

LEADERSHIP OF THE ROUNDTABLE PROGRAM

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to try to explain the different types of leadership of the roundtable program of the Boy Scouts of America. I will discuss what a roundtable is, the roundtable staff, planning and promoting attendance. If the leaders in the Boy Scout or Cub Scout programs are not trained, the program will not be beneficial to the boys. To assure a year-round well-planned program, we need leaders who are willing to give of their time to learn about the program and how they can use this information to help the boys in their units.

## ROUNDTABLE STAFF

A roundtable staff has but one responsibility, planning and conducting quality roundtables. The number of people needed depends on the size of the roundtable and the number of assignable details needed in its operation. Successful roundtables require several staff members who are willing to work. Individual abilities most frequently needed are in areas like song leading, crafts, skills, gadget making, showmanship, and planning techniques.

Roundtable participants will reflect the staff's attitude and spirit. Therefore, it is vital that in addition to any special skill staff members have, each must possess the indispensable quality of contagious enthusiasm.

Before you begin searching for the right persons to fill your staff, you must decide what kind of person you're looking for. Develop a list of special abilities and qualities the staff should have. The district commissioner and district executive should be very involved in the production of this list.

At a commissioner staff meeting, lead a brainstorming session to produce names of prospects. Unit commissioners are usually acquainted with people who have shown special skills at unit and district activities and are good prospects. Evaluate and rate the prospects and go after them, starting at the top of the list.

It helps if someone who knows the prospect makes the appointment and goes with you as you recruit.

## RECRUITING

Your roundtable staff is your team and how carefully you select, train, and motivate team members will determine how effectively you will work together to plan and produce a monthly roundtable. Ask yourself these questions when recruiting your staff:

1. How many people are needed on a roundtable staff?
  - . The size of your staff will depend on the size of your roundtable and the number of jobs. Successful staffs have a minimum of four people.
  
2. What qualities do I look for in roundtable staff members?
  - . Roundtable staff members may be men or women.
  - . They must be dependable and punctual. Do they have a reputation for "following through" on their commitments?
  - . A good indicator of their attitude is how they feel about their uniform. Is it worn correctly?
  
3. What experience and skills should I look for?
  - . Roundtable staff members must have a good practical knowledge of Scouting and know and agree to follow the objectives of the Boy Scouts of America.
  - . Look for individuals with abilities in song leading, crafts, skills, gadget making, showmanship, and planning techniques. Someone who can play the guitar can be a real "plus."
  - . They will be an example for others to follow, so remember; nothing helps credibility like experience.
  - . The best place to look for roundtable staff members is among those who attend your roundtables regularly. They obviously enjoy roundtables, and probably have a pretty good idea of why we have roundtables.

## PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

The secret to better attendance isn't how to make them come but how to make them want to come. A roundtable program that is well planned and presented will inspire leaders to try the program ideas they see and to come back next month for more ideas, fun, and fellowship.

The first step in promoting attendance is to get them involved. Roundtables should not be a passive experience. Get them on their feet, singing, participating. Create the feeling that they are a part of Roundtable.

Give roundtable a sense of purpose by concentrating on the monthly theme and the purpose of Scouting. Make people feel that what they are doing is important.

Use novel ideas. They arouse curiosity and interest.

Involve good song leaders, leaders with artistic talent, etc., in your roundtables. Use your resources!

Recognition and awards are just as important to leaders as they are to Scouts. A tangible award that they can wear on their uniforms or display at a pack meeting makes an attractive incentive to attend roundtable. Some of these motivators are:

ATTENDANCE AWARDS. Give special pins or insignia for a year's perfect attendance. String a blue bead on a vinyl lace to hand out at roundtable; pass out blue beads at registration each month. Trade six blue beads for a yellow one. Cub leaders can wear this "roundtable totem" with their uniform. Award a "thank-you" certificate to packs or troops or leaders who help with the program. Homemade neckerchief slides make inexpensive attendance awards.

Remember, these awards are not official insignia and should not be permanently attached to the uniform or worn outside your council. They are also inappropriate at any meeting attended by Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts.

"CUBBIES" OR TROPHIES. A little friendly rivalry can be a good thing, provided it doesn't get out of hand. Packs promote attendance using "Cubbies" and this scheme or something like it will work for roundtable, too. It works like this: the den with the best attendance (including parents) at pack meeting is awarded the "Cubby" to display at their den meetings. They bring it to the next pack meeting, where it is awarded again. The "Cubby" can be anything; jars of jellybeans, stuffed toys, and even live hamsters have been used by packs. For roundtable, you could use either a "gag" award or an inexpensive trophy or plaque to be displayed at a pack or troop meeting.

Be careful that the attendance award does not become more important than what it symbolizes. Leaders should attend roundtable for information and ideas, not to win prizes.

GIMMICKS.. Some other ways to promote attendance are:

1. Door prizes. If these are contributed, fine; if not, keep the cost down. Use handicraft items or kits. Make the door prizes program-oriented if you can.
2. Don't overlook popcorn as an inexpensive snack to serve at roundtable. It should be popped right at the meeting. The aroma of fresh-popped corn puts everyone in a good mood and creates a "carnival" atmosphere.
3. If you have built a special piece of equipment to demonstrate a game or ceremony, give it away as a door prize after it has served its purpose. The lucky pack or troop who receives it can use it as part of their theme-related activities next month.
4. Have a table of scrap material to give away for handicrafts. Leaders always need ideas and materials for crafts. This might include wood and vinyl scraps, boxes, egg cartons, bleach bottles, ring pulls, etc. Save it for after the meeting so it won't be distracting!

PERSONAL CONTACT. The best most effective, consistently productive way of building attendance is by personal contact. At the monthly commissioner meeting the roundtable commissioner should emphasize that an important part of the unit commissioners' service to packs and troops is encouraging leaders to attend roundtable. Unit commissioners should attend roundtable in order to stay involved and informed about district and council activities. Suggest that they bring along leaders from packs and troops they serve; make sure they realize that roundtable is one of their resources and can make their job easier.

The district executive should attend all roundtables and be available to assist leaders with questions or problems. Since he sits on the roundtable planning meeting, he is an "ex officio" member of the roundtable team and should encourage Scout leaders to attend roundtable whenever he can. Being visible and available during preopening and after the meeting is a good way for a district executive to show volunteers that he supports them and builds better volunteer professional relationships.

A good roundtable will attract new participants by "word-of-mouth". Leaders who find useful program ideas, inspiration, and motivation at roundtable will tell others. Everytime someone asks "Where did you get that idea?" you build good will if the answer is "At the roundtable."

Make it a point each month to publicize Cub Scout and Boy Scout leader training opportunities. You can do this by posters, announcements, or visits from the training team. Ask the chairman of the training team to stress the importance of roundtable at basic training, and offer your support for training at roundtable. If training and roundtable support each other, attendance at both will increase. Better trained and informed leaders result in a better program for Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts.

#### PACK AND TROOP PARTICIPATION

Roundtables should be presented as learning experiences, not as entertainment. Since we learn best by active involvement rather than observation, Cub Scout and Boy Scout leaders attending a roundtable should have as much opportunity as possible to participate. This can be as informal as playing a game or making a craft; or a segment of the program can be assigned to individuals or a pack or troop in advance so that they have time to prepare. This makes roundtables a more satisfying experience and convinces Scout leaders that these are their roundtables. Pride in a job well done can help them develop their Scout leadership skills as well as developing them personally. The roundtable commissioner should decide how much to involve others by assigning them portions of the program. When making the decision, always keep in mind these considerations:

Do you have a back-up prepared if the person fails to deliver on their assignment? Don't leave an embarrassing gap in the evening's program. Are you prepared to cut them short if they run overtime? Sometimes this must be done to keep the meeting to a reasonable length. Have you provided adequate recognition?

## PUBLICITY

Remember that you are a uniformed representative of the Boy Scouts of America, and you should not do or say anything in public which shows bad taste or questionable standards. In case of doubt, don't -- there are plenty of constructive things to say about Scouting. Keep your comments positive and avoid regrets later.

The person to whom you should direct your publicity is the Cub Scout or Boy Scout leader -- he or she either doesn't attend roundtable, or attends regularly and likes to be reminded. Relax, you don't have to reach the entire community, just Cub Scout and Boy Scout leaders. You can have effective publicity without making the 6 o'clock news.

What can you use for publicity?

1. Announcements in the district or council newsletter. (Be sure your dates and meeting place are listed in the district and council calendars.)
2. Brief announcements in the "local news" section of your community newspaper or public service "community bulletin board" radio spot announcements.
3. Posters at the Scouting service center and at Scouting distributors. These can be permanently displayed if you meet at the same time and place each month.
4. Mailed announcements. This method can be both time consuming and expensive, but may be worth it for special events. If your chartered organizations have printed bulletins, get a story in them. Try church bulletins and company newsletters.
5. Telephone campaigns can take a lot of time, but the whole roundtable team can cover a telephone list in one evening. Try to keep the conversation to roundtable and set a time limit for each call.

## TRAINING

Roundtable commissioners and staff members should be trained so that they will be fully qualified to present material and teach skills at roundtables in an interesting way. Training opportunities available include:

1. Personal coaching using the Cub Scout Roundtable Guide
2. Commissioner basis training
3. Council train-the-trainer conference
4. Council commissioner conferences and workshops
5. Philmont training conferences
6. Cub Scout or Boy Scout Trainer Wood Badge

## RECOGNITION

To earn the Scouter's Key, the roundtable commissioner must:

1. Complete the Commissioner Basic Training sessions: "Purpose - Concept - Organization," "The Unit," and "Helping the Unit."
2. Complete roundtable commissioner's personal coaching assignments.
3. Complete 3 years as a registered commissioner within a 5-year period.
4. Earn the Arrowhead Honor Award as roundtable commissioner by doing the following:
  - a. Review all material in the Cub Scout or Boy Scout Roundtable Planning Guide.
  - b. Review all materials in the Cub Scout or Boy Scout Program Helps.
  - c. Recruit a roundtable staff.
  - d. Lead staff in preparing a 1-year roundtable outline.
  - e. Supervise the staff in conducting these roundtables.
  - f. With the commissioner and district executive, develop and use an attendance promotion plan.
  - g. Attend a council commissioner conference, planning conference, or actively participate in a major council event.

Roundtable staff members may earn the Scouter's Training Award by completing these requirements:

1. Complete the Commissioner Basis Training sessions: "Purpose - Concept - Organization," "The Unit," and "Helping the Unit." Complete personal coaching.
2. Complete 2 years as a registered roundtable staff member.
3. Earn the Arrowhead Honor Award by doing the following:
  - a. Participate in six roundtable staff meetings.
  - b. Actively assist in six roundtables.
  - c. Conduct a successful roundtable attendance promotion project.
  - d. Develop and exhibit a display related to the theme at one roundtable.
  - e. Conduct a preopening activity and opening ceremony.
  - f. Conduct or be responsible for a major project, presentation, or demonstration, at one roundtable.

Use Roundtable Commissioner Progress Card, No. 36-859, and Roundtable Staff Progress Card, No. 36-860 to record training.

Training award medals should be worn only on formal occasions, such as blue and gold banquets, district or council dinners, troop courts of honor, etc., and are not intended for everyday wear. The appropriate square knot embroidered emblem is ordinarily worn instead. Scouters who have more than one Scouter's Key or Scouter's Training Award (earned in more than one program) wear only one medal or knot of each kind on their uniform. However, more than one device may be worn on the knot or medal to show in which program the key or award was earned.

## PLANNING YOUR ROUNDTABLE

The roundtable commissioner meets with the roundtable staff and the district executive to plan the roundtable meetings. Many roundtable commissioners prefer to use the preplanned meetings as they are listed in the Roundtable Planning Guide. Each roundtable should be modified to meet the purposes and personalities of the people who attend. As you gain confidence in your ability to plan, you will want to add extra fun features, or substitute other games or songs for those suggested. Finally, you will be able to plan an entire roundtable "from scratch" with only the monthly theme to start with.

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Some important ingredients to use when planning your roundtable meetings are "Something old ... something new ... something borrowed ... something blue." For something old, you may repeat a favorite song or game that was enjoyed at another roundtable. Use an idea or program idea that you have never tried before for something new. Look for something borrowed from sources other than Scout literature. A newspaper article might form the basis for an opening or closing ceremony. A poem or story from classical literature may fit the monthly theme. Of course, something blue refers to Cub Scout blue. Always look for opportunities to present Scout traditions and ideals.

Create a real sense of fellowship. No one likes to go to a meeting and feel like a lost soul with no one to say "hello." Whenever possible, decorate the room to give the meeting a Scouting atmosphere. Get lots of helpers, the more you have, the merrier. Have name tags for everyone as they arrive, and Scouters to greet them. Plan a get-acquainted game. Give a prize to the biggest pack or troop represented. Recognize new leaders with Scouter pins. At every opportunity, present awards. (The expense should be small, but the recognition will be large.) Have a separate folder for each pack or troop containing council material for that unit. Display the U. S. flag.

Keep it fun. This is vital for a successful roundtable.

Whenever possible, all staff members, especially the master of ceremonies, should wear costumes appropriate to the monthly theme. Otherwise, all roundtable staff members should be in full, correct uniform.

Everyone on program should know their subject and be well prepared. Use competent masters of ceremonies to preside. Remember that you are setting an example; use ceremonial props and do not read from prepared scripts.

## SURVEY YOUR AREA

Since needs will vary in different districts, you may want to conduct a survey to find out what the Scout leaders in your district need to learn most at roundtables. If the leaders are not getting the materials and help they need at roundtable meetings, they will not attend. I was concerned about the needs of the leaders in my district so I conducted the following survey. This was mailed to all the registered leaders in the Palmetto Council. We did not receive the response I had hoped for, but I did find some areas where I need to spend more time with the roundtable staff at our planning meetings.

ROUNDTABLE QUESTIONNAIRE

(USE EXTRA SHEET FOR ANSWERS AND COMMENTS IF NEEDED)

1. I DO NOT ATTEND ROUNDTABLES BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. I ATTEND ROUNDTABLES BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. ARE THE ROUNDTABLES WELL PLANNED?
4. ARE THE PEOPLE ON PROGRAM PREPARED?
5. ARE ALL SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS ON HAND?
6. ARE MONTHLY THEMES ADEQUATELY COVERED?
7. IS EMPHASIS ON DOING, RATHER THAN SITTING AND LISTENING?
8. ARE PRACTICAL IDEAS OFFERED WHICH LEADERS CAN USE?
9. ARE THERE GOOD DISPLAYS OF CRAFTS, LITERATURE, AND OTHER THEME MATERIALS?
10. DO YOU HAVE FUN? IF NOT, WHY NOT?
11. ARE SPECIAL EVENTS DISCUSSED AT ROUNDTABLES? (PINWOOD DERBY RACES AND DAY CAMP, CAMPOREES, DISTRICT AND COUNCIL ACTIVITIES, ETC.)
12. IS LENGTH OF MEETINGS ADEQUATE? TOO LONG? TOO SHORT?
13. WERE ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO INCLUDE EVERYONE PRESENT?
14. IS FELLOWSHIP INCLUDED? SONGS? STUNTS? REFRESHMENTS? DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE NEEDED? IMPORTANT? WANTED?
15. HOW CAN WE IMPROVE ROUNDTABLES? WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE MORE OR LESS CRAFTS? SONGS? SKITS? CEREMONIES? GAMES?
16. ARE THERE ADEQUATE HANDOUTS AVAILABLE AT EACH MEETING?
17. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE ROUNDTABLE STAFF ARE TRAINED LEADERS AND ARE CAPABLE OF PRESENTING A GOOD, WELL-PLANNED PROGRAM?
18. DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO SHOULD BE ATTENDING ROUNDTABLES, BUT ISN'T?
19. IF ASKED, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN HELPING PLAN A ROUNDTABLE? (PREPARE A SKIT, LEAD A SONG, BRING A CRAFT, ETC.)
20. IS THE TIME AND MEETING PLACE ADEQUATE?
21. I AM A MEMBER OF THE \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT.

RETURN TO: PALMETTO COUNCIL, BSA  
P.O. BOX 6249  
SPARTANBURG, S.C. 29304

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cub Scout Roundtable Planning Guides

Nos. 7248-81

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Boy Scouts of America, Irving, Texas 75062-1296

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The BSA Purpose handout No. 14-633

## CONCLUSION

Scouting's purpose for the youth of America is character development, citizenship training, mental and physical fitness. In order to accomplish this purpose, we have to have leaders who are trained and dedicated to the Scouting program. It is my desire for the roundtable program to provide as much of this training as possible. I hope this thesis will be helpful to everyone interested in the Scouting program and the youth of America. These are our boys and the future leaders of our country.

One of my favorite verses is from Within My Power by Forest Witcraft. I think it sums up the objective of leadership in the Scouting and Roundtable program.

A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove. But, the world may be different because I was important in the life of one boy.

College of Commissioner Science  
Cluster College of Blue Ridge, Daniel Boone, Palmetto, and Sequoah Councils  
Readers Certification Approval

This is to certify that I have read and approve the following described thesis.

Title: LEADERSHIP OF THE ROUNDTABLE

Submitted by: Lois Lucas

This certification is a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the PH. D. Degree in Commissioner of Science as offered by the Cluster College of Commissioner Science of the Blue Ridge, Daniel Boone, Palmetto, and Sequoyah Councils, Boy Scouts of America.

My appointment as a reader for this purpose was approved at the faculty meeting held at Fletcher, North Carolina, October 18, 1986.

Paul C. Rutherford  
Signature of Reader

2/18/87  
Date

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College of Commissioner Science  
Cluster College of Blue Ridge, Daniel Boone, Palmetto, and Sequoah Councils  
Readers Certification Approval

This is to certify that I have read and approve the following described thesis.

Title: *Leadership of The Roundtable*

Submitted by: *Lois Lucas*

This certification is a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the PH. D. Degree in Commissioner of Science as offered by the Cluster College of Commissioner Science of the Blue Ridge, Daniel Boone, Palmetto, and Sequoyah Councils, Boy Scouts of America.

My appointment as a reader for this purpose was approved at the faculty meeting held at Fletcher, North Carolina, October 18, 1986.

*George D Fields*  
Signature of Reader

*March 13, 1987*  
Date

*George D Fields, Jr.*

Return to:

GEORGE D. FIELDS, JR.  
VIRGINIA METHODIST COLLEGE  
SPRINGFIELD, VA 22151

*Very professional and helpful paper. It would make an excellent handbook for Roundtable development.*

*The paper needs a table of contents so a reader can understand the "big picture" while reading the various parts about Roundtables."*

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Ivan B. Stafford  
Signature of Reader

9 March 87  
Date

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