

OCTOBER – WEBELOS TO SCOUT TRANSITION (AKA – The Webelos Den)

Music Full then Under

AARON: I hear the music, so it must be time for the October CubCast. I am Aaron Derr, Senior Writer for *Boys Life* magazine.

AMY: And I am Amy Hutcherson, Cub Scouting Specialist. The topic this month is based on an email suggestion from Russell Wright who asked us to have a discussion on the Webelos-to-Scout Transition.

AARON: Now, we've have previous CubCasts on how to introduce Webelos to Boy Scout troops and we've talked about the cross-over ceremony, but Russell's request was very specific. With a new Webelos Den starting right now, how do I begin the transition into Scouting?

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AARON: So we invited Erica Smalls to the show to help Russell and other Webelos Den Leaders get started with the transition into Scouting. Not only has Erica served as a Den Leader for all four Cub Scout Ranks, she is currently the Cubmaster for Pack 387 out of Bedford, Texas, AND the Scoutmaster for Troop 253 out of Euless, Texas. So thanks for joining us, Erica. Welcome to CubCast.

ERICA: Hello. Thank you so much.

AARON: how does a Webelos Den differ from Bear or Wolf Dens?

ERICA: Do you mean besides the fact that they wear the cute khaki and green uniform?

AARON: Exactly, yes. How is running it different?

ERICA: A Webelos Den, first and foremost, is going to want more challenging activities and experiences. These are the older boys in our pack. If you've done it right from the beginning, you've told them that they are now approaching Boy Scouts and you're going to get them ready in a Webelos Den, so that's the first thing they're looking for. They are looking for a difference between their Tiger Cub program, and the Cub Scout program - Something right before I go to Boy Scouts to get me ready.

AMY: Alright, Erica, when is the best time to transition the boys from using the Cub Scout symbolism to using the Boy Scout symbolism such as the Boy Scout sign, salute and handshake?

ERICA: I like to actually introduce the boys to the Boy Scout symbolism during their first year as Webelos Scouts by teaching them and getting them ready, but then I like to remind them that they are the big brothers of their little Cub Scout brothers in the unit, so that the other boys feel connected to them. And then when we are in the presence of Boy Scouts as we'll create for them in this program year, to meet with the Boy Scout troops and older adult leaders at Roundtables and things like that, to go ahead and use the sign that we're preparing them for, to send a signal to the Boy Scouts that, hey, I want to be like you and I'm joining you soon. I suggest that we go ahead and start using that Boy Scout symbolism so that this year does feel like a bridge instead of a quick jump into Boy Scouts.

AARON: Erica, can the Webelos Adventures requirements and the Arrow of Light requirements be worked on at the same time? Is that a common thing and, if so, what's the best approach for covering those concurrently?

ERICA: Basically the same type (of) adventures that you will do in an AOL program like a Webelos program versus a Bears program, they're just building on top of what we've already taught them. So there are going to be incidences where the activities that you'll do in one particular event or a special campout, they may be able to cross over and be used by both the AOL candidates and the Webelos candidates. But what I like to suggest to our leaders in making their programming, that if you do an activity when they're a first-year Webelos that could technically be applied to an AOL requirement, that doesn't mean we stop right there. That means that we say, "Hey, guess what, we actually did this in that particular rank or requirement but next year we'll revisit that again, and it'll be cooler because you've at least had a chance to do it once and you can see how you've grown in that experience."

AMY: Erica, when is it a good idea to start introducing the boys to the troops in your area that they may want to become a part of when they cross over?

ERICA: As soon as possible. If the troops in your area are active and seeking those Webelos Scouts that you're preparing, you won't have a problem knowing when to seek them because they'll be seeking you. Hint, hint, troops: Seek us. But I also caution to pace it slowly for first-year Webelos, meaning if a troop is inviting you to their rappelling or their shotgun campout. Sure it's going to be a cool activity for Webelos, but first-year Webelos are barely nine years old and we don't want to give them too much too early. We want them each year to be expecting something.

AARON: Erica, how do you see the parent's role in facilitating their son's transition into Boy Scouting?

ERICA: Scouting is a family activity. I try to encourage parents to remain just as active as they were in that shared experience of the Tiger Cub parenting, as an Akela as they are in the Webelos program. Just take on a different role. So now you're the encourager-in-chief, you're the supporter-in-chief. You may be able to help them with some resources. You may be that take them to the water and encourage them to drink versus providing the water and taking the cap off like you did in the Tiger Cub year. But this is definitely not a year to take your hands off because with each level they're going to experience change and change is always hard for children. So (to) the parent I say remain constant, remain vigilant, remain there supporting them, helping them, guiding them. Just now we back away and let's see what the program has been able to help them do so far. Let's take a look at how they've matured and give them opportunities to become more independent in what they do. That'll prep them more for Boy Scouts than anything.

AMY: That's really wonderful. I have really enjoyed seeing the differences in parenting - some parents are very reluctant to let their boys go off and do all the big-boy stuff and then some are just very much saying, "You go there; have fun!"

ERICA: Mix right on in there in between. A health reluctance is okay when your son is using a knife for the first time, but by now he should be able to roll up his bed and remember to change his socks at camp.

AMY: Always nice to send them with five pairs of socks and they come home with four clean.

ERICA: They come back with four clean. Know this ahead of time.

AMY: Absolutely. Okay, this is all great stuff, Erica. Where can we find out more information about working with a Webelos Den?

ERICA: I would suggest the leader manuals, buying the leadership manuals. The Scouts Manual itself, knowing how the information is presented to the Scout is a big help. We sometimes will just look down the Leader Manual and it tell us how to teach it but it doesn't tell us what the boy is reading and how they're understanding it, so using both of those. But the biggest thing for me is I like to tell my Webelos leaders you can't prepare someone for something you're not familiar with, so most of our Webelos leaders are often first-time Webelos leaders and they haven't been to Scouts yet, so I say buy the Boy Scout Manual and use the Boy Scout leaders manuals and utilize Den Chiefs from Boy Scouts troops. Just reach out from what you know right there in your pack and there's plenty of resources out there. I'm a Pinterest queen myself. And one more fabulous resource is [scouting.org/cubscouts](https://www.scouting.org/cubscouts) with an S.

AARON: All right, Erica, excellent. Is there anything else about the Webelos Den that we haven't talked about that you think we ought to share with our listeners?

ERICA: I like to always remind people that just because they have on the khaki and green, they're not Boy Scouts yet. They are still Cub Scouts. They've grown in their maturity level but they are still needing us to guide them through what they're doing, and so oftentimes there can be rush to treat them like they're Boy Scouts, like they're ready to run their own meetings, ready to cook all of their own meals, do the things that we are proud to say that our Boy Scouts can do after years of being in. I say let them remain Cub Scouts headed on a journey to Boy Scouts. Let them enjoy their year.

AARON: Awesome. So with all this talk about Webelos, here is a bit of trivia for you guys: Where does the word “Webelos” come from? It’s an acronym for We’ll Be Loyal Scouts, meaning keep the Scout Oath and try to live by the Scout Law. So, fun facts to know and share. Erica, thanks for joining us on CubCast and helping us with working with Webelos.

ERICA: Thank you so much for having me.

AMY: After this short break, we’ll be back with Reminders and Tips.

(FSB commercial)

AMY: Now, it’s time for our Magnificent Monthly Reminders. Let’s start with Council Roundtables. To locate Roundtable sites and times, check with your Unit Commissioner, your local Scouting Professional, the Council Service Center or website, or the Cub Scout Calendar.

AARON: There’s really no better way to help deliver a quality program than to experience the idea sharing that goes on at those meetings. You can listen to the September 2016 CubCast to hear an in-depth discussion of roundtables.

AMY: Now here is a question you should be asking yourself: Are all your committee positions filled? Just to review, you should have the following positions filled: Committee Chair, Pack Trainer, Secretary, Treasurer, Advancement Chair, Outdoor Chair, Membership Chair and a Finance/Fundraising Chair. The [responsibilities for each role](#) are outlined on scouting.org.

AARON: This is a great time to recruit new parents to help fill all of these important positions. The Committee Chair is responsible for filling all the slots, but leaders can help out by remaining on the lookout for good candidates at their work, church, or neighborhood. Make sure all new leaders complete their Cub Scout Leader Specific Training and Youth Protection Training.

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AARON: So that's it for the October CubCast. Thanks to Erica Smalls for joining us. And thank you for listening. Hope you're back next month as we explore the topic of Using the Den Leader Guide. With that, I am Aaron Derr.

AMY: And I'm Amy Hutcherson. Are there topics we should be discussing? Russel Wright let us know what he needed and you can too. Email us at CubCast@scouting.org or tweet to @CubCast. Go ahead – don't be shy!

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