



Boy Scouts of America

JPL Troop 509

Est. 1952

La Cañada Flintridge, CA

jpltroop509.org



What Is Leadership?

Leading the way...

What does that mean?

If you are thinking about taking a leadership position in the troop -- thank you. Your service as a leader is very important to the overall success of the Troop. This guide summarizes what is involved and explains how to be a good leader.

Leadership is a process of getting things done through people. A quarterback moves his football team toward a touchdown. The senior patrol leader guides the troop to a high rating at Camporee. Leaders get things done by working through people; football players, scouts, and ordinary citizens, using leadership skills to reach goals.

Leadership also means responsibility. It's an adventure and often fun, but it always means responsibility. The leader is the person that others look to get the job done. Don't think your job as a leader or staff member will be just a title or honor. It's more than that. It means that you are the person accountable for getting a task done. If you are a good leader, you will be able to guide others to get a task done. If you are not a good leader, they may abandon you to do the task all by yourself. You cannot be a leader if you no one follows you.

Is "Leader" just another word for "boss"? Well, what do you mean by "boss"? A guy who threatens and orders other people around? No, a leader is not one of those. (but some people try to lead this way.) Or do you mean a boss is someone who has a task to get done and works with other people to get it accomplished? This is leadership, and a leader is a boss in that sense. As you learn to be a leader you will develop many effective styles of leadership.

A leader always works with two things: a task and a group. You can always tell when a leader succeeds, because:

1. The task gets done.
2. The group stays together.

In Scouting, the group that does the task is your troop or patrol. And in most cases, the group continues after the task is done. This is where leading can get tough. Leadership is not magic. It is skill. The leader needs to know how to get the task done and still keep the group together. You can develop your leadership skills by attending Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST). The leadership skills you will want to learn and practice include:

Getting and Giving Information	Nothing happens without clear two-way communications (verbal, written, acted out, etc.), until everyone shares & understands an idea
Understanding the Needs and Characteristics of the Group	Understanding what group members want to accomplish, individually and as a group, and then being considerate of all of these objectives
Knowing and Using the Resources of the Group	Knowing who can do what and be able to effectively use the different skills and knowledge that each group member has
Setting the Example	Showing others a better way to be, by how you think, speak, and act
Planning	Establishing goals, and agreements between group members on who does what, when, where, how, and how well the task is to be done
Managing Learning	Engaging learners in activities that helps them gain knowledge, improve their skills, and develop productive attitudes
Controlling Group Performance	Coordinating individual efforts and encouraging the cooperation of group members so that the group's task gets done well and on time
Evaluating	Improving group effectiveness based on their progress / results
Representing the Group	Representing the needs and interests of your group to others
Sharing Leadership	Encouraging group members to take on various responsibilities according to the situation and their specific abilities and willingness
Counseling	Helping group members identify and overcome personal challenges
Being Responsible	Using your position as leader appropriately to get the task done, and being accountable for the success or failure of your group's effort

Being a leader in a scout troop is like being a leader anywhere else. When you lead in Scouting you will do many of the same things as any leader anywhere. Scouting gives you the opportunity to start being a leader now. You can learn how to lead in Scouting. You can practice leadership in Scouting. Then you will be prepared to lead other groups, too. Leadership skills you learn and practice in Scouting will serve you for the rest of your life no matter what field or profession you choose. Leadership is a life skill that will always be valuable.