

The Aims of Scouting – *(According to a Scouting Mom)*

It is important to remember why we are doing this.

It is so easy to get distracted by trying to get things organized for the next camp out or den meeting. Or the parent who doesn't understand the difference between Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. Or those who aren't pitching in. Or the personalities not working well together

Refocusing on the ***Aims of Scouting*** will help us push the distractions aside and stay positive in our efforts.

Aims of Scouting

The Boy Scouts of America enumerates three aims of Scouting – Character, Citizenship, and Fitness.

Character

Character development is probably the most recognized of the three. When the public thinks of a Boy Scout, hopefully they are picturing a young man who is willing to help others and follows the points of the Boy Scout Oath and Law. The same should be true for Venturers and Cub Scouts. Scouting helps young men and women develop confidence, independence, and skills. They adhere to their own religious beliefs while respecting the beliefs of others. They are honest and trustworthy.

How is character development incorporated into the Scouting programs offered by BSA.

Venturing

Character development is an integral part of the Venturing program:

- In the Venturing Code, Venturers state “I will recognize the dignity and worth of all humanity and will use fair play and goodwill in my daily life.”
- Venturers develop leadership skills by planning their program.
- With the program emphasis on teaching skills to others, Venturers learn to see through a perspective other than their own.
- The Venturing Code also states “I will, therefore, be faithful in my religious duties and maintain a personal sense of honor in my own life.”

Boy Scouts

The Boy Scout advancement program provides lots of opportunity for character development:

- The Boy Scout Law is basically a roadmap for character development: A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, clean, brave, and reverent.
- Opportunities for leadership help develop confidence.
- Instruction in first aid and emergency preparedness help Scouts prepare to take care of themselves and others when their help is most needed.
- Religious observance is a regular part of the Boy Scout program.

Cub Scouts

- Cub Scouts also have lots of character development material incorporated into the program.
- Character Connection activities help Cub Scouts think about how they can make the right choices in their everyday lives.
- Religious emblem programs help develop their spiritual lives.
- Cub Scouts learn the basics of what to do in an emergency and how to get help.
- The Cub Scout motto – Do Your Best – serves as a guide for their actions and participation.

Character development is such an important part of a youth's education. I'm glad that we can do our part teaching our youth through the Scouting program.

Citizenship

Citizenship training benefits our nation and our communities. Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers learn to take pride in our national heritage. They understand how they fit into the larger community. They understand the importance of

taking care of the environment for the benefit of everybody. They put others before themselves by organizing and participating in service projects.

How is citizenship training incorporated into the Scouting programs offered by BSA.

How does your unit incorporate citizenship into its program? Put your ideas in the comments below.

Venturing

- In the Venturing Code, Venturers state “As a Venturer, I believe that America’s strength lies in our trust in God and in the courage, strength, and traditions of our people”.
- Venturing develops strong leaders who will serve our country as they mature.
- The Ethical Controversies program give Venturers the opportunity to discuss difficult issues facing our communities and learn how to address those issues in a fair manner.
- Venturers learn about the importance of putting others before themselves through service projects.

Boy Scouts

- Boy Scouts learn about their rights and duties as US citizens as part of the early rank requirements.
- The Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, and Citizenship in the World merit badges help Boy Scouts learn how they can be useful members of larger communities.
- By learning to take care of the environment, they preserve our natural resources for everyone’s benefit.
- Boy Scouts also perform service projects to benefit organizations and individuals in the community.

Cub Scouts

- Cub Scouts learn about America’s heritage.
- Through small service projects, Cub Scouts learn to take pride in helping the community.
- Cubs learn flag etiquette and basic citizenship skills.

Fitness

The third aim is fitness. This includes mental and physical fitness. This enables them to enjoy full, rich lives. Physical fitness is encouraged through sports and outdoor activities. Scouts also learn about the importance of eating right and taking care of themselves. They promise to stay away from drugs, alcohol, and other substances which can harm themselves or others. They strive to do their best in their studies and be mentally alert. They learn to think before they act so they can make good decisions.

So how are physical and mental fitness is incorporated into the Scouting programs offered by BSA?

Venturing

- Venturers develop physical fitness through sports and high adventure activities.
- By interacting with other young adults in a safe environment, Venturers learn to develop healthy personal relationships.
- By seeking guidance from adult advisors, Venturers learn how to make responsible choices concerning drugs, alcohol, and dangerous behaviors which young people are exposed to in their daily lives.

Boy Scouts

- Physical fitness requirements must be met throughout the rank advancement program.
- Boy Scouts learn about topics such as drug and alcohol abuse, bullying, and internet safety.
- The Boy Scout program encourages young men to continuously work to improve their minds and bodies.
- A challenging outdoor program provides the opportunity for lots of physical activity.

Cub Scouts

- Cub Scouts learn the importance of good nutrition.
- Age appropriate outdoor activities help Cubs stay fit.
- The Cub Scout Academics and Sports program encourages Cub Scouts to explore different sports.

These are just a few of the ways we can encourage fitness in the various levels of Scouting. And it is important for all of us Scouters to set a good example and to try and improve our own fitness also.