

# Exceptional merit badge counseling

## **Put the Scout at ease.**

Welcome the Scout. Ask questions: how long have you been in Scouting? What interested you in the Astronomy merit badge? Show something related to the subject: for example, a Coin Collecting counselor might show his or her coin collection. But don't overwhelm a beginner. Ask a simple skill. For example, a Woodwork counselor might ask "would you sand this wood while I get some tools ready?"

## **Review the requirements.**

At the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, carefully review each requirement so the Scout understands what he must do.

## **Be literal about doing exactly what is required.**

Insist the Scout does exactly what the requirements call for. If it says "show," then just telling isn't enough. The same holds for words such as "make a list," "in the field," and "collect, identify and label."

Don't require what isn't stated. You must not ask for 30, when 20 are needed for a collection. Let a Scout do more if it's on the Scout's initiative. Recognize and salute it.

## **Be prepared to teach.**

When reviewing the requirements, you may find a boy needs help learning a particular skill. One of your jobs is to teach the Scout the skills required. The most effective way to teach a skill is to get the Scout to practice while learning.

## **Be a good coach by**

- ❑ taking a genuine interest in the projects
- ❑ helping the Scout evaluate his progress
- ❑ following up with the Scout on his goals
- ❑ encouraging the Scout to ask for help he needs to gain more knowledge.

## **Never forget having a buddy present.**

**Want more?** Check these out –

- ❑ "Merit badge counseling," BSA (6 pages, pocket-size)

- "Merit Badge Counselor Orientation Supplemental Adult Leader Training,"  
BSA (1 page)