



Trail Tracks for Troops

Thriving, Striving, or Surviving?

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' AREAS

- 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 or most 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 Joining event (Open House)
- Have knowledge of other Troops to connect and learn from
- Have knowledge of Join the Adventure! 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' AREAS

- 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 when needed
- Have a few leaders that “run” almost everything (Program leaders are also on the Troop Committee, and the Troop has little youth leadership)
- Do not place a large emphasis on advancement or Faith-development
- Keeps 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' AREAS

- 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 or 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)

- **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: _____

- **TML Engagement:** Total of 0-2 points
See *TML Position Description* and *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: _____

- **Active Registered Leaders:** Total of 0-3 points
See *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: _____

- **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: _____

- **Communication:** Total of 0-3 points
See *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 a New Parents' Orientation or Onboarding (1 point)

Score: _____

- **Join the Adventure!:** Total of 0-3 points
 - a. We hold a Join the Adventure! Joining Event (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: _____

- **Annual Planning:** Total of 0-2 points
See *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: _____

- **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: _____

- **Character and Attitude:** Total of 0-3 points
See *Mission of TLUSA, Core Values Brochure*
 - Our Troop's top leaders are committed to God (1 point)
 - Our Troop's top leaders are passionate about the mission of TLUSA (1 point)
 - 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

- **0-12 points:** Survivin'— Room to grow! Seek advice from your Area Team.
- **13-17 points:** Strivin'— On your way to something great! Keep following best practices.
- **18-22 points:** Thrivin'— Wow, you have it going on! Find a nearby Troop to mentor!