



Running a Scouting Open Day

Introduction

What is an Open Day?

An open day is a special day where the Scout Unit opens its doors to welcome non-Scouts and allow them to discover Scouting. It's a great way to recruit new youth members because more than hearing or reading about our Movement, they actually get to experience Scouting first-hand in a local unit. Learning-by-doing at its best. The goal of this day is to recruit more young people and to link the local scout group with new families. A scouting open day can be only one day but also a weekend or a longer event depending on your reality and needs.

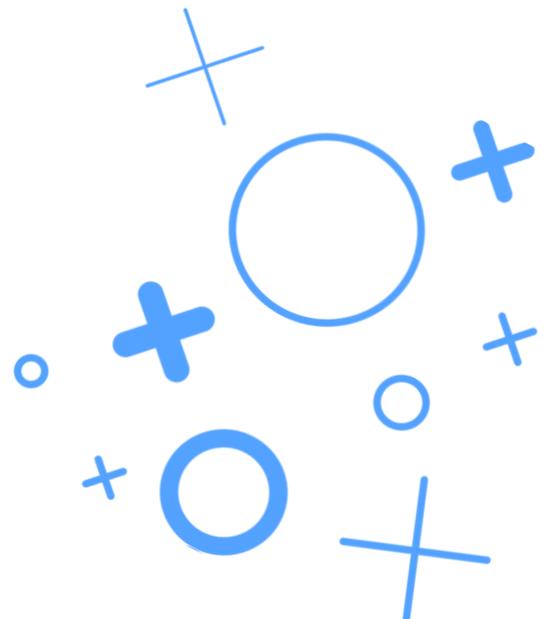
Why having an Open Day?

An open day is a great way to attract new members to your Scout Group. It gives you the opportunity to give prospective members a taste of what Scouting has to offer them.

Who is the target of an Open Day?

The Open day targets potential new members. It can include young people from 5 to 26 years old, depending on your age branches, but it can also be an opportunity to welcome parents and other adults that could become volunteers.

These guidelines will allow you as a Scout group to organise your very own Open Scouting day thanks to guiding questions and tips and tricks. Going through each steps will allow you to plan, promote, run and review the event.





4 easy steps to run an awesome open scout day

Plan the logistics of the event

This section of the guide will help you with the planning stage of your Open Day. It helps you prepare for your Open Day and ensure that the event will run smoothly.

1. When should we run our Open Scout Day?

- Time of the day?
- Time of the week?
- Time of the year?
- How long will be the event?

Tips:

- Think about your **human resources**, make sure that your leaders and your scouts are available
- Pick a **time** where most of the **people are available** such as holidays or weekends.
- The **Open day** is only **one of the options** on how to promote Scouting. Some NSOs even do open camps to allow young people to leave a longer Scouting experience.

2. Where to host the open day?

- Indoors/ outdoors?
- What type of venue would fit the number of people/activities we are planning to do?
- Is the place welcoming (decorated, clean, tidy)?
- Is the safety assured in the place?

Tips:

- Pick a place next to your scout hall if possible or in a **location** that can **bring visibility** to the event (the center or a park in town).
- Pick a place that **everyone can join easily**, including people with special needs.
- Don't forget to **decorate** it, use it to showcase the symbolic framework of Scouting (flags etc).

3. What do we need to anticipate?

- What are the resources to put into the event?
- What will be the size of the event?
- Will you provide food and drinks for your participants?
- Do we want to have a gift/souvenir for the new comers?
- How do we register people and keep a list of their contact?

Tips:

- Ensure you have a **Safe from Harm Plan** for the day, including, adult to youth ratios, management of unknown adults (should they be supervised at all times).
- Make sure your open day has a **good balance** between the energy, time and finances you will put in it compared to the number of potential new young people recruited.
- Plan a very **simple registration process** to encourage people and to gather basic contact information you might need to follow-up with them.



Planning the programme of the event

This section of the guide will help you with preparing for running your Open Day. This section helps you create a great programme for your Open Day to ensure that both the young people who attend and their parents have a great experience.

1. Activities of the event

- What is your outline of the day?
- How will you ensure a great and balanced mix of activities, that speak to different young people? Is the day balanced? Fun activities vs other activities linked to the Scout life?
- Did you plan to include a Scout symbolic framework?
- How will you showcase the Scout Method?
- Did you involve the Scout Unit in the plan of the day? Do they have a special role to play?

Tips:

- Ask your Scouts what their favourite activity are and incorporate them as part of your programme.
- Build the programme in a way that will allow the newcomers to have a **short journey** through the different things we do **in Scouting** Youth Programme in one day.
- Make it **fun and interactive** but also balanced to answer the needs of a great diversity of young people.
- Make sure the programme is also **interesting for your regular Scouts**. If they get bored, it will be harder to give a good vibe to the day for newcomers.

2. Welcoming newcomers

- How will you include the new comers in the day and with the other Scouts?
- Are you planning a special/symbolic moment?
- Will they receive a special scarf or anything that will allow them to feel fully included?
- Are you planning to further explain some elements of the regular Scout activities to make sure they don't get lost in the process?

Tips:

- **Include the newcomers in already existing patrols** where they will experience the games, the everyday life of the patrol and understand the different roles of the patrol members.
- Create and give to every newcomer a **Symbolic Passport** that will guide him through the journey of the day.
- **Offer a badge or a souvenir** at the end of the day to the newcomers that they will be able to show to their families and keep.

3. Welcoming parents and relatives

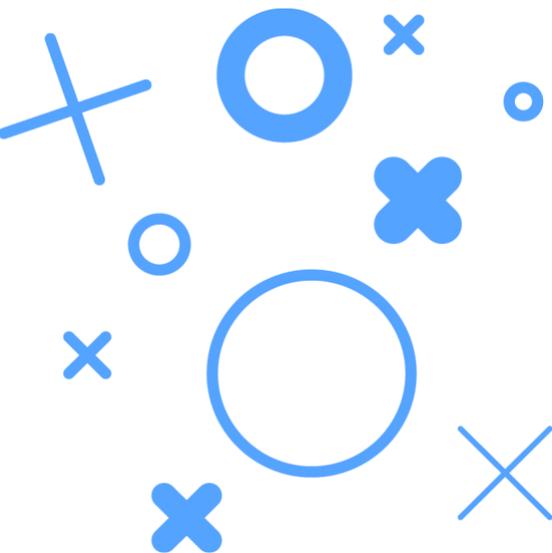
- How are you planning to inform the parents? To answer their questions?
- Will there be people in charge of the welcoming of the parents?
- Will you present your annual plan and describe your main activities of the year?
- How will you share the benefits for the young people to staying and be involved in Scouting?
- Did you anticipate sharing with them volunteering opportunities?





Tips:

- Have a **“parents’ corner”** ready that will allow parents to receive information and ask their questions but also see how the day is going from the far for their children.
- Always **share the big picture** with some exciting projects the unit will carry during the year or during the summer camp. Parents will then be able to **project themselves and their children** into Scouting on the long term.
- Turn this moment into **an opportunity to also recruit parents** or relatives as volunteers for the local group.
- Make sure you have a couple of **registration forms available**, so that parents can directly register their children if they want to. Also, make sure it covers all needed legal consents in case you are planning to run activities without the parents.





Promote

This section of the guide will help you with ideas on how you could promote your Open Day. This section helps you advertise your Open Day to ensure that your target audience is aware of your event and are excited to attend.

1. How do we promote Scouting to the newcomers?

- Do you need to create any new tools to promote your event? (video, flyers etc)
- Do you have the resources to produce these tools?
- Is the tool you have or you are planning to create made for a one-time event or can it be used on the long term in your recruitment processes?
- Do you know the perceptions non-Scouts have of Scouting in your area? How can you make sure your materials are sharing a positive image of Scouting?

Tips:

- Ensure your **information** is presented in a **clear, concise and stylish** way, this will help make you even more attractive to people who see your flyer or digital notice.
- Ensure you include all the **important information** in your promotional material by answering the following questions:
 - When (date and time),
 - Where (location),
 - What (activities, programme, are you providing food?)
 - Who (what age group, should parents stay or just drop their child off?)
 - Why (why should they attend your invent? What will they get out of it?)
- Prepare a **nice short video** (or other media) highlighting the main activities and experiences your group offer that you can play on a screen.

2. How will we communicate information about our event to interested parties and your Scouting network?

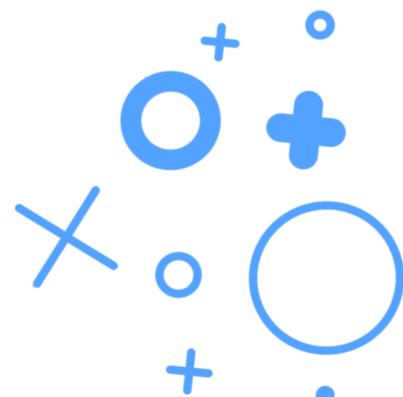
- What are the Scouting networks we have that could support our promotion?
- Do you have any communication tools that you usually use for recruitment?
- Do you have a plan on how you will communicate the information around the open scout day to non-scouts?

Tips:

- Ensure you communication **caters to you target audience**. If you are hoping young people will attend your event, ensure your communications are attractive to young people.

3. What channels will we use for the promotions?

- Will you do an online promotion through social media or your webpage?
- Did you also plan in-person promotion at local events or in the local news channels?
- Where in your town could you promote the event?
- Did you reflect on the networks you could use to promote the event (Scouts friends, religious institution, city hall etc)?



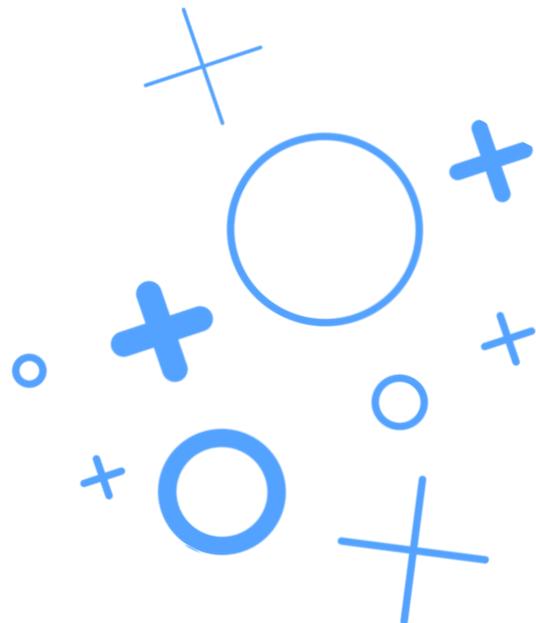


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Tips:

- Create an **online event** to make it easier to promote and to allow people to register online.
- **Promote your open day** through your Scout group but also **thanks to the friends of the scout groups networks**.
- **Anyone can be a scout promoter:** the school principal, local companies and shops, senior communities, church/faith-based community.
- **Encourage each of your scouts to bring a friend** who is not a scout to the open day.





Follow up and review

Once your open day event happened, it is essential to take some time to follow-up with the newcomers and review the impact of the event on your local group. These simple questions and tips will allow you to evaluate the event and also to make sure you maintain the momentum to recruit more young people.

1. Following up with the newcomers

- Did we send a thank you message to the new comers?
- Did we anticipate how to follow up with new comers through an email, personal message etc?
- Did we send them more practical information about the local group, the meetings etc?
- Is there a plan to loop the newcomers in the email chain/ information channel of the local groups?

Tips:

- Assign **one person** in the local group **to make sure the newcomers are looped in** and who can answer their questions.
- Make sure they **received the dates of the next meeting/weekend** so they can directly join again.

2. Review the impact of the event

- Did you anticipate to have an evaluation moment during the event? For young people? For parents?
- Did you plan to share a survey about the event afterwards to the parents? Through an online tool?
- Did you plan a meeting with the local group to review the answers and reflect on the event?

Tips:

- Here are some **suggestions of questions for a quick evaluation** (recommend, come back etc):
 - What did you like about the open day?
 - Is there anything you did not like about the open day?
 - Is there anything we could do to improve the open day for the future?
 - Do you intend to join our Scout Group?
 - How likely are you to promote Scouts to other families? (1-10)
- Make sure to take sometimes to **debrief with the team carrying the event** how they felt about it and how much Scouts it brought on the long term.

