

Extracted from...

**AIDS
TO
SCOUTMASTERSHIP**

**A Guidebook For Scoutmasters
On The Theory of Scout Training**

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THE PATROL SYSTEM

The Patrol System is the one essential feature in which Scout training differs from that of all other organizations, and where the System is properly applied, it is absolutely bound to bring success. It cannot help itself!

The formation of the boys into Patrols of from six to eight and training them as separate units each under its own responsible leader is the key to a good Troop.

The Patrol is the unit of Scouting always, whether for work or for play, for discipline or for duty. An invaluable step in character training is to put responsibility on to the individual. This is immediately gained in appointing a Patrol Leader to responsible command of his Patrol. It is up to him to take hold of and to develop the qualities of each boy in his Patrol. It sounds like a big order, but in practice it works. Then, through emulation and competition between Patrols, you produce a Patrol spirit which is eminently satisfactory, since it raises the tone among the boys and develops a higher standard of efficiency all round. Each boy in the Patrol realizes that he is in himself a responsible unit and that the honor of his group depends in some degree on his own ability in playing the game.

Values of the Patrol System

It is important that the Scoutmaster recognize the extraordinary value, which he can get out of the Patrol System. It is the best guarantee for permanent vitality and success for the Troop. It takes a great deal of minor routine work off the shoulders of the Scoutmaster.

But first and foremost: The Patrol is the character school for the individual. To the Patrol Leader it gives practice in Responsibility and in the qualities of Leadership. To the Scouts it gives subordination of self to the interests of the whole, the elements of self-denial and self-control involved in the team spirit of cooperation and good comradeship. But to get first-class results from this system you have to give the boy leaders real free-handed responsibility if you only give partial responsibility you will only get partial results. The main object is not so much saving the Scoutmaster trouble as to give responsibility to the boy, since this is the very best of all means for developing character. The Scoutmaster who hopes for success must not only study what is written about the Patrol System and its methods, but must put into practice the suggestions he reads. It is his Patrol Leaders and Scouts gain the doing of things that is so important, and only by constant trial can experience. The more he gives them to do, the more will they respond, the more strength and character will they achieve.