

# Issue 383 – February 4, 2014

BY [ASKANDY](#) ON FEBRUARY 4, 2014 IN [2014](#)

**Hi Andy,**

**My son's troop will be interviewing two different people to fill the role of Scoutmaster. Is there a standard set of interview questions to ask applicants for this position? (Lisa Robinson)**

Let's start by taking a look at the primary responsibilities of a Scoutmaster...The Scoutmaster

- (1) is the primary uniformed adult volunteer in the troop;
- (2) trains, guides, and mentors the troop's youth leaders;
- (3) attends troop meetings & outings;
- (4) advises the SPL who runs the Patrol Leaders Council (the PLC plans & carries out the troop program);
- (5) reports on progress to troop committee & chair;
- (6) orients new Scout parents;
- (7) conferences with Scouts on advancement and their life in the troop; and
- (8) selects and trains Assistant Scoutmasters.

**Responsibility #2 is the most important:** Training youth leaders to run their own troop. The Scoutmaster doesn't plan anything, or run troop meetings. His is really a "background" job; not an "up-front" job in front of the troop every minute.

So you want a person who understands that the true troop program-planners are the Scouts themselves (this is what the Patrol Leaders Council, run by the Senior Patrol Leader, is for) and that the PATROLS are the most important "units" in Boy Scouting.

You want a person who believes in the eight methods of Scouting and considers each of these as important as all of the others.

You want a person who understands that the only time he actually speaks to the entire troop at one time is when he delivers the "Scoutmaster's minute" (which lasts 60-to-90 seconds!) at the end of the troop meeting.

You want a person who understands that Boy Scouting is absolutely not "an opportunity for family-camping or dad-and-lad camping." That peer relationships are critical to success.

You want a person who has a "boy-spirit" in him. Who understands that his job isn't to be "the leader" but to be the coach and mentor of the true troop leaders: The Scouts themselves.

How you determine these aspects is up to you. Open-ended questions and then careful listening usually work best.