

AUGUST – PARENT ORIENTATION

Music Full then under

GINA: The music has started, so that means it's time for *Scouting Magazines'* August CubCast. I'm Gina Circelli along with my hosting partner, Aaron Derr. We are so glad you're listening.

AARON: Now, hopefully your recruiting efforts are bringing in lots of new boys and girls into your dens and packs.

GINA: But new boys and girls also means new parents, and you need to let them know what's expected of both the Cub Scout and the parent, so let's find out what that entails–

Music Fades

GINA –with Jamie Smith. Jamie started out in Scouting about 8 years ago as concerned parent. That led to Den leader, then Assistant Cubmaster and Cubmaster. That's a familiar story. It was the role of a concerned parent that made him the expert on parent orientation. Welcome to CubCast, Jamie.

JAMIE: Great to be with you guys today.

GINA: It's so great to have you. So, let's start at the very beginning. What do we mean by parent orientation?

JAMIE: Joining Cub Scouts can be a little frightening for new parents; you've got young boys and girls and there's a ton of questions. When do we meet?

How often do we meet? Where? How much does it cost? What uniforms do we wear? And what is expected from me, the parent? What do I have to do? A parent orientation is a great time for the pack, the Cubmaster to answer all these questions and hopefully take most of that fear away. It's also a great time to get to know the face of the pack. Who is the Cubmaster and what role do they play as well as the Committee Chair, Den Leaders, and others who have already laid down a plan for the coming Scout year.

AARON: Correct me if I'm wrong, Jamie, but when we talk about parent orientation, we're talking about an event that is separate from a school night recruiting-slash-orientation, right?

JAMIE: Yes, it starts there - your recruiting night, but then for us, we do our parent orientation at our Welcome to the Pack, when we welcome all of the new kids and parents. Then we have an event which has activities to keep our Scouts busy, but also kind of gives us a captured audience for all of our parents.

AARON: Gotcha. So, who in your pack orchestrates the parent orientation?

JAMIE: Well, this is planned by the Cubmaster, the Assistant Cubmaster, our Committee Chair, and the returning committee members who are already in place. And we also, include our Charter Organizational Rep.

GINA: Okay. Let's be real for a second. All packs should be doing this but they're not. And if maybe you're a volunteer listening and you're not, this is our chance to reach them, Jamie. Why do they need to have parent orientation?

JAMIE: To answer all of these questions that a parent have. There are so many questions, so many things that you're concerned about. Costs is always one of them. How do I know where to be, when to be there, and how much is my time worth? You know, there's an old saying that being part of Cub Scouts is one hour a week. Well, we always like to say, "That's all you have left after all the other things we do." But seriously, we try and take all of their concerns away, and let them know what that hour a week can mean.

AARON: So, walk us through the process of a parent orientation night. Like how long does it last? What do you go over? How do you split it up? How do you organize it? What exactly happens?

JAMIE: What we try to do at a parent orientation is make it brief. Parents, like kids, can get easily distracted, so we try and have a meeting that lasts about an hour or so. We have it structured so that we can take each and every question we know that the parents will have and try and answer them ahead of time. The best foundation for that, is former Cubmasters and Committee Chairs have left a blueprint of what to expect and what questions parents will have, and then using other resources to guess ahead at what parents might want to know.

GINA: Speaking of time, how do you address the time that a parent will have to invest in volunteering?

JAMIE: Being a Cub Scout parent is not really a drop-off activity like sports practice. Cub Scouts is a family activity. We try and encourage the parent

to participate. And I know from experience, it's the parents who volunteer, their kids end up getting the most out of Scouting.

AARON: When do you present the parent orientation, Jamie? I'm guessing it happens after the recruiting night but maybe before the first pack meeting of the year?

JAMIE: That's exactly right. As soon as we have gone to our local elementary schools and we've had the privilege of speaking to them with our District Representatives, we immediately plan our first pack meeting so that we can have some events to go on to show them what they can expect a little bit. We invite them over to our Welcome to the Pack event, welcoming all new Scouts and parents in, and we give them all the information they can need right there and then.

AARON: And you said something interesting about how long it should take - you said about an hour. And you mentioned that sometimes parents, like kids, have short attention spans, which I found to definitely be the case. So, you think is an hour about the right time length for an orientation?

JAMIE: I do. If you give somebody too much information too fast, they can also withdraw and be a little bit scared of what's coming and say, "Wait a minute. I can't remember all of these types of things." So, you really want to answer their questions, you want to do it briefly, and the other thing you really want to accomplish here is to show them that there's no reason to be afraid of volunteering or stuff. If us as leaders, Cubmasters and Committee Chairs and people who volunteer make everything look easy

for 'em, hopefully that they'll take a step forward towards that leadership as well.

GINA: Now, families all look very different, we know. Is there any part of your orientation that addresses single parents specifically?

JAMIE: For us, being a single parent comes up when we talk about camping and safety. We have many single parents, and sometimes when Mom or Dad can't make a campout, they might want to send their Scout with an uncle or a grandparent or sometimes a family friend. Because of the safety issues with Scouting, we want to make it very clear who might not be able to sleep in a tent with their Scout on a camping trip.

AARON: One of the things that I learned as a Cub Scout leader, Jamie, was how important it is to have other parents involved in terms of welcoming new parents. The best people to ask and answer questions for new parents are current parents. So, I'm curious to know how do you get other parents involved in your parent orientation evening?

JAMIE: We use our current parents to encourage parents and to talk to them about what's coming, but we use a lot of our Scouts to do it too. They're kind of your secret weapon in your back pocket as Scouts showing some of the things they've done and, maybe displaying the Rain Gutter Regatta boats or their Pinewood Derby cars. They say, "Hey, my dad helped me build this," or "my mom did this" or "my grandpa did this. I'm so lucky to have my parents there." The other thing, we try to do is when we have our cookout, there's a lot of parents talking to other parents while the kids are on the slides. We given them an opportunity from day one to be part of

what's going on. "Hey, can you help us with the food distribution? Hey, do you mind watching the kids while they're on this slide?" All of those different types of things.

GINA: Okay, we'll back with more on Parent Orientation right after this short break.

COMMERICAL: Scoutbook

GINA: Okay, I'm convinced we need to have parent orientation.

AARON: I agree.

GINA: So for all of our listeners out there wondering the same thing, what resources are available to assist with the new parent orientation?

JAMIE: Well, first and foremost, there's former Cubmasters and Scoutmasters. They set a great example in the past and they've made the program what it is up until this point, so use them as your resource to always help build the future. Second, you've got wonderful District Commissioners that are at your disposal. They're willing to help. It's easy to talk to them at your monthly district roundtables, and don't forget Scouting.org and all the training that's there. I hear they've got these great podcasts.

AARON: They do have excellent podcasts actually, I think. Is there anything else about new Cub Scout parent orientation, Jamie, that you think ought to be shared with our listeners?

JAMIE: Whether at a Welcome to Pack like we have it or at a specific evening meeting, make the effort to go. We know that you love your son and your daughter already because you took this time to sign them up for Cub Scouts. Do yourself a great service: sign yourself up too. If you want your Scout to learn how to lead, show them by being a leader yourself. The most successful Scouts are the ones whose parents volunteer. And I know that through this investment in time, through what I've learned and through teaching parents from the day one, both my son and I have made friendships that we know will last for the rest of our lives.

GINA: Gosh, it's just so important to get parents involved right away. One, thank you for volunteering, Jamie, and two, thanks for bringing this discussion to CubCast.

JAMIE: My pleasure.

AARON: Let's take a short break with a brief Safety Moment, and then we will be back with Reminders and Tips.

(August Safety Moment – Trees and Hammocks)

AARON: Okay, here we go with reminders for August. Now is the perfect time to plan for New Leader Training. There's a terrific guide to getting started called "So, You're a New Den Leader." Contact your Pack Committee or New Member Coordinator for details.

GINA: And all these new members you've just recruited deserve a trained leader, and without training it's hard to implement a good program. Oh, and

speaking of recruiting, it's about time for you to have all your materials ready to go to your first night of recruiting. Check out the July 2018 CubCast for all the juicy details.

AARON: Now, as a brief recap, you should have youth and adult applications, *Boy's Life Mini Magazines*, and your First Nighter recruitment kit, as well as any games or props that you might want to use that evening. Most importantly, make sure you've set a date for that First Nighter.

GINA: And finally, don't forget to pick up your copies of the various Den Leader Guides, and Ceremonies for Dens and Packs. Your council Scout Shop or Trading Post should be able to get you set up with everything you need.

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GINA: So that's a wrap for the August CubCast. Thanks to our guest, Jamie Smith, for joining us and thank you for listening.

AARON: Are there any other topics we can cover to make your life easier? Just send an email to Cubcast@scouting.org. Join us next month as we uncover the two new Preview Adventures. Very exciting. Until then, I'm Aaron Derr.

GINA: And I'm Gina Circelli. Don't forget, you can also tweet your suggestion or reason for listening to @cubcast. We're checkin' it all the time. We want to hear what you have to say. We can't wait to hear from you!

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