

Welcome To Boy Scout Troop 400

*Chartered by
Aldersgate United Methodist Church
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This packet was written from a Mom's perspective and is provided to you as your source of information to make the transition from Cub Scouts, or just becoming a Boy Scout, a little easier.

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What is Scouting at Troop 400?

Scouting at Troop 400 is a doorway to adventure, personal growth, and most importantly FUN! Whether it's pitching a tent, doing a service project, working on a merit badge, or attending troop meetings, the activities of Troop 400 are aimed toward helping to develop boys into young men of character while learning and having fun along the way.

Please remember, first and foremost, we are here to help the boys and the parents get acquainted with the workings of Troop 400. Ask any questions that come to mind. If we don't know the answer, we'll find someone who does.

A Typical Year of Activities

We try to go camping or on a special activity at least one weekend per month. Parents' involvement is encouraged and is what makes Troop 400 a very strong and active troop. Come when you can and have fun. On the other hand, most of us have jobs, other kids, and other obligations so you do not have to come to everything. We understand arriving late and leaving early.

MAY

Crossover - Lake Michie

This is the official start of training for the new scouts. The scouts gather at Aldersgate United Methodist Church by the Scout Shed (in the Christmas tree lot on the far side of the Sanctuary) on Friday at the designated time; usually 5pm. They will gather the supplies from the shed and load the scout trailer. A car caravan will take the boys to Lake Michie. The older scouts will help the newbies set up camp. The next morning the Scoutmaster will cook breakfast for the newbies (this may be the only time he will cook for the boys). During the morning, centers are set up for the Webelos to learn and sign off on most of the requirements for the Scout rank. The centers give a jump start to advancement. This is a good time for the boys to meet the older scouts and the adult leaders. Families may camp in a separate campsite right next door. The Webelos really want to camp with the Troop. While the centers are going on, the older scouts set up a wooden bridge for the ceremonial crossover. The troop (scouts, leaders, families) gathers about 5:00 for a dinner. After dinner, the new boys line up with their Den Leader and the Weblelo Cubmaster. They "cross over" the wooden bridge and the Troop welcomes the cubs as they officially become Boy Scouts. All the family, if possible, should be at this ceremony. Bring a chair, a flashlight, a camera, and bug spray. Oh, and an umbrella since it always rains on Troop 400. Dress is very casual for families. Scouts should be in "Class A" (Scout shirt, scarf, and khaki or green non-ragity shorts or pants). You will take your son home after

the ceremony. Now your son and you are officially a part of the Troop. You are invited to every scout event.

Summer Camps

Now is the time to sign up for summer camps. This information will be announced at troop meetings a few months prior to the summer camps, which are scheduled between June and August. Many scout camps have a website, which is helpful for actually seeing what the camp has to offer. Costs, registration forms and due dates will all be provided for scouts who want to attend. Historically we have attended Camp Raven Knob near Mt Airy, NC. Cost is about \$255. New scouts are encouraged to take First Aid and Swimming merit badges plus "Raven Scouts" which knock out almost all their Tenderfoot and 2nd class Rank requirements.

Annual Physical

The Boy Scouts require a physical for the boys before they can participate in any event. To help with the cost and the inconvenience of doctor appointments, the Health Coordinator for the Troop arranges for volunteer doctors, physician assistants, and nurses to conduct the required exam. This will occur during a regularly scheduled Scout meeting in May, and the date will be announced several weeks prior. The boys will be signed up for a specific time. As part of the Youth Protection Program, the Boy Scouts require a parent to be in the room with the health care provider. The Health Coordinator will have the forms ready for the physical. If you would rather your physician do the exam that is fine too. The health Coordinator keeps a copy of the physical. Whenever we travel, the scout leader has this information in case of an emergency.

Planning Meeting

On another Tuesday in May, the boys, leaders, and parents spend time planning the monthly activities for the coming year. The scouts take a big calendar for the next year and fill in the activities that they would like to participate in. Parents and leaders advise pacing and costs. As a teacher, I remind them of school obligations and opportunities. Other parents chime in with conflicts with church or sport activities. We get a basic idea of the outings for each month. We try to have one "experienced" family and two "extra hands / trainees" to help the boys plan each event. The dress is very casual and the family is invited. It will help you to see the big picture. There is no pressure to volunteer. We are looking for

people that are interested in the activity. If you cannot attend, your son will be fine. If we need more help, we will ask in the newsletter or at other meetings.

JUNE

During the planning meeting of May, the boys decided they wanted to keep the program going through the summer. So in addition to summer camps we planned a monthly grand event and met *every other* Tuesday night for June through August. It went so well that they will probably do this every summer from now on.

Summer Camps

The troop will provide a list of everything the scout needs to bring. Most of the older scouts will have equipment and uniforms for you to have or borrow. The troop sells a special class-B scout t-shirt that most of the boys have. We usually meet at Easley elementary school to caravan out. This is so not to disturb the Sunday morning worship service at Aldersgate. We usually do the required swim test in Durham before arriving at camp. At least two adults, usually more, stay the week with the scouts. Some adults drive up and back or volunteer for a shorter service. Your son has the chance to go to camp with an adult he knows and boys he knows. For a first long overnight camp, this can be very comforting. Camping for a week helps the boy to feel part of the troop and make lifelong friends. The scouts earn merit badges and learn all the neat stuff. This is where the stories start. Most camps have a parents' night. You go up for dinner and campfire program midweek. Dress is very casual with bug spray. The parents that do go "adopt" the rest of the boys and are some comfort to the homesick ones. If it is anything more serious, they will have called you already. For some, this is their first step toward independence, but no one goes through it alone. Sometimes it's the parents who need comforting.

Your son can do other scout activities as an individual. There are other camps, service projects, and weekend events. We try to put out a monthly newsletter with all the information for upcoming events and give constant reminders on Tuesday nights.

AUGUST

The weekend before traditional schools head back in the fall, the scouts and their families get together for the Aquatics Saturday at Kerr Lake. Everyone that has anything that is fun in the water shares their toys. We have a great time. We just get together to play. If the family cannot come, the boys still have a ball. A few times this has been a one night campout but recently it has turned into a weekend event. Some folks stay all weekend and some come for the day.

SEPTEMBER

Labor Day weekend we have gone down Nantahala River for whitewater rafting and tubing down a Smokey Mnt National Park lazy river. We leave on a Saturday morning and return Monday.

There is a Court of Honor near the end of September. The scouts get all the badges they finished at summer camp. Many of the boys have earned their next rank. Parents should always try to attend this ceremony to watch their son beam and do a little glowing themselves.

OCTOBER

Sometimes in the fall, the scouts challenge themselves with minimalist camping. They pack everything they need in a shoe-box-size bag. It is called the Siwash trip in the tradition of the old fur trapper's survivalist skills. If you like the challenge of "roughing it", this one is for you. The boys love it.

NOVEMBER

In the fall we go biking down the Virginia Creeper trail near Damascus, VA. It has rained on us every year so we're trying something new this year. We're camping at NC Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC. Scout will have a chance to earn their railroading or transportation merit badges.

Scouts can sign up to work on Eagle required merit badges and other fun merit badges at the Duke Univ Merit Badge College day sponsored by our Scouting district.

DECEMBER

December brings scout traditions.

- 1) The Vertical Edge lock-in is a must for the boys. The activity center is on highway 70 East just past Miami Blvd. It is a climbing center. They climb all night, have pizza at midnight, and "monkey" around. This is one where we really encourage younger or older siblings to come join in the fun.
- 2) The boys select a service project. (They have raised money for camping gear for their brother troop in Oxford Commons or adopted a family through Share your Christmas.)

JANUARY

There is a Court of Honor at the end of January.

Freezeree camping trip - Our boys camp together and have a "Capture the Flag" tournament. Bombs are made out of tissues and flour. Elaborate plans and strategies are drawn a month before the fun begins. Remember to have them shake out their things before bringing them in the house. The boys also have an "Iron chef cook-off". Fancy meals are prepared and judged by the scoutmaster and a few other adults.

FEBRUARY

The second Sunday in February is "Scout Sunday" for the United Methodist church. Our charter organization is Aldersgate United Methodist Church. We encourage the scouts to attend at Aldersgate or at their own place of worship in uniform. At Aldersgate the scouts provide all of the lay volunteers for the three services. We encourage the scout families to also attend. It is one way we say thank you to the congregation. After the services, the boy scouts prepare a spaghetti lunch. The money charged for the luncheon is usually given back to the church for a supporting service project.

MARCH

We have the upcoming Webelos and their parents join us for a hike and dinner.

NC State merit badge college is a chance to earn merit badges never thought possible such as nuclear science, engineering, composite materials, pulp & paper, etc

OTHER ACTIVITIES

There are a few activities that we do not do every year but rotate. We've done caving campouts, backpacking trips, shotgun shooting at Ft Bragg, camping on the Yorktown aircraft carrier to name a few. The scouts like the trip to DC when they stay at a military base and lay a wreath. The trip to the USS Yorktown where they

"camp" on a ship is another fun one. We have some avid bikers who have planned some neat trips. Sometimes the best camping trip is just out in the middle of nowhere with no major plan but to be with the troop.

Each year we add other events or change a few when we hear of a better idea. Again, we are here for the boys to learn, grow, and have a great time. We are all volunteers. We welcome your input and are eager to get to know you and your son.

FUNDRAISERS

The troop has two fund raisers.

- 1) Our troop's major fundraiser is working the Duke Women's basketball games as ushers. It is usually agreed that all families (adults only) sign up to help with at least 6 of the women's basketball games.
- 2) The other is the spaghetti lunch held at Aldersgate United Methodist Church on "Scout Sunday". Lunch is served immediately following the 11:00am service. The boys sell tickets, cook, serve and clean up.

Troop meetings

Troop meetings are held each Tuesday at 7:00pm at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in the Scout room, which is on the 2nd floor and accessible by the door to the back of the Family Life Center. Meetings are approximately 75 to 90 minutes long. Parents attendance at the beginning or end of each troop meeting will keep you informed of upcoming events. This will help you and your scouts insure that travel permission slips are signed and food and gas money are paid on time.

Court of Honor

A Court of Honor is a solemn ceremony and is one of the highlights of Scouting. There are meaningful messages imparted throughout the program and it serves as a renewal of our Scouting values. There are 3 Courts of Honor during the year - September, January, and May. This is an awards ceremony held in the church sanctuary.

All parents, family members and scouts are asked to attend each Court of Honor! By attending, we show our respect and support for those boys who are advancing and it gives encouragement to each boy's achievements. The scout will wear his "Class A" scout uniform (shirt, scarf, khaki or green non-ragity shorts or pants). The ceremony begins with the presentation of the colors (a flag ceremony) and the scouts march in together and sit at the front. The scout's family dress is casual. Each scout who has reached advancement in rank is called to the front with his parents. He is awarded a pin, and his mother is also given a pin. Warning! Your son will pin you! The troop provides each mother with a red, white and blue ribbon

to pin on, and your son will put the advancement rank pin on your ribbon. The boys also get called to the front to be presented with any merit badges they have completed. Service stars are given to the boys and the registered adults. This is a chance to say thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers. After the ceremony, we dismiss to the Family Life Center for a reception.

Eagle Court of Honor - Held when a scout has completed all requirements for Scouting's highest honor; the Eagle rank. This is usually held at a time other than a Troop Court of Honor and planned jointly by the parents and the Scoutmaster to honor the scout. All Troop 400 Scouts are expected to attend an Eagle Court of Honor.

Attendance

Attendance at scout meetings and activities are the foundation to learning scouting. Scouts are expected to attend 60% of the troop meetings and activities in order to be considered "active" in the troop.

The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters help the boys accomplish their goals. Their job is to provide guidance and help with the meetings, activities, and projects at Troop 400. Troop 400 practices two-deep leadership and believes deeply its covenant. Two-deep leadership means that two adults are always present at any scouting event and no adult is ever alone or isolated with a boy. All scouts and leaders are guided by the simple tenets of the Scout Law.

A Scout is:	Trustworthy	Loyal	Helpful	Friendly
	Courteous	Kind	Obedient	Cheerful
	Thrifty	Brave	Clean	Reverent

First things first...

After completing the application form, the new Boy Scout will be assigned to a patrol. He will work with that patrol toward this first rank...Scout.

The first source of information is the Patrol Leader or Troop Guide. For the new crossover scouts, there will be an older scout called a Troop Guide to assist them. The Patrol Leader is responsible for a group of boys and is elected to his post by his peers. We realize that boys being boys, some things will get missed. This is

why we have Assistant Scoutmasters. They are listed in the Troop 400 Patrol Roster. Call one of us if you are in doubt about anything!

How Much Is This Going To Cost Us?

Presently the troop operates on a budget approved each year by the Troop Committee. They set the dues and fund raising quotas that will be needed for the program. Each year, the troop must re-charter with the Occoneechee Council. The scout is responsible for his registration fee and the cost of Boy's Life magazine (if desired) at that time. The annual dues for the past several years have been \$85. In addition to the dues, a Class "A" uniform, a Boy Scout Handbook, and proper medical certification are required. (The troop offers free medical exams in May). Since Troop 400 scouting involves a great deal of camping, an initial outlay for personal equipment (sleeping bag, toiletries, backpack/duffle bag, water bottle, good hiking shoes or boots, rain gear, mess kit, etc.) will be necessary. The troop provides tents, cooking utensils, patrol (chuck) boxes and other large, more expensive items required to achieve scouting goals. The troop has a "Scout Closet" in the scout room containing gently used uniforms and equipment that we encourage you to check before purchasing these items new.

It is the policy of Troop 400 to provide the "scouting" experience to all in the Troop. Funding assistance is available for those individuals requiring financial support. If there are any scouts requiring this support, please contact the Scoutmaster.

How can I help?

Volunteer/Parent Involvement: Participation in troop activities is fun and rewarding. We depend on our valued parents to fill all of our leadership and support positions within the troop. Committee members, merit badge counselors and Assistant Scoutmasters are always needed. Leadership experience is not required for any position; leadership training is available. Parents are encouraged to attend Troop Committee meetings that are held at the church on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 PM.

Parents are expected to help out with at least 2 troop events and 6 Duke Women's basketball games. Approximately 20 adults are needed per game. This requires a time outlay of about 3 hours of your time per game. Our troop receives approximately \$375 per game which is used to buy troop equipment and defray camps costs, patches, awards, etc. **A portion is routed to your son's "account"**

which he can use for dues, summer camp or any scouting event. If you attend every game there is usually enough scout "account" funds to pay for summer camp with some left over for other events. Your involvement will make your son feel valued and will strengthen your relationship with him, as well as keep the troop going.

Who is this Troop Committee and what do they do?

The Troop Committee acts as liaison between the chartering organization, in our case Aldersgate United Methodist Church, and the troop. The Troop Committee's primary responsibility is to support the Scoutmaster in his effort to deliver a quality troop program and handle troop administration.

The Committee consists of parents of scouts in Troop 400. Committee meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in a classroom above the gym. Every parent is encouraged to attend and become a member of the committee. Trust us; there is plenty of work to go around!

The old adage, "**many hands make light work**" certainly applies to the administration of a scout troop. In order for boys to be successful in scouting, it is imperative that parents take an active role in the troop along with their boys. Please come and join us!

What is a "Class A" Uniform and when is it worn?

The full "Class A" uniform is worn to Courts of Honor, Boards of Review and any time the scout is representing Troop 400, including travel to and from events.

Full "Class A" uniform consists of:

- Boy Scout shirt (tan) with appropriate patches
- Olive green shoulder epaulets
- Boy Scout belt
- Troop 400 designated neckerchief and BSA slide
- Olive green pants or Olive green shorts

For regular troop meetings, a modified "Class A" uniform of official BSA shirt with appropriate patches and Boy Scout belt and pants are required. The "Class B"

uniform consists of an appropriate Boy Scout t-shirt. "Class B" is worn to activities and events as designated by the Scoutmaster. Troop 400 also has its own custom t-shirt available for sale. The only caps allowed are the Troop 400 cap or official Boy Scout cap.

What is a Board of Review?

When a Scout has completed all of the requirements for a rank and passed the Scoutmaster's conference, he appears before a Board of Review composed of at least three and not more than six committee members.

The review has three purposes:

1. To make sure that the work has been learned and completed
2. To find out what kind of experience the boy is having in his patrol and troop
3. To encourage the Scout to progress further

Note: It's not a re-test of the scoutmaster conference. However the Board of Review members can decide if the boy is ready for rank advancement or not.

The Board of Review may be held once or twice a month during a regular troop meeting. The Scout must request a Board of Review by making an appointment with the Advancement Coordinator. **When attending the Board of Review or Scoutmaster conference, the "Class A" uniform and his Boy Scout Handbook is required. The handbook should be up to date with requirements checked-off, dated, and initialed by the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster.**

How do boys advance in rank and earn merit badges?

Boys earn merit badges and advance in rank by fulfilling specific requirements. Merit badges are earned in specific topic areas. Rank advancement shows growth in more generalized skills and leadership abilities.

As a parent, please help your boy as he advances up the ladder to his Eagle. One way to encourage him is to take time at home to do the requirements listed for each rank. Some of these cannot be done at home. Therefore, you can encourage him to Be Prepared when he goes to a troop meeting or on a camp out. Those scouts who have not achieved the rank of First Class are encouraged to bring their scout handbook to each meeting and camp out. There are always opportunities during meetings or camp outs to complete a requirement and have it signed off in their book. During a camp out, always pack your handbook in a zip-lock bag!

As a parent, you are needed to volunteer as a Merit Badge counselor. Merit badge Counselors are an essential part of any troop. As boys advance through the ranks, they must earn 21 merit badges to become an Eagle Scout. There are 12 Eagle

required merit badges; the rest may be chosen from a list of over 100. Many merit badges can be earned at summer camp, but their offerings are limited, which makes it necessary to counsel our boys throughout the year. This is why we ask for your help. You don't need to be an expert. The book guides the boy and the counselor through the learning experience.

Please check over the attached list and register for a merit badge (or two) that you would enjoy counseling. (See Appendix 1)

The requirements for the job are simple, sensible and few:

- A merit badge counselor must be 18 years or older
- Be of good character
- Be able to sign-off the scout when he proves proficiency

The Advancement Coordinator will register all Merit Badge Counselors with the Occoneechee Council office located in Raleigh. Once you are registered, you may announce at a troop meeting that you will be offering a merit badge class or scouts will contact you in pairs (or more) to ask you to serve as their merit badge counselor. You will want to obtain a copy of that particular merit badge book. This can be done by purchasing one through the Scout Shop in Raleigh, the BSA catalog or contact the Troop Librarian.

You will have an initial meeting with the group and at that time and the scouts will have their Merit Badge Card (also called a "blue card"). These cards must be obtained from, and later signed by the Scoutmaster. Go over the requirements of the badge and let them know your expectations for completion of the badge. Don't forget that once a scout starts a merit badge, he has one year to complete it. You may be able to complete the requirements in two or three meetings with the scout doing the work in between sessions. Make sure they make appointments with you to evaluate their progress and make sure they are headed in the right direction.

At your last merit badge meeting, complete the "blue card" that the scout has given you. Keep a copy for your records. The scout will keep a copy and return a copy to the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster.

Troop Dos and Don'ts...just a few!

We at Troop 400 strive to provide a proper and positive scouting experience for your boy. In order to achieve this, there must be a few guidelines.

1. There must be NO soda, candy, or sweets in the tents. This is a safety issue; we don't want little critters in our packs or tents. This includes bugs, raccoons, mice, or bears!

2. A whistle should be carried on the Boy Scout at all times. The "buddy system" is always in effect on any scout event.
3. Radios, iPods, TVs, Gameboys, or electronic equipment of any type are forbidden. This too is a safety issue. When hiking/backpacking, full attention must be paid to the trail ahead to prevent accidents. A deck of playing cards, or a small travel chess or checker set is permissible.

Parents: Each event will require a permission slip (provided by the Troop) which will need to be signed out BEFORE your scout can attend. Any medication your scout needs to take must be included on the permission slip (name, amount & when), and the medication must be given to an adult leader before leaving. A parent's contact information during our camping events must be provided to the Scoutmaster or designated Scoutmaster on the form. These will be kept with the proper medical forms and accompany the Scoutmaster to each event. Should an emergency arise, we must be able to contact you. The event Scoutmaster has the responsibility for the welfare of the entire Troop and is empowered by the Troop 400 Committee to make decisions. Should it be determined that a boy must be returned home due to an emergency, behavior, or homesickness, you or your designee must be available to receive him. The decision to return a scout is not taken lightly!

It is the aim of Troop 400 to make scouting a fun, challenging, memorable experience for boys and their families. With the help and involvement of all, we can accomplish this goal for all our scouts.

APPENDIX 1:**MERIT BADGES**

American Business	Engineering	Pioneering
American Cultures	Entrepreneurship	Plant Science
American Heritage	•Environmental Science	Plumbing
American Labor	•Family Life	Pottery
Animal Science	Farm Mechanics	Public Health
Archaeology	Fingerprinting	Public Speaking
Archery	Fire Safety	Pulp and Paper
Architecture	•First Aid	Radio
Art	Fish & Wildlife Management	Railroading
Astronomy	Fishing	Reading
Athletics	Forestry	Reptile & Amphibian Study
Atomic Energy	Gardening	Rifle Shooting
Auto Mechanics	Genealogy	Rowing
Aviation	Geology	Safety
Backpacking	Golf	Salesmanship
Basketry	Graphic Arts	Scholarship
Bird Study	Hiking	Sculpture
• Camping	Home Repairs	Shotgun
Canoeing	Horsemanship	Shooting
Chemistry	Indian Lore	Skating
Cinematography	Insect Study	Skiing
•Citizenship in the Community	Journalism	Small Boat Sailing
•Citizenship in the Nation	Landscape	Soil & Water Conservation
•Citizenship in the World	Law	Space Exploration
Climbing	Leatherwork	Sports
Coin Collecting	•Lifesaving	Stamp Collecting
Collections	Mammal Study	Surveying
Communications	Medicine	•Swimming
Computers	Metalwork	Textile
Cooking	Model Design & Building	Theater
Crime Prevention	Motorboating	Traffic Safety
Cycling	Music & Bugling	Truck Transportation
Dentistry	Nature	Veterinary Medicine
Disabilities Awareness	Oceanography	Waterskiing
Dog Care	Orienteering	Weather
Drafting	Painting	Whitewater
Electricity	•Personal Fitness	Wilderness Survival
Electronics	•Personal Management	Wood Carving
•Emergency Preparedness	Pets	Woodwork
Energy	Photography	

- **Eagle required merit badge** **One required: Swimming, hiking, cycling**
One required: Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving