group and a girl group unless your Pathfinders request that.

As a Scoutmaster, you may need to help your Pathfinders divide into Patrols or decide if you will only have one Patrol. If you have only eight scouts, one Patrol is usually better than two tiny Patrols. If you have nine or more Pathfinders, divide them into two groups. Ideally, a Patrol is made up of six to eight scouts. Too few members of the Patrol makes it difficult to have a workable team and absences are more difficult to work around. Too many members leaves some folks idle and makes it hard for the Patrol Leader to manage.

It is best to have a couple of meetings to get to know your Pathfinders before deciding on your Patrols. Figuring out if you should separate or keep siblings together is a challenge that comes up often for our all-inclusive organization. You also will need to decide if Pathfinders will be split into older and younger groups or Patrols that have a mix of skills. Once again, the best choice is to talk to your oldest, most



experienced guides and get their input on how they think the group will work best. The Pathfinders who you expect will likely be the Patrol Leaders, will be the best at suggesting what they want out of scouts and what they think will work best for their peers.

While there is nothing wrong with establishing new Patrols each year, Pathfinders tend to become very attached to their Patrol, both the people in them, and the group identity. Sometimes a group of Pathfinders graduates, and their Patrol flag/animal/etc leaves with them so that younger Pathfinders can establish a new identity. Sometimes, a Patrol will feel a need to rename or recolor themselves. Just remember that your job is to let them lead themselves and not force them to stay the same or change. That isn't up to you.

However, having multiple Patrols can lead to many questions. Do your Patrols camp together or not? Are they going to work on the same badges or different ones? Will they meet at the same time or not? In our experience, having multiple Patrols at the same place and time is great! Each Patrol is a team for any game, scavenger hunt, or relay race. Patrols can have a friendly competition to complete the camp setup first, and they are natural groups for creating campfire skits. There are many possibilities.

One last technique that many OSG groups have found useful is to promote older Pathfinders to the rank of Senior Patrol Leader when it is time to let someone else lead and they significantly outrank the rest of the group. The Senior Patrol Leader is someone who has been a Patrol Leader for years and is now ready to coach a Patrol Leader, lead multiple Patrols in a pinch, and is also ready to step back a bit and let the younger Pathfinders do all they can before stepping in. Pathfinders with five to six years of experience tend to gravitate towards this role. This scout may also be more interested in completing their own scouting journey, doing the work to obtain First Class or another Pillar, or wrapping up other scouting goals more than being Patrol Leader.

## **Breaking it Down by Ages**

---

Teaching Pathfinders to be Patrol Leaders takes time and a great investment of patience and work. You start with very clear goals and small tasks then build them up to bigger ones. The progression of learning to lead is sort of like that from Otter to Timberwolf to Pathfinder. First, they need to see someone else doing the skill, so you or an older scout is demonstrating how to lead. Then they do it with assistance, or in small pieces. Eventually, they can hopefully do it on their own.

### **Ages 11-12 (and newbies that are older)**

The newer Pathfinder wants to follow and get to know the program. An adult leader acts like the Patrol Leader and leads them through Tenderfoot and Second Class if we don't have older Pathfinders ready to lead them. Adults model the teaching style, encouragement, and what we want leadership to look like. New scouts at this stage may not have an official Patrol yet. The Adult does almost all planning, and selecting activities to give all guides a variety of experiences, and encourages various scouts to lead small tasks to teach single skills to each other. Plan for lots of projects and games to emphasize teamwork.

### **Ages 13-14**

Some scouts start to want to lead. Set them up to form Patrols and select leaders. Patrol Leaders are given assignments by adults that largely focus on teaching new Pathfinders skills they have already learned like those for Tenderfoot and Second Class or non-complex tasks like making a Patrol flag. The



adult acts as an expert in learning scouting skills and may regularly teach skills, help with leading Special Proficiency badge work activities, and do most of the planning for both the scout year and camping trips.

While Patrol Leaders have input on things, they are also treated a lot like a new Otter leader in your larger group, and they don't have to plan more than they are ready for. They lead the group in specific games, challenges, or skills, but the adult is usually telling them "Today the plan is to work on trail signs. Make sure your Patrol knows them, and have them lay a trail for the other Patrol to follow." Or similar. The adult leader will meet with the Patrol Leader before and between activities to guide them.

## **Ages 14-16**

The Patrol Leader who has been doing it a while is ready to work with the group to plan details of camping trips. The adult still provides support and directions, and provides tools to help facilitate the Patrol Leader's decision making or leadership.

For example, the Scoutmaster can provide a Patrol Leader with a blank duty roster for camp chores, and the Patrol Leader assigns chores or works with the Patrol to fill in the form. The scoutmaster may provide a form to plan meals for a camping trip. The Patrol Leader works with their Patrol to fill it in and then helps build a grocery and packing list.

When planning a camping trip, Pathfinders may not be aware or think about bigger picture things like what time people should arrive or how long it takes for a fire to be ready for cooking. As the Scoutmaster, you can provide a high level agenda with blocks of time for the patrols to choose activities, or, if the Patrol Leaders are more experienced, give them a list of things that must be done and ask them to fill in a blank agenda. You can work with them to fill out the agenda, asking the Pathfinders for input on things like "What time should we write down we will eat dinner? And what time does that mean we should start dinner prep?"

The key is to realize you may need to model, assist and provide support, like a form to fill out, so Pathfinders can do these skills. Patrol Leaders may do some leading by committee, where the whole group agrees on a meal plan, for example, and then they work together to write it out. The Patrol Leader's job is to make sure the task is done, like making the menu and shopping list, but not to just have to do it all on their own.

At some point, you are figuring out how to balance between adult led and youth led for new skills they want to learn, projects they want to do, and trips they want to take. As the Scoutmaster, you need to let scouts figure out what they can do, but coach and help so that they don't have a big failure because they bit off more than they could handle. As the adult you might lead brainstorming sessions or other things you'd do in a work environment to help them make a plan.

You can be the expert that teaches the skills for a badge the Pathfinders all want to earn, or find an instructor for them. In that case, scout led might be more about how they chose what they wanted to learn or which badge they wanted to earn, and less that they are teaching or leading each other through the badges or skills.

## **16-17 Year olds**

These older Pathfinders tend to step into the role of Senior Patrol Leader. Now they are the ones providing support to a younger guide who is the new Patrol Leader. They may sit back more, letting younger scouts lead. They step in to help with or do complex tasks, teach harder badge work they understand, or mentor Patrol Leaders.

This scout is going to do what YOU have been doing for years, so this is where your style shows a LOT. They may want to plan bigger events, community service projects or a BAT. Also, scouts this age often want to step back and focus again on their own scouting. They may want to work more on accomplishing First Class or other goals for themselves instead of spending as much time Patrol leading.



# 3

## MEETING GUIDELINES

**A** good meeting has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Many children, even teenagers, need cues and clear transitions to know when things are starting and stopping. Having a rhythm and predictable way each meeting starts and stops helps the Pathfinders switch into scout mode.

Here is a typical Pathfinder meeting outline.

- Start in a circle or horse shoe shape with all reciting the Scout law, motto or promise, or singing a song. Greet them and discuss what you will do today.
- Follow that with a game or instructions for the skill of the day.
- Do your scouting skill or activity.
- Let them have a little time to talk and socialize while they work or when they finish.
- End with a closing circle where you ask them to talk about what they liked best or did during the meeting (this works especially well if they are divided into Patrols).
- Finish with a song like Vespers.

The most important thing you should remember is that scouting is a game and you want this to be fun. As guides get older, we sometimes forget the game part. But the game is why they keep coming back. So be sure to remember that you are supposed to be having fun and so are they.

You may have them play actual games like Chuck the Chicken or Werewolf Tag. Or you might have them do a relay race of scouting skills like tying together short pieces of rope so they can rescue a toy. Creating challenges for them to problem solve through is another way to play with them. Dream up a challenge they can meet by pioneering, knot tying or using whatever skills they have learned.

Allow time for your Pathfinders to talk to each other, teach each other, and play together. Younger Pathfinders enjoy time for games like tag, while older teens tend to want more time to just talk and share. Having a set amount of time that your Pathfinders are sent to "go work in your Patrol" allows them to choose to play or talk and work at their own pace. You may wish to give them an easy to achieve goal for their time, so that they can do their work and then have time to play. This creates the illusion you don't

realize they are spending part of this time goofing off. But that goofing off time is actually very important, it is time for them to work on team building and develop social skills youth this age need.

It is also important to realize that unwatched teenagers often forget they even had something they were supposed to work on, so balance their unstructured or self-directed time with time that you and your co-leader are teaching them skills or helping them complete badge work. Check in with them and give reminders or explanations when they need them.

Pathfinders may also have huge responsibilities at home, and being self directed at scouts isn't something they know how to do. Give simple choices, and plan some meetings or community service projects based on what you think will appeal to them. Help them plan adventures that don't have anything to do with badge work if that is what they want to do. Going on a camping trip where the entire goal is to just successfully camp with the Patrol Method is enough if that is what your Pathfinders want.

## How often should you meet?

---

The general guidance on how often your group should meet is at least twice a month. Anything less than that makes it hard to complete badge work and form a cohesive group. Different groups may choose to meet in different ways at different times. What works best for your group will depend on your location, your leaders, and your Pathfinders.

Here are a few examples of different ways your group could choose to meet.

- Meeting in the evenings after school and work for 1-2 hours. These meetings can take place at a park, community room, or other meeting space. Your group could meet this way 1-4 times per month in addition to periodically meeting on weekends for camping, or other activities that don't fit into evenings.
- Meeting 2 weekends a month. These meetings could be done for regular meetings that last 1-2 hours, or could be events like camping, kayaking, rock climbing or other events your group chooses.
- Incorporate some online meeting time, if your group wants to. Meeting over Zoom to plan events or talk through things that don't need to be hands on is a great way to change up your meetings. You can plan games online, like pictionary, using Zoom's whiteboard feature. Online meetings take the stress off parents to get the scout to the meeting while still letting the scouts meet and have fun together.
- Some combination of the above. Your troop might choose to meet twice a month in the evenings and once on the weekends. Or you might reverse that. Or you could meet once a month over Zoom to plan events, and have 2 weekend meetings a month that alternate in intensity from camping and kayaking to simple day hikes.

Whatever you do, be sure it works for your group! If half of your troop is in the high school marching band, Friday night meetings will be poorly attended. You may also find that you need to change your meeting times or spaces as your group ages. This is normal. Eleven year olds usually have fewer conflicts than 16 year olds.

If your OSG group has other age levels, try to meet with those other age levels for at least one meeting a month. You can plan to do openings and closings with the Timberwolves and Otters, then break into age groups for activities. But you may also find ways to let Pathfinders instruct or help younger guides. This cross-age activity is good for everyone and creates a stronger bond for your OSG group.

## Co-Leading and Meeting Planning

---

Every Pathfinder section should have at least 2 leaders. If you have a large group, you may even need more. Having a good working relationship with your co-leaders is essential to having a functioning group. This can be challenging. Your co-leaders may not be people you would typically work with. They may come from different backgrounds and have very little in common with you. This is an asset to your group.

Have leader meetings as frequently as feels necessary for your group to run smoothly. Meeting before you start the scouting year to plan, and again periodically to check in is important. Dividing the labor makes the process better for everyone and increases the buy-in for all leaders.

If your Pathfinders are younger, you may need to do a lot of the planning for them. Eleven year olds aren't ready to plan a full year of scouting. So, negotiate with your leaders what kinds of events you can schedule for your Pathfinders that you think they will enjoy and that you as leaders can handle. Book some camping trips and come up with a few adventurous things to do. Plan at least one thing each leader is excited about.

As your Pathfinders get older, they can guide the group more, but be sure that all of your leaders have opportunities to participate in ways they enjoy. Scouts need to see leaders of all genders participating and working with them.

Be sure everyone is having fun. Not every detail of camping or scouting is fun, but overall, you should all enjoy scouting together. If you aren't having fun, but sure to reevaluate and find ways to have more fun.



# 4

## CAMPING, TENTING, AND PARENTS

**C**amping with Pathfinders should eventually be fun and easy for you, as the Scoutmaster. However, getting there is going to take some work. But like all great endeavors, it will be worth it.

With a new group of Pathfinders, it is important to realize that as the adult, you may be teaching this group of youth all the skills needed for camping. ALL. Of. Them. Guides who moved up from Timberwolves may already have a strong understanding of camping skills, but new Pathfinders will likely need help learning everything.

### **Basic Camping Guidelines**

---

Adults should always maintain two-deep leadership. This means you need a bare minimum of two adults on any camping trip, and three to five is even better if your group is going to be large enough to break into Patrols.

Don't expect new/young Pathfinders to know how to do things on their own without instruction. During their first few camping trips, your Pathfinders will likely need instructed on how to do everything from setting up their tent to washing their dish. During the camping trips they should learn those skills. Don't do it for them, teach them.

Let older and more experienced Pathfinders teach and lead all they can. The Patrol Leader isn't the only Pathfinder who should be doing this. Direct experienced Pathfinders to help the new ones with those skills like setting up their tent and washing dishes. If they need help from you, jump in and do it. Remember, they will imitate you as they grow into being the ones who teach and help younger guides.

Make a timeline for the camping trip with details of when you will do activities, prep for meals, eat, clean up, and have your campfire. Learning how to make a schedule and stick to it is hard enough for adults, so you will need to do this for your Pathfinders at first. Eventually, they should be able to take on managing an hour here or there, and later planning an entire weekend.

Create a meal plan and grocery list for your group. It is ideal to let Pathfinders weigh in on meal ideas,

but if you need to accommodate allergies or have other reasons the meal planning is complex, you may need to do it. Figure out a set of meals your group can make and how to cook them. Older Pathfinders will usually revert to choosing meals they prepared previously as a group when it is their turn to meal plan. Remember that many badges require they make multiple courses, so set the stage now that your group doesn't just eat a single one pot item. Make salad, stew and dessert, for example.

You can get recipes and meal ideas from other leaders and websites. While there are those who believe that ANY meal can be cooked over a campfire, those people are not trying to make a bunch of eleven year olds do it. While foods like roasting hot dogs on a stick are easy, your group should be able to make stew, chili or tacos with a little planning and a reasonable recipe.

Car camping for your first group trip is usually ideal, partially so that you can bring extra gear easily. There will be Pathfinders who somehow forget several things on the "essential things to pack" list you sent out ahead of time. Having in your vehicle extra mess kits or paper plates, a blanket, jacket or other gear is a good way to Be Prepared.

As the leader, you set the example of what "Be Prepared" looks like. Be sure your first aid kit is well stocked and at events. Bring enough food and snacks for everyone to eat more than their usual. Have baby wipes and towels for cleaning up unexpected messes.

As a Scoutmaster, it is important to have a schedule and routine planned for your camping trips. Once your Pathfinders have taken enough camping trips with you, they will be able to help plan activities and contribute to the plan. But with a new group of Pathfinders it is important that you set the pace and make the plan.

## Tenting

---

Be clear with your Pathfinders about your tenting policies. In many groups, 11 and 12 year old Pathfinders are allowed to choose to share a tent with a buddy, but all older Pathfinders have a tent to themselves. Having one Pathfinder per tent eliminates the potential issues that can arise from sharing a tent and gives each of them privacy.

If you have Pathfinders who need to share a tent with a parent due to disabilities or other issues, plan ahead to have the parent's tent in the adult part of camp, and not in the middle of the other Pathfinders. Your tent should also be in this adult area, and not in the middle of a Pathfinder Patrol.

## Backpacking and Campaigning

---

Before you jump into backpacking or other forms of campaigning, read the campaign section of the *Pathfinder Handbook* and the First Class Journey section of this guide. It has tips on teaching backpacking and ideas for working on the Backpacking badge.

Once you start planning backpacking trips, be sure to start slowly. A one night trip hiking only a mile or so to camp is a great chance for Pathfinders to learn the importance of not over packing and using the right gear. Build up to longer hikes and more adventurous trips.

Remember, Pathfinders need to spend their first few years of the program watching, listening and learning how to do this level of scouting. They don't come in ready for a First Class Journey. It is your job to prepare them to be able to take that trip.

## Parents

---

Parents can be the biggest challenge some Pathfinder programs face. Many parents want scouting to be something they do with their kids. If you are lucky, this means you end up with several leaders who attend training and help with your group. If you are not so lucky, it means a whole lot of parents on a camping trip who are being "too helpful." What is wrong with being too helpful? It means that the Pathfinders themselves don't get to do things, because the adults are doing it for them. Pathfinders need to learn to set up their own tent, cook their own dinner, and light their own fires, even if they struggle with them some. Yes, a leader or another guide should help them if they struggle too much, but that is far different than having a parent who wants to step in and do it for them.

If parents will be along for many events, it is reasonable to ask them to be background checked for everyone's safety. Your group auxiliary should decide if you want to require every parent going along to events to be background checked or not. Having a group policy can make it easier for everyone, including you. If you are stuck bringing along Pathfinder parents who are not leaders, lay out some ground rules before each camping trip. Send parents a list of what THEY should pack and be clear they will need to have something to occupy themselves, their own food and gear separate from their Pathfinder. Pathfinders (except for special circumstances) do not sleep in a tent with a parent. Parents should have their own space and let the Pathfinders find their own way.

Some groups find it useful to start a Rover Crew for parents that will have them act as their own Rover Crew for the weekend. This may include having them hike out of camp for a while, work on ax skills, or allow them develop other scouting skills they can later share with your Pathfinders at an appropriate time.

## Communication with Parents

Clear communication is always essential to a good camping trip, and scouting in general. Communicate with parents, before, during, and after camping.

Before the trip, send parents a packing list, expectations, and a timeline. They need to know what time to drop off and pick up their Pathfinders. If you have a more detailed plan you wish to share, parents like that.

One thing that parents need to be aware of is that arriving late or leaving early can be problematic to your programing. Let parents know that if a Pathfinder will need to leave early or arrive late, you need to know in advance to mitigate confusion and disruptions to the rest of the troop. Be clear about expectations about how parents should communicate with you before leaving the event with their Pathfinder.

Have a plan for communication during the trip. In this age of cell phones, most parents are not accustomed to their children, even teens, not being in almost constant contact. But you don't want kids to be on their phone constantly or have parents calling to check in with their child while you are working in a Patrol on a skill or taking a hike.

Be clear with parents that you'll be sharing status updates and how you will do that so they don't feel the need to check in on their kids. As a leader, you may choose to post to a board or group chat a short message during the trip just to let parents know all is well. You can also text a single person who can then do the posting and communicating. A single picture of your group around the campfire and a note "All Pathfinders are fed and happy" posted to your group can help anxious parents to feel better about the choice not to go on the camping trip.

If you have parents on the trip, be sure you give them your schedule and tell them what your expectations



are as you go. Do not assume they will realize that lights out applies to them too, unless you tell them so.

After you get home, be sure to tell your parents what went right and if there were any problems. An announcement "We had a great trip!" is a great way to wrap up the weekend when you get home. Post a few pictures of the trip and let parents know what random gear they need to pick up from you at the next meeting.

## What to Bring Camping

Be sure to communicate clearly to your families times, dates, locations and what they need to bring on a camping trip. It is important that you are reviewing this with the Pathfinders and with the Parents. For example, you may spend some time in a meeting discussing the camping trip, reviewing the schedule and expected weather. That would lead to discussing the packing list each Pathfinder needs to bring. If you expect them to bring a brown bag lunch, you have to tell the kids. And then you have to tell the adults separately, in what ever way your group has established communication norms. Email, social media, handouts at meetings, whatever it is.

Don't assume the Pathfinders are going to tell their parents when the trip is, and don't assume the parents will tell the Pathfinders what they need to bring or go over their packing list.

Here is an example of packing lists to give your Pathfinders and parents. You should add items as appropriate to your location, weather, etc.

### Packing list for camping trips:

- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Pad
- Spare Clothes (specifically extra socks)
- Rain gear and/or jacket
- Water bottle
- Some personal snacks (trail mix)
- Personal Mess kit and utensils
- Flashlight
- Sun protection
- Good sturdy footwear
- Personal First aid kit
- Fire starting kit
- Knife
- Compass
- Personal sanitation/toiletries (including TP, toothbrush, etc).



### What to bring on a backpacking trip:

- Everything listed above (try to lower the weight some).
- Ready to eat / easy to cook meals.
- Extra water (at least two quarts per day).
- Hiking Backpack – be sure that it fits correctly and can carry everything you are bringing with you. The packed weight of the pack should be 20% or less of your body weight.

## While At Camp

---

For every camping trip, there are some important elements to remember to include. These should go on your camp schedule.

- Setting up the campsite, tents, and camp kitchen. Including a special place for the first aid kit known to all.
- Camp Opening. This varies by group, here are a few items to consider:
- For many groups this includes raising a flag over the camp.
- Counting off or Role Call to take attendance
- Reviewing the rules at camp
- A safety talk including the buddy system, knife, axes, fires etc.
- Any important announcements about events that will take place while camping
- A formal or informal campfire
- Meals and snacks
- Break down and clean up of the campsite including Leave no Trace principles
- Camp Closing which can include awards, expressions of thanks and reminders about future events or tasks Pathfinders or parents need to work on.

You may want to create a detailed schedule for your camping trip that includes times for cooking, eating and cleaning up. Issuing Patrol Leaders a detailed schedule can empower them to keep the trip on track. It can also allow you to plan which adult or Pathfinder leaders will be teaching which skills when. Planning a designated amount of time for hiking may also help you decide how far your group should hike, so that they can make it back in time to start their next activity.

If your Patrols are mature, they may be able to assign camp chores themselves. If they are not, you should help assign tasks to your Pathfinders to help the camping trip go smoothly.

Here are some printable pages to use for making schedules and chore charts:

<https://docs.guides4guides.org/Pathfinders/Camp-Schedule-Duty-Roster-Template.pdf>

## Patrol Boxes

---

You will need to make sure that you have Patrol boxes with all the essential items Pathfinders need for cooking and cleaning at camp. Below is a suggested list for Patrol boxes. If your group is new, ask parents to consider donating items to offset expenses for your group. Donated items do not have to be new, and most families have a few extra kitchen items they can spare.

Ideally, every Patrol should have a Patrol Box, dish washing station, and hand washing station. That's a lot of gear if you have two or more patrols. And it can get expensive to maintain and a hassle to store. Start with one good Patrol Box and dish washing station and build up from there as is reasonable. And think about the types of meals you are making. Maybe you don't ever make pancakes or eggs so a whisk is unnecessary. Or there's some other ways you can consolidate.

**Patrol Box Inventory**

- Stove and propane
- Large pot with lid
- Smaller pot
- Frying pan/skillet
- Whisk
- Turner/flipper
- Tongs
- Rubber spatulas
- Knife big
- Knife small
- Wooden spoons
- Serving spoons
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Cutting board
- Can opener
- Cheese grater
- Mixing bowl(s)
- Collapsible water cube
- Fire/grill tongs
- Heavy duty aluminum foil
- Ziploc bags – quart and gallon
- Brown paper bags
- Potholders
- Dish towels
- Table cloth
- Clothespins

**Dish-washing station**

- Bleach or sanitizing tablets
- Camp-safe dish soap
- Scrubbers/Scrapers
- Three dish washing tubs or 5-gallon buckets: soap, rinse, bleach
- Green Waste Management (a 5-gallon bucket and compostable trash bags for collecting compostable waste)
- Container for capturing recyclables
- Trash bags for everything else

**Hand-washing station**

- Water jug
- Soap
- Hand sanitizer
- Tub/bucket to catch water

In addition to the Patrol Boxes, you may need some other gear for the group. You may want to bring things like:

- pop-up canopy
- folding table(s)
- Dutch oven + lid lifter
- cooler
- mason jars/tupperware for leftovers

After each camping trip, you'll want to have a Quartermaster in your group review each Patrol Box to make sure nothing has gone missing and make note of any consumable items that need to be restocked before the next trip. Such things may include:

- paper towels
- Ziploc bags
- aluminum foil
- brown paper bags
- propane
- dish soap
- hand soap
- hand sanitizer
- sponges/scrubbers
- trash bags

Some groups ask parents to send in more items, or make donations to get the group started. After a few years of running your group, you should be able to gradually budget for purchasing group gear or make a plan to fund raise for what you need.



## Cooking at Camp

---

Cooking at camp is an essential part of the work each Patrol will do. It provides an opportunity for team work, delegation, leadership and planning. Dinner will take forever if they don't remember to get that cooking fire started.

Below are a few tried and true recipes to use with your Pathfinders.

### Chicken Stew

#### Ingredients

- 2 pounds of pre-cooked chicken (canned or cooked and shredded in advance is good)
- 2 onions, diced
- ¼ cup gluten-free flour
- 6 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 little bottle of white wine
- potatoes, cut into ½-inch pieces
- carrots, peeled and sliced into ¼-inch thick pieces
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley

#### Directions

1. In a Dutch Oven over the campfire, heat 1 tablespoon of oil until it shimmers.
2. Add the chopped onions and cook until softened and lightly browned, 8 to 10 minutes.
3. Stir in the flour, garlic, tomato paste, and thyme. Cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes.
4. Slowly whisk in 4 cups broth, scraping up any browned bits and smoothing out any lumps.
5. Add the bay leaves. Stir in potatoes and carrots. Bring the stew to a simmer.
6. Cover, and move to a cooler part of the fire. Let it simmer until vegetables soften, about 15 minutes.
7. Discard the bay leaves.
8. Stir in the cooked chicken and let sit until heated through - about 5 minutes. Stir in parsley and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

## Foil Packs

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds Chicken, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 pound Kielbasa sausage, cut into bite-size pieces
- 6 Carrots
- 2 Bell peppers
- 1 pound Baby potatoes
- Ranch dressing
- Seasoning blend
- Salt and pepper
- Water
- Cooking spray
- aluminum foil, in 18-inch long sheets
- parchment paper
- Sharpie

### Directions

1. Light the charcoal in the chimney starter and let it heat up until gray.
2. Peel and cut the carrots into bite-size pieces.
3. Cut the pepper into slices.
4. Cut the potatoes into bite-size pieces.
5. Set out the food in an assembly line.
  - a. At the start of the line should be the sheets of aluminum foil and cooking spray.
  - b. Next should be the potatoes, chicken, sausage, and veggies.
  - c. The third should be a measuring cup of water with a tablespoon measurer.
  - d. Next, should be the toppings: ranch dressing, seasoning, salt and pepper, and Parmesan cheese.
  - e. Last is the sharpie.
6. Each scout should make their own packet, walking down the line, taking what they want, and adding it to their packet. Don't forget to add two tablespoons of water to each packet to help everything steam. At the end of the line, they should fold up their packet into a tent, trapping in the air, and label it with their name.
7. Cook each packet directly on the gray coals for about 10 minutes. Then rotate the packets a half turn and cook for another 10 minutes.
8. Carefully pull the packet out of the fire and check to see if the chicken is cooked through and the potatoes are done.

NOTE: Some scouts may want to put parchment paper down so their food is not directly on the foil.

## Walking Tacos

### Option 1: Canned Chili

1. Heat in a Dutch oven over medium heat 2-4 cans of chili.
2. Serve over Fritos or Doritos with optional toppings of your choice.

### Option 2: Tacos from a Mix

#### Ingredients

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 package Taco Seasoning mix- and water as directed on package
- Tacos
- 2 bags Fritos corn chips
- 2 cups shredded Mexican-blend cheese
- 1 head lettuce, shredded
- 1 can olives, sliced
- 1 tomato, diced
- Sour cream

#### Directions

1. Brown the meat in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add taco seasoning and follow directions on package.
2. To make the Walking Tacos, once the chili is done, put a handful of chips in a bowl and add a scoop of chili. Dress with the condiments of your choice. Enjoy!

### Option 3: All from Scratch.

There is a more complex recipe for Chili from scratch in the *Pathfinder Handbook*.

## Cherry Chocolate Lava Cake

### Ingredients:

- 1 can cherry pie filling
- 2 bags chocolate cake mix
- 1 16-oz bottle of Sprite
- 1 bag chocolate chips
- whipped cream

### Directions:

1. Light charcoal in a chimney starter and let heat up until the coals are gray.
2. Line the inside of a Dutch Oven with foil and spray the foil with cooking spray.
3. Open the pie filling and dump it into the bottom of the Dutch oven.
4. Layer the chocolate cake mix on top of the cherry filling.
5. Open the soda and slowly pour over the cake mix. It will foam, but shouldn't overflow if you go slowly.
6. Sprinkle the chocolate chips on top of the soda.
7. Mix everything until the batter is combined.
8. Put the lid on the Dutch oven.
9. Place 16 charcoal on the lid of the oven.
10. Make a circle of 8 charcoal that will serve as the base heat for baking the cake.
11. Place the Dutch oven over the circle and let the cake bake for approximately an hour. Start checking it after 30 minutes. It might be more or less time depending on the size of your Dutch oven and the heat of the coals.
12. Remove the Dutch oven from the coals and serve with whipped cream.



# 5

## FUND RAISING

**A**t some point, your Pathfinders may want to do something that is beyond their budget. For this reason, the *Pathfinder Handbook* has a section on fundraising with ideas for them to try.

Fundraising is an amazing thing in OSG, as you get to decide if and when your group will do any or all fundraisers. We do not have national fundraisers, because our organization is all volunteer, so we do not have to support the salaries of organizers. We also do not have camps or facilities to maintain.

However, there are a few rules we ask you to follow when fundraising.

1. No national sales. This means you are not permitted to sell items like magazines, wrapping paper, etc with large national or international companies.
2. We encourage you to have your guides do the work to make what they sell, whether that is food or crafts.
3. If you partner with a local business, make sure that your group is not exploited and that you are partnering with a place that shares our values as an organization. Businesses that discriminate against any group of people should not be considered as a fundraising partner.
4. On-line sales of items your group designed or created are allowed.
5. On-line or in person auctions or yard sales of things donated to your group are allowed.
6. Do not send youth members door to door with items to sell, as this is unsafe.
7. All in-person sales should be under the direct supervision of two scout leaders, per our two-deep leadership policy.
8. Online fundraisers for a specific purpose, performed independently or with companies which do not conflict with our values as an organization, are permitted.
9. Private sponsorships, for example (but not limited to) equipment or a campsite, where the group or its members would benefit from the sponsorship while allowing the sponsor themselves to benefit while not in use by the group, are permitted. If there is any question about the suitability of such a relationship, those fall to the regional commissioner.
10. Legally purchased or donated third-party property of a group, region, or national organization, i.e.: gently used tents, sleeping bags, canoes, etc, may be rented or sold to outside parties to the benefit of the organization, without exclusion.

If you are unsure if your fundraising idea is okay, please check with your regional commissioner for guidance.





# FUND RAISING FOR YOUR OSG GROUP



## HOST A DINNER

Have your scouts plan and cook a meal. Sell tickets or accept donations to raise funds. Popular meals include pancakes, spaghetti, or have a s'mores night where scouts make perfectly cooked marshmallows for all.



## SELL HOME MADE ITEMS

Have a bake sale and sell treats made by your group. Create key chains, holiday items or paracord bracelets to sell. The important part is that your scouts make what they sell.



## ORGANIZE A HIKE-A-THON

Your group accepts pledges based on how far your scouts hike or how many scouts participate in a hike. Plan a date and take your group hiking.



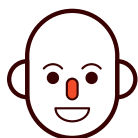
## SET UP A TALENT SHOW

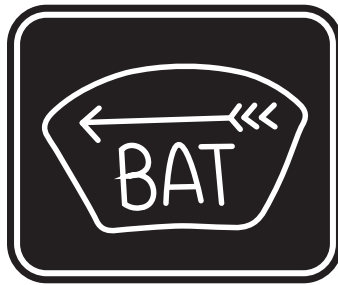
Performing songs and skits is a fun tradition. Selling tickets as part of a fundraiser can merge the two! Encourage everyone to participate and show off what they can do.



## HOLD A SILENT AUCTION

Collect donations of items like camping gear, pocket knives, original art work, or even offers to cook dinner for someone or sing them a song. You can set this up on-line, or have an in person event to bid on everything to raise funds for your group.





## 6

# BRONZE ARROW TRAINING

**B**ronze Arrow Training (or BAT) is a weekend of leadership training for Pathfinder level scouts. Pathfinders who attend need to have earned Second Class and have some interest in leadership such as being Patrol Leader or assistant Patrol Leader. The ideal BAT has Pathfinders from several groups who are ready for a new challenge.

BAT leaders tell us that they enjoy having Pathfinders be surprised by what the weekend entails. Part of the adventure is the experience of attending without being told the agenda beforehand. So, use caution about oversharing with your Pathfinders about what to expect.

## What Happens at BAT

During this weekend, Pathfinders are assigned to Patrols with Pathfinders from other groups and must form a Patrol and work together to complete the activities assigned that weekend. The details of the challenges are kept secret and may change from one event to another. However, the elements of camping such as cooking their own food and working together as a Patrol to complete all camp chores are always present.

The weekend involves learning about leadership, and teamwork. Pathfinders are given unique challenges and work through them with their Patrols.

If you would like to host a BAT, please reach out to your regional commissioner and regional training commissioner. We have a limited number of trainers on each coast who are qualified to run a BAT at this time. However, we hope that as more Pathfinders desire to earn this award, that it becomes more accessible. The trainers who are able to run it, are generally interested in having more of these events, so don't be afraid to ask about having one near your group.

## Beyond Bronze

---

Pathfinders who attend BAT are then eligible to complete the **Silver Arrow Training Award**, SAT, through work they complete in their own group with their Patrol. The requirements for this award are handed out at the BAT event. As their adult leader, you should plan to look at these requirements with your BAT attendees and support them in completing the requirements. They may need to meet with you one-on-one several times to plan and complete the work. In general, the SAT award requires them to be an active Patrol Leaders in their group who plan multiple Patrol meetings and activities like camping.



The third and highest level of this award is the **Triple Arrow Leadership Award**. This award requires that Pathfinders who have earned SAT complete a larger scale community service project with their group or Patrol. It is important to review the requirements and work with your Pathfinder on that project if they wish to take that on.



# 7

## GENDER INCLUSION, SEXISM, AND PERIODS

**T**here are some key differences in leading girls vs. boys. In big, general terms that don't apply to every Pathfinder, girls and boys tend to have some differences in where they most need us as leaders to push them along. Part of the challenge of the program we offer is that we have mixed gender groups. This means we have to consider the needs of all genders at once, which can be both easy and challenging. While nothing about gender makes a Pathfinder better at setting up a tent, lighting a campfire, or leading a Patrol, a person's life experiences matter. The expectation society has given them for their gender, or the life experiences it has presented, can create gender gaps we have to work with as leaders and help our scouts overcome the damage those can cause.

### Girls

---

Girls are generally stronger with their verbal and communication skills. The ability to lead a group or teach a younger scout are skills they may have learned as babysitters and older sisters. Those skills are encouraged in girls in other settings which enhance natural abilities. This means that teamwork and being a Patrol Leader may come easier to girls.

However, society starts telling little girls "don't be bossy" in preschool, so they may need encouragement to step up and actually lead. Boys, who have been told "don't be girly" may have a hard time adjusting to following a girl's lead. But our goal is to create humans who can both lead and follow, so EVERY Pathfinder needs the chance to do both.

Where girls often lack, is that they may not have been exposed to actual scouting skills like starting fires, tying knots, and sharpening knives. They will generally pick up these skills very quickly once they get a chance to learn them. Girls often have better fine motor skills than boys so knot tying may come more easily to them. Girls are often encouraged to participate in crafts, learning knitting and sewing skills that translate into knot work very well. They may also have been encouraged to create and draw more, making other badge work easier for them.

The big thing to watch for, is if girls have been socialized to hang back and let the boys take the lead. This behavior can be something they learned in school, and as a result, you need to be proactive in making sure your female guides get every chance to do everything the boys do, even if they need encouragement at first. Girls will sometimes even hold back, so as not to make the boys feel bad about the skills they don't excel at. You have to make your troop a place where it is safe for the girls to not just participate, but thrive and excel. Honoring their accomplishments and encouraging them to be Patrol Leaders is important for both the boys and girls in your troop.

## Boys

---

The challenge of leading boys today is that they may have been exposed to various levels of toxic masculinity or have ideas about gender roles that limit them as people. Rare is the Pathfinder age girl who has never cooked something, but the boy this age who has never baked brownies or cooked breakfast is far more common. The boys who have never been allowed or encouraged to cook at home, can find a lot of joy in camp cooking.

Boys tend to struggle more with clearly communicating with their group, especially if feelings are involved. In many settings, boys may be discouraged from crying, showing emotions other than anger or expressing fear. Boys are encouraged less to talk in general, and encouraged to babysit far less often than girls, leading them to lack skills from lack of practice. This means you will need to have the male Scoutmaster for your group express emotions and help scouts who need help with expressing themselves and communicating clearly. Scouts is a place where boys can learn skills that will carry them through life, like cooking, cleaning and sewing. It is a place to learn a positive version of manhood that they may not see everywhere and develop strong communication skills.

Finally, you will need to be sure you set the example for the boys that the girls are their equals. One rule in every group is no name calling, but it is especially important that you don't allow slurs that invoke female as bad. Saying things like "You hit like a girl" or "don't be a sissy" are ways boys are taught to make being feminine a slur. Putting an end to any talk like that, even if it is only among the boys, is essential to building young men who respect the girls and women of the world and become whole people themselves.

## All Together Now

---

The real world is not separated by gender, so not separating our Pathfinders that way makes sense. However, creating real equality in our programming can take thoughtfulness. In general, boys tend to be over confident and girls under confident compared to their actual skills levels. It is important to remember this when it comes time to ask your Pathfinders to demonstrate a skill for the troop. When asking for a knot demonstration from a group of 12 year old Pathfinders, the differences may look like the following story.

A boy, let's call him Jimmy, will jump forward saying "I can do it!" and then proceed to take the rope, hold it up, and twist it all wrong, resulting in no knot at all. You turn to a girl in the group, let's call her Sarah, who you know you have seen tie this knot and ask her to demonstrate. Sarah replies "I'm not sure, but I can try." She then ties it perfectly. As scout leaders, we want to praise both Pathfinders appropriately. When Jimmy fails to tie the knot, we tell him, "Thank you for trying. Now we will let someone else try." Boys actually may need to be told that their turn is over. Sarah on the other hand deserves appropriate praise for her work. "Great job, Sarah! Can you do it again slower for everyone to see what you did?"

I once heard a boy say "I know girls can do anything boys can do because at scouts Anna can do

everything better than all the boys.” While this was a testament to Anna’s skills, it also shows the value in having a multi-gender troop. Anna is not only having success, but she is helping the boys in the group grow up to be men who are comfortable having a female boss and working with women as equals. Anna grew from Otters to Pathfinders in her group, and was never told she couldn’t do something because she is a girl. Not all girls have that experience.

One other thing to watch for, is that your scouts aren’t talking over or ignoring the ideas of one of their peers. In the adult world, women are often ignored and talked over by male co-workers. This horrible practice starts in childhood, when boys get the message that their ideas are better, usually because they are louder or teachers give them more attention. Create a space where all your guides can be heard and make sure you give them equal time and opportunities to speak. Correct Pathfinders who interrupt and make sure that your Pathfinders all listen to good ideas when they are presented and don’t ignore the girls.

## Leaders Set the Standards

---

If you are leading a group with two or more genders, it is ideal to have adult scout leaders of the same. One of the most important things you can do is make sure that your leadership team demonstrates working together and listening to each other. As scout leaders, we need to demonstrate and discuss breaking gender barriers with our scouts. Male leaders who mention cooking dinner for the family and female leaders who share about changing their car tire, break down stereotypes for all guides. Both female and male leaders need to take turns instructing Pathfinders and teaching skills, so that your Pathfinders don’t come to believe that there are gender roles in the group. There is nothing wrong with dividing work in a way that makes sense, but telling your guides the female leader is teaching first aid because she is an EMT and has experience is an important part of the lesson. We let those with the expertise teach the skill.

Adult women often have to second an idea one of them says to have their idea heard by the men in their group of co-workers. It shouldn’t take 2 women to have the voice of one be heard. Fight this problem by making sure the female Rovers in your group are listened to with equal respect as the men at every meeting or campout. Create specific times for the women to speak to the group instead of a male leader, at the start or end of meetings. Correct boys about interrupting female leaders and female guides. If you catch a boy repeating what a girl just said as though the idea is his, be sure to give credit to the girl. All too often, men can be inclined to take credit for women’s ideas and work. Be sure that the men in your group don’t do this, and that the boys don’t either. Always give credit where it is due.

## Personal History Matters

---

Beyond all of this, you need to acknowledge that some of the girls and LGBTQ kids who join your group may have the baggage of having been sexually harassed at school or other areas of their life.

From a female Rover: I know how old I was when I first changed my behavior because of being sexually harassed at school. I stopped wearing dresses because the boys would try to raise up my skirt to see my panties. I wanted the harassment to stop, so I stopped wearing dresses. I was six. By the time I was a teen, the clothes didn’t matter, and the harassment had escalated in an assortment of ways. At every step the school was like “boys will be boys.”

It is essential we make sure the boys in our programs aren’t allowed to act like that, and that the girls KNOW they are safe and won’t be harassed at scouts. However, the emotional toll of being harassed

elsewhere can come with a person to scouts, so it is important that you recognize this is an issue kids face far younger than you may realize.

You will need to address any sexual harassment head on and not take a "wait and see" attitude. Guides should never be asked to tolerate inappropriate behavior from another guide. Wipe the phrase "boys will be boys" from your lexicon. All scouts treat all scouts with respect. Period. Be aware, that if a Pathfinder comes to you about a behavior problem, it may not be the first time it has happened, just the first time the victim felt brave enough or strong enough to bring it up. Depending on the transgression, having the Pathfinder who transgressed go beyond an apology may be appropriate. Acts of service, giving a presentation to the group about "what is sexual harassment and why I will never do it again" or being required to stay physically away from the guide who they harassed are all possibilities to consider. I also recommend speaking to a Pathfinder's parents about this kind of problem behavior and being clear that your group doesn't tolerate it.

## **ALWAYS Be Prepared**

---

One last issue with co-ed scouting, make sure that you *do* accommodate having young women in the group. Always pack an assortment of menstrual products in your first aid kit for guides who need them. If you are looking into backpacking, girls may need different packs to accommodate their figures. Chest straps don't fit right over boobs, they go above on the flat part of the chest. And when weighing packs for scouts, remember that smaller guides can carry less gear safely without injury. A Pathfinder shouldn't carry more than 20% of their body weight. So remember, if some of your Pathfinders are smaller, they can carry less gear.

The smallest female Pathfinder I've known, chose to do her First Class Journey by bike, because it gave her the ability to actually haul enough gear for the weekend. As a person who weighed less than 100 pounds, there wasn't a realistic way for her to backpack with all she would need for a weekend. Being a tiny female didn't stop her from her achievements as a Pathfinder, it just caused her to evaluate how she could best achieve her goals. This requirement to think about how to excel when her own physical attributes were not on her side caused her to become a better scout, not a lesser one.

One other bit of advice from that Pathfinder. If you ever get to walk into a Patrol of Pathfinders that are not your own, don't assume who is the Patrol Leader. A pet peeve of hers was that Rovers have walked into her camp, assumed that her second, the "big tall boy" was the Patrol Leader and spoke to him as such. This gender and size based assumption actually is offensive. Always ask who is in charge of the Patrol, and treat the Patrol Leader with respect.

## **A Deeper Look at Menstruation**

---

As a fully inclusive program of all genders, scout leaders need to be knowledgeable about mensuration and provide appropriate support for scouts who experience menstruation. The typical age for a first period is 12, with most starting to have cycles between age 10 and 15. However, there are those who get them earlier and later, so age alone does not tell you if a person has a cycle.

### **Cultural Issues**

As a fully inclusive program, you may have scouts in your group who come from homes that are far more conservative or far more liberal than your own home. Those values impact how a family handles periods.

Girls have historically been shamed and discriminated against because of having periods. Periods are often a source of embarrassment and distress. Your job as a scout leader is to both normalize periods for your group, and to respect your scouts' boundaries.

Not all people who have periods are women or girls. Scouts who are non-binary or transgender can have periods too. When talking about periods with your group, try to use non-gendered language. Because periods are not something to be ashamed of, it is ideal to just let everyone in your group know about access to period supplies your group has, no matter what their gender or their personal need for such supplies. It is not unusual for a scout to discover on a trip to the bathroom that they need a pad or tampon and need to ask their buddy to go get them one. This is one of the secret reasons women go to the bathroom together, so they can share supplies if needed.

There are parents who may not allow their daughters to attend swimming, camping or other events during their periods due to a variety of cultural, financial, and anatomical reasons. You may have scouts who just do not use some menstrual products. Tampons, cups and menstrual disks that must fit internally are just not a solution for everyone. While those products may sound like they would make a scouting activity easier to attend, it is extremely important to not make value judgments about what products someone uses. Reusable options like period panties and cloth pads can be expensive, and not all families are comfortable with washing them.

There are several "backcountry menstruation guides" available on the internet. Please be aware that those are generally targeted at adult women who have the ability to purchase and test any and all products without explaining their needs or choices to a parent. It is challenging to find a guide like that is appropriate for teens. Many of these guides suggest using products that are appropriate for adults and emphasize earth conscious choices over practicality. Some guides are even full of myths and false facts.

## Practical Application

Especially in younger people and teens, periods can be random. While the ideal adult cycle puts periods on a regular schedule, many people don't experience regular cycles until adulthood. During teen years periods can show up anywhere from two weeks to eight weeks apart, instead of the "normal" four. As a result, your scout may not be prepared when their period arrives so your group should be prepared for them.

Your group should provide access to period products at all times. I recommend having at least pads, or pads and tampons in your first aid kit or Patrol box and in a discrete, easy to access place. For example, a leader might always keep a package of pads in the console of their vehicle. Since this vehicle goes to all of the troop's scout meetings and hauls the gear for camping trips: "I need to get that thing from your truck" is easier for a scout to say than "My period just started and I need a pad." Getting something from the first aid kit or Patrol box that is in a central location may make it accessible, but may also mean a scout is observed and feels exposed accessing supplies there. Being able to get a pad or tampon without discussing it, reduces embarrassment for the scout and keeps it private. Make sure all adult leaders and Patrol Leaders are aware and know they can access pads on behalf of scouts or themselves as needed.

All bathrooms used by scouts should always have a trash can for disposing of used products at all times. They clog the plumbing, so they need a place to go when they are used. If you are running an event, be sure there is always a receptacle in all bathrooms.

Periods are often accompanied by cramps. During a period, the body essentially performs a dress rehearsal of childbirth, the body has small involuntary contractions for up to an entire week, while struggling to eject the lining of an entire organ. Cramps can be debilitating. If you've never experienced



them, assume it feels like you are being repeatedly punched in the gut (and back, and occasionally even thighs). It is ideal to know for all of your scouts if they are allowed to have pain relievers while at scouting events. Obtain parental permission at the start of the scouting year if possible, so that you know if your scout can have Advil, Motrin or Tylenol for headaches or cramps while camping or at other events without parents present. Be sure your first aid kit is stocked with those, and if there is an additional place to access those, be sure scouts know that too. It is a good idea to have a leader who is designated to also have with them pain relievers and allergy medication. These may be in their purse, car, or otherwise on their person, so that scouts have a designated leader to ask about medication.

Be willing to change chore schedules if one of your scouts develops debilitating cramps. Doing activities that involve a lot of bending at the waist and reaching can make cramps worse as those movements cause the body to press on the uterus. Yes, you can accommodate cramps just like you would accommodate a sprained ankle. A scout suffering either a sprained ankle or cramps may not be feeling up to gathering firewood, but they can help cut veggies for dinner. Be aware that cramps are not constant or consistent during a period, and that just because a scout feels better later, or once the painkillers kick in, that doesn't mean they were "faking it."

Some teens are more comfortable talking about their periods more than others, particularly girls over 15 who have been menstruating for a few years. They are normalizing it for themselves and others and trying to find the balance. This can be difficult given the cultural taboo around discussing menstruation, particularly in mixed company. It is not uncommon for someone on their period to say, as a way of explaining why they are not feeling well, or just in general, "I'm on my period" or "I'm PMSing something horrible right now". The key here is to help with normalizing this kind of discussion without it becoming an invasion of the person's privacy. A girl making that kind of statement is not, necessarily, granting permission for people to ask her about her period. Mostly she's just expressing frustration with the situation or looking for support and sympathy from others in the group about how periods can be a pain.

On the other side of this coin are other people talking about someone else's period. It is not acceptable for people other than the person actually experiencing the period to point it out to others in the group. Talking about someone else's period, particularly when that person did not initiate the discussion, should not be permitted. Talking about periods in the abstract (What are they? What are these things in the first aid kit?) is a valid topic of conversation but should be monitored and gently guided if it heads in the direction of reinforcing myths or false stereotypes.

## Myths and Falsehoods about Menstruation

1. Bears are NOT attracted to used menstrual products or blood, and neither are other wild animals. Here is article about the topic: <https://www.livescience.com/22688-myth-bears-attack-menstruating-women.html>

Before you even think of suggesting that used products need to be stored or disposed of carefully due to wildlife, please remember that every person having their period is wearing a partially bled on product and smells like blood. Really. Do NOT make your scout worry they are climbing into their sleeping bag to be a bear taco because their period arrived while camping.

2. Period blood is treated like it is dirtier than any other blood. It isn't. It is just blood. Be sure if a scout ends up with pants covered in blood from a period, you don't treat it differently than you would a shirt soaked in blood from a nosebleed. Have a single way you deal with blood and don't act like period blood is different. It is just blood.
3. PMS and cramps ARE real. There are all kinds of myths about them. Don't buy into them, and instead

just trust your scouts and parents. What is true, is that girls on their periods are experiencing hormone fluctuations that can relate to mood changes. Many girls are more assertive and more aggressive during their periods. While this can mean physically aggressive, it usually means verbally. This trait is one our society has labeled as “bitchy”. But the truth is, that the same traits when seen in men and boys are acceptable and even desirable.

If a female scout is suddenly behaving differently, more aggressive, more assertive or more stubborn, stop before you speak. Be sure you aren't correcting a behavior in a girl that you wouldn't comment on with a boy. Just because it isn't her normal, that doesn't make it wrong. Girls are given many messages by society to not be assertive and become leaders. Do not be part of that problem. Only comment on or correct behaviors that actually break the group rules, the same as you would with a boy. If a girl experiencing PMS signs herself up to be Patrol Leader, she is going to pull it off. The hormones just gave her the push to say what she really wanted.

4. Both boys and girls can experience hormone surges that make them more prone to cry and be easily upset, particularly during their teen and pre-teen years. Be sure to never belittle any of your scouts of any gender for becoming emotional, crying or showing their feelings. Do not make an assumption about what they are feeling. Crying is a physical response to feeling overwhelmed, but the reason the scout feels overwhelmed isn't always apparent. Frustration, anger, sadness, and exhaustion are all possible root causes for crying. Everyone cries. Everyone gets upset. “I see you are upset. Do you need to take a break?” Is an appropriate response no matter who is upset. Empower your scouts to own their feelings and not feel ashamed of them.

## Backwoods Camping

If your scouts are camping far from bathrooms, used menstrual products will need to be put in bags and hiked out like anything else. Ziploc bags covered in duct tape are an economical way to make a leak proof bag that you can't see through. If your scouts use reusable products like period panties, Ziploc bags or wet bags are options to hike those out too.

Ideally, every scout who has periods will pack supplies for those for every trip and you can add those to your packing supplies list you give scouts. However, you should make sure there are extras along on the trip either with a female adult leader, or with a female Patrol Leader who is comfortable with that role. Both menstrual supplies and extra Ziploc bags should be kept in an easy to access place. The group first aid kit may be ideal.

Toxic shock syndrome is a health condition that can happen if a person wears a tampon for too long. It is related to bacteria build up in the vaginal wall and the infection can be fatal. Therefore, wearing a single tampon all weekend for a camping trip is extremely dangerous. Scouts need to change their tampons every 8 hours at a minimum. This is a sensitive subject, and you may want to send information to parents to discuss with scouts before taking them on longer trips. Also, toxic shock syndrome has been linked to several specific times that tampons were manufactured with contamination of bacteria. The tampon industry has worked to make tampons safer in recent years, and reduce the risk of contamination by this deadly bacteria.

Be sure to take regular bathroom breaks at your events so that scouts can change their pads or tampons when needed. While it is fine to have a policy anyone can go at any time, designated bio breaks are more comfortable for many scouts. Realize that when dealing with periods in the backcountry, a scout might need more than 5 minutes just to get what they need from their pack and load it back up.

**It's perfectly normal.**

Periods are a normal part of life. Treat them that way. Be sure all your leaders know how to access supplies and are comfortable telling scouts where they are. Remember that this is a sensitive subject and if you are unsure of what to do, consult with some of the moms of your group.



## 8

# MAKING FIRST CLASS SCOUTS

In Outdoor Service Guides, one of the bigger achievements a Pathfinder can attain is earning First Class. Attaining First Class is comprised of two pieces. One is that Pathfinders complete a set of requirements that are much like Second Class. They learn first aid and advanced scouting skills. The second part is that they complete a First Class Journey.

The requirements for First Class must be attained before the Pathfinder sets out on the journey. This means they have several skills to learn and that they must earn the First Aid badge. If you have a group of Pathfinders who have completed Second Class, you should start looking at the requirements for First Class, even if they are not ready for that step yet. You may need to learn skills on that list, so you can teach them, or find other adults with those skills who can teach them. You can start adding some of those skills to their camping trips and meetings here and there, so that when they start considering wanting to take the First Class journey, they have already completed several of the requirements.

It is important that as a leader, you understand that this journey should be a cumulation of skills learned and something the scout is prepared to undertake. This means that if your Pathfinder will complete it backpacking, you have taken them backpacking and taught them the skills needed for backpacking. If they will complete it by boat, bike, or horse, they should have a high comfort level with traveling that way and know how to store each of those for the night. While you may love riding a bike in the mountains, it is different when it is loaded down with gear so practice is the key to success.

## Badges to Help Them Prepare

Before taking the First Class Journey, guides should earn the Camper badge, and at least one of these three: Cycling Camper, Nautical Camper, or Backpacker. These skills will prepare scouts for successful completion of their journey. If you aren't sure how to prepare a Pathfinder to be ready to take a First Class journey, working through these badges, and others in the Outdoor section of the handbook will help.

The Camper badge can be earned by Pathfinders who have just completed Second Class and are still learning basic camping skills. Honestly, every group should make it a priority to give their Pathfinders the opportunity to earn the Camper badge. As a Pathfinder leader, planning camping trips and making sure your Pathfinders work on those skills while camping is important.



If your Pathfinders are interested in backpacking, your next goal should be looking at the Hiker and Backpacker badges for the next step in their development of camping skills.

If your group has never backpacked before, many Pathfinders have not, start with teaching the basics. Bring in a backpack and explain what to take and how to pack your gear.

A favorite activity for a meeting is to bring in 2 backpacks. One is packed with good choices for backpacking and all the essentials and the other has crazy things that are poor choices, such as a 2 liter bottle of soda, heavy cookware, clothes that are fashionable but not practical, toys, and other unnecessary items. Silly items are great because they are memorable. You may even want to have one pack have a heavy flashlight while the other has a lightweight one, so they can discuss how you make choices to lighten your load.



Have your guides unpack both packs and then tell them to pack one with the "best choices" for a weekend of camping. Then they will need to unpack the pack and explain their choices. Do these activities by Patrol or in small groups. It helps Pathfinders learn what to take when it is low stress. If they make a poor choice, discuss it. This kind of game lets you practice and explain good choices before having to deal with it on a camping trip.

Another great activity is to have them all bring their backpack to a meeting with it packed for a trip. They can each unpack onto a tarp and compare what they packed to what other, more experienced Pathfinders or leaders have packed.

One more great meeting is one where you teach Pathfinders how to figure out if a backpack is a good fit. This is a great choice if your Pathfinders are new to backpacking and all need to purchase packs. Stores like REI will often agree to help with this and do fittings on your entire Patrol. They also offer backpacks that are designed to be adjusted and grow with youth, which can save parents a lot of money. This meeting is also helpful so that Pathfinders learn how a backpacking pack is different from a lighter weight day pack or school backpack.

## Biking and Boating

If your Pathfinders are more interested in canoe camping or bicycle camping, there are badges for those skills too. Working on earning those are also a valid way to prepare for a First Class Journey.

Pathfinders who are smaller in stature may find that camping with a bike or canoe is easier for them than trying to carry all their gear on their backs. Learning about how to choose gear for those types of trips and how to pack for them is different from backpacking. However, they will still need to practice and develop the skills needed to complete the journey with the method they choose.



Once again, if you are not experienced, consider seeking out either scout leaders or resources to prepare you to help your scouts. REI offers classes in bicycle camping that can be very helpful on this topic.

## The First Class Journey

The requirements of the first class journey are:

1. Go on foot or by rowing a boat or canoe, alone or with another Scout, for a total distance of fourteen miles, OR ride an animal or bicycle (not motor) a distance of 25 miles;
2. The Scout must write a short report of the journey, paying special attention to any points to which they may be directed by the Examiner or their Scoutmaster (a route of the journey is not required).
3. The journey should occupy about twenty-four hours and a camping kit for the night must be taken and used.
4. Whenever possible, the campsite must be of the Scout's own choosing, and not where other Scouts are camping. Their Scoutmaster or Examiner may indicate the route and suggest the approximate area, but not the actual position where the Scout will make camp.
5. This test should normally be the final one taken for the First Class badge.

The First Class Journey is a trip a Pathfinder takes where they are completely self-sufficient. The Pathfinder must backpack, bike pack, or take a canoe journey where they travel a minimum of so many miles and camp overnight, preparing their own food. The *Pathfinder Handbook* has the details of mileage, but it is important to realize that as the examiner, you can reduce the exact mileage if the terrain is difficult or the Pathfinder has special needs.

### Making Accommodations

You may also choose to allow more than 2 Pathfinders to do their journey together if you feel it is best for their safety. Keep in mind, they need to each bring all the gear they need, and not rely on others to share gear for this trip. Remember, that approaching parents and asking if 2 young female Pathfinders can make this journey alone may cause them a great deal of concern about safety that has nothing to do with scouting. Allowing them to go with an additional Pathfinder or two may help. Remember, other humans are your biggest danger when backpacking. And while we don't want to teach Pathfinders to be scared of others, we want to make sure they are in a situation that is safe.

This First Class Journey should be a challenge for your Pathfinder, but not impossible. For a Pathfinder to prepare for a journey like this, they will need to take similar trips with your group first, with help. The group may go on camping trips together that are fewer miles, or with shared gear that the Pathfinder won't have on their official journey, but rare is the Pathfinder who will want to make a First Class Journey if they have never been backpacking or similar. They need to practice with their troop, and with your guidance the skills they will need for this journey.

### Preparation is Key to Success

If your Pathfinder will complete the trip by horse, kayak, canoe or bike, they will need to build the muscles and skills to do a trip that way. Consider having them travel at least part of their planned route by their preferred method before taking on the full journey. Test out the trail or river. Build the skills and muscles needed. They can also gain confidence about the trail or area they will travel. There is no reason a First Class Journey should be the first time a Pathfinder is on a specific trail. Familiarity is a form of safety.

You will need to be a resource person for your Pathfinders and figure out how to support them best on this trip. If your Pathfinder is able to complete their journey with a group on private land, you may need to only "accidentally" bump into them on their trip so you can make sure they are fine. If they will camp in a state or national park, you may need to plan to have approved adults supervising them, as minors may be unable to rent a campsite.

If possible, get leaders from another section or even another OSG group to be the supervising adults. These adults should not help the Pathfinders, unless there is an emergency, but be close enough for safety during the night. For most parents, their greatest fear with a First Class Journey is not that the Pathfinders will deal with wild animals, but instead will have to deal with humans, who are far more dangerous than bears.

## **Taking The Time**

How long should a scout leader expect it to take to prepare kids for finishing First Class? Several years. The vast majority of eleven year old Pathfinders need a lot of time to build skills and mature before they will be ready for a First Class Journey. This is the beauty of having a program where they can work on the necessary skills by earning badges with their Patrol.

The majority of Pathfinders earning First Class in OSG have been 16-17 years old with many years of experience with their group and with camping. That does not mean that an exceptional Pathfinder can't earn it earlier, but that you shouldn't expect it. Pathfinders who earn it at a younger age, tend to have parents who are involved in helping them learn the skills. They also may be younger siblings who have tagged along for adventures and thus have more scouting experience than is typical for their age.

## **The Report**

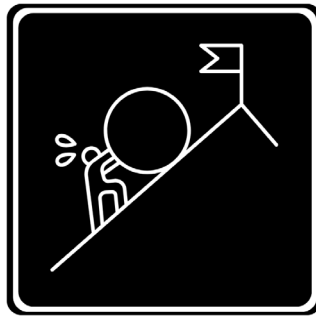
While a written report may be doable for many Pathfinders, it is important that this not become a reason to withhold the badge. Pathfinders with learning disabilities may struggle more with this step than any other requirement. As a result, you should be prepared to accept a verbal account of the journey or other format your Pathfinder can complete. It is also important to realize that Pathfinders may be completing their journey while dealing with looming school deadlines and not have time for writing excellent papers for scouting. Be reasonable and work with your Pathfinders on this requirement.

## **Celebrate Their Success**

---

Earning First Class is a very big deal and you should plan an awards ceremony with your group. Give your Pathfinders a chance to plan their ceremony, if you can. Also, make time for them to tell the tale of their journey to the group. If multiple Pathfinders complete their journey together, they may want to agree beforehand who will share what details.

The First Class badge is a green ring of gold laurel leaves that goes around the Second Class badge. The theme of a ring of laurel leaves makes for a nice idea when choosing decorations with colors in green and gold. The Ceremonies section of this guide has a script for a presentation ceremony with your Pathfinders.



## 9

# FAILING AND SCOUT LED CHALLENGES

One of the most important learning tools we have as humans is the ability to learn from our mistakes. It is essential that you let the kids fail sometimes. They will learn far more from the times things go wrong and they coped with it, than from the times things go right.

This does not mean you need to set them up for failure. Don't worry, they will make the mistakes on their own. But, you don't always have to correct them the minute you see a problem on the horizon either, unless there is a possibility of serious injury of course. Let them mis-read the map and hike the wrong way some, just follow along for a while, as long as you feel confident you can help them correct their course later. If they forget to set a timer on their dessert and burn it, they can live without it this time.

## Recovering From Their Mistakes

One other important part of letting them make mistakes is that you let them try to fix the mistake themselves. Too often, parents and teachers jump in to tell youth what they did wrong and how to fix it. Stand back when you can. Let a Pathfinder struggle some and find their own creative solution. Wait for them to ask for help. Learning how to make a mess and clean it up isn't just for little ones, adults have to do that too.

Most mistakes as a Pathfinder should be fairly low risk. If they have to set up the tent 2-3 times because they forgot to stake it down, or how to put the poles in, they will be fine. You can step in to help before lights out. If their craft project doesn't work, no one is harmed. If they don't complete the badge work now, they can do it later, or never. There are more important things than finishing a badge. There are art teachers out there who insist every art project look like the example, don't be that person. Let your Pathfinders be creative and explore the world and make crazy, strange art. Let them tell you how wonderful it is and why you should accept it as part of their badge work. And if you aren't sure what to do, ask your co-leader what they think. You don't have to make every decision on your own.



## Say Yes More

---

Scouts needs to be a safe place to get dirty, make mistakes and try new things. Part of this means that as a scoutmaster, you have to have a different attitude towards youth. You have to view them as scouts, not just teenagers. Our society has all kinds of ideas about what a "teenager" is. You can probably make a long list of what a "teenager" is and isn't, and most of it isn't good. That is baggage you don't bring to your Pathfinders. Guides and scouts on the other hand, are helpful, cheerful, and engaged. The list of positive words for "scouts" abound. If you treat them like scouts, they will eventually become scouts.

Part of your new attitude should be one where you don't say "No" unless you really have to. Are they breaking the Scout Law? Well, that is a "No" we don't do that. However, there is no scout law against rubbing mud on your own face and playing a version of guerrilla tag that looks crazy. So, why not let them get dirty and messy and run wild on a camping trip? Really, say yes. Will that scout later struggle to clean themselves up? Maybe. Maybe the whole Patrol will be helping them get mud out of their ears, but that's a great bonding experience. In general, kids and clothes are pretty easy to wash.

## Scout Led

---

Being "scout led" is one of the important parts of having a Pathfinder group, but doing it can be very confusing and challenging. At the heart of a good program is that same willingness to say yes to your Pathfinders to let them choose what they will do with their scouting time. However, they may not be ready to choose their own adventures when they start with you. Be sure to set them up to make choices that have no wrong answers. What will your Patrol animal be? What will you eat for dessert? Which badge should we try to earn? These are all choices they can make without a lot of knowledge or skill.

You also can create specific challenges to give them a chance to lead themselves. Ask your Patrol Leader to simply lead one game with the group at a meeting. Have a toy or garden gnome who is a member of your group who needs to be rescued and then let your group problem solve how to get him out of a tree or out of whatever jam he has gotten himself into. Ask them to make the menu for a camping trip or use the map to plan a single hike. Point out important information like how steep the trail looks or which food allergies you need to plan around. But let them make the decisions.

Asking new Pathfinders to be completely scout led isn't appropriate. They need guidance to be able to make good choices and good plans. Hopefully, you can lead them and teach them in a way that after a few experiences, they are ready to make those decisions and lead for themselves.

## Letting Go

---

As your Pathfinders have more experiences with camping and even scouting in general, they will be able to plan more and ask for more of you and their program. One of the hardest parts of leading this age level is realizing that you have to either learn the skills, or find someone with the skills that are needed to help them reach their goals. The best person to help them won't always be you. Or it might be the version of You that has called around or done further training to get the skills. There is a balance in figuring that out for your group.

One thing to be aware of, your Pathfinders may make you uncomfortable when they lead themselves. This is okay and you have to be the adult who lets it be okay. They may not want to make the same camp food you like. They may turn their s'mores ingredients into fondue. They may select a strange fictional animal for their Patrol animal. If it is their group identity and they rally behind it, that is what is important. Given

the chance to plan their own camping trip, they may plan time for D&D or to just sit around the campfire. Let them. Not every minute of a camping trip has to be spent in action.

Remember, this isn't your scouting experience, it is theirs. Let them own it.



# 10

## CEREMONIES AND TRADITIONS

**E**stablishing group ceremonies and traditions is an important part of your group identity. New traditions can happen because you made a purposeful choice, or by accident when your Pathfinders discover something they love that they want to do again and again.

### Investiture as a Pathfinder

When investing a Pathfinder, some groups have a public ceremony where the Pathfinder states the Promise in front of the entire group. Other groups have the promise be something that is private, and the Pathfinder only states it in front of their scout leaders and not the larger group.

The *Pathfinder Handbook* has 3 versions of the Promise. One mentions God, and if your Pathfinder wants to make their promise inclusive of their religion, that is up to them. They can also alter this part to be Goddess, Odin, Great Spirit, or another appropriate choice for their religion. This decision to include their religion is something that some scouts want to keep private, as others in their group may not want to use this version of the promise.

As a scout leader, it is up to you to be sure you are in tune with your scouts and their needs. It is also possible that regional culture may be a factor in how your group approaches this. If you are not from the area you now scout in, ask your parents or other leaders how they feel about promises and oaths.

These are the 3 versions of the Promise offered. As you can see, one is adaptable to your group.

“On my honor, I promise that I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my Country,  
To help other people at all times,  
And obey the Scout Law.”  
~ Original Scout Promise

“On my honor, I promise that I will do my best  
To do my duty to my conscience and my Community,  
To help other people at all times,  
And obey the Scout Law”  
~ Adaptation of original Promise

“On my honor, I promise that I will do my best  
To render service to my country,  
To help other people at all times,  
And to obey the Scout Law.”  
~ The Outlander’s Promise

## Investiture Into Your Group

---

Some groups give scouts their group necker as part of another ceremony, such as being invested as a Pathfinder. However, it can also be a separate ceremony. Some groups find it is a good bonding experience to give our neckers as part of a group camping trip. Having a formal campfire, telling the story of your group's formation, and the reason for your group's necker colors can also be a meaningful ceremony. Campfires just make things more special.

## Formal Campfires

---

There are two kinds of campfires during a campout: formal and informal. Informal is just like it sounds, sitting around a campfire without a set structure. It could include songs, stories and snacks. What you do with it is up to you.

A formal campfire however has a set structure. You generally have someone acting as the Master of Ceremonies for the evening and introducing the evening and moving things along.

The formal campfire generally starts with gathering the scouts in a calm manner after dinner is cleaned up and the scouts are ready to be quiet and calm.

A Scoutmaster first performs the Ashes Ceremony, pouring ashes from previous campfires they have attended into the fire to mix with the ashes there. They talk about where their ashes came from and how this has been done for 100 years. They talk about the long history of scouting and invite everyone to gather their own ashes in the morning before leaving.

If you wish to award badges, neckers or call out accomplishments of scouts or leaders, now is a good time.

This is followed by scouts performing songs or skits. Be sure your camping trip has time for scouts to practice these performances ahead of time!

Close your ceremony with a calm song like Vespers and ask scouts to leave quietly. This can help them calm down for sleep.

## Vespers

Softly Falls the light of day  
As our campfire fades away.  
Silently each scout should ask,  
Have I done my daily task?  
Have I kept my honor bright?  
Can I guiltless sleep tonight?  
Have I done and have I dared  
Everything to be prepared?

## Other Traditions

---

Traditions and ceremonies make the experience of scouting more meaningful and more memorable. They are also helpful for neurodiverse scouts who may struggle with transitions. Having a way you always open and close a camping trip for example, helps everyone know you are officially started and officially done. This ceremony could be as simple as raising and lowering the flags and having the scout master say a few words. But the clear sign that the flag is down and the event is over helps everyone know they can now leave.

Traditions for your group can take many forms. One way to have a tradition is to start annual events you repeat year after year. These often happen by accident, as a group comes up with a good idea once, and when they approach the next year they say "That was fun. Let's do that again." This could be something like kayaking at your first event of the fall or taking a night hike in October when it starts to get dark earlier.

Other group traditions can include raising your group flag or state flag over your campsite. Certain songs you sing each trip or meeting also qualify. Having a traditional start of camp reading of the rules of camp is both functional and helpful. Traditions can also include playing a favorite game or serving a favorite food.

# Investiture Ceremony Script

---

**Participants:**

- SM - The Scoutmaster or Senior Patrol Leader
- Scout: The scout being invested.
- Troop: all other Pathfinders.

**SM:** Welcome scouts and friends, today we are gathered to Invest a new scout to the \_\_(*group ordinal and name*)\_\_. A scout must first gain some simple skills and learn the Scout Law to be invested in the Troop. Troop please join me in the scout law.

**Troop:** (*Repeats scout law together and audibly*)

**SM:** \_\_(*invested scouts name*)\_\_ please step forward. Have you come here today willing and wanting to join the troop?

**Scout:** Yes

**SM:** Do you know what your honor is?

**Scout:** Yes

**SM:** What is your Honor?

**Scout:** (*Brief reply of their choosing*)

**SM:** Do you know the Scout Promise?

**Scout:** Yes

**SM:** Are you willing to make this promise here in front of the troop?

**Scout:** Yes

**SM:** (*Makes the scout sign with Scout, call and response version of scout promise to the Scouts preference*)

**Scout:** (*repeats*)

(*Scoutmaster presents the Tenderfoot badge and places the necker around the scouts neck if appropriate. All scouts join in Hip Hip Hooray or other congratulatory Hoopla.*)

**SM:** To your Patrol quick march. (*Invested scout returns to pre-chosen Patrol position*)

# First Class Ceremony Script

The following script is a good way to present the First Class Award to your scouts and convey the others in your group or families of the participants what a big deal it is to earn First Class.

## Participants:

- SM - The Scoutmaster
- Scout(s): The scout(s) being invested.

**SM:** Baden Powell said "When a scout has become a First-class Scout, but not before then, they have got a grounding in the qualities, mental, moral, and physical, that go to make a good useful adult."

## SM: The original First-Class Requirements

1. Swim 50 yards,
2. Send and receive a message in Semaphore or Morse
3. Go on a fourteen-mile expedition over two days, by foot, boat or canoe and write a report on returning,
4. Know how to deal with a wide range of specified accidents and know the correct first aid techniques to use,
5. Cook on an open fire
6. Know map symbols, draw a sketch map and take a compass bearing,
7. Use an ax,
8. Estimate distances, area and capacity to within 25% error,
9. And finally train another . . . in the Tenderfoot skills so that [they pass] the test.

**SM:** The modern requirements for earning this rank are not so different.

1. Swim 50 yards.
2. Throw a lifeline and explain how it fits into the principles and risks of water recreation and water rescue
3. Demonstrate correctly the following knots and lashings: Shear lashing, Round lashing, Back splice, Eye splice, Firefighter's chair, Alpine butterfly
4. Estimate, without apparatus, Distance, Height
5. Earn the First Aid special proficiency badge.
6. Demonstrate your outdoor cooking skills.
7. Demonstrate your mapping abilities.
8. Read and be able to use a topographical map.
9. Draw an intelligible rough sketch map.
10. Demonstrate proper use of a compass.
11. Point out a compass direction by day and by night without the help of a compass.
12. Use a felling ax for felling or trimming light timber
13. Complete a First Class Journey.

**SM:** Originally Swimming was considered the hardest requirement, as the skill and swimming areas were less common. Frequently people complained it should be waived. But Baden-Powell said: "I look on swimming as a very important step, combining as it does attributes of all three of those classes

- Mentally it gives them a new sense of self-confidence and pluck;
- Morally, it gives them the power of helping others in distress and puts a responsibility upon them of actually risking [their] life at any moment for others;
- And physically, it is a grand exercise for developing wind and limb.

**SM:** In our era the Journey our scouts completed demonstrates accomplishment of these goals.

**SM:** I now ask the following scouts to come forward - *(call each scout that earned First Class)*

**Scout(s):** *(scouts named step forward as a group)*

**SM:** The First-Class rank represents a significant step in Scouting. It represents the 'Complete Scout', having demonstrated all the basic scouting skills. As a First Class Scout, you have earned the opportunity to demonstrate the code to which a true and mature Scout is forever bound by his Scout Promise and Law. This code is one of 'Service' and 'Leadership'. Do you accept this greater responsibility of a First Class Scout? If so, answer, 'I do.'

**Scout(s):** I do

**SM:** In qualifying for First Class rank, you have demonstrated skills making it possible for you to live outdoors for weeks rather than hours. You have the skills to survive in the wilds, and more importantly the knowledge to prevent the need to survive by planning well and making sound choices.

**SM:** The next phase of scouting lies before you. Unless you grow past being a Scout 'hiker' and Scout 'camper' to being a Scout 'leader', you have not experienced the true Scouting life. As you watch other leaders and learn leadership skills, you will understand that a leader is actually a servant. Serving and leading go hand in hand.

**SM:** As a First-Class scout, you are expected to lead other scouts up the trail with you. Make their path safe, fun, and memorable so one day they can stand here where you are while you have moved on to greater things.

**SM:** Wear this badge with pride in your accomplishments. The time it took you to reach this point is not important. The time that lies ahead of you and what you do with that time is all that matters.

**SM:** *(hand out badges to each scout and shake their hands)*

**SM:** Troop, please stand and join me in congratulating these new First Class scouts!

*(All scouts join in Hip Hip Hooray or other congratulatory Hoopla.)*





# 11

## SPECIAL NEEDS SCOUTING

**O**utdoor Service Guides has a leader guide focused on all ages for working with special needs scouts. It is called our Accessibility and Adaptive Scouting Guide. You can access it through our website and through the resource page on [Guide4Guides.org](http://Guide4Guides.org). Here we have presented some of the things most relevant to a Pathfinder leader.

### Adjusting Badge Requirements

If you have special needs Pathfinders, you may find you need to adapt requirements to make them a reasonable and achievable challenge for the Pathfinder. The first thing to look to change is anything with a number. You can reduce distance, repetitions, and/or speed that something must be done to make it more achievable. This applies to Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, and all badges. Outdoor Service Guide Leaders are empowered to make changes that are appropriate for the needs of each individual. That is how we can create a group where we embody "Scouting for Everybody."

When choosing to create an accommodation, think about what is the main goal or spirit of the requirement. Our program focuses on both outdoor experiences and independence, so accommodations should lean in those directions when possible. If the goal is light a campfire, a Pathfinder who can't motor plan matches may be able to use a lighter.

If the goal is to tie a knot, you can adjust the knot or use a bigger rope that is easier to handle. Holding one end of the rope while the guide works on the knot can help them stay oriented for knots designed to only have one working end. It is even better if you can tie the other end of the rope to an item, so that they actually only have one working end. Knots are often easier to understand when they are functional rather than just being practiced with a short piece of rope. So consider ways to teach the knot in use, instead of just with a rope.

If a Pathfinder has worked hard to learn a skill but you realize that achieving the goal would require professional levels of therapy to accomplish it, replace the task with something else that they can achieve. Replacing a requirement with something equitable is a good way to accommodate Pathfinders who have specific challenges that make a single requirement unreasonable.

If you read the requirement and think “This Pathfinder could do this if only they were allowed to do it this way”, let them do it “this way.” Does your Pathfinder need to meet their hiking requirement on a bike? Do it. Do they need to give an oral report instead of a written one (or the other way around)? That is a doable change.

## Working Around Reading And Writing Challenges

Remember that the goal of most written assignments is to demonstrate understanding and knowledge. There are many ways to demonstrate that, and insisting on a written report may be discouraging and disheartening to the Pathfinder. The worst thing we can do as leaders is make a youth want to quit because we made success unattainable. Most Pathfinders with learning disabilities are already spending all day at school struggling to complete written work and keep up with their class. They do not need their scouting time to be that same struggle.

If you have Pathfinders with learning challenges that make reading and writing harder, there are many ways you can choose to adapt the requirements. You can adapt to accept drawings instead of written assignments. You can allow them to copy from a sample you create, instead of having to think of their own words to write which helps with activities like sending a Thank You card. You may also find that letting a Pathfinder give an oral report instead of a written one solves the problem best. The tech savvy Pathfinder may prefer to create a digital presentation. If you are not sure what a Pathfinder could do to complete a requirement, sit down with them and ask them for ideas.

While we are not a technology based program, allowing for the use of computer programs is a great adaptation for Pathfinder who struggle with fine motor skills for drawing and writing. Drawing a map may be too hard, because their fingers just won't cooperate. But creating a 3-D world in Minecraft may be very doable.

This is not to say that every Pathfinder will want to or should earn every badge. But it is important that we consider appropriate accommodations and ensure that our Pathfinders are not being held back by a disability.

## Recognizing When Accommodation Is Needed

The list of badges in the *Pathfinder Handbook* has a variety of badges designed to allow typical scouts to earn easier badges at age 11 and the hardest ones at age 17. One other way to figure out if you should be accommodating a Pathfinder or encouraging them to earn a different badge or spend more time on it, is to look at how well other Pathfinders their age are doing with that badge. If other Pathfinders their age also think it is too hard, it may be one the entire group needs to earn later. If the rest of your group is earning a badge, you should work to accommodate a Pathfinder who is participating as well as they are able.

Do remember that in kids and teens with disabilities, a refusal to try is often a sign they know their disability is going to be an issue. One of your goals as a leader, has to be creating a place where your Pathfinders all have opportunities to fail and succeed and be safe doing both. Praise all of your Pathfinders for effort, when they keep trying the hard skills and persevere. Praise failure, because we learn a lot through failure. Do not only praise success, because that is easy to praise.

Your Pathfinders need to learn from your example to encourage each other when a task is hard. The way you treat a struggling Pathfinder is the way the rest of the group learns to treat that Pathfinder. It will also translate to how they treat people for the rest of their lives. If you demonstrate kindness and encouragement, you will be teaching your able bodied Pathfinders how to be good humans for the rest of

their lives.

Remember that when you are feeling frustrated with a Pathfinder, they are likely feeling frustrated and upset too. The best thing you can do when you want to throw in the towel, is to tell your Pathfinder "I am so proud of how hard you have worked on this." You can also choose to let something go for that meeting, switch activities or take a break. Rome wasn't built in a day.

Sometimes, having a group of Pathfinders who are not typical can be difficult for a Scoutmaster who wants to take on big challenges with their group. It is important to realize that your Pathfinders may already be learning a lot and facing big challenges just by being in your group. Developing social skills, friendships, and teamwork are extremely important aspects of our program, even if they don't connect to earning anything specific.

## Neurodiverse Patrol Leaders

---

Create space for your scouts to share their strengths and abilities and to stretch themselves. A Pathfinder who struggles with school, may excel in scouting with a little support, even being a Patrol Leader for Pathfinders. Remember that these scouts may struggle some with organizing their thoughts and plans, so you can support them with coaching, and giving them tools to help them be more organized. This scout might not be able to plan a weekend's activities when just asked to do it, but can fill in a table or timeline that you've created with an hour by hour break down, based on replicating past trips. The same goes for assigning chores. As the leader, you can provide a chart for them to fill in with the names of the scouts who are assigned each one. Step in and coach as needed.

Remember that leadership skills are complex, and building them takes time for most people. If you presume competence, your Pathfinders will have the chance to thrive and fulfill their own potential. Having your neurodiverse Pathfinder lead a hike or instruct everyone in a game helps them build those skills. You will need to step in and teach more advanced skills until your Patrol Leader knows them well enough to teach them, but if your scout wants to try teaching, step back.

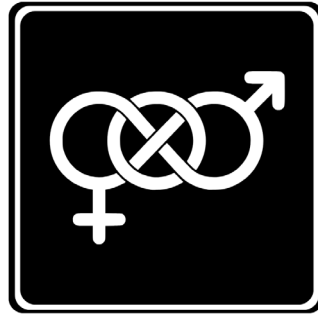
Working with neurodiverse scouts can be full of surprises. You can't predict when they will suddenly blossom and display skills you had no clue they could do. Just be sure when that day comes, that you get out of the way so they can lead!

## Looking for More Support?

---

You can also create an entire Individualized Scouting Plan for a scout who needs a more elaborate plan. Work with parents, scout leaders, and the GSM to write out how your group will work to meet the needs of this Pathfinder. There are forms designed for this use on the Outdoor Service Guides website or directly at <https://docs.guides4guides.org/accessibility/OSG-Individualized-Scouting-Plan-Form.pdf>

You can read more about special needs scout leading in a leader guide specifically for that, which can be found at <https://docs.guides4guides.org/accessibility/Leader-Guide-Accessibility-and-Adaptive-Scouting.pdf>



# 12

## LGBTQ TIPS FOR SCOUTMASTERS

**W**hile a tenant of being an OSG scout leader is that we are welcoming to all who want to scout with us, there may be room for you to learn more. Our most recently OSG pole suggests that about 25% of our membership identifies as part of the LGBTQ+ community. And about 8% of our membership is trans or non-binary.

### Vocabulary

---

As a scout leader, one way to start your own education on this topic, is to be sure you know the most frequently used terms, or what those letters stand for.

- **L – Lesbian.** Lesbians are women who love/are attracted to women.
- **G – Gay.** Gay men love/ are attracted to other men.
- **B – Bisexual.** Bisexual folks love/are attracted to both men and women. They may be in a monogamous relationship with either gender and this does not change the fact they are attracted to both genders. They may also be mostly attracted to one gender and a few people from the other gender. They may also be attracted to those who are non-binary or trans.
- **T – Trans.** This term is used to refer to those who have transitioned from one gender to another. It may involve medical changes such as medication or surgery, or not. Those who are trans generally wear clothing that reflects their gender preferences, but not always.
- **Q – Queer.** This is a word that has been reclaimed by the LGBTQ community. It generally is used as a way to identify oneself as either not straight or not cis without disclosing more information. Sometimes this term is used by younger people who have not yet landed on other identifiers they are comfortable using.
- **I – Intersex.** This term refers to those with biological features of both genders. The term hermaphrodite was previously used, but is not appropriate to use when referring to people, because it specifically refers to animals like earthworms that do not have separate genders. Those who are intersex may have chromosomes of one gender, but have genitals of the other gender, have genitals

of both genders or present in other biological ways. Historically, parents chose a gender and forced a child to comply with that gender, including surgically altering them in infancy. This is becoming less common as parents choose to allow their children to grow up and decide for themselves whether or not to alter their bodies.

- **A – Asexual and Aromantic.** Those who are asexual do not experience sexual attraction. They may also not experience sexual attraction outside of an emotional connection or in other specific situations. Aromantic folks do not experience a desire for romantic gestures and that aspect of human relationships.
- **P – Pansexual.** Pansexuals are capable of being attracted to those who are male, female, trans or intersex. They feel the person on the inside is what matters and not the exterior parts.

## Understanding Identity

---

One of the most important things to realize about working with Pathfinder age youth, is that they are exploring not only the world, but themselves. They are growing and changing. They are learning how they identify themselves and they are going through big changes. As hormones and bodies change, some Pathfinders may be working through big feelings to understand who they are attracted to and how they feel about gender.

Your job is to be a supportive person in the lives of your Pathfinders. This may mean calling them by a new name or different pronouns. It may mean just accepting that they may be dating or not. They may identify with a variety of LGBTQ terms over the years as they try to figure out who they are. Sexuality is a spectrum and it can change over the course of a person's life.

Pathfinders may change how they identify several times between the ages of 11 and 17. They may come out one way, and then realize that identity isn't a good fit anymore. A single person may, over the course of years identify as bisexual, pansexual, lesbian and non-binary. Each of these identities can be a separate experience of coming out and saying "I now know myself better and I think I am this." Sometimes, they may leave behind the last identity and sometimes they might not.

## Sexuality is complex.

---

As a scout leader, try to never say "But I thought you were..." When a Pathfinder announces who they are. They may have previously played soccer too, but they don't anymore.

In general, if a guide wants to talk to you about their identity, it is good to listen. Often, teenagers need a kind adult to hear them out so they can sort out big emotions or life changes. Be aware, that as a trusted adult, it is not your job to out your guides to parents or teachers. They should be empowered to decide who they tell what about their innermost feelings.

Most OSG Pathfinder groups are happy to wear our Inclusivity Badges that feature an arrow with a rainbow background. This badge represents our personal commitment to welcome everyone into our groups, but the rainbow is significant to the LGBTQ community. Every time a new Pathfinder joins your group, it is a great opportunity to review this badge with your group and present it to the new Pathfinder.

Wearing that badge on your own uniform is a great way to quietly let your Pathfinders know that you support them in being themselves.



# 13

## IN CONCLUSION

**A**s a Pathfinder leader, you have the extraordinary opportunity to help youth find their way from adolescence to young adult. This is an amazing time in their lives, and giving them the chance to become self-sufficient and learn the skills of scouting will give them a boost into adulthood.

Remember, the goal is to be scout led. This may mean that your scouts want to do more hiking and less camping, or more archery than you planned on. Being flexible and using the program as a guideline instead of a Bible will help you all get the most out of the program.

This is not a race to be won, but a journey to take together. The journey is more important than the destination. Just getting the Polaris Award isn't the goal as much as creating a guide who can face new and different challenges and has life skills that will carry them into the future.

If you lead Pathfinders for many years, you will inevitably have kids who are Pathfinders for several years and those who only participate for a single year. You will have ones who earn high levels of awards and many badges and those who earn very few. Do not confuse the value of the experience of scouting with how many awards a Pathfinder might earn.

What you are actually providing is a unique set of experiences. Even if their time with us is brief, most people look back on their experiences scouting with fondness. They will remember you as a role model who taught them how to handle adversity, treated them with respect, and guided them in learning new skills.

You are shaping the leaders of tomorrow. Do a good job.