

# Cubmaster Advancement Newsletter

Issue 5, March 2004

For this month's topic, let us return to one of the basic tools of the trade for Cubmasters.

## Ceremonies

The culmination of a Cub Scout's hard work is the recognition he receives up in front of his Pack. It is your job to help him feel pride in his accomplishment.

There are relatively few wrong ways to conduct a recognition ceremony. A good ceremony has the following basic elements.

- a) Immediate recognition. Unless there is a significant obstacle, this ceremony is conducted at the next pack meeting immediately following the month that the award has been earned. Quoting from the Cub Scout Leader Book "Ensure that boys who have earned awards receive them at the next pack meeting. Don't let boys get discouraged by having to wait for recognition."
- b) The Cub is invited to the front of his Pack.
- c) His accomplishment(s) are announced.
- d) He is congratulated with something as simple as the Cub Scout handshake or something more involved.

There are four main factors to consider when you are planning and creating your ceremonies; recipient, audience, time, and proportionality.

Never embarrass a Cub Scout in an award ceremony. Keep your ceremonies respectful and reverent. The silliness and zaniness that you might use in your monthly announcements or in recognizing other leaders should be replaced by simple fun. Your goal is to give the Scout self-confidence through the quiet warmth of pride in knowing he has done a great job.

Even though you are making a Cub feel special, you still have only so much time for your pack meeting. No matter how much of a show you put on with your ceremonies, your boys are still just sitting and watching. They need their time to be up and doing. If you have 30 boys to present awards to, you need to make some choices about where you spend your time. The largest packs often have to go to a format of only presenting rank awards at the pack meetings and presenting the other awards at the den level. While this is certainly less than ideal, it helps make the pack meeting ceremony time more reasonable.

There are different levels of effort for different awards. Consider the levels of efforts for progress beads, arrow points, sports & academics belt loops and pins, Webelos pins, Webelos Compass Point Emblem and arrow pins. These are important to the Cubs and should be announced and presented to the Cubs in front of the Pack. But, the Tiger, Bobcat, Wolf, Bear, Webelos, and AoL rank awards are the major milestones in a Cub Scouts' advancements. Plan the scale (proportionality) of your ceremony accordingly. It is these major milestones that deserve the real fanfare.

### Types of Ceremonies

There are numerous categories of ceremonies, more than I can cover in a single month. Next month's edition will cover Jungle Book, glowing, American Indian, candle lighting and other prop based ceremony themes.

Tradition. Tradition is always important in a Cub pack. When a Tiger sees a Bobcat badge presented to another boy, this gives him something to look forwards to when it comes his time. If your pack has built a history of traditions, be sure to learn them so that they can live on. Traditions help build a pack culture and a sense of belonging. However, this doesn't mean that you can't retire old and tired traditions every once in a while. Boys like being part of starting a new tradition. An introduction of "You are going to be the first ones to be part of this..." should help smooth over any anxieties.

Monthly Themes. Many packs heavily use the monthly themes that BSA publishes in the annual Program Helps and Scouting Magazine. This is a great platform for coming up with some fun ceremonies. For a past month, based upon the space theme, one pack ran a guy wire from the back to the front of the room. They then sent rockets in to deliver each boy's award to the Cubmaster for presentation. There is no limit to the creativity that can be shown.

For instance, the May 2004 theme is *My Home State*. Here is a basic set of ideas that can be expanded upon to build ceremonies around the Minnesota State symbols.

Calling the Cubs	Find a loon call recording and an assistant. As you call the boy forward have the assistant play the recording.
Tiger	[Cub], like the monarch you are spreading your wings in Scouting. Congratulations on the earning your Tiger rank and on completing a great year with your Scouting partner.
Bobcat	Growing up from the nourishing water like wild rice, [Cub], you have matured in Scouting, learning the Cub Scout Oath and Law of the Pack. You have earned the privilege of being harvested into the Scouting canoe. In the next year, continue downstream to your next rank of Wolf.
Wolf	[Cub], like the state flower, the ladyslipper, that can live to be 100 years old, you are flourishing in Cub Scouting. Continue your growth now towards the Bear and grow strong in the great climate that Minnesota has to offer.
Bear	[Cub], you have swam in the great lake of Scouting like a walleye completing the requirements for the Bear badge. In your 3 years, no fisherman has hooked you nor other animal caught you. Swim deeper in Scouting and grow stronger.
Webelos	[Cub], your dedication to Scouting has earned you your Webelos badge. Like the Norway Pine, Minnesota's most proud tree, you have grown strong and tall. Your branches have extended even farther into Scouting.
Arrow of Light	[Cub], you have reached the highest rank in Cub Scouting. For this you should be very proud. You have risen like Minnesota, the Star of the North (L'Etoile Du Nord if you can handle French) to the top.

Add some props like cutouts of butterflies, wild rice that could be scattered at their feet, pictures of a walleye and you will have yourself a complete set of ceremonies.

**Painted Ceremonies.** This is a very popular approach to conducting for ceremonies, painting symbols on the boys' face to emphasize Scouting's values and temporarily marks the boy so that all know his accomplishments. My favorite set of these can be found out on <http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Rapids/8047/paint.htm>. The web link to insanescouter.com that I provide below also has a number of these.

Give some thought and planning in selecting your materials for face painting. The easiest materials to find are during Halloween when face paint can be found in all stores that sell children's costumes. If you need to search out a costuming store, be careful. Clown makeup will most times require a cold cream to wash away the paint. Tempera paint, as I have once seen suggested, is very drying to the skin. If you can find it, a soap-based stick type product is ideal.

### **Other Ceremony Resources**

BSA's basic toolkit for ceremonies is their publication titled *Cub Scout Ceremonies for Dens and Packs*. This can be found at your local Scout Shop. For a slight cost and some shelf space, this can be a good place to start.

If free is more your style, there are numerous web sites that have ceremony ideas. Some of my favorites include:

<http://usscouts.org/ceremony.asp>

<http://www.macscouter.com/Ceremony/index.html>

<http://insanescouter.com/t276/files/ceremonies.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/9152/ceremonies.html>

<http://my.dmci.net/~dmanchester/default.htm>

<http://www.scoutorama.com/>

### **Summary**

Having fun with ceremonies is an important part of making your pack meetings fun. Your only limits are your own creativity or your willingness to research the wealth of other ideas that have been shared.

### **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](http://webpages.charter.net/chadc/html/cub_scouting.html)

Till next month, yours in Scouting,  
- Chad Cooper (chadc@charter.net)