



PLANS & IDEAS: CLIMBING & RAPPELLING

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OBJECTIVES

This month's activities should:

- Teach Scouts the principles of Climb On Safely.
- Show them how to identify climbing safety hazards and how to avoid them.
- Help them become familiar with climbing equipment.
- Teach the knots used in climbing.
- Demonstrate the difference between climbing and rappelling.
- Let Scouts learn and demonstrate climbing and rappelling skills.

LEADERSHIP PLANNING

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items when choosing climbing and rappelling as your program feature during your planning meetings.

- Where can we find a BSA-certified climbing instructor to help us learn about climbing and rappelling?
- Where do we want to climb, and what climbing routes are available at the site we want to visit?
- What is our unit's current skill level? Do our climbers have the skills required for the site we want to visit?
- What crew equipment do we need?
- How much will the outing cost?
- Do we have the correct number of qualified and certified adults for the meetings and main event?
- How might the weather affect our plans?
- How can we involve parents?
- How can we incorporate Scout skills and advancement into the main event?
- To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

Meeting Plan		
Activity	Materials/Supplies	Time
Planning		
Safety Instruction		
Skills Instruction		
Main Event		
After the Meeting		

PREOPENING IDEAS

[Preopening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

- As Scouts arrive, show selected climbing and rappelling videos from the Internet.
- Display ropes and equipment as Scouts arrive, as well as rope logs if possible.
- Show Scouts how to inspect ropes and equipment for damage and excessive wear.
- Challenge each Scout on arrival to tie a one-handed bowline.

OPENING IDEAS

[Opening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

GROUP INSTRUCTION IDEAS

Hazards and Equipment

- Lead a discussion on the most likely hazards that may be encountered while climbing. Include information on risks, weather, nature, injuries, equipment, etc.
- Introduce basic climbing gear. Display the gear with the option for Scouts to handle it and ask questions.

Climb On Safely and Knots

- Present an overview of [Climb On Safely](#), ensuring that all Scouts understand each of the eight points.

Climbing and Protection

- Explain and demonstrate the different techniques for climbing.
- Discuss top roping and lead climbing and rappelling, using diagrams or photos as examples.

Rappelling

- Discuss rappelling commands and the relationship between the rappeller and the belayer.
- Discuss how climbing and rappelling commands differ.

SKILLS INSTRUCTION IDEAS



Hazards and Equipment

- • Discuss proper attire and need for helmet, closed-toe shoes, and harness.
- • Learn how to put on and adjust harness and helmet properly.
- • Learn how to inspect and care for a rope.



- • Review the above equipment and skills.
- • Learn the use of the equipment for anchors.
 - • Compare different carabiners and discuss how to use them properly.
- Learn the proper care and placement of edge protection.
- Show how to use and care for webbing.

- ◆ • Review the above equipment and skills.
- ◆ • Get an introduction to rock climbing shoes; get a shoe fitting if possible.
 - ◆ • Review and learn about the protection equipment needed for lead climbing.
- Practice the knots for climbing, rappelling, belaying, and anchors.

- Learn about the different types of anchors.

Climb On Safely and Knots

- Learn and practice the figure eight on a bight, water knot, and double fisherman's knot (grapevine bend).

- Review the above knots.
- Learn how to rig the equipment used for anchors.
- Learn and practice the figure 8 follow through.

- Review the above knots.
- Learn and practice the Prusik knot.

Climbing and Protection

- Learn the commands between climber and belayer.
- Learn proper belaying technique. Set up a basic belay system on the floor, and practice as if climbing.

- Review climber commands and belaying techniques.
- Learn how to set a three-point anchor safely.

- Review the above skills.
- Learn the principles of lead climbing.
- Discuss where and when one should use nuts, hexcentrics, or cam devices.

Rappelling

Learn and practice rappelling skills:

- How to tie in
- Different braking devices
- Going over the edge

- Review the above rappelling skills.
- Learn how to belay a rappeller.

- Review the above rappelling and belaying skills.
- Learn how to ascend a rope using a prusik knot or ascending device.

BREAKOUT GROUP IDEAS

Getting Ready for the Main Event

- Practice harnessing, helmeting, shoeing, and having Scouts check each other to make sure gear is put on correctly.
- Menu Planning
- Duty Roster Planning

Discussion Ideas

Determine what [requirements](#) will be needed to earn the climbing merit badge after the main event.

Preparation for the meeting's game or challenge

GAME AND CHALLENGE IDEAS

[Library of Games and Challenges](#)

- **Shape Shifters**

- *Materials:* A long piece of webbing tied in a loop with a water knot
- *Method:* This game is meant to foster communication and trust. Have all Scouts grab on to the piece of webbing with both hands. The leader of the game tells everyone to close their eyes and to not speak during the exercise. The leader then asks everyone to get into a circle without talking. Repeat this exercise with different shapes (triangles, squares, etc.). Give each Scout a chance to lead.
- *Notes:* If a large troop, divide in two teams and use two pieces of webbing. The teams could compete to see which forms a shape faster.

- **Climbing Knot Relay**

- *Materials:* 1 to 3-foot piece of rope per team of three to five Scouts.
- *Method:* Designate starting and ending locations and a stump or surface—the ground is OK—where knots will be tied. When the game leader says “Go!” and names a knot, the first person on each team runs to the stump/surface and ties that knot. A judge at the location checks it. If it is correct, the player unties the knot and runs back to tag the next player. If it is incorrect, the judge teaches the knot and lets the player try again. The leader can add as many knots as desired, but each player must tie each knot.
- *Notes:* Knots could include figure eight followthrough, figure eight on a bight, double fisherman's, bowline, butterfly knot, prusik knot, and double overhand knot

- **Ground Belay Relay**

- *Materials:* Two or more ropes (60 to 180 feet long), at least two harnesses for each rope, a rudimentary anchor (webbing and carabiners), and a belay device for each rope
- *Method:* Along a flat surface, set up two or more simulated top-rope belays. Divide into teams that will relay a belayed “climber” along the floor. Be sure proper commands are used. Team members can exchange harnesses as needed.
- *Scoring:* This is a timed race. A penalty of 5 seconds is assessed for each mistake, such as wrong knots, improper harness wear, or missing commands.
- *Notes:* Use variations as needed, but keep the focus on safety.

- **What Am I?**

- *Materials:* An assortment of gear and knots, such as harness, ATC, Grigri, rappelling eight, rope, cord, webbing, figure eight follow-through, figure eight on a bight, double fisherman's, bowline, butterfly knot, Prusik, and double overhand; sticky notes that are sequentially numbered; a piece of paper and pencil for every Scout
- *Method:* Lay out all the gear, putting a numbered sticky note on each piece. Each patrol member then identifies each piece and writes it down on paper.
- *Scoring:* Patrols check their responses and earn a point for each correct answer. The team with the most points wins.

CLOSING IDEAS

- [Leader's Minutes](#)
- [Closing Ceremonies](#)

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TROOP LEADER RESOURCE LINKS

[Advancement Resources](#)

[Awards Central](#)

[Boy Scouts](#)

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#)

[SCOUTBOOK](#)

[Scouting Forms from the National Council](#)

[ScoutCast](#)

[Scouting Magazine](#)

[ScoutStuff.org \(Retail Site\)](#)

[ScoutingWire](#)

[Sign in to MyScouting.org](#)

[Take Youth Protection Training](#)

[The Outdoor Adventure Planning Guide](#)

[Troop Leader Guidebook Appendix](#)

[Uniforms](#)