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Running a Demo in Trimaris

A basic guide to preparing for, presenting and following up after SCA demos in Trimaris.

Step 1: Fill out the demo status form.

http://www.trimaris.org/demo_status_form

Step 2: Familiarize yourself with the SCA Demo Policy.

<http://www.sca.org/officers/chatelain/demopolicy.html>

Step 3: Fighting at your demo.

If you will have fighting at your demo, do you have a marshal in charge? This and policies on fighting at demos, handling armor and handling weapons are covered in the demo policy.

<http://www.sca.org/officers/chatelain/demopolicy.html>

Step 4: Would you like SCA bookmarks to distribute at your demo?

If so, how many would you like? We can make sure these get to you. Please let us know which events you will be attending between now and your demo and also provide the Hospitaller or Demo Deputy with your mailing address in case they will need to send your bookmarks by post.

Step 5: Consider your needs.

- If the demo will be held outside, you will likely need to provide tents and may need to bring your own tables.
- Draft a list of your needs and solicit help from your local group and officers if you are having trouble filling your needs.
- Draft a list of how many volunteers you will need for set-up, the demo period and tear down.

Step 6: Solicit volunteers from your local group.

- Ask for help from the local marshall, arts and science officer, herald, seneschall or any other officer or local who may be able to assist.
- Remember that you may need specific help with setup and teardown of your demo.
- Be sure to consider your audience and solicit appropriate volunteers. Work to find volunteers who will work best with the audience to whom you will be presenting.
- Let your volunteers know what kind of audience they will be dealing with so they can bring age appropriate crafts or consider additional safety features for the demo.
- Ask your volunteers to review **Recruiting and Retention Basics for the SCA** and consider these ideas and concepts when approaching the demo.

Step 7: Prepare a guestbook. Simple guestbook sheets can be created that collect information from interested demo-goers. Try to collect the following information:

- Name:
- Email Address:
- City:
- Zip Code:
- Interests:
- Which SCA member or members were helpful today:

Step 8: Demo setup.

- Make sure to check in with the school office or demo contact for the group requesting your demo when you arrive.
- Put up your tents or tables at your demo location. Cover tables and mundane objects to create an attractive and medieval-looking space for your demo.
- Review what arts, crafts, fighting or other demonstrations that you have and make sure each has their own space and enough people for staffing.
- Brief your volunteers on the plan for the day and set up shifts so that volunteers can take short breaks to eat or rest if needed.

Step 9: The demo.

- Have a good time and show your guests why you love the SCA. Your enthusiasm is infectious.
- Greet guests who enter the demo area. Engage the guests and ask them what their interests are so you can properly direct them or just suggest they browse around the demo area. Thanks visitors as they leave.
- Put the guestbook out somewhere obvious and remind your volunteers to suggest signing the guestbook to visitors who seem interested or excited.

Step 10: After the demo.

- Pack Up: After the demo is torn down and packed up, make sure to check in with your demo contact to let them know you are leaving.
- Get in Contact: Within a few days give the guestbook to your local hospitaller, seneschal or whoever else will be making contact with your interested visitors. Make sure to contact interested visitors in a prompt fashion. Invite them to a local meeting or local

class night based on what interests they listed in the guestbook. If an interested visitor lives far away or within the boundaries of another local group, share their information with their local hospitaller or officers. Help to make finding and attending SCA meetings, classes and events as easy as possible for potential members.

- After Demo Report: Fill out the After Demo Report. Let us know approximately how many visitors your demo worked with, how many guestbook responses you received, who your volunteers were, if any were particularly helpful and what your plan is for getting in contact with your interested visitors. Also let us know if you need any help with follow up.
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Recruiting and Retention Basics for the SCA

The SCA is an international organization dedicated to researching and re-creating the arts and skills of pre-17th-century Europe. As a 501(c)(3) non profit organization, one of the goals of the SCA is to educate the public about the arts and skills of medieval life.

Some considerations for effective recruiting:

Demos give us the opportunity to display crafts, martial arts and other aspects of medieval life to the public. Usually, demos are requested by groups which are already interested in or focused on arts and skills which we practice and thus are 'target-rich' environments for us to find potential SCA members.

- **Know your audience:**

Consider the potential audience for each demonstration and work to tailor the demonstration to be attractive and useful to the audience.

- **Staff the demo with care:**

The SCA can appeal to a wide range of people and interests but each demo should be considered individually when considering which volunteers would be best to staff a demo. Like attracts like and people often seek out those who seem to have similar interests, knowing that they will be interesting in conversations or even a potential new friend.

- A demo for a younger or school aged group is well served by volunteer staff more used to working with children. Teachers and those who regularly work with young people will be more effective in dealing with a school aged demo and will have an easier time answering questions because they are more likely to know what to expect.
- A demo for a older or senior group will be more effective when utilizing older SCA members who may share a connection of age or interest with the audience. Crafts and martial arts that would appeal to the audience can be selected to make both our educational value and recruiting opportunity more effective.
- Not everyone is right for every demo and that is ok. Find creative ways to use volunteers who might not be appropriate for the target demo audience. Those

who might not be best to talk to a group may be willing to help set-up or tear down your demo or prep items you can use at the demo.

- **Have an attractive demo:**

An attractive, clean and organized space is more approachable for a visitor. Even a single-table demo can achieve this by using appropriate table coverings, displays and well dressed volunteers. If providing a large, multi-tent demonstration work to cover up mundane items like coolers and portable tables. Ask volunteers to dress appropriately or in their court garb. Create a space you would be proud to hang-out in at an SCA event and visitors will be dazzled.

- **Be approachable:**

Greet visitors to your demo warmly and give them the reception you would want when approaching a new group that you think might be interesting. Talking to your friends and fellow SCAdians during the demo is, of course, allowed and even encouraged. However, make sure to stop and give interested visitors an opportunity to talk to demo volunteers.

- Some basics of customer service can go a long way toward making a visitor feel welcome and comfortable to express their interests or ask their questions. Be friendly, polite and positive while you let your passion for the SCA shine.
 - Greet visitors.
 - Introduce yourself and your craft or display.
 - Ask visitors if they have any questions.
 - Answer visitor questions.
 - Suggest other crafts or displays at the demo which might also be of interest.
 - Invite visitors to sign the guestbook to get more information.
 - Thank visitors for their time.
- Be careful not to be pushy. If a visitor seems like they are no longer interested or uncomfortable, provide them an out to end the conversation. Be polite, smile and let a visitor walk away when they are done, even if you feel you have more to say.

- **Have a guestbook:**

A guestbook gives people an easy way to indicate their interest no matter how shy they may be. In the guestbook ask for information that will help you in approaching them later.

- Ask for the visitor's name, contact information, city of residence, zip code, possible medieval interests and if they worked with any SCA volunteer in particular who really helped them.

- **Follow up with contact leads:**

Visitors who leave contact information are interested in some aspect of the SCA. Contact every visitor who leaves their contact information and when doing so consider what interests they listed in their guestbook entry.

- If a visitor indicates that they live within the boundaries of another group, contact them to let them know they are welcome at your local events, meetings and classes but also let them know about opportunities that may be closer to them. Copy the Hospitaller of their local group when you send the email and make sure to explain why you are copying someone else and then introduce their local

contact in your email.

- **Be welcoming:**

When interested visitors come to a meeting, a class, a local event or a revel, make sure to welcome them. Introduce yourself to new people and allow them to introduce themselves. Ask what their interests are and help to connect them with the people that might be helpful for them to learn more.

Some considerations for retaining new visitors and recruits:

Newcomers are often enthusiastic and excited about the SCA but meeting new people, developing a persona, learning history, developing a kit and finding places to fit in or excel can seem daunting. By providing good information, basic assistance, being welcoming and creating opportunities to fit in and meet new people, we make the SCA a more inviting place for new members.

- **Provide opportunities for meetups:**

Publicize your upcoming events, meetings, classes and revels and send invitations to people who are new. Make sure your local website and calendar are up to date with information and provide addresses and/or directions to upcoming venues.

- **Be welcoming:**

When interested visitors come to a meeting, a class, a local event or a revel, make sure to welcome them. Introduce yourself to new people and allow them to introduce themselves. Ask what their interests are and help to connect them with the people that might be helpful for them to learn more.

- **Provide knowledge:**

New members of any group want to make a good impression and are afraid of making a mistake that might be embarrassing or make them look unknowledgeable. Present newcomer classes at events and hand out newcomer information packets to your new members. Provide your new members with knowledge about our group and customs and opportunities to learn more. Web resources and members of your local group may be of assistance so consider all the options for providing information.

- **Reassure and introduce:**

Make sure to let newcomers know that they aren't expected to dress perfectly or know everything about SCA culture. Introduce newcomers to people you know so they will have more friendly faces in the crowd at events, revels, meetings and classes.

- **Provide loaner clothing and equipment:**

The SCA can be a big investment for someone getting started and can put off potential members who are daunted by investing in a hobby in which they haven't made up their mind. Work with your local group to provide loaner garb or supplies for newcomers to use. Gold Key items give newcomers an opportunity to 'try before they buy'.

- Try to make your Gold Key clothing items attractive. Provide loaner items that are freshly cleaned, free from stains and tears, and that are at least a little attractive to wear. No one likes to be seen in ugly clothing and a poor looking outfit can make a newcomer feel out of place and uncomfortable. Help to make new

members comfortable with their environment and appearance.

- **Assist with kit development:**

New members will need lots of things. Garb, feast gear, supplies for crafts, armour and more are easier to create and less daunting to develop with help. Find out what new members need and help to pair them up with people who might be able to help them, resources for more information, instructions or even vendors who provide things they want or need.

- Consider the budget of your newcomer. College students or anyone on a restricted income simply won't have the money to buy expensive fabrics and perfect replicas. Work with others to find creative solutions to assist with making a decent looking kit that won't break the bank. Suggest places to find inexpensive fabrics or kit. Yard sales, thrift stores and people who have a garage full of SCA 'stuff' they have not used in years can all be useful in helping newcomers develop their kit.

- **Provide volunteer opportunities:**

Most new people will be excited and will want to help. Work with local officers and event staff to find out what jobs need to be done and then determine if these are jobs in which new members can participate.

- Ask new members for their interests and try to pair them up with the right volunteer service.
- Provide proper instructions for volunteer work and don't just have newcomers do the dishes after feast or sweep a hall. You can ask them to help set up or decorate a pavilion or hall or to join you in tasks like working gate and reservations. Teach newcomers your job and next time you need a volunteer you are more likely to have a willing and already trained person to help you.

- **Check in:**

Every so often, check in with newcomers you have met. Ask them how things are going, if they have found new interests, and if they have questions or need help.

Learn more

Check out this five part series on recruiting and membership retention for the SCA by Sir Kyppyn Kirkcaldy

- Part 1: <http://youtu.be/64UzvDZB9DM>
 - Part 2: <http://youtu.be/QgkixKEJObI>
 - Part 3: <http://youtu.be/qyrCQ4ZIlrA>
 - Part 4: <http://youtu.be/UdKcGqyNwXk>
 - Part 5: <http://youtu.be/gS5KdH1bKAK>
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Sample Guestbook Page

Name	
Email Address	
Home City	
Zip Code	
Interests	
Which SCA member or members were helpful today	
Name	
Email Address	
Home City	
Zip Code	
Interests	
Which SCA member or members were helpful today	

Post Demo Report

Post demo reports help us to determine how effective our demos are and helps us to provide better support for local demos

Demo Organizer name	
Demo Organizer SCA name	
Demo Organizer email address	
When was your demo?	
Where was your demo?	

For what group and/or event was your demo conducted?	
What sort of audience attended your demo?	
About how many people came to or through your demo area?	
How many visitors signed the guestbook?	
How many volunteers did you have for your demo?	
Were any of your volunteers particularly helpful or noteworthy? Please tell us of any volunteers for your demo that were especially helpful and why.	
Were there any problems with visitors, group contacts or volunteers about which we should know? Please list and describe all issues or problems.	
For future demos, is there anything additional that the Kingdom of Trimaris can provide for support?	
Is there anything else you would like to report?	

Request a Demo

Requesting a demo does not guarantee that the SCA, Kingdom of Trimaris or local branches thereof will be able to fulfill your request although we will make every effort to do so. Please request demos as far in advance as possible. Our state level and local level demo contacts and staff members are all volunteers. Advance notice will help us to provide the best possible demo

for your group or event.

Group requesting demo	
Group contact name	
Group contact email	
Group contact phone number	
When is the event for which you are requesting this demo? Please list all days and times.	
Where is the event for which you are requesting the demo. Please provide name of school or location along with a physical address and zip code.	
For what sort of event are you requesting a demo?	
How many people should we expect at the requested demo?	
Who is the expected audience at this event? Children, families, adults, etc	
Have you worked with the SCA on demos before? If so, when and where?	
Are there any particular points of medieval life on which your event is focused?	
Are there any particular points of the SCA or medieval life you would like highlighted at the requested demo.	
Is there anything else you would like us to know about your event or group?	
Additional comments or message?	