

Youth Leader Mentor Training Guide

For Adult Mentors Supporting Youth Leadership

Thank you for volunteering to mentor a youth leader in Troop 221. Your role is critical to helping our Scouts develop real leadership skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

This guide will help you:

- Understand your role as a mentor
- Learn the coaching vs. doing approach
- Support your Scout leader effectively
- Navigate common scenarios
- Stay compliant with Safeguarding Youth Training (SYT)

SCOUTMASTER

Jeff Martin

COMMITTEE CHAIR

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PROGRAM COORDINATOR

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PART 1

Understanding Your Role

WHAT IS A YOUTH LEADER MENTOR?

A mentor is an **adult guide** who helps a Scout succeed in their leadership position. You are NOT there to do the job for them. You are there to help them figure out how to do it themselves.

Think of yourself as:

- A coach, not a player
- A guide, not a supervisor
- A question-asker, not an answer-giver
- A safety net, not a rescuer

Your mission: help your Scout...

1. **Understand** their position and responsibilities
2. **Plan** how to accomplish their duties
3. **Execute** their plans with confidence
4. **Learn** from both successes and failures
5. **Grow** in leadership capability

TIME COMMITMENT

Meeting Type	Time
Initial meeting	30–45 minutes
Weekly quick check-ins	10–15 minutes (at troop meetings)
Monthly deeper check-ins	20–30 minutes
As-needed support	Quick texts/conversations
Total estimate	2–3 hours per month

PART 2

Coaching vs. Doing — The Core Philosophy

“Never do for a Scout what they can do for themselves.”

This is hard. You’ll be tempted to jump in and fix things. **Don’t.** The learning happens when they struggle, figure it out, and succeed — or fail and learn from it.

COACHING VS. DOING IN ACTION

Situation	DOING — Don’t	COACHING — Do
Scout forgets to bring flags to meeting	You grab the flags and set them up	“What do you need for opening ceremony? How can you remember next time?”
SPL doesn’t know how to plan a PLC meeting	You write the agenda for them	“What do you think should be on the agenda? Let’s look at last month’s minutes together.”
Patrol Leader’s patrol is disorganized	You organize the patrol yourself	“What’s going well with your patrol? What’s one thing you’d like to improve?”
Quartermaster can’t find equipment	You locate it and hand it to them	“Where do you think it might be? Who could you ask? What system would help?”
Scribe forgets to take minutes	You take the minutes	“What happened? What reminder system would work for you next time?”

THE POWER OF QUESTIONS

Your most powerful tool is **asking questions**. Questions help Scouts think through problems themselves.

Great coaching questions:

- “What do you think should happen next?”
- “What are your options?”
- “What’s working well? What could be better?”

Avoid saying:

- “Here’s what you should do...”
- “Let me just handle this...”
- “That’s wrong, do it this way...”

- “If you were in their shoes, what would you want?”
- “What did you learn from that?”
- “How would you do it differently next time?”
- “What support do you need?”
- “Who else could help with this?”

When to step in directly:

- Safety is at risk
- SYT policy is being violated
- BSA policy is being broken
- Beyond the Scout’s maturity level
- Adult needs to communicate with adult
- Scout explicitly asks for help after trying

Even then — explain why you stepped in and what the Scout can learn from it.

PART 3

Your Mentoring Toolkit

TOOL #1 — THE JOB CARD

Your Scout has received a job card for their position. This is their roadmap. Use it to review expectations together at your first meeting, set specific goals, check progress monthly, and celebrate successes.

TOOL #2 — REGULAR CHECK-INS

Weekly Quick Check-In (10–15 min)

- “How’s it going this week?”
- “What’s coming up that you need to prepare for?”
- “Any challenges I can help you think through?”
- “What went well this week?”

Monthly Deeper Check-In (20–30 min)

- Review job card progress
- Discuss bigger challenges
- Plan for upcoming events
- Reflect on leadership growth
- Set goals for next month

Best practices: Schedule check-ins on the troop calendar · Keep them consistent · Let the Scout talk more than you · End with encouragement

TOOL #3 — THE EDGE METHOD

EDGE is Scouting’s teaching method. Use it when helping your Scout learn a new skill.

Step	Method	Example — Teaching SPL to run a PLC meeting
E	Explain	Describe what needs to be done and why: “A PLC meeting helps patrol leaders plan the troop program together...”
D	Demonstrate	Let them observe you or an experienced leader run a meeting
G	Guide	Sit with them as they plan and run their first meeting, offering tips as they go
E	Enable	They run subsequent meetings on their own — you’re still available but hands-off

TOOL #4 — THE DEBRIEF

After events, meetings, or challenges, help your Scout reflect with these three questions:

1. **“What went well?”** — Start positive
2. **“What would you do differently next time?”** — Growth mindset
3. **“What did you learn?”** — Make it stick

TOOL #5 — ENCOURAGEMENT & RECOGNITION

Your Scout needs to hear when they're doing well. **Specific praise is powerful.**

× “Good job today.” (*vague*)

✓ “I noticed how you handled that patrol conflict calmly and got both Scouts to talk it out. That’s excellent leadership.” (*specific*)

Catch them doing things right: leading effectively · showing initiative · trying something new · learning from mistakes · helping others

PART 4

Common Scenarios & How to Handle Them

SCENARIO 1: “I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO DO”

1. “That’s okay — it’s new! Let’s figure it out together.”
2. “What do you think might work?”
3. “Who could you ask? Where could you look?”
4. “Let’s break this into smaller steps...”
5. Guide them to resources (job card, SM, handbook)

Don’t just tell them the answer or do it for them.

SCENARIO 2: “THIS IS TOO HARD” / “I WANT TO QUIT”

1. Listen without judgment — “Tell me what’s been hard.”
2. Validate feelings — “It’s normal to feel overwhelmed.”
3. Identify specifics — “What part is hardest?”
4. Problem-solve together — “What would make it better?”
5. Reconnect to purpose — “What did you hope to get out of this?”
6. Look for small wins — “What’s gone well?”

Note: Some Scouts genuinely need to step down. That’s okay — help them do it honorably and learn from the experience.

SCENARIO 3: SCOUT ISN’T FOLLOWING THROUGH

1. **Observe patterns** — is it everything or specific tasks?

SCENARIO 4: CONFLICT BETWEEN YOUTH LEADERS

1. **Let them handle it first** — “How do you think you should address this?”
2. **Facilitate if needed** — help them have a conversation together
3. **Ask both sides** — “What’s your perspective?”
4. **Find common ground** — “You both want [shared goal]...”
5. **Guide to solutions** — “What would a good compromise look like?”
6. **Follow up** — “How did it go?”

Don’t solve it for them or take sides.

SCENARIO 5: ADULT LEADER CRITICIZES YOUR SCOUT

1. Listen to the adult’s concern
2. Don’t be defensive of your Scout
3. Gather facts — what specifically happened?
4. Talk with Scout — “Here’s what I heard... tell me your side.”
5. Use it as growth — “What could you do differently?”
6. Communicate back to adult — “We talked about it, here’s the plan.”

Remember: Your job is to help the Scout grow, not protect them from all feedback.

SCENARIO 6: SCOUT SUCCEEDS!

1. **Celebrate specifically** — “You did [X], and that resulted in [Y].”

2. **Private conversation** — “I’ve noticed [observation]. Help me understand.”
3. **Explore causes** — too busy? Doesn’t understand? Needs support?
4. **Problem-solve** — “What would help you accomplish this?”
5. **Set clear expectations** — “Your patrol is counting on you for [X].”
6. **Follow up** — check in more frequently for a while
7. **Involve Scoutmaster if needed**

2. **Debrief the win** — “What made that successful?”
3. **Build confidence** — “You figured that out yourself — that’s leadership.”
4. **Look ahead** — “How can you build on this?”

Don’t take any credit or minimize their achievement.

PART 5

Youth Protection & Safety

You MUST complete Safeguarding Youth Training (SYT) before your first mentoring session. SYT replaced YPT in May 2025 and is now required **annually**. Complete it at my.scouting.org — the initial course takes 90 minutes; the annual refresher takes 15–20 minutes.

KEY SYT PRINCIPLES FOR MENTORS

Two-Deep Leadership

- Never be alone with a Scout
- All meetings and check-ins must be in public view
- Troop meetings are the ideal setting
- If meeting elsewhere, ensure another adult is present

No One-on-One Contact

- Private conversations are okay **if in sight of others**
- Closed-door meetings are NOT okay
- Electronic communication must follow troop policies

Respect Boundaries

- No inappropriate physical contact
- Keep conversations appropriate
- Be aware of how things might be perceived

Mandatory Reporting

- If you suspect abuse or policy violations, report immediately
- Contact SM Jeff Martin, Committee Chair Nick Dodson, or HOAC council

SAFE MENTORING PRACTICES

DO:

- Meet at troop meetings when possible
- Check in via email or text with appropriate tone
- Include parents in communication when appropriate
- Keep conversations focused on Scouting and leadership
- Be encouraging and supportive

DON'T:

- Meet one-on-one in private locations
- Give rides alone (unless you're the parent)
- Use social media inappropriately
- Share personal problems with your Scout
- Treat your Scout as a friend rather than a mentee

PART 6

Position-Specific Mentoring Tips

SENIOR PATROL LEADER (SPL)

Unique challenges: High visibility and pressure · Leading peers, some older · Balancing SM's vision with youth leadership

Your focus: Meeting planning and facilitation · Delegation and trust · Public speaking and confidence · Managing conflict between patrols

Key support: Help them prepare PLC agendas · Debrief every meeting · Role-play difficult conversations · Build confidence in decision-making

ASSISTANT SENIOR PATROL LEADER (ASPL)

Unique challenges: Often unclear role ("backup SPL?") · Less visible than SPL · Finding meaningful ways to contribute

Your focus: Define specific responsibilities with SPL · Find projects ASPL can own · Prepare them for a potential SPL transition

Key support: Help them carve out their own leadership space · Encourage proactive initiative · Build skills they'll need as future SPL

PATROL LEADER (PL)

Unique challenges: Leading close friends · Patrol not listening · Planning patrol activities and meals · Staying organized

Your focus: Patrol meeting skills · Patrol spirit and identity · Duty roster creation · Participation in PLC

Key support: Help plan engaging patrol meetings · Brainstorm solutions for patrol challenges · Practice delegation to APL

QUARTERMASTER

Unique challenges: Equipment everywhere, hard to track · Other Scouts don't put things away · Trailer organization

Your focus: Organization systems · Inventory management · Inspection routines · Working with adult Equipment Coordinator

Key support: Help design tracking systems · Problem-solve equipment issues · Advocate for equipment needs to committee

SCRIBE

Unique challenges: Easy to forget to take notes · Minutes feel boring · Unclear what to record

Your focus: Note-taking system · Reminder and routine building · Understanding why records matter

Key support: Help create a minute template · Set up reminder system · Review minutes together monthly

HISTORIAN

Unique challenges: Remembering to take photos · Getting photos organized and shared · Court of Honor presentations

Your focus: Photo habits · Organization and storage · Creating displays and presentations

Key support: Help establish a photo routine · Brainstorm creative ways to share troop history

DEN CHIEF

Unique challenges: Working with younger Scouts · Different meeting time/location · Balancing troop and pack commitments

ASSISTANT PATROL LEADER (APL)

Unique challenges: Often feels like “backup” not a real leader · PL doesn’t delegate effectively

Your focus: Define role with PL · Support PL without taking over · Be prepared to lead when PL is absent

Key support: Help them communicate with their PL · Identify 2–3 specific things they can own · Build skills for future PL role

Your focus: Working with younger children · Planning age-appropriate activities · Building relationship with Cubmaster

Key support: Attend a pack meeting with them occasionally · Debrief den meetings · Connect with Cubmaster as needed

OA REPRESENTATIVE

Unique challenges: Role depends on OA calendar · Promoting OA without over-pushing · May have quiet months

Your focus: OA event communication · Election coordination · Connecting with lodge adviser

Key support: Help track OA calendar · Prepare announcements for meetings · Coordinate with adult OA contact Dustin Hengel

PART 7

Your First Meeting with Your Scout

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Read their job card thoroughly
- Review this training guide
- Schedule 30–45 minutes at a troop meeting (in public view)
- Bring their job card printed out
- Bring a notebook

AFTER THE MEETING

- Email/text parents introducing yourself as mentor
- Send Scout a brief summary of goals you discussed
- Put check-ins on your calendar
- Touch base with Scoutmaster

MEETING AGENDA (30–45 MIN)

#	Time	Topic
1	5–10 min	Build relationship — introduce yourself, share why you volunteered, ask about their Scouting experience
2	15–20 min	Review job card together — ask what questions they have, which parts excite them, which seem hardest
3	5–10 min	Set goals — “What do you want to accomplish? How will you know you succeeded?” (2–3 goals)
4	5 min	Establish check-in routine — agree on weekly time, schedule first monthly check-in, exchange contacts
5	5 min	Encouragement — express confidence, remind them mistakes are okay, end on a positive note

PART 8

Monthly Check-In Template

Use this structure for your monthly 20–30 minute deeper check-ins.

Monthly Mentor Check-In		Troop 221	
DATE	SCOUT LEADER	POSITION	MENTOR
1. WINS & CELEBRATIONS (5 MIN) • What went well this month? • What are you proud of? • What positive feedback have you received? Notes:		2. CHALLENGES & LEARNING (10 MIN) • What's been difficult? • What didn't go as planned? • What did you learn from it? • What would you do differently? Notes:	
3. JOB CARD PROGRESS (5 MIN) • What's going well on each responsibility? • Where do you need support? • Any adjustments needed? Notes:		4. LOOKING AHEAD (5 MIN) • What's coming up next month? • What do you need to prepare for? • What resources or support do you need? Notes:	
5. GOAL SETTING (3 MIN) • What's your focus for next month? • How will you know you accomplished it? • What's your first step? Goal:		6. MENTOR SUPPORT (2 MIN) • How can I best support you this month? • Do you need me to connect you with anyone? • Anything else on your mind? Notes:	

NEXT MEETING DATE

PART 9

Troubleshooting & FAQs

“My Scout doesn’t want to meet with me”

- Make meetings short and valuable
- Meet at troop meetings (convenient, comfortable)
- Ask what format would work better for them
- Check if they understand the purpose
- Talk with Scoutmaster if pattern continues

“My Scout isn’t doing their job”

- Have an honest conversation about expectations
- Explore what’s getting in the way
- Problem-solve together
- Set specific, small commitments with follow-up
- Involve Scoutmaster if needed
- Accept that some Scouts aren’t ready — that’s okay too

“Another adult keeps doing things for my Scout”

- Have a friendly conversation with that adult
- Explain the mentorship approach and its value
- Ask them to redirect to the Scout when possible
- Involve Scoutmaster if needed

“I don’t know the answer to my Scout’s question”

“My Scout is doing great — do they still need me?”

YES! Maintaining success is different from achieving it. Continue check-ins (maybe less frequent). Help them set stretch goals. Support them in mentoring others. Celebrate their growth.

“I’m too busy to keep doing this”

- Talk with Scoutmaster **as soon as possible**
- Don’t just disappear on your Scout
- Help transition to a new mentor if possible
- It’s okay to step down — just do it right

“My Scout made a big mistake”

Perfect learning opportunity! Help them own it, fix it, and learn from it. Don’t rescue them from natural consequences. Support them emotionally while they work through it. **This is where growth happens.**

“My Scout wants to quit their position”

Listen without judgment. Validate the feelings. Identify what’s specifically hard. Problem-solve together. Reconnect them to purpose. Some Scouts genuinely need to step down — if so, help them do it honorably. Either way, it’s a growth moment.

That's **perfect!** Say "I don't know — let's find out together." Help them identify who to ask.
Research together. You're modeling that leaders don't have to know everything.

PART 10

Resources & References

TROOP 221 RESOURCES

- **Job Cards** — position-specific expectations (separate document)
- **Scoutmaster:** Jeff Martin — primary resource for program questions
- **Committee Chair:** Nick Dodson — structural and policy questions
- **Advancement Coordinator:** Devon Smith — advancement-related questions
- **OA Adult Contact:** Dustin Hengel — OA Rep questions

BSA RESOURCES

- Senior Patrol Leader Handbook (BSA)
- Patrol Leader Handbook (BSA)
- Scoutmaster Handbook — good mentoring principles
- Safeguarding Youth Training — required, at my.scouting.org

CORE PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

Servant Leadership

Leaders serve those they lead. Put patrol and troop needs ahead of personal recognition. Leadership is about helping others succeed.

Youth-Led, Adult-Guided

Scouts plan, lead, and make decisions. Adults guide, mentor, and ensure safety. **It's their troop, not ours.**

Learning by Doing

Scouts learn by trying, failing, and trying again. Experience is the best teacher. Protect them from harm, not from challenge.

TROOP 221 • YOUTH LEADERSHIP MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Mentor's Commitment

I have read and understand this mentor training guide. I commit to supporting my Scout through this term.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| ✓ Coach, not do | I will support my Scout through coaching and questions, not by doing the work for them. |
| ✓ Meet regularly | I will conduct weekly quick check-ins and monthly deeper check-ins throughout the term. |
| ✓ Follow SYT | I will always maintain two-deep leadership and follow all Youth Protection policies. |
| ✓ Communicate | I will stay in contact with the Scout's parents and Scoutmaster as appropriate. |
| ✓ Support growth | I will help my Scout learn and grow, being patient with mistakes and celebrating successes. |
| ✓ Positive role model | I will demonstrate the Scout Oath and Scout Law in all interactions with youth. |

MENTOR NAME

SIGNATURE

SCOUT LEADER'S NAME

DATE

POSITION

TERM END DATE

Questions or support? Contact Scoutmaster **Jeff Martin**, Committee Chair **Nick Dodson**, or program coordinator **Michael Smith** — we're here to support you as you support our Scouts!