

## Open House Kids Activities

This can be one of the most critical, yet easiest elements of an Open House. It takes some coordination and planning by Troop Leaders, but if well executed will leave a lasting impression on parents signing up their sons.

As soon as the Opening is complete (Flag Ceremony, Prayer, and Oath) have your designated kids' activities leaders (maintaining at a minimum 2-Deep Leadership) lead the youth (all elementary age children – Woodlands Trailmen, prospective Trailmen, younger siblings, etc.) to another close location, either outside or in another large area suitable for activities. This will allow the parents to focus on the rest of the presentation without having the distraction of age-appropriate wiggling by their children. Navigator and Adventurer prospects should stay with their parents.

The leaders of activities should come prepared with easy, all-inclusive activities for the children. Be prepared for a large group and/or a large age gap, and be ready to break them into age appropriate groups with enough adult leaders to maintain a safe environment.

A cornerstone of these activities (for existing and prospective Trailmen) is to begin briefly introducing them the Trail Life USA motto, salute, sign, and handshake. (*Please note: the Oath is not included as it's potentially more difficult to incorporate in this situation – use your discretion*). A relay is a great way to do this:

- Begin by briefly explaining and demonstrating the motto, salute, sign, and handshake, and allow them to practice and demonstrate themselves.
- Randomly divide the Trailmen into two teams, single file lines, with 2 leaders roughly 10 or 20 yards away. This works best with teams mixed (all ages, new and returning Trailmen alike).
- On 'GO!' have the boys at the front of the lines run to the leader who asks them to demonstrate one of 4 things: motto, salute, sign, and handshake.
- For correct answers, the boy runs and tags the next in line. For incorrect answers, the leader guides him to the right answer and then sends him to tag the next in line.
- The highlight of these activities is demonstrating to the boys the TLUSA sign: explain that when you see the sign, immediately stop talking and make the sign yourself. Be sure to show them the correct form (right arm, 90° at the elbow).
- After the relay is over, revisit the sign and make sure all the boys have the proper form and understanding of its use. Once they do, ask them to be as loud as possible. Let this go on for a few seconds, and then make the Trailman Sign. It may take a few times, but they'll eagerly catch on to what you're going for – immediate attention as soon as the sign goes up. Practice a few more times until everyone immediately falls silent and follows with their own sign. Now you're ready for the big event.
- Tell the boys you are now going to go show their parents what they have learned. Lead the boys back to the room where their parents are and walk right up front and center.
- Tell whomever is presenting that you apologize for the interruption, but you have something to show the parents that just can't wait. On cue, have the boys yell and scream as loud as they can, and then make the Trailman Sign. The noise should stop instantly, and this is when you turn to the parents and say, 'Parents, this also works at home!' This makes a huge impression on parents!
- Lead the boys back to the activity area to wait for their parents to finish the meeting.