



ROPES & KNOTS

CHIEF'S KIT - BOYS



CHIEFS: These fun ideas are not intended as requirements toward Skill completion. They will, however, make your boys' experience that much better and you are encouraged to consider them. Their order corresponds to the Lesson Knots. So, be sure not to introduce them too early. However, you can repeat any favorites to ensure your boys have the best possible time in your crew meetings!

Brooms and/or mop handles, poles or sticks will be suggested for some games. Also, a single, longer length of line (probably longer than the ones the boys have been learning with) may simplify preparations for a game. Above all, prepare well ahead of time: give your boys the maximum fun by being ready to start quickly and explain rules clearly.

Establish this rule in the very beginning: Rope must never be used to tie anyone or to strike with like a whip or lash.

Lesson 1: **S.O.A.R.R.** (“Squares On A Round Rope”)

Two games can be played by tying Square Knots on a length of rope. Try them yourself before your crew meeting and decide a best way to explain them. You may only have time after the lesson (“Builder”) for one, or you can try them both this time.

1. “**Squeeze the Squares**” Boys tie as many square knots as they can on a single length of rope (preferably three feet or more long.) Hint: it can be more efficient to tie the first knot in the center, then other knots going outward towards the ends. But let the boys figure that out for themselves! If you have a length of rope for each boy, then all will compete at the same time. If not, then each boy on a “team” takes his turn tying one knot, and then passes off to his next teammate who ties the next one. The objective is to either tie as many knots as the rope can hold – or – whoever can fill their rope first.
2. “**Square – Un-square**” Boys work as teams (3 or more boys each.) The first boy ties 3 (three) square knots and passes the rope to the next teammate who unties and then re-ties them. The last boy passes his three knots to the first boy who unties and presents rope to Chief. The team doing so first is the “winner” (though game does not end until all teams complete the task.) This variation works well if the available rope is in “shorter” lengths.

Lesson 2: **S.K.O.A.R.R.** (“Stopper Knots On A Round Rope”)

This game is just like S.O.A.R.R. except the boys now tie Stopper Knots (Figure 8 knots) along a single length of line. This will be much more challenging as the knots will be harder to make – knots should begin at one end and proceed to the other (no advantage to starting in the middle!) If you like, you can use any of the S.O.A.R.R. game variations above.

Lesson 3: HITCH YOUR HORSE

Boys will compete in teams of 3-5 but not more than 7. A Crew Chief or adult will serve as the “hitching post” by being seated, facing the boys who are lined up behind each other about 8 –10 feet away. His arms are to be extended down at his sides for a Clove Hitch on a railing or branch , or bent upward at a 90 degree angle for Pile Hitch and top-of-post Clove Hitch.

First boy on each team has a length of rope in hand. When ready, Chief calls out “**Hitch Your Horse with a...**” (adding either “**...Pile Hitch**” or “**...Clove Hitch**” to the command) The first boy holds one end of his rope and hands the other end to the next boy in line. He then “leads” the second boy like a “horse” to the “hitching post” where the appropriate knot is tied. The team who ties a correct knot first gets a point. Other team must complete knot.

First boy then returns to back of his team while the “horse” unties himself and returns to get the next “horse” in line. He “leads” the new horse to the “post” to be tied with a new, or same, knot chosen by the Chief (boys need to be surprised.) Game continues up to a number of points - you decide (maybe 5, maybe 10.) Ensure that boys don’t shove or impede each other, or a point can be lost!!

[Chief: For more than two teams use more than one leader to have additional hitching posts. Instruct boys not to make the knots too tight!! Always change the order of the knots so boys won’t know ahead of time what to expect.]

Lesson 4: QUICKIE HITCHIES

This is a speed and accuracy game. Divide boys into two or more teams of several or more. If your Site is not too large, let them all be grouped into just two opposing teams. Large teams work just as well. Be sure to prepare ahead if you are having more than two teams (more chiefs or broom handles!?)

A Chief will sit on a chair with arms up at his sides in 90 degree angles (or, better, use two brooms or mop handles.) Each boy in turn will approach, tie first a **Two Half Hitch**, untie, then tie a Taut Line Hitch, and untie once more. He then presents the rope to their next teammate (still in line) who does the same. Round continues until last boy on a team unties his second knot and then holds up his rope. Team that completes first is the winner but all members of the other team must complete their knots before game is ended.

[Chief: Ensuring that the knots are soundly made is important: a loose, poorly tied knot defeats the whole purpose.]

Lesson 5: SOMEBODY SAVE THE BOY

A team of boys will make a life-saving **Bowline knot**, cast it to a “drowning boy” (victim), then pull him to “safety”. A smooth floor or carpeted surface is best (outside is not a good idea, classroom floor is.) Also, if available, have a cloth bag or pillow case for the “victim” to slide on. For a “rescue line” you need a piece of rope about 10-12 feet long for each team (or tie together shorter ones that were used in previous lessons.)

Divide your boys into “rescue teams” of 3 or more, and they select a willing “victim” (probably the smallest boy) who will be pulled to safety. Teams line up on one side with the “victims” sitting on the floor about 9-10 feet away. Game begins with the “victim” crying “Help! Help!” and team goes to work making a bowline knot on the end of their rescue lines of the right size to slip over the victim’s head and arms. [Note: knots are not tied until “Help” is called out! If it turns out the knot is too small the team will lose time having to re-tie it. Remind the boys of this.]

The bowline is then tossed to the victim who gets it into position around his body. He holds tightly to the line and calls out “READY”. Now, the team carefully pulls him to “safety” (up to the feet of the team members.) Working quickly is important, but getting the victim to “shore” safely is what matters. It can be done as a race between teams, or you can time them one at a time. Boys will enjoy the activity if everyone is careful - we don’t want bruises or carpet burns!!!



Lesson 6: TIE IT ALL TOGETHER

The objective is simple: have boys tie, then untie, all 10 of their knots. They can compete as teams against each other or one at a time with a stop watch (perhaps on your phone) to keep each boy’s “score”. Boy or team finishing first (or in the least amount of time) wins!

Will go quickly if each boy has his own piece of rope (though your job of keeping up with them all will be tougher. Extra crew chiefs can help!) Whatever solution you use just remember that this is an opportunity for all your boys to get better with all their knots. Be available to help those who may be struggling - the idea of any contest is to challenge the boys to work harder and perfect their skill.



Lesson 7: (After Evaluations)

Anyone of the Boys Being Boys activities above can be used to fill remaining time after boys complete their Skill Evaluation. Since some boys will finish before others, be sure that everyone is being supervised for safety and order. Rope must never be used to tie anyone or to strike with like a whip or lash. Hopefully you have already established these rules from the beginning.