

Welcome to Troop 11. If you are reading this your son has either transitioned from Cub to Boy Scouts or your son has taken the leap into Scouting for the first time. Regardless of where your family is in regards to Scouting, this guide is here to help. The leaders of Troop 11 are all dedicated adults and are the final word on all things pertaining to the Troop. However, sometimes Mom's see things a little differently and want the nitty gritty details in order to properly prepare for the journey ahead. Okay, let's get started!

First Scout Meeting: Must Haves and Need to Know

If you are not prepared the first night, do not despair! The leaders know that entry into Scouting can mean some logistical challenges and know that it may not be possible to have your shirt and book on that first night! If you able, hop on over to the Scout store and pick up the clothing listed below, if not, give yourself some grace!

- Clothing: Class A Shirt, red handkerchief, clasp (See more on clothing below), khaki or green pants or shorts.
- Scout Hand Book
- Meeting Info: Tuesday nights, 7PM @ Christ the King (August through May),

Uniforms:

You don't have to search too hard to find the clothing requirements for Scouting. Your options to find clothing requirements include:

- Website: <http://bsauniforms.org/boyscouts>
- Scout Handbook
- Scout Store (Green Hills)

Even though there are clothing requirements for Scouting as a whole, Troop 11 adheres to the following guidelines:

- First Tuesday of each month: Class A Uniform (see web link above)
- Rank Advancement Interview: Class A Uniform (this is a must!)
- Some Events as required by leaders (such as a flag ceremony): Class A Uniform
- Other Tuesdays each month: Class B Uniform
- Travel to and from Troop 11 events such as camping: Class B Uniform

What is a Class B uniform? Class B's are any shirts that pertain to Scouting. For example, t-shirts purchased at Boxwell Scout Reservation or the Troop 11 red shirt that your son will be given upon joining the troop. Class B's should be worn with Scout/khaki/green shorts, etc.

So your son is new to Troop 11 and he insists he is not required to wear his uniform to Scouts. Always defer to the leaders but the boys are required to wear either a Class A or Class B to any Scout activity. Occasionally there are boys coming from another event or practice and they

simply do not have time to change. The leaders of Troop 11 are understanding and are up to the challenges of meeting our kid's needs.

Merit Badges

There are over 135 merit badges that your son can earn on his way to Eagle. Of those, he must earn a total of 21 to attain that highest rank with 13 of those being specific to Eagle. Earning merit badges is fun and the boys light up at the Court of Honor ceremonies when they are handed the badges they earned that year. Your local Scout store has books specific to each badge or you can visit www.scouting.org to read about the requirement for each badge. If you have questions regarding badges, speak to one of the Leaders.

We have all of these badges, now what?

- Your son's current rank should be attached to the left (heart) pocket of his Class A shirt.
- If he is elected into the Order of the Arrow, that "badge" will go on the right pocket flap.
- Your son may receive other event patches such as a Camporee patch or a 50-mile canoe trip patch. Those can go on a sleeve though many Scouts simply hold on to them. Ask the Leaders what they recommend.
- Many parents have their son's merit badges sewn on a sash that can be purchased at the Scout store. What's even better than sewing? Badge magic which is an extremely durable adhesive sold at the Scout store or can often be found places such as Hobby Lobby.
- Rank advancement badges, once they are no longer on a shirt (as your son has advanced) can be placed in a display case or frame once your son reaches Eagle.

Rank Advancement

BSA offers 7 ranks beginning with Scout and ending with Eagle. Each rank has its own requirements and opens the door to opportunity such as leadership positions, more advanced classes while at camp and high adventure trips. The Leaders of Troop 11 work very hard to support the Scouts in advancing in ranks to allow them to get the most out of their Scouting years. If you unsure of how the advancements work, you can speak to a Leader and read through your son's Handbook which offers all you and your son need to know about rank requirements.

Boxwell

Summer camp. Boxwell is one of the best Scout camps in the nation. That's the good news. The boys THRIVE there and have an amazing time. But, the reality is that Boxwell is a very rustic camp. This is the real deal and brings amazing lessons to the boys and despite the bug bites and bad food, they come out on the other side more mature and feeling like they have accomplished something. And, they have.

Boxwell serves to build relationships among the boys and confidence for individual kids. It is also your son's best opportunity to collect merit badge – which are required for rank advancement.

The week offers plenty of downtime but the leaders work with the boys to get them signed up for appropriate activities to allow them to advance in rank. Not all boys are eligible for all activities. Some activities, such as boating or riflery require that boys have attained specific ranks before being allowed to participate.

End of the week ceremony: All families are invited to Boxwell for dinner on Friday night and the opportunity to attend an end of camp ceremony. Every parent should go at least once. But, take bug spray and wear good walking shoes as you'll take a short walk through the woods to the lake-side amphitheater for the finale.

Packing for Boxwell:

Your son will pack much like a car-camping trip (see below) with a few added items. The Leaders will send a comprehensive list. But, below are a few tips:

- A trunk. Not a requirement but for a 6-day trip such as this it will help to keep your son organized and give him added seating in his tent.
- Camp chair. Please send a camp chair with your son for the long nights around the fire. Boys have been known to fall asleep in the chairs which is really a special experience that they will boast about later on.
- Money. Your son will want money to spend at the Trading Post. He can get all manner of junk there, so be prepared to detox him when he comes back home. If he wants to purchase a t-shirt, he should do so at the beginning of the week because the pickings are slim at the end. How much? The Mom's Guide recommends around \$40 for the week.
- Sleeping arrangements. Your son can sleep in one of the lovely open-air platform tents that are permanent fixtures at Boxwell. He can also pack a hammock and sleep in it (depending on the weather), HOWEVER, if your son has a serious aversion to bugs, he may want to take a Troop tent so that he can zip up each night and keep the bugs away from himself and his gear.
- Treats for the Leaders. These men need treats and deserve them. They are giving an entire week to our boys. Let's give them something special!

Let's Go Camping!

Troop 11 does three types of camping. There is car camping at sites such as Shiloh, back country camping (backpacking) on trips to locations such as Virgin Falls and high adventure camping like the 2015 Appalachian Trail trip (open to Scouts who have achieved rank of First Class or above). In addition, there are other trips such as caving and canoeing that are captured here.

Troop leaders will send out a packing list before the trips and your son will be given a food list by Patrol Leaders who guide much of the trips. Below is the Car Camping list plus a few notes for other trips. If you have the items on the car camping list you will largely be covered for other trips. Remember, this is the MOM'S GUIDE. The Troop leaders are the final word and will send specific lists for specific trips.

Car Camping:

- Sleeping bag (LIGHTWEIGHT, STUFFABLE, see more under GEAR)
- Sleeping pad (optional, see more under GEAR)
- Hammock (optional, see more under GEAR)
- Water bottle or camel back style pack reservoir
- The Patrol Leader will work on a food plan and give a list to each Scout of what to bring.
The leaders will sometimes cook some meals.
- Socks. Good moisture wicking hiking socks. 2-3 pairs
- Lightweight moisture wicking clothing. Pack/wear layers. Think warm days/cool nights.
- Snacks. Nuts or granola bars. Nothing that will weigh down the pack.
- Lightweight flashlight or headlamp
- Mess kit. Plate/bowl, and silverware.
- Compass (maybe). It's just good for them to learn to use it.
- Sunscreen and bug spray
- A hat. Baseball hat or wide brimmed
- Multi-tool
- Hand sanitizer or wipes or both.
- Something to sleep in. Can get really cold at night.
- Raincoat or poncho
- Personal First-Aid kit
- Personal toiletry kit
- Hiking Boots. Your son's first camping trip should NOT be the first time he wears his boots.
Break them in before he goes.
- Shoes to wear around the campsite (Crocs or sandals, etc.)
- Tent: The boys use Troop 11 tents on a typical trip. These are high-end lightweight 2-person tents from REI.
- Money: The leaders will let you know if you should send lunch money.

Back Country Camping:

- The Same as car camping with some additions/omissions as noted below
- Backpack and rain cover (see more under GEAR)
- The Patrol Leader will work on a food plan and let your know what to bring.
- Mess kit. Every trip is different in this regard.
- Tent: The boys use Troop 11 tents on a typical trip. These are high-end lightweight 2-person tents from REI. The boys will pack this to the camp-site. Typically, they are assigned a tent buddy and the boys can work out who will carry the tent to and from camp.
- Due to pack weight, you may NOT want to send an extra pair of campsite shoes.
- Money: The leaders will let you know if you should send lunch money.

Cumberland Caverns

- Sleeping bag (LIGHTWEIGHT, STUFFABLE, see more under GEAR)
- Sleeping pad (optional, see more under GEAR)
- Water bottle
- Socks. Good hiking socks. 2-3 pairs: A MUST
- Clothing: Lightweight moisture wicking clothing. Pack/wear layers. One set of clothing should be such that can get very dirty or possibly torn. Something to sleep in.
- Headlamp
- Personal toiletry kit
- Two pairs of shoes: one that can get EXTREMELY DIRTY and one to wear home. Ask the Troop leaders what they recommend.
- Plastic bag for VERY DIRTY clothing and shoes
- Money for the snack bar

Grimes Canoeing

Many of the same items as car camping. The primary addition you need to prepare for a large dry bag to pack your Scout's supplies. The Troop leaders will give more information regarding this item as well as a Grimes specific packing list.

High Adventure and Skiing

This guide does not cover high adventure camping nor does it cover skiing. The leaders will be very specific with the boys and families that are eligible for high adventure trips as well as the ski trip what is needed. High Adventure trips are open to boys who have attained First Class and above with additional age requirements depending on the trip. The yearly ski trip is open to all boys in all ranks and is an amazing trip that should not be missed!

Gearing Up

This Mom's Guide is by no means the expert resource on gear. Gear options change, technology changes and your son will change. This is, however, one family's experience in regards to gear. And, gear is an INVESTMENT. Camping can be expensive and may need to be purchased one piece at a time. It makes great Christmas and birthday gifts! By investing in good quality camping gear, you are ensuring that your son has items that will last him through his Scouting days and beyond.

Backpacks: Loaner, Youth or Full-Size?

Troop 11 has a few loaner backpacks, specifically for the younger and smaller boys, which means you do not necessarily need to purchase a backpack for your growing son right away. However, if your son is on the small side and he has his eyes set on Eagle, you may want to go ahead and invest in a Youth backpack. REI and LL Bean have fantastic youth packs that are the perfect size

and height for kiddos 5'2 and under. Why youth instead of full-size? Your son should be able to carry about 25% of his body weight on his back. Can he carry more? It depends on the boy. Should he carry more? Probably not. When you purchase a youth pack for a younger/smaller boy you are ensuring that you will not over pack. In addition, for a small boy or a boy who has not hit that magic growth spurt, a youth pack will allow the shoulder straps to sit appropriately as well as the hip belt, which will make all of the difference as he packs in to a backcountry campsite.

The leaders of Troop 11 are well-versed in the area of backpacks. If you are not sure what type of pack your son needs, speak to them or go to REI or Cumberland Transit and let their staff assist you. When looking for a full-size pack purchase the best quality you can afford and let your son guide you. Your son may like lots of pockets or he may not like any pockets and simply prefer a well to dump everything in. If he has lots of growing to do even after he transitions to a full-size pack you may want to invest in a higher end pack with adjustable should straps. Regardless, his pack should last him many years.

Sleeping Bags: Again, talk to the Troop leaders, however, know that while they avoid camping when the weather forecasts below freezing weather, they have been caught on more than one occasion in a freak cold snap where the temps dropped well before freezing. So, Be Prepared. Your son's sleeping bag should be lightweight and stuffable. The first few times out, if he has to carry a rolled up Target bag, well, so be it. And, really, those are fine for car camping or an overnight at Cumberland Caverns. But, for backcountry camping, a lightweight, stuffable bag is definitely the way to go.

Sleeping Pad: This is one of those optional items that are worth considering. If your son can sleep anywhere and the hard cold ground does not bother him, you may not want a sleeping pad. If your son does not want any added weight to his pack, he may not want a sleeping pad. And, if your son prefers a hammock over a tent, you definitely do not need a sleeping pad.

Hammocks: Speaking of hammocks, they are very popular among the Scouts. Like the backpack, if you go with this option, buy the higher end if you can. The lower end hammocks tend to fray more easily and they often have seams in strange places making sleeping sometimes uncomfortable. Also, you probably want to invest in a rain cover if your son is not planning on carrying a troop tent on his camping trip. ***If your son has an aversion to bugs, this may not be the best option for him. He may want to continue to sleep in a tent which can be closed up prevent the entry of bugs into his sleeping space.

Fundraising

Don't you just love a good fundraiser? Troop 11 does! Each year Troop 11 offers to the community to opportunity to purchase sustainably harvested holiday wreaths through Sherwood Farms (www.sherwoodforestfarms.com). This fundraiser has allowed the Troop to subsidize trips such as the annual ski trip, support families who perhaps could not afford Scouting and purchase new supplies such as tents for the Troop. The fundraiser kicks off in early September at the

annual Christ the King Fall Festival and sales end at the end of October with wreath distribution the week of Thanksgiving each year.

As Troop 11 is looking at new high adventure trips, additional fundraisers may be added for the boys who will be participating in those trips.

Wrapping It Up

Scouting is an amazing journey for any boy who wishes to walk the path. The growth that the boys exhibit during their Scouting years is simply amazing. It is no wonder that at one time the rank of Eagle was required for any many applying to the NASA space program as an astronaut! This guide gives a little bit of what to expect but remember that the Troop Leaders have the answers as well as the plan that allows each boy to complete his Scouting years successfully.

Good luck to you and your son!