

Preparing The First-Time Camper

Unfortunately there is no easy way to prepare people, especially young Cubs, for their first camping trip away from home. The biggest problem for first-time campers is often homesickness, and it is often not the person you think most likely to succumb that is affected.

However, there are there are several things that you can do help prepare first time campers. Information is invaluable in these circumstances - making sure everyone's questions are answered satisfactorily before you depart will clear most fears from both parents and children.

One common solution with Cubs and more timid Scouts is a 'sleepover' where they are dropped off at the hall early evening for games and supper, then into sleeping bags for the night and returned home for breakfast. This is quickly followed up by a one night camp in a base, with a small number of people preferably at the site where they will be camping so as to familiarise them with the site.

Bringing parents in to a meeting where you talk to them, and hand out leaflets then answer any questions they may have is very informative but also boring for both you and them. Ensuring they have the information such as where when and how is important as well as stressing that they must fill in the permission to camp form correctly and fully. Meetings to this effect are often poorly attended and parents are reluctant to openly inform you of the need for young Jimmy to have no drinks after 6pm.

So why not arrange for those going to camp for the first time to bring a bag packed with all their kit and arrange a demonstration of tent pitching by them for their parents. Whilst the lads are busy putting up the tent and laying the beds out, a Leader can talk quite socially to parents. Parents also get to talk to each other.

Once you have mentioned a possible problem, often others will comment. This is a good time for serving tea thereby giving an opportunity for:

- the Leader to see the kit and advise on it;
- the parent to see they will be comfy;
- an exchange of information in jovial circumstances.