



# Adult Leader Guide

for

# Scoutmaster Conferences

## Notes to adult leaders:

- An Advancement Based Scoutmaster **Conference requires approximately thirty (30) minutes.**
- So as not to interfere with the Troop Meeting program, Conferences should be conducted prior to the start of the meeting or after the closing ceremony when the Scouts break for game-time.
- **Scouts should request a Conference in advance;** so that the Scoutmaster or ASM can prepare and arrange to arrive at a troop meeting early if necessary.
- Scouts presenting themselves for a Conference shall be **in BSA uniform** with a Troop 944 neckerchief.

Copies of this guide and materials required for each level are available in the Troop Shed.

## Table of Contents

Purpose of Advancement.....	3
Purpose of the Scoutmaster Conference .....	3
Scoutmaster Conferences – Problem Counseling.....	5
SM Conference – Advancement Oriented.....	5
SM Conference: Scout.....	6
SM Conference: Tenderfoot .....	7
SM Conference: Second Class .....	8
SM Conference: Star .....	10
SM Conference: Life .....	11
SM Conference: Eagle.....	12
SM Conference: Palm.....	13

### Brief History of BSA Advancement.

- 1911 – Ranks of Life, Star, and Eagle established
  - 1936 – Life Scout rank required for Eagle
  - 1952 – Ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle must be earned before the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
  - 1958 – “Do your best to live up to the Scout Promise, Law, Motto and Slogan.”
  - 1963 – SM Conferences required for Star, Life, and Eagle
  - 1972 – Take part in a “Personal Growth Agreement Conference”
  - 1980s – Renamed “Scoutmaster Conference”
- 

This guide book was based upon the 2009 University of Scouting lecture on “Scoutmaster Conferences” presented by **Mr. Dick Holcomb, Troop 461.** Montgomery District, NCAC. Troop 944 adopted the format in 2009 with much appreciation to Mr. Holcomb.

## Purpose of Advancement

1. Achieve aims of Scouting:
  - Citizenship
  - Growth in moral strength and character
  - Mental and physical development.
2. Provide opportunities and challenges
3. Make the program fun and educational
4. Develop confidence:
  - Self-confidence
  - Peer confidence
  - Confidence in leaders
5. Provide focus for the Troop program

---

## A Scout's Four Steps to Advancement

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Step 1 – A Scout learns           | Acquires skills from senior Scouts or adults         |
| <b>Step 2 – A Scout is tested</b> | <b>Demonstrates these skills for an adult leader</b> |
| Step 3 – A Scout is reviewed      | Discusses what he's learned with "non-Scout" adults  |
| Step 4 – A Scout is recognized    |  |

The Scoutmaster conference is Step 2. The board of review step 3.

Note: For Troop 944, **an adult leader or JASM may sign off** on the advancement requirements in the book. It is the older Scouts who teach the younger boys. When the Scout demonstrates that they've learned the skill, sign off in the book. During the Conference, the Scoutmaster then "tests" the Scouts on what they've learned as part of the advancement decision.

---

## Purpose of the Scoutmaster Conference

From the Scoutmaster Handbook:

- Establish trust and understanding between a Scout and SM.
- Reinforce the ideals of Scouting
- Allow the Scout and SM to share ideas and ask questions of one another
- Set goals and outline steps for achieving them.

Plan approximately 30 minutes for each conference through Life and an hour for an Eagle conference. A Scout should schedule a conference in advance. If the conference is planned for a Troop Meeting night, arrange to arrive early or to begin after the closing ceremony (during game time) so as not to interfere with the scheduled program. If the meeting is planned for another day of the week, remember to provide two-deep leadership (a spouse and other family member or the parent of the Scout count).

The Scoutmaster:

- Gets to know the Scout
- Gets to know the Troop
- Collects feedback on meetings and activities
- Collects feedback on his leadership
- Reinforces the Scout Oath, Law, Slogan, and Motto
- Encourages the Scout.

The Scout:

- Gets to know the Scoutmaster

- Sees the ideals of Scouting in action
- Evaluates progress
- Sets new goals
- Questions answered
- Concerns aired
- Develops a bond, a relationship, with the Scoutmaster

*“All through the ranks, it is rewarding for the SM to observe the Scout grow in responsibility and maturity. It is through this association and example that a young man grows and matures...”* -- National BSA Policies related to Rank Achievement.

## Scoutmaster Conference v/s Board of Review:

Scoutmaster	3 – 6 Adults
Part of testing process	Not to include SM or ASMs
Familiar with the Scouting Program	Part of “review” process
One-on-one “chat”	Not familiar with the Scouting Program
Is the Scout ready for a BoR / Advancement?	Interview
Check on rank requirements	Not an examination
Scout “quality control”	Assess Scout’s attitude
Evaluate Scout Spirit	Ensure rank requirements have been completed
Map out a plan for the next rank	Troop “quality control”
Demonstrate Scouting ideals	Encourage the Scout to continue his progress
	Reinforce Scouting ideals
	Board’s decision must be unanimous

### Reference list:

“National BSA Policies Related to Rank Achievement,” from BSA Advancement Committee Policies and Procedure, #33088, revised 2009

“Scoutmaster Conference,” Walton, Maj. Mike, US Scouting Service Project, 2002

“Historical Perspectives on Scouting,” [scouters@earthlink.net](mailto:scouters@earthlink.net)

“All BSA Eagle Requirements since 1911,” [www.troop97.net](http://www.troop97.net)

“Scoutmasters Conference Guidelines,” Schuman, Ed. Grand Canyon Council, May 2003

CyberScout Roundtable October 1995

US Scouting Service Project – “Scoutmasters Conference” by Maj. Mike Walton

# Scoutmaster Conferences – Problem Counseling

## Purpose

- Poor behavior
- Troubled behavior
- Lack of advancement
- Misunderstanding
- When a situation must be corrected
- Health and safety issues

## Approach

1. Start on a positive note
2. Listen carefully and actively
3. Ask yourself – are you understanding the Scout? Is something else going on?
4. Keep the Scout talking. Repeat and summarize what you're hearing to be sure you're understanding
5. If the Scout needs more information – supply information, not advice
6. DO NOT solve the problem for the Scout unless danger in the situation requires it.
7. Explore alternative solutions with the Scout. His answer, not yours is what is important.

*“If you can guide the boy to his own solution, you have done two things: first, you have proven true leadership; and second, you have just helped the boy grow as a person.”* -- Scoutmaster Conference Guidelines by Ed Schuman, Grand Canyon Council

# SM Conference – Advancement Oriented

## Why focus on the Scout Skills during a SM Conference?

- “A Boy Scout badge recognizes what a young man is able to do; it is not a reward for what he has done.”
- Scout skills are important to know
- Where else will the boy learn Scout skills?
- Reinforces the instruction being done by the senior Scouts
- Provides focus for the Scout
- Familiarization with the Scout handbook
- Word gets out that the SM thinks the Scout skills are important
- Provides incentive to junior and senior Scouts.

*“The Scout joining conference is probably one of the most important associations a Scout will have in his Scouting career. It is at this conference that the SM illustrates to him the adult-youth relationship that is unique to Scouting.”* – “National BSA Policies Related to Rank Advancement”

## **SM Conference: Scout**

<b>Introduction to Scouting Program</b>
---

- Do you meet the requirements to be a Boy Scout?
- What grade are you in? What school do you go to?
- What is the purpose of a SM Conference?
- Do you know the Scout ranks to Eagle?
- Do you want to become an Eagle Scout? How will you do it?
- Who signs your book off when you do a requirement?
- Show me how to tie a square knot.
- Do you know the Scout Oath and Scout Law
- What is a merit badge?
- How do you earn a merit badge?
- Did you know that you can work on Tenderfoot through Star at any time?
- Have you ever been camping before?
- Are you planning to go to summer camp this year?
- What does the Scout badge mean?
- Have you done the pamphlet exercise with your parents? (get parent signature)

Notes:

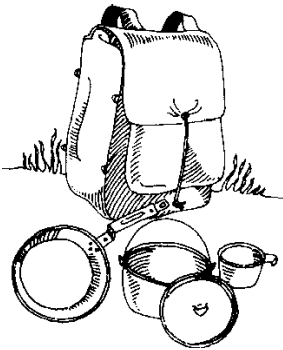


## ***SM Conference: Tenderfoot***

- How do you like Scouts? Your Patrol?
- Who is the SPL? ASPL?
- Do you want to become an Eagle Scout? When?
- Do you like camping? What is fun about it?
- Do you like cooking? What is fun about it?
- Show me how to whip a rope. (have supplies available)
- When do you fuse a rope instead of whipping a rope?
- Show me how to tie a double half hitch. A taut-line hitch
- What are the rules for safe hiking? “S.T.O.P” (ref lost Utah kid who “hid from strangers”)
- What would you do if you got lost?
- Describe poison ivy. What would you do if you were exposed to poison ivy?
- How would you treat a cut? A blister? Nosebleed?
- What is the Heimlich maneuver? When do you use it?
- Please recite the Scout Oath and Scout Law for me.
- What is the Scout Slogan? The Scout Motto?
- What does it mean to “do your best to your duty to...” (God and country)
- What “good turn” did you do yesterday?
- What does the “obedient” mean? Are your obedient?
- What is the “buddy system?” When do we use it? Do you know a bully?

**Beginning to learn the  
Scouting Skills**

Notes:

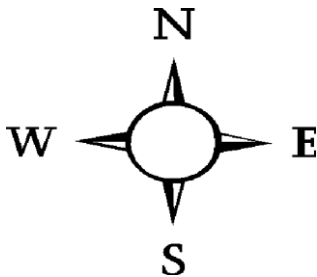


## **SM Conference: Second Class**

### **Mastering Hiking**

- What Troop activities have you done?
- Which did you like the best? Which did you like the least? Why?
- Using the map of MD and a compass, point me in the direction of Salisbury, MD.
- What factors do you take into account when selecting a site for your tent?
- What factors do you take into account when setting up an axe yard?
- When would you use a backpacking stove?
- Plan a breakfast for a backpacking trip. What cooking equipment do we need to bring?
- What did you do for your service hour? How did it help someone else?
- What are the “hurry cases?” How do you treat them?
- What is shock? How do you treat it?
- What are the different degrees of a burn? How do you treat them?
- What is the four-word saying for rescuing a drowning person? (reach, throw, row, go)
- Do you want to be an Eagle Scout? When?
- Have you discussed joining Scouts with a friend? Who?
- What does it mean to keep yourself physically strong?
- What does “trustworthy” mean? Are you trustworthy? How do you become trustworthy?
- What are the three (3) “Rs” of personal safety? (recognize, resist, report)

Notes:



**Mastering Camping**

- While outside, which way is North? How do you know?
- While outside, estimate the height of \_\_\_\_\_ (eg. telephone pole )
- While outside, pretend this street is a river and estimate the width of the “river.”
- Plan a dinner for a Klondike Derby. What cooking equipment do we need to bring?
- How do we wash the dishes on a camp-out? How do you handle raw meat safely?
- Name three (3) rights of a U.S. citizen? Four (4) obligations of a U.S. citizen?
- Show me how to tie a bowline. A clove hitch. A timber hitch. A taut-line hitch.
- Show me how to tie a square (or shear) lashing
- Show me how to splint a broken collar bone.
- What would you do if you find me unconscious, laying on the floor?
- What are the five most common signs of a heart attack? How would you do CPR?
- Have you discussed joining Scouts with a friend? Who?
- How do you think your Patrol is doing? The Troop?
- Where are you on the trail to Eagle? How many MBs? What’s left for Star?
- What does it mean to be a leader? How do you demonstrate leadership?
- What Troop position of responsibility are you interested in?
- What does it mean to keep yourself “mentally awake?”
- What does “thrifty” mean? Are you thrifty? Does thrifty apply to just money?
- What should you NOT do in the internet? What is a cyberbully?

Notes:



## SM Conference: Star

### Troop Instructor

- Teach me how to whip a rope (or some other Scout skill)
- What position of responsibility do you hold?
- How did it go? Did you learn anything about responsibility and leadership?
- What Troop position of responsibility are you interested in next?
- What did you do for your service hours?
- Did you learn anything about doing something for someone else?
- Did you learn anything about working with others?
- What do you know about Eagle service projects?
- How do you think your Patrol is doing? The Troop? Any problems?
- Have you been elected to the OA? What do you think of the OA?
- Where are you on the trail to Eagle? How many MBs? What's left for Life?
- How many days until your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday?
- What is your plan for reaching Eagle Scout? When?
- What does it mean to be a leader? How do you demonstrate leadership?
- What does it mean to keep yourself "morally straight?"
- What does "reverent" mean? Are you reverent?



## SM Conference: Life

### Learning Leadership

- Teach me what to do if I were to come upon someone who is unconscious.
- What position of responsibility to you hold?
- How did it go? Did you learn anything about responsibility and leadership?
- What Troop position of responsibility are you interested in next?
- What did you do for your service hours?
- Did you learn anything about doing something for someone else?
- Did you learn anything about working with others?
- Do you have any ideas for an Eagle service project?
- How will you go about finding and doing an Eagle project?
- How do you think your Patrol is doing? The Troop? Any problems?
- Where are you on the trail to Eagle? How many MBs? What's left for Eagle?
- How many days until your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday?
- What is your plan for reaching Eagle Scout? When?
- What does it mean to be a leader? How do you demonstrate leadership?
- How did you demonstrate the Scout Oath last week?
- How do you demonstrate the Scout Law at school?

Notes:



## SM Conference: Eagle

### Demonstrating Leadership

- Is your Eagle Book (Application complete? (Review Eagle book)
- Is your uniform complete and in good shape?
- What position of responsibility did you hold?
- How did it go? Did you learn anything about responsibility and leadership?
- Tell me about your Eagle project? How did it go? Any problems?
- How many others helped out? What did you learn about leading others?
- Tell me about your life's ambitions and purpose. (Scout should have something written)
- Are you going to college? Where? Major?
- What does it mean to be an Eagle Scout?
- What do you know about an Eagle Board or Review?
- What can they ask you? Are any subjects out of bounds? (anything – gay, God, etc.)
- Will your parents be able to accompany you to the EBoR?
- How have you demonstrated the Scout Oath and Law?

Plan 60 minutes

Notes:



## SM Conference: Palm

<b>Demonstrating Leadership</b>
-------------------------------------

- How have you participated in the Troop during the last three months?
- How have you continued to develop and demonstrate leadership? (in or out of the Troop)
- How can we improve the Troop for the other Scouts?
- How can **you** improve the Troop for the other Scouts?
- How many MBs do you need for the next Palm?
- Do you have a plan for earning them?
- How have you demonstrated the Scout Oath and Law?
- Why is it important to continue to demonstrate the Scout Oath and Law?

Notes:

