



ENHANCED WITH PROPS

The examples listed in this section can be adapted and used as a point of reference to inspire Scouts, open their eyes, and/or get them thinking.

Scout-age boys are “visual” thinkers. They relate well to stories that are accompanied by props. A little extra time spent in preparing these visual aids pay off by contributing to the overall impact of the presentation.

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1. BACK IT UP!

Hold up a ten or twenty dollar bill for all to see, and ask the Scouts what it is, what it's worth, and why is it worth so much.

- The bill is really just a piece of paper. It has no value. But, it has been created and certified by the U.S. Government to be worth ten (or twenty) dollars and can be exchanged for ten (or twenty) dollars worth of goods or services. It is Backed Up by the strength of our government. Without that power and trust *backing it up*, the bill would be worthless. *Hold up a First Class or higher badge of rank.*
- Look at this patch. It's just a piece of fabric and by itself hardly worth much. But, it's valuable because we know it represents years of learning, leading, and serving. It is *backed up* by the efforts and commitment made by the young man that wears it.
- When you receive your own patch like this, you will know that the patch itself is not that important. How you back it up is the important part!

2. The BOY AND THE FILBERTS

(Before the presentation, fill a jar with a neck that's just wide enough to fit your hand into, about half way to the top with hazel nuts, marbles, or even small stones.)

- A boy put his hand into a pitcher full of filberts. He grasped as many as he could possibly hold, but when he tried to pull out his hand, he was prevented from doing so by the neck of the pitcher. Unwilling to lose his filberts, and yet unable to withdraw his hand, he burst into tears and bitterly lamented his disappointment. A bystander said to him, “Be satisfied with half the quantity, and you will readily draw out your hand.”
- We should not attempt too much at once. *(Demonstrate this by reaching your hand into the jar, grabbing a fist full of nuts, and reveal*

how you can't pull out your hand. Then let go of all but a few and free your hand.)

3. The BUNDLE OF STICKS

(Before the presentation, bind a bundle of dry sticks, as thick as a pencil, together with string or a couple of rubber bands. The bound bundle should be large enough to resist any attempts to break it in two. Hold up the bundle.)

– Who would like to attempt to break this bundle of sticks in half?

(Let two or three try.) A father had a family of sons who were perpetually quarreling among themselves. When he failed to heal their disputes by his exhortations, he determined to give them a practical illustration of the evils of disunion. For this purpose he one day told them to bring him a bundle of sticks. When they had done so, he placed the bundle into the hands of each of them in succession, and ordered them to break it in pieces. They tried with all their strength, and were not able to do it. He next opened the bundle, took the sticks separately, one by one, and again put them into his sons' hands, upon which they broke them easily. He then addressed them in these words: "My sons, if you are of one mind, and unite to assist each other, you will be as this bundle, uninjured by all the attempts of your enemies; but if you are divided among yourselves, you will be broken as easily as these sticks."

– By the same token, if we share the load by dividing the labor and working together, we can accomplish many things that separated we'd never be able to do. *(Unbind the sticks, and give them to the same Scouts who before attempted to break the bundle in half, so they can now break them all.)*

4. CAN'T TO CAN!

– Every now and then we hear a Scout use the word can't: "I can't hike 15 miles," or "I can't tie that knot," etc. *(Put up the Scout sign.)*

Please repeat after me, "On my honor I will do my best!" *(Write the word "CAN'T" in big letters on a chalk or white board.)* Does that word appear anywhere in the Scout Oath? *(Erase the "T".)*

– Anything we want to accomplish will be much easier if we start telling ourselves we can do it instead of using that other word.

(Write a big "I" in front of the "CAN" and leave it there until the next meeting. The first thing they see the next time they walk in is the words "I CAN!")

5. CORK IN A SODA BOTTLE

(Before the presentation, insert a small cork inside a soda bottle whose mouth is just a little bit smaller than the cork. Hold up the bottle with the cork inside it.)

– Does anyone know how to get the cork out of the soda bottle without breaking the bottle? *(Allow Scouts to offer opinions of how this might be done, and allow several to try to get it out.)*

– Can you think of any items that would help get the cork out of the bottle? *(You probably will get some more opinions. After hearing some ideas, pull a piece of heavy string out of your pocket.)*

– Do you think a piece of string will do the job? The key to removing the cork with the string is a knot tied on the end of the string. *(Tie a stopper knot on one end of the string. Run the knotted*

end into the bottle, turn the bottle upside down with the small end of the cork turned toward the crown of the bottle. Gently pull the string out, and as the knot slides against the cork, it will pop out.) The knot is the key to the success of removing the cork.

— If something as small as a knot can serve such an important role, think how important each of us are to our patrol and troop.

6. The DOLLAR BILL

(You'll need two crisp, new dollar bills. Hold one up to show.)

– Can you all see this dollar bill? Pretty nice looking, isn't it? See how it's crisp, clean, and neat? *(Crumple the bill up into a small ball.)* Who still wants it? OK, just a second. *(Drop it on the ground and grind it with your foot.)* Who still wants it? *(Hold the crumpled bill in one hand and the second clean bill in the other.)*

– One of these bills is good looking, clean, and nice to look at. The other is kind of grimey, crumpled, and not too pleasant. But, neither is more valuable than the other. Their worth is not based on how they look.

– Like these dollars are valuable because they are dollars, people are valuable just because they are people, not because of how they look.

[Back to top of page](#)

7. FILLING OUR JAR

(You'll need: a glass jar, some rocks, pebbles, sand, and water, -or- use doughnut holes, M&Ms, sugar, and milk. Before starting, make sure there are enough rocks, pebbles, sand, and water that will fit in the jar. Put pebbles, sand, and water into separate cans or containers so the contents can not be seen.)

– There is only so much a person can do. I have a real job *(put rock in jar)*. I teach a Sunday School class *(add a rock)*. I volunteer at school *(add a rock)*. I run to stay in shape *(add a rock, and continue listing other main things you do until you reach the top of the jar)*. So, there, I'm full. I can't do anything else, even if someone asked.

– I expect most of you are the same way. You are so busy, you can't possibly take on anything else. Your jar is full like mine. But, maybe if its not too big, I can still do it. Like drive for a weekend campout, or arrange a fundraiser, or help at church one week, or plan a service project, or organize a parents picnic *(add pebbles to the jar as you list the activities. Shake the jar to settle them until it is full)*.

– Wow, I guess I could do a little more than I thought. But, now, that's it, really. I couldn't possibly do more. Just like you, I'm doing too much now. Well, maybe if its just a small thing, I could. Like shoveling my neighbor's walk, or leading a game at a meeting, or helping someone with schoolwork, or cleaning the church for an hour *(pour the sand in as you list the items. Shake to settle)*.

– Huh! Well, what do you know. Looks like I could do a bit more than I thought. I guess I just needed to make the time. As you can see, my jar is definitely full. I did more than I thought I could and I'm really able to accomplish a lot. No way could I fit anything else in. But, now I don't have time for just relaxing. How can I just have fun? There's no room left. *(Pour water in as you list things.)* I want to watch TV, play video games, see a movie, play football, ... So,

what does this mean? It seems I can do much more than I thought and I still have a little time to play.

— The point is that we need to get the big rocks—the important things— scheduled into our life first. Decide what is most important to us and make time for it. Then, fill in our time with other worthwhile, meaningful activities. That time left over is our relaxing time. We should be careful not to fill our life with the little things first, or there won't be room for the big, important things.

8. FRAPPINGS OF LIFE

(You'll need two Scout staves and a lashing rope. Before the presentation, tell a senior Scout who is well-versed in tying square lashings that he's going to help out during the Scoutmaster Minute.)

— I've asked a couple of you to help me out for a minute. *(Bring up the senior Scout and a new Scout. Have the new Scout hold the staves so one crosses perpendicular to the other.)*

— *To the senior Scout:* Would you please take this lashing rope and start a square lashing on these poles? Now, those wraps look very good to me. They hold the poles close together and lay them out in the right shape. I'm sure they'll hold the poles together just fine. But, now that you've finished the wraps, stop lashing for a second.

— *To the new Scout:* Would you please wiggle those poles and see how tight the lashing is? Hmm, they sure have a lot of loose play in them—not as good as they could be.

— *To the senior Scout:* Go ahead and add the frapping turns.

— The wrapping turns held the poles in the right position, but this extra effort of adding the frapping is making a difference. The entire lashing is getting tighter, stronger, and more secure.

— *To the new Scout:* Now give those poles a wiggle and see how they hold. Not bad! That extra effort made a much better result. Some of the newer Scouts may have thought the lashing was done after the wrapping turns and it was good enough.

— Whether in lashing or in life, don't forget the frapping turns. Like the frapping turns, it's that extra special effort on top of what we do that makes what we do the best it can be.

9. GIVE IT YOUR ALL!

(You will need one baking potato that's not overly hard and two plastic drinking straws. Hold up the potato.)

— Think of this potato as your obstacle to a desired goal, whether it's your advancement to the next Scouting rank, or earning money for a new mountain bike. *(Hold up the first plastic straw in your other hand.)*

— Now think of this straw as your desire to reach your goal on the other side of the obstacle—in this case, the potato. *(Push the straw against the potato. The straw will bend over.)* Notice that if you go at your obstacle halfheartedly, your will to reach your goal is easily bent. You are easily kept from your goal.

(Take the second straw and hold it in your fist, placing your thumb over the open end of the straw.)

— But, if you are willing to give it your all, you can easily reach your goal on the other side! *(Carefully thrust the straw at the potato, keeping your thumb over the open end of the straw. The trapped air in the straw makes it more rigid and the straw should*

thrust cleanly into the potato. Hold up the potato and straw to show the Scouts that indeed you have reached your goal.)

— Not giving up is very important, even if an obstacle seems too great to surpass!

10. The INSIGNIFICANT PIN

— Let me show you something I have in my pocket. It's not very big. In fact, I can almost lose it in my pocket. *(Take out a full-sized safety pin.)* Ah, here it is—a safety pin. It came from the bottom of the trinket box that sits on my counter and collects tiny things like paper clips, thumb tacks, and screws. You'll find a pin like this one at home, maybe in a sewing basket or dresser drawer or even in a trinket box like mine.

— Now when you look at this tiny piece of metal, it seems very insignificant. And, sometimes, that is just the way we feel in this big bustling world. Right now, this pin and the pins you have tucked away at home don't have a purpose. One day that will change though. Perhaps you will be on a camping trip, or rushing off somewhere, and you will realize that there's a button missing from your coat. You won't have another button or the time to search for one, but a safety pin will hold together your coat just fine until you can find a button and sew it on.

— If you ever feel like this safety pin—as if you have no purpose—remember that, one day, when you least expect it, your time will come. You will have a chance to do something worthwhile, some little helpful thing that will be very important to someone. Our job is to be prepared for that moment. Then, when our chance comes along, we will be ready to do your best to help out. We'll be surprised to find how often those opportunities to help will pop up, if we are prepared to meet them.

11. LOSING YOUR TEMPER

(Hold up a sheathed hand ax for all to see.)

— I have in my hand a tool that helped the pioneers blaze a trail across our country. Many lives depended upon this instrument to protect, shelter, and feed them. The care and handling of the ax, of course, was given only to a very responsible individual, one who was certain to keep it sharp and clean, one who would know that placing the ax too close to a fire would heat up the metal and cause it to lose its temper. Once the steel of an ax loses its temper, it's useless.

— From time to time, all of us get involved in an argument or some fiery discussion. When things get out of hand, we should always try to remain calm and in control of ourself. If we become overheated in those situations and lose our temper, we'll find ourself rendered as useless as that ax.

[Back to top of page](#)

12. MATCHES

(Needed is a small bundle of wooden matches and a rubber band. Gather up the matches and neatly bundle them together so that they will stand when you set them down.)

— Our troop is much like these matches. *(Stand the matches on end for everyone to see.)* You might have noticed that we all stick

together. It is the trust, friendship, and knowledge of everyone here that makes us feel this way. We know that when the going gets tough, like on some of our campouts, if we stick together we will come out on top. When we work well together, everyone does their job. The tents are set up, the cooks prepare fine meals, and the wood crew brings in enough of the right kind of firewood. We stick together.

– But what happens if we don't stick together? (*Pick up the bundle of matches and take the rubber band off. Then set the bundle back on the floor. Let the matches fall and scatter.*)

– If we don't stick together, we will all fall apart just as these matches did. When this happens we cannot accomplish as much as we can as a team. Thanks for sticking together.

13. OUR FLAG

(*To start this presentation, turn off the room's lights and illuminate the US flag with a bright LED flashlight. The presentation can be read from the back by the light of an additional flashlight.*)

– Our flag stands for freedom and equality. It is the banner of a people who are still willing to lay down their lives in defense of right, justice, and freedom. It is the emblem by which we proclaim to the world that this is “the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

– Our flag is an emblem of true patriotism—the patriotism of deeds; the patriotism of courage, of loyalty, of devotion to freedom, justice, and humanity; the patriotism of men who have lived and died, not for themselves but for their country.

– When we look at our flag—its stars and stripes, its vivid red, white, and blue—and read its story and hear its message, when we contemplate what our flag means and what it stands for, and when we consider the sacrifices made and the lives given so that our flag could still be flying over us today, we are quietly reminded to cherish, to protect, and to defend it.

14. The PARABLE OF THE TOOTHPASTE

(*Hold a tube of toothpaste in one hand, and a plate in the other.*)

– Have you ever squeezed too much toothpaste out of a tube of toothpaste and tried to put it back in the tube? It can't be done, can it? No matter how hard you try, the toothpaste is out of the tube forever. (*Squeeze a bunch of toothpaste out of the tube onto the plate, and go through the actions of trying to get it back inside.*)

– Toothpaste is similar to unkind words. Once unkind words come out of your mouth, you cannot take them back.

– So when we are tempted to say something unkind, we should remember the parable of the toothpaste, and keep the unkind words to ourselves.

15. REACH HIGH THE FIRST TIME

Tape a large piece of paper on a wall at your eye level. Ask two or three Scouts to come up and make a mark on the paper with a marker as high as they can reach. Thank them for their effort and allow them to return to their seats.

– We can all usually do better than our first effort. Each of the Scouts who made a mark on this paper were asked to make it as high as they could. Let's have them come back up here and see if

they can do better than their first effort. *(It never fails that they will always reach two to three inches higher on the second try.)*

– This is a good opportunity to emphasize doing one’s very best, and to give every project one’s “second effort” on the first try.

16. A SCOUT IS CLEAN

(Two cups are needed: one clean, opaque cup filled with very dirty water, and one opaque cup, dirty on the outside and filled with clean water. The soiling of the outside of the dirty cup and the murkiness of the water in the clean cup must be exaggerated. Hold up both cups so that the Scouts can see the outsides clearly but not what is inside.)

– Which of these cups of water do you think I should drink from? You probably think that I should drink from the clean cup. But, you see, the cup that appears clean really contains very dirty water. *(Walk around the room and show the dirty water to the Scouts.)* It’s the other cup, the one that looks dirty on the outside, that is really clean. *(Show the clean water.)*

– It doesn’t really matter if we play hard and get dirty doing the many fun activities we do in our troop. We can always take a shower and get clean again. But, it is a little harder to keep our insides clean.

– When the Scout Law says “A Scout is clean,” it is also referring to our inside selves. A Scout has clean language, clean manners, and clean thinking.

[Back to top of page](#)

17. A SIMPLE CLOTH AND A COMMON THREAD

– They are woven of simple cloth and common thread. They are no more than an inch and a half in diameter, and weigh no more than a couple of ounces. They are priceless, yet only cost a few dollars. They have the power to turn struggle into courage, self-doubt into self-esteem, and the unknown into knowledge. And the most magical metamorphosis of all is they can help transform a boy into a man. What are these mysterious things? *(Hold up a merit badge sash with merit badges sewn on.)* Merit badges.

– Take full advantage of each and every opportunity that earning a merit badge provides. Take each requirement seriously. Conscientiously learn everything the badge requires you to learn. Master the skills so you can take them back to our troop and share them with your fellow Scouts.

– Each of these badges might very well appear to be small, but in actuality, what they represent is a body of knowledge and experience that is much larger.

18. STRETCHING THE TRUTH

– Have you ever stretched a rubber band? It always comes back to its original shape. *(Hold up a large rubber band and demonstrate.)*

– What about a sweater. Ever try to stretch one. You can, but it’s much harder to get it back to its original shape. Often you can see bumps and bulges where it was stretched. *(Hold up an old sweater and demonstrate, trying to get the stretched part back into shape.)*

– Now the truth, that’s a different thing. The trouble with stretching the truth is a little like stretching a sweater. It’s hard to get it back to its true shape again, although your chances are

much better with the sweater.

– A Scout is trustworthy. It's the very first point of the Scout Law.

19. SYMBOLS

– There are a lot of symbols that we recognize. (*One at a time, show a picture of a famous logo, e.g. Kentucky Fried Chicken, Apple Computers, Facebook, etc.*) When you see these symbols, you know what they stand for.

– You, too, are a symbol. You represent the Boy Scouts of America. People see you and know that you stand for something good. You stand for being trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

– We should be good symbols!

20. TURK'S HEAD

(*Make a large Turk's head knot about 4 to 6 inches around. Before your Minute begins, pass the Turk's head around for all of the boys to see.*)

– Who knows what this is? See how the strands of rope go in and around each other, and seem to never end? Working as a patrol, you boys are like the strands of this Turk's head knot, in that you must learn to work in and around other people to reach a common goal. (*Next, pull two opposite strands apart so that the shape of the Turk's head is distorted.*)

– This is what happens when the patrol members do not work together. The patrol becomes all bent out of shape. (*Begin rolling the knot around your fingers or hands; this should put the shape back into the Turk's head.*)

– This external "working" could be our senior patrol leader, or another junior leader working with the patrol to set the example on working together.

– A patrol that's in good shape is like a team where everyone works together.

21. TWO BACKPACKS

(*Wear two book bag-sized packs, one on the back, the other on the chest.*)

– Life can be seen as a journey. While we travel along, figuratively we are equipped with two knapsacks, one to be carried on our backs and the other on our chest. The average hiker along the trail of life puts the faults of others in the sack on his chest so that he can always see them. "Jeez. That guy just can't control his temper." (*Open up the front bag and make an action like you're putting something inside.*)

– His own faults he puts in the bag on his back so that he can't see them without some effort. "Hey! Even though you say you like them and think they're easy to cook, I'm sick and tired of you guys always having hotdogs!" (*Spoken with an inappropriately loud, angry voice, and followed by a pronounced effort to reach around and act like you're placing something in the bag on your back. After that, regain your composure.*)

– And so, he hikes through life constantly seeing the errors of others, but overlooking his own mistakes. This pack arrangement is bad, because for a successful hike through life we should strive

to become the best person we can be. So place your bag of faults upon your chest and put the bag of other people's faults and mistakes behind you.

– We can help others much more easily by first being our own best example. (*Switch the bags around. Take a look inside the bag of faults at your chest.*) "I've really got to work on my anger problem."

[Back to top of page](#)

22. TWO KINDS OF BUCKETS

(Two buckets of the same size are needed, one with a bail, the other without. Both are filled with water almost to the rim, and are placed on one end of a large plastic ground cloth spread out up front.

– Two buckets equal in size when filled to the rim will hold the same amount of water. Neither bucket has a hole so, as long as they are not moved, they are equally effective holding water. However, one bucket has a bail, or a handle to carry it by, and the other does not. Have you ever tried to carry a bucket without a handle? The water will slosh out and you usually spill most of the contents. The bucket with a handle is easily movable, and the contents can be carried with little or no spillage. Let's have two of you come up and demonstrate how easy or difficult it is to carry the buckets a couple of feet.

– People are sometimes a lot like the buckets. Some are out of control, leaving splashes everywhere they go for someone to clean up after. Others are like the bucket with a handle, leaving no mess or bother. Which kind of bucket are you?

23. WHICH PATH?

(Draw on a chalk or white board, two paths across a field both leading from point A to point B, but one straight, the other made up of four zig-zagging lines as follows.)

– It was a cold spring morning. A light snow had fallen during the night. You know, the kind that just covers the grass. I was visiting my grandparents on their farm. It was still very early when my grandfather and I started across a field to check a fence.

– Being the curious type, I first had to run down to the creek to see if it had frozen during the night. Then, as I started back across the field, I noticed a spot where a deer had bedded down for the night, and I just had to check that out, too.

– When I'd satisfied my curiosity, I headed back toward my grandfather. I could see that he hadn't reached the fence yet, so I still had time to check out the spot where yesterday I had found an arrowhead before sprinting to the fence, just before my grandfather got there. We stood there for a few minutes, and then he told me to look back across the field at our two paths, which were very visible in the new snow.

– There was his, straight as an arrow from the barn to the fence. My path was scattered here and there, going first to the stream, then to where the deer had bedded down, then across the field where I had yesterday found an arrowhead. He asked me, "Which path was the correct one?" When I said, "I don't know," he replied, "Both are. Mine is surely faster and easier, but I didn't get to see the things that you saw."

– Remember, you always have a goal, just as we did in getting to

the fence today, but sometimes, if you can, take the time to explore the wonders of life.
— Whenever possible, we should take time and smell the roses.

[Back to top of page](#)

TROOP LEADER RESOURCE LINKS

[Advancement Resources](#)

[Awards Central](#)

[Boy Scouts](#)

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#)

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[ScoutCast](#)

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[Troop Leader Guidebook Appendix](#)

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[Blind Train Video](#)

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Lassoing the Steer Video

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Rescue Relay Video

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Scout Stave Launcher Video

Self Standing Flagpole Video

Snake Race Video

Split the Match Relay Video

Stretcher Relay Video

Water Boiling Race Video

Zulu Toss Video

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Blindfolded Steal the Bacon Video

Can It! Video

Christmas Card Game Video

Hit the Bucket Video

Hit the Can Video

Hula Hoop Horseshoes Video

Hunker Down Video

Identifying Sounds Video

Jump the Shot Video

Prisoners Escape Video

Stand By Sixes Video

Standing Jump Relay Video

Standing Staves Video

Steal the Bacon Video

Time Bomb Video

True or False Steal the Bacon Video

Tug of War Video

Wall Street Video

CEREMONIES & LEADER MINUTE VIDEOS

Sample Troop Court of Honor Video

An Eagle Court of Honor Opening Ceremony Video

Four Winds Eagle Ceremony Video

Trail of the Eagle Court of Honor Ceremony Video

Sample Troop Meeting Opening Ceremony Video

Posting the Colors Troop Meeting Opening Ceremony Video

Scoutmaster's Minute Video

Troop Circles Closing Ceremony Video

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