

THE TRAIL LIFE PLANNING, BUDGETING, FUNDRAISING, AND RECRUITING GUIDE SERIES •

PART 5
OF 5



**JOIN
THE TRAIL!**

Recruiting Guide



WHY RECRUIT?

Recruiting is the reward for all your planning in Parts I-4

A well-planned program year leads to a great recruiting season. "Join the Trail!" recruiting furthers the great commission, an opportunity to meet new Trailmen where they are, and to grow them into godly young men. Discipleship requires multiplication! Recruiting brings in potential new leaders, new experiences, new faces, and new friends to the Troop. Welcoming new families develops skills in hospitality, kindness, and member orientation. Very often, new members add new outdoor opportunities, new leadership development, and servant's hearts that grow with the experience.



BUT HOW?

**“ AN OLD ADAGE SAYS,
'IF YOU'RE GIVEN
AN HOUR TO CHOP
DOWN A TREE,
SPEND 45 MINUTES
SHARPENING THE AX.'
THE SAME CAN BE SAID OF
PLANNING YOUR 'JOIN THE
TRAIL!' OPEN HOUSE.**



”

Steps to Plan Your Open House

STEP ONE:

Determine date/time and promote your Open House Event. (See pages 4-5)

STEP TWO:

Determine responsibilities. (See pages 6-7)

STEP THREE:

Set-up the room. (See pages 8-9)

STEP FOUR:

Follow up with new recruit's families. (See pages 10-11)

Throughout this resource, items with a * indicate further resources available at TrailLifeConnect.com, including a full array of promotional items like posters, banners, yard signs, flyers, media blurbs, Facebook promotions, and the unique Trail Life Tentvitation. Additional free Join the Trail! resources can be found at <https://www.trailifeusa.com/join-the-trail>



STEP ONE

Determine Date/Time and Promote Your Open House

Scheduled for ____ / ____ / ____



BEST PRACTICES FOR "JOIN THE TRAIL!" SUCCESS

BEST Promotions

- Prayer
- Personal Invitation of Trailmen's parents to their friends
- Personal Invitation of Trailmen to their friends
- Announcements/video at your church
- Announcement on church marquee and bulletins
- Adventure Zone Booth at school/church open house/fall festival/homeschool groups
- Flyers handed out at school / homeschool groups
- Flyers handed out at local churches
- Contact all Find-a-Troop inquiries in your TLC "member prospects" tile

BETTER Promotions

- Social Media Promotion
- Open House date submitted to online community calendars or newspapers
- Post messages to Homeschool Co-op or School media and email threads

GOOD Promotions

- Yard signs at intersections or in neighborhoods
- Radio Public Service Announcements
- Recruiting events (bowling, camping, airsoft tournament, etc.)

* Additional free resources available on TrailLifeConnect.com help menu and at <https://www.trailifeusa.com/join-the-trail>

Now take the promotions you chose on page 4 and list them here along with who will be coordinating each one.

JULY

What	When (Date)	Who
Set Open House Date		

AUGUST

What	When (Date)	Who
Start Social Media Promotion		

SEPTEMBER

What	When (Date)	Who
Plan Open House "2nd Chance" Invites		
Call all Find-a-Troop inquiries		

STEP TWO

Determine Agenda and Responsibilities for Open House Event



OPEN HOUSE AGENDA Key Points & Goals/Person(s) Responsible

30 minutes maximum

- Flag Ceremony (conducted by Trailmen) | Who _____
- Prayer (conducted by Troop Chaplain or Trailman) | Who _____
- Oath (conducted by Trailman) | Who _____
- Dismiss all youth to kids activities* (optional) | Who _____
- Introduce Leaders | Who _____
- Distribute Troop Calendar & Cover Highlights | Who _____
- Emphasize Parent/Son Opportunities | Who _____
- Explain Joining Process / Q&A | Who _____
- Register Trailmen (laptops & WiFi available) | Who _____
- Closing (invite families to stay and connect) | Who _____



OPEN HOUSE CHECKLIST

- Sign-in Sheet for recruit contact info*
- Customizable "Welcome to Our Troop" Flyers, see p. 12
- Laptops & credit card readers (more if expecting a crowd!)
- Troop Display / Projector / Pictures
- Script / Agenda
- Pens
- Tabletop Signs (for each Patrol)*
- Leaders / Helpers in place
- Single Page Calendar to distribute
- Flags (American and Troop)

NEW RESOURCES: "New Parent Packet," "New Parent FAQ," and "Welcome To Trail Life Video" are available in the "Welcome to Trail Life" tile on the TLC dashboard.

Other considerations for making a good first impression and helping the Open House run smoothly:

- Kids Activities* (registered leaders who can lead Trailmen and siblings in fun activities – remember 2-Deep Leadership is required!)
- Refreshments
- Decorations (Centerpieces*, Room Set-up, etc.)
- Handbooks (consider having extras on hand to present to those who register immediately)

Further resources available at TrailLifeConnect.com in the JTT Recruiting Materials section of the help menu

4 Ways to Sign up Families!

- **Text Message:**
Send an SMS sign up link to parent's cell phone
- **Email:**
Send an email sign up link to parent's email address
- **Kiosk:**
Allow parents to sign up **NOW** in-person via laptop or device
- **QR Code:**
Allow parents to sign up by scanning the Troop-specific QR code found at the bottom of the "Add New Adult" section of your "My Troop" menu in TLC

Visit the help section of TrailLifeConnect.com for more details on using these features!





STEP THREE

Set Up The Room

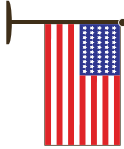
The sample room setup (on page 9) is carefully designed to help make your Open House as successful as possible for several reasons:

- **Flow** – As soon as prospective families come through the door, several things take place:
 - They're warmly greeted and welcomed by a Trailman (preferably in uniform), who hands them a 'Welcome to our Troop!' flyer that allows them to capture the key information they need.
 - They're asked to sign in. This ensures that you have their information for follow-up in case they don't register that night or their information is lost.
 - Directly in their line of sight they see a display (mock campsite, slideshow, etc.) that's eye-catching, draws them in, and showcases your Troop.
 - They'll easily see the table at which they are supposed to sit, based on grade level.* Greeters should be sure to let parents know they can choose any table if they have boys in different grade levels.
- A room that's inviting makes a great first impression on families!
- **Identity** – If possible, have tables already divided up by patrols rather than simply rows of chairs. Here's why:
 - Families will instantly identify with those at their table. They may or may not know with whom they're sitting, but these will be the families with whom they're spending the rest of year. This allows them to begin connecting in fellowship right from the start.
 - If you have a patrol that does not yet have a leader for the year, you'll be able to easily identify the parents for that patrol as prospective leaders. [Keep in mind that leadership is determined, selected, and approved by the church's Troop Ministry Liaison, so avoid promising anyone a leadership role "on the spot."]

SAMPLE OPEN HOUSE ROOM SETUP

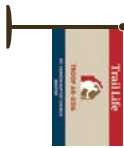
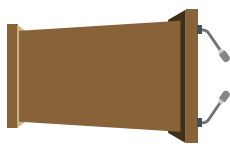
**CHECK-IN /
SIGN-UP
TABLE**
2+ Laptops

ENTRANCE



American Flag

It's better to
hand out info than
to just project it
on a screen.



Troop Flag

FOX TABLE
Ages 5-6
& Parents



HAWK TABLE
Ages 7-8
& Parents



ML TABLE
Ages 9-10
& Parents



NAV TABLE
Ages 11-13
& Parents



ADV TABLE
Ages 14-17
& Parents



**TROOP
DISPLAY
AREA**

(Mock Campsite, Slideshow,
Knot Tying Station, Kayaks, etc.)

STEP FOUR

Follow Up

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have helped new families onto the Trail!
But their Adventure is just beginning...

Onboarding New Members

The first impression new families have of Trail Life USA is greatly important for increasing retention. Your challenge of assimilating new Trailmen and their families begins the moment they come to your Open House or their first Troop meeting. It is vital that families are onboarded well, so they don't get lost in the shuffle.

Here's How:

Well before your Open House, appoint a knowledgeable and winsome adult as an Onboarding Chair who will...

1. Welcome new families to the Troop
2. Host a New Parents' Orientation
3. Help parents get involved with their son's Trail Life journey

3 Steps to Success— Onboarding Chair:

1. Send Welcome Message

Immediately after the Open House, send the "Welcome to Our Troop" [email](#) (found in TLC Resources) to each parent who signed in.



2. Call Parents

Call one parent from each family that attended your Open House using the Open House Sign-In sheet.



- If they haven't joined yet, encourage them to do so.
- Ask the parents if they have questions or concerns that weren't addressed at the Open House.

- Confirm they know when and where the next Troop meeting is, and make sure they feel invited. Remind them that this meeting will include the new Parents' Orientation.
- Then call each Patrol's Trail Guide, giving him the names of each new youth and his parents so that current members can welcome them as they arrive for the first time. At their first meeting, Trail Guides should make sure all Trailmen meet the new boy, and all dads meet the new dad.

3. Host a Parents' Orientation

During the first Troop meeting after your Open House, host a Parents' Orientation for all new parents. The New Parents' Orientation is your chance to help new families understand what the Trail Life program is all about and how your Troop operates. Make sure families leave with all the information they need about meeting times and locations, supply lists, uniform expectations, annual calendars, fundraising information, parental involvement, and child safety. Here is a sample Agenda:



- Communicate the basics of Trail Life— Check out the “Welcome to Trail Life” tile in TLC for a New Parent Information Packet, New Parent’s Frequently Asked Questions, and a Welcome to Trail Life video. Use these resources as needed and guide parents through the information.
- Point families to the Parent and Leader Guide in the Trail Life Store for more in-depth information on all things Trail Life USA.
- Encourage parents to complete Peak I training online or in person.
- Help dads understand the importance of attending meetings and campouts with their sons. It’s important to befriend the new dad, not just his son. “Ease dad in” by giving him a small role—one small thing to do with his son.

But don’t try to make dad sign up to assist as a leader right away; he might not be a Christian yet, so he may not be eligible to register. Ask your Troop Chaplain to be intentional in getting to know each new dad.

- Review behavior expectations of all Trailmen.
- Provide a basic supply list (such as uniforms and handbooks) and how to find them in the Trail Life USA store.
- Help them understand the importance of the upcoming fundraiser (what it accomplishes for each family and for the Troop, not details about the fundraiser itself).
- Show parents how to download the TLC icon (shortcut) onto their smart phones (find the “Add a TLC icon” in TLC under Help Menu/ Videos and Documents). Let them know to check frequently for updated information on lesson plans, advancement tracking, and future events.
- Point them to **“Understanding Woodlands Trail Advancements”** (view this 13-minute video in Trail Life University/Modules). New parents—especially Woodlands Trail parents—need to know how advancements work...what they can do at home, and other ways to help their sons advance.

Great job!

Communicating these few important items during the Parents' Orientation meeting will help new parents feel connected, knowledgeable, and part of your Troop family.



**Thank you for joining our Troop!
Please keep this info in a safe place.**

Troop Number: _____

Meeting Place: _____

Day: _____

Time: _____

Leader's Name: _____

Leader's Contact Info: _____

Upcoming campouts and activities:



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Meeting Place: _____

Day: _____

Time: _____

Leader's Name: _____

Leader's Contact Info: _____

Upcoming campouts and activities:

The Picture Is Not Complete Until You Have All Five!



The Trail Life Planning, Budgeting, Fundraising and Recruiting Guide Series is composed of five parts that will help you plan a great program year.

- 1. The Annual Planning & Budgeting Guide for Troop Committee Members**
- 2. The Patrol Planner for Adult Leaders**
- 3. Officers' Conference Planner**
- 4. The Annual Troop Fundraising Guide**
- 5. The "Join the Trail!" Recruiting Guide**

Look for next years' Planning Guides
in Trail Life Connect.