

Delivering “God & Family” as a Weekend Lock-In

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Introduction

While many Cub Scouts initially earn their “God & Me” (1st thru 3rd grade) youth religious knot, a majority of those do not continue with the rest of the religious program:

- God & Family – 4th and 5th grade
- God & Community
- God & World

Why Most Scouts Don’t Continue

For some, the lack of continuation is due to lack of awareness to the higher programs or the sentiment that they already earned their purple knot, without understanding that the program builds on itself in stages; similar to how the Sunday school lessons that the boys learned as a child will not suffice forever as they mature in their Christian walk.

Eight More Meetings ??

But for many other scouts, the primary reason that they do not continue is due to busyness or conflict with the other programs that take the time of preteens and teenagers. Traditionally, the God & Family (G&F) course would take roughly 8 meetings, including an Introduction/Kickoff, six lessons and a closing ceremony. And while the beginning and end might be combined with lessons, most organizations will require a regular meeting cadence that competes with other Scout activities, sports, school, church or simply downtime – and the result is the boys missing this Reverence opportunity from their Scouting adventure.

After prayer and consideration, the Five Trails district of Circle Ten Council successfully piloted the G&F curriculum as a single overnight lock-in, instead of up to eight meetings. The remainder of this document is intended to share how you might deliver G&F in an overnight format.

Disclaimer: neither this weekend format, nor this document, have been reviewed by [PrayPub](#), the originating organization for the God & Family curriculum.

This guide was originally authored by and posted for distribution at <http://ScoutingForGod.org>. Adaptation of this guide is encouraged to meet your group’s needs, with the request for original source attribution and suggestions for improvement made to Jason@ScoutingForGod.org.

This is considered a living-document and is subject to change or updates, as lessons are learned or feedback offered.

Course Format

The general format for the G&F to build a pizza, literally and figuratively, as a model for the basis of family, with the following tiers:

6. Share It – Responding to God’s Love
5. Heat – When things are tough
4. Cheese – We are Loved
3. Toppings – Our Talents and Gifts
2. The Sauce – Family Heritage
1. The Crust – Family as a Foundation

The original format includes homework, including some family interaction, in between each layer of the pizza; with the presumption of regular meetings over 6-8 weeks to include:

- Kickoff/Introductions (sometimes merged with Topic 1. Crust)
- Topics 1 through 6, with instruction/activity during each lesson
- Closing (sometimes held immediately after Topic 6).

Adapted Format for Weekend Lock-In

Instead, many of the homework elements can be (optionally) done in advance of the lock-in itself. Between completing the prerequisite assignments, as well as fully participating during the lock-in, a scout can complete the entire course except for the final review meeting with a youth-religious leader.

Essentially, by front loading the weekly assignments as prerequisites for the weekend -- and then teaching the lessons with some group participation, the course can be delivered in most of a weekend.

Sample of the Prerequisite Lock-in Assignments is included on the last page of this guide.

Weekend Lock-In Schedule (*sample*)

FRIDAY

- 5:00P Leadership team arrives to prepare facility
- Inspect facility, ensure proper contact information, verify evening entertainment operation
 - Reorganize primary sleeping area(s) and teaching room(s), as appropriate
- 6:00P Registration Table open (plan for some early arrivals)
- Boys should arrive already fed and with proper sleeping equipment
 - Upon check-in, boys should set up their sleeping area(s). If small-groups for skits and discussion are pre-defined, it is recommended that those scouts sleep in the same area.
 - After scouts are prepared, some form of energy-burning activity should be pre-planned
- 6:30P Kick-Off & Course Introduction
- Course director welcome to scouts, reminder of conduct and mission for the weekend
 - Announce skit and need for preparation and team formation.
 - Introduce leadership staff, as well as counselors’ availability
- 7:00P Session 1 (75m), including instruction and group activity
- 8:30P Session 2 (75m)
- 9:45P Movie (suggested sleeping in main sanctuary with movie on big screen) & Board-Games
- 11:30P Lights Out

Suggestion: If possible, move the boys between each lesson/event. This will help the weekend feel varied and enable each subsequent instructor to have quiet time to prepare for the next session.

SATURDAY

6:30A Lights Up & Breakfast

- Ideally, breakfast would be prepared and served by adults not otherwise teaching in the morning, perhaps by motivated parent(s) or other scouting/ministry supporters.
- After breakfast, Scouts should gather their sleeping supplies

7:30A Session 3 (75m) *

9:00A Break (prep for skit) - craft support

9:30A Session 4 (90m) with skit *

11:00A Session 5 (75m) *

12:30P Lunch – perhaps pizza, or else serve something hardy but still easy to clean-up

1:30P Session 6 (75m), go straight to Closing Session in different room

3:00P Closing (encourage parent attendance)

- Course Conclusion Discussion
- Presentation of certificates of lock-in (not course) completion
- Pre-presentation of purple knots or devices, as appropriate (be sure to ask during registration)
- Final instructions for counseling to complete course
- Closing prayer

3:30P Dismissal

4:30P Leave Venue

- Ideally, additional volunteers who did not spend the night will help with venue re-set, such as realignment of chairs in sanctuary, cleaning of boards in teaching rooms, etc.
- Potential sign-off with facilities owner
- Optionally, if a boy did not complete course pre-requisites or if a counseling session is needed, adequate counselor supervision may be done after dismissal (but is best planned for).

* It is important that the boys have opportunities to ensure that their progress and prerequisites are complete and acceptable, so that they boys will gain full credit for the weekend. In addition, some boys may have theological or other questions requiring 1:1 interaction – so generous breaks and availability of roaming adults should be ensured.

Logistics

As with most scouting activities, the keys to success happen before the event:

Prayer

Never forget (and particularly in regard to a reverence or discipleship event) that the material being covered is God-breathed. Adult leaders should be prayerful, as well as studious, in their preparation-for and while-delivering the event.

Recruiting

Ensure enough boy participation, by offering the event on a broader scale – e.g. district or city-wide. By opening enrollment to a broader base, it compensates for the fact that not all scouts are of the same faith, some will have already completed similar courses, and some may not be interested. By offering the weekend to multiple scouting units, you have a wider probability of achieving critical mass.

Enrollment

While a broad recruiting base enables better attendance, it can create additional challenges for tracking enrollment and collecting of fees. Enrollment should be advertised up to *two months* before the event, ideally from local Round-Tables, as well as emails or website posting on the district and applicable units’ websites. It is highly recommended to use some form of online registration and fee collection, such as a Troop website that does not require individual log-ins and/or PayPal for collection of fees. This also ensures that pre-purchased food and teaching supplies are fully-funded, even if some scouts later choose not to attend.

Materials

Course materials provided by the event include:

- Course workbook, which can be purchased from Scout Shops, ScoutStuff.org, PrayPub.org or reproduced electronically (if licensing fees paid to PrayPub.org).
- Youth Religious Award (“Purple Knot”) from Scout Shops or ScoutStuff.org
- Webelos Device (pin) for existing purple knot bearers, to show 2nd course completed
- *Optionally, some church groups may offer to provide Bibles for every Scout (as a loan for the weekend or as a gift) to ensure that each scout has one and to provide consistency of translation during teaching.*

Materials to be brought by Scout participants

- Sleeping supplies and change of clothes – Class B suggested for course & A for opening/closing
- Notebook and pencils/pens for taking notes
- Spill proof Nalgene or other drinking container
- No electronics (including eReader bibles)

Adult Leadership

Many hands make light work. This includes a variety of adult roles:

Hosting Pastors, Ministers and Counselors

For both ad-hoc counseling, as well as potential closing discussions with each scout, one or more designated pastors or youth ministers are needed for the weekend. If conducting the weekend at a local church, that church may also designate additional ordained laymen (deacons/elders) or other youth teachers as authorized counselors for the weekend.

Teachers

There are 6 modules, along with an introduction and closing.

At a minimum, three teaching adults are needed (each teaching two modules). While it may be more convenient to teach 1+2, 3+4 and 5+6, it is important to help the boys differentiate between the modules. Instead, three instructors might teach 1+4, 2+5, and 3+6 to provide variety (and enable each instructor time to adequately prepare for each module that they are responsible for). Ideally, six instructors would each teach one module.

The Introduction can be delivered by the lock-in director, one of the hosting pastors, or the lesson-one instructor. Best practice is that a hosting-pastor delivers the introduction and lesson-1, to ensure the proper tone for the weekend.

The Closing can be delivered by the lock-in director or the hosting-pastor.

Supporting Adults

Along with instructors and counselors, several other adult services are also required:

Registration

It is ideal to have two people share responsibility for the web-enrollment and the on-site signing in of the boys upon arrival, ensuring receipt of medical and consent forms, as well as late dues collection and verification of contact information. If sharing roles, these folks should not teach modules 1 or 6 for best results.

Food/Snacks

Throughout the locking, the boys will eat snacks on Friday night, breakfast, more snacks, lunch and potentially some closing desert. This may be stocked from parents who can come in for an hour or two to help – or might be served from a Sunday School class or other youth teacher team as a service opportunity.

Media & Entertainment

Friday night should have some unstructured time, which might include movies on big screens or some other entertainment – which may require a facilities person to approve or operate the lights/sound of the venue. In addition, a coordinator for board games or other entertainment may also be desired.

Venue/Facilities

A pre-identified representative from the facility that the lock-in is being held at is needed, in case of accident, breakage or other potential issue. This person may either be reached by phone from an on-site leader or stay on-site as well.

Course Director(s)

It is suggested that two adults co-lead the overall weekend event, including recruitment of adults, enrollment of scouts, etc. Two ensures that a last-minute emergency does not derail the weekend, and that a wider variety of skills and experiences can be applied to making the weekend what it needs to be for God and the scouts. Suggestion: “Leading a God & Family event” may be considered a Wood Badge ticket item, with prior approval of your Troop Guide.

It is IMPORTANT to note that any person spending the night with the Scouts, including the facilities owner, or leading a lesson/activity must have current BSA Youth Protection Training (YPT).

Be certain that this is explained to all applicable adults and verified by the course director.

God & Family Lock-In – pre-work

We look forward to your scout joining us for the upcoming God & Family lock-in for 4th and 5th grade scouts. The curriculum is designed for Christian Protestant scouts and assumes that they already have some understanding & relationship with their savior, Jesus Christ.

During the lock-in, your scout will have the chance to learn from adult counselors, demonstrate his own understanding of his faith and hopefully have some fun and make new friends.

Along with attending the instructional modules, based on the P.R.A.Y. Pub’s Christian Protestant program (www.PrayPub.org), there are some required activities that he must also perform prior to arriving at the lock-in to receive credit for the course. As with most things, your scout will get more out of the course, if he puts more into it. And as this course is about family, a healthy interaction of family-members during the prerequisite work is recommended. The overall requirements to be completed for the course are:

Session 1: Crust / Foundation – *We are God’s Family*

- Participate in Session 1
- Count the crosses in your “home” church
- Memorize John 3:16 ... or Deuteronomy 6:5 ... or Joshua 24:15
- Say grace before dinner

Session 2: Sauce – *Family heritage; Spiritual heritage*

- Participate in Session 2
- Make a family tree which includes at least 4 generations
- Interview a family member about their Sunday School experience or vacation bible school as a child

Session 3: Toppings – *Our Talents and Gifts strengthen our Families*

- Participate in Session 3
- List and tell what is special about them for each family member
- Write a thank you letter

Session 4: Cheese – *In God’s Family, we are loved, no matter what*

- Participate in Session 4
- Act out a parable, such as the prodigal son – *will be done during lock-in*
- Poll your family to find out what kind of cheese each member likes and why

Session 5: Bake – *Being In God’s Family Helps Us When Things Are Tough*

- Participate in Session 5
- Memorize the Ten Commandments

Session 6: Enjoy & Share – *We share as a Response to God’s Love,*

- Participate in Session 6
- Write a prayer to thank God for sending Jesus to us

After the Lock-In ... *Final Discussion with Youth Minister, Pastor or Counselor*

- Discuss what you learned with a youth minister, pastor or counselor
A discussion guide for the Pastor is provided on pages 37-38 of the counselor workbook

Final Approval

To complete the course, a final discussion and sign-off must be done with a religious counselor, preferably within your scout’s home church. If the scout does not currently have a home church, an authorized representative from the lock-in’s hosting church can meet with you instead. After sign-off, your scout has completed the God & Family program and is authorized to receive either the Purple Knot (youth religious award) or the Webelos device (BSA part # 932). You may also opt to purchase the God & Family medal from PrayPub.org for presentation to your scout at a future Pack Meeting or Troop Court of Honor.