

# *The Order of the Arrow and Your Troop*

## ***Training Summary***

This session discusses the benefits to the individual, troop, district, and council as a result of the Order of the Arrow's influence in your troop.

## ***Time Required***

60 minutes

## ***Target Audience***

- Youth and/or adults

## ***Learning Objectives***

At the end of this lesson, participants will be able to

- Increase awareness of the resources available to troops.
- Understand the benefits to individuals, troops, districts, and councils of using the OA program in their troops.
- Create a win-win situation between the local OA lodge and the troop.

## ***Training Format***

This session is designed as a lecture with participant discussion. If PowerPoint is available, it may be used. The trainer should be familiar with the local OA program.

## ***Required Materials***

- Flip chart and markers
- Pen and paper for each participant
- Troop/team representative position patches
- Position description: Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Representative (from Troop Leadership Training, No. 34306A)

## ***Training Resources***

- Position description: Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Representative (from Troop Leadership Training, No. 34306A)
- Scoutmaster Handbook, No. 33009C
- Order of the Arrow Handbook, No. 34996D
- Guide for Officers and Advisers, No. 34997C
- Field Operations Guide
- Order of the Arrow Web site (<http://www.oa-bsa.org>)

## ***Using the Order of the Arrow in Your Troop***

Part of being a good leader is knowing and using your resources. Ask participants what resources are available to their troop. List responses on the flip chart, and add any that might be missing.

Then ask, “Have you ever considered the Order of the Arrow to be a resource?” Tell participants that you will be focusing on developing a win-win situation between individuals, troops, districts, and councils when the Order of the Arrow is utilized.

### ***Order of the Arrow Background***

The Order of the Arrow is Scouting’s national honor society. The OA has been around since 1915 and exists to serve the local council. Members of the OA are referred to as Arrowmen, and their main duty is to serve their unit. They wear red and white sashes and a patch on the right pocket flap of the Scout uniform to identify their lodge affiliation.

### ***Benefits to the Individual***

The Order of the Arrow has several key benefits for the individual.

First, the OA is a way for peers to recognize Scouts who exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. In order to gain membership into the OA, a Scout must meet certain criteria and be elected by his peers in the unit. A Scouter must meet the same criteria and be selected by the troop or team committee. This recognition instills a sense of pride within an individual.

Second, the OA gives Scouts an opportunity that might not be found at the unit level. They have a chance to sharpen their leadership skills by leading others at a local council or national level, by planning and promoting events, by communicating, and by attending leadership programs. They are then able to return to their troops and provide leadership. By allowing Scouts to actively participate in the OA, troop and team leaders are allowing them to develop their leadership skills, which will improve the unit.

Third, the Scout may actively participate with his troop or team for a longer period of time if he is active in the OA. Arrowmen are more likely to continue to participate in troop or team functions because they are still involved with Scouting.

Fourth, there is also a nationally recognized leadership position for rank advancement: the troop/team representative. The troop/team representative acts as a liaison between the unit and the OA lodge or chapter and communicates future program opportunities to unit members. Your representative would also coordinate any interaction between the unit and the OA (i.e., help with activities at troop meetings or outings). This is a great way to strengthen leadership skills in a younger Scout to prepare him for further unit leadership.

Fifth, the Order of the Arrow operates three great high-adventure programs—Philmont Scout Ranch, Northern Tier, and the Florida Sea Base. These programs are open to youth Arrowmen at a discounted rate.

### ***Benefits to the Unit***

The Order of the Arrow is full of knowledgeable Scouts and Scouters who are dedicated to the BSA program and are willing to assist your unit. When you have tried new approaches and nothing seems to be working, or you are just looking for a fresh idea, feel free to contact the OA. Arrowmen could assist with a skill that is going to be taught at a troop meeting, attend a troop or team outing, help promote weekend and summer camp, help with leadership activities, or be

present at troop functions to serve as a positive role model for those troops with many younger Scouts.

The Order of the Arrow is not designed to take older Scouts away from the unit. The Order is designed to keep Scouts in Scouting as they mature. When Scouts go through their Ordeal, the first interaction between the Scout and the OA program, it is stressed to them to remain active in their unit.

These are just some of the benefits your troop or team could receive from utilizing the Order of the Arrow.

### ***Benefits to the Council***

When the troop is receiving assistance from the Order of the Arrow, the council is also benefiting. The mission of the Order is to become an integral part of the council. The lodge is charged with providing program that enables youths to become better leaders and continue to serve their unit. In many places across the country, the lodge provides support to council programs and camps.

Discuss with participants what the lodge has done locally for the council and camping.

### ***Hands-On Participation***

Ask participants to write down three weak areas of their unit, leaving between each entry. Give them about five minutes to complete this task.

Ask participants to focus their attention on the weaknesses they listed, thinking about possible solutions. Give them six minutes to complete this task.

Tell participants: Now, look at your solutions. Could the OA help your unit?

Ask participants for volunteers to share a possible situation that the OA could help with, and discuss ways the OA might be of assistance. List the solutions on a flip chart.

### ***Conclusion***

By understanding that the Order of the Arrow is a service organization willing to help the unit and council, you have identified an additional resource that you may take advantage of in the future. If you already knew that the Order was a resource, hopefully you learned of new ways that you could utilize in order to take advantage of the Order of the Arrow. Utilizing the OA will lead to a win-win situation between the individual, unit, district, and council programs.

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