

SESSION 4: Recognizing Tomorrow's Leaders

Duration: 45 minutes

Facilitator: Section Staff

Learning Outcomes:

- Explain the basics of an Order of the Arrow unit visitation.
- Develop an effective structure to oversee the unit visitation process.
- Create a plan to innovate and improve lodge unit election rates.

Supplies: Sticky notes, Cards with challenge scenarios

Introduction 3 minutes

Introduce yourself, emphasizing your experiences managing the unit visitation process. To start things off, could I have a volunteer to read the learning objectives for this session?

[read learning outcomes]

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We mentioned earlier that historically, we conduct unit visitations in less than 50% of troops, crews, and ships. We also talked about our end goal: achieving a 90% unit election rate. By the end of 2022, we need to close the gap between our current metrics and this goal.

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Your lodge leadership signed the "Declaration to Thrive" document during the 2019 national webinar and committed to a three-year plan to become high performing. Today, we are going to develop attainable goals for the next year to improve our unit election rate.

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The Context: Why Should We Care? 5 minutes

Let's start by putting unit visitations into context. We're going to brainstorm as a group the purpose and significance of unit visitations as well as some common obstacles we face.

1. How do unit visitations help us grow our membership?

Unit visitations are the single most significant driver of performance in the Order of the Arrow. The first point of the purpose of the Order of the Arrow is to “Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.”

We set out to recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives through annually conducting an election in all 38,000+ troops, crews, and ships in the entire nation. But we can't truly fulfill that purpose as long as we are only conducting elections historically in under 50 percent of units. That means there are actually more units that DO NOT see the OA annually than those who do. We lose over half of our potential membership right from the get-go before those Scouts even have a chance to experience the OA. Imagine for a moment that all units, or even 90 percent, were conducting elections. That's thousands of new members, selected as the best and brightest of the Boy Scouts of America, as part of our organization.

2. How can we make unit visits impactful?

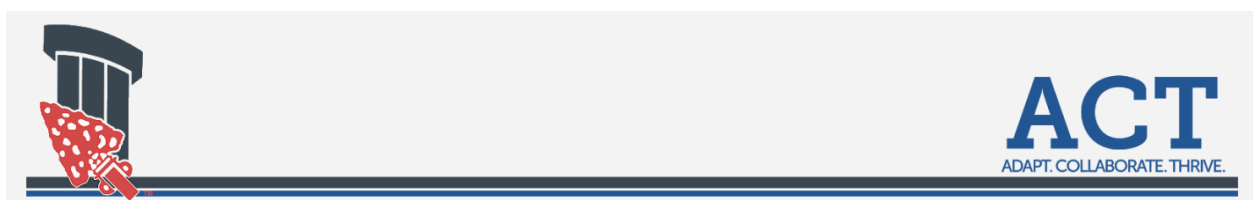
About half of the units in the BSA don't hold an OA visit in a given year, and the set of units that don't isn't just a coincidence. Many units NEVER hold a visitation, because we have not successfully developed a relationship. Getting our foot-in-the-door is one of the biggest obstacles that every lodge faces. We need to find ways to connect with unit leaders and get them on board so they will hold a visitation every single year.

Trainer Tip: The delegates should ideally come to these conclusions themselves through the Q+A on their own, but make sure all of these elements are discussed before you move on.

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The Breakdown: Conducting a Unit Visitation 5 minutes

Ask the group to start naming parts of the unit election sequence (i.e. promoting at a roundtable meeting, following-up with the unit leader before the election, etc.) and write all of them down. Feel free to use sticky notes to organize this.



As soon as the group agrees they have exhausted ALL options, then work together to put them in order. It's likely that the group will be surprised at how many parts of the sequence there really are.

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Unit Visitations Challenges Experience 12 minutes

Lodges encounter a variety of challenges that prevent them from hitting a 90% unit election rate. This portion of the session will (1) help groups brainstorm ways to overcome these recurring challenges and (2) help them source best practices that other lodges use to overcome similar challenges.

Each table should be given a card with one of the scenarios found below and should be given 5 minutes to develop a solution for how they would solve the problem.

As soon as the 5 minutes are up, every table will send one delegate to brief everyone on the solution they developed for the scenario.

If you recognize something that the delegate may have left out in the answer as a potential part of the solution, this is a good opportunity for you to ask leading questions to get people to think about other ways to solve the problem. You can also ask other delegates what they would have done.

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ACTion Plans 20 minutes

Lodges encounter a variety of challenges that prevent them from hitting a 90% unit election rate. The idea of the High Performing Lodge initiative is to provide lodges with a sense of focus as to what is important.

For the remaining 20 minutes, table groups will continue to share their experiences in unit elections and help each other refine ideas into potential plans. These plans will be shared with your lodge later today, when you will have the chance to introduce your ideas and create an ACTion Plan as a lodge. Aim to identify three distinct ideas that you can present to your lodge. Be sure to make the most of this time, gathering ideas and imagining how you can bring best practices into your lodge.

