
Leadership Skills

Planning

If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail. Try to keep your plans simple.

- Planning gives direction to the program and keeps it focused on missions.
- Planning includes setting goals and developing ways to achieve those goals.
- Planning prevents calendar conflicts. Share your plans with the church office.

Goals are an important part of planning.

- Goals are specific, concrete, measurable, and have a time frame.
- Goals guide our actions, and direct us to the future.
- The goal is to have shared goals. (Involve boys and leaders in setting goals.)

Types of goals include:

- Short-range goals—from a day to a month
- Intermediate-range goals—from a month to a year
- Long-range goals—a year or more

Annual Planning:

Get all leaders involved in the planning process. Pray for God's leadership and wisdom as you develop your plans for RAs. Have at least five minutes of "anything goes" ideas. (Make plans with unlimited resources and leaders.)

Include these starter questions:

- What will we do with RAs this year?
- What "dream project" will we do?

Set priorities and goals for the year. Consider evangelism goals, enrollment goals, mission project/activity goals, Bible memory goals, advancement goals, leader recruitment goals, and training goals.

Use the resources below to help you develop an annual calendar for RAs.

- Church calendar (Vacation Bible School, children's ministry, children's choir, etc.)
- Associational calendar—Contact your association for associational RA events.
- State calendar—Contact your state office for state RA events.
- Royal Ambassador calendar—Visit the national RA Web site, www.royalambassadors.org.
- School calendar—Don't forget school holidays.

Monthly Planning:

Schedule a monthly meeting for leaders to pray and review the month's plans. Review the lesson plans in *Lad Leader* and *Crusader Leader* magazines.

- Pray for God's leadership and wisdom in your planning.
- Review plans for the month and make assignments.
- Ensure that you have the materials necessary for the weekly plans.
- Order magazines and materials needed for future months.
- Evaluate and adjust the schedule as necessary.
- Report monthly to the church about RA activities. (An RA Leader's Report form is provided in the RA Forms section)

Weekly Planning:

A successful meeting always begins with successful planning. Suggested lesson plans are found in *Lad Leader* and *Crusader Leader* magazines.

- Pray for current prospects as well as each person involved in RAs.
- Arrive early, be prepared, teach with confidence, and evaluate goals.

Flexibility

Great! You have made some plans for Royal Ambassadors. Remember the following proverb: "*Blessed are the flexible for they will not be bent out of shape.*" Below are some suggestions about being flexible.

Make Royal Ambassadors Enjoyable for Boys and Leaders

- Do not hesitate to make adjustments to the schedule or materials.
- If the boys are enjoying an activity and want to continue longer than the allotted time, then adjust the time for another part of the meeting.
- Modify activities for boys with special physical or other needs.
- Generally, the busier and more involved the boys are, the less apt they are to behave inappropriately. "*A busy boy is a better boy.*"
- Do not be afraid to ask someone to help in the meeting by assisting with one or two boys who need extra attention.
- Do not forget to thank your leaders and others who help with the RA ministry.

Evaluating and Reporting

How do you know if your RA ministry is successful? Are the boys learning how to be ambassadors for Christ? Are the boys and leaders enjoying their experiences?

Evaluating Plans:

After each meeting, or at least once a month, take time to evaluate the meetings with other leaders. Use the Meeting Evaluation Report form in the RA Forms section of this book to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the meetings and to plan future RA meetings.

Make several copies of the Weekly Meeting Plans and Meeting Evaluation Report forms (in the RA Forms section of this book) as two-sided pages, with one form on the front and the other on the back. This will allow you to have your meeting plans and meeting evaluation in the same place. You can also make two-sided copies of the Mission Project/Activity Plan Sheet and the Mission Project/Activity Evaluation and Report Sheet located in the RA Forms section of this book. Keep these sheets in a notebook and continue creating a great tool for an annual evaluation report.

Reporting Your RA Ministry:

Each month, submit a report to the church that provides information about the RA ministry. RA leaders should submit a copy of the RA Leader's Report (found in the RA Forms section of this book) to the RA ministry leader. The RA ministry leader can compile the information received from these reports and send a final report to the church.

Another way you can report about the activity of your RA chapter is to send a short "digital picture" story about things your RAs have been doing, "action shots" of the RA boys doing a mission project or other activities to royalambassadors@namb.net. Please send high-resolution digital photos (at least 300 dpi). Boys can also send art and jokes to *Lad* and *Crusader* magazines. Information included in the magazines explains how boys can do this.

Budgeting

One of the ways the church can support Royal Ambassadors is to include RAs in the church's budget. Consider the following suggestions when establishing a budget for the Royal Ambassador program at your church:

- Pray—Seek God's wisdom and guidance in establishing an RA budget.
- Set Goals—Use the Goals for Royal Ambassadors planning sheet in the RA Forms section of this book.
- Determine Expenses—Ask for a report that lists expenses from previous years.
- Estimate Expenses—Use the Budget Plans form in the RA Forms section of this book.

- Track Ministry Expenses and Income–Submit all receipts and checks or cash received.
- Submit RA Reports–Submit reports to the church so everyone knows what the RAs are doing.

Most budgets are viewed and submitted as a “lump sum” amount. Another way to view and submit the budget proposal for the RA ministry is to calculate the amount needed on a per boy basis. The goals you have for the RA ministry should be reflected in the RA ministry budget and stated when you submit the budget proposal for consideration to the church.

As a general rule of thumb, budget at least \$100 for each boy per year to cover the following expenses: monthly magazines for boys and leaders, RA vests, awards, and teaching supplies. This amount does not include expenses for attending RA camp or interest activities such as campouts. Consider conducting fund-raisers or asking the senior men of the church to sponsor a boy to help offset expenses for large events such as RA camp.

Securing Resources

Consider the following suggestions as you prayerfully seek to secure resources for Royal Ambassadors. Many of these suggestions can assist in stretching your RA budget.

- Pray–Seek God's wisdom and leadership in locating affordable items.
- Trust God and Tell the People–Ask members if they know anyone who could help.
- Post Needs in Bulletin–Plan ahead in securing items.
- Be Watchful–Keep an eye out for items you could use. (Check at garage sales and flea markets.)
- Search for Online Deals–Sometimes lower prices are advertised online.
- Seek Discounts and Donations–Visit local stores and ask to speak to the managers. Share with them who you are and what you are planning to do with the items you need. Often, managers will discount items or possibly have you complete a donation form and give the items as a corporate donation. Plan far enough in advance to take advantage of this.

Communicating

Today we are living in the information age. People are constantly receiving various messages and evaluating the messages based on their values. Communication is the process of a messenger sending a message through the use of a medium or channel (face-to-face conversation, e-mail, phone, letter, etc.) to a receiver. Effective communication involves an active receiver listening and giving feedback concerning facts and feelings. Listed below are some methods of communication:

- Announcements
- Handouts
- Mailers
- E-mail
- Church bulletin
- Posters
- Bulletin boards
- Web page

Motivating

Motivation is the energy we have to do things. Technically, leaders don't motivate anybody. Enthusiasm and a positive attitude help create a positive climate for others. Leaders strive to inform, open doors of service, and model ministry for others. The Holy Spirit guides the believer's actions. As leaders, we need to pray that God will continue to motivate the boys to respond to His invitations. Listed below are some methods used by leaders to motivate Royal Ambassadors:

- Give verbal praise for the positive actions you observe in the boy's life.
- Recognize a boy's accomplishments soon after he completes the task.
- Plan exciting events that have boy appeal.
- Set attainable goals that challenge each age group.
- Provide consistent and fair leadership.
- Use visual records (RA Advancement, attendance charts) and awards (Advancement, Bible memory, Campcraft patches) to encourage and motivate boys.
- Implement motivational award systems. (Short-term award systems are most effective.)

Mediating

Conflicts are inevitable; therefore, mediators are needed. Effective leaders know that differences can enrich a group if conflict is dealt with constructively. Consequently, leaders learn to mediate conflicts over facts and to listen carefully as combatants vent differences involving feelings. Moses is a good biblical example of a mediator (see Exodus). Jesus Christ is our Mediator, interceding to God on our behalf. Listed below are some conflict resolution skills:

- Use attentive listening skills.
- Allow the boys to express their point of view without judgment.
- Allow the boys to express their opinion concerning a resolution.
- Allow the boys to agree on a resolution.