



## Session Two

# Advancement Program

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### Time Allowed

35 minutes

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### Teaching Objectives

Through this presentation, instructors should convey the following points:

- Scouting offers young people tremendous opportunities to learn a wide range of skills.
  - One of the most effective ways for boys to learn skills is through the Four Steps to Advancement.
  - Advancement is one of the eight methods of Scouting used by BSA leaders to help boys fulfill the aims of the Boy Scouts of America. Properly used, a troop's advancement program can tie together and energize the other seven methods of Scouting.
  - There are many resources available to a Scoutmaster to provide ways for boys to learn skills and to advance through Scouting.
  - Advancement should be kept in perspective. It is not an ends in itself, but rather is the outgrowth of the other seven methods of Scouting. A Scout troop can have great Scouting without great advancement, but a troop with an active outdoor program will naturally have a strong advancement program.
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### Materials Needed

- *The Boy Scout Handbook*, No. 33105 (One copy per instructor. Participants in this training should have brought their own copies.)
- *The Scoutmaster Handbook*, No. 33009A (One copy per instructor. Participants in this training need to have brought their own copies.)

- *Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training* video, No. AV02V015
  - *Troop Program Resources*, No. 33588 (One copy to show participants.)
  - *First Class—First Year Tracking Sheet*, No. 34118A (One copy to show participants.)
  - Advancement poster (Hang this in the meeting room before the beginning of Session Two.)
  - PowerPoint slides or overheads from CD, if desired
  - Flipchart or other means of writing discussion notes
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## **Recommended Facility Layout**

- Session meeting area. Each participant should have a comfortable place to sit, take notes, and organize written materials. That setting most often consists of tables, each accommodating six to eight participants forming a patrol, and enough chairs for all participants.
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## **Delivery Method**

- Instructor-led presentation and discussion
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## **Presentation Procedure**

### ***Learning and Teaching in Scouting***

Open the discussion using the preopening activity of Session Two as a springboard. Participants taking part in that activity learned a new skill and may have helped other participants master that skill. They all enjoyed a relay that gave them the chance to use the new skill and to be recognized for their accomplishment.

In considering their own experience during the preopening activity, what is the participants' understanding of how Scouts learn?

What are some of the most effective ways that Scouting skills can be taught?

### ***Learning and the BSA Advancement Program***

In Scouting, we often use the terms *learning* and *advancement* interchangeably. Whenever a Scout learns a new skill, he is advancing his confidence, his abilities, and his ability to do more.

- The BSA advancement program provides a framework for guiding the learning of Scouts and for recognizing their accomplishments.
- Advancement also offers opportunities for Scouts to explore many areas of learning and to master skills that lead to success in a troop's outdoor program.
- The learning experiences for Scouts moving through the requirements for the ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class teach the core skills and values of the BSA.
- Learning opportunities for Scouts earning the ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle focus on personal growth and exploration, with a strong reinforcement of BSA values, leadership, and responsibility.

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An effective means of promoting learning in the BSA can be found in the Four Steps to Advancement. For the next few minutes we'll explore each of these steps.

### **The Four Steps to Advancement**

1. A Scout learns.
2. A Scout is tested.
3. A Scout is reviewed.
4. A Scout is recognized.

#### ***Step One: A Scout Learns***

##### **Instructors' Note**

*Invite participants to consider the first of the four steps to advancement by watching a patrol leader teaching a group of Scouts a Scouting skill.*

## Video No. 7—Teaching Scout Skills

At the conclusion of the video, lead participants in a discussion of what they have just seen. Draw out the following points:

- The patrol leader demonstrates how to tie a bandage.
- The patrol leader asks Scouts to tie the bandage.
- The patrol leader asks each Scout to show another Scout how to tie the bandage.
- The patrol leader refers Scouts to the page of *The Boy Scout Handbook* illustrating the skill.
- The patrol leader, senior patrol leader, and other troop guides check every bandage.
- The patrol leader, senior patrol leader, and other troop guides assist those Scouts still having difficulty.

In short, then, those who are teaching Scouts a skill do the following:

- Demonstrate the skill.
- Work with Scouts on learning the skill.
- Reinforce the use of the skill at troop meetings and during monthly outings. This reinforcement can occur by incorporating the skill into patrol competitions, troop projects, and other hands-on events. (The BSA publication *Troop Program Resources* is a rich collection of games and activities that can be adapted to promote learning.)
- Test Scouts when the Scouts feel that they are ready.

### WHO CAN TEACH SCOUTING SKILLS?

Ask participants for their thoughts on who can teach skills to Scouts. Guide the discussion to this conclusion:

A Scoutmaster doesn't have to be the one who teaches all these skills. As we have seen, Scouts can teach one another. There are many other people connected with a Scout troop who can serve in the capacity of instructors—troop committee members, merit badge counselors, trainers, and some parents. Councils can provide listings of local experts for merit badges and other training.

### ***Step Two: A Scout Is Tested***

A Scout wanting to complete a requirement to advance in rank must demonstrate to a Scout leader that he has fully mastered a skill at the level expected.

- In a new Scout patrol, that leader may be the assistant Scoutmaster or the troop guide assigned to the patrol.
- Scouts in regular patrols and Venture crews may be tested by adult troop leaders or by their own patrol leaders, troop guides, or another junior leader provided that the boy leader has already earned the rank the Scout is aiming for.
- As Scoutmaster, you provide quality control by monitoring the testing that occurs and ensuring that boys have met the requirements.

### ***Step Three: A Scout Is Reviewed***

After the Scout has completed all of the requirements for a rank and has been tested, his progress is reviewed in two stages: the Scoutmaster's conference and the board of review. Drawing together methods of Scouting including personal growth, association with adults, and instilling the values of the BSA, these are critical elements of a Scout's learning process.

## **SCOUTMASTER'S CONFERENCE**

### **Instructors' Note**

*Invite participants to consider one phase of the third of the Four Steps to Advancement—A Scout Is Tested by watching a Scoutmaster conducting a Scoutmaster conference.*

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### **Video No. 8—The Scoutmaster Conference**

At the conclusion of the video, lead participants in a discussion of what they have just seen. Draw out the following points concerning what the Scoutmaster is seeking to achieve:

- Establish trust.
- Listen carefully to understand the Scout's concerns, successes, and sense of self.
- Provide positive reinforcement.
- Emphasize Scouting's ideals by talking about the Scout Oath and Scout Law and the ways that the Scout can continue to apply them.
- Share ideas related to the troop, to school, and to the personal interests and concerns of the Scout.
- Ask the Scout to set goals and outline the steps for achieving them. For example, the Scoutmaster may



encourage the Scout to serve as a junior leader, achieve a higher rank, or attend summer camp.

- Congratulate the Scout on his achievements.
- Explain what the Scout can expect at the board of review, reminding him that the review will not be another test.
- Call attention to the fact that the Scoutmaster conference is always conducted in view of others and not in a private or nonpublic location. This is in accordance with BSA Youth Protection procedures. You saw this exemplified in the video.

The bottom line is that, by getting to know Scouts well, Scoutmasters can better show that they care about each boy as a person.

### THE BOARD OF REVIEW

After a Scout has completed all the requirements for any rank from Tenderfoot through Life and has had a Scoutmaster conference for that rank, he appears before a board of review composed of three to six members of the troop committee. (The membership of the board of review for an Eagle Scout candidate is determined by local council policy.)

*The purpose of the board of review is not to retest a Scout, but rather to ensure that he has completed all the rank requirements, to determine the quality of the Scout's troop experience, and to encourage him to advance toward the next rank. Each review should also include a discussion of ways in which the Scout sees himself living up to the Scout Oath and Law in his everyday life.*

Members of the board should engage a Scout in a meaningful discussion about important matters including his goals, personal growth, and Scout spirit. The following guidelines will help provide an atmosphere of trust and support:

- Make every effort to put the Scout at ease.
- Enliven the discussion by asking open-ended questions about the boy's recent Scouting adventures.
- Offer encouragement and praise.

At the end of the review, the Scout will leave the room while the board members discuss his qualifications. They then call him back to tell him that he is qualified for his new rank, or to outline very clearly what more he must do to successfully complete the requirements. The board can close the session by congratulating the Scout on the progress he has made

and by providing positive reinforcement for him to continue his good efforts.

### ***Step Four: A Scout Is Recognized***

#### **Instructors' Note**

*Invite participants to consider this aspect of recognizing a Scout's achievement, illustrating the discussion with photographs, slides, or posters showing a court of honor.*

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Immediate recognition of achievement is a powerful incentive for Scouts to continue learning and advancing. When a boy has finished the requirements for a rank, you as Scoutmaster can present him with his badge during a very simple ceremony at the close of the troop meeting. Leaving the meeting with his new badge in hand, a Scout's enthusiasm and self-esteem will be greatly enhanced.

More formal recognition also has its role in Scouting. A court of honor allows family, friends, troop members, and others involved with Scouting to share in the joy and satisfaction of every Scout's achievements.

Lead participants in a discussion of the role of recognition in the BSA's advancement program. During the discussion, bring out the following points:

- A Scout should receive his new badge of rank as soon as possible after his achievement has been certified by a board of review. A simple ceremony at the conclusion of a troop meeting or during a campout is ideal, with the Scoutmaster making the presentation of the badge.
- In addition, a troop should hold a court of honor every three months to recognize all Scouts who have moved up to any higher rank or who have earned merit badges since the last court of honor. (The exception is the attainment of the Eagle rank. A special Eagle court of honor will be held after an Eagle board of review has certified that a Scout has completed all the requirements for that rank.)

Ceremonies have an important place in Scouting. A variety of effective ceremonies are outlined in the BSA publication *Troop Program Resources*.

#### ***Resources for the BSA Advancement Program***

The requirements for the ranks of Tenderfoot through Eagle can be found in *The Boy Scout Handbook*. The publication *Boy Scout Requirements* includes those requirements as well as the requirements for merit badges and other BSA awards.

### ***Timing of Advancement***

Scouts are encouraged to be self-motivating in their desire to learn and their opportunities to advance. A Scout learns at his own speed, not at the speed of others in the troop. Boys should not be pressured to advance on someone else's timetable.

To allow them the greatest opportunities to pursue their interests, Scouts are welcome to work on any requirements in any order in the Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class advancement awards. There is no mandatory waiting time associated with earning the Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class awards.

However, it's fine to encourage new Scouts to attain the First Class rank within one year of joining. The troop can help by having a well-rounded annual program for new-Scout patrols that touches on all of the outdoor skills Scouts must master to become First Class Scouts.

(The First Class Tracking Sheet is an effective tool for managing the advancement of new Scouts.)

### ***Summary***

#### **Instructors' Note**

*Close the presentation on advancement by inviting participants to use The Scoutmaster Handbook to consider the strengths of the BSA's advancement program, and then to engage in a group activity highlighting the manner in which advancement promotes the other seven methods of Scouting.*

### ***Advancement and The Scoutmaster Handbook***

As with other aspects of being a successful Scoutmaster, nearly all the information you need can be found in the pages of *The Scoutmaster Handbook*. Chapter 10, "Advancement," discusses in detail all the material we have covered in this presentation. If you turn to the first page of that chapter, you'll also find a listing of the strengths of the Boy Scout advancement program:

#### **Instructors' Note**

*Ask participants to find the listing of the strengths of the Boy Scout advancement program and invite someone to read the list aloud.*





## Strengths of the Boy Scout Advancement Program

- It's fun.
- It offers adventure.
- It allows Scouts to measure their progress.
- It provides recognition.
- It promotes the development of physical fitness, character, and citizenship.

— *The Scoutmaster Handbook*,  
Chapter 10, "Advancement"

Advancement is also one of the eight methods of Scouting. Properly used, a troop's advancement program can tie together and energize the other seven methods.

## The Methods of Scouting

1. The Ideals
2. The Patrol Method
3. The Outdoors
4. Advancement
5. Association With Adults
6. Personal Growth
7. Leadership Development
8. The Uniform

### ADVANCEMENT AND THE METHODS OF SCOUTING GROUP EXERCISE

Assign each group of participants one or several of the methods of Scouting. Ask them to take several minutes to come up with a short list of the ways in which the learning of skills can play a role in the methods of Scouting. Give them time to compile their lists, then lead a discussion with the larger group about each of the methods and its relationship to learning. Introduce the discussion of each method by inviting participants to share what their list concerning that method. Expand upon their comments, touching on the following observations for each of the methods.

## **The Ideals**

- The learning experiences for Scouts moving through Tenderfoot to First Class teach the core skills and values of BSA. Learning opportunities for Scouts earning Star, Life, and Eagle ranks focus on personal growth and exploration, with a strong reinforcement of BSA values, leadership, and responsibility.
- Promotes the development of the three Aims of Scouting (mental and physical fitness, character development, citizenship training.)

## **The Patrol Method**

- Patrol members can often work together toward the goal of learning a new skill that will help them make the most of an outdoor activity or other Scouting event.
- Patrol members also have many opportunities to teach skills to one another and to take pride as a team in the progress of all of the patrol's members.

## **The Outdoors**

- You can have great Scouting without great advancement, though a good outdoor program naturally leads to advancement.

## **Advancement**

- Advancement in Scouting offers a framework for guiding the learning of Scouts and for recognizing their accomplishments.
- Advancement offers opportunities for Scouts to explore many areas of learning and to master skills that lead to success in a troop's outdoor program.

## **Association With Adults**

- Advancement encourages youth to experience healthy associations with adults who are serving as instructors.
- Scouts associate with adults through the review process of advancement, specifically with Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review.
- Recognition, the fourth of the Four Steps to Advancement, provides Scouts with the support and acknowledgement of parents, adult Scout leaders, and other adults from their communities.

## Personal Growth

- Learning brings with it confidence, greater awareness, and a fuller understanding of the world around us.
- The areas of learning encouraged by the Boy Scouts of America are especially meaningful for the personal growth of boys and young men.

## Leadership Development

- When Scouts are teaching one another, they are acting as leaders. Scouting offers young people the chance to share their knowledge with others and, in both formal and informal settings, to hone their skills as instructors.
- Many of the learning opportunities for Scouts involve the meaning of being good leaders and the means to practice their leadership skills.
- A Scout learning new skills with his patrol and troop is learning to work together with others. He is gaining confidence, strength, and wisdom and acquiring invaluable leadership skills along the way.

## The Uniform

- In all of their activities, including those involving learning, teaching, and leading, Scouts wearing the BSA uniform share a visible bond with one another.
- Patches displayed on the uniform serve to reinforce the recognition of their achievements in Scouting.

### FINALLY, KEEP ADVANCEMENT IN PERSPECTIVE

Advancement is not an end in itself. It is only one of the eight methods. Put energy and direction into helping Scouts develop a boy-led troop with a strong program, and advancement will naturally follow.

### Instructors' Note

*As you close Session Two, leave participants with one last reminder. Everything covered in Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training is explained in detail in The Scoutmaster Handbook. Even more important to remember is that every Scout leader has the support of a wide range of volunteer and professional Scouters. All of them will be there when participants need them. All of them are eager to help every Scoutmaster succeed.*

***Summary Assignment***

Ask participants to take several minutes to write down two of the most important points they have learned during Session Two of Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training, and note how they intend to use these points with their own troops. They are to keep this piece of writing with them, adding to it at the end of each of the three sessions. There will be no follow-up; the information they write down and the guidance it provides is for them alone.

**Announce a break before the beginning of Session Three.  
(For training scheduled over several evenings, confirm the time and location for the commencement of Session Three.)**

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