

Identify potential Scout leaders with the Oreo Test

by Bryan Wendell

Wondering whether that parent on the other side of the meeting room would make a good Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA or Venturing leader?

Try the Oreo Test. I think it's brilliant. Here's how it works ...

The Oreo Test

Pre-Step: Check with other Scouters

Speak with the Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Committee Chair, etc. and see who they may think would be a great help or asset to the pack or troop. Then, get your game face on ...

Step 1: Make your approach

Walk up to a person who shows interest in helping out. Chit-chat with them. You learn a lot about people in a simple conversation (micro-twitches and all).

Step 2: Get them laughing

Get them laughing about some of the fun anecdotes of Scouting. (One hour a week and all)

Step 3: Ask them to do a simple favor

After a little chit-chat, ask them to do a simple favor. Ask them if next week they would bring in a pack of Oreo cookies to share as a snack (for the Scouts, for a leaders' meeting, etc.).

Step 4: Let the test begin

So why this simple task? 100 percent of the prospective leaders in our pack and troop have been asked to bring in Oreo cookies. They look at you puzzled and you politely say, "See you next week."

By now you are probably wondering why Oreo cookies, right?

Step 5: See what they bring next week

Empty-Handed: If they come back next week without them they will probably have an excuse. You have no use for excuses. You only need solutions.

We all work, go to school, have disabilities, have sick kids, etc. Adapt, overcome, find a way just like all the other dedicated adults in the pack that on top of life remember the craft, or the Scoutmaster who stays two hours after the meeting helping Scouts and he/she still has to get up for work at 4 or 5 a.m.

Snack-size Oreos: If they come back with the snack-size pack, they did what was asked, but the bare minimum. Bare minimum does not equal good leader quality.

Who wants to work with folks who do the bare minimum? It's only a matter of time that their work ethic will be dipping into less than the bare minimum, and the program will suffer which means the boys and girls will suffer.

Regular Oreos: If they come back with a thing of Oreo cookies that is the normal pack, they have followed directions, met the challenge and sacrificed \$3.50 of their own money and time shopping to get it.

They might just be worth the leader conversation.

Double Stuf: If they come back with Double Stuf, now we are talking potential. They exceeded expectations. They get the leader conversation that night. Usually these folks walk in with a smile holding them up.

You get a laugh, they get a laugh, we all get a cookie! Stephen Covey would be proud with the Win-Win-Win!

Nutter Butters: If they show up with Nutter Butters, I'll make them a Scoutmaster or Cubmaster only if they were paying attention to the anecdotes from Step 2.

Always make two jokes during Step 2: 1.) It's not a campout without burnt pork butt involved (Scouts burning bacon) and 2.) It's not a campout without Nutter Butters. I don't really know why the second, but they always make the backpack trips.

No-Shows: More than not, the folks never show up again. They self-eliminate the time you have to spend with them as a leader and more than not, the folks who come back the next week with Oreo cookies bring more than one pack ... which is the final test.

Enough for Everyone: If they bring back cookies to you, who cares... If they thought it through to make sure each and every youth in the pack or troop has a cookie, their heart is in the right place from the word go.

Surround yourself with leadership who has their heart in the game for the Scouts. The Scouts come first. Always.

Step 6: Analysis

See, a simple test of Oreo cookies gets you quality leaders who have the right heart, stay the longest in the organization, attract like-minded others, parents and Scouts.

Who would have thought all that from a cookie? End of the day ... it doesn't matter if you are "Dad Eagle, Super Scout" ... or a brand-new single mom. Just bring in Oreo cookies next week, and let's see where this goes.

Plus, you can see the entire room smile that next week when someone walks in with Oreo cookies because no one but the leaders ever know why, and the Scouts will eat anything chocolate! So, win-win ... again!