

Successful Pack Meetings

Gathered from members of Scouts-L listserv.

1. Set up ahead of time. If there is something that will be used during the meeting get it ready before the meeting starts. For example, instead of wasting time fumbling for awards, pins, and cards during the meeting, lay them all out beforehand, in order, on the head table. Two additional benefits, it makes it easy for someone to help and the display sure gets the other Cubs motivated when they see what others have earned.
2. Start on time. You can easily waste 15 minutes waiting for people. About 5 minutes before the scheduled start announce that people need to take a seat. Start on time and don't pussyfoot around. Kick the meeting off energetically and don't look back. If the CM is late expect the ACM to step right in.
3. Look at your meeting order. What are the very important items and who is the meeting for? (Hint: awards/skits/songs and the boys) Make these a priority and limit the other activities. Do try to mix activities with sitting to help control excess energy. Adults will also appreciate a chance to stretch. A good rousing cheer can be well worth the time.

If you have a game as part of the pack meeting, you might consider using it as a "gathering" activity. Benefits? It frees up meeting time, helps get people there early because the boys are pushing not to be late, and it gives the parents some social-time outside of the meeting. Just don't get too involved and forget item #2.

4. Seating arrangements. We have parents sit with their son's den rather than having all the Cubs sit together. It helps maintain control. We also tell parents that they are responsible for helping maintain control - especially of siblings.
5. Notice that "announcements" isn't on the hot list. If you publish a newsletter (and you should!) announcements are often a duplication. Move them to the end of the meeting and keep them under tight control. Too often announcements are a big time waster where unprepared people stand up, fumble for words, and just repeat common knowledge. It is better to have one person read highlights from a card. If people need to know who is running a project just have them stand, briefly. There are other good reasons for having announcements last. You'll get better retention of information and if you run long you can cut announcements short by just mentioning that there is important info in the newsletter.

6. Stay on schedule and don't let things drag out. Be aware of the clock.

7. Finally, a good meeting doesn't just happen, it requires planning, communication, and a commitment to staying within a time limit.