



Golden Arrow District Boy Scout Roundtable Topic - February 2014 Training Junior Leaders Using ILST

The badge of office presented to a Boy Scout who is accepting a position of troop leadership does not automatically make him a good leader.

Since 2011, BSA National has provided Troops with a new syllabus for Junior Leader Training, *Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops*. This is considered to be "the first steps in the Youth Leadership continuum."

The purpose of the Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops course is to teach Scouts with leadership positions about their new roles and how to most effectively reach success in that role. It is intended to help Boy Scouts in leadership positions within their troop understand their responsibilities and to equip them with organizational and leadership skills to fulfill those responsibilities. Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops is the first course in the series of leadership training offered to Boy Scouts and is a replacement for Troop Leadership Training.

Completion of Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops is a prerequisite for Boy Scouts to participate in the more advanced leadership courses National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) and the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE). It is also required to participate in a Kodiak Challenge Trek.

Leadership In Boy Scouting

Leadership is a vital part of the Scouting program. Boy Scouts in positions of leadership run the troop. They take care of the many tasks necessary for troop and patrol meetings and activities to run smoothly. By accepting the responsibilities of troop leadership, Scouts are preparing themselves to be leaders throughout their lives.

Opportunities to develop leadership skills are every bit as important, if not more important, to Boy Scouts and to Scouting in general as any recognition or advancement program. Scouting offers young people a rich and varied arena in which to learn and use leadership skills. It is also a way to keep Boy Scouts interested and involved—keep them busy, organized, and trained, and give them opportunities to lead.

Among the activities encountered by a troop's leaders are

- Organizing the troop
- Planning and organizing activities and meetings
- Assigning duties to others
- Planning menus and figuring out food costs
- Encouraging advancement
- Guiding a troop's involvement in problem-solving
- Teaching outdoor, sports, or craft skills
- Ensuring the troop's safety during meetings and outings
- Handling the troop's finances

- Helping other Boy Scouts make the most of their own leadership opportunities
- Encouraging participation

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As part of the Youth Training Continuum, Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops provides the core unit-level leadership skills every Scout leader should know. This is followed by the National Youth Leadership Training course, which expands on the skills learned in Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops and provides Scouts with more advanced leadership skills and experience during a six-day course delivered in an outdoor setting. The National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience is an exciting program that allows NYLT graduates to enhance their leadership skills in the Philmont backcountry. NAYLE offers Scouts an unforgettable wilderness experience as they use leadership and team-building skills to resolve exciting and challenging backcountry situations. Last, the Kodiak Challenge offers Scouts an opportunity to reinforce their leadership skills on an exciting trek adventure. Scouts may participate in a Kodiak Challenge Trek after they have completed any of these three trainings, but the Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops is required.

About This Course

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops is a guide meant to offer the Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader a flexible training program for troop leaders. It is not a syllabus to be followed verbatim; every troop is different. Trainers can review the resource material and adapt it to their individual troop's needs.

Training Boy Scouts to be leaders is an ongoing process that begins immediately when a Scout accepts a leadership position in his troop. Leadership experiences can be frustrating and disappointing for a Scout who is not given the knowledge, skills, and encouragement that he must have to fulfill his leadership assignment. It is the Scoutmaster's responsibility to make sure the Scout has all the necessary tools and to coach and mentor the Scout to be successful.

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops is organized into three modules, each of which should take 60 to 90 minutes to complete, with additional optional games and challenges to enhance the leadership lessons (and fun) of the course.

- Module One—Troop Organization includes a description of each leadership position in the troop, including roles and responsibilities, troop organization, and introductions to vision and servant leadership.
- Module Two—Tools of the Trade covers some core skill sets to help the Scout lead, including communicating, planning, and teaching.
- Module Three—Leadership and Teamwork incorporates additional leadership tools for the Scout, including discussions of teams and team characteristics, the stages of team development and leadership, inclusion/using your team, ethics and values of a leader, and a more in-depth review of vision.

This course may be conducted over three different days, one module at a time, perhaps before a regular troop meeting that incorporates some of the optional games. The course may also be conducted in one session. If this single-day format is used, it is important to include several breaks for two reasons: Without breaks, participants will become overloaded and bored; and

participants often benefit from being able to immediately spend some time thinking about, discussing, and even applying new leadership skills to their positions (perhaps by writing goals or brainstorming about new activity ideas).

A preferred option is to spread this course over a weekend activity with meals, camping, or other activities interspersed between the modules. Make the Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops experience a fun event for the entire troop to look forward to.

You can download the syllabus at: [ILST](#)

<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/ILST%20FINALS%202011%20-%20Item%20Number%20511-016.pdf>

Discussion Topics:

1. Are you familiar with this program?
2. Have you used it in your Troop?
3. If so, what has been your experience and would you do it again?
4. How would you change or evolve what you have done?
5. If you have NOT used this training - why? Would you like the District to offer this as a training program you could send your PLC members to?
6. What do you see as the strengths of this training program?
7. What are the weaknesses?
8. Is it "too much" for Junior Leaders (especially the younger or fidgety ones) to sit though - even broken up with breaks, meals, etc?
9. Is it/has it been effective for your Troop?
10. What do you do/need to do to supplement this training for the specific position training - do you do an additional training by position or have another way you "educate" new Junior Leaders as to their specific role and responsibility?

Junior Leader Lesson: Evaluating Junior Leaders

Too often, the SPL, ASPL, the Scoutmaster, ASM, or other person responsible for that Junior Leader is unaware, not empowered or too otherwise occupied to notice the failure of a Junior Leader to do his job for the Patrol or the Troop - until it is too late.

Adding an evaluation step, conducted by the supervision or responsible Scouter or Junior Leader, has the dual purpose of:

1. Clearly establishing a chain of command and responsibility to others
 - a. Who and what functions am I responsible for.
 - b. Who do I report to for help and instructions, etc.
2. Establishing clear criteria the Junior Leader is expected to follow to be successful in their role.

Giving such evaluative responsibility to the supervisory Scouter or Junior Leaders adds to their understanding of the role they play in making sure the leadership positions they have responsibility for are being well performed, and empowers them to suggest/encourage improvement.

A further explanation and example of such a program will be available to share with your PLC or can be downloaded from the Golden Arrow Roundtable Website after the program.