



Youth Leadership Ideas

Never do anything a boy can do and a boy can do anything

At Meetings

Openings

A Boy Scout Troop meeting should start with a formal opening. Patrols in lines, boys in uniform, at attention, SPL in charge, demonstrating a pride in his troop, establishing his position of leadership. Announcements (if any) should be very short and pertain only to that meetings activities and always made by the boys, not an adult.



Patrol Method

Lord Baden-Powell, founder of worldwide Scouting, said: "The patrol method is not a way to operate a Boy Scout troop, it is the only way. Unless the patrol method is in operation, you don't really have a Boy Scout troop."

Why is the patrol method so important?

"The patrol is the school of leadership," It is often a boy's first opportunity to manage tasks and projects: Who is going on this month's camp-out? What are we going to eat? Who is going to buy the food? What skit will we perform at the campfire?

Closings

Closings can be less formal, a circle perhaps, with the boy leadership and the flags in the middle surrounded by the troop (including all adults). Again any announcements pertinent to upcoming activities or other troop business should be handled by the boys. If an adult needs to communicate a last minute message it should be done through the SPL, using the Scoutmaster Whisper method. During the closing, instant recognition of any advancement that took place that night should be done. This is done by the boy leadership, not the adults. But this is the time for the Scoutmaster Minute, and he should be introduced and welcomed into the circle by the SPL.

Rank Advancement

Scout Spirit

Demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath (Promise) and Scout Law in your everyday life. Many troops have begun using a 'board of review' type system run by the boys themselves to establish, judge, and decide the Scout Spirit requirement of each rank advancement. Boys, part of the leadership group (SPL, ASPL, Patrol Leaders, etc.) are gathered when needed, usually at a troop meeting to have a Scout Spirit review for the boy wishing to complete this requirement. It is that boys responsibility to set up the review via his Patrol Leader or the boy assigned that leadership position by the SPL. Each boy who sat on the review then signs the book giving his approval, or suggests the boy try again.

Scoutmaster Whisper

By: Steve Roberts, SM Troop 495

One of the things we have worked on over the years is creating a strong Boy Run Troop. When I look at one of the most significant differences between our troop and others, it comes down to the Scoutmaster Whisper. As I've reflected on the importance of the way we treat the boys in our troop, this is one of the most important. What is the Scoutmaster Whisper?

If you have attended any meeting or campout, you might have noticed me going up to our Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) or Assistant SPL or the Scout who is running a particular activity. When I approach the Scout you may notice that I wait to get his attention. Once I have his attention I put my arm around him and whisper to him. During that whisper I turn him away from the other Scouts and talk quietly to him. The whisper may last a few seconds or go on for a few minutes and then I walk away. Next, the boy leader will talk to the Scouts conveying the information that was shared during the whisper. The important thing is that the words are coming from the Scout in charge and not from the adult!

Why is this so important?

First, waiting for him to recognize the intrusion and finish his current thought shows that he is respected. Respect is the cornerstone behind a good relationship between adult and boy.

Second, it shows all of the other Scouts that the boy leader is trusted as the Scout who is in charge and that there is special information to be shared with him. This element of showing that you trust

the Scouts to run the troop is vitally important to a Boy Run Troop. If you trust them, they will trust you.

Third, the Scouts watching this brief interchange are both envious and curious. Many of them begin to envision the day that a leader will walk up to THEM in confidence and share important information. Imagine the power a young boy holds in his head at that moment!

Fourth, the boy leader will then convey the adult's message to the troop in his own words. While he may not say exactly what has been whispered, he will say it in his own words and in the language that the other Scouts understand. Never underestimate the power of "boy talk" - it's far more powerful than "adult talk".

Last, while that brief interchange may have interrupted the activity for a few moments, the Boy Scout has been left in charge. That's what a Boy Run Troop is all about!

We can teach our boys leadership, responsibility, and trust by a simple act, the Scoutmaster Whisper!

As I've reflected on the power of this simple gesture to the boy leaders in the troop, it's become clear to me that it's more than a Scoutmaster Whisper. While I really like that phrase and will continue to use it, the truth is that it is just "The Whisper!" Any adult in the troop that has information to convey to a Scout who is leading any activity should be willing to step up and whisper to the Scout in charge if there is important information that needs to be conveyed.

Keep in mind that our job as adults is to convey the information to our boy leaders before they give announcements or begin an activity. But, sometimes, we will recognize we've forgotten something or possibly he is conveying the wrong information (he's a boy, it happens!). Yes, it may be easier for us, as adults, to yell out what we want to say. That approach is taking away the power from our boy leader and even discrediting him in front of all the other Scouts who he is supposed to be leading! Reflect on the 5 points listed above and you will begin to understand the power of The Whisper.