MEETING PLANS & IDEAS: FISHING

Fishing	Information	Troop Meetings	Main Event

OBJECTIVES
This month's activities should:

- Introduce basic fishing skills to Scouts who have limited exposure to fishing.
- Improve the fishing skills of Scouts at all levels of experience.
- Ensure that Scouts have a reasonable chance for success by teaching them how to find fish, how to fish for them, how to set a hook, and how to play fish to land them.
- Teach Scouts what equipment is needed, how to cast efficiently, how to rig their outfits effectively, and how to take proper care of all the gear.
- Introduce important knots, including where and why each is used.
- Teach Scouts how to release their catch or prepare it for cooking.
- Cover possible risks and health threats while fishing and how to deal with the most likely problems.
- Emphasize conservation and the role that no-trace guidelines play in sport fishing.

LEADERSHIP PLANNING
As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items when choosing fishing as your program feature during your planning meetings.

- Where can we find qualified fishing instructors to teach during the weekly meetings? (Merit badge counselors or BSA-trained angling instructors would be ideal.)
- Where is the best location for a fishing event?
- What fishing equipment will we need, and where can we acquire it?
- What rules and regulations apply in our area? Do Scouts need fishing licenses?
- What lures or bait should we use to attract the fish that live in our selected fishing location?
- How will we prepare for the expected weather conditions?

Click above for fillable troop meeting planning form.

PREOPENING IDEAS

Preopening Ideas on Troop Program Resources

- Display an album of great fishing pictures from the Internet or other sources. Have copies of the Boys' Life annual April fishing issue on hand.
- Have several rods available for Scouts to review and cast to determine their skill levels. Include spincast, spinning, and fly rods. (Use a hookless lure or casting plug.)
- Display a fishing knot board featuring five basic fishing knots: Palomar knot, improved clinch knot, double surgeon's knot, loop to loop, and blood knot. See who can identify each knot and its use. Let Scouts practice.
- Have older Scouts dress inappropriately for a fishing trip. Challenge other Scouts to tell

them what should be changed, eliminated, or added for the upcoming trip.

OPENING IDEAS

Opening Ideas on Troop Program Resources

GROUP INSTRUCTION IDEAS

Introduction to Fishing

- Discuss plans for the next four weeks and details of the main event.

Casting Technique

- Introduce the three types of fishing rods, and point out the one each skill level group should use. Discuss quickly the differences and why Scouts should use each.

Knots

- Introduce the basic fishing knots and riggings. Explain how important it is to learn them in order to succeed.

How to Fish

- Explain that the Scouts are about to have a great outing, but only if they have prepared properly, including assembling all the necessary fishing tackle.

SKILLS INSTRUCTION IDEAS

ESSENTIAL	CHALLENGING	ADVANCED

Introduction to Fishing

- ESSENTIAL
  - Discuss the basics of fishing.
  - Outline the benefits and opportunities.
  - Demonstrate the spin-cast outfit, how it works, and how it is fished.
- Challenge Scouts to complete the Fishing merit badge.

- CHALLENGING
  - Have Scouts use an open-faced spinning outfit.
  - Demonstrate and instruct on how to best use spinning outfits effectively.
  - Challenge Scouts to complete the Fishing merit badge

- ADVANCED
  - Introduce the opportunity for earning the Fly-Fishing merit badge during this month.
  - Teach fly-fishing basics.

Casting Technique

- ESSENTIAL
  - Demonstrate casting with spinning outfits and instruct Scouts how to cast. Let them practice on a lawn with ample spacing using plugs or hookless lures. Remember, no hooks.
- Discuss human impact on animals in the wild.

- Demonstrate and instruct Scouts to spincast outfits. Let them practice on a lawn with ample spacing using plugs or hookless lures. Remember, no hooks.

- Demonstrate roll cast and overhead cast fly-rod outfits and instruct Scouts in their use. Let them practice on a lawn with ample spacing using hookless flies or tufts of yarn. Remember, no hooks. Allow ample room both in front of and behind each Scout for casting.

Knots

- Demonstrate the five basic knots, and instruct Scouts in tying them. Let them practice with small-diameter cord and then with monofilament line.

- Demonstrate the five basic knots, and instruct Scouts in tying them. Let them practice with small-diameter cord and then with monofilament line. If Scouts already know the knots, have them use the EDGE method to teach them to the other Scouts.

- Demonstrate the five basic knots plus a nail knot for flyfishing, and instruct Scouts in tying them. Let them practice with small-diameter cord and then with monofilament line. If Scouts already know the knots, have them use the EDGE method to teach other Scouts.

How to Fish

- Review all tackle Scouts will use and where or how they can obtain it.
- Discuss what will be supplied by the troop, and what they will be responsible for bringing.

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- Inspect the gear being provided by the unit or unit families.

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- Inspect the gear being provided by the unit or unit families.
- Make repairs as needed.

BREAKOUT GROUP IDEAS

Discussion

- Sign off Fishing or Fly-Fishing merit badge requirements as appropriate.

Getting Ready for the Main Event

- Menu Planning
- Duty Roster Planning
- Equipment check

Preparation for the meeting's game or challenge

GAME AND CHALLENGE IDEAS

Library of Games and Challenges on Troop Program Resources

- Name That Fish

- **Fish Identification Challenge**
  – *Materials:* Several Backyard Bass (plastic casting targets shaped like fish, available at backyardbass.com), clear packing tape, permanent marker, spinning rods and reels
  – *Preparation:* On the underside of each Backyard Bass, attach a picture of a fish with clear packing tape. Using a permanent marker, write a point value from 1 to 5 on each fish. Assign lower point values to fish that are easier to identify, such as bluegills, and higher values to more difficult fish, such as sturgeon.
  – *Method:* Give each Scout three to five opportunities to cast and catch fish. (Do not use hooks; use only hookless lures or casting plugs.)
  – *Scoring:* Award points to Scouts only if they can identify the picture of the fish they catch.
  – *Variation:* Award points for catching a fish and bonus points for identification.

- **Casting Accuracy Challenge**
  – *Materials:* Several Backyard Bass, hula hoops, or plates; caution or surveyor's tape
  – *Preparation:* Use the tape to create a line simulating a shoreline. Spread the Backyard Bass, hula hoops, or plates on the lawn.
  Method: From the shore, Scouts practice casting to catch the Backyard Bass or hit the hula hoops or plates. (No hooks; use only hookless lures or casting plugs.)
  – *Scoring:* Assign points for each successful cast. For example, you could give 1 point for hitting inside a hula hoop, 2 points for hitting a plate, and 3 points for catching a Backyard Bass.

- **Fishing Knot Patrol Challenge**
  – *Materials:* for each patrol, a 6-foot length of heavy monofilament line, a large gauge hook with the point safely masked.
  – *Method:* The leader calls off one of the seven fishing knots, and the patrol as a team must correctly tie the knot using the line and, if necessary the hook. If they can, they present their knot to a judge who determines that it is or is not tied correctly.
  – *Scoring:* Each patrol that can tie the knot correctly within a minute's time, receives a point.

CLOSING IDEAS

- Leader's Minutes
- Closing Ceremonies

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TROOP LEADER RESOURCE LINKS

Advancement Resources

Awards Central

Boy Scouts

Guide to Safe Scouting

SCOUTBOOK

Scouting Forms from the National Council

ScoutCast

Scouting Magazine

ScoutStuff.org (Retail Site)

ScoutingWire

Sign in to MyScouting.org

Take Youth Protection Training

The Outdoor Adventure Planning Guide

Troop Leader Guidebook Appendix

Uniforms

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