

Blue and Gold Banquet Planning

The Blue and Gold Banquet, the birthday dinner for the Cub Scout Program, is held during the anniversary month for the Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts of America was organized in February 1910, and the Cub Scout program was organized 20 years later, in 1930. February is also the birth month of Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting. Each February, Packs across the country plan and conduct a Blue and Gold Banquet for the entire family to celebrate the anniversary of Scouting. This big Pack celebration gets its name from the Cub Scout colors – Blue and Gold. The Blue and Gold Banquet is really a birthday dinner, so it should involve a lot of planning and be **really special**. Blue and Gold Banquets are held throughout the month by packs all across the country. **NOTE TO EXPERIENCED LEADERS:** Be sure that the “first year” pack leaders know just what a Blue and Gold Banquet is and what “traditions” your pack follows.

Some Packs have the banquet at a banquet facility; other packs prefer to have a potluck affair with each family bringing a covered dish; and some packs choose to buy the food and have it prepared by a committee, then divide the cost amongst those attending the dinner. For those packs where money may be an issue, then have a birthday party. A celebration with ice cream and cake instead of a dinner. The plan is not important; it is the Cub Scouting that takes place during the preparation and at the dinner that really counts.

Dens should sit together. Guests may be invited and are seated either at a head table or with the dens.

A February Blue and Gold Banquet is a perfect time to also conduct an Arrow of Light and Webelos Crossover Ceremony. You can contact your Order of the Arrow Lodge to inquire the availability of their Ceremonies Team. Your Troops can also conduct Crossover Ceremonies for the boys as well.

Base your banquet on a theme so you can have a base from which you can decorate and organize skits and songs from.

Decorations may be as elaborate or as simple as you wish. Attractive menu cards or dinner programs can be made, place cards, centerpieces, placemats, nut cups, and favors are all suggested things that might be used at the banquet.

Cub Scouts should take part in making decorations; however, please be sure that what the boys do are boy-type activities.

Involve as many parents as possible; Den Leaders should NOT have to do all the work. They should be free to mingle with parents. Appoint a set-up committee, publicity, program committee, and clean-up crew. Determine your Pack’s needs, and then organize your committee.

The dinner program should be entertainment from within the pack, or from the outside. And don’t forget the importance of recognizing the advancement of the boys.

Organization – the key word!

Steps to Planning the Blue and Gold Banquet

1. **Select a date, time, place.** To be successful, the banquet must be well planned in advance. Start planning early. Allow you and your boys plenty of time to make the evening a success.
2. **The pack committee selects a banquet chairperson.** That person recruits sub-committee members to carry out the responsibilities on the entire process. Involve as many people as possible.

The Banquet often takes the place of the February Pack meeting, although it is not necessarily held on the regular Pack meeting night.

In selecting a place, consider the following:

1. Adequate space for seating and displays. How many tables are needed?
2. Availability of parking spaces, restrooms, coat racks.
3. Program needs, such as microphone, stage, etc
4. Convenience for food preparation and /or serving.
5. Reserve meeting place well in advance!!!!

3. **Committees**

A. **Physical Arrangements** – plan to set-up the night before or a least well in advance of banquet time. You should be ready when guests begin to arrive. Perhaps one den's parents could take the responsibility for setting up, and another is clean-up crew.

Again, organization is important.

Make floor plans of tables and chairs for the dinner.

B. **Welcoming Committee** – greets guests, has guestbook available to be signed and aids families and honored guests in finding their respective seats. Den Chiefs and Webelos can be very helpful with the seating.

C. **Program Committee** – sees that programs are printed for the guests, acquires the necessary props and sound equipment for the program, and works with the Den Leaders in producing the program.

D. **Dinner Committee**

Select a meal plan

- **Restaurant:** A local restaurant is selected as the banquet site and a menu is chosen. Charges are based on the restaurant charge. Be sure to secure the cost of the meal, plus tax and tip.
 1. Leave deposit to hold date and facility.
 2. Keep cost down by choosing a fixed menu/buffets are cheaper than sit-down.
 3. Asked for a selection for adults – Lasagna and turkey; and a selection for kids – chicken fingers.
 4. Collect money prior to banquet. Restaurants will not refund money for no-shows.

If Catered –

1. Contact caterer – agree on menu and cost.
2. Take reservation and estimate cost.
3. Check with caterer on time of delivery, finding out if they provide plates, silverware, and napkins. Are drinks and dessert included?
4. Catered dinner – be sure you have DEFINITE prices before committing!
5. Plan two serving lines if more than 150 people are attending.
6. Collect money prior to banquet. At least two weeks in advance.

Steps to Planning the Blue and Gold Banquet(cont')

D. Dinner Committee(cont')

Select a meal plan (cont')

- Potluck –
 1. Pack buys the meat. Then each family brings a covered dish.
 2. Or parents could sign-up to bring dishes on a planned menu
 3. Each family brings a meat dish and covered dish (casserole, vegetable, salad, or dessert) All dishes are put together in buffet form.
If you have potluck dinner, the Pack should plan to buy coffee, cream, sugar, rolls, butter, beverages. Also salt, pepper, and any other condiments.
A decorated cake for Scouting will accentuate your celebration.

- Committee is Prepared???
 1. Determine serving needs – kitchen utensils
 2. Select menu and estimate cost
 3. Assign someone to serve if needed (Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H are possibilities- serve yourself)

*** NOTE: Plan to have a cake or cupcakes. This is Scouting's Birthday!**

E. Clean-up Crew – should wait to clean up until guests have left. The parents should help assume this responsibility in a particular den. Be sure you leave the facility in as good or better condition than you found it.

4. Program – should be something really special. Plan ahead, practice a lot, and make it really meaningful and entertaining.

- Select a Master of Ceremonies – usually the Cubmaster
- Make assignments for various parts of the program
- Plans room decorations and displays. Each den handles table decorations
Develop and make copies of the program
- Avoid speeches on the program
- Decide whether to held an FOS presentation

A. Entertainment

1. Opening and Closing Ceremonies – should be planned to go with program and be meaningful.
2. Skits – dens can prepare skits that tell parents the story and meaning of Cub Scouting. Include props, costumes, and songs in your skits. Parents enjoy seeing their children perform.
3. Speaker – keep in mind the age of the audience and plan the length of the speech accordingly.
4. Songs – group singing encourages spirit and involves everyone. It helps “break the ice”.

B. Recognition of Cubs and Leaders

1. Advancement Awards – have *impressive* Advancement Ceremonies.
2. Leaders – present certificates of appreciation to Pack Leaders and to any parents who have helped in the Pack extensively. Don't forget the Den Chiefs and Pack Committee Members.
3. Chartering Organization – express appreciation for their sponsorship. Some packs also receive their charter at this time.

Steps to Planning the Blue and Gold Banquet(cont')

C. Make assignments for various parts of the program

1. Invocation
2. Welcome and Introduction of Guests
3. Ceremonies
4. Recognitions
5. Entertainment

D. Typical Banquet Program

1. Opening Ceremony
2. Welcome and Introduction of Guests
3. Greetings from Head of Institution
4. Invocation
5. Dinner
6. Group Singing
7. Entertainment
8. Awards
9. Leader Recognition
10. AOL and Crossover Ceremony (should be highlight of Banquet)
11. Announcements and Thanks
12. Closing

5. Decorations – should follow a theme.

- A. Room decorations – use pennants, balloons, sunbursts, crepe paper streamers, or anything to create a bright, colorful atmosphere for all to enjoy. Don't forget display tables.
- B. Table decorations – each den makes placemats, favors, napkin rings, place cards, and Nametags for whoever will be sitting with their den.
- C. Centerpieces – created for the tables by mothers, dens, and/or leaders.
If you have a parent that is really creative-centerpieces or favors to be taken home by everyone is a great thing!! And it makes that parent feel included. Don't forget to thank them at the Blue and Gold Ceremony.
- D. All dens should make decorations for the head tables special guests.
 - Decorative Programs – giving the order of activities for the evening could be handed out as guests arrive. It would be nice to list the Cub Scouts, Leaders, and Honored Guests in these. If you have someone that is really good with the computer- how about pictures of what has been going on in the pack over the past few months.

6. Publicity

- A. Inform all Pack families of the date, time, place, and cost.
- B. The Cub Scouts can make invitations for families and special guests. You will have to determine ahead how many people each Cub Scout can invite. Be sure to get your invitations out in plenty of time for responses to come back.

Typical Invitation:

Cub Scout Pack # ____ of _____ (town) requests the pleasure of your company for our Blue and Gold Banquet on _____, the _____ of February at _____ O'clock at the _____ (location).

RSVP (name, Phone #)

Steps to Planning the Blue and Gold Banquet(cont')

C. Suggested Guest List – many Packs invite guests from outside their Packs to the banquet. People who have done much to encourage and promote the Scouting program. Below are some people you might consider.

1. Head of Chartered Organization
2. Scoutmaster of affiliated Troop
3. Minister
4. Custodian of building where meetings take place
5. District Roundtable Personnel
6. District Executive
7. District Commissioner
8. District Chairman
9. Unit Commissioner
10. Former Scout Leaders
11. Business Contributors
12. Scoutmaster and Junior Leaders of Troops for Crossover Ceremonies

Planning Calendar

June to August: Annual Pack Planning Conference. Decide on time and place for the Blue and Gold if possible or if not already done. If a school location is desired, be sure all requisitions for building are started. If outside banquet hall is desired make sure you have written contract with provider.

Recruit the Blue and Gold Chairman!!!

September to October: Recruit sub-committee chairmen (Physical Arrangements, Welcoming, Program, Dinner Committee and any other committees that fall under those chairmen)

November: Check reservation of location. Sub-committees begin duties as stated. Write down plans, Share with others on committee.

December:

(timing can be dependent on the date of your Blue and Gold in February: is it early February or late February? Late February gives you a few more weeks to plan. If it is early, push your schedule up a bit.)

Week One: Blue and Gold committee to meet with Den Leaders to give ideas for decorations, program, invitation, information, etc. Dinner committee needs to have decision made on what to eat and how it will be served (if catered or restaurant – this should be done several months in advance). Entertainment must be secured and/or assignments made. Physical arrangements committee visits location of banquet to check out needs.

Week Two: Dens begin to work on decorations (gathering ideas, thoughts, etc so they may start working on them in January and be done by the end of January)

Week Four: Invitations for Blue and Gold Banquet go out to families. Special Guest invitations mailed.

Planning Calendar

January:

Week One: Blue and Gold Chairman meets with sub-committees. How are dens coming along? Location good? Entertainment booked? Program being finalized? Food? Supplies? Invitations?

Week Two: Dens should be working on decorations.

Week Four: Make sure you have supplies, plates, coffee, forks, spoons, knives, condiments, special decorations that need to be provided by Pack. (any themed decorations by BSA run out quickly-order them through your scout shop and have them saved for you in early January)

February:

Week One: Reconfirm location, time, and place. Reconfirm Entertainment. Buy any other supplies that you may have missed. Deadline for RSVP depending on date of Blue and Gold?

Week Two: Program agenda ready for printing. Let dinner committee know reservation numbers to make final food order.

Week Three: Make seating chart. Give to physical arrangements committee.

Banquet Day: Early PM, set up, schedule so if people need to go back home before dinner they have time.

Have fun, Late PM, clean up!

Be mindful this is a guide only. Depending on the date of your Blue and Gold Banquet, you must adjust your Planning Calendar. Not every Banquet is the same-so you must add whatever you need. A lot of the bigger and more popular halls need one year's notice these days so you may need to put a deposit down a year ahead of time instead of the month of your Annual Planning Conference. (Meet to decide on a facility one year in advance and start the Banquet Program Planning at your Annual Planning Conference four to five months later.) There are a lot of factors to consider dependent upon your type of Banquet, where you live, size of your unit, etc.