

Try these in your program

A Scout Leader recently wrote pointing out that, while the sampling of program suggestions was "all very good in its way, it was obvious that the magazine people did not realise the amount of time a leader would need to spend in securing all of the odds and ends to put the material over..." Why couldn't we give "impromptu ideas"(??)

It is assumed that this particular leader wants material that requires absolutely no thought or preparation, and if our assumption is correct, this is reducing program planning to 'idiot-board' level. Most certainly there are many Leaders who can draw on a wealth of experience to put over an A1 program without any prior planning but maintaining the pace, is a different matter.

Some programs will require more planning than others and if you're using your PLs and the Patrol system correctly, you should be able to enthusiastically enlist their support in securing program items. There is no need to let the cat out of the bag by indicating the purpose for which it will be used - let them enjoy the mystery.

Sense Training

Have you tried any taste, touch or smell stunts at your meetings lately?

You can put the Patrols through the sense of smell test by producing a series of different "items" in bottles on saucers or even on pieces of clothing. Try curry powder, ground coffee, soap, lemon peel or lemon essence ' cheese and so on. Let the Scouts try it blindfolded.

Senses of touch - place a number of items in bags and pass around the Patrol. Each Scout must dip into the bag (no peeking), select an item and announce what it is before producing it. Try a button, five cent coin, metal washer, a ring, a lifesaver" (edible type), small hinge and so on.

Senses of taste - try a variety of soft drink tastes. Taste and identify jam (raspberry or blackberry), mashed potatoes, soup, and tomato sauce.

Patrol Swap

Have one Patrol write (or personally extend an invite) to another Patrol in a nearby Troop, to be their guests at a particular meeting. Naturally leader sanctions will be necessary.

The Patrol should try and arrange with their own parents to pick up and return their guests. They may even wish to put on a small supper before the meeting is over. Try and encourage a little more inter-troop relations.

Detection

Prepare a report on a fictitious camp, which contains a number of obvious and not so obvious inaccuracies. Read it to the troop pointing out that there is some incorrect information and points will be allocated to the Patrols who find or detect the items. Your report could go something like this: "Scout Leader Brown set out for camp in his station wagon carrying members of the Owl, Hawk and Kookaburra Patrols. It was 50 kilometres to camp and halfway to camp his motorbike got a puncture. The PL of the Eagle Patrol assisted him to change the tyre and soon they were on their way again. On arrival in camp, the four Patrols were allocated their campsites". Get the idea? You can make it a lot of fun but there is training to be gained from the exercise.

Observation

You'll need some assistance with needle and cotton for this project. Tack another Group nametape over your own; change your Leader epaulette insignia from green to red and perhaps wear a different plume. Also use one black and one tan shoe lace and see if any members of the Troop note the changes.

If they don't, give them a few hints in due a course.

Some thoughts on Training PL

While we are talking about Patrol Leading, here are a few thoughts that could be well worth thinking about.

Representing the Patrol

When Patrol Leaders attend a Patrol Leaders Council meeting, it is their responsibility to represent the Scouts in their Patrol and not just to put forward their own ideas. Here are two activities, which could be used to emphasise the PL's responsibility to the Patrol.

Activity 1

Give each PL a copy and allow 10-15 minutes to discuss it and then to report back. It has been suggested by the District Scout Leader that a swimming carnival be held. As Patrol Leader you are excited at the suggestion because you belong to a swimming club, and have been training for your school sports so you think you should win most of the events you enter.

The other members of your Patrol are:

Mary Ann - Patrol Second, who also belonged to the same swimming club, but left because she did not enjoy the competitive aspect. You feel she would not want a competitive carnival

David - Learnt to swim in the holiday swim classes. Not water confident but would enjoy a fun carnival.

Paul - Can dog paddle only. Not very interested in a swim carnival.

Amanda - New recruit who is frightened of the water.

How will you report on your Patrol's behalf to the Patrol Leaders' Council meeting?

Activity 2

Make up a set of cards of words, which relate to a Patrol Leaders duty in representing the Patrol and a choice of three definitions of these words. The set of cards can be used in a number of ways; as a concentration game, a relay, snap and others that will occur to you.

Make one card for each duty on the left hand side (eight in all) in one colour such as blue, and one card for each a, b and c definition (24 cards in all) in another colour. The two colours will make it easy to identify the definition cards.

Speaking for the Patrol

- a. Giving a vote of thanks.
- b. Deciding what everyone in the Patrol should attend.
- c. Taking the Patrol's ideas to Patrol Leaders Council meeting - even if you don't agree.

Voting

- a. Pretending you are a politician.
- b. Allowing everyone present to vote and not listening to the one with the loudest voice.
- c. Casting your vote even if it won't alter the final outcome.

Fair

- a. A Scout with light coloured hair.
- b. Allows everyone present to have a say.
- c. Gives all members of the Patrol a chance to put forward their ideas though they are not present at the moment.

Patrol's Ideas

- a. Suggested activities from members of the Patrol.
- b. Suggested activities from the Guide leaders.
- c. Suggested activities from the Patrol Leader and second.

Patrol Council

- a. A meeting of members of the Patrol to discuss Patrol business and the Patrol Leaders' Council agenda.
- b. A meeting of the Patrol at the Patrol Leaders house to play games.
- c. A get together of the Patrol.

Patrol Leaders Council

- a. A meeting held at the Leader's home.
- b. A meeting of Patrol Leaders and Scout Leaders to discuss Troop business.
- c. A meeting where the Patrol Leaders meet to drink coke and discuss uniform.

Meeting procedures

- a. Saying good afternoon politely to a visitor.
- b. Formal organisation of a meeting using a recognised set of rules.
- c. The collection (proceeds) taken at a meeting.

Loyalty

- a. Agreeing with the Patrol when they make rude remarks about the guide leader.
- b. Deciding on something on the Patrol's behalf without asking them first.
- c. Representing the patrol at the Patrol Leaders' Council even though acting against personal preference

Teaching skills to the Patrol

Capture their interest ... curiosity

You need to make the skill appealing and relevant in the near future. Hint at a game or competition in the next few minutes, hours or weeks. Or tell a story of how this skill was "just what was needed" by someone they would relate to.

Be prepared with all the equipment

Provide enough equipment for everyone to have a go. For some skills, like complex lashing, craft or sketch mapping it is a good idea to have samples at various stages of completion.

Explain any jargon

Many skills have a language all their own, so make sure you cover any special terms before you start, or as you go along.

Break the skills into steps

This requires planning and analysing the way YOU do it. Then you can structure your skill into logical steps.

Demonstrate and explain

For skills such as knitting or knotting, demonstrate from beside people, not in front of them.

is sometimes confusing to see a "mirror image". Maybe a large-scale model will help when demonstrating skills that involve fine detail, like whipping the end of a rope, or building a fire.

Let everyone have a go

You will all need your listening skills when the Patrol starts asking questions - all at once. Make sure everyone has it right before moving onto the next step. Encourage Patrol members to help each other once they have understood the step.

Finish with an activity

The best way to remember something is to use it. Before anyone has a chance to forget, put the skill to use in a game or activity. Make it fun to make it memorable.

Follow up

All skills need practice, so make a note in your diary to use the skill again this month, next term and next year.

Variety – the spice ... meetings!

Without involving yourself in mind boggling schemes, endeavour to introduce the unexpected to your program at different intervals.

This will keep your Scouts on their toes, improve your ratings and boost the attendance. If you've tried ideas that really clicked, write and tell us about them.