

WEEKEND & SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Seminar M5 Lesson Plan

Scope: Why do cadets join CAP? Perhaps the most basic answer is that they're excited about the activities CAP offers. Although the squadron meeting is the nucleus of the Cadet Program, weekend and summer activities are perhaps the most exciting aspects of cadet life. In this seminar, students will share best practices for running squadron-level weekend activities, and discuss wing and national-level events as well.

Format: Guided Discussion

Duration: 30 minutes

Objectives:

1. Defend the idea that cadets should have an opportunity to participate in at least one special activity each month
2. Give examples of weekend activities squadrons can host on their own
3. Give examples of weekend and summer activities hosted by the group or wing
4. Identify activities that are prohibited / seriously restricted in the Cadet Program
5. Discuss best practices for managing cadet activities

Resources: No special resources are needed, but if possible, the instructor should personalize this seminar by sharing pictures of cadets participating in squadron and wing activities. Add photos to the powerpoint slides, and/or pass around a photo album.

STARTING POINT

Introduce yourself and state the seminar's topic.



ATTENTION

The Goal: Provide each cadet with an opportunity to participate in one weekend activity each month.

Solution: Squadrons & wings need to work together.

	<u>Squadron</u>	<u>Group or Wing</u>
January	Field Trip	
February		Leadership Academy
March	O-Flights	
April		Model Rocketry Day
May	Parade	
June		Cadet Competition
July	Bivouac	
August		Encampment
September	O-Flights	
October		Wing Conference
November	Day Hike	
December		Wreaths Across America

The Goal:

Provide each cadet with an opportunity to participate in one fun weekend activity each month.

The Solution:

Squadrons and wings or groups need to work together and share the burden of organizing weekend activities.

One Way to Do It:

	<u>Squadron</u>	<u>Group or Wing</u>
January	Field Trip	
February		Leadership Academy
March	O-Flights	
April		Model Rocketry Day
May	Parade	
June		Cadet Competition
July	Bivouac	
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By working together and creating an arrangement like this one, the cadets win and the squadron is not overwhelmed.

MOTIVATION

Once again, the solution to CAP's perennial retention problem is easy to see: keep cadets active. Active cadets have high morale. They advance quickly through the program. They make lots of friends. Having attended several activities, they are heavily invested in CAP and are apt to renew. For active cadets, CAP is one awesome experience after another.

Overview

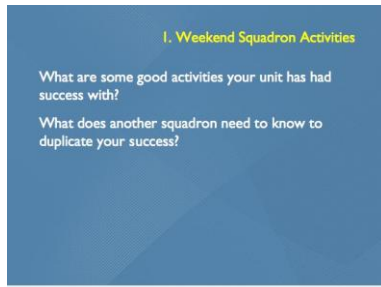
- Squadron-level weekend activities
- Group and wing activities
- National activities
- General management principles

OVERVIEW

See slide

MAIN POINT #1

SQUADRON-LEVEL WEEKEND ACTIVITIES



What are some good local activities that your unit has had success with? What does another squadron need to know about that activity if they want to follow your lead?

Anticipated Responses:

Answers can vary. Some good examples include:

Orientation flights

Model rocketry

Bivouacs

Satellite Tool Kit

Parades and honor guard events

Day hikes

DDRx activities

Field trips to museums, factories

Community service

Wreaths Across America

Emergency services training

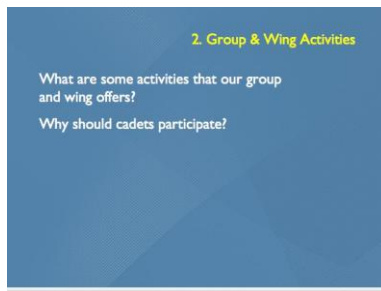
Airshows

Red Ribbon Leadership Academy

Allow students ample time to discuss their success stories. Emphasize the need to offer a diverse mix of activities that touch on all aspects of CAP.

MAIN POINT #2

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AT GROUP OR WING LEVEL



Region and Wing Activities offer cadets experiences that are unavailable in their home unit. Moreover, they give ranking cadets additional opportunities to lead. Plus, everyone makes new friends.

What are some activities that our wing (and/or group) offers? What are those activities all about?

Anticipated Responses:

Answers can vary. Some good examples include:

Encampment

Leadership schools

Wing conference

Cadet competition

National Character Day

Balls and dances

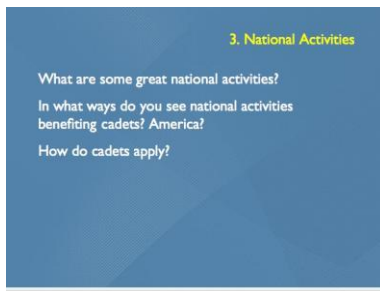
Cadet Advisory Council meetings

Allow students ample time to discuss what is unique about each of these activities. Emphasize the benefits of supporting wing-level programs.

Show some pictures from recent wing and group activities, if possible.

MAIN POINT #3

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES



INSTRUCTOR NOTE: *Time is limited. Do not attempt to discuss NCSA application procedures in depth. The majority of this seminar should be devoted to discussing squadron and wing level activities.*

National Cadet Special Activities aim to help answer America's call for an aerospace workforce. They allow cadets to develop advanced leadership skills, explore careers in the Air Force or aerospace industry, and fly.

What are some of the outstanding national activities available to cadets?

Anticipated Responses: Can vary. If anyone in attendance is a graduate of an NCSA, invite them to summarize the highlights of that activity.

In what ways do you see the National Cadet Special Activities program benefiting cadets? America?

Anticipated Responses: Cadets can check out a career that interests them; they will get to meet and be mentored by aerospace professionals; they will see how principles of aerospace science are used to create new technology; etc. America benefits because we need today's cadets to become tomorrow's professionals if America is to perpetuate our nation's global leadership in aviation, space, and technology.

[Lecture Item]

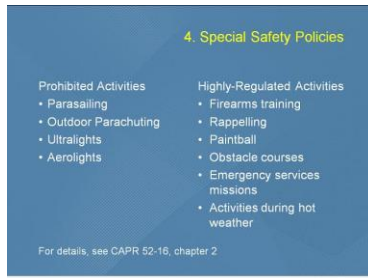
National Headquarters typically announces NCSAs in the fall. Cadets have until early January to apply (exception: 3 winter NCSAs have deadlines in August and October). The application process may change slightly from one year to the next, but full details are available online. Keep in mind that NCSAs are open only to cadets who have graduated from encampment; they are essentially programs for "second year" cadets and beyond. Finally, there are opportunities for seniors to attend NCSAs as staff members. (*Emphasize that the capmembers.com/ncsa website has the details.*)

TRANSITION

There are tons of activities at the local, state, and national level. Each is designed to give cadets hands-on opportunities to apply what they have learned during their weekly squadron meetings. Obviously, special activities don't just happen, they require careful planning, which we'll discuss next.

MAIN POINT #4

SPECIAL SAFETY POLICIES



[Lecture Item]

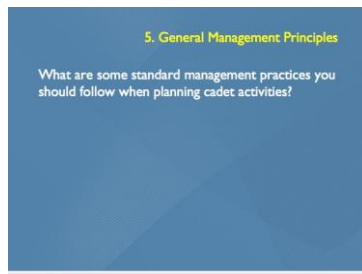
Just because it could be a “fun” activity does not mean it is appropriate for CAP cadets. CAP policies restrict or highly regulate the following activities (see slide).

Hot Weather Rules: Also note that CAP has policies regarding cadet training in hot weather. These policies essentially codify common sense.

For details, see CAPR 52-16, chapter 2.

MAIN POINT #5

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES



Cadets recognize quality when they see it. Again, from our exit surveys with former cadets, we know that they expect activities to be well-planned, and that the cadet staff should have a sense of ownership in the activity.

Key to an effective meeting is the use of hands-on activities. Cadets learn better in this environment. They forge bonds of trust among themselves and their senior member officers. By combining lessons from the text with practical experience, they reach a higher cognitive level of learning; they learn the *why*, not just the *what*. Most importantly, cadets value hands-on experiences more. They'll remember it longer.

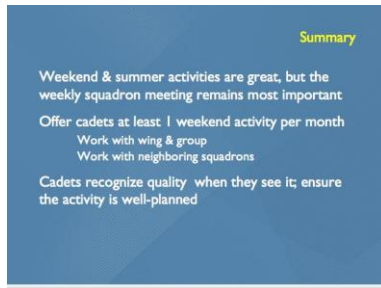
What are some standard management practices you should follow when planning cadet activities?

Anticipated Responses:

- Publicize the event 6-8 weeks in advance, or longer for major activities
- Invite cadet staff input throughout; all cadet officers to plan the event
- Ensure plenty of seniors or Cadet Sponsor Members will be available to chaperone
- Showstoppers are meals, lodging, and transportation
- Set a specific and measurable objective for the event; use S.M.A.R.T. goals (see CAPP 52-15)
- Follow a written schedule
- Use "hands-on" activities more than lectures
- Keep parents informed
- Publish a list of required gear
- Provide travel directions to the event
- Have a safety plan
- Take pictures and issue a press release
- Have a back-up plan in case something goes wrong
- Begin and end on time

Simply list or acknowledge the students' responses at first, then come back to students' list or the list on the slide, and encourage them to discuss each item in some depth. For example, for "publicize in advance" ask students how they announce special activities and get the word out.

SUMMARY



The nucleus of the Cadet Program is the weekly squadron meeting. As discussed in the previous seminar, do more than just drill, and have a detailed schedule.

Weekend and summer activities are the Cadet Program's electives. Working together, wings and squadrons can ensure the cadets have something fun to do one Saturday per month.

Cadets recognize quality when they see it. Follow standard management practices to ensure the activities are well-planned and worthwhile.

FINAL THOUGHT

Cadets join CAP because they're excited by the activities we advertise. Is your squadron keeping cadets busy one weekend per month? Active squadrons are successful squadrons.