

Beavers

A fast, hands-on Colony Forum that turns ideas into a decision before Beavers go home.

Ages 6-8

Colony

Colony Forum

YouShape Award available

Run the session

Total: 57 minutes

0:00	Arrival - Scouting Sketch Two big sheets on the floor: "best sleepover ever" and "best game ever". Draw or write while everyone arrives.	PLAN
0:10	Opening Lodge Leaders lead. Explain that tonight the Colony decides what happens after half term.	LEAD
0:15	Warm-up - Snowball Fight One idea each, scrunched, thrown, then read out by whoever catches it.	PLAN
0:30	Colony Forum in Lodges - Pizza Review Pizza Review, one slice each: like it, want to try it, would change it.	REPRESENT
0:50	Vote - Pots of Adventure Three tubes labelled with the top ideas, one token each.	PLAN
0:57	Closing Announce the winning tube and the date it is happening. Beavers hear the result the same night.	CLOSE THE LOOP

Volunteer cue: the point of the night is not just to collect opinions. Finish with a real decision, a clear next step and a date for when the section will hear back.

How to run each activity

Use this page alongside the timeline. The steps explain the practical set-up, what the facilitator says or does, and what must be recorded before moving on.

Arrival - Scouting Sketch

0:00

1. Put two large sheets on the floor or low tables with the prompts already written. Add chunky pens so Beavers can join in immediately.
2. Ask each Beaver to draw or write at least one thing. Adults can ask "What would make it brilliant?" but should not add their own ideas.
3. Before the opening, quickly circle repeated ideas so they can be picked up later in the forum.

Record: Record the strongest themes and any ideas that appear more than once.

Colony Forum in Lodges - Pizza Review

0:30

1. Give each Lodge a large paper pizza divided into slices, or individual paper slices. Use three prompts: "We liked...", "We want to try...", and "We would change...".
2. Each Beaver adds one drawing or short comment to a slice. Lodge Leaders make sure everybody contributes before discussion starts.
3. The Lodge chooses one or two points under each prompt to feed back to the whole Colony. Volunteers write the feedback exactly as given.

Record: Record one clear set of feedback from each Lodge.

Opening

0:10

1. Give Lodge Leaders a short prompt before the meeting: welcome everyone, explain the decision, and remind the Colony that everybody gets a say.
2. State exactly what is genuinely open for choice and any fixed limits such as dates, cost, travel or safety.
3. Tell the Colony when they will hear the result - ideally before they go home tonight.

Record: Record who led and the exact decision being made.

Vote - Pots of Adventure

0:50

1. Use the ideas gathered earlier to identify three options that are genuinely possible. Label three clear tubes, pots or containers with words and pictures.
2. Give each Beaver one token. They place it in the container for the option they most want. Keep adults away from the voting area so there is no pressure.
3. Count the tokens in front of the Colony. If there is a tie, use a quick second vote between the tied options.

Record: Record the totals, winning idea and any close second choice worth keeping.

Warm-up - Snowball Fight

0:15

1. Give everyone one small piece of paper. Ask them to write or draw one idea for a future Colony night.
2. Scrunch the paper into "snowballs". On the signal, throw them into the middle or across a safe marked area for a few seconds, then stop.
3. Each Beaver picks up one snowball and reads or describes the idea. A volunteer scribes all ideas without judging them yet.

Record: Record every idea and mark repeated suggestions.

Closing

0:57

1. Announce the winning idea and show where it sits in the programme calendar.
2. Name the date it will happen and, where useful, one thing that needs doing next such as booking or buying kit.
3. Thank the Colony and make the link explicit: "You chose this tonight, so this is what we are doing."

Record: Record the date, next action and named volunteer or young person responsible.

Prep, record, close the loop

Before they arrive

- ✓ 2 large sheets and chunky pens
- ✓ Paper for Snowball Fight
- ✓ Pizza Review sheets/slices
- ✓ 3 tubes or containers labelled with shortlisted ideas
- ✓ 1 voting token per Beaver
- ✓ Clipboard or large sheet for recording decisions

What to record

- ✓ Ideas from the arrival sheets
- ✓ Snowball Fight ideas
- ✓ What each Lodge liked, wanted to try or would change
- ✓ The three shortlisted ideas
- ✓ Final vote result
- ✓ Date the winning idea will happen

Facilitation notes

- Keep discussion in Lodges so everyone gets airtime.
- Lodge Leaders should lead where possible; volunteers support from the side.
- Make the final vote simple and visible.
- Do not finish without a date or a clear next action.

End-of-night check

- ✓ Did young people make at least one genuine decision?
- ✓ Did somebody young lead part of the session?
- ✓ Have you named what happens next?
- ✓ Have you said when you will update them?

Keep it going next meeting

Ten-minute Colony Forum

In Lodges, ask one question: what should we do on the last night of term? Bring back one idea per Lodge, vote, then put it in the programme.

Hand the game over

Ask a Beaver to explain a game they know to the whole Colony, with a volunteer beside them.

Close the loop

YOU SAID

WE DID

WE COULD NOT YET

NEXT UPDATE

Use these four headings at the next meeting, on a noticeboard or in your parent/carer update. Showing what happened after young people spoke is what makes the next forum worth taking seriously.