



# Youth & Parents Introduction to Boy Scouting

As a compass keeps a hiker going in the right direction, Scouting's values put young people on the right path. For almost 100 years, Scouting has provided an "internal compass" guiding millions of young people throughout their lives.

## **A PREDILECTION FOR SUCCESS**

For every 100 boys who join a Boy Scout Troop:

- Five will earn their religious emblem.
- Twelve will have their first contact with a church or synagogue.
- Three will enter the clergy or a religious vocation.
- Eighteen will develop hobbies that will last through their adult life.
- Eight will enter a career that was learned through the merit badge system.
- One will use his Scout skills to save the life of another.
- Two will use their Scout skills to save their own life.
- Twenty-one will become adult Scouting volunteers.
- Four will become Eagle Scouts

## **THE AIMS & METHODS OF SCOUTING**

### **Aims**

Boy Scouting works towards three aims:

One is growth in moral strength and character. We may define this as what the boy is himself; his personal qualities, his values, his outlook.

A second is participating in citizenship. Used broadly, citizenship means the boy's relationship to others. He comes to learn obligations to other people, to the society he lives in, and to the government that presides over that society.

A third aim of Boy Scouting is development of physical, mental, and emotional fitness. Fitness includes the body (well-tuned and healthy), the mind (able to think and solve problems), and the emotions (self-control, courage, and self-respect).

## **Methods**

The methods are designed to accomplish these aims. It is important that you know and use the methods of Boy Scouting. Other methods are good, but they may bring results quite different than we are seeking.

### **1. Advancement**

Scouting provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps to overcome them through the advancement method. The Scout plans his advancement and progresses at his own pace as he overcomes each challenge. The Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a boy grow in self-reliance and the ability to help others.

### **2. Ideals**

The ideals of Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, and Slogan. The Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and as he reaches for them he has some control over what he becomes.

### **3. Patrols**

The patrol method gives Scouts an experience in group living and participating in citizenship. It places a certain amount of responsibility on young shoulders and teaches boys how to accept it. The patrol method allows Scouts to act in small groups where they easily can relate to each other. These small groups determine Troop activities through their elected representatives.

### **4. Outdoors**

Boy Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoors that Scouts share responsibilities and learn to live with each other. It is here that the skills and activities practiced at Troop meetings come alive with purpose.

Being close to nature helps Scouts gain an appreciation for God's handiwork and mankind's place in it. The outdoors is the laboratory for Scouts to learn ecology and practice conservation of nature's resources.

### **5. Adult Association**

Boys learn from the examples set by their adult leaders. Troop leadership may be male or female, and association with adults of high character is encouraged at this stage of a young man's development.

## **6. Personal Growth**

As Scouts plan their activities, and progress towards their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. There probably is no device so successful in developing a basis for personal growth as the daily Good Turn.

The religious emblems program is also a large part of the personal growth method. Frequent conferences with his Scoutmaster help each Scout to determine growth toward Scouting's aims.

## **7. Leadership Development**

Boy Scouting encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership situations. Understanding the concepts of leadership helps a boy accept the leadership roles of others and guides him toward the citizenship aim of Scouting.

## **8. Uniform**

The uniform makes the Scout Troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Boy Scouting is an action program, and wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform gives the Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals.

The uniform is practical attire for Scout activities, and provides a way for Scouts to wear the badges that show what they have accomplished.

# **ADVANCEMENT**

We believe that a Scout should receive recognition for his achievements.

Advancement sets a pattern of setting positive goals and reaching them throughout life. It's easy to advance by following these four basic steps:

Learning

Review

## **RANK ADVANCEMENT**

Scout skills cannot be mastered by performing them just once. You will have many opportunities to practice each skill, and you will be thoroughly tested on each requirement before it is "signed off". In addition, expect to practice each skill repeatedly, even after it has been signed off. As you progress, you will also have opportunities to teach these skills to less experienced Scouts, which will further reinforce your knowledge and skill.

As you complete each requirement, you will be tested and signed off in the BACK section of your handbook by the Scoutmaster or by someone he designates. This person may be The Scoutmaster, an Assistant Scoutmaster, or another, more experienced Scout, designated by the Scoutmaster.

In Boy Scouts, leaders, rather than parents, sign off advancement requirements. In order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, in most Troops, Troop leaders will not normally sign off rank requirements for their own sons. Infrequent exceptions may be made in the case of a leader who is teaching skills to several Scouts at once at a patrol or Troop meeting or other Scouting function, but every effort should be made to have another leader sign off the instructing leader's sons if possible.

## **ADVANCEMENT GUIDELINES**

It's up to you to take advantage of the advancement opportunities available to you, and to take initiative to ask for someone to test you when you are ready. You are responsible for keeping your own personal advancement record in your handbook. You should also record your service hours, campouts, Troop activities, and leadership positions in your binder.

You must earn the ranks in order, but you may complete any requirement for Tenderfoot through First Class at any time. (For example, you may complete a First Class requirement before finishing your Tenderfoot requirements, but you must earn Tenderfoot rank before you are awarded Second Class and First Class ranks.)

You will be meeting regularly with the Scoutmaster to discuss your activity in the Troop and your understanding and practice of the ideals of Scouting. This

Scoutmaster conference is also used to discuss your goals and accomplishments and is required for each rank advancement.

You do not have to wait until you have completed the requirements for a rank in order to ask for a Scoutmaster conference. You may talk with the Scoutmaster at any time that is convenient to both of you. However, for a Scoutmaster conference to count toward rank advancement it must take place after all other requirements are complete and before the Board of Review. At this required conference the Scoutmaster will also help you determine whether or not you are ready to go before the Board of Review.

After this Scoutmaster conference, you should arrange for your Board of Review following the procedures your Troop has established. Boards of Review for all ranks except Eagle Scout, are normally held once a month, and are composed of three to six registered members of the Troop committee. The Board of Review may not include the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, or your family members.

The purpose of the Board of Review is not to retest you but rather to ensure that you have completed all of the requirements, to determine the quality of your Troop experience, and to encourage you to advance toward the next rank.

You need to have your Handbook and binder and must be in full Class A uniform when you appear before a Board of Review. During the review the board will discuss your development along your trail to Eagle, ask you questions about skills that were required for your particular rank, and evaluate you in terms of Troop activities and readiness for the next rank.

It is also a time for you to ask any questions you might have and to give feedback to the Troop committee about activities and your Scouting experience in your Troop and in your patrol. At the end of the review you will be asked to leave the room while the board discusses your qualifications. The board will then call you back into the room and inform you either that you have been approved for the next rank or what additional actions you must take to qualify.

After passing the Board of Review, you will be recognized in front of the Troop as soon as possible. You will receive your new rank patch shortly after, usually at the next Troop meeting. You will be formally recognized for your rank advancements and merit badges in front of family and friends during a ceremony at a Court of Honor. At this time you will be presented with your wallet-sized certificate card and, if your Troop presents them, a rank pin ("mother's pin"). Your parents, other

family members, and friends are invited and encouraged to attend all Courts of Honor.

After reaching the rank of Life Scout, you will meet with the Scoutmaster. At this meeting you will receive your Life to Eagle packet and discuss ideas and suggestions for your Eagle Service Project. This project must conform to special guidelines that have been outlined by the Boy Scouts of America. Your Scoutmaster, Troop Advancement Chairman, and a representative of your District Advancement Committee, as well as the benefiting organization, must approve your project before you begin carrying it out.

## **Merit Badges**

Earning merit badges allows you to explore many fields, helps you round out your skills, and introduces you to subjects that will perhaps become lifelong interests or a rewarding career.

There are more than 100 merit badges for you to choose from. You may earn any merit badge at any time, with Scoutmaster approval. Don't wait for someone to tell you when and which merit badge to work on. You don't need to reach a certain rank in order to be eligible. However, you should concentrate on achieving the rank of First Class before devoting a lot of time to working on merit badges.

Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to complete too many badges at one time.

You can find information about merit badge requirements in the appropriate merit badge pamphlets and in the current year's Boy Scout Requirements book.

Here are the steps to earning a merit badge:

Get a blue merit badge card from the Scoutmaster, fill in your name, address, and the name of the badge, and ask the Scoutmaster to sign it. Then get the name and phone number of a qualified counselor from Scoutmaster.

Call the counselor and set up an appointment. This can be at any place that is suitable to both of you. Along with a buddy (another Scout, a family member, or a friend), meet with the counselor. (The two-deep leadership requirement applies to meetings with Merit Badge Counselors, as well.) The counselor will explain the requirements for the merit badge and help you get started.

Work on the badge requirements until you complete them, meeting with the counselor (along with your buddy) whenever necessary. You must complete the

stated requirements and satisfy the standards of each merit badge. The merit badge counselor may encourage you to do more than the requirements state but he or she may not require it.

YOU (not the counselor, Scoutmaster, or Advancement Chairman) keep the merit badge card until you have completed the requirements and the counselor has signed the card. If you lose this card, you will have to start the badge over unless the counselor is willing and able to vouch for what you have already completed.

After you complete the merit badge and the counselor signs your merit badge card, he or she will keep the counselor's section and return the rest of the card to you. Bring the rest of the card to the Scoutmaster, who will keep the Troop section and return the Scout section to you.

You will receive your merit badge shortly after you turn in the blue card (usually the next Troop meeting). Your wallet-sized certificate card will be presented to you at the next Court of Honor.

## **Record Keeping**

Your advancement records are kept in three places — your Council office, the Troop records, and yourself. The Council office keeps records supplied to them by the Troop. Many Troops maintain their advancement information on computers.

You will receive three kinds of documents that you need to keep in a safe place until after you turn 18 (or receive your Eagle Scout award, whichever is later)! These documents are: your scout handbook with requirements signed off, your portion of completed blue merit badge cards, and the wallet-sized certificate cards for rank advancement and merit badge completion.

Make sure all of them are signed or initialed by the appropriate Scout leader. All of the cards are the same size and can be safely kept in plastic protector pages which are designed for baseball and other sports cards.

It is very important that you keep these documents in a safe place and do not lose them! If it should happen that there is a discrepancy or missing records, your personal records are your most important ally in proving what you completed and when.

## **Troop Guidelines**

1. National Council's Advancement Policies & Procedures, #33088, revision current year shall be the governing document with regard to advancement.
2. "Active participation" see the Troop 295 By Laws.
3. Attendance at a Troop meeting means being in full Scout uniform to pass inspection.

## **Leadership Evaluation**

Junior Leaders are evaluated based on the following criteria:

### **Responsibility**

- Is conscientious.
- Follows directions
- Can be counted on to do assigned tasks
- Does required tasks to the best of his ability.
- Displays honesty by words and actions
- Takes responsibility for own actions
- Takes care of equipment and resources
- Respects the property of others

### **Leadership**

- Sets a good example by personal behavior...
- Exhibits good communication skills
- Delegates work effectively and appropriately.
- Checks to make sure that assigned tasks are done
- Treats others fairly and impartially.

- Promotes teamwork and cooperation.
- Works along with those he leads.
- Acts safely and appropriately.
- Continually reinforces his knowledge of skills.
- Effectively teaches skills to others.
- Keeps required records.
- Submits reports on time.

### **Attitude**

- Is polite and courteous to other Scouts and leaders.
- Does required tasks cheerfully.
- Is clean and neat in habits and behavior.
- Displays a positive attitude.
- Wears Scout uniform when required.

### **Interpersonal Relations**

- Shows concern for the well-being of others.
- Recognizes and respects the individual differences of others
- Shows respect for other living things.

### **The Scout Oath or Promise**

On my honor, I will do my best  
to do my duty to God and my Country,  
and to Obey the Scout Law,  
To help other people at all times,  
To keep myself Physically Strong,  
Mentally Awake, and Morally Straight.

Just forty words. The Scout Oath is just forty words long, but in these concise phrases are the values and ethical standards that have molded generations of boys into a special breed of men; responsible and responsive, capable of leadership, yet trained in teamwork, able to adapt and face the changing challenges of their times. The unique strength of the Scout ethic is that it remains as relevant today as it was in 1910. And, if ever there was a need to develop men who can overcome challenges, it is now. Our world is changing faster than ever before, for both good and bad. The seeds of the future are already sewn. What the BSA does for each boy, it does for the man he will become. In doing so, Scouting paves the way for individuals along the road of life.