

# Boy Scout Advancement

## Aims and Standards

Advancement accommodates the three aims of Scouting:

- Citizenship
- Growth in moral strength and character
- Mental and physical fitness

The advancement program is designed to provide the Boy Scout with a chance to achieve the aims of Scouting. As a Scout advances he is measured and grows in confidence and self-reliance. When a badge and certificate are awarded to a Boy Scout to recognize that he has achieved a rank, they represent that a young man has:

- Been an active participant in his troop and patrol
- Demonstrated living the Scout Oath and Law in his daily life
- Met the other requirements and/or earned the merit badges for the rank
- Participated in a Scoutmaster conference
- Satisfactorily appeared before a Board of Review

## Four Steps of Advancement

A Boy Scout advances from Tenderfoot to Eagle by doing things with his patrol and troop, with his leaders, and on his own. It's easy for him to advance if the following four opportunities are provided for him.

1. **The Boy Scout learns.** A Scout learns by doing. As he learns, he grows in his ability to do his part as a member of the patrol and troop. As he develops knowledge and skill, he is asked to teach others. As he learns to teach others, he develops leadership.
2. **The Boy Scout is tested.** A Scout may be tested on hand requirements by his patrol leader, Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmaster, a troop committee member, or a member of his troop. The Scoutmaster maintains a list of those qualified to give tests and to pass candidates. The Scout's merit badge counselor teaches and tests on the requirements for merit badges.
3. **The Boy Scout is reviewed.** After a Scout has completed all requirements for a rank, he has a board of review. For Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle Palms, the review is conducted by members of the troop committee. The Eagle Scout Board of Review is

conducted in accordance with local council procedures.

4. **The Boy Scout is recognized.** When the Board of Review has certified a boy's advancement, he deserves to receive recognition as soon as possible. This should be done at a ceremony at the next troop meeting. The certificate for his new rank may be presented later at a formal court of honor.

## Scoutmaster Conference

The Scoutmaster is responsible for the conference conducted prior to the Board of Review. During this conference, the Scoutmaster will take the opportunity to evaluate the Scout's accomplishments and help him to set goals in leadership and advancement.

The Scoutmaster Conference can take place at a troop meeting, camping trip, or in the Scout's home. Regardless of the location, two-deep leadership must be maintained. The aim of the conference is to determine the Scout's readiness to advance by having learned the skills required, provided service as determined by the rank, and provided leadership as required.

## Board of Review

The members of a Board of Review should have the following objectives in mind:

- To make sure the Scout has completed the requirements for the rank.
- To see how good an experience the Scout is having in the unit.
- To encourage the Scout to progress further.

Additionally, the Board of Review provides "quality control" on advancement within the unit, it provides an opportunity for the Scout to develop and practice those skills needed in an interview situation, and it is an opportunity for the Scout to review his accomplishments.

The Board of Review is NOT a retest; the Scout has already been tested on the skills and activities required for the rank. The Board of Review is an opportunity to review of the Scout's attitudes, accomplishments and his acceptance of Scouting's ideals. However, the chairperson of the Board of Review should ensure that all the requirements have been "signed off" in the Scout's Handbook. Additionally, the chairperson should

ensure that leadership and merit badge records are consistent with the requirements for the rank.

The role of the Board of Review members and the atmosphere that should be present are well described in the *Scoutmaster's Handbook*, the *Troop Committee Guidebook* and the *BSA Advancement Guidelines*. For a quick, one-page summary of *Board of Review Concepts*, please follow the link. This document provides descriptions of Boards of Review for various ranks, sample questions or thoughts that should be considered, and even addresses how to conduct a Board of Review for a Scout who is not advancing (and WHY you should do it!).

## **The Methods of Boy Scouting**

The methods by which the aims are achieved are listed below in random order to emphasize the equal importance of each.

### **Ideals**

The ideals of Boy Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout motto, and the Scout slogan. The Boy 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 and who he becomes.

### **Patrols**

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

### **Outdoor Programs**

Boy Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoor setting that Scouts share responsibilities and learn to live with one another. It is here that the skills and activities practiced at troop meetings come alive with purpose. Being close to nature helps Boy Scouts gain an appreciation for God's handiwork and humankind's place in it. The outdoors is the laboratory for Boy Scouts to learn ecology and practice conservation of nature's resources.

### **Advancement**

Boy Scouting provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps in overcoming them through the advancement method. The Boy Scout plans his

advancement and progresses at his own pace as he meets each challenge. The Boy Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a Boy Scout grow in self-reliance and in the ability to help others.

### **Association with Adults**

Boys learn a great deal by watching how adults conduct themselves. Scout leaders can be positive role models for the members of their troops. In many cases a Scoutmaster who is willing to listen to boys, encourage them, and take a sincere interest in them can make a profound difference in their lives.

### **Personal Growth**

As Boy Scouts plan their activities and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Boy Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. Probably no device is so successful in developing a basis for personal growth as the daily Good Turn. The religious emblems program also is a large part of the personal growth method. Frequent personal conferences with his Scoutmaster help each Boy Scout to determine his growth toward Scouting's aims.

### **Leadership Development**

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

### **Uniform**

The uniform makes the Boy 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 Boy Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform gives the Boy Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals. The uniform is practical attire for Boy Scout activities and provides a way for Boy Scouts to wear the badges that show what they have accomplished.