



Trail Tracks for Troops

This tool was developed to help your Troop track your progress as you strive to become a thriving Troop! Your Troop Ministry Liaison, Committee Chairman, and Troopmaster should review the following characteristics together, then self-evaluate to determine where your Troop is now—and where improvement is needed.

THRIVIN' TROOPS – THIS IS THE GOAL!

- Embrace the church/parish-owned model; TML (church leader) is regularly engaged with Troop operations
- Have many active leaders (15 minimum, if all program levels are offered)
- Meet weekly throughout the school year
- Communicate important information consistently to all parents—have scheduled activities (Campouts/service projects), provide a general annual calendar and meeting/activity schedule, and consistently follow up with reminders and advance participation notices
- Are involved with the Area (attend Area Trail Gatherings, Trainings, Area-wide campouts, and utilize the [Levels of Support](#))
- Have high parent participation (all parents are involved and help in some capacity)
- Have a well-planned Summer Adventure (including a Woodlands Trail Adventure)
- Have an active Woodlands Trail program (Troops with Navigators and Adventurers ONLY soon “age out”)
- Focus on Advancement and Faith-development (provides the opportunities for mentoring)
- Continue to grow (growth breeds excitement!)
- Schedule an annual Open House recruiting event
- Have knowledge of other Troops to connect and learn from
- Have knowledge of [Join the Trail!](#) (for free resources to help with recruiting new members)
- Have knowledge of how to conduct an annual planning (a full year’s program) & budgeting (how to pay for it) session with all Troop stakeholders
- Have leaders who are committed to God, passionate about the mission of TLUSA, and willing to learn and use TLUSA methods and support systems including youth leadership methods.

STRIVIN' TROOPS

- Accept the church-owned model, but only involve the TML on a “need-to-know” basis
- Have enough active leaders to get by, but only 2-deep leadership at each program level
- Meet regularly, but not every week
- Communicate often, but sporadically and often last-minute
- Participate in campouts and activities in addition to just Troop meetings
- Keep to themselves, but might interact with Area volunteers if there's a problem in the Troop
- Have a few same leaders that “run” almost everything (Program leaders are also on the Troop Committee and the Troop has little youth leadership)
- Do not place much emphasis on advancement or Faith-development
- Like to keep the same families involved, not actively recruiting new ones
- Know about recruiting, fundraising, planning & budgeting but don't use Trail Life's “best practices”
- Struggle to raise enough money to “keep the promise” of regular trips and adventures
- Focus more on the Program than the Mission (into outdoor adventure, with no religious emphasis)

SURVIVIN' TROOPS

- Don't really understand/buy into “church owned-and-operated” (program leaders run the show)
- Struggle to find enough leaders (many “wear more than one hat”)
- Experience outdoor adventure only a few times a year
- Have one leader in charge of the whole Troop with no TML involvement or active Troop Committee
- Don't participate in Area/multi-Troop activities
- Don't focus on advancement or Faith-building
- Have no growth or recruiting plan to engage more families
- Have little to no money nor a budget plan
- Don't know where to go for help

ALERT: If your Troop has more than a few of these indicators, seek help immediately from your Area's Point Man or DSA!

SCORE YOUR TROOP (self-evaluation):

1. We are faith-focused [total of 0-2 points]

- a. We use the Worthy Life curriculum (1 point).
- b. We embrace male mentorship/discipleship methods (1 point).

Score: _____

2. TML engagement [total of 0-2 points]

[TML Position Description](#) & [How a Troop is Chartered & Operates](#)

- a. Our TML is a paid staff or lay leader within the host Charter Org (1 point).
- b. Our TML is engaged in communications at least weekly with the Troop Committee (1 point).

Score: _____

3. Active registered leaders [total of 0-3 points]

[Selecting and Recruiting Volunteer Leaders](#)

- a. Less than 5 leaders (0 points)
- b. 6-9 leaders (1 point)
- c. 10-14 leaders (2 points)
- d. 15 or more leaders (3 points)

Score: _____

4. Camping adventures [total of 0-2 points]

- a. We hold quarterly campouts including Woodlands Trails patrols (1 point).
- b. We attend a Summer Adventure (1 point).

Score: _____

5. Communication [total of 0-3 points]

[FastStart Training](#), [How the Program Year Works](#), [New Parents' Orientation Meeting Agenda](#)

- a. We send out weekly communications to all Troop member families (1 point).
- b. We provide an annual calendar that includes regular meetings and activities (1 point).
- c. We guide each new family through FastStart training or a New Parents' Orientation (1 point).

Score: _____

6. Join The Trail! [total of 0-3 points]

[Join the Trail!](#)

- a. We hold a Join The Trail! Open House to recruit new members every fall (1 point).
- b. We added at least 5 new families last fall (1 point).

- c. We re-chartered with a growth over last year (1 point).

Score: _____

7. Annual Planning [total of 0-2 points]

[Annual Planning and Budgeting](#)

- a. We conduct an annual Planning & Budgeting session (1 point).
- b. We invite all Troop stakeholders to the session - Troop Committee, direct contact leaders, parents, and youth (1 point).

Score: _____

8. Area Involvement [total of 0-2 points]

- a. Our Troop is never involved in Area activities (0 points).
- b. Our Troop is somewhat involved in Area activities (1 point).
- c. Our Troop is frequently involved in Area activities like Trail Gatherings, Area-wide campouts, and/or other multi-Troop activities (2 points).

Score: _____

9. Leader's characters and attitudes [total of 0-3 points]

[Mission of TLUSA](#), [Core Values Brochure](#)

- a. Our Troop's top leaders are committed to God (1 point).
- b. Our Troop's top leaders are passionate about the mission of TLUSA (1 point).
- c. Our Troop's top leaders are willing to learn and use TLUSA methods and support systems including youth leadership methods (1 point).

Score: _____

Total Score: _____

Scoring Results:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 0-7 points | Please seek help from your Area Team |
| 8-12 points | Survivin'— Good start, room to grow! |
| 13-17 points | Strivin'— On your way to something great! |
| 18-22 points | Thrivin'— Wow, you have it going on! Find a nearby Troop to mentor! |