

APRIL – What is Wood Badge

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AARON: It's Cubcast time for April. I'm Aaron Derr, Senior Writer for *Boys' Life* magazine with Webelos Den Leader and International Scouting Program Specialist, Amy Hutcherson.

AMY: If you're a regular CubCast listener, as you should be, you know that we talk a lot about the importance of training, especially Wood Badge.

AARON: In fact, we got a tweet from Joe@bosshoss1031 who told us that while we talk a lot about it, could we talk about actually what the Wood Badge course is?

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AARON: So, @bosshoss1031, that's what we're going to do, and we've invited the Wood Badge expert, Mark Nelson, to join the discussion. Mark is the Team Leader of Leadership Development at the National Service Center, but he also served as a Wood Badge Director. Welcome to CubCast, Mark.

MARK: All right, thank you.

AARON: First of all briefly, give us kind of an overview of Wood Badge. What is it?

MARK: It's Advanced Leadership Training, and hopefully that doesn't scare individuals. We want to make sure our adult leaders working with Cub

Scouts or Boy Scouts or Ventures have the tools they need to be able to lead to provide the best quality program.

AMY: Okay. So, full disclosure, Mark. I haven't taken the course yet but I'm eager to do it. I've heard a lot about it and I've heard the word "ticket." Now, in my mind, when I hear "ticket," it's a bad thing, right? I'm not wanting to get a ticket speeding. So what is a Wood Badge ticket?

MARK: We're going to get into some history; so talking about the British Army, if you can imagine 150, 200 years ago, they would go out to like India, Africa, and get their first military assignment, and then they would work their ticket back to Great Britain because that was on their own cost. And so, the best assignments were, of course, back at Great Britain because they would get back for free.

AMY: Okay.

MARK: So, that's working the ticket. But in Wood Badge it's very specific. Wood Badge is an experience. It's a two weekends or it could be a weeklong course but, that's the experience. We give them the leadership skills, have them try it on for size but then they have another 18 months, 24 months to work their ticket or actually do some, leadership goals that pertain to those leadership skills.

AMY: So, for when I take the course, what are some examples of a ticket?

MARK: Some great examples would be tying it back to communication as a leadership skill, maybe doing a newsletter for your pack. Or some other ways of building communication in your pack. So, what we want to do is use the ticket to benefit the program.

AMY: I see.

MARK: Getting to some other of the leadership skills, let's say project planning. Project plan is one of the leadership skills. You plan a pack campout as one of the ticket items. There are a certain number of items or ticket goals that you do on the ticket.

AMY: And do some volunteers then also go beyond their pack and maybe benefit their district or even their council at times?

MARK: Oh, they sure can. One of the items that we do require, the only item that we require, is diversity. That is one of the four goals that they do, and it's tied into bringing diversity into Scouting, and that could be adding more kids to the Scouting program or different populations that are underserved.

AARON: So, you mentioned communication; you mentioned leadership skills. Are there any other specific skills that a Wood Badge participant can expect to come away with?

MARK: Sure. You'll have better understanding the values, mission and vision of Scouting, the stages of team development which are very interesting. Leading EDGE, Using the four steps in Leading EDGE and Teaching EDGE, which is Explain, Demonstrate, Guide and Enable. Coaching, mentoring and development of others, which is a great tool when you're a Cub Scout leader to be able to coach and mentor that young Cub Scout. I actually am a grandfather of a New Lion.

AMY: Oh, exciting!

MARK: I'm learning about Lions. I think he's two stickers away from earning his badge.

AMY: How great.

MARK: And so, as we talk about – sorry, I got sidetracked (laughter) they get to practice managing conflict, problem-solving and decision-making. And the last one, leaving a legacy, you know, the thought about what am I leaving as a Scout leader.

AARON: All of that stuff I need as Cub Scout Leader. (Laughter)

AMY: We're signing Aaron up too, for sure. So, when I take Wood Badge, which I can't wait to take it, where would I go to take a Wood Badge course?

MARK: We have 240 courses every year throughout the nation, so you would need to contact your local council, and most likely they have a course or they know of a course in the next council over, almost every single council provides a course each year.

AARON: So if you're a Cub Scout leader and you want to learn more about Wood Badge, where do you go?

MARK: I would go to the council website. It should be listed there. That's the best place to start, just go to the council website. We don't have a national list that we post because there are so many and it changes all the time. But your local council would be able to answer that information.

AMY: All right, Mark, is there anything that we've left out about Wood Badge that you'd like to share with our listeners?

MARK: Well, just a side note that Wood Badge is sometimes perceived as the final training that you go to. Training is a journey that you go on. This is a constant development. And there's actually a training that we've developed called the Leadership Challenge that is actually after Wood Badge. If you imagine going to Philmont, it's a weeklong course where you take this leadership skills you learn in Wood Badge and actually put them into practice in different scenarios and that's a wonderful week.

AARON: Okay, Mark, I had one last question for you and this is going to be the most important question of the day, okay? What did the daddy buffalo say to his son before he left for his Wood Badge course?

MARK: Boy, I should know that. I'm actually a Buffalo in Wood Badge, but I have no idea.

AARON: What he said was, "Bi-son." (Laughter)

MARK: I should have known that coming from *Boy's Life*.

AARON: (Laughs) Yeah, I love my *Boy's Life* jokes. Anyway, I'm certain Joe@bosshoss1031 and all of our listeners know a whole lot more about Wood Badge now than they did 10 minutes ago. I know I do! Thanks for the discussion, Mark.

MARK: Thank you.

AMY: We'll be right back with Reminders and Tips.

(Safety Moment – [Risk Assessment](#))

AMY: It's time for April Reminders and Tips. If you didn't already know, April is Youth Protection Month and the Boy Scouts of America take this very

seriously. Be sure your Youth Protection Training is up-to-date. It's also a good time for you to review with your unit the four rules of personal safety.

AARON: To help you with this sensitive subject, you may want to give each member a copy of the *Power Pack Pals* comic book to open the discussion. You can order them from [Scouting.org/training/youthprotection](https://www.scouting.org/training/youthprotection)

AMY: You could also have a family meeting to watch the DVD, "It Happened to Me." A prior viewing with just parents is recommended.

AARON: On a lighter note, the March/April issue of *Scouting* magazine has cast the net wide to find the best fishing gear for your pack. Check it out and you'll have one summer activity ready to go.

AMY: From the mailbox in our new Ask CubCast portion of the show, Jessica Simon writes: "As a new Den Leader, I feel like I'm doing all the work. How can I get parents to help?"

AARON: Family participation is very important in Cub Scouting. I like to get parents involved by asking specifically for help with snacks or sending our event reminders. A great resource is the Family Talent Survey found in the Cub Scout Meeting Guide. Once they fill that out you'll have a treasure trove of information to assist you in parental involvement.

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AARON: The April CubCast has come to an end, but we can't leave without a special thank-you to our guest, Mark Nelson. I'm Aaron Derr.

AMY: And I'm Amy Hutcherson. Don't forget to send us your ideas and comments to cubcast@Scouting.org or tweet to @cubcast. Joe@bosshoss1031 did and so can you. Now, Joe, go sign up for Wood Badge.

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