

A PATROL METHOD CHECKLIST FOR SCOUTMASTERS

By: Bill Nelson 3/19/10

	Do I always think of my Patrols in terms of the leaders? Do I always transmit announcements and information to the Scouts through the Patrol Leaders or do I get up in front of the whole troop and make all the announcements myself?
	Do I always answer the Scouts' questions about routine details by saying, 'Ask your Patrol Leader; he knows!' instead of giving them the answer myself, thus doing my part to develop in them a certain amount of respect for those leaders, to whom they have to look for vital facts and guidance?
	Do I keep asking the Patrol Leaders for specific pieces of information about their Scouts, such as advancement, progress, personal interests, hobbies, or activities at school, to encourage them to get to know all their Scouts?
	Do I stick these alleged leaders right out in front at every opportunity where they get a feeling of leadership?
	Do I commend the Jr. Leaders publicly whenever they show signs of taking responsibility, and do I always refrain from criticizing them before their group?
	When something goes wrong in one of those Patrols during a Troop meeting, say a little matter of discipline, do I jump on the Scouts themselves, or do I first call the Patrol Leader aside and point out the situation to him, making him realize that it is his responsibility to handle it?
	Does the troop hold a mini-PLC after every meeting and major event that goes over what occurred at the event, what we should continue to do, stop doing and start doing to improve it? Do we also go over the agenda of the next meeting or activity to make sure everyone is ready?
	Does the Senior Patrol Leader hold a PLC meeting once a month to plan out the troop activities for the month? Is every patrol represented?
	Does the troop hold a Troop Leader Training after every change in youth leadership?
	Do I hold quarterly Scoutmaster Conferences with each Patrol Leader and the SPL?
	Do patrols meet on a bi-weekly or other regular basis apart from the troop? Do they go on separate activities?
	Are the Jr. Leaders NYLT trained?
	Does the troop send at least one potential Jr. Leader to NAYLE each year?
	Do I hold 10-20 minute training sessions at least once a quarter during the PLC meetings?
	Are the Jr. Leaders running the troop calendar planning sessions?
	Are the Scouts running the troop meeting with me only involved for the Scoutmaster minute?
	Do we have a "Green Bar" patrol made up of the PLC that goes on their own outings (say once a quarter) where we conduct training and motivational activities?
	Do the patrols take responsibility for each Scout's advancement?
	On campouts are my patrols separated at a sufficient distance (e.g., 300 feet) that they feel 'on their own'?

Let Them Lead!

So again, "Train 'em, trust 'em, and let 'em lead!" And remember that that last point is of tremendous importance. Let them lead in practically everything. Let them work out their own problems, interfere as little as possible but be ever ready to give wise guidance-not when you think they need it, but when they seek it. Keep in mind that unwarranted, ill-advised interference discourages leadership and that those boy leaders of yours are "learning by doing."¹

¹ Handbook for Scoutmasters by William "Green Bar Bill" Hillcourt, 1936, pg 225