



# Brotherhood Conversion

## Session Objectives

- **Explain** the history and purpose of Brotherhood membership and why it is emphasized in the OA
- **Demonstrate** the methods to increase Brotherhood conversion rates
- **Guide** to develop a plan to increase their Brotherhood conversion rate
- **Enable** the participants as to increase their lodge Brotherhood conversion rate

**Session Length:** 50 Minutes

## Appendix Resources

- Order of the Arrow Handbook
- Order of the Arrow Guide to Inductions
- Ceremony for the Brotherhood
- The Brotherhood of Cheerful Service: A history of the Order of the Arrow, Kenneth P. Davis, Third Edition
- Order of the Arrow Annual Report

## Required Materials

- Flipchart w/easel
- Markers
- Overhead projector (optional)
- Computer w/projection machine (optional)
- Small prizes for participation (optional)

## Trainer Preparation

The trainer for this session should be a Brotherhood member who is familiar with all aspects of Brotherhood membership especially the 'Challenges of Brotherhood Membership'. The trainer should study this syllabus and review all support materials provided, as well as prepare copies of the Brotherhood Conversion Handout (enough for one per participant).

It is anticipated that the audience for this session will consist of your typical conclave participant: youth and adult members who are not necessarily chapter or lodge officers. The audience will also include a mixture of members who have reached at least Brotherhood and those who have not yet completed the 'Challenges of Brotherhood Membership.' The trainer should prepare for an audience of all backgrounds.





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## Session Narrative

### Introduction

2 Minutes

*Trainer Instructions:* The session trainer should introduce themselves and the topic. They should provide information on his Order of the Arrow experience, what lodge and city they are from and any other relevant items of interest. Although this session narrative is written in the first person, trainers should not read directly from the syllabus and work to develop their own style of delivery while maintaining the integrity of the content.

Today, we're going to take some time to talk about Brotherhood membership and Brotherhood Conversion. However, before we can talk about what Brotherhood membership means and why we even care about Brotherhood Conversion, we should probably understand a little about the history of Brotherhood membership.

### Brief History of Brotherhood

7 Minutes

When the Order was founded in 1915, the concept of Ordeal, Brotherhood and Vigil did not exist. Instead, there were two 'degrees'. The First Degree is what we would now know as Ordeal membership. The Second Degree is what we now call the Vigil honor.

Brotherhood membership was later created as a method to signify the completion of the induction process. Since its inception, Brotherhood membership has existed primarily as a method of confirming the Obligation.

Brotherhood members were initially distinguished from Ordeal members by wearing their sash on the opposite shoulder. Ordeal members wore the sash over the right shoulder and Brotherhood members wore the sash over the left shoulder. It wasn't until 1950 when a separate Brotherhood sash (with the bars on either end of the arrow as we are familiar with today) was created.

### Brotherhood Membership

7 Minutes

Becoming a Brotherhood member marks the completion of the induction into the Order of the Arrow. It signifies an Ordeal member's desire to become more involved in the Order by their commitment of future service to their lodge, while continuing to serve their unit.

The time requirement of ten months between the Ordeal and when an Arrowman is eligible for Brotherhood membership exists to allow the new members of the Order time to give service to their unit, learn more about the Order's traditions and principles and to practice what they have learned.

Brotherhood members do not enjoy any special privileges that are not open to Ordeal members, other than being able to attend Brotherhood ceremonies. However, Brotherhood members do have additional responsibilities and obligations: service to the Order of the Arrow in addition to continuing service to his unit.

How does a member become Brotherhood? Let's discuss the Challenges of Brotherhood Membership in detail.





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- *Memorize the signs of Arrow membership*
  - The Obligation of the Order of the Arrow
  - The Order of the Arrow official song
  - The Admonition
  - The sign of Ordeal Membership
  - The Arrow handclasp
  
- *Advance in your understanding of the Ordeal*
  - Four tests of the Ordeal
    - Night Apart from Others – demonstrates courage and self-reliance
    - Pledge of Silence – Pay strict attention to unspoken thoughts
    - Arduous Labor – demonstrates willingness to serve
    - Scant Food – demonstrates your ability to subordinate desires
  - The Induction Sequence
    - Election
    - Call-Out
    - Pre-Ordeal Ceremony
    - The Ordeal
    - Ordeal Ceremony
    - New Member Orientation
    - Journey to Brotherhood
    - Brotherhood Ceremony
  
- *Serve your unit. Retain your registration in Scouting*

During a period of at least 10 months, strive to fulfill your Obligation by continuing and expanding your service to your own troop or team.
  
- *Plan for service in your lodge*

Retain your registration in your Order of the Arrow lodge and keep your dues paid. Be aware that acceptance of Brotherhood membership involves a pledge of service to the lodge. Develop a concrete idea of how you plan to fulfill this pledge.

A good idea might be to speak with your chapter or lodge chief to determine what roles and opportunities exist for your future involvement.
  
- *Review your progress*
  - This challenge requires members to write a letter to the lodge or chapter secretary and asks the member to consider and respond to the following:
    - Explain what you think the Obligation means?
    - Describe how you have been fulfilling this Obligation in your troop or team and in your daily life, and how you have used your understanding of the Ordeal to aid in this service
    - A description of your specific plans for giving future service in the lodge program





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*Trainer Tip:* This is a great opportunity to discuss some of the contents of the Order of the Arrow Jumpstart website (<http://www.jumpstart.oa-bsa.org/>). Jumpstart screen prints are included as part of the PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this session.

The Challenges of Brotherhood ask the Ordeal member to demonstrate his knowledge of the Order of the Arrow, explain his continuing service record to his unit and share plans for future involvement in the chapter and/or lodge. The Challenges are meant to encourage the Ordeal member to reflect and put a great deal of thought into their role as a Scout and as an Arrowman. The Challenges should not be characterized as a ‘test’ that Ordeal members need to ‘cram’ for prior to their Brotherhood ceremony.

## Brotherhood Conversion and Why It Is Important

5 Minutes

Now that we’ve discussed a little bit about Brotherhood membership and its history, it’s time now to look at the main point of this session: Brotherhood Conversion. What is Brotherhood Conversion (*seek answers*)? Let’s discuss.

- *What is Brotherhood Conversion?*  
The term “Brotherhood Conversion” refers to the process of Ordeal members becoming Brotherhood members - it is often referred to as a percentage.
- *How is it calculated?*  
The Brotherhood Conversion percentage is calculated by dividing the total number of members who become Brotherhood in each year by the total number of Ordeal members in the lodge that were eligible that same year. For a lodge to achieve JTE Lodge status in the Order of the Arrow, at least 30% of the eligible Ordeal members must become Brotherhood. On average, 70% - 75% of lodges in the nation achieve this target each year

*Trainer Tip:* It is important to emphasize that the focus is not how many Ordeal members inducted in the previous year became Brotherhood members. The focus is the total number of all eligible Ordeal members who became Brotherhood members. Some may want to challenge the math of the formula but it is sound and proven. While there may be other methods of calculating conversion rates, the most important aspect of the formula is the fact that it is used consistently throughout the country.

## Why is Brotherhood Conversion important?

You might ask yourself, “Why do we care about Brotherhood Conversion?” It’s more important for members to be active in their unit, so why is there such an emphasis?

Studies and statistics show that Arrowmen who become Brotherhood members are more inclined to stay active in the Order of the Arrow. They’ve learned more about the Order and have consciously chosen to make the Order an important part of their Scouting experience. As individuals remain active in the Order, they continue to ‘crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others’, - the fourth part of the Order’s purpose.

While an Ordeal Arrowman’s sole responsibility is to his unit, there is an undeniable fact that if your lodge is to be effective, it requires the commitment of members to fulfill the lodge’s mission





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and the Order's purpose. Those that obtain Brotherhood membership are likely to be active in chapters and lodges, providing the leadership and manpower required to operate effectively.

Essentially, strong Brotherhood Conversion is a key indicator into understanding the 'health' of a lodge and how well it is accomplishing part of the Order's purpose. High conversion rates demonstrate that a lodge is effectively communicating with its members

and providing necessary support and encouragement to Ordeal members as they continue on the Journey to Brotherhood.

- *How can we improve our Brotherhood Conversion rates?*

That's the question that a lot of lodges would like to answer. There are several lodges who consistently and easily meet Journey to Excellence requirements (for 2019 Lodge JTE Petitions, 29% for Bronze, 36% for Silver, and 43% for Gold), while other Lodges struggle year after year to reach this target goal. In the next part of the session, we're going to talk about different methods for improving Brotherhood Conversion in your chapter and/or lodge.

## Methods for Improving Brotherhood Conversion Rates

**25 Minutes**

Let's discuss methods for improving Brotherhood Conversion rates. However, before we do that, I'd like to get your feedback. I'd like each person to find a partner, preferably someone you don't know or someone from a different lodge.

Once you introduce yourself, I'd like you to share with each other the reason that you became a Brotherhood member. Perhaps it was because someone encouraged you, perhaps it was a flyer that you received in the mail. If you are an Ordeal member, talk about if you plan to become a Brotherhood member or if you have been in the OA for ten months, discuss some of the reasons why you have not yet become a Brotherhood member.

*Trainer Tip:* The purpose of this exercise is to get participants to talk with each other about their Brotherhood experience. It serves as a slight change of pace to the session and prepares them for the second part of the activity. Give participants approximately 3 minutes to discuss.

Now that each of you have shared your experiences, is there anyone who would like to share their experience with the entire group? (*seek volunteers*).

*Trainer Tip:* Allow a few individuals to share their experiences. Ultimately, you will find that a common thread between all experiences is the fact that someone encouraged or mentored them to become Brotherhood members. It may have been a father encouraging his son, two Ordeal members encouraging each other, or a Brotherhood member motivating an Ordeal member in his chapter. The concept of 'mentoring' and 'encouragement' is a key factor to successful Brotherhood Conversion and should be mentioned to the entire group.

Now that you've heard some experiences and understand how important mentoring and encouragement are, I'd like you to work as a team to come up with the most unique idea for improving Brotherhood Conversion in your lodges. Based on both of your experiences with Brotherhood membership and your personal reasons for becoming Brotherhood, think of a way to improve your





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lodge's conversion rates. You should not limit yourself to what you have heard before. Aim for innovative and creative ideas.

*Trainer Tip:* You may want to make this activity a little competitive. Perhaps the session trainer could award a prize to the team that has the most innovative idea. The goal of this portion of the exercise is to utilize their understanding of why they personally became Brotherhood into a tangible idea for lodges to improve their Brotherhood Conversion rates. Give participants a few minutes to discuss. Be careful to watch time.

Is there any team that would like to volunteer to share their creative idea? (*seek answers and participation*).

*Trainer Tip:* This is the most important portion of the session. The participants will be able to improve their lodges' Brotherhood Conversion through the new and innovative ideas being shared. It is important that you promote and facilitate discussion and idea sharing among the participants.

Here are some key suggestions for improving Brotherhood Conversion in your lodge. We may have touched on some of these points, but I want to make sure we cover them all:

- **Mentoring:** Utilize the Elangomat, Troop Representative or some other type of system to guide the new Ordeal members along the journey to Brotherhood. Ordeal members rarely decide for themselves that they want to become Brotherhood members. It often takes the encouragement of another.
- **Opportunities for Ceremonies:** Your lodge should provide a Brotherhood ceremony opportunity at every lodge, district and council event as well as each week at summer camp. Frequency of opportunity has proven to make a difference. In addition, since everyone is short of personal time, don't require attendance at a service weekend or participation in a service project prior to the ceremony.
- **Guide to Inductions:** The Order of the Arrow Guide to Inductions offers valuable information regarding Brotherhood including Stages in the Journey to Brotherhood, The Brotherhood Induction, Elements of a Good Brotherhood Program and the Brotherhood Hike.
- **Accurate Records:** Update your lodge records every year, making sure to keep "non-dues paid" members separate or eliminated from your member database. Accurate records allow a lodge to target Ordeal members upon their eligibility. Remember, each lodge must manage and control its own Brotherhood Conversion process.
- **Remove Barriers:** Try to eliminate barriers that might prevent an Arrowman from achieving Brotherhood. The Brotherhood ceremony must be accessible and available - keep in mind brothers with special needs and an Arrowman's religious obligations (e.g. weekend travel). Also keep in mind distance to the ceremony - people with limited time are more likely to attend a Brotherhood ceremony if it is not far away. Help to arrange transportation. Remember that the lodge cannot make changes to the Challenges of Brotherhood membership either by adding or removing requirements!
- **Cost of Sash:** A common barrier to some Arrowman is the cost of the sash. A lodge can create a "Brotherhood Scholarship" either in the lodge budget or through





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donations. A lodge could also consider paying for the cost of the Brotherhood sash.

- **Chapter/Lodge Recognition:** Recognize new Brotherhood members at all opportunities: lodge events; in lodge publications; in district/council newsletters; present certificates at the annual lodge banquet. This can help to motivate other lodge members to also become Brotherhood members.
- **Letters to Ordeal Members:** A personalized letter from the lodge chief mailed to eligible members, extending an invitation to begin their journey to Brotherhood can be an effective reminder to Ordeal members.
- **Phone Calls/Email to Members:** Emphasize constant contact and communication to your membership, inviting Ordeal members to a lodge or chapter event where they can obtain their Brotherhood.
- **Articles in Newsletter:** Within each lodge newsletter, recognize new Brotherhood members and promote future opportunities where members can obtain Brotherhood.
- **Brotherhood Class/Training Session at Chapter and/or Lodge Events:** At every chapter and lodge event, provide a fun and energetic discussion where Brotherhood members can work with new members and help them with the Challenges of Brotherhood Membership.
- **‘Challenge’ vs. ‘Test’:** Ensure the use of correct terminology. The term ‘Brotherhood Test’ is incorrect and can be intimidating to some. Ordeal members should not feel pressure and must ‘cram’ to understand aspects of Brotherhood Membership.
- **Brotherhood Chairman (under Vice Chief of Inductions):** Create a position that strictly focuses on developing lodge programs centered on helping members obtain Brotherhood membership. This can increase your lodge’s conversion rate as well as boost participation at chapter and lodge functions.
- **Troop/Team Representative:** Utilize these representatives to reach more Ordeal members and help personalize the promotion for them to obtain Brotherhood. Recognize Troop/Team representatives who play an active part in encouraging members from their unit to become Brotherhood members.
- **JumpStart Program:** As we briefly discussed, this is a great web-based program that will help answer new members’ questions and guide them along the journey to Brotherhood.
- **Brotherhood Challenge Worksheet:** A Brotherhood Challenge Worksheet is a one-page handout that some lodges distribute to their new Ordeal members. It outlines when the Ordeal member is eligible for Brotherhood membership, discusses the Challenges of Brotherhood Membership and provides other information helpful to a new lodge member.
- **Lodge/Chapter Incentive:** Provide incentives if the lodge or chapter reaches its conversion goal. Some ideas include a free, low cost, or discounted fellowship, a pizza party, special t-shirt, etc.
- **Lodge Image:** Image and first impressions are important to a new member. People want to be part of an organization that welcomes them and that has a good image. Have prepared unit election teams and impressive ceremonies.





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- **Pre-Ordeal meeting with candidates:** Hold a meeting with candidates prior to the Ordeal to discuss the induction process and to clarify any concerns of the candidates or their parents/leaders. This will help to establish the mindset that the Ordeal Ceremony isn't the end of the induction process.

It's important to note that regardless of what techniques your lodge uses to encourage higher Brotherhood Conversion rates, each lodge must manage and control its own Brotherhood Conversion process. Arrowman cannot meet the Challenges of Brotherhood membership or become Brotherhood members outside of their home lodge.

I realize we just covered several ideas, many of which may be new to you and your lodge. If you have any questions or would like to talk about an of these or other ideas more in depth, I encourage you to continue your discussions this weekend with myself, each other and most importantly, your lodge key three.

## **Conclusion:**

**5 Minutes**

Are there any additional questions or points? (*resolve any open questions or points*)

We hope this session has helped to explain what Brotherhood Conversion is and why it is important. Brotherhood Conversion is a critical component to building your lodge so that it can fulfill its mission and the purpose of the Order of the Arrow.

