

## **Campouts**

**Robert P Adams (Dr. Bob)**

Campouts are great any time but spring and fall are really special because of the cool, crisp nights (except in Hawaii, where we just don't have those crisp nights). This is the ultimate father - son activity. But be sure to get an 'uncle' for the boys who do not have a dad who can come with them.

### **Purposes**

Campouts serve several purposes. Perhaps the most important is the building of relationships among men and boys. Campouts are a mixture of fun, learning about nature, and sometimes some serious conversations about life.

### **Sponsors**

One should always have at least two adult men as sponsors on campouts. This insures that in case of emergency, one adult can administer first aid while the other sponsor can go get help, etc. In addition, it just makes sense to have at least two adults. This can provide an adult testimony in cases of lawsuit and the two adults become accountable to each other for their actions.

### **Schedules**

Campouts vary in format, but often due to tight schedules by both the boys and the adult men, they are on Friday night and Saturday. The focus of a campout may focus on fishing, hiking, sightseeing, etc. Boys should sleep in one tent with the sponsors (very good situation if you have a large enough tent. The time after lights out can be a special time of bonding between boys and sponsors. It also makes it easy to know where the boys are and insure their safety). If the boys are in separate tents, have 4-6 boys with one adult. For junior and senior high aged boys, they may sleep under a large rain fly (if you don't have mosquitoes and snakes), or even in pup tents (but this often leads to lots of running around at night and possible dangerous situations; be very careful if you do this. I know of one case where two boys slipped away for a midnight swim and drowned).

Campouts are not just an all night party. They can do this at home. Teach them some responsibility and teamwork in getting to sleep. Proper rest is as important as proper exercise. Because boys generally get up about sunrise, it is best to try to get to bed by 11 pm. Do not allow the boys outside the tent thereafter, except to use the toilet.

With today's busy schedule, generally I have found that a Friday night until Saturday noon campout works best. You only have to plan two meals and you don't have to worry about taking showers or a change of clothes.

Here is a schedule that I have used that worked well.

**Friday**, 6pm, meet at clubhouse and form a convoy to the campsite (a lake is great!).

7pm Set up tents and build a campfire (real wood if possible, charcoal briquettes if nothing else). Then free time to explore.

8:00 Supper - Hot dogs, chips, Country Time Lemonade®, mustard (fixin's), ice, cups, (plates if desired). Have the dads bring a pocket knife to cut a switch to make a wiener stick (if you are in the prairies, you may need to bring wire coat hangers instead!). Be sure and keep your stick for roasting marshmallows later!.

8:30 Campfire time - Have the father and/or son tell about the 'best' time they have had together. (Alternatives: scariest, funniest, dumbest, worst camping experience, etc.). This sharing by men and boys is very important. Many times, boys are unaware that their dads used to be boys and did dumb things. You may want to sing some camp songs if someone has a guitar.

9:30 The great flashlight race (to the top of the dam, to the highway, etc.) - race boys by clubs. Have a few adults with flashlights at the finish line. Prizes could be candy, ribbons or just announcing the winners. We have also had a coyote calling activity at this time, but that depends on where you are camping. Of course, the boys get scared and excited, even if no coyotes come! The nice thing about a race is it gets rid of some energy!

10:00 S'mores! S'more means Some More. That is what you will hear, 'Give me s'more'. S'mores are made by roasting a marshmallow over the fire (using the stick you saved from supper), then putting it on a Graham Cracker®, followed by a piece of Hershey's® chocolate, then squashed down with another Graham Cracker. This is a messy operation. Have a bucket of water and a roll of paper towels nearby to wash their hands. Take an entire packet of Graham Crackers from the box and gently break the rectangular packet in half so the crackers are square. If you use Hershey plain chocolate bars, open a bunch of them and break them into about 1" lengths. You can also use Hershey Assorted Miniatures®. One of these is just a perfect size for one s'more, so there is no waste.

10:30 Club time. This is a good time to wind down. Have a devotional and share a story about character.

11:00 Good night! I really try to get the boys and dads to get some sleep.

Boys tend to get up at sunrise, so you may as well plan for it!

### **Saturday**

7:00 AM Rise and Shine!

7:30 Breakfast. Burrito roll-ups are easy. Just brown and season some hamburger meat in preparation for the campout (Thursday night) and keep it in an ice chest. Then scramble some eggs and fold in the hamburger meat as the eggs begin to cook. Heat a bunch of flour tortillas (heated in a double boiler - one pot inside another with some water in the larger pot to provide steam heat). Have the boys grab a tortilla while you put in a big spoonful of meat and eggs. Have a couple of kinds of hot sauce so they can season it as hot as they desire.

A fun way to cook is to make French toast on buddy burners (see Buddy burners in crafts



section). Another fun way to cook is to make scrambled eggs in an aluminum foil cooker (just put 2 layers of heavy-duty aluminum foil onto a green, forked stick to make a little skillet). Spray their "foil skillet" with Pam and then cook their scrambled eggs over the campfire. There are lots of neat cooking ideas in *Roughing It Easy* by Dian Thomas (see references).

8:00 - 9:30 Campcraft competition

Here is a campcraft competition schedule for two groups (ex. 1-3rd and 4-6th):

	8:00	8:30	9:00
1-3rd	Archery	Obstacle Course	Sling Shots
4-6th	Sling Shots	Archery	Obstacle Course

For additional ideas for campcraft competition events, see Vol. I of this series.

9:30 Fishing tournament. Bring your fish to the 'official' measuring adult (measuring is much easier than weighing, because all you need is a tape measure and a clipboard). Record the biggest fish and the number for each boy. Trophies for biggest fish, most fish, smallest fish and most unusual catch are great. I also like to have a couple of trophies for the 'Best Camper' and 'Good Sport' awards.

11:15 Awards. Camping patches and year arcs (from The Patch Place, see Where To Get It) plus trophies for fishing and 1-3rd place ribbons, medals or trophies for the campcraft competition.

11:30 - Dismiss



### What to bring

Radios, electronic games, and other entertainment actually cause problems and inhibit relationship building. In order to build relationships and experience nature, do not allow boys to bring radios, headsets, electronic games, etc. If someone "forgets" and brings something, lock the device in the car until the campout is over.

The boys should bring a sleeping bag (or bedroll), a windbreaker, cap, perhaps a day pack for keeping their personal stuff, and their personal hygiene items (toothbrush, sunscreen, etc.).

The meals should be planned and the food bought in bulk so the boys are almost never asked to bring food. A modest charge can be collected if needed. The boys are involved in cooking and clean up. Discourage boys from bringing lots of snacks. This (along with electronic gear) can cause envy between boys and snacks are seldom of good nutritional balance.

