

# SEA SCOUTING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Many years of experience in Sea Scouting have shown that good leadership is a result of the careful application of 11 skills that any Ship petty officer can learn to use. With practice, these skills can become a part of the adults' or youth officers' leadership style and will prove helpful in Sea Scouting and all other leadership situations.

## Understanding and Meeting the Needs of the Ship Members

Through conversation and informal surveys of Ship members try to find out:

- \* Why they join.
- \* What they expect from the Ship's program.
- \* What they would like to see the Ship do.
- \* What their major interests are.
- \* What their plans for the future are.

## Knowing and Using the Resources of the Group

- \* Keep the Ship's program capability inventory up to date and use it in planning.
- \* Understand the purpose and resources of your chartered organization.
- \* Survey the members' parents; include them in your program capability Inventory.
- \* Survey the Ship members to determine skills, interests, and resources.

## Communicating

To improve your skills in *getting* information:

- \* Pay attention and listen carefully.
- \* Make notes and sketches.
- \* Ask questions and repeat your understanding of what was said.

To improve your skills in *giving* information:

- \* Be sure others are listening before you speak.
- \* Speak slowly and clearly.
- \* Draw diagrams, if needed. Ask those receiving information to make notes.
- \* Have the listeners repeat their understanding of what was said. Encourage questions.

## Planning

The best procedure for planning an activity is:

- \* Consider the task and objective. What do you want to accomplish? What are the desired outcomes?
- \* Consider the resources. Who can help? Where can you get equipment, transportation, or facilities?
- \* Consider the alternatives.
- \* Reach a decision.
- \* Write it down and review it with your Ship.
- \* Execute the plan.

## **Controlling**

When working with Ship members, do the following:

- \* Continually observe the group. Know what is happening and the attitude of the group.
- \* Make your instructions clear and pertinent.
- \* Pitch in and help when necessary.
- \* Quickly deal with disruption. Guide the Ship toward self-discipline.

## **Evaluating**

After any event or activity, ask these questions:

- \* Did the members like it?
- \* Were the objectives reached? The task accomplished?
- \* Would the Ship do it again?
- \* Did the Ship members learn from or improve themselves by participating in the event?
- \* Were the objectives of your Ship, its chartered organization, and Sea Scouting met?

## **Setting the Example**

- \* As a leader you have to live up to the standards of the Ship and Sea Scouting. The Ship elected you with this in mind.
- \* Actions speak louder than your words. Your attitude and behavior are a great influence on your Ship.
- \* If you were a Ship member, how would you expect your leaders to behave?

## **Sharing Leadership**

Good leadership will produce the following results:

- \* A spirit of cooperation and teamwork.
- \* A feeling that Ship members are needed and wanted.

Try using some or all of the styles of leadership listed below -- from the least to the most desirable:

- \* Telling (least desirable)
- \* Persuading
- \* Consulting
- \* Delegating
- \* Joining (most desirable)

# Counseling

A good leader takes an interest in and tries to develop the leadership skills of individual members. You also will have to counsel disruptive members and work to involve apathetic ones.

How to counsel:

- \* Seek a private location.
- \* Give the person your undivided attention.
- \* Make him or her feel at ease.
- \* Listen -- encourage him or her to talk about the problem.
- \* Try to understand what is being said. Ask questions to clarify points.
- \* Do not offer advice. He or she may reject your suggestions until the problem is fully discussed.
- \* Encourage him or her to discuss alternatives.
- \* Instead of advice, offer additional information that may be helpful.
- \* Ask what he or she thinks should be done. The person with the problem often may have the solution without knowing it.
- \* Decide on a plan -- perhaps the problem could be solved one step at a time.

## Representing the Ship

You were elected by your Ship to make decisions on their behalf and represent their interests. You will need to:

- \* Solicit and analyze Ship members' views.
- \* Attempt to represent these views within the framework of the objectives of the Ship, chartered organization and Sea Scouting.

Where do you represent your Ship?

Advisor:

Ship Committee  
Chartered Organization  
Advisors' meetings

Boatswain:

Quarterdeck Meetings  
YOA Meetings  
Planning Conferences

Ship Officers should evaluate their own abilities in each of these areas. Keep them in mind as you begin to counsel and train your Ship Youth Officers.

## Managing Learning

Managing learning is a way of teaching that deeply involves the Sea Scouts in the learning experience. The techniques are to:

- \* Help the person discover what he or she already knows. The Sea Scout will feel good about this.
- \* Help the person discover what he or she needs to know.
- \* Encourage the person to relearn job skills.
- \* Teach the subject or skill using a variety of methods.
- \* Provide opportunities for Ship members to try out the new knowledge or skill.
- \* Evaluate. See if the learner learned and the teacher taught.