



The Aims and Methods of Scouting

The Aims of Scouting

The goal of the Boy Scouts of America is to help boys develop into honorable men. Every Scouting activity moves toward these three aims.

Character Development

Character encompasses a boy's personal qualities, values, and outlook. Scouting strives to help a boy grow in the following ways:

- He becomes confident but is not conceited.
- He is honest with himself and others.
- His personal appearance shows that he respects himself.
- He develops special skills and interests.
- He can take care of himself, especially in emergencies.
- He can be counted upon to do his best, even in difficult situations.
- He practices his religious beliefs.
- He respects other people regardless of their differences.

Citizenship Training

The Scouting program allows boys to practice good citizenship by living and working among others in a troop with rules based on the common good. Each Scout is further encouraged to do the following:

- Learn about and take pride in his national heritage.
- Develop an understanding of the social, economic, and governmental systems of which he is a part.
- Be of service to others.
- Have knowledge of and respect for cultures and social groups other than his own.
- Be aware of community organizations and their functions.
- Appreciate the environment and seek to protect it.

Mental and Physical Fitness

People get the most out of life when they are mentally and physically fit. Scouting motivates each Scout to work toward these goals:

- Improve his general physical condition through exercise and participation in vigorous activities that might include outdoor adventures and sports.
- Eat properly, get enough sleep, and follow other habits for good health.
- Keep his weight within a healthy range.
- Reject experimenting with tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs, or with other activities that can be harmful to himself or others.
- Strive to be mentally alert.
- Use good judgment and make sound decisions.
- Train himself to be resourceful in solving problems.



The Methods of Scouting

The Boy Scouts of America uses eight fundamental methods to meet boys' hope for fun and adventure, and to achieve Scouting's aims of encouraging character development, citizenship, and mental and physical fitness.

Method 1 — The Ideals

The ideals of the Boy Scouts of America are spelled out in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. Boy Scouts and adult leaders incorporating these ideals into their daily lives are said to have Scout Spirit.

Method 2 — The Patrol Method

Within the larger community of the troop, the patrol is a Scout's "family circle." Each patrol helps its members develop a sense of pride and identity. The boys themselves elect their patrol leader, divide up the jobs to be done, and share in the satisfaction of accepting and fulfilling group responsibilities.

Method 3 — The Outdoors

Boys join Scouting for the challenge, the excitement, and the fun. Much of Scouting is designed to take place outdoors in settings where boys can find real adventure.

Method 4 — Advancement

The Boy Scouts of America believes that a boy should receive recognition for his achievements. The requirements for the ranks of Tenderfoot through First Class prepare boys to take full advantage of all that Scouting has to offer. Earning merit badges allows them to explore many fields, helps them round out their skills, and perhaps introduces them to subjects that will become lifelong interests and rewarding careers. In addition, advancement sets a pattern of setting positive goals and reaching them through life. Star, Life, and Eagle requirements focus on service to others and developing leadership skills.

Method 5 — Association with Adults

Boys learn a great deal by watching how adults conduct themselves. Scout leaders are positive role models for the members of the troop, and take a personal interest in the development of each boy.

Method 6 — Personal Growth

Scout-age boys are experiencing dramatic physical and emotional growth. Scouting offers them opportunities to channel much of that change into productive endeavors and to find the answers they are seeking for many of their questions. Through service projects and Good Turns, Scouts can discover their place in their community. The troop itself provides each Scout with an arena in which to explore, to try out new ideas, and sometimes simply to embark on adventures with no design other than having a good time with good people.

Method 7 — Leadership Development

Leadership is a skill that can be learned only by doing it. Every boy in a patrol and troop will find that he is filling leadership positions of increasing responsibility. Through leadership experiences, boys learn planning, organization, and decision making.

Method 8 — The Uniform

Since 1910, the Boy Scout uniform has been a recognizable part of the American Scene. Wearing the uniform helps boys develop a sense of belonging to their patrol and troop. It reinforces the fact that all members of the Boy Scouts of America are equal to one another. People seeing a boy in a Scout uniform expect someone of good character who is prepared to the best of his ability to help those around him. Likewise, adult leaders in full uniform set a good example for members of their troops and are also seen as community leaders fulfilling a very important role.

