



# Conclave 2.0 Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support sections in creating an innovative, unique and fun Conclave for Arrowmen.



**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®**  
**ORDER OF THE ARROW**

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Section leadership team,

Conclave 2.0 was a committee comprised of 2 subcommittees that have been tasked with attempting to innovate and renew the conclave program across the country. Our goal at the beginning of this journey was to have a complete set of materials that any section can utilize to put on an effective conclave program to activate and engage Arrowmen.

A conclave, first and foremost, should be fun. Put yourself in the shoes of a 13 or 14-year-old Arrowman who is going to his or her first conclave. Think about what would keep you coming back and finding that there is something worthwhile about investing their time in this organization just as you have. It is our hope that you can use this guide to do just that and propel your conclave into thriving throughout the coming decades.

Conclave 2.0 was an idea that was meant to provide resources to make conclaves universally excellent. We have delivered on our end; now it is up to you as the section leadership to use these tools to make a qualitative change in our Order.

Yours in Service,

Sid Salazar  
2019 Conclave 2.0 Youth Lead



# Background

## Conclave Crossroads

The Conclave 2.0 Task Force spent a year studying successful and unsuccessful conclaves, reports, and associated data. Over the course of the year, the task force discussed with section leadership on how they continually improve conclave, and how they struggle.

They determined that the concept of conclave *IS* still relevant to today's Arrowmen, but that the program of the last 40 years is not. As a result, conclave youth attendance is generally stagnant or declining. The team has prototyped a new framework that is successful in being attractive to today's youth, while retaining the look and feel of a 'conclave'. This guide offers tips and tricks from success conclaves, as well as 2 new features to make your conclave great.

1. A new program concept to replace the traditional 'training' concept, called the IDEA Framework.
2. Administrative templates from successful conclaves and their sections to make your job planning conclaves easier.

## Supporting You

At the end of 2018, section leaders from across the nation got together to plan out the program of emphasis: Focus'19. The program was designed to help vault the Order of the Arrow into a new era of local support.

The team of leaders understood the ever-growing role of the section on today's program and wanted to give you the support and materials to make your conclave easier, and impactful.

As you read through and utilize this guide, think of even more out-of-the-box and innovative ways to make conclaves impactful and worthwhile to youth and share them with others.



# Getting Started

## Importance of Conclave

Next to a national jamboree and a national Order of the Arrow conference a section conclave is probably the largest inter-council event in the Boy Scouts of America. What happens at a national Order of the Arrow conference and a section conclave can make a big difference in the effectiveness of lodge and chapter programs of the Order of the Arrow and in the dedication of an individual Arrowman's first responsibility — their unit.

A successful conclave increases the knowledge and understanding of the delegates in all aspects of the Order of the Arrow program. Arrowmen should be inspired to set and commit themselves to the higher goals of performance for themselves and their lodges and should provide training necessary to achieve these goals.

## Leading the Charge, Making the Team

Conclaves cannot be put together by 2 or 3 people. It takes a coherent team of youth leaders under the age of 21, with the assistance of capable advisers, to make a conclave program run.

When selecting members of your team, think of the following:

- Is this someone who works hard?
- Is this someone who will come up with creative ideas?
- Can this person communicate effectively?
- Do I see this person taking my role eventually?

These basic questions you ask yourself will help you build a team of top-notch Conclave Vice Chiefs (CVC) and their advisers. Another aspect to keep in mind is to include members from all of the lodges in your section, this will help the entire section buy into a conclave, make all feel included, and provide for more inter-lodge interaction.

To assist you with distributing the workflow amongst leaders younger than 21, we've assembled an example organizational chart for you to utilize. This form can be edited to include the names of the members of your team so everyone can see where they flow. The format of this chart takes advantage of the 3-youth section officers and incorporates adviser roles. You'll notice that it is our recommendation that the section leadership oversees program elements, while the host lodge oversees logistics. Along with the organization chart, there are resources below that will help you jumpstart your next conclave.

**Resources:**

*Field Operations Guide:* <https://oa-bsa.org/resources/publications>

This guide provides details on OA national and regional organization, section rules, section Conclave guidelines, and section training.

The following resources can be found at: <https://oa-bsa.org/resources/conclave>

*Organization Chart Template*

A fillable document for visual representation of a conclave organization.

*Council of Chiefs Roster Template*

Fillable template that provides contact information for the Council of Chiefs.





# Conclave Program Kit

Every conclave needs a cohesive program that engages, enables, or inspires Arrowmen in some way. The following section is a library of different programs that you can present during your conclave. Some of them may encompass components that can be used across the event, while the others are simple and are designed to fill a standard hour-long block.

## The I.D.E.A. Method

Identify – Develop – Engage – Activate

One of the strongest bonds that people develop are those connections with other people. The I.D.E.A. Method is an activation process that utilizes the strength of interpersonal bonds by developing and fostering an individual's relationship with a group of people. This method focuses on cultivating this relationship at each of the four stages of group relationship development: The Identify stage, the Develop stage, the Engage stage, and the Activate stage. Each of these stages focuses on how an individual, referred to as a Candidate for Activation (CA), perceives their relationship with a group, as well as the depth of their relationship with the members within the group.

This concept was developed with the intention to capitalize on the experiences Arrowmen have at conclave in order to improve their local lodges. It's aimed to be achieved through developing Arrowmen and connecting them with other lodges.

The I.D.E.A Method is used throughout the Conclave 2.0 program in the following ways:

1. To develop a CA's relationship with their interest group
2. To develop a CA's relationship with their chapter-based group

Additional I.D.E.A Method processes can be applied:

1. To develop a CA's relationship with the Order of the Arrow
2. To develop a New Arrowmen's relationship with other New Arrowmen

### Objectives:

Identify a group as one the candidate desires to join

Develop a strong sense of identity as a member of the group

Engage with the group to build relationships that extend beyond the group's identity

Activate members through continued connection and engagement with their group and attempting to expand the group.



<b>Identify</b>	
<b>Stage Focus:</b>	Shared Interests
<b>Stage Beginning:</b>	CA is unaware of group's existence
<b>Stage Ending:</b>	CA chooses to join the group.
<b>Stage Characteristics:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CA discovers a group in which they share interests with</li> <li>CA learns about the group</li> <li>CA meets with others who are either in the group or interested in joining the group</li> </ul>	

<b>Develop</b>	
<b>Stage Focus:</b>	Shared Identity, Relationship Development
<b>Stage Beginning:</b>	CA begins developing their relationship with the group as a new member
<b>Stage Ending:</b>	CA is resolved in their decision to join the group and strongly identifies as a member of the group
<b>Stage Characteristics:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactions and activities revolve around the group's identity/shared interest</li> <li>CA beings interactive with members of the group</li> <li>CA participates in shared activities with other members of the group</li> <li>CA develops connections with other members of the group which are defined by their shared interests</li> </ul>	

<b>Engage</b>	
<b>Stage Focus:</b>	Shared Experiences, Personal Relationship Development
<b>Stage Beginning:</b>	CA's relationship with the group begins to extend beyond the group's identity
<b>Stage Ending:</b>	CA has developed strong interpersonal connections within the group based upon factors unrelated to the group
<b>Stage Characteristics:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CA learns more about the interests of group members beyond group identity</li> <li>CA develops friendships with other individuals within the group</li> <li>CA develops deep personal connections with other members of the group</li> </ul>	

<b>Activate</b>	
<b>Stage Focus:</b>	Shared Activation
<b>Stage Beginning:</b>	CA's passion for the group drives them to recruit additional members
<b>Stage Ending:</b>	N/A
<b>Stage Characteristics:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CA understands the purpose of the group</li> <li>CA understands their individual role and value within the group</li> <li>CA is willing to recruit other members into the group</li> <li>CA helps retain other members by encouraging their active participation</li> <li>The group members form a sense of shared responsibility</li> </ul>	

### **I.D.E.A. Group Assembly**

Scouting gives youth and adults the opportunity to interact from people they normally wouldn't, every person can find someone that they relate with. The group assembly program marks the beginning of the Identify Stage of the I.D.E.A Method. Participants will roam within a centralized area where they will have the opportunity to discover or create interest groups, with whom they will participate in a morning program. Each pre-selected group will have an informal, ice-breaking activity designed to both attract participants to that group as well as foster a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Participants will then select their group before exiting the program area.

#### **Objective:**

- Arrowmen get to experience small slices of Saturday's program
- Arrowmen have a fun, exciting evening activity
- All Arrowmen will self-select into the group they want to join

As presented in the I.D.E.A. Method section of this document, the Identify stage is focused on common or shared interests. This program is designed to accelerate the Identify stage by placing all CAs in a smaller centralized area and structuring the evening program around shared interests. During this program, CAs will first become aware that these shared interest groups exist within the conclave membership, then they will have the opportunity to explore, or "feel out", different interest groups before selecting an interest group to join, and thus concluding their Identify stage.

Allowing groups to form naturally within a structured conclave program presents a challenge, both logistically and chronologically, but done right, the group program has the potential to greatly impact an Arrowman's feeling of belonging, and therefore, their continued level of activity and involvement with the Order of the Arrow.

#### **Required Materials:**

- # booths = # of groups (pop-ups, tables, chairs, signage, etc.)
- Group specific activity materials (sports group = soccer ball, frisbee, etc.)
- Method in which participants select their group (through an app, notecard & shoebox, etc.)

#### **Instructions:**

The first step in successfully implementing the Pre-Selected Interest Group approach is polling a section's membership effectively. A simple, broad question should be posed:

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*What Interests You?*

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Answers to this question can be collected electronically or through brainstorming sessions at lodge or chapter events. Once an initial list is created, each interest should be examined to determine whether it is compatible with the program. Each interest group should meet the following criteria:

**1. An interest group is able to have any desired number of crews.**

In order to provide the best foundation for all Arrowmen, the Interest Group program should contain as few limitations as possible, which means any number of members desiring to participate in an interest group should be given that opportunity. While the number of participants in a given crew should be consistent, each interest group needs to be capable of expanding to any number of crews. Activities for these groups should be low-budget and either low-resource or use resources that are easily attainable.

**2. An interest group activity engages all members within the group.**

The interest group program is designed to activate members through group relationship development within the I.D.E.A. Method. If an interest group activity does not engage all members, then those members are excluded from forming such strong relationships with the rest of their group, compromising the goals of the program. In order to build strong activating groups, it is vital that the beginning programs focus on engaging all members within a group.

**3. The interest group is led and facilitated by an enthusiastic member.**

As the program is designed to increase activation, it is important that the conclave administration select leaders for the interest groups who are empathetic and able to connect to all members of the group. The leader also exudes excitement for the program, ensuring each member feels important.

Some past conclaves had lower energy morning programs such as training sessions or lectures. The interest group method tailors the morning program specific to each Arrowman's interest in order to maintain high participation. As the conclave is a brief event, it is important for staff members to convey enthusiasm and high energy, maximizing every interaction with the participants as an opportunity to activate.

**Tips/Resources:**

Consider assembling both scouting and non-scouting related interest groups. For example, you may consider groups based on interests in;

- OA High Adventure
- Patch Trading
- Sports
- Video Games

## **The I.D.E.A. Method: Develop – Arrowman Connect**

At the conclusion of the group assembly on Friday evening, participants completed the Identify stage of the IDEA Method. Saturday morning's goal is to deepen connections as they enter the Develop stage and begin to form stronger relationships among the members of the group revolving around the group's shared identity.

### **Objective:**

- Develop a strong shared group identity
- Active participation in a shared activity based on the group's topic of interest
- Form connections with other group members. At this stage, these relationships will likely be based on the interest group's shared activity and group identity

### **Required Materials:**

- Group program materials
- Group discussion prompts

At this point in the program, conclave participants have chosen a group and therefore have completed the Identify stage. In the I.D.E.A. method, this gives the participants a way to connect with people who have similar interests. This is the basis for forming stronger group relationships. In the Develop stage, participants interact with other members of the group and learn more about their connection to the group's shared interest. Activities will focus on this shared interest to provide something which all members can build stronger relationships. Through participation in the group's morning program, CAs will develop a personal identity as a member of the group and find satisfaction in their decision to join the group.

### **Instructions:**

From the interest groups the conclave participants selected, individuals will then be placed into inter-lodge crews of 10-15, providing the opportunity to form relationships. Each crew will begin their morning program by participating in a group icebreaker discussion. This discussion is intended to build a comfortable group environment, prior to the group's morning activity, to help foster quicker and stronger group development. After the completion of the discussion, the group members will begin to form stronger connections through their shared activity based upon a common interest. For example, those participants who selected an art-focused interest group, may spend their time designing a patch set as a group, or painting a group (themed) mural. This focus on their common interest will allow these participants to develop connections with other members within their group, furthering their progress to activation.

## **The I.D.E.A. Method: Engage – Scavenger Hunt**

The scavenger hunt is a fast-paced, high-energy, and task-oriented challenge where crews will need to unite in a competitive environment, cultivating further development as a group. The Arrowmen Connect program revolved around the group's shared interest and shared identity, culminating a shared activity. The scavenger hunt focuses on strengthening a group's unity and developing connections independent of the group identity. Putting the groups in this competitive environment allows the opportunity to shift the focus from just a shared interest to a shared achievement, another known method for strengthening a group dynamic. Thus, the group members develop stronger relationships that are not solely dependent upon the original interest.

### **Objectives:**

- As a group, complete as many tasks/challenges as possible within the given time frame.
- Build upon the relationship each member has with the group.
- Build upon the relationships with others in the group.
- Actively engage every Arrowman.
- Maintain high energy, focus, and enthusiasm
- Continue the participant's immersion in the theme

### **Required Materials:**

- Task list (physical or digital)
- Method to track scores (physical w/clipboard or digital)
- Task/Challenge specific materials (e.g. a phone to take a photo)

The Develop stage focused on interaction between participants around their shared interests. This helps form a common ground to connect people and allows the formation of relationships. The goal of the Engage stage is to deepen the relationships with the members of a crew by extending their common ground beyond their original shared interest. Shared achievement provides additional depth to their relationships. Engage begins after the participant is further resolved and confirmed in their decision to join the group, establishing the framework for fostering these relationships. By the end of this stage, participants will have developed relationships with the group that are independent of the original interest. Now, individuals can begin their transition into the Activate stage.

In the course of a conclave, it is not reasonable to expect that all of a group's members could achieve transition into the Activate stage. This stage is marked by strong commitment to grow and expand the group. The work of the previous stages serves to bring a CA to this point, however a CA's transition into the Activate stage requires a deep internal motivation. Activation demands a future-focused mindset. Activated members have a goal to carry the group into the future and are willing to step up and perform the actions required to ensure the group's long-term success.

## Conclave Signature Session

The goal of a conclave is to inspire and help refine Arrowmen for success in the lodges and chapter. A signature session that members will take a skill from conclave and be able to apply it in their lodge will make lodges encourage more membership at conclave. These sessions should aim to develop a members in Unit Elections, Inductions, or Activation.

### Objectives:

- Enable an HPL skill in Arrowmen
- Inspire local involvement

### Tips

Examples of a signature session could be:

- Elangomat Training
- Unit Visitation Training
- Engaging Events
- Chapter Involvement Training

### Resources:

*Conclave Training Initiative:* <https://oa-bsa.org/training/conclave-training-initiative-cti>

The purpose of the CTI is to provide at least one training session each year for sections to use to augment their own conclave training.

*Thrive:* <https://oa-bsa.org/thrive>

The contents of this page were explained during the webinar on October 19. This page is a resource for ongoing Thrive support.

## Friday Night Show

Getting all staff and attendees together on Friday night to welcome everyone to the Conclave, and provide important updates and announcements is crucial. This is also a great opportunity to set the tone of the weekend.

### Objectives:

- Welcome all participants to the event
- Provide key updates/housekeeping items
- Introduce special guests

### Tips/Resources:

Inspiration is the key ingredient of the conclave. The conclave should kick off with a welcome from the service council and a short opening ceremony. It is equally important that the conclave close with an inspirational challenge that will create a lasting impression on every Arrowman who attends. Youth leaders, such as the national chief, national vice chief, or region chief, might be invited to give an inspirational message during the conclave.

Opening and closing ceremonies always have played a vital role in Order of the Arrow traditions, and experience teaches that good ones:

- Are well-planned, adequately rehearsed, and properly presented;
- Focus on rededication to the Scouting ideals;
- Focus on rededication to the principles of the Order of the Arrow;
- Are impressive, dignified, simple, and brief;
- Are dramatic, inspiring, colorful, and sincere;
- Exclude horseplay and initiation-type activities;
- Avoid fraternal, religious, and military rituals; and
- Show proper respect for American Indian traditions.



## **Friday Night Festival – Cracker-Barrel**

The Friday night festival is a late-night cracker-barrel focused on introducing the conclave theme. Participants will be immersed in the theme as they complete the in various evening yard games and activities. The Friday night festival is designed to be a flexible and casual ice-breaker program. Make a point to ensure participants are interacting with each other, and meeting others from different lodges.

### **Objectives:**

- Immerse participants in the theme
- Create a welcoming environment focused around fellowship

### **Required Materials:**

The materials required for this activity are dependent on the theme and desired atmosphere. This could include:

- Themed Food
- Lawn Games
- Team Games (Capture the Flag, Ultimate Frisbee)
- Themed Music
- Themed decorations

### **Tips/Resources**

In any situation, the human brain focuses on three parts: the beginning, the climax, and the conclusion. Having a themed cracker-barrel Friday evening provides the opportunity to create a large impact on each participant's perception of the event, however it presents an equally strong opportunity to hinder their perception of conclave. Therefore, there are a few vital aspects of a strong Friday evening program:

- The Friday evening program should create a high energy, engaging atmosphere. Arrowmen should feel an irresistible urge to participate, and struggle to maintain anything other than a friendly smile or laugh.
- The program should quickly and effectively immerse all participants in the conclave theme. This theme immersion should be strong enough to carry all participants into Saturday morning with an eagerness to further engage with the theme.
- Use the cracker-barrel food to further integrate the theme. Utilize food that is theme-specific or arrange it in a manner specific to your theme. Don't allow anything to detract from the theme immersion that you have worked hard to create.

Following these guidelines will help you to create an engaging and effective Friday program, and keep participants engaged in the theme.

## **Vigil Rededication Program**

The vigil rededication program is designed to offer a unique experience for both new Arrowmen (<1 year) and Vigil members during breakfast. All other conclave participants will have breakfast during the normally scheduled time. In addition, this is best executed in a separate, dedicated space.

Vigil Honor members are some of the most valuable resources in the Order of the Arrow: they are experienced, they have had a positive relationship with the program, and they are knowledgeable of the program at the local level. This Vigil rededication program is designed to take advantage of this great resource and mobilize Vigil Honor members to play a role in activating new Ordeal honor members. While attending breakfast, Vigil Honor members will receive training on how best to interact with new members. From there, Vigil Honor members will utilize their knowledge on developing meaningful connections and activating members through the New Arrowmen breakfast program, where they will be leading discussions and telling personal stories, aiming to engage and activate New Arrowmen.

### **Objectives:**

- Explain importance of helping new Arrowmen discover their niche in the OA.
- Train Vigil Honor members how to activate and empower New Arrowmen.
- Utilize Vigil Honor members as activating tools in the New Arrowmen program
- Develop a shared identity and purpose among Vigil Honor members

### **Required Materials:**

- Activating and Empowering New Arrowmen Presentation
- Presentation materials (screen, projector, etc.)

### **Timeline:**

6:30 - Vigil Honor members gather  
6:35 - Breakfast served  
6:45 - Activating and Empowering New Arrowmen training  
7:00 - Prep. for New Arrowmen breakfast  
7:10 - New Arrowmen gather  
7:20 - Breakfast served  
7:30 - Vigil Honor members lead discussion  
7:55 - Discussions end

## **Worship Program**

The Worship Service is a quick religious program for all Arrowmen to attend. The program consists of simple prayers, call and responses, and songs. This provides an opportunity for Arrowmen to practice the 12th point of the Scout Law, Reverent.

### **Objectives:**

Allow religious Arrowmen to practice their faith.

### **Required Materials:**

Interfaith Worship Service

### **Instructions:**

One youth Arrowmen leads the group through the Service. Have a printed or digital version of the program available.

### **Resources:**

*Worship Program Handout:* <https://oa-bsa.org/resources/conclave>

A handout of the approved religious service to use during conclave.

## **New Arrowman Program - Breakfast**

The New Arrowmen Breakfast Program is geared towards activating youth new Arrowmen through making personal connections and having guided discussions with experienced Vigil Honor members. Vigil Honor members will serve as table guides, having been prepped prior to the breakfast (See Morning Vigil Program). These guides will lead New Arrowmen through discussions and share personal stories.

### **Objectives:**

- Activate New Arrowmen through personal stories and encouraging discussion.
- Build connections between New Arrowmen and Vigil Honor members.

### **Required Materials:**

New Arrowmen Breakfast Prompts

### **Instructions:**

Saturday Breakfast Program (Paired with Morning Vigil Program): New Arrowmen will attend Breakfast apart from the rest of participants. They will be dining at tables accompanied by Vigil Honor members. Vigil Honor members will be leading New Arrowmen through discussions regarding the Order of the Arrow, as well as giving personal stories.

New Arrowmen will be easily identifiable through the use of specially colored wristbands given to them at check-in. These wristbands not only serve as a way to identify New Arrowmen, but also gives the Arrowmen another keepsake from the event.

### **New Arrowmen Discussion Prompt - Breakfast**

Introductions

- Name, Rank/Award, Lodge, Hometown
- What made you want to attend Conclave?
- What part of the OA are you most interested in getting involved in? AIA, Leadership, etc.
- Share personal favorite Conclave experience
  - First Conclave/favorite activity/best memory
- These prompts are for the table guides to share their personal experiences

## **New Arrowmen Program - Dinner**

The New Arrowmen Dinner Program for youth is geared towards activating youth new Arrowmen through making personal connections and having guided discussions with experienced Arrowmen. Youth New Arrowmen will be dining at tables together, accompanied by experienced Arrowmen that will serve as table guides. These guides will consist of Section and National Officers, Lodge Chiefs, Council of Chiefs, and Out of Section Guests.

Those not participating in this dinner program will be at a standard dinner program, ideally in a separate location.

### **Objectives:**

- Activate New Arrowmen through personal stories and encouraging discussion.
- Give Arrowmen a better understanding of the Order of the Arrow through a trivia style game.
- Build connections between New Arrowmen and experienced Arrowmen.

### **Required Materials:**

- Table Guide Prompts
- New Arrowmen Trivia Questions

Once again New Arrowmen will have their own VIP style tables. The Dinner program however will include new table guides. The Dinner table guides will be Lodge Chiefs, Section Officers, other COC members, and special guests (National Officers, Out of Section Guests). The table guides will once again be leading discussion with New Arrowmen and sharing personal stories. Dinner will also include a trivia game, to engage New Arrowmen in OA history and general knowledge to give them a better understanding of the program in a fun way. The trivia will be run by table guides, simply asking the questions and listing all possible answers.

### **Tips/Resources:**

Discussion Prompts:

- What has been your favorite part of Conclave so far?
- How do you plan on getting more involved in the OA?
- What event/activity/person helped you get involved?
- What has motivated you to stay involved?
- Why are you still involved?

NOTE: These prompts are for the table guides to facilitate open and active discussion. Table guides should share their personal experiences by answering these prompt questions for the group as well as the new members at the table.

# Trivia Questions

1. Which principle in the Ordeal Ceremony is the Guide?
  - a. Allowat Sakima
  - b. Nutiket
  - c. Kitchkinet
  - d. Meteu
2. What year was the Order of the Arrow founded?
  - a. 1910
  - b. 1918
  - c. 1912
  - d. 1915
3. Who founded the Order of the Arrow?
  - a. E Urner Goodman
  - b. William D Boyce
  - c. Daniel Carter Beard
  - d. Ernest Thompson Seton
4. What BSA rank do you need to hold to be eligible for the OA?
  - a. Scout
  - b. First Class
  - c. Star
  - d. Eagle
5. What is the highest honor in the Order of the Arrow?
  - a. Ordeal
  - b. Vigil
  - c. Brotherhood
  - d. Double Vigil
6. Which principle in the Ordeal Ceremony is the Medicine Man?
  - a. Allowat Sakima
  - b. Nutiket
  - c. Kitchkinet
  - d. Meteu
7. How many months of membership are required for Brotherhood Eligibility?
  - a. 6 months
  - b. 18 months
  - c. 12 months
  - d. 10 months
8. What does NOAC stand for?
  - a. National Oklahoma Anteaters Convention
  - b. National Otter Assistance Campaign
  - c. National Order of the Arrow Conference
  - d. National Orange Appreciation Council

## **Adult Dinner Program**

The Adult Dinner program is geared towards helping adults find a place in the Order of the Arrow. Adults often find themselves struggling to find a niche in the program, as they have fewer opportunities to participate as the youth. Adult Arrowmen will dine together normally. There will be prompts on the tables designed to start conversations. The goal is to have these conversations as casual and natural as possible. There will be specially placed experienced Arrowmen at dinner tables, ensuring to have some knowledgeable members ready for discussions.

### **Objectives:**

- Activate Adult Arrowmen through personal stories and encouraging discussion.
- Provide guidance on how to explore the different areas of the Order of the Arrow.

### **Required Materials:**

- Roles of Adults
- Prompts for Table Guides

Experienced Adult Arrowmen should follow the prompts by asking the questions and sharing personal stories, but feel free to come up with new topics. Tables guides should engage all Arrowmen at the table, and make sure to have as much participation as possible. After the dinner, the experienced adults should take note of to discuss in the future.

### **Prompts for program:**

- How can you use what you're interested in to benefit the program/lodge?
- What roles can you have in the program as an Adult?

Opportunities for Adults in the OA.



## **Lodge Competitions**

In addition to promoting lodge fellowship and lodge spirit, the lodge competitions at a conclave can serve as model examples on how to cultivate chapter fellowship and chapter spirit. They provide an opportunity to further develop relationships between members of different lodges.

### **Objectives:**

- Boost Overall Conclave Spirit
- Boost Lodge Spirit and Lodge Identity among a lodge's members
- Serve as model programs to increase Chapter spirit, fellowship, and Chapter identity

### **Required Materials:**

- Competition Descriptions
- Score Tracking Sheet
- Leaderboard/Bracket Template

### **Tips/Resources:**

Innovate! Do not do the same competitions each time. Collaborate with other sections and introduce new ideas to the competitions.



## Conclave Administration

A successful conclave needs good administration to go along with the program that it sets. Administration details include scheduling, messaging and brand, COC communication, and finances. The following section is a library of different tools you can use to prepare for and execute your administrative tasks for a conclave. Some of these tools may need to be taken care of ahead of conclave, while others can be handled at the event. Additionally, some may need to be approved by your COC, such as the budget.

### Creating a Section Planbook

A Conclave Planbook is the backbone of your section. It is where an Arrowman can find information on the section and Conclave. It contains resources including the section calendar, budget, and roster as well as the Conclave schedule, training, activities, and competitions information. The planbook should be something that your section can look back to when discussing conclave, and it should be revised year to year. How can your section create a planbook that is useful and effective? Here is a guide on how to organize your conclave planbook.

A planbook should begin with a cover page including conclave year, section name, and section totem followed by a table of contents so the reader can locate desired topics quickly. The beginning of the planbook should refer to the section as a whole. A message from the section chief and goals for the year sets standards and expectations for the year, a tool to measure success, and a curb to follow throughout the year. Next, a calendar for the conclave year should contain all important dates in regard to the section. This includes but is not limited to COC meeting dates and locations, the section retreat, and Conclave. Including the conclave budget in the planbook is also useful so the COC can look back upon it throughout the year. Likewise, a COC roster provides a central location where the section leaders' contact information can be found.

Different sections have different CVC positions and committees with different roles to fit a specific section's needs that could change yearly. Thus, these roles and committees should be clearly defined in duties and purpose and be included in the conclave planbook. In this way, the Arrowmen in these positions or on these committees know what is expected of them and will know their responsibilities ahead of time.

It is important for a section to create a schedule of events for conclave and a schedule of training so why not add it to the planbook as well, publishing it ahead of time? Throughout conclave weekend the section has several events ongoing ranging from a wide variety of activities and competitions including American Indian Affairs. A

conclave planbook should also include rules for competitions and information on activities as well as criteria for conclave awards. In this way, the conclave planbook contains the necessary information for running and judging any event as well as determining winners of awards presented at conclave. Lodges will know the standards ahead of time and can plan accordingly.

Finally, a conclave should include a map of the conclave site and any other resources a section would like to include such as a link to the section website and social media. Optional items consist of a list of past chiefs and advisers, section history, any national event information, lodge information, and any other paperwork associated with conclave that is not already part of conclave.

The purpose of a conclave planbook is to have a centralized source of information regarding conclave and including the section. Much like how lodges have lodge planbooks, sections have conclave planbooks so that members of the section can use it to find a variety of information such as conclave events, who their section chief is, or when the next COC is. It is a resource that the section can reference when planning and preparing for conclave. It can be used to check the budget, see whose responsibility a new event falls under, or measure progress on goals. There are a few examples of a conclave planbook is attached in the support material.

**Resources:** <https://oa-bsa.org/resources/conclave>

*Conclave Backdater*

A planner on action items and goals to complete a successful conclave.

## Section Finances

Although the Order of the Arrow is a not for profit organization with volunteer members, it still needs money to fulfill its yearly functions. Sections are no exception. It is important to follow the Field Operations Guide on how to operate your section's finance. Also, attached to this guide is a budget template for your use.

We realize that sections may have more, less, or different line items in their budget, which is completely fine. There are extra rows in the template for sections that have more in their budget than what is provided. Likewise, feel free to add or delete rows to fit your section's needs. All values should be self-calculated in the template if a quantity and price per item or extended amount is provided.

In order to keep the registration cost for members low, sections need to either find a way keep costs down or find other sources of income. A few ways that sections can keep costs down is by keeping some line items relatively low. Awards and recognitions can rack up large bills depending on what sections use. Ribbons are a good way to keep this cost low since it supports the paper free initiative and is cheaper than plaques and framed certificates. Activities and recreation are generally similar from year to year, thus reusing some items (signs, cones, balls, etc.) from the previous conclave can be another way to reduce costs. A great alternate source of income is the trading post. Candy, soda, and other consumables will always bring in income and section merchandise could add to that. Shirts, jackets, hats, etc. are both a way for sections to make money but also for members to show their section pride and represent it throughout conclave. Of course, sections should not abuse the monopoly they have with the trading post and keep the prices fair.

**Resources:** <https://oa-bsa.org/resources/conclave>

*Budget Template*

Fillable template on how to organize section and conclave finances.

## **Trading Post and Conclave Auction**

Funding on a section level has never been more challenging. Today, sections must focus on more than just bringing people to conclave to pay for expense, they also have to sell their brand. A trading post and conclave auction is used to help the section bring in extra funds over the year and to allow Arrowmen to take the section home with them.

### **Items to Sell:**

- Shirts
- Jackets
- Hats
- Patches
- Candy, Soda, Snacks
- Unique items of the area

### **Online Presence**

An online trading post takes time and dedication to reach its full limits. One way to do online sales is to have volunteers keep track, pack, and ship items bought. Other retailers might work with your section to directly ship to members for a fee. Depending on the item, one or both might be best for your section.

### **Auctions**

Auctions are a great revenue for sections. Some sections set up an eBay account for online/pre-conclave bidding. Most conclaves have an on-site silent and live auction. Members from around the section are willing to donate to their items to the auction if they understand where the funds are going, so make sure to state how the money will benefit the section, and youth in the section.

## Weekend Schedule

A conclave schedule is important because it gives direction to everyone. It allows them to know where to be, when, and what to expect. Below is an example schedule for your use. You can find a fillable one in the support materials.

Friday	
5:00 PM	Registration/Check-In
6:00 PM	Recreation
8:00 PM	The I.D.E.A. Method: Identify
9:00 PM	Friday Night Show
10:00 PM	Friday Night Festival
Saturday	
6:30 AM	Vigil Rededication
7:30 AM	Opening Ceremony
8:00 AM	Breakfast/ Program
9:00 AM	The I.D.E.A. Method: Develop
10:00 AM	The I.D.E.A. Method: Engage
11:00 AM	Workshop/Training
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	Silent Auction/Exhibit
2:00 PM	Lodge Competitions
4:00 PM	Silent Auction
5:00 PM	Worship Program/Closing
6:00 PM	Dinner/Program
7:30 PM	Pre-Show/Gathering
8:00 PM	Saturday Night Show
9:00 PM	Saturday Night Festival
10:00 PM	Patch Auction/Activity
Sunday	
7:30 AM	Opening Ceremony
8:00 AM	Breakfast/Program
9:00 AM	Section Business Meeting
11:00 AM	Closing/Cleanup

Resources: <https://oa-bsa.org/resources/conclave>

*Conclave Schedule*

Fillable template on our recommended conclave schedule.

## **Venue Selection**

Most sections hold their conclaves on a rotation with the lodges in the section. When it comes time to find a location in the section, there are a few things to keep in mind:

### **Location:**

In real estate, location means everything. When planning a conclave, the same can apply. When selecting a conclave location, think of the distance that will need to be traveled by all lodges in the section. Trying to find a central location in the host lodge's area is going to be tough, and some lodges may have to travel more than others. When this is the case, think about providing some travel options such as carpooling or busing for lodges with a farther trek.

### **Space:**

When considering a location, make sure to keep in mind how much space you will need. Too much space and the conclave can feel spread out, while not enough space and the conclave will feel cramped. Both of these are issues when it comes to bringing excitement to a conclave.

### **Accommodations:**

Today it's extremely important to make sure you can provide accommodations for the members attending. This includes a shower, bathroom, lodging, and recreation space for youth, adults, males and females. While you might not be able to get every piece perfect, having the ability to provide will draw more people to your conclave.



## **Meals and Snacks**

Food is one of, if not the most, important feature of a conclave. Normally there is 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners, and 2 cracker barrels you will have at your conclave. Making your meals diverse and cost effective is a hard task.

### **Local Food**

One section had their conclave on a Native American reservation, the section leadership team talked with the local tribe and were able to schedule a bison feast for dinner on Saturday. Having something local to dine on at your conclave is something that can be cost effective, and unique, giving the participants something to remember.

### **Dietary Restrictions**

When deciding on what to eat, make sure to plan a second menu for those with dietary restrictions. To find out who has restrictions, ask for comments during your registration. These restrictions can include a multitude of things, and you need to be able to cater to each person.



# Conclave Theme Kit

A properly focused and applied conclave message and conclave theme will deliver an impactful experience to all participants. When hosting a Conclave, how you utilize a conclave message and conclave theme will define the success of the event. Conclave messages have a great importance and impact and inspire the Arrowmen around a central cause or goal. Conclave themes can elevate the fun, engage participants, and can define the memory of the event. Used together, a message and theme can be very powerful tools in making your conclave a hit. However, where most fall short, is a lack of understanding of the two and can lead to a lack of development of either or both the message and theme. Therefore, in order to effectively utilize both the conclave message and theme, it's important that both you and your team understand each one and its role.

## **The Message | Important, Purposeful, Motivating**

The conclave message, first and foremost, presents the opportunity to impact and inspire Arrowmen. In order to take full advantage of this opportunity, a fully developed conclave message contains 3 vital elements:

### **1. The conclave message is presented as a call to action.**

A conclave message should inspire Arrowmen to act. Without a call to action, Arrowmen will begin to question the purpose of the message. The message should be a request or challenge, not commentary or information. Challenges inspire. Lectures do not.

### **2. The conclave message is relevant to all.**

The purpose of a conclave message is to impact, but it will be difficult to impact those whom the message does not apply to. For example, if your message is about youth leading change, the message will be relevant to all youth Arrowmen, but it will not resonate with all adult Arrowmen. This isolates that group instead of impacting and inspiring them to participate in your purpose. The above message could be broadened to leading or impacting change and present opportunities for both youth and adults to impact change.

### **3. The conclave message is easily understood, clear, and concise.**

If participants spend more time trying to decipher the message, that allows less time for them to get inspired by the message. It is for this reason that a message should be easily understood and provide one unambiguous meaning.

It is important to note, developing the message first is essential. The conclave message ultimately comes from the purpose and goal of the event, and because of this it is the more important of the two. Developing the theme first, can lead to molding the message around the theme, which can lead to a distancing from your original goals and purpose.

What do you want each Arrowman to know, do, or feel when they leave this conclave? What is your call to action?

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*Ex. 1 'We want each Arrowman to feel energized and motivated to actively participate within their chapter, encourage activation among other chapter members, and work to develop a stronger chapter.'*

How can you make this event impactful on your section and lodges?

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At this point, you've now defined your event's purpose, your definition of success, and developed the core of your conclave message. Once the core of the message has been developed, the theme can be chosen.

After defining the purpose and phrasing of a conclave message, the next step is effective integration. Without effective integration and delivery of a conclave message, the quality of the message of itself will not matter. In order to effectively integrate and develop, the following steps should be followed:

### **1. Integrate Mindfully**

Including the message in the program just to include it will NOT effectively deliver your message. Every time the message is integrated into the conclave program, it should be considered why the message is being delivered through that specific aspect of the program. For example, if after each activity a participant is presented with a messaging piece, the message will lose its meaning in the reciprocation. The message should be integrated mindfully and when a participant is able to present their full attention on it. Allow opportunities, like keynotes and group discussions, where participants can put their focus on the message, even if they aren't explicitly aware that are what they are doing. Continual repetition of the message, by itself, will not help you deliver the conclave message.

## **2. Integrate the message with the weekend program**

If the conclave message is only presented at one time (e.g. during the evening or closing show) it allows the message to be an isolated incident. By presenting the conclave message or rather aspects of the message over a longer period of time (e.g. Friday evening through Sunday morning) the message is more likely to leave a larger imprint on each Arrowman. In fact, presenting the message prior to the event, such as a thought-provoking question in an email or social media post, or after the event, through a follow up email or a post-conclave chapter led program, will leave the Arrowmen more impacted. This does not necessarily mean the depth of the message and the call to action should be continuously presented. Save the call to action reveal for at conclave and then the call to action can be readdressed after the event. Larger time frame equals larger impact.

## **3. Participants should depart conclave with the message on their minds.**

Although the climax of the message delivery may occur at different times (Saturday Afternoon/Evening or Sunday Morning) it is important that all participants leave with a call to action on their mind. A night of sleep after a tiresome day is a fantastic opportunity for participants to forget about the call to action, therefore not presenting the conclave message during pre-departure program undermines the message.

This document will provide examples of when and how to integrate and deliver the theme in meaningful, impactful ways.

## **The Theme | Fun, Engaging, Memorable**

If conclave was a pancake, and the message was the batter, full of meaning and purpose, then the theme would be sprinkles, chocolate chips, bananas, syrup, and whipped cream that you add. While the conclave message is the important inspiration and the opportunity to impact change, the conclave theme is the flavor of the event. It is your opportunity to get creative.

Go crazy, throw on some chocolate AND strawberry syrup, maybe even a cherry on top. The batter of conclave will sustain the Arrowmen, and reenergize them around a challenge, but what you throw on the pancake is what will keep them coming back to get more and more pancakes. A conclave theme should be fun, it should be engaging, it should be memorable, and even goofy at times. It has the potential to be the part of the event that defines how a participant remembers conclave.

When selecting a conclave theme, keep the following in mind:

### **1. A conclave theme should be fun**

Remember, this is the FLAVOR of the event. Just as nobody wants peas in their pancakes, nobody wants to go to a conclave where the theme is high school. Poll your membership and select something that will interest them. Don't be afraid to stray from realism to generate a theme. Maybe the best theme for your membership is a Rainbow Unicorn Apocalypse. Go with it. Sounds like a pancake I would want to try!

### **2. A conclave theme should be engaging.**

Along with being fun, a conclave theme should provide each member with the opportunity to engage with the theme. This means don't select a hyper-specific theme (e.g. Dungeons and Dragons, Magic, Pokémon) that only engages some Arrowmen. Do your best to select a theme that can be relevant and enticing to all participants.

### **3. Be wary of real-world plots**

Conclave themes based off real books or movies, not only provide legal limitations, but can be more detrimental by limiting the creative process. Try choosing a broader theme that allows more creativity, then selecting one that has a pre-written plot (e.g. Space Exploration vs. Star Wars/Star Trek).

### **4. A conclave theme is NOT dependent on the conclave message**

The conclave message and the conclave theme are two independent aspects that have some overlap, but they are fundamentally different. The conclave message has a focus on purpose. A conclave theme has a focus on providing a fun experience. Not drawing a distinction between the two, can develop into a lack of clarity perceived by the participants. This means you lose the purpose of both the theme and message.

Once a conclave theme has been chosen, then the fun begins, integrating the theme. The best piece of advice for integrating your theme, is as follows:

### **Don't let your conclave be a conclave.**

One of the sections in the nation decided that their conclave theme was going to be space exploration, that's when our conclave planning stopped. From that point forward, they began planning a voyage across the universe. They didn't have Arrowmen attending, they had Arrownavts. The goal wasn't theme integration, it was total theme immersion. A conclave theme shouldn't be thought of as an aspect of the event, but rather an experience you are taking each participant through.

An excellent example of a theme immersion experience is an escape room. Participants pay not just to solve puzzles, but to be immersed in a scenario where they are escaping a dungeon or solving a crime. Making your conclave a completely theme immersive event adds a powerful flare to participant's perception of the event. Additionally, getting your conclave leadership excited about the themed experience, both during the planning and on-site, can keep planning fun and translate into more on-site theme engagement.

The following is a list of 8 ways you can further immerse your theme:

1. Change position titles (e.g. Arrownavts/Arrowmen)
2. Change activity names (e.g. Spaceball/Kickball)
3. Change activity locations (not a lodge's camp site, but Arrownavt Quarters)
4. Have themed cracker-barrels
5. Play themed music
6. Use theme graphics and fonts in your promotions
7. Center all shows around your theme
8. Use theme-based costuming for the officers, guests, and Council of Chiefs members

To optimize your section's ability to incorporate the theme, consider appointing someone to ensure that each program element has a component of the theme.

The following section is a library of different programs you can use to prepare for and execute your conclave. Some of them may need to be initiated or taken care of ahead of the conclave, while others can be handled at the event. Additionally, some may need to be approved by your council of chiefs, such as the budget.





## Communications Kit

Any good Conclave isn't put on by a one-man army. Instead, a Council of Chiefs spends months putting together the best experience possible. Each Conclave Vice Chief on the COC is responsible for some portion of the Conclave, but each area of the Conclave touches every other. It is up to the Section Chief to ensure that communication remains open, regular, and worthwhile, in order to provide the best, most cohesive experience possible for event attendees.

Members and advisers of the Council of Chiefs are busy, high-performing Arrowmen, often with several large time commitments in and out of Scouting. Therefore, when communicating with the COC, the overarching principle should be **regular, succinct communication**. Long, complex emails to entire groups are very often necessary to give major updates or explain unexpected obstacles. However, with that said, shorter, more frequent contact helps to keep everyone informed and engaged without overwhelming amounts of information all at once.

### *Which platform is best?*

In Scouting, as in business, email is king. This is true for several reasons; first, everyone has one. Second, old messages are stored until actively deleted by the user - this means that each COC member can easily access that now-relevant email from two months ago with minimal effort. Emails are easily sent to large groups all at once and give Arrowmen practice in writing formal communications.

Email is decidedly the best communication platform for sending a message to an entire group. However, individual communication requires a much higher degree of awareness of each individual. For example; an adviser may have their email open on a second monitor during their entire workday, but only check their Facebook Messenger notifications once or twice a month. On the other hand, a youth may consistently respond to text messages in 10 minutes or less, but have a problem remembering to check their email or Slack account.

The best way to have regular, valuable, and individual communication is just that: individual. At the start of the Conclave planning process, ask each member of the COC to give their best method of contacting them. Record this in a central location alongside each members' contact information; that way, when you go to look for someone's information, you already know which method works best for them. This creates faster responses and happier members of the COC, leading to a better Conclave for everyone.

### *How often should communication occur?*

In-person meetings of the COC are essential to putting on a good Conclave. However, it simply isn't feasible to have a monthly meeting to go over everyone's progress and pass along updates. Section Chiefs must instead figure out how often they want to pass along information to the entire group, and in what way.

Like many other issues discussed in this guide, this is best found through trial and error. Here, the section adviser is a valuable resource. They have likely been around the COC for a number of years and have seen different chiefs try their hand at this method or that. At the end of the day, though, the final decision does lie with the chief. Feedback from CVCs and advisers will also help to make this decision; if CVCs feel as though they are making regular, significant progress (and the section chief agrees), communication may consist only of a few check-ins and calls prior to the Conclave. However, if there are issues in making progress or a CVC would prefer it, the section chief has the option to be in much more regular contact with them - perhaps as often as a call once a week. Each CVC and adviser are different, and some will require much more regular, intensive communication than others.

It's important to remember, though, that even within this variance there must still be consistency. It's to the benefit of everyone involved for the section chief to contact each member of the planning team, regardless of office, on a consistent schedule. This way, those small questions or problems that never seem to be addressed anywhere else have a time and place to be answered and solved. This contact can be as casual or involved as works; for example, anything from a simple text message to a scheduled call or meeting will work.

### ***A Note on Youth Protection***

The Conclave planning team will often be composed of a diverse group of Scouts and Scouters. It's critical that in all communication youth protection policies are followed. This means that an email from an adult to a youth is copied (or sent directly to) another adult; one-on-one meetings between adults and youth don't occur in private; and other rules, as required. Work with the section adviser and section staff adviser to ensure that the most current youth protection rules and policies are being followed in all communications pertaining to the section. While many of the practices in section communication are up for debate, and there is no definite best answer, following youth protection is required and non-negotiable in all instances.

## **Conclave Brand and Identity**

### ***Section Brand***

A brand helps to publicly define the most important features of an organization. By utilizing one unified voice, the Arrowmen of the section can better understand what the Section is, what it does, and how Conclave can help them to better serve their units, chapters, and lodges.

### ***Visual Design***

Aesthetically pleasing designs and promotions draw more attention for the simple reason that they are more pleasant to look at. This doesn't go to say that all promotions should aim for aesthetic values above all; rather, needed content should be promoted in a way that's both informative and visually pleasing. These elements also help to create a unified identity for the Section. In this way, promotions can be utilized by different lodges and on different platforms; with one unified visual identity, any Arrowman who has previously seen and been impacted by a section promotion will again recognize the work of the section, and have their thoughts called back to Conclave and their excitement for this year's event.

Having an organizational voice is critical for an organizational unit such as the section. As an organizational level between the lodge - a smaller, more local level - and the larger region, the section also carries with it a professional voice and tone in public marketing. The audience for section promotions and materials isn't just limited to Arrowmen; families, parents, and unit leaders will also look at section materials and pass their own judgement about the section based on the materials available to them.

While creating content with a unit leader in mind may seem daunting, it is also an opportunity to recruit more youth to attend the Conclave. If materials are professional, aesthetically pleasing, and communicate all relevant information, a unit leader may be impressed and serve as an advocate for the section and for the Conclave itself. On the other hand, scarce information and confusing graphics will likely discourage a unit leader from promoting the Conclave to the youth in their unit. If information isn't easily understood and accepted by all, how can it be expected that the information will be passed along?

### ***Creating a Conclave Brand***

Each year, the section must face one of its many perennial struggles: deciding on a theme for the year's Conclave. For more information on assembling this theme, see the theme section above. Once each committee has created a vision of the theme in their work, what's the next step? For those in charge of promoting the Conclave, a Conclave Brand needs to be developed and distributed as soon as possible.

A Conclave Brand isn't as extensive as the Section Brand discussed above. Rather, imagine promotions highlighting the theme and specific activities of the event in the weeks and months leading up to the Conclave. Any promotion that couldn't be copy-pasted from one year into the next is part of the Conclave Brand. This brand matters because it addresses that all-important question: what's new this year? How will Conclave this year be a different experience from the one I attended this time last year? A Conclave Brand serves as the face of these changes by communicating, visually and in written materials, that this Conclave is distinct and worthwhile.

### ***How to Create a Conclave Brand***

The greatest assets of any section are its members. When creating a Conclave Brand, remember that: look for members with interest and willingness to learn. Find those with needed skills and background, such as knowledge of graphic design and promotion, but also remember that anyone can be trained. Pull together those who are passionate about the Conclave and what it has to offer and give them guidance in promoting the specific benefits and ideas of the Conclave.

For a few fantastic examples, look at the brands of the following lodges and sections: [Section W-3N](#), [Section SR-7A](#), [Tsisqan Lodge](#), and others.

#### **Resources:**

*Order of the Arrow Branding*: <https://oa-bsa.org/resources/branding>  
Provides information and resources on OA National Branding standards.

# Guide to Conclave Promotions

## *Introduction*

A Section can spend an entire year working hard to put on the perfect Conclave for Arrowmen, bringing together years of experience and trial-and-error into an experience that's truly unforgettable. However, if no one is told when and where the event is, all of that effort will have been for nothing. While this is a rather extreme example, it remains true that Sections need to effectively market and promote their Conclave in order to excite Arrowmen to attend and bring their friends.

## *Paper Mail: Is it Worth It?*

In formal event planning, a paper invitation is an absolute must. Careful attention goes into the color, format, styling, and RSVP requirements of the invitation, portraying exactly the kind of event and formality expected. While a Conclave is (at least typically) far removed from such expectations, it still remains a valid question of whether or not sections should send out a paper invitation or reminder about the Conclave.

There is no definitive yes-or-no answer to this question. In some Sections, a paper mailer may be particularly effective in exciting Arrowmen; a newly inducted member may light up upon receiving a promo postcard in the mail, promptly hanging it on the refrigerator as a reminder to register the moment they're able. On the other hand, a mailer may be fruitless if sheer distance and cost keep Arrowmen who would otherwise attend away from the site on the weekend of Conclave. In this case, a mailer would serve relatively little purpose here because the issue is simple geography, not a lack of information or anticipation.

## *In-Person Promotions and Promotional Materials*

No section could exist without the support of its lodges, and lodges receive key support from the sections they form part of. Unsurprisingly, this relationship extends to promotions as well. Sections across the country have found success in providing lodges with ready-made promotional materials, asking only that the lodges repost or share them on their own social media platforms. Many other sections print a banner or provide flyers to lodges. Note: these sections don't send an image file or PDF, each ready to print. Instead, they do the printing themselves and give lodges the actual, physical promotional material. This material then ends up with the Lodge Adviser or Chief, and it's shocking how often this material will appear as a reminder of Conclave at local lodge events.

Lodges and sections share wonderful, mutually beneficial relationships: it's in the best interest of any Section Chief to use this relationship for the benefit of their Conclave.

## ***Marketing Conclave Content***

“Conclave is a great time! Hang out with friends, watch awesome shows, and eat great food! Register today!”

“Conclave is a great time! Spend time with your fellow Arrowmen, watch the National Chief sing karaoke live on stage, and compete with your friends in the newly re-designed Lodge Games!”

In all event marketing, specificity is key. Everything in the first pitch could be accomplished at either a national Jamboree or at a Conclave; in the second, though, participants have a much more precise idea of what they can expect at Conclave this year.

Among all sections and all Arrowmen, a common complaint emerges: Conclave is the same every year. Traditions stagnate and excitement turns to drudgery as old ideas are brought up as new, and the key, small changes from year to year go unnoticed by the larger audience. Perhaps the easiest way to remedy this comes in the marketing of the event itself. Those planning and marketing Conclave know better than anyone what will be happening, and (most likely) how the weekend has changed. In order to excite Arrowmen, remember to keep promotions specific and unique. Why will this Conclave be one you don't want to miss? What can participants look forward to when they wake up on Saturday morning? Remember to promote these elements, and promotions can't go wrong.

For ideas as to how specifically to do this, reflect on examples found both in and out of Scouting. How does the local high school market school events to the student body? How do community organizers get uninterested community members to spend their Saturday traveling to and enjoying their event?

## ***What Promotions Work?***

Section SR-7A hosts the largest Conclave in the country, routinely hosting over 1,500 Arrowmen at one Conclave. The Section Chief and Officers of SR-7A have regularly filmed a music video that promotes this Conclave while parodying a popular song. See: [2019](#), [2017](#), [2015](#).

This promotion is time- and labor-intensive, involving coordinating many individual schedules, booking the facility, editing, scriptwriting, and onsite filming, among other elements. However, it's also a promotion that's likely to be widely shared and remembered, and the investment of time and energy may be worth it.

Determining which promotions work and which don't will vary from Section to Section. Some sections, such as [Section W-1S](#), have found that the time and effort they put into social media promotions year-round yields results that merit their investment. Other sections may find that in-person promotions at events are more

effective and choose to spend their time developing resources to facilitate these promotions. The best tool to recognize what does and doesn't work in your Section is through feedback - consider polling Conclave attendees and figure out which promotions reached them, or polling Arrowmen online in the months prior to establish which communication medium they check most often.

