



## 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-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), providing general annual calendar and meeting/activity schedule, and consistent follow-up reminders and advance participation notices
- \*Are involved with the Area (attend Area Trail Gatherings, Training, Camporees, 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
- \*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—nearby, or at least in the *Official Trail Life USA Forum* (to connect with/learn from);
  - [JoinTheTrail.com](http://JoinTheTrail.com) (actively recruiting new members);
  - and how to conduct an annual *Planning* (a full year’s program) & *Budgeting* (how to pay for it) session with all Troop stakeholders
- \*Have top 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; involve the TML on a “need-to-know” basis
- \*Have enough active leaders to get by, 2-deep at each program level
- \*Meet regularly, but not every week
- \*Communicate often (but sporadically, often last-minute)
- \*Participate in campouts and activities (do more than just Troop meetings)
- \*Keep to themselves, but might interact with Area volunteers if there’s a problem in the Troop
- \*Same leaders “run” almost everything (the program leaders are also on Troop Committee), little youth leadership development
- \*Not 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”
- \*Scrape to get enough money to “keep the promise” of regular trips and adventures
- \*Are more about 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"
- \*Only experience outdoor adventure a few times a year
- \*One leader is actually in charge (no TML involvement or active Troop Committee)
- \*Don't participate in Area/multi-Troop activities
- \*No focus (Advancement or Faith-building)
- \*No growth or recruiting plan to engage more families
- \*No \$, no budget plan
- \*Don't know where to go for help

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

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### SCORE YOUR TROOP (self-evaluation):

We are faith-focused. We use Worthy Life, Manhood Journey, or Band of Brothers curriculum (1 point), and embrace male mentorship/discipleship methods (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-2 points] [Faith Building Options Guide](#)

Our TML is a paid staff or lay leader within the host Charter Org (1 point), and is engaged in communications at least weekly with Troop Committee (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-2 points] [TML Position Description](#) & [How a Troop is Chartered & Operates](#)

We have enough active, registered leaders (15 is the minimum allowable if all program levels are offered). Less than 5 leaders=0 points; 6-9 leaders=1 point; 10-14 leaders=2 points; 15 or more leaders=3 points). [self-evaluation, total of 0-3 points] [Selecting and Recruiting Volunteer Leaders & Video](#)

We have a Woodlands Trail unit (1 point), which meets at least 2x/month (1 point) [self-evaluation, total of 0-2 points] [WT Overview](#)

We send out weekly communications to all Troop member families (1 point), provide an annual calendar that includes weekly meeting and activities schedule (1 point), and guide each new family through *FastStart* training (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-3 points] [FastStart Training Document](#), [Understanding How the Program Year Works](#)

We hold a [JoinTheTrail.com](#) Open House to recruit new members every fall (1 point); added at least 5 new families last time (1 point); re-charter with a growth over last year (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-3 points] Plan/Promote/Grow/Thrive at [Jointhetrail.com](#)

We conduct an annual *Planning & Budgeting* session (1 point), inviting all Troop stakeholders—Troop Committee, direct contact leaders, parents, and youth (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-2 points]

Troop is involved with its Area (regularly attending Roundtables, Camporees, or other multi-Troop activities). [0-2 points]

Troop's top leaders are committed to God (1 point), passionate about the mission of TLUSA (1 point), and willing to learn and use TLUSA methods and support systems including youth leadership methods (1 point). [total of 0-3 points] [Core Values Video](#)

### **Scoring Results:**

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|--------------|---|
| 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! |