

# What Is Venturing?



VENTURING · BSA

## Program

Venturing is a youth development program of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women who are 14 (and have completed the eighth grade) through 20 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 Oath

As a Venturer, I promise to do my duty to God and help strengthen America, to help others, and to seek truth, fairness, and adventure in our world.

## Venturing Code

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. I will, therefore, be faithful in my religious duties and will maintain a personal sense of honor in my own life. I will treasure my American heritage and will do all I can to preserve and enrich it. I will recognize the dignity and worth of all humanity and will use fair play and goodwill in my daily life. I will acquire the Venturing attitude that seeks truth in all things and adventure on the frontiers of our changing world.

## Goals

Young adults involved in Venturing will

- Learn to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling the values in the Venturing Oath and Code
- Experience a program that is fun and full of challenge and adventure
- Become a skilled training and program resource for Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts and other groups
- Acquire skills in the areas of high adventure, sports, arts and hobbies, religious life, or Sea Scouting
- Experience positive leadership from adult and youth leaders and be given opportunities to take on leadership roles
- Have a chance to learn and grow in a supportive, caring, and fun environment
- An emphasis is placed on experiences in leadership, citizenship, service, outdoor, fitness and social

## Methods

The methods of Venturing have been carefully chosen to meet the needs of young adults.

**Leadership.** 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 in an active way to effectively lead.

**Group Activities.** 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.

**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 acknowledgement of a youth's competence and ability by peers and adults.

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

**High Adventure.** Venturing's emphasis on high adventure helps provide team-building opportunities, new meaningful experiences, practical leadership application, and lifelong memories to young adults.

**Teaching Others.** All of the Venturing awards require Venturers to teach what they have learned to others. When they teach others often, Venturers are better able to retain the skill or knowledge they taught, they gain confidence in their ability to speak and relate to others, and they acquire skills that can benefit them for the rest of their lives as a hobby or occupation.

## Ethics in Action

An important goal of Venturing is to help young adults be responsible and caring people, both now and in the future. Venturing uses "ethical controversies" to help young adults develop the ability to make responsible choices that reflect their concern for what is a risk and how it will affect others involved. Because an ethical controversy is a problem-solving situation, leaders expect young adults to employ empathy, invention, and selection when they think through their position and work toward a solution of an ethical controversy.

## Crew Activities

What a Venturing crew does is limited only by the imagination and involvement of the adult and youth leaders and members of the crew—sail the Caribbean, produce a play, climb a mountain, teach disabled people to swim, or attend the Olympics. All these adventures and more are being done today by Venturing crews and ships across the country. All that is needed are concerned adults who are willing to share a little bit of themselves with today's youth—tomorrow's leaders.

# Starting a New Venturing Crew

Organizing a Venturing crew is easy to do. Just follow these steps:

1. A survey is conducted annually in community high schools to determine students' recreational, hobby, and avocation interests.
2. A meeting is called of key people within an organization, with a Scouting representative in attendance. The representative explains the Venturing program, describes the key volunteer leader positions, and plans the recruiting of adult leaders.
3. The crew committee and Advisors are recruited and meet with the Scouting representative. Responsibilities of adult leaders are explained. The Scouting representative also discusses program ideas and helps develop a one-year program. The crew's one-year program is reviewed and adopted.
4. The organization's top executive writes a personal letter to each young adult selected from the survey, or identified through other recruitment efforts, and invites the youth and their parents to attend an organizational meeting. This letter is followed by a personal phone invitation from a member of the organization to each prospective youth.
5. The first meeting is held, involving young adults, the adult committee, and selected consultants. Adult Advisors share the program plans with the new Venturers (youth) and discuss member involvement and leadership roles through the election of youth officers.
6. Local training and support materials include video tapes, a program planning kit, and a list of program consultants who are willing to be contacted to help with your Venturing program.

## What Youth Want

Research has revealed these major points:

- High school students have many vocational and avocational interests.
- Teenagers want a broader experience that provides practical "hands-on" experience and is tailored to their cultural backgrounds.
- Teenagers want to belong to a group that provides a secure, supportive place from which to address the youth development issues that affect them. These issues include experimentation, moving from dependence to interdependence, social relationships, psychological changes and sexual maturity, and a re-evaluation of values.

# Program Support

The Venturing Division has designed literature, audiovisuals, training, activities, and awards to support Venturing crews and ships.

**Literature and Audiovisuals.** A variety of books, pamphlets, and videos have been developed to assist with organization, program, leadership, and activities. In particular, the *Venturing Leader Manual* will support leadership and planning.

**Training.** Venturing Leader Specific Training (for Adults), Venturing Leadership Skills Course (for youth), and monthly roundtables will be available to improve and enrich Venturing crew programs. A weeklong high-adventure skills course for Venturing Advisors called Powder Horn is available annually. The weeklong Nature of Leadership High Adventure Treks program is available from host councils across the country to teach experience-based leadership skills.

**Advancement Awards.** A variety of awards are available to Venturers who accomplish specific advancement achievements. These awards include:

- Venturing Bronze Awards
- Venturing Gold Award
- Venturing Silver Award
- Venturing Quest Award
- Venturing Ranger Award
- Sea Scouting Quartermaster Award

**Recognition Awards.** Those awards that are designed to provide recognition for youth and adults include:

- Venturing Leadership Award
- Venturing Advisor Award of Merit

**Uniforms.** The BSA Supply Division offers the traditional spruce-green uniform shirt for Venturers. It is recommended that crews adopt a charcoal gray casual pant and/or backpacking-style short for their uniform. However, each crew may determine what, if any, specific uniform pants or shorts they will wear based on crew activities.

**BSA Councils.** Venturing crews and ships are supported by local BSA councils, which provide staff and volunteer support, operate service centers and camps, and conduct training and activities.

**Liability Insurance.** The Boy Scouts of America has liability insurance that covers leaders and organizations to which Venturing crews and shops are chartered. Accident and medical insurance coverage is provided by the Viking Council.

For additional information and support on organizing a new Venturing Crew or Sea Scout Ship, contact your Northern Star Council Venturing Division 763-545-4550 or visit our website at [www.northernstarbsa.org](http://www.northernstarbsa.org).