



Foreword to Staff

Thank you for committing your time to share the great experience of Wood Badge with others.

Wood Badge is the ultimate leadership development program for adult leaders of the Boy Scouts of America. It has been widely recognized as Scouting's most advanced training program. It is a practical course designed to inspire and empower our volunteer and professional members to achieve their individual potential and to assist our organization in reaching its vision, mission, and goals for young people.

The concept of a youth-led, adult-supported program and partnership took root in the very earliest days of Scouting, in Wood Badge training at Gilwell Park, near London, England. Established in 1919 by Robert Baden-Powell, Scouting's founder, Wood Badge for the past century has been the ultimate training experience for hundreds of thousands of Scouters around the globe.

The first Wood Badge courses in the USA were conducted in 1936, and now thousands of American Scouters are participating in Wood Badge courses every year. With the passing of every decade since those first courses, Wood Badge has become more prominent and stronger than ever. The current version of Wood Badge represents the most significant changes in the program in nearly 20 years. Like most everything else, as the world has changed, so too has Wood Badge, and that evolution has allowed this training program, and Scouting itself, to keep pace with the world in which it operates. Wood Badge stands ready to continue providing leadership and service for Scouting and for our nation.

A Wood Badge course is designed for leaders from all areas of Scouting and its family of programs—Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Exploring, and Sea Scouting—and all levels of the BSA's professional staff. Today, Wood Badge builds on all that has come before it. Wood Badge alumni will clearly still recognize the traditions that make this program unique, just as they will also recognize the value of the new content that will allow for a greater understanding of our members about the world in which we live, and the how to best apply the values in which we believe as we lead and serve.

Through the years, the content of Wood Badge has gradually changed and evolved—from the campcraft and Scoutcraft skills of its early years, to more effective communication, relationship, and planning competencies today. Wood Badge now draws upon the most current leadership models used by businesses, corporate America, university programs, the military, and other leadership entities and organizations to present the latest in leadership theory, competencies, and behaviors.

Wood Badge participants attend a five-day course, offered in five consecutive days or as separate sessions over two weekends (a three-day weekend followed by a two-day weekend). Participants experience a whole day as Cub Scouts to have a full experience in the team formation process. They are first led by the Cubmaster and den chiefs. They experience a den meeting, learn about Wood Badge traditions, and bridge into a Scouts BSA troop at the blue and gold evening banquet. After the crossover, the denners become patrol leaders, and these new Scouts get an introduction into being led by a youth, the senior patrol leader. The dynamics of the larger group change from that of



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pack leadership by adults into troop leadership by youth. The progression of the den chiefs to troop guides aids in this process. At no time should staff treat them as anything other than adults working through roles that will help everyone appreciate the youth perspective and expectations.

Just as Wood Badge participants progress in Scouting as if they are growing up in the program, the Wood Badge curriculum also progresses and builds on the knowledge it presents. It starts with learning about ourselves, learning the value of understanding and including others, and understanding the role of good communication has in all that we do. This building of knowledge and skills uses hands-on exercises, active participation, and opportunities for feedback so we can all learn from each other and understand a bit about the programs we offer through Boy Scouts of America. There is little lecture time; the course is designed to be interactive and fun. You will find you learn something new from participants each day, just as they will learn from you. As you progress through staff development and practice the course, you will feel what our participants feel. You may experience both the frustrations and joys that they will. This is good and builds your understanding as you go along. Remember that you will go through the same stages of team development in preparing for the course as they will during the course.

Servant Leadership is a core part of Wood Badge. It is not a presentation or session; it is modeled daily by members serving the needs of participants, being helpful and preparing them to serve and lead others. As staff, you are preparing to learn, to grow, and to think about how Scouting values are instilled in youth, and to lead by the example of service to others so that others can do the same. This is not an easy task. Rarely, if ever, can anyone “walk the walk” 24/7, but everyone must do their best. Real servant leaders do not refer to themselves that way; they are too humble. Rather, servant leadership is a way of life that others recognize in them. You are in service to each other and to the world through your attitudes and actions. Trust and respect for each other is vital. If you are having fun, make sure everyone is invited into the fun. The environment of Wood Badge is one of inclusiveness.

This value extends after the course as well. We are all Scouters in the end, with or without having experienced Wood Badge, with varying experiences and abilities, who should always strive to help other people at all times.

You may have noticed Scouters singing a staff verse at the end of “The Gilwell Song.” It is unknown how this started, but it is not inclusive of anyone other than staff (while each patrol animal verse does reflect some staff member if all patrols are used). Not everyone will have the opportunity to serve on staff, and singing a staff verse may be seen as portraying some superiority to others. It is not a good way to set staff apart.

Since you are leading by example, staff members have the obligation and responsibility to portray positive attitudes and actions. During Gilwell Field assemblies, staff should be attentive, just as we expect from the participants (although you may have a designated staff member quietly moving about to take photos). During large group learning sessions, staff should be present if possible. Being present has dual meanings. It means physically present, showing interest and support of the efforts of the session leaders. It also means being mindfully present, attentive, and respectful. Staff members are expected to be available to answer questions from participants, while respecting the role of the troop guide as the primary go-to resource for the beginning of the course. As the



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course progresses, remain accessible but also reinforce the patrol method of sharing responsibility.

To prepare you to deliver the course, you have been provided with the Wood Badge lesson plans. It opens with a timetable for a course, showing exactly what events will occur and the order in which they will take place. Following the timetable are pages of lesson plans for each portion of the course, such as assemblies, learning sessions, and application activities. These are presented in an instructor-friendly format that includes:

- Time allowed
- Learning objectives
- Materials needed
- Recommended facility layout
- Delivery method/presentation procedure

You will notice that there is a learning objective for all that we do, whether it is to gain a new skill or to reinforce a Scouting method to take home. It is important that the delivery methods explained in the lesson plans are used. A variety of methods have been employed throughout the sessions to aid in keeping the learners' attention and in improving retention of the concepts. These methods also keep it fun for the presenters! One of them is the use of physical tools as visual aids to reinforce many of the lessons within the learning sessions. It is important that these tools and the associated explanation are presented with the lessons. The summary session will also refer to the tools as a reminder.

As participants develop their tickets, they will have many questions. Their patrol's troop guide is their primary resource, but all staff should be available to consult, offer clarification, and provide support. It is important that all staff offer the same explanation of one vision, five goals to reach that vision, and a ticket that promotes diversity and membership growth for the Boy Scouts of America.

Use this Administration section to get to know all aspects of the course. Read it and re-read it before you focus on the portions for which you are most responsible. Prepare and practice. Use staff development time to ask for feedback on how you are doing and to also provide feedback that makes the whole team function better. Then practice some more. It is important that you understand how the whole plan works and are prepared before the course starts. Be yourself. That is why you were invited to be a part of this experience.

The Boy Scouts of America deeply appreciates your contributions to Scouting and wishes you well as you undertake the important responsibility of delivering the course material of Wood Badge. You have a remarkable opportunity to enhance the skills and vision of those who are providing leadership for Scouting and leadership for America. The positive impact you will have upon the Boy Scouts of America, upon our nation, and upon your own abilities to lead will be profound.