

## Boys and Girls and Their Stuff

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Experiences with kids are like no other experiences we may encounter.

After saying, "Why Not?" too many times when a group of mothers recited why there would be no Cub Scout Pack for our boys, I ended up with the distinction of Den Mother! There was one particular boy who tried the hearts, souls and minds of all who encountered him and he was in that Pack. I decided that he would no longer disrupt our Pack and set out to develop a "Code of Conduct" for the boys. During one of our first meetings, I told them of the Three Strike Rule. Strike 1 would result in the offender responsible for inappropriate behavior being told it would not be accepted during our meetings. Strike 2 would result in the offender being placed in a timeout situation and not being able to participate in the day's activities that would be applied toward the next badge or arrow point. When I said, "And Strike 3..." Several of the boys gave a resounding "You're Out!" They had said it more succinctly than I could have done and I told them in fact that would be the result. They would be sent home and would have to tell their parents why they couldn't come back until they apologized and changed their behavior. The next meeting the offender heard, "Strike 1" and was told his behavior was not acceptable and it needed to cease immediately. Seeing that the Three Strike Rule was "for real," there never was another offense committed that resulted in Strikes 2 or 3! At the end of the year, the boy who had tried us all begged me to please be their Den Mother for one more year. Rules, accountability and consequences worked for all of us. These Cubs went on to earn all their badges and the largest number of arrow points achieved to date by their Pack all while having fun!

My twin nieces were playing at their Grammy's house and she heard them giggling. When she peeked around the corner, she found the girls dipping their water color paint brushes in water and then applying it to their mouths. When she asked why they were using their paint brushes in this way, their reply was "Because that is the way Aunt Jeannie puts on her lipstick and we want to be like her!" That makes one ponder what other behaviors were being observed that probably were not ones that I wanted them to mimic.

My younger brother got frequent sore throats and mother had tried repeatedly to teach him how to gargle so that he would get some relief. The effort resulted in a lot of water drenched shirt fronts, coughing and sputtering, but no gargling. One of his friends had joined him for lunch on the front porch on day and their laughter and coughing caught mother's attention. As she watched, the neighbor was encouraging and teaching my brother how to gargle...his Kool-Aid. She watched in awe, trying not to laugh out loud. She obviously could not reprimand them after the successful lesson, but she did swoop in collecting their plates and offering them a choice of Popsicles to enjoy outside under the tree. Yes, with a little extra soaking, the Kool-Aid and the Popsicle stains came out of the shirts.

Memories of times spent with kids bring laughter, thoughts of what was or might have been, trials, tears, heartbreak and accomplishments but most of all LOVE!