

2015 National Order of the Arrow Conference

Ordeal Planning and Management

Session Length: 60 Minutes

Through this session, you will:

**Explain** themethods and best practices for planning a successful Ordeal

**Demonstrate** that properly planning an Ordeal will provide for a greater chance of event success

**Guide** Arrowmen through a series of practical exercises that will emphasize the importance of proper planning

**Enable** Arrowmen to take the knowledge acquired back to their home lodges and conduct successful Ordeals

This session will help the lodge Ordeal chairman and Adviser plan a successful event.

The theme of NOAC 2015 is “It Starts With Us”. This session will relay this theme in the following ways:

* By preparing chairmen and Advisers to conduct Ordeals that will inspire new arrowmen to seek to serve through the next century of service

**SESSION NARRATIVE**

**Purpose of the Ordeal 5 Minutes**

The Ordeal is the formal induction of a candidate into the Order of the Arrow. The Ordeal will leave a lasting impression on a new candidate – either good or bad. It is important that the Ordeal be conducted with the greatest amount of planning so that the chances for branding a positive influence on a new candidate are high. This will increase the odds of the new Ordeal member participating in future OA events. The ninth principle of the OA Guide to Inductions states “The induction must be presented to the candidates in an organized sequential pattern. When the prescribed pattern is disrupted, the candidate's experience of the induction is diminished.” Only well thought out planning will guarantee this principle is met.

**Ordeal Planning Activities 20 Minutes**

Conducting a successful Ordeal weekend requires hours of planning and careful consideration. Planning for an Ordeal should begin several months in advance of the event and can begin as early as one full year prior to the Ordeal. The following timelines should be considered:

* Six months before the event – location and date set set and reservations made Recruitment of essential support staff can begin at this time.
* Two months before the Ordeal weekend - a master schedule, checklist and organization chart should be submitted to the lodge Key 3 for approval. A list of work projects should be created. The detailed checklist of items needed, things to be done, and who is responsible for them should be updated.
* One month out – Conduct an Ordeal leadership meeting to discuss all final detail and ensure all plans (and contingency plans) are in place.

**Ordeal Staff Membership and Responsibilities**

In order to conduct an effective Ordeal, the lodge chief should appoint an Ordeal chairman who will oversee an Ordeal committee responsible for planning and conducting the Ordeal weekend. In a similar manner, the lodge adviser will appoint a qualified adviser for the Ordeal chairman. In lodges where the chapters conduct the Ordeals, each chapter should select an Arrowman to manage the Ordeals at the chapter level. The chapter Ordeal chairmen form the lodge Ordeal committee and should meet with the chairmen of the unit elections, elangomats, and ceremonies committees to ensure that all aspects of the Ordeal process will flow smoothly.

The Ordeal chairman is responsible for assuring that each of the following jobs is filled by a trained Arrowman for each Ordeal and an adviser should be in place for each committee as well:

* Ordealmaster (often filled by the chairman himself),
* Ordeal support staff (Assistant Ordealmasters),
* Elangomats,
* Ceremony team members,
* Kitchen staff,
* Medical staff, and
* Registration staff.

The Ordealmaster's responsibilities are:

* To ensure that all of the Ordeal support staff are recruited and properly trained in a timely manner
* To make sure the Ordeal is properly planned,
* To develop a budget and a master schedule for the Ordeal,
* To coordinate the Ordeal with the other lodge and chapter committees,
* To ensure that elected candidates are notified of the Ordeal weekend,
* To make sure that the Ordeal weekend is a success, and
* To prepare a written evaluation of the Ordeal with an explanation of the successes and failures of each Ordeal.

The responsibilities of the Elangomats are:

* To lead the candidates through the Ordeal process
* To be properly trained on the purpose of the Ordeal, logistics (5 Ws), safety procedures, how to handle disruptive candidates, and motivational tactics
* Demonstrate servant leadership through cheerful service

The responsibilities of ceremony team members are:

* To completely memorize their part as printed in the appropriate official ceremonies publications,
* To help prepare the ceremonial ring for all ceremonial activities,
* To ensure all required props and costumes are present and in good condition, and
* To conduct an impressive and inspiring ceremony.

The responsibilities of the kitchen staff are:

* To assist the Ordealmaster in planning the menu for candidates, and if necessary, members;
* To secure appropriate cooking equipment, food, and supplies for the weekend;
* To prepare and serve food as appropriate; and
* To help manage any special dietary needs or allergies candidates or members may have.

The responsibilities of the registration staff are:

* To greet each candidate or other attendee in a cheerful manner,
* To check in each candidate and verify that registration and payment have been properly submitted,
* To verify that medical forms have been filled in as appropriate, and
* To present the Ordealmaster with a complete list of all attending candidates and members
* To have an understanding of the camp layout and master schedule in order to direct candidates and members as needed

The responsibilities of the medical staff are:

* To be adequately trained in basic first aid skills and other applicable skills as circumstances require;
* To ensure that at least one person is continuously “on call” for the duration of the event at a known and centrally accessible location;
* To provide first aid as necessary;
* To log any treatment provided in accordance with relevant BSA policies, local laws, and regulations; and
* To contact emergency medical services if necessary.

**Scheduling Considerations**

The master schedule, checklist, and organization chart should include alternatives for problems such as absence of ceremonial team members or elangomats, late arrivals, power outages, severe weather, and other unexpected developments. While creating the schedule for the Ordeal, the following points must be considered

* Registration should be open until a reasonable time, accounting for the travel time required for the candidate or member farthest away.
* The ceremony team will require time to set up the ceremonial grounds and prepare for the ceremony. The team should plan on arriving to camp several hours early.
* Allow at least 20-30 minutes to conduct the pre-Ordeal ceremony. Consider allowing additional time for the lodge membership to arrive at the ceremonial ring prior to the candidates’ arrival. Allow for walking time (at a slow pace) to and from ceremonial sites.
* Per national BSA standard, 8 hours of sleep is required to be scheduled for both candidates and members.
* If breakfast is to be prepared by candidates, allow sufficient time for its preparation and distribution before work projects begin.
* Candidates will require time to clean up after the completion of their work projects.
* Darkness, while not a requirement for the ceremonies, is often desirable.
* Allow at least 45-60 minutes to conduct the Ordeal Ceremony.
* Schedule time for cracker barrels, if applicable.
* Schedule time for new member orientation.
* Give the candidates time to setup sleeping arrangements for a second night of camping if applicable.

**Characteristics of Well Defined Service Projects**

In addition to the requirements above, Ordeal service projects should planned to have the following characteristics:

* The project should require no specialized abilities, such as a professional license, unless it is arranged with the member or candidate in advance;
* The project should be genuinely useful;
* The project should require physical effort equivalent to a hard day's work;
* The project should be lasting. Repaired facilities or landscaping, while not permanent, can be viewed with pride when the candidate returns to camp for years to come;
* The project should be of a sufficient size so that all members of a small clan can work together on the same project;
* The project should not involve long breaks without work. This problem can occur when the project includes a lot of walking, or when there are too few tools available for the candidates to all work at one time; and
* The project should ideally be able to be completed in one day.
* The project should try to avoid weather specific activities, if possible, in the event of inclement weather.

A good rule of thumb is to plan for twice as many service projects as anticipated to be completed. This ensures that no clan will go without a full days’ worth of service. There may be candidates that, due to physical constraints, may not be able to work on certain service projects. Thought should be given to creating projects that candidates with disabilities can work on while still accomplishing the intent of the challenge given at the Pre Ordeal ceremony.

**Planning Candidate Meals**

There is no proscribed Ordeal candidate menu so Lodges are given the freedom to choose any menu they desire as long as it meets the intent of the principles laid forth by Nutiket during the Pre-Ordeal ceremony. Some guidelines to follow are:

* Be alert for any food allergies that might exist
* Plan for water sources to be placed near work sites
* Meals should be simple and plain

**Supporting Materials**

The Ordealmaster shall ensure that any supporting materials needed during the Ordeal are prepared or copied prior to the event. Copies of Spirit of the Arrow booklets as well as schedules need to be prepared and distributed to the candidates and Arrowmen respectively. These booklets can be duplicated from the OA Guide to Inductions.

**Elangomat Training**

* Elangomat training should occur at least one month prior to the Ordeal induction weekend.
* Training should occur at the same place where the Ordeal will occur, so elangomats can visualize and understand where they need to be and when.
* The ceremonies chairman should also attend to answer any questions that arise.

A full elangomat training syllabus and other supporting materials are available at the Lodge Leadership Development website at *http://lld.oa-bsa.org*.

**Candidates with Special Needs**

If candidates with special needs will be attending the Ordeal, the requirements of the Ordeal should be adapted to address any issues regarding their needs. The Order of the Arrow program can be adapted to include everyone. "Guidelines for Assisting Scouts with Special Needs," contained in the OA Guide to Inductions, discusses ways to adapt the Ordeal to meet special needs while still upholding the customs and traditions of the Order

**The Ordeal Weekend 15 min**

**Pre-Ordeal**

The afternoon of the Pre-Ordeal is when key Ordeal committee staff should arrive at camp as early as possible to make final preparations. The following tips should be considered o make the evening run smoothly:

* The Ordealmaster should meet each elangomat and ensure each has a clear understanding of what their responsibilities are.
* Elangomats should visit their clan's campsite and confirm where the clan members will sleep.
* The ceremony team and assistants should check out the pre-Ordeal circle, build a fire lay, and place unlit firepots in their proper locations.
* The kitchen, medical, and registration staffs should prepare their respective areas**.**

The evening of the pre-Ordeal ceremony is a time of great anticipation for the candidates. Consider the following items when preparing the candidates for the pre ordeal events:

* Keep all candidates should remain far away from all ceremony-related preparations.
* Registration should include all information required for lodge records and any medical, dietary, religious, or special needs that may require discretionary modification of the Ordeal challenges.
* Make sure to ask candidates to write any special needs on a piece of paper or card to be distributed by their elangomat.
* Ensure the candidates receive a health and safety briefing.
* The elangomats should be advised of any special medical requirements or disabilities that their clan members might have at this time.
* Divide candidates into groups, or “clans”, of six to ten.
* The clan should stay together for the entire Ordeal.
* Provide each elangomat with a roster of the candidates in his clan to help learn their names, and assist the Ordealmaster in case of emergency.

The elangomats should meet and welcome each candidate who will be in their clan. After the entire clan is registered, the elangomats should store their clan members’ personal items and equipment in a safe place, except a sleeping bag, a ground cloth, a flashlight, and any special items or medications that the candidates will need to take with them for the Ordeal.

**Ceremonies**

A solid ceremony is highly dependent on the skills of the ceremonies team. Plenty of time should be allocated for practices prior to the Ordeal. Rehearsals should be held at least once a month, and weekly in the month prior to conducting the ceremony for the candidates. All ceremony parts must be conducted by youth under the age of 21.

Ceremonial team members must hold the same or higher membership level of the ceremony being conducted. For example, an Ordeal member may not be a member of a Brotherhood team but a Brotherhood member may be a member of an Ordeal team.

It is national policy that no more than fifty candidates should participate in one pre-Ordeal or Ordeal ceremony so that the experience is not diluted for any of the participants. In large lodges and chapters, the ceremony team may have to put on multiple ceremonies simultaneously, or in succession, to handle all of the candidates.

Whether it is the pre-Ordeal or Ordeal ceremony, the main points of having a successful ceremony presentation are the same. A ceremonialist must get the candidates' attention, deliver the key points of his message effectively, and inspire each candidate to live up to the challenges presented. It is not an easy task. Pay special attention to the following:

* Get in the spirit. The team should spend some time together just before the ceremony to get into the spirit of the ceremony. This process reaches its apex during the investiture.
* Project your voice. Speak loudly enough so that the candidate standing the farthest away from the speaker can hear clearly. Always face the candidates when speaking
* Speak slowly. One of the most common problems is speaking too fast. You will rarely hear someone speak too slowly in a ceremony. It is much easier to be understood if you speak slowly and clearly.
* Speak clearly. Speaking clearly goes with speaking slowly. Practice speaking each word so that it can be easily understood.
* Focus on the candidates. A candidate should think that the ceremony is being presented for them alone. Make eye contact with every candidate during your speaking part. Direct your gestures toward the candidates whenever appropriate. Speak directly to the candidates.
* Set the example by listening well. Pay attention to the other principals when they are speaking. If a candidate's eyes wander from the speaker to another principal, the other principal's gaze will direct the candidate's eyes back to the speaker.

**The Ordeal**

**Sleeping After Pre-Ordeal**

It is important that time is spent picking the proper spot for candidates to sleep. Consider the following elements when choosing spots. The spots must:

* Create an appearance of isolation
* Avoid distractions and noises
* Be safe and free of hazards
* Be accessible in case of emergency
* Accommodate candidates with special needs

An inclement weather plan should be developed. The plan should include a procedure for contacting each elangomat if the Ordealmaster decides the clans should be moved during the night because of severe weather. Elangomats should know where to take their individual clans if they have to move them during the night. A list of alternative work projects that can be performed during inclement weather needs to be developed before the Ordeal weekend.

**Candidate Meals**

Candidates and elangomats should eat together during the Ordeal. This helps build the bond between candidate and elangomat. The following items should be considered when serving meals:

* Ensure the candidates stay well hydrated. Provide water and encourage the Elangomats to take clan water breaks often.
* Do not use the meal time as a time filler due to a lack of service projects.
* Consider a full banquet for the candidates after the Ordeal ceremony.

Be prepared to handle a candidate who is not willing to accept the ordeal challenges. The Ordeal staff needs to keep a keen eye out for any candidate who “does not step forward.” The Ordeal staff needs to be discreet about removing a candidate from the circle to avoid any embarrassment of the candidate.

**Executing the Service Projects**

The Ordeal staff needs to constantly monitor the progress of the clans executing their assigned service projects. Safety is paramount and any project that poses a potential safety issue should be halted by the elangomat immediately. Elangomats must ensure the candidates maintain the pledge taken at the pre-ordeal ceremony. Elangomats must be prepared to acquire more service projects from the service chairman as soon as the given project is completed.

**Breakout** **15 Minutes**

One of the greatest tasks of an Ordealmaster is the role of problem solver. As you can see by now, an Ordeal has many parts that make-up the overall successful first experience of the Order for candidates. With such a large number of things to account for in an Ordeal, it can be common for problems to arise. Even as we may plan out every detail properly, unexpected issues can arise. It comes down to the Ordealmaster to solve these problems if need be. In this breakout session, you will be given a possible complication that may occur during the Ordeal that will need your expertise in solving. When developing a contingency, keep in mind the simplicity and overall effectiveness of your plan, as well as what other factors your solution may affect. One note, not all problems are bad problems, but they must be addressed.

**Trainer Instructions:** Partition the class into 5 sections. Ask each participant to pair with another. Provide each section with a scenario where some event causes a deviation from the Ordeal plan. Have each participant develop a contingency for the event. Have each participant discuss his contingency with their partner. The instructor shall ask one team per each section to provide a result. Sample scenarios can be found at the end of this session.

**Now What? – Setting Up the New Arrowman for Success 5 min**

The lodge’s new member orientation is a key element in the inductions sequence. After new Arrowmen have completed their Ordeal, they are not likely to understand everything that occurred during their experience. Lodges should not presume that the new brothers know more than has been presented to them during the Ordeal. Due to the impressive nature of ceremonies and the tests presented to them, it is possible that the new member may have missed key aspects of the Ordeal. It is the lodge’s responsibility to new members to explain what is expected of them and what they can expect from the lodge.

A new member orientation session should be held with the new brothers, their elangomats, the four ceremony principals, and the lodge or chapter officers after the ceremony. The following topics should be covered in the new member orientation:

* Welcome Message. The lodge or chapter chief welcomes the new members
* Explanation of the Ordeal ceremony. The Ordealmaster gives an overview of the Ordeal. Each of the four Ordeal ceremony principals, still in their ceremony costumes, explains their character's role in the ceremony.
* History of the OA and lodge. A brief history of the OA should be presented.
* Opportunities for service.The new Arrowmen should be reminded that their primary focus must be service to their troop or team. Opportunities for participation in OA activities such as lodge events, NOAC, section conclaves, and OA high adventure opportunities should be presented.

Examples of how to conduct Jumpstart training are provided in the OA Guide to Inductions.

**TRAINER PREPARATION**

What qualifications should the trainer have to perform this session? The trainer should have prior experience chairing or advising an Ordeal event.

Materials needed:

Ordeal Planning and Management PowerPoint presentation

Projector

Projection screen or suitable equivalent

Flip Chart and markers

Appendix Resources:

***Order of the Arrow Guide to Inductions***

[*http://www.oa-bsa.org/resources/pubs/gti*](http://www.oa-bsa.org/resources/pubs/gti)

***Order of the Arrow Handbook***

***JumpStart website***

<http://www.oa-bsa.org>

***Lodge Leadership Development website***

*http://lld.oa-bsa.org*.

**Sample Breakout Session Scenarios**

1. A sudden change in the weather forecast leads to the development of inclement weather that provides safety concerns for outdoor camping. You have placed the Ordeal candidates in a remote location of camp to ensure the best possible night of solitude for them. How do you best mobilize your Ordeal staff in order to move the candidates in a quick and orderly fashion to a safe location?
2. The groups of candidates in attendance for this Ordeal have exemplified the meaning of cheerful service and tackled the task of arduous labor head on by completing all tasks on the original work list well ahead of schedule. How do you handle this situation in respect to ensuring that candidates understanding of hard work by not allowing them to stop work too early?
3. It is becoming later in the workday, and you realize that some of the tasks that must be completed by the end of the weekend are not going to get finished with the course that is currently being taken. How do you ensure that the tasks get completed? Keep in mind situations such as a large amount of distance between groups of candidates due to factors such as groups working at separate camps on the same reservation.
4. Candidates have completed their pre-ordeal ceremony and have laid down to rest for their night of sleep in solitude. However, some did not understand the part of the pre-ordeal ceremony that indicates sleeping under the stars and candidates begin setting up tents. How do you address the issue with each individual candidate?
5. One of your elangomats has not been exemplifying all of the points of the Ordeal. The elangomat has not been keeping his clan under control and is not upholding them to the principles of the Ordeal. You have already spoken with the elangomat once about this issue and not much has seemed to change. What will your next course of action be?