

Session: Unity in Variety



Duration: 50-55 minutes

Facilitator: Section Staff

Supplies:

- [New Voices Scenario Cards](#)
- [Interest Cards](#)
- [Challenge Character Traits](#)
- [Challenge Scenario Cards](#)

Learning Outcomes:

- Learn how to identify new voices and encourage conversations
- Practice how to have those conversations
- Identify the benefits of breaking the echo chamber and create an action plan to take home

Introduction: 2 minutes

Hello! My name is TRAINER NAME and I am a member of LODGE NAME from CITY AND STATE. I am currently the POSITION TITLE, and am excited to be here with you today. Welcome to our session: Unity in Variety!

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By the end of this session, you should have learned:

1. How to identify new voices and encourage conversations
2. Practiced how to have those conversations
3. Identified benefits of breaking the echo chamber and created an action plan to take home

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Section 2: 10-15 minutes

We are going to spend the first few minutes getting to know those around us. Please turn to someone next to you and share at least one non-Scouting-related interest that you are passionate about.

(Set a time for about 2 minutes. When the timer expires, bring the group back together.)

I hope you all learned an interesting passion that your partner has. This wasn't just an ice-breaker; rather, an introduction into how to identify new voices and how to have those conversations.

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Why is it important that we identify new voices among our lodges? *(solicit some answers from the group - answers will probably be along the lines of the reasons covered below)*

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The importance of identifying new voices is fourfold.

1. **They offer a fresh perspective.**
 - a. When the same few people are making decisions, we risk falling into complacency where our events stagnate.
2. **They provide sustainability.**
 - a. Lodges thrive when we nurture the next generations of leaders. Involving new Arrowmen ensures we don't burn out the same volunteers.
3. **It aids in belonging and retention.**
 - a. When we connect with Arrowmen and give them opportunities for their ideas to be heard, they are more likely to stay active and motivated.
4. **It shines a light on unseen talents or skills.**
 - a. Our members have talents and skills outside of the OA, whether that be artistic, technical, theatrical, or trades related, to name a few. These talents could open doors to new times of programming, promotions, or experiences for our lodges if we tap into them.

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(Have an assistant pass out scenario cards while you explain the activity.)

At each of your table groups, you have been given a common scenario. As a group, I want you to evaluate the scenario and write down people whose skills might be unseen, but if brought to light, would add value. It might be helpful to think of ways to improve the scenario in general and then identify what specific skills would be beneficial.

Here is an example to provide some guidance.

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Scenario: A chapter is working on creating a new t-shirt to sell as part of a fundraiser. The officer team has tried to draw several ideas, but none of them have turned out as they wanted. Who could the officer team turn to for assistance?

Examples of people to turn to: a new adult Arrowman who is an Art Teacher at the local middle school, an Arrowman who regularly designs t-shirts for their club at school, and an Arrowman whose family runs a local t-shirt company that offers design consulting.

(Give the groups 5-7 minutes to work through their scenarios)

(Have 2-3 groups share their scenarios and who they would look for as a resource. Thank all of the groups that share.)

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Trainer Tip: *Body Text*

Section 3: 10 minutes

Now that we know why it is important to recognize and amplify new voices, how do we do that?

Most people don't get involved simply because no one reached out in the right way. A rushed, tasked oriented approach such as "We need you to be the chair of ____", can feel overwhelming, especially to someone new to the OA. When we reach out to new Arrowmen, we should focus on forming a genuine connection first, and worry about finding a role for them second.

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Start by being curious. Ask about their interests and hobbies. Ask what they are excited about at the event or what their favorite part is. Get to know this Arrowman as a person. This time shouldn't just be you interviewing the new member, share something about yourself as well and try to connect your interests to theirs.

Once you have established a rapport with them, start to bridge their interests with opportunities in the OA and offer them small roles in events. For example, if this new Arrowman is interested in photography you could propose the following: "You mentioned that you like photography, would you be interested in helping me take pictures at our next event?" This gives them an "in" without all the pressure of a formal title.

Finally, celebrate their contribution and keep encouraging them to try new roles when they're ready. To build on our photography example, if the new Arrowman helps take photos at the next event, we should thank them and recognize their work. This would also be an opportunity to suggest they take a look at the communications committee or another related position.

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Now we are going to practice! On your table there is a small card for each of you that lists 2 interests. In partner pairs you are going to take turns being a new Arrowmen and an active Arrowmen.

In the first round, Partner A is going to be the new Arrowmen. Partner B is going to be the active Arrowmen and is going to practice starting a conversation, asking questions, and gently connecting Partner A's interests to lodge or chapter activities.

In the second round, you are going to switch roles.

(Give the group 2-3 minutes and then ask them to switch. At the end of the second round, bring the group back together for a debrief.)

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Debrief Questions:

- What did it feel like to be approached naturally versus recruited right away for a role?
- Which questions helped the conversation flow?
- How can you take these skills back to your chapter/lodge?

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Section 4: 25 minutes

We've talked a lot about how to identify new voices and how to engage in meaningful conversations, now we need to understand why it is important that we break the echo chamber and bring in a variety of skills, ages, and experiences to help our lodges thrive.

Can anyone offer a definition of an echo chamber and give an example of how it can impact our lodges? *(solicit an answer from the audience)*

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An echo-chamber occurs when the same voices and perspectives dominate the conversation and everyone begins to think alike. This may feel comfortable to us, but it has hidden costs:

1. Limits creativity: solutions get recycled instead of improved.
2. Discourages participation: members who aren't in the "inner circle" may feel like their ideas don't matter and they will stop contributing.
3. Burns out leaders: when we ask the same people to do everything, they tire out quickly
4. Misses hidden talents: as we mentioned before, every Arrowman has skills beyond Scouting. If we don't bring them in, we miss the opportunity for them to use and grow in their skills.

Breaking the echo chamber ensures that more people feel heard, the lodge has fresh energy, and everyone shares in the leadership.

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For our final activity, you are going to work with your full table group. I am going to give each table a challenge card. It will include a task your group is responsible for solving. Each of you will also be given a role card with a unique skill or limitation (ex: builder, artist, communicator, organizer, techie, outdoors expert, idea person, encourager, and quartermaster). You will have 15 minutes to create a plan to address your challenge. You must use everyone's abilities.

(During this time, walk around and support the groups as they try to solve their challenges)

(Once the time has expired, have groups volunteer to share their tasks and solutions.)

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Debriefing questions:

- Which skills made the biggest difference?
- Was anyone's skill overlooked at first? How did you bring them in?
- What does this teach us about breaking the echo chamber in our lodges?

When we invite a variety of voices and skills, our lodge becomes stronger, more creative, and more sustainable. An echochamber feels safe, but limits growth. Unity in Variety means every Arrowman's voice helps shape the future.

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Closing: 2 minutes

As a reminder, the main points of this session were:

1. Learning how to identify new voices and encourage conversations
2. Practicing how to have those conversations
3. Identifying benefits of breaking the echo chamber and creating an action plan to take home

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I hope you have enjoyed learning with me today, and thank you for your attention and participation. If you have any questions, please find me during a break, or my contact information is on the screen. This was Unity in Variety.

