

# Managing Meetings

Taughannock District Cub Roundtable  
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One of the questions that we all have is “how can I run a good meeting?” A lot of us – especially new leaders – are understandably concerned about actually running a meeting. So, what makes for a “good” meeting ...

**1) Preparation** - Start your meeting with a plan. Preparation gives you a good foundation for whatever happens. If you have a theme or some overarching purpose for your meeting, you give yourself a base and from that base you can then change things to meet the needs of your scouts.

**2) Be Flexible** - If you have 60 minute meeting, come with about 90 minutes of activities planned - - that way if an activity bombs, you have a back-up!

**3) Don't Worry, Be Happy and, most of all, Be Flexible** - um, yes, I know that's a repeat. It's on purpose. Studies have shown that most of us fear speaking in public even more than our own death. We constantly worry about “what if I mess up.” Don't worry. Eight-year old kids are a very forgiving crowd. If you are up in the front of the room and having fun, your fun will be infectious. If you are up in the front of the room and you are being stern and somber, they'll follow that too. Remember that Scouting is supposed to be “Fun with a Purpose” (quoting Baden-Powell). So be happy and be flexible. Don't be afraid to admit something was a failure, end it quickly and move on ... you are there for the scouts, not to accomplish everything on the schedule.

**4) The More, the Merrier** ... If you watch movies, you realize that “Leading Ladies” do not do “character roles” and that men who play “bad guys” in one movie, don't play “good guys” in another ... why? Well, no one can do everything. The person who makes a great “MC” may not be able to carry a tune in a bucket and that woman with a great singing voice may not be able to act in skit to save her soul. So vary the people in the front of the room. Besides, there is nothing more boring to folks than staring at the same person talking for an hour ... Pack meetings, and even den meetings, are an opportunity to share what you've learned. Scouting is all about letting BOYS find their voice, find their passion and share what they learned. So what if it isn't polished. So what if it isn't perfect. Let them into the front of the room. Let them be goofy. Their fun will infect everyone and give your program energy. If you've gotten locked into being the “presenter” then find small discrete ways of getting other people into the front of the room. Let den leaders hand out awards for their den. Ask a parent to lead one - - just one - - song.

**5) I'm a great coordinator, but I can't get up in the front of the room ... I just can't.** Then you've just found a great way to invite volunteers. “Hi, this is Cubmaster BSA. As you know, I'm not really that great at presenting, I could really use your help. Could you follow the script for the next meeting and just announce things as folks come up” ... See, it's easy to ask. I think you'll be surprised at how many people say yes when you ask for one discrete task.

**6) Communicate.** If you feel like you are doing it all, you probably are. Ask yourself, however, if you are doing it all just because no one else will, or because no one else knows what you are doing. It's a good idea to write out your agenda for the meeting and get it to the den leaders in advance of the meeting. Really well run packs have den leader meetings where the leaders do a “run-through” of the Pack meeting in advance to “work out the kinks.” That pre-planning gives you the opportunity to say “I need someone to.” But if you don't communicate your need, then no one can fill it for you ... we're Scouters, not mind readers!

**7) Watch your pace** - A word here about the “pace” of your meeting. What do I mean by “pace?” I mean two things: How fast is everyone doing things and are you building to a “big finish.” Kids are a forgiving audience. They don't expect things to be perfect. What looks “rough around the edges” to you may be an “awesome spectacle” to a Cub Scout. That being said, there are two unforgivable sins in “kid-dom” 1) being boring, and, 2) being rushed. Kids are used to being “disrespected” by being rushed around and they are very used to being talked \*at\* by adults. Scouts is supposed to be their time to shine. So, when you are “pacing” your meeting, make sure you are giving people time to enjoy the moment. For example, don't “hold applause to the end” for the whole pack - - the kids know it's meant to speed things up. So what if there's a light applause over and over ... doesn't each kid deserve it? Let them cut up a little bit ... it's their meeting! When you sit and plan meetings, try to mix things up and build to a “big finale” ... the skit at the end, the big award, a loud song ... something everyone wants to stay around to do!

Lastly, IF IT'S NOT FUN - **DON'T DO IT!**