

TROOP MEETING

PLAN Date:

Service Patrol:

Program Patrol:

	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME	
Preopening					
	minutes				
Opening Ceremony					
	minutes				
Skills Instruction					
	minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Scouts 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced Scouts 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Scouts 			
Patrol Meeting					
	minutes	Opening/Call to Order/Attendance	Patrol Scribe		
		Business: Review minutes from last meeting	Patrol Scribe		
			Skill / Activity:		
			Game:		
			Closing:		
Interpatrol Activity					
	minutes				
Closing					
	minutes				
	TOTAL TIME	(Goal is approximately 90 minutes)			
After the Meeting <i>(the "standing" PLC)</i>					
	minutes	PLC Members and any other Scout who is interested	SPL/SM		

- 1. Preopening:** As boys begin to arrive for a troop meeting, the senior patrol leader (or an older Scout assigned by the senior patrol leader) should get them involved in a game or project designed so that additional Scouts can join in as they show up. The preopening is often well suited for the outdoors. The person in charge of the preopening activity should be ready to start about 15 minutes before the scheduled beginning of the meeting.

While the preopening activity is going on, Scouts whose patrol has been assigned to serve that week as the *service patrol* should be preparing the meeting room or area—setting up equipment, arranging chairs, and doing whatever else must be done ahead of time.

- 2. Opening Ceremony (5 Minutes):** The senior patrol leader calls the meeting to order at the appointed time, instructing Scouts to line up in formation by patrols. A patrol responsible for the opening might conduct a flag ceremony and then lead troop members in reciting the Scout Oath and Law. The opening should be varied from week to week to keep things lively.

- 3. Skills Instruction (15-20 Minutes):** This part of the meeting might focus on skills Scouts will need in order to fully participate in an upcoming activity, or upon skills they must have to complete requirements for advancement. A troop with boys of about the same experience level might separate into patrols so that groups will be of a size that maximizes learning experiences. Troops with Scouts of various ages and levels of expertise could organize instruction at three levels; basic information for the new-Scout patrol, more advanced instruction for regular patrols, and the most challenging level for members of the Venture patrol.

Instruction should be hands-on learning rather than lecturing. Those leading the sessions can be troop instructors with expertise in a particular area, adult Scout leaders, or outside experts willing to share their knowledge with the troop. (For more on the position of instructor, see chapter 3, "The Boy-Led Troop.")

- 4. Patrol Meetings (5-20 Minutes):** At the conclusion of skills instruction the senior patrol leader will announce that it is time for each patrol to go to its designated meeting area, usually in the same room (or outdoor area) as the troop meeting. Each patrol leader takes charge of his patrol's meeting. Matters to be handled during a patrol meeting include taking attendance, collecting dues, planning the patrol's involvement in upcoming troop activities, selecting menus for hikes and campouts, assigning patrol members to specific tasks, and working out any other details for the smooth operation of the patrol. The length of the patrol meetings will depend upon how much business the patrols must handle.

- 5. Interpatrol Activity (15-20 Minutes):** Led by the senior patrol leader, this part of the meeting allows all of the patrols to interact with one another in a competition or in a cooperative effort. The activity might be a game that tests the skills Scouts are learning for an upcoming activity—a race by each patrol to set up a tent properly, for example, or for patrol members to tie a set of knots correctly. (For more on cooperative and competitive activities, see "Games" in Troop Program Resources. The Project COPE manual also contains many appropriate games and challenges.)

Scouting is not a spectator sport. A meeting should move along at a quick pace and maintain the interest of the Scouts. If the senior patrol leader feels a portion of a meeting is lagging or that it has served its point, he may encourage the Scouts to conclude that segment and move on.

- 6. Closing (5 Minutes):** The closing is the Scoutmaster's portion of the meeting. The Scouts should be paying attention. It might help to dim the lights and have everyone seated. Deal with any outstanding business first—reminders for upcoming meetings, outings, etc. Congratulate any Scouts who have advanced since the last meeting. This is also a good time to praise Scouts for Good Turns or any other jobs well done.

The heart of the closing is the Scoutmaster's Minute—your opportunity to share a story based on Scouting's values. Use a personal experience if you can, or one of the many Scoutmaster's Minutes found in Troop Program Resources. The story should contain a thought for the Scouts to carry home with them. The closing can also include a simple ceremony, a song, or a prayer.

- 7. After the Meeting:** At the end of the meeting, the service patrol for the week puts away any troop equipment and returns the room to its original arrangement and condition.

Meanwhile, the senior patrol leader should meet briefly with members of the patrol leaders' council and the Scoutmaster to review the meeting, go over the plans made at the patrol leaders' council meeting, and decide which patrol will be the upcoming service patrol.

Evaluating Troop Meetings: How do you know if a troop meeting was successful? After the meeting, guide the patrol leaders' council in a discussion that reflects on these questions: **1) What are we not doing that we should start? 2) What is not working that we should stop doing? 3) What are we doing well that we should continue doing?** The answers to these questions will help the troop's youth leaders as they refine the plans for future meetings.

TROOP MEETINGS AND PROGRAM FEATURES: Troop meetings are usually built around monthly program features such as hiking or camping, and an exciting portion of each meeting is the skills instruction that prepares Scouts for challenging troop activities based on a program feature. (For descriptions of program features and explanations of ways to incorporate them into troop meetings, see chapter 6, "Program Features.")