



## **LLD - Conversion**

### Lodge Leadership Development Training

**Session Length:** 45 Minutes

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- To understand the essential components of a successful unit election.
- To discuss effective methods of promoting candidate to member conversion.
- To gain a comprehension of the brotherhood conversion process and the importance of sealing your membership in the order.
- This session will instill in participants a comprehensive knowledge of the unit elections process.
- This session will cover the pitfalls of candidate to member conversion and offer best practices that participants will be able to employ in their lodge and chapter to encourage conversion and member retention.
- This session will offer information about the importance of brotherhood conversion and how to best promote the completion of the brotherhood to eligible members.

#### **Required Materials:**

- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Best practices handout

#### **Outline of the Session:**

- I. Introduction – 3 Minutes
- II. Unit Elections – 10 Minutes
  - a. Importance of an election
  - b. Getting Units to Hold an Election
  - c. Holding the Election
- III. Candidate to Member Conversion – 10 minutes
  - a. Getting Candidates to their Ordeal
  - b. Retaining New Members
  - c. Candidate Conversion as a JTE Metric
- IV. Brotherhood Conversion – 5 Minutes
  - a. Improving Brotherhood Conversion in your Lodge



### **Trainer Preparation:**

This session relies heavily on group discussion to best tailor the content to each individual lodge as different lodges face different issues when it comes to conversion points. The trainer(s) should be well versed in unit elections, candidate to member conversion, and brotherhood conversion as it pertains to their lodge in order to best facilitate worthwhile discussions for participants. The trainer should take the time to review the resources appended to this syllabus such the guide to elections and SURGE literature so that they will be able to answer any questions pertaining to the material.

## **Session Narrative**

### **Introduction**

**3 minutes**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I serve as the \_\_\_\_\_. During this session, we will be taking an in depth look at the several conversion opportunities that a new member faces during their first year in the Order. As leaders, it is important for us to have an extensive knowledge of these opportunities so that we can most effectively promote them to our members. Over the next session we will be discussing the three conversion points prospective and new Arrowmen encounter; the unit election, converting from a candidate to a member, and finally becoming a brotherhood member. The unit election is when a scout is formally introduced to the Order of the Arrow. Putting on an impressive election is the key to growing our organization. This takes proper planning and execution on the part of the lodge and chapter. Following the unit election, the newly made candidates need to be made aware of their Ordeal and encouraged to attend as soon as they can. The troop representative is the most valuable resource when it comes to promoting Ordeal attendance within the units and we will explore several options for chapters to encourage candidates to complete their induction into the Order. Lastly, after having completed the Ordeal and at least ten months of service to his unit and the OA a member is able to seal his membership by becoming a brotherhood member. This conversion point can be the trickiest one to effectively promote as many lodges and chapters struggle with the "sash and dash". However, with proper communication and follow-up, Ordeal members will see the value of sealing their membership and continuing to render service as an Arrowmen.

### **Unit Elections**

**10 minutes**

The unit election is the moment when a potential Arrowman is first introduced to the order. And as lodge and chapter leaders it is our responsibility to give every troop in the council the opportunity to have an election. But what makes a unit want to have an election? To answer this, we should think about why a unit would choose not to have an election.



*Trainer Tip: Lead a short discussion with participants about the reasons units don't have elections. Subjects such as lack of knowledge about the order and fear of losing their youth to the OA and how to address these feelings should be discussed.*

## Importance of an election

What makes having an election worthwhile for a unit? Why would a unit want its members to join the order? [Seek answers from participants] If we can't communicate the value of the order to Scoutmasters and units then they will see no value in allowing us to take up their meeting time for an election. When reaching out to units to schedule elections having an experienced Arrowman with a vast knowledge of the OA's program and opportunities is vital. Contacting Scoutmasters is the best way to provide units with the information they are looking for about why it is beneficial to have the Order of the Arrow in their units. Building strong relationships with the units in your area by emphasizing the benefits of the Order. Such as leadership development and opportunities for their youth and providing a worthwhile year-round program that keeps youth members involved in scouting, is the best way to encourage units to continually hold elections every year. But, in order to do this chapters must create both a valuable program for their members as well as a positive public image within their district.

## Getting units to hold elections

Getting a unit to hold an election, like most things, starts with proper communication. After the election season is identified by the lodge, chapters should begin contacting units about holding elections. It is critical that these Arrowmen have a comprehensive knowledge of both the Order of the Arrow and the election process. Use the troop representative, or if the unit does not have one, an Arrowman in that unit to promote the election within the unit for any that have been reluctant to schedule an election. Establishing a year-round presence in your district lets units know about the OA and its purpose. Things such as offering quarterly service projects that are open to all scouts, making presentations about the Order and elections at roundtables, and performing crossover and arrow of light ceremonies are all ways to create a positive image for the chapter and lodge within your district. Giving back to the district and units makes it easier to convince units to have elections as they have seen what the Order of the Arrow can give to their units when they have their members involved. Schedule early! Do not wait until the election season starts. Giving units ample time to schedule their election increases the chances that they will seek the support of adult members of OA to encourage Scoutmasters of their units to schedule elections. By being more than the chapter that performs ceremonies you will show the exceptional value of being an Arrowmen. Be impressive whenever you are interacting with units. Take the time to prepare for whatever you are doing to help build the relationship with the youth and the units to create the desire for these scouts to want to become Arrowmen. When seeking

to hold elections in units chartered by the LDS church; resources, such as those from the SURGE program, will prove immensely helpful in tackling challenges and answering questions specific to the LDS community.

## Holding the election

The first step to holding elections is to assemble and train teams. Unit election teams are comprised of three youth members and at least one adult. If the unit has a troop representative or members of the unit are in the order they should be utilized as much as possible. Having one member of the unit on the election team helps the other members of the unit better relate to the team and be more receptive of the information you are presenting them. Chapters should devote the time to assembling a large pool of Arrowmen that are willing to help with unit elections. Having the same few members do every election leads to burnout and an unwillingness to volunteer in the future. Training members on the rules and procedures of unit elections is an important step to ensuring quality elections that will promote interest in the OA and impress units. Creating an incentive program for election team members who participate in a set number of elections can be an attractive way to encourage Arrowmen to volunteer their time performing elections. The guide to unit elections offers in depth resources on conducting elections as well as an election team training syllabus that can be utilized to prepare Arrowmen for this responsibility.

## Candidate to member conversion

**10 minutes**

Following the election, there is a period of time prior to the Ordeal when we risk losing the candidate. Troop representatives are key resources when it comes to encouraging candidates to complete their Ordeal. In order to do this though, a chapter must have an effective troop rep program that serves all of the units in which there are OA members. A troop rep can keep the momentum and excitement of joining the Order from elections to Ordeal by talking about his personal experience with the Order and ensuring that candidates are aware of induction weekends and chapter events. Including new candidates in chapter activities, when appropriate, is a great way to engage new candidates immediately following their election or callout. The lodge needs to be prepared to contact each candidate as well. Offering them additional information about what to bring and other logistical information as well as giving them a point of contact with the lodge is vital to ensuring that candidates are attending and completing their Ordeal.

## Getting candidates to their Ordeal

Getting candidates to attend the Ordeal can be a challenge. There are many different reasons why someone is unable to attend an induction weekend. What are some examples you have encountered as to why a candidate couldn't come to an Ordeal? [Seek



answers] Things such as a lack of transportation, financial barriers, and being nervous about the ordeal can all contribute to a candidate not going to the Ordeal. The leadership of each chapter and the lodge are best equipped to identify the common issues that candidates face when trying to be inducted. Chapters should consider inviting candidates to a meeting or hosting an activity for them following the callout to answer any questions candidates may have about the OA (without revealing too much about the induction process!) is a good way to dispel any nervousness a candidate may be feeling. This is also a good opportunity to arrange transportation for candidates to ensure that transportation is not an issue that will hinder someone from becoming a member of the Order of the Arrow. Financial barriers can be a challenge to overcome and many people will not be willing to admit that they can't afford to attend the Ordeal. Creating a scholarship fund or waiving the fee for candidates on an as needed basis are good ways to tackle this challenge.

*Trainer Tip: Take the time to address other reasons that participants mentioned about candidates being unable to attend Ordeals. Brainstorm solutions with participants and encourage them to implement these solutions as much as possible within their chapters and the lodge.*

### Retaining new members

Following their Ordeal, it's incredibly easy for a new member to simply walk away and never participate in the Order of the Arrow's program. Implementing the extended Elangomat program is a good way to ensure that members become active in the Order. An extended Elangomat doesn't necessarily need to be the same Elangomat from the candidates' induction just an Arrowman who is willing to stay in contact with the new member and encourage him to participate in the program. Hosting a new member orientation is a good way to inform Ordeal members about the opportunities now available to them now that they are in the Order. Letting them know about events such as NOAC's, OA service at Jamboree's, and section conclaves as well as OA High Adventure can incentivize members to become active and stay involved. A knowledgeable Arrowman, such as the lodge/chapter chief or an officer are good choices to facilitate the orientation which should be conducted the Sunday of the Ordeal weekend or at the first chapter meeting following the Ordeal. Maintaining an up-to-date roster of new member's contact information is another key tool for retaining members after the induction. Communicating upcoming events and activities makes new members feel welcome and will make them more willing to attend and actively participate. Now let's take a few minutes to brainstorm some other ways we can encourage new members to be active following their induction.

*Trainer Tip: Use a flipchart or whiteboard to write out ideas from participants. Encourage them to expand on their ideas until it is a viable method for retaining members.*



## Candidate conversion as a JTE metric

Journey to excellence is an important tool for measuring lodge performance and highlighting a path to improvement from year to year. Ordeal completion measures the conversion of candidates to members. In order to attain bronze level in Ordeal completion a lodge must induct at least 65% of its Ordeal candidates or have a 5% increase over the previous year. Silver level requires a 78% induction rate or a 5% increase over 65% and reaching gold requires a 100% induction of Ordeal candidates. While this may seem daunting, if we utilize these best practices and continually encourage candidates to attend you will find it can be easily accomplished.

## Brotherhood Conversion

**5 minutes**

After ten months of continued service a new member is eligible to become a Brotherhood member. This is the final conversion point that a new member is tasked with overcoming in his first year in the order. Brotherhood conversion is easily the most challenging point, to effectively get past due to the time constraint associated with it. But if we are properly engaging members at the previous conversion points it becomes significantly easier to encourage Ordeal members to seal their membership in the OA. The extended Elangomat program is just as useful during this step as it is when trying to promote membership retention following the Ordeal. The goal of the extended Elangomat program is to convert Ordeal members to brotherhood as well as to foster a passion for the Order of the Arrow. Using extended Elangomats and troop representatives to ensure Ordeal members are properly informed about events, the requirements for Brotherhood membership will keep them engaged in the program. This will ensure that the lodge has a high rate of Brotherhood conversion.

## Improving Brotherhood conversion in your lodge

To best understand how we can improve brotherhood conversion we're going to do a quick activity. I'd like you all to find a partner, preferably someone you do not know. Ordeal members I would like you to partner with another Ordeal member and talk about why or why not you complete your Brotherhood. Brotherhood and Vigil members please partner with each other and discuss what made you want to become a Brotherhood member and what you would say to someone that was unsure about completing their Brotherhood.

*Trainer Tip:* Give participants a few minutes to complete this activity and then ask them for the answers to the questions you presented them. Facilitate discussion on their answers and develop some ways to promote brotherhood conversion with the participants.





Offering prizes for chapters with the highest brotherhood conversion rate, creating a brotherhood task force to target longtime Ordeal members, and having specific events to convert Ordeal members to brotherhood are some other options for increasing the conversion rate within your chapters and lodges.

### **Brotherhood conversion as a JTE metric**

Just like Ordeal induction is a journey to excellence metric so is brotherhood conversion. Reaching the bronze level requires having at least 25% of eligible members convert to brotherhood. Silver requires 32% or a 3% increase over 25% while gold requires 50% conversion or a 3% increase over 32%. These can be some challenging requirements to meet. By utilizing the extended Elangomat program and the troop representatives to inform, encourage and support members to complete their brotherhood as well as creating as many opportunities as possible these metrics can become very attainable.

### **Brotherhood Conversion Role Play minutes**

**15**

Now that we have discussed brotherhood conversion I would like us to participate in one more activity. We are going to do a brief role play where half of you will be acting in the role of an Ordeal member who is eligible to take his brotherhood. The other half will be chapter chiefs trying to encourage brotherhood conversion in your chapter.

*Trainer Tip: Split the participants into groups of two*

Start off by talking with the scout on your left about why you joined the OA, and give the three best reasons you have for staying active and involved. If you are a Brotherhood member, talk about why you wanted to obtain Brotherhood. Then, switch places and repeat the process. \* Talk with the scout on your right about why you joined the OA, and give the three best reasons you have for staying active and involved. If you are a Brotherhood member, talk about why you wanted to obtain Brotherhood. \*

Questions for the whole group:

- How can we share these best practices with scouts in our troops and/or chapters?
- How many of you know someone who is an Ordeal member, but is eligible for Brotherhood?
- What were some of the best reasons you heard for staying involved?



### **Takeaway Challenge**

**3 minutes**

For the last few minutes, think about the issues your chapters and the lodge face when trying to promote member conversion. I would like each of you to identify two ideas related to the session that can be applied to help your chapter and the lodge more effectively convert members. When you have a break later be sure to share some of these ideas with others and try to find another idea that you can back with you.





## Appendix: Resources and Source Material

- 2016 Guide to Unit Elections, available online at <http://www.oa-bsa.org/pages/content/guide-to-unit-elections>
- Conducting elections in units chartered by the LDS Church [http://western.oa-bsa.org/surge/documents/1\\_SURGE\\_syllabus\\_2.17.pdf](http://western.oa-bsa.org/surge/documents/1_SURGE_syllabus_2.17.pdf)
- LDS scouting and the OA Myths [http://western.oa-bsa.org/surge/documents/7\\_SURGE\\_Myths\\_2.17.pdf](http://western.oa-bsa.org/surge/documents/7_SURGE_Myths_2.17.pdf)
- 2016 JTE Scorecard [https://oa-bsa.org/uploads/resources/forms/2016\\_JTE\\_points.pdf](https://oa-bsa.org/uploads/resources/forms/2016_JTE_points.pdf)
- Extended Elangomat Program syllabus [http://lld.oa-bsa.org/2012/files/Extended%20Elangomats\\_A%20Membership%20Retention%20Key-Syllabus.pdf](http://lld.oa-bsa.org/2012/files/Extended%20Elangomats_A%20Membership%20Retention%20Key-Syllabus.pdf)