



How to be an Adult Outing Leader

Have a bunch of Scouts that need to plan an outing . . . thinking that you will do all the work. Wrong! Your role is that of a “Coach.” Ever see a pro football coach making tackles on game day, kicking that game deciding field goal, throwing that critical first down. NO, the team is playing the game just like the Scouts will be planning and leading the Outing.

The “**How to Plan an Outing – a Scout’s Guide**” is your game plan, it can be found on the Troop’s website under the “Resources” page.

So how do I Coach a bunch of Scouts:

- Have a kickoff meeting to lay down the philosophy, expectations and goals
- Avoid lectures
- Keep them engaged and busy
- Positive attitude – be enthusiastic without being intimidating
- Be prepared and organized, set an example
- Give clear instructions
- Simple to complex progression but don’t underestimate a Scout’s ability
- Be patient and allow time
- Understand the different characteristics of youth and of different age groups
- Be approachable
- Provide opportunities for all your Scouts
- Be prepared for some failure but treat them as teaching moments.

Some Ideas:

- Make sure every meeting has an agenda, including any you lead.
- Long lead - Check for permit and reservation requirements. Be especially wary of lotteries and call-ins on the day of reservation.
- Find other leaders who've done the same or similar trips and bleed them dry. Pass on what you learn to the Scouts.
- Get things in writing. Scouts hate to write. Make sure meetings have agendas. Make sure the outing has a schedule, and duty rosters for each Patrol, etc. Make sure the leader has written attendance spreadsheets, Patrol assignments, driver assignments, program outlines, etc.
- Above all, follow the plan, or if you have to, modify it ahead of time in conjunction with the planning patrol and re-publish it so everybody knows what needs to be done.

On the Outing:

- At first, do nothing. Act ignorant. Let them figure it out. If they can't you have a teachable moment. What should they do to figure it out? (What would you do to figure it out?) Don't tell them. Guide them, step by step. Hopefully they'll pick it up.
- If you have a suggestion, make it quietly to the Scout leader and let him decide what to do with it.
- Intervene only in the case of imminent danger of great bodily injury. Otherwise, if you see something dangerous going on, ask the Leader if he thinks it's dangerous. If he doesn't, explain why you do.
- When it's important, ask the leader why he's deviating from the plan. (Leaders often forget things like "Thorns and Roses" in their haste to get home.)
- Back the leader. If there's a discipline problem, ask him if he wants you to get involved. If so, what can you do for him? Maybe you can be the "bad cop" in the "good cop - bad cop" scenario.
- Finally, if the Scouts are lazy and the outing is dissolving, discuss it in private with the leader. If the leader's disengaged you may have to spontaneously invent a program on the spot.

Resources:

- There are numerous adult Scouters in the Troop that have knowledge of various outings, use them as resources for both you and the Scouts.
- The Troop website has links to get info on wilderness areas and permits.
- Past Trip Logs on similar outings detailing route, camp locations, water sources, etc.
- Be familiar with “**How to Plan an Outing – a Scout’s Guide**”