

# PLANNING PROGRAMS THAT ROCK

## — SEQUENTIAL PROGRAMMING —

A sequential approach to program planning is one where gaining specific skills, and then *putting them into action*, pave the way towards a larger experience that is memorable and rewarding. This larger experience is ordinarily featured during a “main event” like an outing or special trip.

During the meetings leading up to the special event, the skills and their related activities are presented in a stepwise progression and can be likened to building blocks. The ultimate goal of this sequential approach is to use these building blocks to enable the Scouts to enjoy and appreciate the larger experience. This larger experience is a culmination of the preceding meetings with their periods of skills instruction and activities. In order for the Scouting program to rock, these preceding meetings, that lead up to the super cool main event, in themselves should be filled with fun!

A major example of a sequential approach to programming is a trek to Philmont. Think of all the planning and preparation that is prerequisite to this monumental, life-changing experience. Along with the growing anticipation that can be felt with each step taken to get ready, the steps themselves can be fun. For example, learning about what takes place before, during, and after cooking a dinner out on the trail provides opportunities to become acquainted with and practice a range of practical techniques—everything from setting a pot of water to boil to compacting the trash. Scouting is a game with a purpose! With a little creativity, each step can be made into a challenge or a game, e.g. which pair of crew members can compact the trash into the smallest collection that takes up the least amount of space in the shortest time?

As mentioned, a Philmont trek is a major example of sequential programming, that can take many months of planning and preparation with many steps leading up to each larger step like a weekend shakedown trip. But, making each step fun along the way is where it's at! Let's say a crew plans a physical conditioning meeting during which time they'll be climbing several flights of stairs wearing their backpacks. Pretty strenuous stuff, but depending on what shape the crew members are in, and their geographic area, stair climbing can be a good idea. How can some fun be added to even this kind

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## — SEQUENTIAL PROGRAMMING (continued) —

of physically taxing activity? Be creative! Build crew spirit. Out on the trail, crew members need to support one another. They can be challenged to do that now and build on the fellow feeling developing crew spirit. The occasion might be a good time to distribute a crew T-shirt or hat. During a rest period, they can be given a packet of freeze-dried ice cream. (Really delicious!) The idea here is that it's not only the actual trek that rocks. It's the whole program leading up to it!

*To illustrate the sequential approach in a practical way, this conference features some examples of sequential programming that are all based on the same concept, i.e. after presenting information, a skill, or a technique, (building blocks), whatever's been presented will be brought to life in a fun and/or challenging way. Eventually, each building block will be combined with others, contributing to that larger experience that is especially memorable and rewarding.*

Unlike most programs, where it seems students often learn something just to get tested on it, Scouting can provide opportunities to learn something and then have fun with it. What's even better, is when what's learned is combined with other learnings, to experience something bigger—something outstanding. This kind of sequential programming approach is an effective way to *deliver the promise of Scouting!*

Notes: