

Youth Commissioner



**National Youth Network
Scouts Canada**

Introduction

So, you're a youth representative for Scouts Canada! Congratulations and welcome aboard! Through your term as a youth representative, you can have an enormous impact as a member of the network. By reading this section, you will hopefully be more prepared, knowledgeable and ready to have that impact during your term.

Being a youth representative brings with it a number of responsibilities, as you are probably already well aware. This section is meant to help you deal with all of your responsibilities, whichever youth representation position you are filling. Use this section as a resource as you perform all your important tasks.

Qualities of a Youth Commissioner

Youth Commissioners should have the potential to attain the following attitudes, skills and knowledge.

Attitude	Skills	Knowledge
Positive	Communication	Youth Network Structures
Open Minded	Learning	Scouting Structures
Visionary	Organizing	Scouting Sections
Dedicated	Leadership	Scouting History
Self Motivated	Teamwork	General Meeting Structure

"The Moon Is Round!"

1. A leader should draw a big happy face on a blackboard when reciting the following poem:
"Ahem...(clearing throat) The moon is round as round can be, Two eyes, a nose And a mouth has he."
2. The leader then asks the group members to try and recite it back. The trick is the "Ahem". If someone does catch on, they should keep it to themselves.

Pass The Cosmic Zoom!

1. Everyone is to sit on the floor in a circle and join hands around the circle.
2. One person squeezes a cosmic zoom around the circle in the form of a gentle hand squeeze.
3. Members should watch the zoom being sent around the room.
4. You can also do this by sending two messages at the same time in opposite directions, or asking everyone to close their eyes.

Zip-Zap-Zop

1. Participants stand in a circle facing in with hands clasped like a gun.
2. One person starts by pointing at another and saying "ZIP."
3. That player must quickly respond by pointing at somebody and saying "ZAP."
4. The third person responds with "ZOP," and so on.
5. When a person makes a mistake they leave; the group continues until only 1 is left.

Hints for Beginners

Human Knot!

1. Stand in a circle and have everyone reach into the middle, grabbing hold of two different people's hands.
2. Working together as a team, try to untangle the big knot and return to the original circle while still holding hands.

Ping Pong!

1. This can be done with any number of people, just go around the circle.
2. The object is to count as high as you can while following the rules:
 - a) If you get to a number that is divisible by 3 or has 3 in it you say PING
 - b) If you get to a number that is divisible by 5 or has 5 in it you say PONG
 - c) If you get to a number that is both a) and c), you say PING PONG.
3. For a twist, change the numbers from 3 and 5, to 2 and 10, 4 and 5, etc...

Rubber Bullets!

1. Everyone sits in a circle.
2. The leader fires an imaginary gun containing rubber bullets which bounce and ricochet all over the room. The leader watches the invisible rubber bullet as it bounces off the walls.
3. The leader then asks "Who did the rubber bullet hit?"
4. The first person to speak is who the bullet hit, but don't tell the group members that!
5. When a member figures out the pattern, tell him/her to keep the secret, and invite him/her to shoot rubber bullets for a while.

When starting in your new position, these are a few things you can do to help ease your way in.

Learn From Someone Else's Experience: Schedule a meeting with the previous person who occupied your position to ask them for tips and suggestions.

Be Organized: Get an Agenda!!! Any kind of planner or notebook that includes plenty of calendar space, blank sheets for "to do" lists, space for telephone numbers and addresses and anything else you may need, will do.

Warning: Your agenda could become your most valuable tool as youth representative.

Things To Do: During especially busy times, keep a "to-do" list. Prioritize your list and use it as a guide for what has to be done. *P.S. Don't forget to delegate!!!*

Keep Everything: Keep copies of all of the documents that you receive pertaining to your network, or tasks on the network. You may find these documents useful later in your term.

Relations

The following are two things that should guide you throughout your term:

Promote Your Goal: Let people know what you are doing. A good way to do this is to put articles in to National, Council, or Area Newsletters. Let people know how you can help them and how they can help you.

Represent Youth Well: As a Youth Representative keep in mind that you are representing a body of youth.

When you are a part of a network, you will be accountable to either National, Council, Area, and sometimes more than one of these. The key to working with your particular Council is communication. There are a few things which you must remember when dealing with your council.

- You are accountable to them, thus, you should respect them.
- Frequent correspondence with the Key 3 of the council will ensure that you know about any upcoming projects. Keep the lines of communication between you and your council open at all times. You will need their support, and they will need yours.
- At all meetings of the network which you are working on, do not be afraid to speak up. You are a full member of that network, so make your opinion heard!
- Find all the information you can pertaining to any network project or event. The more you know about a topic, the better you will be able to provide input into it.

Delegates Diary!

1. Give each delegate a sheet of paper and writing utensil.
2. Get each delegate to find a private spot where no one will be able to see what they are writing.
3. Tell the delegates to write down their feelings at this point, before they came to the conference, what they expect to gain from the conference and anything else they want to add. This will preferably be done in essay format rather than question-answer format. Assure the delegates that no one besides themselves will read these letters, which will be returned at the end of the conference.
4. Once the letters are completed, ask the delegates to fold their papers in half and write their name on the outside of the sheet.
5. Have the delegates put their page in a brown envelope. Let the delegates see you seal the envelope.
6. Discourage delegates from discussing their answers and move on.
7. At the end of the conference, return the letters, and watch the delegates laugh, cry, or think about what they wrote.

The Toilet Paper Game!

1. One roll of toilet paper is needed for this game.
2. Pass a roll of toilet paper around the circle. Tell each member to take all the squares they feel they will need for a camp, hike, etc.
3. Once everyone has some toilet paper, tell them that for each section of toilet paper they have taken, they must tell one thing about themselves. Keep going until all the toilet paper squares are gone, or it's getting boring.
4. If your group is familiar with this game, create an interesting twist by replacing the toilet paper with another object. If you are in a meeting, a good trick is to use paper clips, pens, and other items that might be useful during the meeting.

The Animal Game!

1. Have the group sit in a circle on the floor.
2. Assign each person a different animal and an action that best represents that animal.
3. To start, the first person does their own sign, then the sign of someone else in the group. Then that person does their sign and someone else's and so on until someone messes up.
4. When someone makes a mistake, they must return to the beginning of the circle, and everyone in the circle below him/her move up a position and animal. In other words, everyone up to the person who had to return to the beginning, must become the animal of the person they are replacing.
5. Have a practice round or two until everyone catches on. As the group gets better at it, speed the game up.

Name Association!

1. First person in circle says, "Hi! My name is...and I like to...!" (Note, the thing that the person likes should start with the same sound as the person's name.)
2. The next person in the circle does the same, then repeats the last person's.
3. The third person says their own then the second person's then the first person's, etc.
4. For an added twist: have everyone do an action for each thing.

Partner Introductions!

1. Split into partners.
2. Each person spends a few minutes introducing themselves, their interests, etc.
3. Group is reformed and everyone must introduce their partner, their interest, etc.

Tips for Leading a Team

When leading your network/team remember to:

Start Early: To accomplish everything you want to is a difficult, but not impossible task. The secret: Start early... the earlier the better! Getting a head start will make life much easier for you throughout your year on the network.

Evaluate: Evaluate your network's progress! Play the devil's advocate and determine whether the network has been fulfilling its role.

Communicate: Keep in contact with the members of your network. The work that you get done at the meetings is just a small part of the work which must be done, so in order to complete all tasks, communication is essential.

Define Tasks: Define each person's role on your network, each with a specific job description. Make a "to-do" list for each person at the end of each meeting.

Set Goals: Make a clear set of goals for the network, which will set its direction and define the events that will determine its progress towards reaching these goals. It is important to review these goals frequently.

Finish the Year Well: While it is sometimes a good idea to finish the year with a big event, recognize that sometimes this is not possible. The main goal, however, in finishing the year, is to make sure that everyone is satisfied with the year's work put in by the network. The end of the year is an excellent time to wrap-up all the projects and hold a self-evaluation of the accomplishments of the network.

Youth Forums

One of the most common and most important tasks of a youth representative is holding Youth Forums. Youth Forums are your means of brainstorming for ideas, working on large projects, and obtaining input from a large group of people. Each Forum has a different structure, but they all have a shared goal to generate ideas and work on projects.

What is the purpose of a Youth Forum?

- Let youth participate in decision-making.
- Provide an opportunity for members to discuss issues of interest to them and to make recommendations on these issues.
- Provide an opportunity for members to learn the skills necessary to take part in decision-making in the movement.

Characteristics of a Youth Forum:

- It is a gathering of young people with different scouting backgrounds who come from different community groups.
- The participants are, ideally, chosen democratically by other young people from their area.
- The event is organised and conducted by the young people themselves.

Making a Youth Forum a success starts long before the Forum actually begins. As the leader, you are responsible for informing everyone about the meeting, its location, time, and other details. You are also responsible for making an agenda. You may be the leader, but the Forum belongs to its participants, so use their ideas when

Ice Breakers

You know those awkward introductory minutes of a meeting, when no one knows anyone else's name, or the final few minutes of a workshop, when you have time to kill? These unscheduled moments can be uncomfortable and awkward.

Here are some icebreakers and games that will help wile away those minutes.

Shake!

1. Group members walk around.
2. The leader calls out a body part (start with hands).
3. Each member introduces themselves to another person and shakes hands or feet or ...
4. Continue using as many body parts as you can think of (but keep it clean!)

Toss a Name!

1. Form a circle.
2. Using a ball, toss it to anyone in the circle saying: "Catch (person's name)!"
3. Modify the game by having the receiver of the toss say: "Thanks (thrower's name)!"

Rhythm Circle!

1. Everyone in the group creates a slap-slap-clap-clap-snap-snap rhythm.
2. On the first snap say your name. On the second snap say someone else's. They in turn, on snaps, say their name, then someone else's, and so on...

2. Let more than one person answer a question.

"What else do the rest of you see?"

"What can others add to that?"

3. Acknowledge answers.

Use different types of communication to affirm answers. Ex. eye contact, smiling, nodding, "Yes", "Right", "That's a good point", etc.

4. Include everyone.

One reason for working in a group is to get input from the *group*. Make sure that everyone gets a chance to give their input.

5. Keep everyone headed in the right direction.

Occasionally provide a summary statement that reminds people of what has been said with regard to the question at hand. When someone veers off path, gently guide them back. Repeat the question or ask "Does anyone have anything else to say about this question?"

6. Pace the questions.

There is never enough time for everyone to give an adequate answer to all questions. That's where your guidance comes in. Don't spend too much time on one question. When time runs short, skip the less important questions and stick to the important issues.

making the agenda. Once at the meeting, stick to your agenda and make sure that each item is brought to a decisive close with a vote, consensus, or some other form of agreement. And don't forget to have fun!

Tips For a Fun Forum

THEME:

Give your Forum a theme! A good theme will help give a focus and a coherence to the Forum's deliberations. The theme must be closely related to the subjects to be discussed during the Forum, and not an "empty" slogan that carries no substantial meaning. If membership is going to be the big topic of discussion, then the theme might be a question like "Membership Increase... how do we do it?" By the end of the Forum, the participants should feel that they understand the importance of the theme, and are ready to go back home to work on projects that will fulfill the theme's objectives.

WORKING METHODS:

There are many different types of working methods that can be used during a Youth Forum. Some of the sessions are best held with all the participants together, such as the opening, introduction, activities, agreeing on recommendations, closing, etc. Other sessions may be better suited for small discussion groups. These smaller groups will allow greater participation by members and make it easier to formulate recommendations. There are many other types of working methods that you may find useful in your forum. These include presentations by experts, interviews or fact-finding inquiries, panel discussions, audio-visual presentations, games... the list is endless. If you make sure a variety of different methods are used during the Forum, there will be less chance of participants becoming bored or losing their creativity.

Brainstorming

Idea generation is one of the most common and time consuming tasks that a Youth Network has to accomplish. The youth are the ones who constantly have to come up with new and exciting issues that are important to the youth that they represent. During your meetings, you will often be using a process called “brainstorming” to generate ideas. You may also encounter problems that your group needs to solve, and this process could be a valuable tool in doing so. When brainstorming for ideas or solutions to problems, there are several tips that you should keep in mind, that will make your group thinking more effective.

The process of brainstorming loosens people up, gets those who are not usually a part of things to make a contribution, and gets out some new ideas where old ones would normally be found. Besides, it can be a good break for a lagging meeting, and helps to clear some of the cobwebs upstairs!

What exactly is brainstorming? Brainstorming is a high speed, sometimes loud, sometimes uncontrolled “think session”, in which you throw out ideas about a chosen topic, without evaluating them. First, get the group together and assign a topic. For example, methods to link the sections. Now give them a block of time, maybe 5 minutes. The members of the group just start throwing out ideas that come into their heads, no matter how crazy or corny. A recorder or secretary should write down the ideas as they are called out. You should have a facilitator or discussion leader, who is there to ensure that brainstorming is done properly. The brainstorming process was designed to generate ideas, not to reminisce about something that has happened. Once you have finished brainstorming, go over each of the ideas and evaluate them. You will be surprised

at the number of creative ideas that come out when people are allowed to think freely!

Before starting off a brainstorming session, you might want to try a quick little activity to “get the creative juices flowing.” Try this game, it’s called “It’s a...” Divide your group into two teams. Give each group a regular household object, such as a slipper. The object is for the teams to come up with as many uses for the object as possible in two minutes.

Now that everyone’s brains are in gear, start **BRAINSTORMING!**

Discussion Leader

When the Forum breaks into discussion groups, someone will have to lead the discussion. The participants should be aware of the main subject being discussed, but the discussion leader should also have a list of questions that explore all the different aspects of the main subject. When the discussion slows down, the leader will ask one of the questions to help generate discussion from a different viewpoint on the subject. Here are some good principles for leading a discussion group.

1. Good questions...

- ...are clear.
- ...contribute to the purpose of your discussion.
- ...are open-ended (generate discussion).
- ...encourage group members to search and discover for themselves.
- ...move the group through the process in a logical sequence.
- ...draw out and highlight the main points of the situation.