

Rocket Into Scouting Playbook



Rocket Into Scouting

The Rocket Into Scouting program is designed to take your recruiting efforts to new heights. With a focus on fun, this program invites families in your community to experience the adventures that only Scouting can offer. The program leverages an activity that kids love (building and launching rockets) while showing parents that Scouting will foster their child's creativity, initiative, and sense of wonder.

Concept

Your council or district will host a community event for parents and youth to design, build, and launch their own rockets. All of the details (supplies, snacks, instructors, games) will be taken care of by the council or district. All the families need to worry about is having a great time. Through this simple interaction, parents will see the experience, friendships, and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that Scouting can offer their children. It's sort of a "test drive" of the Scouting experience. Scouting employees and volunteers will be on-hand to help with the event, answer any questions, and of course, sign up new Scouts! This playbook will act as your guide for planning, promoting, and carrying out an event in your area.

Planning the Activity

Just as with real rockets, being prepared is key for a successful launch. Fortunately, this program isn't actual rocket science. This is meant to be a fun, easy to implement community event. But there are a few things you will need to have in place beforehand, so here are some suggestions to get started.

Step 1 – Determine Your Strategy

The Rocket into Scouting program can be used as either a single, stand-alone event, or as part of a broader recruiting effort. For example, the program could be promoted at back-to-school nights or other similar presentations to incentivize families to join Scouting and receive their rocket when they sign up. Or you could plan to host this as an open community event and be prepared to recruit and provide rockets at the event itself. Promoting the event at presentations beforehand while still having additional rockets available at the event is also an option.

Step 2 – Set a Budget

Once you have committed to hosting a Rocket into Scouting event, budget the appropriate funds needed so you can provide each boy who attends a rocket kit (some councils have been successful securing donations to help cover these expenses). Visit ScoutStuff.org to research the different types of rocket kits available. Other costs to consider include event venue, food & drink, awards and prizes, and other miscellaneous event costs.

Step 3 – Pick a Date

This is an outdoor activity, so it should be relatively warm outside when the event is held. We know Scouts are tough, but we'll also have parents and youth participating with us for the first time, so it's very important that this is a pleasant experience. Always have a back-up plan if it turns out to be a rainy day when you show up for the event. For example, you could move indoors and still build the rockets, but just not launch them at that time. Specify a beginning and ending time but advertise the event as an "open time" for when families can show up and participate.

Step 4 – Reserve a Venue

Select a family friendly, open location to host the event. A city park, local nature center, or even Scout camp (as long as it's close by) are all great options. The most important things are that it's easy to get to and that the venue has plenty of space for those who attend and for all of the rockets that will be launching. This generally requires a large open space. Be sure to reserve the venue months in advance. And also be sure to check with your local city or county to be sure there are no restrictions on launching rockets (such as fire restrictions or noise ordinances).

Step 5 – Secure Materials

A shopping list of potential materials is available, but your most basic need will be a rocket for each of the youth attending the event. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to order certain items to ensure you have everything needed prior to the event.

Step 6– Provide Meals

Plan to have a meal service run throughout the event. Plan on having a designated lunch time, but also keep in mind that depending on when families show up, some may want to eat before launching rockets and some after. Be flexible. Choose something simple such as hotdogs and snacks.

Step 7 – Organize Staff and Volunteers

Like most things in Scouting, this event will only work with the help of our dedicated volunteers and professional staff. This is a great opportunity for parents, alumni, and donors to get involved. Below are suggested staffing needs with recommended numbers of people. Be aware that your staffing needs will vary depending on how many people show up to the event.

Promoting the Activity

It doesn't matter how fun the event is if nobody shows up. Here are a few tried and true tactics you can use to get the word out. Remember to think outside the box and apply them to your community's specific situation. We have created customizable assets to fit your individual needs that can be found by accessing the [BSA Brand Center](#).

Current Members

Be sure your current parents and volunteers are aware of the event and are invited to participate. This is a recruiting event, and our best recruiters are those who are currently in love with our programs. A Scout family that brings their friends to an event is one of the most powerful recruiting tools we have.

Social Media

Be sure to promote the event on your council's social media channels. Encourage parents and adults to share photos from the event on their Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts. Often, any local businesses you partner with will be willing to share the event with their online communities as well.

E-Mail

Reach out to your network digitally by sending them an email that promotes the event and includes links to learn more about Scouting in their community.

Printed Materials

Fliers, posters, yard signs, etc. are great ways to drive awareness and promote the event in your local area. Professionally designed assets have been created for you to leverage during your recruiting efforts.

School Outreach

School outreach is a great opportunity to promote your Rocket into Scouting event. Back to School recruiting nights provide an opportunity to invite new Scouts to the event and allow boys who are not signed up yet to see Scouting in action. For new Scouts that sign up at the back to school night, a rocket kit could be provided to them as an incentive for signing up. Daily morning announcements, take home mail, and weekly emails to parents are also great options to explore.

Public Relations / Earned Media

Reach out to your local newspapers and news stations and invite them to attend the event and do a story. Local news organizations usually appreciate advanced notice so be sure to let them know at least a week or two in advance. Additionally, consider inviting a local blogger as well.

Community Partnership

Work with local businesses to have them provide prizes for the kids. Partner with churches and other local nonprofits (such as a science center or kids club) and invite them to participate as well. In addition to taking flyers to community centers, make sure it ends up on their online calendars

Holding the Activity

The event itself is organized into four different stations that families and their Scouts will move through.

Station 1 – Check-in / Check-out

At the check-in station, provide each Scout and family with their rocket and an agenda for the day. At the check-in station, families will also be able to ask questions and receive additional information about Scouting.

Station 2 – Design and Assembly

Families should then take their rocket kit to an open area for assembly. Make sure you have plenty of staff and volunteers on-site to assist families with any questions or help needed assembling the rockets. This station will also have all necessary supplies for assembling the rockets.

Station 3 – Launch

After the rocket has been assembled, families will then go to a designated launch area that is very open and safe for a rocket launch. Plan to have designated staff and volunteers in this area to help Scouts safely launch their rocket. This is also a great spot to take pictures!

Station 4 – Awards & Lunch

After launching their rockets, the Scout and family will be given their awards and prizes (if applicable) and served lunch. This could even be organized as an award ceremony.

Recruiting at The Event

Recruiting at the event itself should occur naturally and organically. When parents and youth have the opportunity to participate in Scouting and see what it's all about, they tend to be much more responsive to recruiting messages. Be sure to have plenty of recruiting material on-hand and provide opportunities to sign up, but remember to keep it light and informal. Families came here to have a fun time, not to hear a sales pitch.

Follow Up

After the event, it is appropriate to follow up with the parents and families that attended and include them in future council communications. Send an email to new families thanking them for their time and sharing photos or recaps from the event. Include an invitation to join a local pack if they haven't already. The important thing is to follow up and ensure that those who have a desire to become part of Scouting are able to do so.

Thanks!

