

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION OF 11 YEAR-OLD BOYS TO THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

Cedar Mill Oregon Stake

Each 11 year-old boy and his family need the ward's and troop's support to successfully begin Boy Scouting and prepare to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. During this key transition year, each boy needs specific encouragement from multiple sources. Success now leads to enthusiasm for and improved advancement toward the lifetime rank of Eagle Scout and the eternal blessings of becoming an endowed elder and missionary. Please implement these guidelines in ministering to each 11 year-old boy and his parents.

1. Bishoprics develop a welcoming and sustaining priesthood relationship with each boy while he is 11 years old, including at least the following:
 - a. Each child this age needs to know that his bishopric knows and loves him and shares his excitement to progress. The bishop or his counselor encourages each boy as he turns 11 to successfully complete Primary (with Faith in God) and Cub Scouting (with Arrow of Light), participate in Boy Scouts, and prepare to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. This does not require a formal interview and can be accomplished in a spirit of ministering in conjunction with the efforts and activities of parents and Primary leaders.
 - b. The bishopric, with assistance from the Primary presidency and Boy Scout troop committee chair, ensures that the 11 year-old Scout patrol is organized and operates as outlined in the *Scouting Handbook*, with at least two BSA-trained assistant scoutmasters. The bishopric calls a patrol leader and (as appropriate) a Troop Guide (*Scouting Handbook*, 4). When two or more wards host a combined 11 year-old patrol, at least one assistant scoutmaster is called from each ward.
 - c. The bishopric ensures that each adult Scout leader is properly registered with the BSA council before being sustained and beginning his or her service. With the troop committee chair, the bishopric ensures that each Scout leader is fully trained by BSA and receives all Church resources and training necessary for his or her calling. (See CHI, Book 2, 237; *Scouting Handbook*, 1, 2, 5.)
 - d. The bishopric asks the home teachers of each 10- and 11 year-old boy to support his parents in their primary responsibility to teach and prepare him to receive the priesthood (CHI, Book 2, 176).
 - e. Priesthood Preview is held in November and again during the following year as necessary, depending on how birthdays of 11 year-old boys fall throughout the year. This program is organized by the bishopric and should include the bishop and his counselor responsible for the Deacons (CHI, Book 2, 176, 231, 237).
 - f. A bishopric member accompanies the deacons quorum presidency to visit the home of each boy as he approaches his 12th birthday to welcome and train the boy in his priesthood duties, and provide needed materials to the boy and his parents (*Guidebook for Parents & Leaders*, 6, 14).
 - g. The bishop interviews each boy before he turns 12 to receive the Aaronic priesthood (CHI, Book 2, 231). He should consult with parents to determine whether also to issue the boy a limited-use temple recommend (CHI, Book 1, 78-79).

2. The Deacons Quorum Presidency has specific stewardship to prepare, welcome, and train each 11 year-old boy as he prepares for the Aaronic Priesthood. The president is to “teach them their duty, edifying one another” as each becomes a member of his quorum (Doctrine & Covenants 107:85).
 - a. The deacons quorum presidency presents a lesson to the Valiant 11 class early in the calendar year to teach about the Aaronic Priesthood (CHI, Book 2, 236). The lesson may take the entire class period, be open for questions and discussion, and address preparation, advancement, and activities. The lesson should generate an increased level of enthusiasm for the priesthood and Mutual.
 - b. As each boy’s 12th birthday approaches, the deacons quorum president or presidency and bishopric councilor visit each boy and his family in his home to welcome the soon-to-be deacon into the quorum, train him in the duties of a deacon, and provide him with his own copies of *For the Strength of Youth*, *Preach My Gospel*, *Fulfilling Our Duty to God: Deacon*, the troop’s annual calendar, a quorum/troop leadership and telephone list, summer camp information, and other needed materials. The bishop’s counselor should present the parents with the *Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth*, discuss its application, and encourage them to read it (*Guidebook for Parents*, 6, 14).
 - c. The deacons quorum secretary notifies the incoming deacon and his parents of upcoming activities, camps, and quorum service opportunities well in advance, and continues to do so after he enters the quorum.
3. Scout Leaders play a crucial role in a boy’s life during this important year. The patrol must introduce Scouting correctly and be fun. Principles taught this year should launch the young man into priesthood service and Scouting advancement with enthusiasm.
 - a. The bishopric organizes this patrol, which operates under direction of the Primary presidency and the troop committee, as noted above. The Primary president is a member of the troop committee, and this patrol’s assistant scoutmasters should attend and be fully engaged with the troop committee (*Scouting Handbook*, 3, 5). The troop committee is responsible for recording 11 year-old advancements and ensuring adult leadership training. Bishopric and troop leaders should coordinate closely and regularly with the Primary and the assistant scoutmasters.
 - b. The 11 year-old patrol should be invited to participate in daytime troop activities on a scheduled basis. While the 11 year-old patrol usually meets separately from the troop, ward and Scout leaders should identify regular opportunities to include 11 year-old Scouts in service and Scouting activities.
 - c. The assistant scoutmasters plan three one-night camps each year and ensure that each boy is prepared with the skills necessary for a successful experience (*Scouting Handbook*, 4).
 - d. The assistant scoutmasters teach the patrol method and ensure that all patrol activities are planned in advance, safe, fun, and supportive of families. The troop committee fully supports the assistant scoutmasters, including providing boards of review, advancement support, registration, calendaring, and camp support. The patrol should participate in the troop’s courts of honor.
4. A BSA unit commissioner is assigned specifically to assist 11 year-old patrols in the Cedar Mill Oregon Stake. Ward and troop leaders should call on this resource regularly for training and advice. This unit commissioner also plans an annual camp experience for all 11 year-old patrols in the stake.