

Troop 794 Patrol Leaders Council Guide



By Zak Scott

PLC Guide

Introduction

This guide is to serve as a reference for how to construct the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC) during a term. The leaders within the PLC are appointed to those positions because they are or will become the elite of the Troop. A PLC is where all the youth leaders in the Troop come together to plan the agenda for the Troop in the coming months.



Apart from planning, the PLC should be so much more. It should be a time where leadership skills are developed and shared. As well as a time of encouragement. The Bible says in Proverbs twenty-seven verse seventeen, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” One of the greatest characteristics of the council should be its devotion to prayer for one another and others in the Troop. Lastly, the PLC should be a band of brothers bonded by experience and friendship.

A General Overview of a PLC Meeting

- Start with an Opening Prayer (p. 4)
- Take Role/Attendance of Who is Present (p. 4)
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- Planning Meetings for the Upcoming Month (p. 11)
 - What is the Purpose?
 - Who is Leading the Activity?
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Opening and Closing Prayer

The Opening and Closing Prayer is the most important part of a PLC Meeting. The Chaplain's Aide is responsible for the invocation. By opening in prayer, the PLC is showing its devotion to God. As a Christian Troop, glorifying God is at the top of the priority list. Prayer can be considered a part of praising God. The Bible says that if we do not praise God then the rocks and the trees will call out their praise to the Lord.

Attendance/Roles

Every young leader within the council has a role. Each role is vital to the success of the Troop. Therefore, it is imperative that each member attend on the designated night at the designated time. The PLC usually convenes on the last Thursday of every month. It always starts promptly at six o'clock. Lastly, anyone is welcome from the Troop to attend the Meeting.

At the beginning of each meeting, the Scribe should take role of who is present. If a member cannot attend, it is his duty to appoint a scout to represent him at the meeting. When a member is not present, the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) is responsible to call that member at a later date. Part of that phone call will be to make sure that the absent member is alright, then the SPL will proceed to reiterate the importance of attending the PLC.

The following is the list of roles and their responsibilities within the Troop.

- Senior Patrol Leader

The senior patrol leader is the top leader of the troop. He is responsible for the troop's overall operation. With guidance from the Scoutmaster, he takes charge of troop meetings, of the patrol leaders' council, and of all troop activities, and he

does everything he can to help each patrol be successful. He is responsible for annual program planning conferences and assists the Scoutmaster in conducting troop leadership training. The senior patrol leader presides over the patrol leaders' council and works closely with each patrol leader to plan troop meetings and make arrangements for troop activities.

- Is in contact with the Scoutmaster by phone on Sunday evenings
- Has communicated with all Patrol Leaders no later than the Monday before a meeting
- Has written plan of what is to be accomplished at each troop meeting
- Makes sure enough is planned that there is no down time
- Makes sure all scouts are participating in either the troop activity, merit badge work, etc. including all ranks during the meeting.
- Makes an account of what is going on during scout meetings
- Sends Troop emails by the Monday before the meeting on Thursday
- Checks with the scout who is leading the meeting by the Monday before Thursday
- Assigns Patrols to Color Guard duty for the next month at the PLC before the coming month
- He is responsible for a prayer at the beginning of the PLC

- Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

The assistant senior patrol leader works closely with the senior patrol leader to help the troop move forward and serves as acting senior patrol leader when the senior patrol leader is absent. Among his specific duties, the assistant senior patrol leader trains and provides direction to the troop quartermaster, scribe, historian, librarian, instructors, and Order of the Arrow representative.

- Patrol Leader

The patrol leader is the top leader of a patrol. He represents the patrol at all patrol leaders' council meetings and the annual program planning conference and keeps patrol members informed of decisions made. He plays a key role in planning, leading, and evaluating patrol meetings and activities and prepares the patrol to participate in all troop activities. The patrol leader learns about the abilities of other patrol members and fully involves them in patrol and troop activities by assigning them specific tasks and responsibilities. He encourages patrol members to complete advancement requirements and sets a good example by continuing to pursue his own advancement.

- Is in contact with the ASM over the patrol...(weekly)
- Has communicated with each member of his patrol prior to the end of the day Monday
- Comes to PLC on time with a minimum of 5 ideas of things his patrol wants to do
- Has two patrol activities at least outside of regular troop meetings
- With the help of his ASM will pick his assistant patrol leader
- Lead Patrol in color-guard when assigned for the month. Has it set up by Tuesday
- He is responsible for giving a report on the status of his Patrol for the PLC.

- Troop Guide

The troop guide is both a leader and a mentor to the members of the New-Scout patrol. He should be an older Scout who holds at least the First Class rank and can work well with younger Scouts. He helps the patrol leader of the New-Scout patrol in much the same way that a Scoutmaster works with a senior patrol leader to provide direction, coaching, and support.

- Quartermaster

The quartermaster is the troop's supply boss. He keeps an inventory of troop equipment and sees that the gear is in good condition. He works with patrol quartermasters as they check out equipment and return it, and at meetings of the patrol leaders' council he reports on the status of equipment in need of replacement or repair. In carrying out his responsibilities, he may have the guidance of a member of the troop committee.

- Scribe

The scribe is the troop's secretary. Though not a voting member, he attends meetings of the patrol leaders' council and keeps a record of the discussions. He cooperates with the patrol scribes to record attendance and dues payments at troop meetings and to maintain troop advancement records. He sends the PLC's minutes via email to the SPL, ASPL, Scoutmaster, and JASM the day after the PLC has taken place. A member of the troop committee may assist him with his work.

- Historian

The historian collects and preserves troop photographs, news stories, trophies, flags, scrapbooks, awards, and other memorabilia and makes materials available for Scouting activities, the media, and troop history projects. He takes pictures on outings and posts them on the Troop's Shutterfly website. If he cannot make a campout then he must assign a scout to take his place on the campout.

- Librarian

The troop librarian oversees the care and use of troop books, pamphlets, magazines, audiovisuals, and merit badge counselor lists. He checks out these

materials to Scouts and leaders and maintains records to ensure that everything is returned. He may also suggest the acquisition of new literature and report the need to repair or replace any current holdings. Instructor

- Conservation Instructor

This instructor is responsible for conservation service projects. Contacting groups/individuals in the surrounding area to allow all scouts the opportunity to serve in conservation projects.

- Instructor

Each instructor is proficient in a Scouting skill. He must also have the ability to teach that skill to others. An instructor typically teaches subjects that Scouts are eager to learn—especially those such as first aid, camping, and backpacking—that are required for outdoor activities and rank advancement. A troop can have more than one instructor.

- Chaplain Aide

The chaplain aide assists the troop chaplain (usually an adult from the troop committee or the chartered organization) in serving the religious needs of the troop. He ensures that religious holidays are considered during the troop's program planning process and promotes the BSA's religious emblems program. He is responsible for a prayer at the beginning and the end of a troop meeting. He is also responsible for a devotional at the beginning of a Troop Meeting.

- Bugler

The bugler plays the bugle (or a similar instrument) to mark key moments during the day on troop outings, such as reveille and lights out. He must know the required bugle calls.

- Order of the Arrow Troop Representative

The Order of the Arrow representative serves as a communication link between the troop and the local Order of the Arrow lodge. By enhancing the image of the

Order as a service arm to the troop, he promotes the Order, encourages Scouts to take part in all sorts of camping opportunities, and helps pave the way for older Scouts to become involved in high-adventure programs. The OA troop representative assists with leadership skills training. He reports to the assistant senior patrol leader.

- Troop Webmaster

The troop webmaster is responsible for maintaining the troop's website. He should make sure that information posted on the website is correct and up to date and that members' and leaders' privacy is protected. A member of the troop committee may assist him with his work.

- Junior Assistant Scoutmaster

A Scout at least 16 years of age who has shown outstanding leadership skills may be appointed by the senior patrol leader, with the advice and consent of the Scoutmaster, to serve as a junior assistant Scoutmaster. These young men (a troop may have more than one junior assistant Scoutmaster) follow the guidance of the Scoutmaster in providing support and supervision to other boy leaders in the troop.

PLC Approvals

PLC Approvals is a time for scouts from the troop to present their plan for a Camp Fire Program or a Scout Led Service. Scouts seeking approval are usually trying to complete a requirement for a merit badge that requires the PLC to approve a designated activity. The Council should listen to the plan and make necessary suggestions. Lastly, the SPL will sign the plan giving the Scout the approval to proceed with the plan.

Patrol Leader Reports

Patrols are what make up a Troop. A Patrol should be a team of scouts that work well together and achieve common goals. A Patrol Leader Report lets the PLC know what is going on in each patrol and what needs to be done to help the members of that patrol. The Patrol Leaders should go one at a time. Here is a list of questions that need to be answered by each Patrol Leader when giving his report:

1. What has the Patrol done in the last month?
2. What will the Patrol do in the coming month?
3. What are some of the main rank requirements that need to be completed within the Patrol?

Patrol Activities are highly encouraged. There are tons of fun things you can do with a patrol. Here is a list of awesome activities just to give you some ideas:

1. Movie Night
2. Working on a Merit Badge
3. Game Night
4. A Hike
5. A Sport of some sort

The point is there are literally tons of things you can do with your Patrol. These activities will build bond between guys that are almost unbreakable and you carry those fun experiences forever.

Planning Meetings/Events

One of my favorite quotes is, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. There is so much truth within that saying. Planning a meeting should not be taken lightly. It is a big responsibility. Each term the PLC receives two game nights. When the following three questions are answered, the PLC had done its duty to plan:

What is the Purpose?

Every meeting needs to have a purpose. Without one, the night turns to organized chaos. When planning a meeting, you might consider the time of year. For instance, you could teach the techniques of winter camping during the winter months. Also, skills constantly need to be reinforced. Just because someone has learned a skill once, it doesn't mean that they don't have to practice anymore. Skills are like a knot, they sometimes have to be retied. One of the most common purposes for a meeting is to complete a specific requirement. With a set purpose, the meeting will most likely succeed.

Who is Leading the Activity?

There always needs to be a leader for a meeting. If you are teaching a requirement within a certain skill, it would be beneficial for the Instructor of that skill to lead the activity. One great idea, is to pair to scouts together to lead a meeting. That way the load does not fall completely on one person.

Who will it Benefit?

For each activity, there should be a demographic that the PLC is trying to reach. Teaching young scouts is a great thing to do. However, don't forget about the older scouts or the PLC itself. The older Scouts need help completing requirements just like the younger Scouts. Sometimes, everyone benefits like when you are doing

a Troop wide merit badge night. The point is, try to plan a meeting that is beneficial to everyone.

Meeting Ideas

There are endless possibilities for a meeting. From Soccer to Underwater Basket Weaving. Meetings provide an excellent chance for the leader in charge to gain experience teaching. Even though some subjects may be boring, create an interesting learning experience for those in your audience. That way your audience will be continually engaged and will have learned something in the process. Also, just when you learn something for the first time, doesn't mean you never revisit that skill. Continue to develop skills. The last stage of team development is performing. By continually performing that skill, the troop will become strong in that area. There is no excuse for being a scout that is 1st-class and above who cannot remember how to tie his basic knots or First Aid. One thing to consider when planning meetings, dont stick completely to the scout manual for activities. Seek out other exciting ways to learn about something outside of scouting. You could have someone come and talk about their career or a cool adventure to Everest. Listed below are a few ideas for possible meetings:

- Cook-off
- Game night
- Scavenger Hunt
- Orienteering Course
- Team Challenge Activities
- Knots
- Lashings
- First Aid Competitions
- Personal Fitness
- A Visitor explaining their career or an adventure
- Movie Night
- Fishing Night

- Developing New Skits

These are just a few, but each can be expanded upon in order to have fun. Meetings are only limited to scouting policy and your imagination.

Patrols

Patrols are the foundation of the troop. A Patrol is designed to be a team of individuals who work together for a common goal as friends. On Campouts, patrols allow for easier organization within a large group of people. These groups cook, eat, and play together.

The patrol has the ability to create a name, slogan/cheer, and a flag. All these variables combined create healthy patrol pride and spirit. These two qualities brought together with those of another patrol can establish competition. In a Troop meeting, competitions can be used to learn new skills or accomplish task that are usually deemed boring. Patrols are expected to have at least two patrol outings each term.

Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is key to morale, as well as creating positive motivation. Enthusiasm allows for creativity to flow. The PLC should be very enthusiastic. All leaders must be excited about the event. If you can show enthusiasm, the rest of the troop will model your excitement. When I think about enthusiasm, the PV camp conselours come to mind. They were always excited and active. Understandably, leaders are tired or dried out, however the rest of the troop does not need to see your weaknesses. In a survival situation, optimism is key to getting through the tough spot. Now obviously, there is such a thing as too positive and flowery, yet keep the excitement controlled. In conclusion, leaders need to be enthusiastic in almost every activity.

Suggestions

Suggestions are what every leader loves. Suggestions can sometimes be an annoyance. However, suggestions are extremely helpful in the right time and place. For instance, when a leader in the troop is unsure about anything, everyone else usually turns to the older scout in the room which denotes from the leader of the activity. That older scout can either take over the event or take the leader aside and give him suggestions. It would be preferable if the older scout took the leader aside and talked to him. Especially when in a council of leaders, it is easy for one person to take over an event. There are many different techniques to avoid take overs. One way is to take that leader aside and out of ear shot give him suggestions. Another option is to ask the leader openly, “May I make a suggestion?” This question allows for the leader to make the decision on whether the advice is acceptable at that time or not. These different options for making suggestions will help manage troop unity and coherence.

Campfire Programs

There are a lot of funny things in this world and Scout campfires are one of the funniest. It is a magical scene where the smallest boy becomes a stand up comedian. I’ve almost fallen out of my chair for laughing so hard. Campfires are time of good jokes, side splitting skits, and goofy songs. Like most things, a campfire needs to start with a prayer. Then the MC can switch between songs and skits performed by different patrols. Each patrol should have a part. Also, don’t leave out the adults because the night becomes hilarious when they take part in the show.

The MC is the person that keeps the entertainment smoothly rolling. Between acts, the MC can tell jokes, have scouts perform transitions between skits, or even lead a song. Songs are usually a good way to close a night. The MC should have everyone’s part planned out the Thursday before the campout. Each patrol

should be assigned a skit to perform. Towards the end, the MC can introduce a free skit time providing that no banned skits are performed.

The banned skit list is a sad but relieving thing. It allows for skits that are over used to take a break. There are thousands of great skits available online or in books. Some of the best skits are just simply make up. The banned skit list may change. Skits may be added to the list as well as some skits can be taken away at the proper time. The following is the current ban list that may be altered at a later date:

- The Loon and the Medicrine
- Two Suckers on a Stick
- The Climbing Monkey
- Ugliest Man in the World
- Submarine - "I don't know how" (forever banned in Troop 794)
- Hans and Frans
- J.C. Penny (forever banned in Troop 794)
- Football on game nights (activity **not a skit**)

Duty Rosters

Duty Rosters are designed to organize a patrol on a campout. Every patrol leader should have at least two printed copies of their duty roster. One Roster should be taped to the inside of the patrol box allowin access to other members of the patrol. The patrol leader will hold on to the other copy for roll call. Each menu should be recorded on the roster. As well as who is cooking and cleaning. The roster should also tell who is tenting together. I would advise that the roster be put in a map case to avoid damage caused by the weather. A Duty Roster allows for the outing to become more successful and effective.

Conclusion

When the PLC comes together and works like an elite team of Scouts, the Troop will succeed. There are three things to remember above all. The main thing is to glorify God in everything. Secondly, stick to the principles of the Scout Oath and Law. Third, be role models. When younger Scouts look at the PLC, they don't see a bunch of scouts, they see a group of elite mentors seeking the Troops best interest. The Troop rests on the shoulders of the PLC, therefore I encourage you to go and be men.

Contributors

Mr. David Gates for his list of job descriptions.