

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF THE ARROW? 2009 PROGRAM & TRAINING CONFERENCE

Session Length: 75 Minutes

Learning objectives:

- To expand the understanding of the role of the Order of the Arrow to non-members
- To put the Order of the Arrow into a more outstanding role in the Scouting program.
- To provide unit leaders with information on how to use the Order of the Arrow in their best interests, while helping the OA members to reach their potential for service and activity in their home units.



Required Materials:

- Whiteboard or flipchart and pens
- A copy of the Order of the Arrow Handbook
- Reference material about the OA Unit Representative Program
- PowerPoint presentation file
- OA Unit Election Video on DVD or YouTube
- Computer with LCD projector
- Handouts: copies of the OA Troop/Team Representative registration form
- Handouts: copies of the OA Basics Factsheet from the National OA website
- Handouts: training session evaluation forms if not provided by the conference

TRAINER PREPARATION

This session is designed to be presented to adult leaders who may not have a full understanding about what the OA is, or what it does.

The type of trainer for this session is preferably an experienced, youth Arrowman. This Arrowman may be a current or past officer in the Chapter or Lodge level that has an understanding about District and Council operations. This member should be slightly well known in his district or council so that the unit leaders being trained respect him and pay more attention during the session.

The training area should be set up like a classroom with desks or chairs facing a front area of the room. The front of the room should have the flip chart or projector set up and ready to go. The first page on the flipchart or first slide should have the title of the session with the name of the trainer/presenter.

SESSION NARRATIVE

Introduction:

1 Minute

The presenter should give a brief explanation of who he is, his past and/or current offices, and what his objectives are for the presentation. If there are co-facilitators, they might choose to introduce each other.

Definition of the Mission and Purpose of the Order of the Arrow:**3 Minutes**

The presenter of the session should have prepared on his flip chart/overhead the mission of the Order of the Arrow, and read it for the participants.

Mission of the Order of the Arrow:

The mission of the Order of the Arrow is to fulfill its purpose as an integral part of the Boy Scouts of America through positive youth leadership under the guidance of selected capable adults.

The presenter should then move on to present the Purpose of the Order of the Arrow.

Purpose of the Order of the Arrow

As Scouting's National Honor Society, our purpose is to:

- *Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.*
- *Promote camping, responsible outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship as essential components of every Scout's experience, in the unit, year-round, and in summer camp.*
- *Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit and ability to advance the activities of their units, our Brotherhood, Scouting, and ultimately our nation.*
- *Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.*

Membership Eligibility and Levels of Membership:**20 Minutes**

Explain that to become a member of the Order of the Arrow, a registered Boy Scout must:

Youth Eligibility

- Fellow unit members elect youth to the Order, following approval by the Scoutmaster or Varsity Team Coach.
- A youth must be a registered member of a Boy Scout troop or Varsity Scout team and hold First Class rank.
- The youth must have experienced 15 days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election.
 - The 15 days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. The balance of the camping must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps.

Adult Selection

Adult selection is based on their ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose, and is not for recognition. Selected adult Scouters must be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities, and provide a positive role model for the youth members of the lodge.

Unit Election Process

Briefly explain the process of the OA Unit Election. Members of the local OA chapter coordinate a time with Scoutmasters and Team Coaches to visit the unit to give a presentation about what the Order of the Arrow is, and to elect scouts from the unit to be candidates for membership in the OA.

Introduce the OA Unit Election Video, "Becoming an Arrowman." This video does an excellent job of explaining the founding principles of the OA, giving a brief history, and walking through the actual election process. (The video can be shown from YouTube if an Internet connection is available.)

Roll Video	OA Unit Election Video: "Becoming an Arrowman"	Time: 9:15
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Levels of Membership in the Order of the Arrow

The presenter should stress to participants that there are NO RANKS in the Order of the Arrow. No "special treatment" is given to members who hold a higher honor than someone else. It is not unusual to have an Ordeal or Brotherhood member become a Chapter Chief or a Lodge officer.

Ordeal:

Once unit members have elected a person to the OA, he or she is formally recognized as a candidate. This is done at a calling-out ceremony, usually conducted by the ceremonies team in an outdoor setting. The candidate then takes part in a brief pre-Ordeal ceremony, and then the actual Ordeal.

During the ordeal, a candidate will:

- Sleep alone under the starlit sky, testing bravery
- Take a vow of silence, emphasizing the need to spend time in thoughtful silence
- Eat scant food, which illustrates self denial
- Spend a day working, which indicates a candidate's willingness to serve others cheerfully.

Brotherhood:

To become a brotherhood member, Ordeal members must meet five challenges:

1. **Memorize the signs of OA membership.** These include the Obligation of the Order, the OA Song, our Admonition, the sign of the Ordeal, and the OA handclasp.
2. **Advance in his understanding of the ordeal.** Gain a thorough understanding of the Ordeal through which he has passed.
3. **Serve his unit.** Retain his registration in Scouting. During a period of at least 10 months, strive to fulfill his Obligation by continuing and expanding his service to his own troop or team.
4. **Plan for service in his lodge.** Retain OA registration and keep his dues paid. Be aware that to gain brotherhood he must pledge to serve the lodge.
5. **Review his progress.** When a member feels he has met the first four challenges, he must write a letter to the chapter secretary. In this letter he must:
 - a. Explain what he thinks the Obligation means.

- b. Describe how he has been fulfilling the Obligation in his home unit and daily life, and how he has used his understanding of the Ordeal to aid in this service.
- c. Describe his plans for giving service to the lodge program.

The presenter should stress the third point because this is a session designed to make unit leaders aware of the benefits of the OA to them.

Vigil:

Vigil Honor is the highest mark of distinction in the Order of the Arrow. After being an active member of the OA for two years after attaining his brotherhood, members of the Lodge Vigil Committee accept nominations from members of the lodge and review them. The National Order of the Arrow Committee gives each lodge a quota of how many members can receive the Vigil Honor each year.

The presenter should keep this vague because in this setting The Vigil is not very pertinent to discussion. Ordeal and Brotherhood membership are a more important topic of discussion.

Where the OA stands in the BSA structure:

1 Minute

This is a point in the session where the presenter should not only tell about where the OA stands, but what it does for the units. Scoutmasters and Den Leaders want to know what the OA can do for their units.

It may be appropriate at this point in the session to briefly show or draw a diagram of the OA/BSA structure. However, for simplicity, the presenter should not spend too much time on the minutia of the structure, other than how the OA fits into the big picture.

Say: "Now that you are fully aware of what the Order of the Arrow is and its purpose, I would like to speak with you a few minutes about what we are, and what the Order of the Arrow can do for your units."

The OA Unit Representative Program:

5 Minutes

The presenter should have a slide or flip chart page ready with "Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Representative Program" prepared on the front. Since there are existing Order of the Arrow Unit Representative reference materials, it is not necessary to brance into a complete training session about this program. The purpose of this session is to make Scoutmasters and Team Coaches aware of all aspects of ways the OA can serve them.

What is the OA Unit Representative Program?

Leadership position in the troop/team: "Has your unit ever had the problem of having a lot of boys who need leadership positions for Eagle, and not enough positions to give them?" The OA Unit Representative is a recognized leadership position in the unit, which can be used for rank advancement.

Communication link between OA and units: The OA Unit Representative brings any information members of the unit may need about lodge and chapter events to troop meetings, and can also bring any needs for service back from the unit to the OA lodge/chapter.

How do we get an OA representative?

The Senior Patrol Leader, with approval of the Scoutmaster, appoints the Order of the Arrow Unit Representative. A unit should register a Unit Representative with their local OA lodge/chapter.

Other ways the OA serves you:**25 Minutes**

In this portion of the session, the presenter should talk about ways his OA chapter and/or lodge serves, or can serve their council/district and the troops. Here are some ideas you may decide to use. If your lodge/chapter does other activities, you are encouraged to use those as well.

Support Staff at Council Events

The Order of the Arrow is comprised of the "best" that the scouting movement has to offer. The OA can and should be looked to, to provide service at big events where a strong youth presence is needed.

Support Staff at District Events

The OA can make a great impact at smaller events in districts. This can range from running a food stand, to providing man power at stations at Klondikes and other year round robin type events. Your local OA chapter/lodge should be more than happy to help you run an event such as assistance at Webeloree's and other events.

OA Recognition Days at Summer Camp

Some councils set aside time at summer camp for OA members to hold a re-dedication ceremony, as well as show off their pride in being a member. This can be seen as setting an example to younger scouts to see who the OA members are and who it is they can look up to.

Assembly of Summer Camp(s)

During the yearly ordeal weekend, the Order of the Arrow sets up the council's summer camps and does other service to the camp. Without this service, summer camps may not be of the high quality they are. A large percentage of Camp Staff's are also Order of the Arrow members. This shows that camping is a big part of what the organization is.

Eagle Scout Ceremonies

The Order of the Arrow has many ceremonies that involve the use of Native American symbolism and characters. The ceremonies teams of the OA are great resources for this type of event.

"Trail to First Class" Camporees

Many OA lodges utilize the experience of its youth membership to pass along their knowledge to younger scouts. This can be done at events where younger youth can learn skills required for Tenderfoot through First Class Rank.

Camping Promotion and Where to Go Camping Resources

The OA does not only promote summer camp, but also year-round camping. The experience of its members is vast, and can be used to answer all scouts' questions about these types of experiences, especially in the field of high adventure. The OA camping promotion teams can visit your units and show the great opportunities that await them at Cub Day Camp or Boy Scout Summer Camp. For Cub Scouts, this will result in new anticipation in their crossover to Boy Scouting.

The OA camping promotions team also can give presentations to Boy Scout troops and Varsity teams on the opportunities that await them at the council's local summer camps. This is also a great chance for those scouts to learn about the high adventure opportunities that are available to older scouts. Hearing this presentation from their peers will create a sense of excitement about camping. Some lodges have

produced Where to Go Camping resource guides and websites about the local camping destinations in the area.

Leadership Training for Older Youth

The leadership opportunities of the OA are some of the greatest. Through training at lodge and section conclaves, and National Leadership Seminars, the members of the OA who participate are not only good examples of leaders, but also have the experience to back it up. Many of the same youth leadership training opportunities are also available to adults.

Crossover Ceremonies

The Order of the Arrow has some of the best ceremonies teams out there. Crossover ceremonies and Arrow of Light ceremonies are two of the most important ceremonies in a young scout's career.

Providing Good Role Models

While supporting Cub events, as well as visiting them for camping promotion, the Order of the Arrow is showing the Cub Scouts what they can be in the future if they stay with the program. Many Cubs leave Scouting after they have graduated from Webelos. This does not have to be the case. With a positive thing to strive towards (OA membership), Cubs will have more of a reason to join Boy Scouting.

The presenter should really stress to Cub leaders that the OA may be primarily a Boy Scout organization, but is more than happy to assist the entire Scouting program, especially with assistance at the Cub Scout level.

Common Myths:

4 Minutes

Take a few moments to address some of the most popular myths about the Order of the Arrow. Likely, these are the most "burning" questions in the eyes of adult leaders who do not yet know much about the organization.

- *Myth: The OA is a secret organization and conducts hazing.* Fact: There are no secret organizations allowed in the Boy Scouts of America, nor is hazing ever allowed. The Order of the Arrow's program may sometimes seem as if it is, but actually, all ceremonies and proceedings of the OA are open to anyone who desires to attend. However, in order to preserve the sense of wonder about experiences a Scout may have later down their Scouting career, the OA has established a logical inductions sequence.
- *Myth: The OA takes youth leadership away from the unit.* Fact: The Arrowman's first duty is to his unit, and is expected to give generous service to his unit for the honor it has extended. OA members are encouraged to assist with unit activities first. Since members are considered "youth" until they turn 21 years of age, the OA provides an avenue for older scouts to stay involved longer than they would if they simply left the unit after attaining Eagle rank by the age of 18. The program offers exciting leadership and program opportunities that are unique in Scouting. Through collaboration between the OA Unit Representative and the rest of the unit's senior leadership, much can be done to avoid scheduling conflicts, which allows active Arrowmen to provide service to their units and to also participate in OA events.
- *Myth: The OA mocks Native Americans.* Fact: Scouting is rich in tradition, and its original ceremonies took place at Treasure Island Scout Camp in the Delaware Valley. Since the area is rich in Indian tradition, and the island had been used an early Native American campground, it seemed only natural to base the OA on the legends and traditions of the Delaware Indians. Today, many active Native Americans from tribes all over the country attend Order of the Arrow events to help us continue the tradition and to respect those customs and traditions by learning

the proper background. Each OA lodge is unique in the traditions it follows based on the area of the country it is in.

Questions, Answers, and Improvement Suggestions:**10 Minutes**

Take time for questions from those in attendance. Reference the FAQ page on the National Order of the Arrow website for answers to many common inquiries. Also solicit suggestions for ways the Order of the Arrow can improve in performing its mission. Write these on a flip chart page or the whiteboard.

Conclusion:**1 Minute**

Say: "Thank you all for your time. I hope this presentation has helped you to gain a greater understanding of the wonderful service the Order of the Arrow can provide, and has broadened your understanding of what the OA is.

"The OA is a unique organization. Without it, Scouting may not be what it is today. The OA is not just a work organization. It is a cheerful service organization filled with fun and brotherhood. If there are no more questions, I once again thank you for your time, and hope to take these ideas back to my chapter/lodge and help improve our service to you in the near future."

Evaluation:**5 Minutes**

Give participants a chance to evaluate this training session using the conference evaluation form or a form prepared in advance by the presenter.

APPENDIX: SOURCE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

National Order of the Arrow Website

<http://www.oa-bsa.org>

OA Unit Election Video: Becoming an Arrowman

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qlbl0yASe7k>

Guide for Officers and Advisers

<http://www.oa-bsa.org/resources/pubs/#goa>

OA Basics Factsheet

<http://www.oa-bsa.org/misc/basics>

OA Troop/Team Representative Program

<http://www.oa-bsa.org/programs/ttr>

Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.oa-bsa.org/QandA>