



Advancement Priority #1: It is April, and May graduations are right around the corner. Have you reviewed the advancement status of all of your dens yet? Now is the time to meet with your den leaders and find out if they are having challenges with any of their Cubs earning rank. Time to roll up your sleeves and offer support or encouragement to your leaders and those families that might be thinking that Scouting isn't worth their commitment. 100% advancement is a good target.

With that said, let us wrap-up the topic we started last month.

More Ceremonies

More Approaches to Ceremonies

In last month's newsletter I provided an initial set of approaches to recognition/advancement ceremonies that included carrying on traditions, monthly themes, and building ceremonies around face painting symbology. Hopefully you have browsed the web links that I have provided and have increased your ceremony tool kit many times over. But, there are a few more types of ceremonies to be mentioned.

Glowing Ceremonies. This category of ceremony makes use of the chemicals available in the ever-popular glow sticks. Here is a quick synopsis of how this type of ceremony is presented: The Cubmaster sets the stage telling the story of the power of the Scouting spirit and the lore that is handed down. The Cub is then allowed to pour the Spirit of the Bobcat (Wolf or Bear) in with the dew collected at midnight from the first spring campout. If the mixture glows, then it is deemed proof of the boys earning his new rank and having good Scout spirit.

The two liquids that are poured together are the two chemical components from a light stick that was carefully disassembled. You should only use non-toxic sticks. Special attention should be given to working with these because the chemicals can stain clothing and you will be working with glass that is prone to shattering. Detailed instructions for working with the glow sticks can be found out at <http://www.cherokeescouting.org/Glo-Bobcat.htm>.

Candle Lighting. Candles always carry a powerful symbology. A few examples:

#1: My Pack uses candles for the Arrow of Light ceremony, one for each ray from the AoL sun. As the seven virtues are read, a candle is lit. Once all of the candles are lit, the individual badges are presented.

#2: I have also seen an example of a prop with platforms for each rank level. When a boy earns his rank, he lights a votive candle on the corresponding platform level.

#3: At the first pack meeting of the year, my Pack uses a "Pass the Spark" ceremony to introduce all of the leaders to the boys. Our most senior leader, with lit candle, introduces himself (herself) and explains his/her role in the Pack. He/she then passes the spark to the next most senior leader and then posts his/her candle. This repeats with each leader introducing themselves and passing the "spark" of Scouting.

For candle ceremonies, first you have to design the candleholder. And to design the candleholder, you need to consider the candles that you are going to use. For our purposes we don't need high quality candles. It is reasonably easy to find inexpensive tapers and votives and Michael's and at Northwestern Book Stores. Once you know the dimensions of the candles, it is time to construct your candleholder. Wood is often the easiest medium to work with. Think through your design to create a stable and safe holder. Having something that is portable and can easily be stored away is also an element to consider in your design.

American Indian With a bit of a costuming effort, American Indian ceremonies can be very popular. With their respect for the earth and animals, it is reasonably easy to build a set of ceremonies on this theme. www.insanescouter.com also has American Indian ceremonies for each rank. Combining an American Indian theme in conjunction to face painting can pack a double punch. One note: Ceremonies have deep meaning for American Indians and their cultural and religious traditions. If your pack has American Indian members, consult with them to come up with a culturally sensitive approach.

Jungle Book One of the oldest traditions in Cub Scouting is the Rudyard Kipling story. The Wolf and the Bear books each have a portion of the story of Akela and Mogli. Tying the rank advancement awards back to this story is easy for Wolf and Bear and with a little creativity can be extended to all ranks. The web site http://www.usscouts.org/profbvr/jungle_book/index.html provides some additional background on the Jungle Book characters. For some additional examples of these ceremonies, look out on http://insanescouter.com/t276/files/ceremonies/more_cs_ceremonies.htm

Other Prop Based There have been numerous Scouters that have created different props to go along with their ceremonies. One leader designed a floor-standing display with a station for each rank level. Each boy when he joined the pack received a spring type clothespin with his name written on it. As a boy advances to the next rank, the boy gets to move his clothespin from its current station to the next as part of his recognition.

Summary

Keep expanding your ceremony toolkit to keep your pack meetings special. Ceremonies are about

1. Recognizing your Cubs' accomplishments in front of the pack in an exceptional manner
2. Adding symbology to reinforce Scouting's values.
3. Encourage all boys to work diligently towards their next rank.

Newsletters

If you are interested in getting back-copies of the newsletters or would like electronic versions to share, you can find them at http://webpages.charter.net/chadc/html/cub_scouting.html

Till next month, yours in Scouting,

- Chad Cooper

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