



## BSA TROOP 500

*Sponsored by St. Agnes Catholic Church*

[www.Troop500.com/](http://www.Troop500.com/)

Dear Scout,

Leading the way.....What does that mean?

Think about being a Cub Scout. You came to den meetings and did a lot of different and fun things. But who decided what to do and who planned the activities? The Den Leaders, right?

Sports teams are a lot of fun, too. But who decides who plays what position, who's on the starting lineup and when to substitute? The coach, right?

There is one thing that makes Scouting different from all other youth groups. Do you know what it is?

Well, it is not the uniform. Every soccer, basketball, and baseball team has a uniform.

It is not the fun activities. There are a lot of other things that are fun.

And it certainly isn't cleaning dirty pots and pans on a campout!!

### **What makes Scouting special is that YOU make the decisions!**

That's right! YOU run the troop. Baden-Powell made it very plain in Aids to Scoutmastership when he wrote,

“The best progress is made in those Troops where power and responsibility are really put into the hands of the Patrol Leaders.”

This is real decision making power. And not it's not just Patrol Leaders. All of the troop leadership positions have a hand in making the Troop run. As a troop leader you will:

Plan and run troop meetings,

Pick troop outings, where to camp, what to do,

Plan advancement opportunities for all troop members

Select High-Adventure programs

Determine troop policy

Help other Scouts along the trail to Eagle.

Sound good? It is! The adults are there to provide support but YOU will be making the decisions.

Because being a leader is more than just sewing on a patch designating your position we have put together job descriptions for the troop leadership positions. They will give you a good idea of what each job is all about and what you will be required to do.

Read the job descriptions, qualifications, and job responsibilities. Then decide what you want to do and talk it over with your parents and other Scouts who have served in that position

So, are you ready to "Lead the way"? I hope so!

Yours in Scouting,

Scoutmaster,  
BSA TROOP 500

# TROOP 500 - ORIENTATION INFORMATION

## *Your First Year in Scouting*

### BACKGROUND OF TROOP 500

The Troop is based in Pt. Loma, California. St Agnes Catholic Parish sponsors the troop. Troop meetings are held every Wednesday at 7:00pm at the St. Agnes Parish Hall located at 1140 Evergreen Street Pt. Loma, CA 92106. The troop has an informative website at <http://www.troop500.net>

The Scoutmaster oversees the activities of the boys on outings and at meetings. The **Assistant Scoutmaster's** aide in this task. Troop 500 is a "boy lead troop" and these adult leaders are present to ensure the safety of the activity and for guidance upon request from the **Troop Leadership**.

The **Troop Committee** oversees the financial and fundraising activities. The **Chairman** of the Troop Committee works with other adult volunteers to ensure that the requirements of Boy Scout of America and the San Diego-Imperial District are adhered to. They conduct fundraisers and monitor the expenses of the Troop. The committee meets once a month generally during a Troop Meeting. Any interested adults are encouraged to attend. The Committee Chair also host parent meetings once a month. These meeting are informative in nature and usually held during the Wednesday troop meeting.

### PATROL METHOD

Troop 500 uses the **Patrol Method** for its Troop Leadership. The **Patrol Method** was first proscribed by Lord Baden Powell as a method wherein the boys could study group structure and develop scout skills while learning to be leaders. The Patrol Method allows the boy to elect a senior scout of the star rank or above as a **Senior Patrol Leader (SPL)**. The SPL then appoints Assistant Patrol Leaders (APL) to assist him in operating the Troop. The individual scouts are broken in to various patrols. Each patrol elects a Patrol Leader (PL). The Patrol Leader is responsible for the leadership of his patrol for a six-month period. The Patrol Leader appoints an Assistant Patrol Leader (APL) to assist in operating the patrol. The Scoutmaster will assist the SPL & APL in appointing other individual scouts to the remaining leadership positions within the Troop. (i. e. Scribe, Troop Guide, Instructor, Historian, Den Chief, Bugler, etc).

This group of elected and appointed "leaders" becomes the **Troop Leadership**. These individual scouts will meet initially at the start of the term to review the Troop activities for the next six months. They will then meet once a month (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday) at a Patrol Leaders Conference (PLC) to review the upcoming calendar and refine the activities. The SPL will run the Wednesday troop meetings on an agenda approved by the Scoutmaster.

### FIRST YEAR SCOUTS

The first year of scouting in Troop 500 is a busy one. The scouts generally begin the year in February having advanced from Webelos. The initial outing is a camping trip to facilitate the learning of initial scouting skill by the boys. They should anticipate the opportunity to complete the requirements for the rank of **Scout** on this outing. They may also be able to earn their **Tote'n Chip** on this trip. Earning this patch allows the boys to use knives, axes and saws when needed

at scout events. The **Scout** will then be able to focus on the requirements for the next rank prior to attending camp at Mataguay later that summer. The leadership of the new scouts is the same as the troop. The scouts will select a name for their patrol and elect a Patrol Leader. The Patrol Leader position will change every three months to allow for the opportunity for each new scout to perform in this capacity.

A **Troop Guide** and **Instructor** will be appointed by the Troop Leadership to assist the new scouts with their familiarization with the ways of Troop 500. This individual is generally one of the senior scouts in the Troop.

A **Patrol Parent** will be appointed for the new patrol. This individual will serve as an adult advisor to the scouts during their initial days with the troop. He may elect to continue in this capacity as an Assistant Scoutmaster or serve the troop in another capacity as an adult leader.

The balance of the first year is dedicated to providing the boys opportunities to continue on the scouting trail and complete the ranks of tenderfoot, second and ultimately first class. Each scout will be encouraged to find his own pace as he moves down this trail.

## **ADVANCEMENT**

The first year scouts are encouraged to focus on **rank advancement** in lieu of merit badges. The initial ranks in scouting are rigorous and provide exciting opportunities for the new scout to grow in the troop. Merit badge activities will become the focus at the weeklong summer camp in July or August of the first year.

To earn a rank advancement it will be necessary to have the requirement in your scout handbook **signed off**. Troop members of the rank of LIFE or those who are INSTRUCTORS are allowed to sign off a requirement when they are satisfied that you have fulfilled it. This can occur while on an outing where the requirement is completed or by performing the requirement for the older scout. Scouts are encouraged to obtain sign-offs from as many Life scouts as possible. Rank advancement sign-offs completed by any one Life scout shall be limited to 4 per rank in the absence of permission from the Scoutmaster.

When the rank requirements are complete the scout will need to schedule a **Scoutmasters Conference** with the Scoutmaster. The scout must take the initiative to schedule the meeting by contacting the Scoutmaster in person, through e-mail or phone contact. The Scoutmaster will review the requirements with the scout and evaluate his abilities related thereto. If the Scoutmaster approves the scout for the rank, then a **Board of Review** will be scheduled.

The **Board of Review** is scheduled by contacting the member of the **Troop Committee** in charge of rank advancement. A panel of three Adults will be assembled. They will meet with the scout and review those requirements for the particular rank. They will question the scout about his activities with the troop as they relate to the rank. Upon approval by the Board, the scout will receive his rank badge at the next **Court of Honor**.

A **Court of Honor** is held every four months to acknowledge the accomplishments for the members of the troop. Rank advancement, merit badges and other noteworthy awards are given at these events. When a scout reaches the rank of Eagle, an Eagle Court of Honor is held. These are special events that acknowledge the serious nature of this achievement and should not be missed by members of the troop. Parents and scouts of all rank are strongly encouraged to attend.

## MERIT BADGES

Each summer the Troop presents the scouts with several camps to attend where they can work on their **Merit Badge** requirements. Other opportunities abound at various functions and activities where the scout can work on and complete various Merit Badges. However the camps remain a staple for the completion of these requirements.

The first year scouts are encouraged to attend camp at the Mataguay Scout Reservation. This is the scout camp located in the mountains east of San Diego near Julian CA. At this camp the scouts will be exposed to scout life in a tent setting while attending sessions designed to assist them in completing the Merit Badge requirements. This will prepare them for the following years as they attend other camps and pursue the merit badge path of their choice.

The remaining scouts are offered a number of opportunities for camp during the summer. The Troop Leadership generally approves a camp such as Kern, Oljato, Cherry Valley or Emerald Bay for attendance by the scouts. The troop then arranges travel to this camp for the attendees. These camps offer the opportunity to complete various merit badge requirements while enjoying the outdoors.

To begin earning a **Merit Badge** the scout must obtain a **blue card** from the Scoutmaster. This informs the Scoutmaster of the intent to earn a particular badge and creates a record of the effort for the scouts use. The scout then contacts a **Merit Badge Counselor** from an approved list. (See <http://www.bsadic.org/advancement/mbadges/counselors/> for the online listing of counselors) The Merit Badge counselor then works with the scouts to ensure compliance with the requirements of the particular badge. The Merit Badge Counselor are trained, registered scouters who have knowledge in the area of the particular merit badge. Upon completion the counselor signs off on the blue card. The blue card is then returned to the Scoutmaster. The card is then given to the Troop Committee Advancement Chair for recording. The merit badge shall be awarded at the next Court of Honor.

## MEDICAL FORMS

Many of the camps and other outings require the scout to complete a medical form. The Class 1 medical form is basic health information that the scout provides to the troop upon signing up. It needs to be updated by the parents on a yearly basis. The Class 2 medical form is more complex. It is required for all residence camps and provides vital information to the BSA leadership. The Class 2 form requires a physical examination by a medical doctor. Several doctors in the area can assist in completing this form. Check with the Scoutmaster for more information. A Class 2 form is good for 3 years. The Class 3 Medical Form is for adult leaders over 40 years of age and scouts participating in high adventure activities. It requires an examination by a physician. This form must be renewed annually.

## CAMELBACKS

The focus of Troop 500 is backpacking. To assist the scouts in training for the many backpacking events Camelbacks are held each month. These are load-bearing hikes of ten miles or more. Some will be overnight. The goal is to enable the scout to become familiar with the necessities of life on the trail when he is carrying it on his back. The scout will learn how to select gear, what to bring, how to pack and safety on the trail. The Troop has a limited selection of backpacks and tents for use by the scouts. (Checklist available at <http://www.troop500.com/tips.html>)

Participation and completion of these camelbacks will enable the scout to qualify for the rigorous hikes taken by the Troop to the Sierras and Grand Canyon. A handout is available to assist the scout in keeping track of his hiking adventures and Troop related activities. (See <http://www.troop500.com/tips.html>)

### **CANOEING/KAYAKING TRIPS**

Each year the troop takes a trip to the Colorado River. To qualify for this event the scouts must complete the Canoeing merit badge. This is generally accomplished at a two-day campout at the scout facilities on Mission Bay. The weekend is filled with training and tips on how to handle a canoe. There is a swim test that must be completed as part of this badge. Details will be provided in advance of the event.