

## Out and About

### Introduction

In decades gone by, SCOUTS trainers used to talk about the OUT in SCOUTS. It's a term not used much these days, but it's a really good term to describe part of the method SCOUTS use to educate our youth members.

The SCOUTS method is to "work in small groups using the outdoors" to teach them the leadership, team work and related skills that build their self esteem and confidence.

### Why out and about?

Well, if we are to use the SCOUTS method effectively, we really do need to get our youth members out and about as much as possible. Most of them love being outside running around and dare we say it, getting dirty and developing their immune system so it's able to cope with the myriad of bacteria that assault us daily without us realising it.

Turning rocks and stones and looking underneath them is a Kea and Cub activity that never fails to intrigue them. Take them to the beach, river or stream and look for some rock pools, or walk across the mud flats and watch what they do.

These are great activities that intrigue, challenge and teach them, all with minimal effort from yourself. However, if you are wise you will swot up on what they are likely to find and be able to answer their questions credibly.



### How often should you go outdoors?

Let's put it this way. Many decades ago, a young Scout Leader with 18 Scouts who met on the outskirts of a small town, attended a Scout section programme planning course in town. At the end of the course he tendered his resignation because he had listened to all the other Scout Leaders talking about the facilities in their halls and the great training aids they had stored away and felt quite inadequate.

His Scout Troop met in his father's hay and implement barn. During winter they lit a fire in a drum to keep warm while instruction sessions took place. They ran around in the dark when playing games as it helped to keep them warm.

In summer they canoed in the stream running across the farm, did compass courses and held camps all over the 1000+ acres of land that was their 'back yard'. He also had the biggest Scout troop in the locality. Are you surprised?

Needless to say, the trainer told him he was probably one of the few leaders present who was doing things right, so please keep doing it.

**The short answer is to have at least one activity outside every meeting night if possible, and when possible hold the whole meeting outside.**

### What can you do outside?

Almost any inside game can be played outside, usually with less damage to young bodies.

Too wet? Perhaps. But how many children are taken to school in cars in wet weather and have seldom if ever learned the joys of wandering along in the rain, protected by a rain coat and hood, poking sticks in puddles, floating and racing sticks in the kerbside drain and learning about what the rain can do to streams etc. They could learn about the dangers of flooding and drains under the leader's supervision.

*Continued on next page*

## Out and About, Continued

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### How's your imagination?

Here's a short list of things you can do outside on a meeting night without too much extra effort.

#### Compass training for Scouts and Cubs

Find 30 minutes to set an orienteering type course around the nearest park or neighbourhood. Have a different course for each patrol. At the end of each course hide some sweets or drinks and tell them they have to find them. If you don't have a park handy you may have to arrange with some nearby householders to hide the 'goodies' just inside their gate etc.

#### Teaching knots

Find a suitable tree and throw a rope over a strong branch. Each youth member ties the rope around their waist and is hauled up the tree about 1 metre. Nothing concentrates the mind quite so well as the thought of having the knot come undone. They will go to some considerable effort to get it right before they will allow the others to hoist them up.

#### Wall scaling

Borrow a few pallets from a local building supplies outlet and nail them together to form a wall between 1m and 1.5m high. Use some of the pallets for bracing. Have the Cubs and Scouts race over the wall. Or run some of your usual team games, but they have to climb over the wall each turn.

#### Hold a scavenger hunt

Works for all sections. If you are looking for leaves etc for tree identification, you just give each posse, six or patrol a shopping bag and a list of the required items. If looking for empty bottles and similar rubbish, give everyone empty bread bags as well, to put over their hands etc as make shift gloves.

#### Ice hockey

No park, only a car park of concrete or similar? Freeze some water in an ice cream container. Tip it out once frozen and use it as a hockey puck. Use tightly rolled up and taped newspapers as the hockey sticks.

#### Your turn to come up with some ideas

*Think about some of the games and activities you have experienced in your short time as a leader. Work out how you could modify the games and training activities so that they work well outside. Do be mindful of safety. If your neighbourhood is not safe, don't go outside unless you have an appropriate number of experienced leaders with you.*

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### Over night activities

Here are several things you can try that will add an element of adventure to your activities.

1. **Holding a sleep over?** Hold it at a neighbouring Scout Hall or a parent's double garage. Walk to the venue, or catch public transport. Use parents to transport the gear while the youth members are walking, biking, catching the bus, or train.
  2. **Practice camps?** Keep them simple and make it easy for parents. Leave after sports on Saturday afternoon and return before midday the next day. Minimal meals to prepare, minimal home sickness to deal with, minimal cost, maximum fun.
  3. **Sea Scouts?** Row to your camping site and take your gear with you. Too many for the boats? Get the others to tag along in canoes. Set off about 3pm, return or get picked up the next day at midday or before. Rowing three or four kms may be all that's needed to provide fun and adventure. Aim to hold short, sharp adventures with minimal effort and cost.
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*Continued on next page*

Page 2 of 6

## Out and About, Continued

### Family activities

The more family involvement in your Group the stronger it will be. Here are some activities that have worked in the past and can be adapted for running in or out doors.

#### Parent and Child competitions for Cubs and Scouts

Invite one parent of each youth member to attend the meeting and take part in a mini Olympics or Commonwealth Games. Form the parents into sixes or patrols and have them compete against the youth members.

Number the games from 1 to 5 or whatever number of events you choose to have. Have the parents rotate from highest to lowest numbers and the youth members rotate the other way so that all Sixes or Patrols compete against each other during the event. Spend say 15 mins on each game. You will need to find a handicap method to even up the size advantage of the parents. Parents stand further back etc. The games could be:

1. Ten pin bowls	The pins are Coke bottles with a little water in. Use tennis balls or small beach balls for the bowls.
2. Javelin	Throw drinking straws with a blob of blue tack on one end.
3. Putting the shot	Throw marbles onto a blanket if inside, using the correct throwing method. Use Petanque bowls if playing outside on grass.
4. Discus	Use a plastic plate or a CD, or maybe a Frisbee if outdoors.
5. Hop, step, & jump	No run up allowed, just a hop, step and jump.

Parents are often very competitive and that spurs the Cubs and Scout on to try harder. Finding or creating games that don't give parents an advantage is worthwhile thinking about.

#### Family camps

These are usually hugely popular and well worth the effort. You will nearly always recruit one warranted leader and several parent helpers during each camp. Help pair up the families with no camping experience with those that have and suggest they share kitchens etc. Families become sixes and Patrols for flag Break and Flag Down etc.

#### Family hikes

Consider running a mother and child or father and child tramp appropriate for each section. It may have to be a step parent, grandmother, grandfather, a neighbour or a caregiver who attends. It doesn't matter, as long as there is family connection. A couple of hours is sufficient.

#### Group or section picnics

Some Groups hold a family picnic or BBQ at the end of the spring and summer terms and present the awards and badges at the events.

Once again, keep the event down to 2 hours and invite all the siblings and grandparents and have them join in the games. Finishing with a campfire seems to help boost the numbers attending as it can be a nostalgia trip for the parents and grandparents.

### Checking the facilities

A pre-visit to a location you are not familiar with can be very useful and sometimes essential. You will need to check such things as the toilet facilities; refreshments/picnic areas; opening and closing times; play spaces and playgrounds; additional programme possibilities; length of time needed for the visit; first aid provision and wet weather options. You may also need to identify areas that need to be out of bounds.

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## Out and About, Continued

### Local visits

There are plenty of suggestions in the National Programmes, or your Zone Section Leader or other Leaders may be able to advise you about local possibilities and the potential of joining in with other Groups.

**Here are some possible places to visit locally:**

Zoo  
 Campsite  
 Country walk  
 Model or historic Village  
 Theme park  
 Craft workshop  
 Farm  
 Museum  
 Historic home  
 Regional Park  
 Nature trail  
 Town trail  
 Fire/Police/Ambulance Stations  
 Boat or ferry trip  
 Leisure Centre  
 Radio station /TV studio  
 Climbing wall

### Transport

You will next need to decide on the best way of getting to the venue. Will you be walking, using cars, or taking public transport - train, bus or mini-bus? A number of factors will help you decide – the distance of travel, the time of travel, the relative safety of travel.

It is essential that the arrangements made are safe and sensible, and that parents/carers know exactly how their child is to be transported. As Leaders, you can only do your best to provide the safest method of transport available. It is for parents/carers to decide if they are satisfied with the arrangements.

Parents/carers offering transport should be asked to confirm that their car has a current warrant of fitness and that they have a current drivers licence. It is advisable not to put smaller youth members in the front seats of cars if at all possible, particularly if the car has airbags.

### Assessing the risk

We all carry out informal risk assessments everyday. We assess whether it is safe to cross the road, to turn right in our car at the traffic lights, or to remove a box teetering on the top shelf.

Formal risk assessment starts at the planning stage. Remember, you covered this in the Initial Training? If you are moving to a location away from the hall, complete an Activity Intention Sheet and give it to the Group Leader for approval.

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## Out and About, Continued

**Who can help?** Safety requires that there should be one adult for every 4 Keas, 6 Cubs or a Patrol of Scouts, plus the Leader in Charge. Each youth member should know which adult is looking after them for the day. In turn each adult would know the youth members for whom they are responsible.

Any adult who may have unsupervised access to young people must read and sign the document on the Duty of Care before getting involved with youth members.

**Do we need insurance?** ACC cover personal accident and medical expenses. The Scout Association of New Zealand holds Public Liability Insurance cover for \$5,000,000.

**How much will it cost?** Usually outings will be self-financing and therefore it is important to calculate the likely costs accurately. Costs will include transport, entrance fees, refreshments and any equipment required. Do not rely on the Group to pick up any shortfall. Especially if you didn't tell the Group Leader of your plans.

A policy will need to be agreed with the Group Committee, on how much Leaders will be expected to pay, if anything. Leader costs may be subsidised by the Group or be spread among the youth members taking part. Contacting the place you intend to visit beforehand may result in discounted or free adult entrance.

### Tell everyone

#### Informing parents/caregivers and parental consent

Parents/caregivers should be left in no doubt as to what activities are planned and what arrangements have been made.

The Information to parents/caregivers should include:

- Date of proposed outing
- Venue and the planned activities
- Cost and Payment method – cheques; staged payments; deposit required
- Departure and Return time and place
- Pocket money required and allowed
- Food and drink required
- Clothing required, uniform, rain jackets, footwear etc.
- The name and phone number of the Home Contact
- The name and phone number of the Leader organising the outing
- Information from parents/caregivers should include:
  - Written permission for the child to take part
  - Any medical treatment being received currently
  - Any disability or medical condition which might affect their child's involvement
  - Parents/caregivers whereabouts during the outing and a contact phone number
- An outline of your schedule and itinerary

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## Out and About, Continued

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### On the day of the outing

Make sure you have with you:

- First Aid kit
  - Money, tickets and details of the venue and travel arrangements
  - The Home Contact's phone number
  - A list of all the Cub Scouts, Leaders and adults attending
  - Mobile phone
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### After the outing

The Leader of the outing should ensure:

- Thank you letters are sent, or the Cubs and Scouts make thank you cards
  - Outstanding bills are paid
  - A record is kept showing the money received and spent on the visit – which will be required by the Group treasurer.
  - Notes are kept of the arrangements for future reference
  - Everyone who participated in the outing, Keas, Cubs, Scouts, Leaders and assistants are asked their views about it.
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### Ideas and notes