

Cub Scout Safety Scenario for March: The Pocketknife Picnic Problem

For Cub Scouts (Ages 6–10)

Your den is having a picnic lunch at a local park. A few Cub Scouts are helping prepare snacks at a picnic table. One Cub Scout brings their pocketknife because they recently earned their Whittling Chip and want to show they can be responsible.

The Cub Scout decides to cut an apple to share with a friend. The table is crowded with lunchboxes, water bottles, and backpacks. Another Cub Scout reaches across the table at the same moment to grab their sandwich. The Cub Scout with the knife shifts their hand to make room, and the blade slips. The Cub Scout gets a small cut on their finger—enough to bleed and require first aid.

A Cub Scout says, “But they were being careful! It was just bad luck.”

This becomes a puzzle for the den: **What went wrong, and what clues did we miss?**

Role-Play / Skit: “The Pocketknife Picnic Detectives”

Characters

- 3–5 Cub Scouts
- 1 Leader
- 1 “Safety Scout Detective” narrator

Props

- A pretend pocketknife (paper or cardboard)
- An apple or paper apple
- A picnic table setup with lunchboxes
- Tape to mark a “safe cutting zone”

Skit Outline

Scene 1 — The Crowded Table

- Cubs sit at a “picnic table.”
- One Cub uses the pretend knife to cut an apple.
- Another Cub reaches across the table.

- The “knife” slips; Cub reacts with a safe, exaggerated motion.

Scene 2 — Safety Scout Detective Freezes the Scene

- Detective says: “Let’s solve the mystery! Why did the knife slip?”
- Cubs examine:
 - The crowded table
 - The direction of the cutting motion
 - The other Cub reaching across
 - The lack of a safe cutting zone

Scene 3 — The Safe Way

- Leader explains: “Pocketknives are tools, not toys. We need space, focus, and a safe cutting area.”
- Cubs practice:
 - Setting up a safe cutting zone
 - Checking that no one is within arm’s reach
 - Asking an adult before using a knife
 - Using a cutting board or stable surface

Final Line (all together)

“Space, focus, and asking first—safe knives make safe Scouts!”

Leader’s Guide: The Pocketknife Picnic Problem

Purpose of This Scenario

This scenario teaches Cub Scouts:

- How to analyze multiple safety factors
- Why knives require space, focus, and supervision
- How crowded environments increase risk
- Why reporting injuries and near misses is essential

- How to set up a safe cutting area
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Key Teaching Points

1. This Was a Real Injury With Potential for Worse Harm

The Cub Scout received a small cut, but the situation could have caused:

- A deeper cut
- A cut to another Cub Scout
- A dropped knife causing additional injuries

This qualifies as both an **incident** and a **near miss**.

2. Help Cubs Analyze the “Hidden Clues”

Encourage them to think like detectives:

- The table was crowded.
- Another Cub reached into the cutting area.
- The knife was pointed toward others.
- There was no designated cutting zone.
- An adult had not approved the knife use.

This scenario builds higher-level reasoning by asking Cubs to connect **multiple causes**, not just one mistake.

3. Connect to Scouting America Knife Safety Expectations

Reinforce:

- Knives must be used only with adult permission and supervision.
- A “blood circle” (arm’s-length safety zone) must be checked before opening a knife.
- Cutting should be done away from the body.
- Knives should never be used at crowded tables or near others.

- Tools must be respected and used only for appropriate tasks.
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4. Use the Skit to Reinforce Learning

The skit helps Cubs:

- Practice identifying unsafe knife-use environments.
 - Understand how distractions and crowding increase risk.
 - Learn to set up a safe cutting zone.
 - Build confidence in speaking up when something looks unsafe.
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5. What Leaders Should Do After an Injury

- Provide first aid.
 - Document the incident.
 - Submit a near-miss/incident report.
 - Review knife safety rules with the den.
 - Reinforce Whittling Chip expectations.
 - Ensure knife use happens only in designated, supervised areas.
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Suggested Leader Discussion Prompts

- “Why was the picnic table not a safe place to use a knife?”
 - “What clues showed the knife might slip?”
 - “How could we have prevented this injury?”
 - “Why should we always tell an adult when someone gets hurt or almost gets hurt?”
 - “What does a safe cutting zone look like?”
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Takeaway Message for Cub Scouts

Knives are tools that require space, focus, and adult supervision. When we think ahead and report injuries or near misses, we keep our whole den safe.