
Boy Scout Interest Topics

LET'S TALK ABOUT VENTURING

Time Available

10 minutes

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the role of Venturing as part of the overall Scouting program.
2. Understand how youth can participate in both Boy Scouting and Venturing.
3. Understand the differences between the two.
4. Work with more experienced youth to keep them interested.

Suggested Presenter(s)

Experienced Venturing crew Advisors and members of the district or council level Venturing Officers Association (VOA) would be ideal facilitators for this interest topic.

Presentation Method

Discuss how the methods of Venturing differ from Boy Scouting. Discuss how adult leaders interact with the youth. Emphasize that youth leaders drive the crew operation even more than they do in a troop or team. Point out and explain the obvious differences, namely that Venturing is coed in its design and implementation, and it has a unique appeal for many older youth. Have unit leaders share their experiences and their concerns about Venturing. The presentation should start with a general understanding of what Venturing is and how it functions.

BSA Reference Materials

- *Venturing Youth Handbook*, No. 619088
- *Venturing Advisor Guidebook*, No. 618768
- *Venturing TRUST Award Handbook*, No. 33154
- *Quest Handbook: Venturing Sports and Fitness Award*, No. 33151
- *BSA Fieldbook*, No. 34006

Presentation Content

• What Is Venturing?

- Venturing is a youth development program of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women who are 14 years of age OR 13 years of age and have completed the eighth grade and under 21 years of age.

- Venturing's purpose is to provide positive experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults.
- Venturing is based on a unique and dynamic relationship between youth, adult leaders, and organizations in their communities. Local community organizations establish a Venturing crew by matching their people and program resources to the interests of young people in the community. The result is a program of exciting and meaningful activities that helps youth pursue their special interests, grow, develop leadership skills, and become good citizens.
- Venturing crews can specialize in a variety of avocation or hobby interests. Focus areas include the outdoors and high adventure, religious life, sports, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).
- Venturing is NOT Boy Scouting in a different shirt and with girls.

• Aims and Methods of Venturing

- The aims of Venturing are the same as the rest of the Boy Scouts of America: to build character, develop citizenship, and foster personal fitness.
- The methods of Venturing differ from Boy Scouting, just like the methods of Boy Scouting differ from Cub Scouting. They are age- and stage-appropriate, emphasizing the growth and potential of the young men and women in Venturing crews.

Leadership and mentoring. All Venturers are given opportunities to learn and apply proven leadership skills. A Venturing crew is led by elected crew officers. The Venturing Leadership Skills Course is designed for all Venturers and helps teach them in an active way to lead effectively. Mentoring represents one of the leadership approaches of Venturing, both for Venturers and their adult Advisors. Venturers guide other Venturers in the delivery of program and adventure; Advisors work largely as mentors to guide and encourage Venturers.

Group activities and adventure. Venturing activities are interdependent group experiences in which success is dependent on the cooperation of all. "Learning by doing" in a group setting provides opportunities for developing new skills. Venturing's emphasis on high adventure and sports helps provide team-building opportunities, new meaningful experiences, practical leadership application, and lifelong memories to young adults.

Adult association. The youth officers lead the crew. The officers and activity chairs work closely with adult Advisors and other adult leaders in a spirit of partnership. The adults serve in a "shadow" leader capacity.

Recognition. Recognition comes through the Venturing advancement program and through the acknowledgment of a youth's competence and ability by peers and adults.

The ideals. Venturers are expected to know and live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law. They promise to be faithful in religious duties, treasure their American heritage, help others, and seek truth and fairness.

Service encourages youth to identify a community need and to take action to address that need. Service helps youth make a difference in the world beyond themselves and, in the process, develop the disposition to put the needs of others first. Throughout its history, members of the Boy Scouts of America have provided service to others, and asserting service as one of the methods of Venturing emphasizes its critical role in the movement.

A Boy Scout who is of the appropriate age to consider Venturing may be looking to spend more time with his peers in school and in the community. Those peers may include young women. He may be looking to challenge himself with more advanced outdoor skills or a deeper interest in the world around him.

- **How Adults Work With Venturers**

- Setting a good example, by the Scout Oath and Law, which for some crew members may be a new concept
- Mentoring relationship, with the youth leaders doing most of the work

- **How Youth Lead the Crew**

- Teaching others is a basic piece of the advancement and recognition program, and is part of the leadership and mentoring method of the program.
- Adults are generally in the background. Adults who have special skills that the crew wishes to learn can be brought in as consultants to help the crew with an activity.

- **Venturing is a coed program.**

- Just as young men are looking for the next challenge, young women are also looking to grow and develop in a quality program.
- Venturing crews can be set up to be single-sex (male only or female only) or coed. The choice is up to the crew members.
- Young men and young women develop at different rates, and it is often the case that young women take the lead in planning and running crew activities once they become comfortable with the program.
- Having a place where young men and young women can work together on activities they plan is a selling point of the program.

- **A Boy Scout can be in a troop and a crew.**

- Dual registration is an option.
- If a young man reaches First Class in Boy Scouting, he can continue on advancing toward Eagle while in a Venturing crew.
- Positions in Venturing do count for leadership positions requirements for Star, Life, Eagle, and Palms. Coordination between the troop and the crew will be needed when a Scout is dual-registered.
- Teaching skills is a major piece of the Venturing program, and Venturers are a great resource for helping Scouts learn skills.

- **"You're stealing my boys!"**

- A concern for many Scoutmasters is that anything that is outside of the troop meeting is a threat to take boys away from Scouting. This always seems to include Venturing, the Order of the Arrow, Explorers, and in some cases Varsity Scouting.
- Boy Scouting and Venturing can help young people with the ability to manage and prioritize activities, as well as to advocate for their own likes and interests. A good Scout leader will encourage a young man to stretch his potential, and let him try other opportunities in Scouting.

- **Remember what the mission of Scouting is.**

- To help young people be able to make ethical choices in their daily lives using the principles of the Scout Oath and Law. Venturing may help a young man to continue developing that ability.
- It is not necessarily to keep your troop numbers up.

- **Advancement in Venturing**

- Age- and stage-appropriate
- Builds on previously developed skills and stretches Venturers to organize and lead crew activities as well as teach others
- The Summit Award is the highest award in Venturing and involves more work than earning the Eagle Scout rank.

- **Achievement in Venturing**

- The Ranger Award recognizes advanced proficiency in outdoor skills and in teaching those skills to others.
- The Quest Award recognizes interest in sports and physical activity. It develops lifelong habits in personal health and exercise.

— The TRUST award recognizes advanced interest in religious life and social awareness. Many faith-based sponsors and youth ministries encourage work toward the TRUST award to help youth grow in their religious beliefs.

- **High Adventure**

— Even crews that are formed around interests in careers or STEM are encouraged to get outdoors and to plan high-adventure activities as a long-term program goal.

— Venturing crews frequently get better chances at attending Philmont, Florida Sea Base, and the Summit, as those facilities are looking to attract young men and women in that age range. Many of them eventually return to high-adventure bases as staff.

— For many Venturers, this may be their first opportunity to do something more than backyard camping.

- **Leadership Opportunities**

— Venturers also have the opportunity to attend NAYLE at Philmont or at the Summit, just like their peers in Scout troops.

— Many Venturers are invited back to teach due to their maturity and experience in crew leadership.