

New Parent Guide Troop 618 Boy Scouts of America

St. Andrew Lutheran Church
Beaverton, Oregon



Sunset Trail District
Cascade Pacific Council

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Welcome!

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

This guide is intended to be a resource for parents of new scouts in Troop 618. It contains information to help make your boy a successful member of the troop. Hopefully it will also answer some of your questions about the troop and Scouting in general. Try not to worry about all of the new and sometimes confusing concepts and terms that you will encounter in your first year in the troop. This guide should help, but you are also encouraged to seek advice from any of the adult leaders (and the boys too!). Most of all, remember to have fun!

What you need to know has been broken into four sections:

Section 1 - Getting Started

Section 2 - The Scouting Program

Section 3 - Parents' Roles

Section 4 - Resources



Section 1 - Getting Started

Why Join Boy Scouts?

Boys want to be part of Scouting for the adventure. They love going on hikes, sleeping in tents with their friends, and cooking outdoors. They are eager to master the skills of Scouting and enjoy putting into practice what they have learned. They anticipate challenge, adventure, leadership, and recognition for their achievements.

Parents want their sons to participate because of the character development, citizenship training, and the mental and physical fitness growth that the Scouting program delivers. The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.



SCOUT OATH

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law; To help
other people at all times; To keep
myself physically strong, mentally
awake, and morally straight.

SCOUT LAW

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind,
obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

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

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

The boys in the troop will be working towards their 1st Class and then Eagle ranks. As they travel on their trail to Eagle, they will not only learn how to lead a team to a goal, but they will actually lead teams of scouts in a number of situations. Many Eagle Scouts put their scouting accomplishments on their résumés, and these accomplishments are often considered in obtaining acceptance into college or the work force.

Introduction to Our Troop

Troop 618 is part of the Sunset Trail District of the Cascade Pacific Council. We feel that our strength comes from our youth leaders, our active Scoutmaster and assistants, our effective Troop Committee, and the active participation of our parents.

Our sponsoring organization is St. Andrew Lutheran Church, which graciously allows us to utilize their space for our meetings.

Our troop is a mix of older experienced scouts (Life and Eagle rank), new scouts such as your son (Scout through Second Class rank), and proficient scouts (First Class and Star ranks). We are fortunate to have a group of very active adults who assist in helping the troop to function, as well as committed scout leaders who help the boys develop and execute the troop's program.

We have troop meetings every week year-round (with some exceptions as noted on our calendar) and campouts every month, along with a week-long summer camp experience that is usually the highlight of the year for most boys. Our aim is to provide a varied program that meets the needs of our younger scouts while providing more challenging activities for our older scouts.



Joining Our Troop

There are two forms that you need to complete to register your boy in the troop. These can easily be done at your first troop meeting.

- 1) Complete the Boy Scout Application. This registers him with the Boy Scouts of America (our national organization), and will extend the BSA insurance policy for him during scouting events.
- 2) Fill in a Health and Medical Record, Parts A and C. This record is carried with the troop whenever we travel, and can be used as a medical release in the case of an emergency. This information is updated annually. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself. A physician examination (Part B) is not required in order to participate in most troop activities, but one will be needed before your son attends an event longer than 3 days, such as summer resident camp.

After joining, the first thing you need to do is obtain a Boy Scout Handbook. The Scout Handbook will be one of your Scout's greatest resources and his constant companion over the coming months and years, so you may want to purchase a protective cover for it, as well. A uniform will also be needed.

Section 2 - The Scouting Program



The Patrol Method

A troop is made up of one or more patrols. A patrol is a group of approximately six to ten scouts. The patrol method gives scouts an experience in group living and participating citizenship. It places a certain amount of responsibility on young shoulders and teaches boys how to accept it. The patrol method allows scouts to act in small groups where they can easily relate to each other. These small groups determine troop activities through their elected representatives.

Each patrol elects a Patrol Leader. The Patrol Leader becomes a member of the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC). The leader of the PLC is the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), who is elected semi-annually by all the scouts in the troop. The PLC is responsible for planning the troop activities and implementing them. If your son is elected or selected to serve in one of the troop leadership positions, he is required to attend and participate in the PLC meetings. (If the Patrol Leader cannot attend, he must delegate the responsibility to his assistant and then follow up later to understand the outcome of the meeting.) The PLC meets once per month for about an hour. The PLC and other interested scouts also meet in late summer for an annual planning conference to construct the activities for the upcoming year. The adult leaders are present at the PLC meetings only as advisors.



Our Patrol for New Scouts

Each spring, a number of new scouts join us as they cross over from their Cub Scout packs. The new scouts form a patrol which is led by one or more "Troop Guides", who are older, more proficient scouts that have been selected for this position by the Scoutmaster. The Troop Guides mentor the new scouts as they begin to acquire the skills they need for success. After the first six months, the patrol elects its own patrol leader, and the Troop Guides step into a background role.

The Adult Leaders

Chartered Organization (Sponsor)

Every troop belongs to an organization. As previously mentioned, the Chartered Organization for Troop 618 is St Andrew Lutheran Church. The Chartered Organization shares our objectives for the boys and insures that there is adequate, trained leadership. A Chartered Organization Representative acts as a liaison between St. Andrew Lutheran Church and our troop.

Troop Committee

The Troop Committee functions as an administrative and support organization for the troop. The Troop Committee takes care of the non-program issues surrounding the troop; for example: newsletters, troop funds, fund raising activities, membership drives, activity permits and coordination, advancement records, procurement and maintenance of troop equipment. The committee meets monthly. The meetings are open to all interested adults.

Scoutmasters

The Scoutmaster and his assistants oversee the troop program. They act as advisors and counselors to the youth leadership and are responsible for the safety of the boys during meetings and outings.



Uniforms

The scout uniform helps to achieve the objectives of Scouting. The uniform by itself cannot make a good scout or a good troop, but its use has been proven to improve both the scout and the troop because it is a visible symbol of Scouting and unity. Uniforms must be worn to all meetings, travel to and from campouts, and at any scouting activity. Full uniform (or "class A") consists of scout pants or shorts, scout socks, scout shirt, scout belt and troop hat. The "class B" uniform, worn during the summer and some other informal activities, consists of the troop t-shirt and, preferably, scout shorts or long pants, scout socks, and scout belt. An official scout shirt (summer camp t-shirt, etc.) may be worn if a troop t-shirt is not available. No other t-shirts are acceptable.



Advancement

The Boy Scout advancement program provides a ladder of skills that a scout climbs at his own pace. As he acquires these skills he moves up through a series of ranks, for which he is awarded badges. The ranks are Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle. The higher he climbs the more challenging his tasks -- and the more rewarding.

A basic premise of Troop 618 is that leadership should be developed within the patrol and the troop. Many of the advancement requirements for the individual scouts specify that the older scouts help the younger ones in their own growth and advancement. Advancement additionally requires review by the scoutmaster and members of the troop committee. Many of the advancements require merit badge achievements that involve demonstrating skills and knowledge to an adult leader or volunteer serving as a merit badge counselor. Unlike Cub Scouts, parents are not allowed to sign off on their son's advancement requirements.

There are four steps of advancement: learning, testing, reviewing, and recognizing. Details for advancement are contained in the Boy Scout Handbook, which every scout should obtain when joining the troop. Rank advancements are recognized immediately upon completion of the requirements and again during a Court of Honor.

Advancement through First Class

From the time the scout enters the troop through the time he earns advancement to First Class, he is learning basic scouting skills to enable him to camp, hike, swim, cook, tie knots, administer first aid, and perform other tasks in the outdoors and to work as a member of a team. With those first steps the scout begins to build himself physically, mentally, and morally. He will start to live with the Scout Oath and Law. Soon he will learn the symbolism inherent in the Scout badge; he will learn that there are three points of the trefoil that stand for the three parts of the Scout Oath: Duty to God and country, duty to other people, and duty to yourself. The First Class rank is a sign that the scout has mastered the fundamentals of scouting and can start the long process of learning to lead others.

Advancement from First Class to Eagle

As he advances from First Class through Eagle, the scout will be demonstrating leadership, performing service projects, earning merit badges and using the skills learned while achieving the rank of First Class. The next ranks he will earn are Star and

Life. These ranks are harder to obtain than the earlier ranks, but are also more interesting for the older scouts. Upon completion of all the requirements for Star and Life, the Scout will be eligible to work on his Eagle rank. The final steps towards Eagle are filled with leadership experiences.

Scout Spirit

A scout's advancement in rank not only depends upon his skills and experiences, but also upon the spirit in his heart and the way he lives the Scout Oath and Law. We expect our scouts to adhere to the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives.

Active Participation

Active participation in troop meetings and outings helps the Scout to succeed in his rank advancement. We actively encourage scouts to attend partial meetings and outings if other conflicts exist, such as sporting events.

Scoutmaster Conference

Before each advancement in rank, the scout has a conference with our Scoutmaster. This gives the scout and Scoutmaster the opportunity to reflect on what has been accomplished and how to approach the challenges that lie ahead. It is up to your son to decide what goals he will set for himself and what badges he will work towards. It is the scout's responsibility to notify the Scoutmaster when he is ready for a conference.

Boards of Review

When a scout has completed all the requirements for a rank, he appears before a Board of Review composed of members of the Troop Committee. The purpose of the review is not an examination of the Scout's skills. Rather, it is to determine the scout's attitude and acceptance of scouting ideals; to ensure that the requirements have been met for advancement; to discuss the scout's experiences in the troop and the troop's program; and to encourage him to keep working towards his next advancement.



Merit Badges

The goal of the merit badge program is to expand a scout's areas of interest and to encourage the scout to meet and work with adults on a chosen subject. A scout works with a registered merit badge counselor to earn merit badges. The scout contacts the counselor to arrange for times and places to meet with the counselor. The counselor will specify the guidelines for earning the badge at the first meeting. The rest is up to the scout. When the scout completes the merit badge, he informs the Scoutmaster of the accomplishment for final approval.

Along the path to Eagle, each scout must complete a minimum of 21 merit badges. Twelve of these are specific required merit badges, and the remainder can be drawn from a list of over 120 possibilities. The Scout Handbook contains a list of all the merit badges. The troop maintains a collection of merit badge books that each scout can use for reference. Personal copies are also available at the scout shop.

We strive to keep our Merit Badge Counselors List within the troop up to date. If your hobbies or employment fall under one of the merit badge titles, please let our Advancement Chairman know, and they will give you the necessary information needed to become a merit badge counselor. Most, if not all, badges earned outside of summer camp are through counselors directly affiliated with Troop 618. This makes it easier and more comfortable for the scout, although he is not restricted from making arrangements with counselors outside of the troop. You should not serve as a merit badge counselor for your own scout (unless it is a group class with no other counselors helping you).

Courts of Honor

The Court of Honor is a semiannual event where the troop recognizes all scout leadership appointments, elections, awards, and advancements. Adult recognitions may also be presented. Unlike a Cub Scout pack meeting, it is the responsibility of the youth-led PLC to plan and conduct the troop Courts of Honor.

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



Behavioral Expectations

In Scouting, we strive to maintain a safe and healthy environment during all of our activities. As such, all participants are expected to abide by the Scout Oath and Law, as well as any special rules established by the Boy Scouts of America, the troop, and its leaders. At Troop 618, we have conduct expectations that each scout, parent/guardian, and adult leader needs to abide by during all scouting activities.

Section 3 - Parents' Roles

Few scouts remain in scouting very long when there is little interest from the home. We cannot over emphasize the importance of the Boy Scout Handbook. It is an invaluable tool in helping your scout learn and advance. Parents should familiarize themselves with the handbook so that they will be better prepared to assist their son when requested. The Scouting program is for the boys, but requires interested parents and adult leaders. The adults who provide their supervision, support, and time to make the troop a success are volunteers. Our troop has become strong and will remain so because we expect the support of every parent when they are called upon to help.

The role of parents within Troop 618 is to be supportive of the troop's efforts and to provide the atmosphere scouts need to learn and excel.

Parents should try to:

- Read your scout's handbook and understand the purpose and methods of Scouting.
- Show support to both the individual scout and the troop by attending all troop Courts of Honor.
- Do your share of driving for trips.
- Review the Troop 618 annual calendar with your son when he receives it in the fall. Mark important dates on your own calendar so the whole family knows what is happening and when.
- Actively follow your scout's progress (or lack thereof) and offer encouragement and a push when needed.
- Assist in troop fund-raisers and other such activities. All such assistance lowers the cost of the program we offer to the scouts and, therefore, lowers each family's cash outlay for their scout(s).
- Sign up as a counselor for relevant Merit Badges.
- Help your scout manage his time to enable participation and attendance, especially if he is in a leadership position.
- Consider becoming a regular member of the Troop Committee (Treasurer, Quartermaster, Advancement, etc.). We recommend that new parents "watch and learn" for their first year before considering becoming an assistant Scoutmaster in the troop.
- Be consistent with the Scout Oath and Law at home, as Scouting is a lifestyle and not limited to meetings and outings.

To be a successful troop, we rely on parents to provide content and assistance to our program. Please let us know how you are willing to lend a hand. BSA requires two-deep leadership for all scouting events.



Financial Expectations

When you first join the troop, the number of expenses that scouting requires may surprise you. Some of these are optional. *Never feel that your son cannot participate if you cannot meet these expenses.* The troop participates in several fundraisers throughout the year that provide ample opportunity to reduce or even eliminate these expenses. The Council also maintains "Opportunity Funds" to assist in these expenses. Feel free to discuss any of your concerns with the Scoutmaster.

Essential Expenses

- Troop registration - \$63/year. Usually collected in November and includes BSA registration fees, insurance, Boy's Life magazine, and troop fees.
- Uniforms: As previously mentioned, uniforms are required for all boys. To help offset this cost, the troop maintains a collection of previously owned uniform parts. New uniform parts can be found at the Scout Shop in downtown Portland or online (See "Resources"). Details of the uniform emblems can be found in the Scout Handbook. The minimum set of emblems consists of the council shoulder patch (Cascade Pacific Council), the troop number (618), the American Flag, the World Scout Crest, and Boy Scout shoulder loops.
- Outing Fees: These are based on the actual cost of each outing, and primarily cover food and fuel. Since each patrol is responsible for purchasing its own food, the fees vary by patrol. A typical outing costs \$10 - \$15 for food plus a share of the gas cost, which is usually between \$5- \$10.
- Summer Camp fee: This is usually around \$200, and is collected in increments prior to attending.

Optional Expenses

- Friends of Scouting (FOS): This is a national scouting fundraiser, and helps to offset some of the capital expenses such as new buildings and property acquisitions and upkeep. All raised funds stay within our local council. BSA asks that each family contribute approximately \$150 per year. If the troop meets its FOS goal, which is dependent on the troop size, we get discounts at the council camps, including summer camp.
- Other Scouting activities: The Council offers some really exceptional activities that are outside the usual activities of the troop. These include the National Jamboree, council-supported Junior Leader Training, and high adventure camps such as Philmont and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.
- Other opportunities such as Sea Scouts and Venturing are also available for older scouts.

Scout Accounts

The troop treasury consists of an individual “Scout account” for each boy, plus a general fund that supports the entire troop. The general fund pays for advancement awards (badges and patches), campground fees, camping equipment and other miscellaneous supplies, leadership training for Scouts, etc. The individual Scout accounts are used to pay outing fees, summer camp fees, and other costs directly related to personal attendance. We ask that each Scout maintain a balance of at least \$25 in his Scout account. When a Scout or adult requests reimbursement for food or gas purchased for an outing, the money is transferred by the treasurer into that person’s account from the accounts of the participating Scouts (and/or adults). This simplifies the financial transactions within the patrols in the troop.

Each Scout will have the opportunity to help his family to pay for his Scouting adventures through optional fundraisers that occur throughout the year, including candy, wreath, and popcorn sales. Profits from fundraising events are deposited directly into the Scout accounts. One fundraiser – Christmas tree recycling – primarily benefits the troop general fund, and every Scout is expected to participate. A car wash or other fundraising effort may occasionally be added to raise troop funds for a specific purpose.

If a boy leaves Scouting, the funds that have been deposited into his Scout account through fundraisers are transferred to the troop general fund. Money that has been added to the scout account by the family, but has not yet been spent, will be returned to the family. If the Scout leaves Troop 618 to transfer to another troop, the funds in his Scout account are transferred with him to his new troop.

Some adults prefer to have the fees for their own Scouting adventures tracked separately from their Scout’s, so participating adults may have a “Scout Account” of their own if they so choose. Just let the treasurer know if this is your preference.





Gear/clothing that your son will need for his initial outings

There is really very little that your son will need for his first outings. The Boy Scout Handbook is an excellent resource for knowing what to bring. Essential to a good campout is staying dry and warm, and most everything else is secondary.

Your son should have the following items when attending an outing:

- Scout Outdoor Essentials (10 Essentials): These are listed in the Scout Handbook and include things like a pocketknife, first aid kit, and flashlight.
- Appropriate clothing: The camping section of the Scout Handbook lists items for warm and cold weather camping. In almost all cases, your son should prepare for cold weather campouts. Always carry raingear and warm clothes. Inexpensive boots are a good choice for fast-growing feet.
- Personal overnight camping gear: The Scout Handbook has a good list for beginning boys. You'll find that even experienced campers use this list to help prepare themselves for camping trips. Personal gear includes items such as a backpack, sleeping bag/pad, eating utensils, and personal hygiene kit. Keep in mind that items such as the backpack and sleeping bag should be appropriate for the outing. Initially an inexpensive duffel bag is fine for most outings, but eventually a backpack should be purchased. The sleeping bag should be selected in accordance with the season. A winter and summer bag works best, but if he will only have one bag a winter bag is the best choice. Avoid "premium" gear; its higher price is not a good value for Boy Scouts! The Scout Handbook contains a full list of necessary camping items.

There are several things that your son will **not** need on his first outings. The troop provides many of the more expensive items used when camping. These include tents, ropes, tarps, group cooking gear, lanterns, and large stoves. Items such as single-person stoves and backpacking style tents make great gifts, and you'll find some of the older boys using their own gear. It's a good idea to ask around first before purchasing these items.

If you have questions, feel free to ask one of the scoutmasters for assistance.



Adult Training

The Boy Scout program offers many opportunities for adult training. The first step is the Fast Start and Youth Protection training. Online Fast Start and Youth Protection training are available (<http://www.scouting.org/Applications/MyScoutingFull.aspx>).

The Council also offers other kinds of basic and advanced adult training, including:

- Advancement Extravaganza. This is a one-day event where leaders can learn all about the advancement process and other key areas.
- Outdoor Skills Institute: This is a weekend event where all adults can get refreshers on outdoor activities as well as learn new ones.
- Wood Badge: This is the ultimate adult training in scouting leadership.
- District Roundtables: These monthly meetings always have an instructional session.
- BSA publications: Some very good references include the Scoutmaster's Handbook and the Troop Committee handbook.

More training opportunities can be found at the council web site.

Section 4 - Resources

When your Scout has a question or needs additional information, he should first check in his Scout Handbook. Then he should seek out his patrol leader or an older scout. When the parent needs information, the troop adults are a great resource. The following websites may also be useful:

Troop 618 web page: <http://www.troop618.org/>

Sunset Trail District webpage: <http://www.cpcbsa.org/sunsettrail/>

Cascade Pacific Council webpage: www.cpcbsa.org

Council Newsletter (Compass Points):

<http://www.cpcbsa.org/volunteerservice/compasspoints/index.html>

BSA National Council webpage: <http://www.scouting.org/>

Order of the Arrow Lodge 442 webpage: <http://www.aa-442.org/>

Scout Gear: <http://www.scoutstuff.org/bsasupply/>

Listing of Scout Camps (get maps and other info here):

<http://www.cpcbsa.org/camp-properties/propertylist/index.html>

Guide to Safe Scouting (intro): <http://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS.aspx>

Guide to Safe Scouting: <http://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx>

Youth Protection (info): <http://www.scouting.org/YouthProtection.aspx>

Online Youth Protection Training:

<http://www.scouting.org/Applications/MyScoutingFull.aspx>

