

On the Trail to Brotherhood

The Challenges of Brotherhood membership

You must meet five challenges before you can enter the Circle of the Brotherhood. The first of these you should meet now. The next three require steady effort over a period of months. The last challenge you must meet after you are satisfied that you are meeting the first four.

1. **Memorize the signs of Arrow membership:**
 - a. The Obligation of the Order, which you received from Allowat Sakima (printed on the back of your membership card and in your handbook)
 - b. The Order of the Arrow Official Song
 - c. The Admonition
 - d. The sign of Ordeal membership
 - e. The Arrow handclasp
2. **Advance in your understanding of the Ordeal.** Gain a thorough understanding of the Ordeal through which you have passed.
3. **Serve your unit.** Retain your registration in Scouting. During a period of at least 10 months, strive to fulfill your Obligation by continuing and expanding your service to your own troop, team, or post.
4. **Plan for service in your lodge.** Retain your registration in your Order of the Arrow lodge and keep your dues paid. Be aware that acceptance of Brotherhood membership involves a pledge of service to the lodge. Develop a concrete idea of how you plan to fulfill this pledge.
5. **Review your progress.** When you earnestly feel that you have met the four challenges above, write a letter to your lodge secretary. In this letter:
 - Explain what you think the Obligation means.
 - Describe how you have been fulfilling this Obligation in your troop or post and in your daily life, and how you have used your understanding of the Ordeal to aid in this service.
 - Describe your specific plans for giving service in the lodge program.

Include with this letter your advance registration application and fees for the next Brotherhood ceremony according to the instructions given by the lodge.

Order of the Arrow Obligation

I do hereby promise, on my honor as a Scout, that I will always and faithfully observe and preserve the traditions of the Order of the Arrow, Wimachtendienk, Wingolauchsik, Witahemui.

I will always regard the ties of brotherhood in the Order of the Arrow as lasting,

and will seek to preserve a cheerful spirit, even in the midst of irksome tasks and weighty responsibilities,

and will endeavor, so far as in my power lies, to be unselfish in service and devotion to the welfare of others.

Order of the Arrow Official Song

Firm bound in brotherhood,
Gather the clan
That cheerful service brings
To fellow man.
Circle our council fire,
Weld tightly every link
That binds us in brotherhood,
Wimachtendienk.

Order of the Arrow Admonition

The Order of the Arrow Admonition was given to you by Allowat Sakima in your Ordeal ceremony. By tradition, it is not written down. Ask a brother Arrowman for help if you do not remember the admonition.

The Sign of Ordeal Membership

The hailing sign of the Ordeal is made with the right hand over the left shoulder moving as if drawing an arrow from a quiver.

The Arrow Handclasp

The handclasp is given with the left hand, as in the Scout handclasp, intertwining the third and fourth fingers.

The Customs and Traditions of the Ordeal

Questions and Answers

Q. Who is Kichkinet? Nutiket? Meteu? Allowat Sakima?

A. Kichkinet is your guide in the ceremonies. He symbolizes helpfulness and friendliness. Nutiket is the guard of the Circle. He upholds the tradition of cheerfulness. Meteu is the medicine man and representative of brotherhood. He reminds us of our need to love one another. Allowat Sakima, the mighty chief, symbolizes service. From him you accepted the Obligation of the Order.

Q. What tokens did the four ceremonial principals reveal to you in the pre-Ordeal, and what did they represent?

A. Nutiket gave the bow to Allowat Sakima as a token of liveliness and flexibility under stress, the principle of cheerfulness. Meteu gave the bowstring to Allowat Sakima as a token of the ties of Brotherhood also symbolized by the rope in the Ordeal ceremony. Allowat Sakima strung the bow uniting brotherhood and cheerfulness for service, and drew an arrow from the quiver as a token that your election separated you from your fellows for something higher. Allowat Sakima asked you to test the bow as a sign of willingness to test the dedication to Scout ideals which led to your election. Lastly, Kichkinet shot the arrow upward, symbolizing the pathway you will follow if your dedication is unwavering.

Q. What are the tests of the Ordeal, and what do they illustrate?

A. The night alone focuses attention on your need for courage and self-reliance on the trail ahead. You must be willing to accept individual responsibility for your thoughts and actions. You will find that your course will set you apart from your friends to the extent of isolation, but you must act according to your resolution regardless of what others do or fail to do.

Your pledge of silence emphasizes the continuing need for you to spend time in thoughtful silence. Difficult decisions will face you now and in the future, and you will need to search your heart and spirit deeply to find the resolution that will guide you onward successfully.

The scant food test illustrates self-denial. Often you will find it necessary to abandon mere personal comfort or desires if you are to fulfill your Obligation.

The day of work indicates your willingness to give service, even when this service involves hardship and toil. In the Ordeal, you worked with the help and cooperation of other candidates and members, but now you must be ready to serve without the help and cooperation of others.

Q. What are the three symbolic preparations for the Obligation?

A. Before you entered the circle, you placed your hand on the shoulder of the candidate ahead of you to indicate your intention to continue in service to your own Scout or Explorer unit. Kichkinet, seeing that you all had the same purpose, symbolized this bond of brotherhood by binding you all together with the rope. Finally, upon Allowat Sakima's direction, Kichkinet asked you to advance before the fire of cheerfulness.

Q. What is the tradition given us by Uncas as described in the legend?

A. The legend tells how the peaceful lives of the Lenni-Lenape Indians were threatened by neighboring tribes and distant enemies. Chief Chingachgook's call for volunteers to go and alert other villages of the tribe was met with apathy and indifference from tribal members. Uncas cheerfully offered his help despite the negative attitudes of everyone around him. He cared enough for others that he was willing to face hardship and danger to protect them from harm. Uncas clearly saw a higher vision, and his desire for his brothers was that they could see it, too. The self-sacrificing service given by Uncas and Chingachgook is said to have saved the tribe from annihilation.

Q. What is the significance of Allowat Sakima's description of the Arrow in the ordeal ceremony?

A. The chief stated that the various qualities attributed to the Arrow are ingredients of leadership. His discussion is a continuation of Meteu's comments about the Arrow in the pre-Ordeal. The Ordeal asks each one to act according to his highest sense of right, regardless of the attitudes or actions of others. The four tests and the Obligation point the way, and Allowat Sakima reveals this way as one of real leadership. Any member who understands his Obligation and is striving to fulfill it inevitably becomes a center of strength in his troop or post. His example sets the pace in cheerful service, and his dedication has a rich effect on those who know him. Although wearing the sash identifies a Scout as a member of the Order, it is his efforts to fulfill his Obligation that truly distinguishes him and provides others with glimpses of the Arrow.

Q. What is Ordeal membership?

A. Like the Ordeal, it is a time of trial, during which your understanding of the traditions of the Arrow will be put to the test. In the Ordeal ceremony, each advancement you made into the circle was challenged, but your resolution and faithfulness in time of testing enabled you to go forward. You will find this to be true also in the experiences ahead. By striving to fulfill your Obligation, you will provide the higher vision of Brotherhood, Cheerfulness, and Service to your fellow Scouts or Explorers, even as Uncas did for his tribe.

- Q. When are you ready to accept Brotherhood membership in the Order?**
- A.** Successfully meeting the demands of the Obligation is usually rather hard for the first several months. Gradually, however, your dedication to it will bring about changes that will make it easier for you. Eventually, the Spirit of Cheerful Service will become almost second nature to you, and you will be fulfilling the Obligation and hardly even thinking about it. As this experience develops, you are beginning to see the Arrow, and you are ready for the Brotherhood.

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