

Pack Leadership Forums



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The Pack Leadership Forum is a meeting of the Sixers with their Cub Scout Leaders. Sometimes you may also wish to include the Seconders in the meetings. The number of Assistants present may vary according to circumstances.

The Meeting could take place in the local library, café or Scout Headquarters. The time you hold the meetings must be arranged to suit your own and your Cub Scouts' circumstances. It may be for half-an-hour after the Pack meeting or it may be easiest to hold it on another evening. It may be on a Saturday morning or sometime during the school holidays.

The meetings do not need to take up a lot of time and do not require a great deal of extra preparation, but they can be of great help to you and of immense benefit to the Cub Scouts involved. The benefit the youngsters gain will not only be that derived from more satisfying Pack meetings but also in helping them to acquire skills of consideration and decision-making. These Forums can be great fun for everyone involved.

Try discussing a past Pack meeting, or better still, planning a future one with Sixers and see what they suggest, how realistic they are, and what prompting or guidance they need. This will give a clue to how these Pack Leadership Forums can help you. You can assess the Pack's views by asking your Sixers about recent Pack activities. They may point to ways in which things could improve or suggest ideas for the future.

The forum is a place to try out new games and activities. The Sixers will experiment quite happily and will co-operate in trying out different methods of playing games or working out the best way to tackle a new handcraft.

Changes in Pack routine can be discussed with the Sixers who will be able to help you introduce them to the Pack. Perhaps experiments with Programme ideas and activities would be best discussed with the Sixers first.

Sixers can be trained to teach their Six a particular skill or be given time to work out how to tackle a Six project, making the next Pack meeting much easier to run.

The Sixers can also be trained to take over simple Pack administration, giving them a greater feeling of responsibility. They can collect the subs or record attendance - which relieves the pressure on the Leaders. Briefing the Sixers about forthcoming events may avoid unnecessary clashes. It will also mean that the Sixers can be involved in the planning of parents' nights and organising the Pack act of worship or service project.

During these meetings there is a marvellous opportunity to talk with your Sixers. You can find out what is really going on in the Pack. You may discover that one of the Cub Scouts may have problems in their life outside of Scouting perhaps at home or at school. Such information can be invaluable in understanding the behaviour of the youngsters in the Pack. It can be very valuable to discuss appointments of Sixers and Seconders and even which Sixes the new recruits should go into.

Give it a try

So, you have decided to hold your first Pack Leadership Forum and you have arranged a meeting time and place with your Sixers.

- Keep it fairly brief.
- Tell them what sort of things you hope to cover - they may come better prepared.
- Make notes - it is very important that you follow up the discussion that takes place.
- Balance activity with talk.

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- Give limited choices at first. 'We could sing to the people in a residential care home, put on a show, or plant bulbs'
- Have refreshments, with chocolate biscuits!

After a while you will get help and ideas from the Cub Scouts in planning future events. This will not happen immediately, it will take time and lots of patience. Don't ask, 'What shall we do?' Say, 'Here are a few ideas. Which would you like to try?' In time your Sixers will make valuable suggestions for Pack games, activities, visits, expeditions, and camp programmes.

A method

To introduce or strengthen these Pack Leadership Forums, the following ideas might be used by the Cub Scout Leaders perhaps with support from the Assistant District Commissioner, the Group Scout Leader, or other experienced local Leaders.

To start tell the Sixers that you need their help with some ideas, then in a suitable quiet and comfortable room or corner, settle down. On the first occasion discuss rules and why we have them. Discuss the following questions (for a maximum of 10 minutes).

1. Where do we have rules? (Home, school, football)
2. List some examples.
3. Why do we have rules?
4. List some of the rules in this Pack.
5. List some reasonable rules we would like to see in this Pack.
6. Who keeps the rules?
7. Who sees that they are kept
8. What happens when they are broken?

Write the conclusions down for future reference, preferably on a large sheet of paper. Ask one of the Sixers to do this (they can take turns). So that something tangible has been achieved, ask them to choose a game for the end of the meeting or the beginning of the next.

On the second occasion discuss the following (for not more than 10 minutes):

- 1 What is a Sixer?
- 2 What does a Sixer do?
- 3 What else could a Sixer do?

Record these as before. Again something positive to do would be useful.

On the third occasion start some planning, perhaps beginning with some general thoughts. Have the Sixers any ideas for activities they would like to do as a Pack?

Decide:

- 1 whether they are spring, summer, autumn or winter activities
- 2 if the suggested activities are possible in the short or long term.

Put all the information in the Sixers' file.

At the next gathering a review of achievements could be made. The Sixers' file might become a more adult minute book, positive plans can be made and the Sixers may like to talk about any particular training they need. Finally, set the date for the next meeting.

It may be important to ask the Sixers to keep the ideas discussed secret in case it is not possible to get them organised. This will increase the status of the Sixer and ensure that you are not met by the Pack clamouring to be taken on the Mediterranean cruise that the Meeting discussed last week!

Make use of your Sixers

This does not mean that all the decisions about running the Pack are taken by the Sixers. You are the Leader and the responsibility is yours. But asking the Sixers can be of real help to you and it will certainly benefit the older members in your Pack, for they will feel that they can share in the leadership of the Pack and take on small responsibilities. For instance, your Sixers could:

- Look after new Cub Scouts.
- Organise a Six-duty rota.
- Take a leading role in ceremonies, for example Flag break
- Welcome Pack visitors.
- Teach younger Cub Scouts new skills.
- Run a game or inter- Pack competition
- Look after Pack equipment and Six boxes.

These are all jobs well within the capabilities of our Sixers. They can be organised at the Pack Leadership Forums where any necessary training can take place. In this way, we are training young people to make reasoned choices and take decisions.

Some ideas

During these meetings, the emphasis should be on doing things but, given the opportunity, the youngsters will talk. We must ensure that we give them time to talk and when they do, that we listen. Here are a few more ideas and reminders for activities at your meetings. Ask them to:

- list the jobs they do in the Pack and discuss them
- fill in examples of Six records
- make a points chart
- try out games and activities for the Pack
- discuss and choose ways of keeping order
- try some ideas from SCOUTING Magazine
- make a Sixers' notice-board and paint the Six boxes
- visit the Beaver Scout Colony and organise a game for them.

For Reference see: **Pack Essentials** and The Pack Programme.