

## SESSION 7: Activating the Future

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Facilitator:** Section Staff

### Learning outcomes:

Explain the stakeholders involved in activating Arrowmen.  
Demonstrate ways to increase participation and engagement.  
Create a plan to innovate and improve lodge activation rates.

**Supplies:** Computer, PowerPoint presentation

### Introduction & opening

**3 minutes**

Introduce the session by first introducing yourself and outlining your experiences in the Order of the Arrow; particularly, your experience managing new member activation.

[read learning outcomes]

A majority of the youth that are inducted into the Order of the Arrow never attend an event after their induction weekends. You and I are actually an anomaly. Nearly 70% of Arrowmen never become activated. If you're a vice chief of program in your lodge, you may spend countless hours planning events; but not even 30% of our members will ever come to even just one of them.

### The activation timeline

**10 minutes**

When Arrowmen complete their Ordeals and receive their new sashes, they are very excited about the OA. They met the eligibility requirements, their fellow Scouts elected them, they went through the induction, and finally, they get to wear their lodge flaps. That momentum doesn't last forever, and the excitement that each Arrowman has at the Ordeal ceremony quickly wears off.

We need to engage Arrowmen quickly after their Ordeals if we want them to become activated. Activation events are held within six months, but preferably within 90 days, following the induction weekend. These events should have the intent to involve new members, encourage retention at the local level, build personal growth, and ensure future involvement in the OA.

We know you already plan great events, but it's important that we deliver an outstanding program immediately after the Ordeal. Some lodges hold an induction opportunity, but then do not



schedule another event for months after the induction. To make sure that we don't lose new members, we want to make sure that we identify activation events in our lodge within this timeline.

I'm going to give all of you five minutes to breakout with your lodges and critically analyze your program structure. I want you to consider a few key questions.

1. After each induction opportunity, when is the earliest activation event that an Arrowman can attend?
2. What barriers exist for new members to attend this event, and how can we overcome those barriers?

*Trainer tip: Walk around during this breakout and ensure each lodge is holding a productive discussion.*

Let's come back together. Let's get a show of hands – how many of you hold an activation event within the first month after the Ordeal? Two months? Three months?....Six months?

For those who aren't raising their hands right now, or even those who don't hold an activation event within the first three months. The longer you wait, the less chance you will have of activating a new member as the momentum subsides.

I also asked you to consider the barriers that Arrowmen face in attending this event. Let's share with the group, what did you talk about in this portion of the discussion?

[ask delegates for their ideas]

We face some of the same obstacles as we did when we talked about induction rate. Some members may find it difficult to find a ride or have other commitments. We have to do everything we can to remove these barriers. An inactive Arrowman may not be proactive, so it's up to us to close that gap.

It's also important to host multiple activation opportunities soon after the Ordeal to reach as many members as possible. Youth have a LOT going on in their lives, and until they become extremely involved in the OA, they may be unwilling to prioritize our program over other commitments. While you don't want to overload the new members, make sure you offer more than just one activation event in case someone can't attend.

*Trainer tip: Ideally, delegates should make these conclusions on their own, but it is important to discuss these points before moving on.*



### **Making an activation event meaningful**

**10 minutes**

So far, we've talked about the importance of holding an activation event within the first six months, but ideally within the first 90 days, following an Ordeal. We also worked through some barriers for Arrowmen to attending the activation event. Next, we can't forget to make this activation event actually serve its purpose: showing Arrowmen the benefits of the OA and get them hooked on our program!

You'll notice that the activation event doesn't include a list of programs that qualify, because there are so many different ways to activate Arrowmen. Each lodge may do something a little different, as the options are limitless. We are going to take a few minutes to allow you to share with each other some best practices that work successfully in your lodge. I will give you three minutes to talk within your lodge to prepare your ideas, and then I will ask the Lodge Chief or designee to come up to the front and share your ideas with everyone.

[allow delegates to discuss for three minutes]

At this time, I invite each lodge chief or designee to come to the front of the room and share their ideas with all of the delegates. Please briefly share your successful activation event(s), including when the event(s) is/are held relative to the time of the Ordeal and what the program includes.

[Lodge Chiefs should share their ideas at this time]

Thanks for sharing, everyone. As you can see, lodges hold a wide range of activation events. We need to communicate the events to Arrowmen at the time of the Ordeal. During the induction weekend. We have a captive audience of excited new members, and we need to use that to our advantage. Providing each new member with a flyer or other promotional material about the events is a great way to spread information. If you are going to require members to register for the activation event, I also suggest that you provide them a way to register at the Ordeal itself.

### **National resources to support activation**

**3 minutes**

The national organization has developed resources to support you in achieving a higher activation rate. The first resource is an activation event guide. This guide shares a variety of success stories, best practices, and timelines to follow to provide you with some inspiration and guidance in planning an activation event. The best practices in the guide range from ideas for a chapter or lodge meeting to a fellowship weekend. Along with these ideas, the guide identifies four key attributes that tend to drive success in an activation guide: immediacy, locality, price, and purpose. We've talked about some of these attributes already, but make sure to keep these in mind as you plan your event.

We also developed an Activation Mentorship Program Guidebook. The guidebook outlines a program that provides individualized support for a new Arrowmen until they become activated. Many lodges have already adopted a “big brother program” in which an elangomat stays in contact with newly inducted Arrowmen until they become activated. The guidebook includes a thorough checklist of steps that you can take to ensure a successful program debut.

Finally, we developed an online elangomat certification training, which all elangomats should take prior to the Ordeal. We talked about elangomats in the last session, but the role of an elangomat extends beyond the induction weekend. They also help bring Arrowmen back to their first event and serve as a key liaison between a new member and the OA as a whole. This training explains these responsibilities to set each elangomat up for success.

All of these resources can be found at [oa-bsa.org/thrive](http://oa-bsa.org/thrive).

### **Action plans**

**20 minutes**

Lodges encounter a variety of challenges that prevent them from achieving a 50% activation rate. The idea of the High Performing Lodge initiative is to provide lodges with a sense of focus as to what is important.

Delegates will take the remaining 20 minutes of the session to develop an action plan for their lodge to improve their activation rate in the next year to stay in line with the “Declaration to Thrive.”

Lodges should take the first 10 minutes to develop an action plan on their own. A member of the ACT Conference staff should check-in with their designated lodge after 10 minutes and assist as necessary. Each staff member should ensure that their designated lodge has a plan with attainable and tangible goals. There will be additional time for delegates to return to this goal in the “Implementing your Vision” session.

