

# Incorporating Scouting in a Homeschool Program

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Scouting programs from the Boy Scouts of America are an excellent opportunity for boys ages 5 to 21 and girls ages 14 to 21 (yes, there are coed Scouting opportunities within the BSA) to learn important life skills and become responsible citizens, and combining a homeschool program with these important lessons can really enhance both, while providing boys and girls with a fun, exciting experience.

## What Is Scouting

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### History

During the Boer war, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lieutenant General Robert Baden-Powell of the British army wrote down a guide to Scouting. Initially meant for military purposes, after the war he felt it could be used as a focus for young boys to give them more meaning in life. In 1907, Baden Powell organized a trial scouting that proved to be a great success.

From this initial starting point, the scouting movement soon blossomed in Britain and within a few years had become a national institution.

In 1909 "W. D." Boyce learned about Scouting while passing through London during his first expedition to Africa. According to legend, Boyce had become lost in the dense London fog, but was guided back to his destination by a young boy, who told him that he was merely doing his duty as a Boy Scout. Boyce then read printed material on Scouting, met Baden Powell, and on his return to the United States, he formed the Boy Scouts of America on February 8, 1910.



1 - Robert Baden-Powell

In September, Robert S.S. Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, visited America and helped develop the program.

In the years after the BSA was founded, unofficial programs for younger boys were started. The BSA obtained the rights to Baden-Powell's The Wolf Cub Handbook in 1916 and used it in unofficial Wolf Cub programs starting in 1918. The BSA finally began some experimental Cubbing units in 1928 and in 1930 the BSA began registering the first official Cub Scout packs.

*“Try and leave this world a little better than you found it and when your turn comes to die, you can die happy in feeling that at any rate you have not wasted your time but have done your best. ‘Be Prepared’ in this way, to live happy and to die happy — stick to your Scout Promise always — even after you have ceased to be a boy — and God help you to do it.”* – Baden Powell.

Today, the Boy Scouts of America is part of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, an international organization that consists of 164 National Scout Organizations (NSOs), located in 224 countries and territories around the world. There are over 40 million Scouts worldwide!

The Boy Scouts of America consists of nearly 2.3 million youth members and almost a million adult volunteers throughout the United States. The BSA is organized in a hierarchy. Below the national level, the country is divided into regions. We are located in the Central region. Within regions there are a number of different councils. In our area we are part of the Three Fires Council. Other nearby councils include the Northeast Illinois Council, Pathway to Adventure Council, and Blackhawk Area Council. Within each Council there are districts. Most of DeKalb County is part of the Kishwaukee District. Other local districts include Great Bear District, Northern Trail District, Maramech Hill District, Fox Valley District, Chanonee District, Potawatomi Trails District, Foxfire District, Indian Prairie District, and Thunderbird District. And finally, within each district are individual units. Depending on the program that a unit is part of they will have a different title; Pack, Troop, Crew, etc.

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

#### **Scout Oath**

On my honor I will do my best  
to do my duty to God and my country  
and to obey the Scout Law;  
to help other people at all times;  
to keep myself physically strong,  
mentally awake, and morally straight.

#### **Scout Law**

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly,  
courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave,  
clean, and reverent.

## Different Types of Scouting

When people think of Scouting they mainly think of Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Girl Scouts. Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts are both programs run by the Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts is a separate organization with similar values. But there are a few other Scouting programs run by the BSA as well. Cub Scouts is for boys ages 5 to 11 (Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade). Boy Scouts is for boys ages 11 to 18 (6<sup>th</sup> grade through high school). Venturing is a little less common and provides more high adventure opportunities for both boys and girls ages 14 to 21 (high school into college). Sea Scouts is a program similar to Venturing, but with a focus on maritime activities for boys and girls ages 14 to 21. Sea Scouts is more prevalent in maritime communities. Varsity Scouts is similar to Boy Scouts, but with more focus on high adventure for boys ages 14 to 18. Varsity Scouts is more prevalent in LDS communities.

Here I will focus on the three main BSA programs in the Three Fires Council: Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturing.

## Cub Scouts

Cub Scouts is a program for young boys, ages 5 to 11, or Kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Cub Scouts lets kids have fun while teaching them skills that will help them later on. From the thrill of shooting an arrow to learning how to transform a block of wood into a race car, Cub Scouts is one adventure after another. With a program expertly tailored to match each age in a young boy's life, Cub Scouts learn that even when fun isn't easy, it's always an adventure. In Scouting, everything has a purpose. And it shows kids that doing their best is the most fun of all.

In Cub Scouts each Pack is broken up into Dens of boys that are the same age. There are six levels of Cub Scouts, from Kindergarten up to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Lions, Tigers, Wolves, Bears, Webelos, and Arrow of Light. For each Den, in

order to earn their rank advancement they have to complete seven Adventures. This includes Required Adventures, Elective Adventures, and other activities throughout the year (like learning about cyber safety). Each of these Adventures is age appropriate for the boys and teaches things like history, science, physical fitness, community service, writing, math, and much more! Yes, it's possible to just quickly complete the requirements, but these Cub Scout Adventures can also provide a foundation for a well-rounded, fun educational experience for boys ages 5 to 11!

Throughout the year, most Dens will complete the Required Adventures together, and maybe one or two of the Elective Adventures. And many times an Adventure has several optional requirements that Scouts can choose from. So, even though each level has a handbook that outlines all of the required and Elective Adventures and each Adventure covers a different topic, most of the handbook will not be used during a regular year of Cub Scouts.

Using the Cub Scout handbooks as a guide, it is possible to build a very fun, educational program for your sons. Each Adventure's requirements are discussed in detail and ask the boys to learn through experience, research, anecdotes, experimentation, reading, exploration, and active participation in the world around them. The handbooks provide a great stepping off point for some excellent educational opportunities in a way that encourages learning and makes it FUN! Plus, for every Adventure and most other activities that boys complete they'll receive cool recognition in the form of stickers, belt loops, pins, patches, and more!

One thing you will notice in each of the levels, except for Lion Cubs, is a Duty to God Required Adventure. These Adventures encourage Scouts to explore their family faith. This is usually something done as a family, but may be done as a group if everyone in the Den is of the same faith. Scouting is a non-denominational organization that encourages religious faith, however it doesn't make any distinction between faiths. There are Scouts of all faiths, including Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and more! One of the awards that Scouts can earn is an Emblem of Faith. Most religious faiths have a program for earning this emblem and you can learn more about it at [www.praypub.org](http://www.praypub.org)

### Lion Cubs

The Lion Cubs program is a sub-program within Cub Scouts. It is new for the Three Fires Council and is still in pilot program testing, but shows a lot of promise. The Lion Cubs program is for Kindergarten aged boys, 5 and 6 years old, and is a simplified version of the Cub Scout program for older boys. In Lion Cubs boys will meet for shorter meetings in a more casual program. There will be an official Lion Guide that is a registered leader, but each meeting's activities will be led by a parent with support from the Lion Guide. The Lion Cubs program has twelve interesting age appropriate Adventures that will give boys an opportunity to experience Scouting as well as learn about the following topics:



- Life Skills
  - Basic Art
  - Clean Air and Water
  - Fire Safety
  - Safety
- Health
  - Health
  - Physical Fitness
- Caring
  - Getting Along with Others
  - Importance of Family
  - About Me
- Courage
  - Building My Courage
  - Sticking to What's Right
- Respect
  - Ethnic Heritage
  - Respecting My Peers
  - Self Awareness
- Finance
  - Money Management
- Citizenship
  - Community
  - What is Freedom?

Each of these topics will be covered in five Required Adventures and one of seven Elective Adventures. Some of these Adventures will be done together in the Den meetings, and some can be done independently at home. And as part of a homeschool program, these Adventures provide a great starting point for some great learning opportunities.

### Lion Adventures:

- Lion's Honor – boys will learn about character development, participatory citizenship, fitness, and leadership through active games, learning about Cub Scouts, singing songs, and making posters.
- Fun on the Run – boys will learn about character development, fitness, and nutrition through physical activities, having a healthy snack, and outdoor games.
- Animal Kingdom – boys will learn about patriotism, stewardship of resources, and community responsibility and awareness through flag ceremony, pledge of allegiance, meeting with a community service professional (e.g. a firefighter, police, EMT, etc.), emergency preparedness, basic first aid, and a community service project.
- Mountain Lion – boys will learn about outdoor skills, leadership, personal fitness, and citizenship through outdoor activities and a hike.
- King of the Jungle – boys will learn about citizenship and leadership through games, crafts, a flag ceremony, and visiting older boys' meetings.
- I'll Do It Myself – boys will learn personal care, citizenship, and character development through activities, crafts, and outings.
- Pick My Path – boys will learn about character development, friendship, emotions, choices, and leadership through games and activities.
- Gizmos and Gadgets – boys will learn about personal fitness, science, and motion through simple science demonstrations, games, and outings.
- On Your Mark – boys will learn about sportsmanship, fitness, and character development through outdoor activities, crafts, and games.
- Build It Up, Knock It Down – boys will learn about choices, handling failure, and character development through games and activities.
- Rumble in the Jungle – boys will learn about manners, fitness, and health through games, team sports, and outings.
- Ready, Set, Grow – boys will learn about science, gardening, citizenship, health, and fitness through planting and other activities.

### Tiger Cub Scouts

Tiger Cubs are 1<sup>st</sup> grade boys, ages 6 and 7. Tiger Cubs participate with their parents, however their Den will have a designated Den Leader. Usually this is one of the Tiger parents who will be a registered BSA Adult Volunteer.

The Tiger Cub program consists of six Required Adventures and one of thirteen Elective Adventure. Each Adventure is outlined in the handbook. The Tiger Cub Adventures are more varied in topics and activities than the Lion Cub Adventures and allow more room for extended learning opportunities. Each Adventure has a number of different requirements as well as some optional items.

### Required Adventures

- Backyard Jungle



- Games Tigers Play
- My Family's Duty To God
- Team Tiger
- Tiger Bites
- Tigers In the Wild

#### Elective Adventures

- Curiosity, Intrigue, and Magical Mysteries
- Earning Your Stripes
- Family Stories
- Floats and Boats
- Good Knights
- Rolling Tigers
- Sky is the Limit
- Stories in Shapes
- Tiger Tag
- Tiger Tales
- Tiger Theater
- Tiger-iffic
- Tiger-Safe and Smart

Most of the Required Adventures will be completed as part of the Tiger Den Meetings, although there are usually take-home activities that can be expounded on during your homeschool sessions. For example, in the *Games Tigers Play* Adventure the boys need to make up a game that they share with their family or Den. This is a great opportunity to work with your son on learning how rules and structure make games fun, how to present his ideas to others, and public speaking. These may sound like big concepts, but the idea is that starting with these concepts as small activities will make it easier when the occasions are bigger!

More of the Elective Adventures have activities that can be completed at home, and these are where incorporating Scouting into a homeschool program can really shine. While the Required Adventures give your son the opportunity to work on projects with a group, and there will be many times where the requirements are quickly covered without going in depth, with the Elective Adventures you can choose to learn as deeply as you like for each Adventure. And while only one Elective Adventure is required to achieve the Tiger Rank, every one your son completes will earn him another belt loop!

For example, in the *Sky is the Limit* Elective Adventure, boys must complete eight requirements. These cover history, scientific observation, using scientific equipment, research, reading, writing, and more! Done with an adult partner, the Elective Adventures encourage much more in-depth learning opportunities.

#### *Sky is the Limit* Adventure Requirements:

- Go outside to observe the night sky and talk about what you see. This encourages observation and self-expression.
- Look at a distant object through a telescope/binoculars. This encourages learning about scientific instruments and how to operate them.
- Chart 2 constellations, name the stars in those constellations, and learn about how the constellation got its name. This involves a bit of scientific observation as well as research.

- Create & name your own constellation and share it with your den. This requires creativity and some public speaking skills.
- Create a homemade constellation. This is a craft project that will require learning about a few tools and creative expression.
- Learn about 2 jobs related to astronomy. This requires doing some research and putting things learned into writing.
- Learn about 2 astronauts that were Scouts. This requires research and putting things learned into writing.
- Visit & ask questions at a science place, like a museum, planetarium, or observatory. This is a hands-on experience visiting a location and requires that the Scout prepare questions ahead of time.

Each of these requirements encourages learning in a fun, exciting way!

### Wolf Scouts

The Wolf Scout program for 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade boys (ages 7 and 8) is very similar to Tiger Cubs, but Wolves will be working more independently. Wolves are not required to have a parent with them at every Den meeting (although parental involvement in the meetings is still encouraged). Wolves have a few more take-home activities as part of their Required Adventures and more independent learning is encouraged, especially in the Elective Adventures. Activities also require more reading and writing to complete. The Wolf Scout program consists of six Required Adventures and one of thirteen Elective Adventure. Each Adventure is outlined in the handbook.



### Required Adventures

- Call of the Wild
- Council Fire
- Duty To God Footsteps
- Howling at the Moon
- Paws on the Path
- Running with the Pack

### Elective Adventures

- Adventures in Coins
- Air of the Wolf
- Code of the Wolf
- Collections and Hobbies
- Cubs Who Care
- Digging in the Past
- Finding Your Way
- Germs Alive
- Grow Something
- Hometown Heroes
- Motor Away
- Paws of Skill
- Spirit of the Water

Just like with Tigers, most of the Required Adventures will be completed as part of the Wolf Den Meetings. However, there are a few more activities that can be done at home that can be expounded on during your homeschool sessions. For example, in the *Council Fire* Adventure the boys need to learn about how their community has changed over time and then create a project to show their Den how the community has changed. This may be done during a Den meeting, but it's also something that can be done at home and will require some research and planning to prepare a presentation.

Most of the Elective Adventures have activities that can be completed at home. The Elective Adventures are excellent opportunities for incorporating a number of subjects in the Adventure. And again, while only one Elective Adventure is required to achieve the Tiger Rank, every one your son completes will earn him another belt loop!

A great example of an Adventure that can be done as part of a homeschool program is the *Air of the Wolf* Elective Adventure. In this Adventure, boys must complete four requirements, each with multiple parts. These cover scientific experimentation, observation, reading, writing, music, and more! The Wolf Elective Adventures encourage much more in-depth learning opportunities.

*Air of the Wolf* Adventure Requirements:

Requirement 1 – These all require putting scientific observation into practice and communicating what was observed.

- Conduct an investigation about the weight of air.
- Conduct an investigation about air temperature.
- Conduct at least 1 of the following investigations (any 1).
  - Make a paper airplane- fly it and show improvement.
  - Make a balloon-powered sled or boat - test it.
  - Bounce a ball with no air - then bounce a ball with air and describe the difference.
  - Roll a tire or ball without air - then with roll a tire or ball with air and describe the difference.

Requirement 2 – These all incorporate skills of observation, learning about music, and more scientific observation.

- Go outside; listen, record, & identify sounds.
- Create a wind instrument and play it.
- Investigate on how speed can affect sound.

Requirement 3 – These requirements teach about safety and crafting skills.

- Explain the rules for safely flying kites.
- Make a kite using household materials.

Requirement 4 – This requirement has the boys constructing a useful item and explaining how that item works.

- Participate in a derby where air helps the vehicle move, like a space derby or raingutter regatta, and tell how the air moves the vehicle.

Each of these requirements can be incorporated into a homeschool science program and can serve to encourage more learning about the properties of air.

## Bear Scouts

Bear Scouts are boys in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, or ages 8 to 9. As a Bear Scout, boys will start to do extended projects that stretch from one meeting to another. Bears have quite a few take-home activities as part of their Required Adventures and more independent learning is encouraged, even in the Required Adventures. Boys will need to learn about something outside of Scouts and then present what they learned to the Den at the next meeting. The Bear Scout program also consists of six Required Adventures and one of thirteen Elective Adventure. Each Adventure is outlined in the handbook.



### Required Adventures

- Baloo the Builder
- Bear Claws
- Fellowship and Duty to God
- Fur, Feathers and Ferns
- Grin and Bear It
- Paws For Action

### Elective Adventures

- A Bear Goes Fishing
- A World of Sound
- Bear Necessities
- Bear Picnic Basket
- Beat of the Drum
- Critter Care
- Forensics
- Make It Move
- Marble Madness
- Roaring Laughter
- Robotics
- Salmon Run
- Super Science

With the Bears, many of the Required Adventures have parts that cannot be done during Den meetings. These will need to be completed at home and then presented to the Den Leader at the next meeting. Some of the requirements involve doing some research and preparing a small presentation, and some require keeping logs of activities for an extended period of time. These are activities that sometimes need parental supervision, but most are activities the Bears should be able to do on their own.

For example, the *Bear Claws* Adventure teaches all about pocket knives, knife safety, first aid, and whittling. Boys will earn their whittling chip after completing all the requirements. Most of the Adventure can be covered at a Den meeting, like learning about knife safety and first aid. But one of the requirements is to complete two whittling projects out of soft wood or soap. This is best done at home after learning about different possible shapes to whittle, creating a pattern, and then whittling the object.

Likewise, the *Bear Necessities* Elective Adventure requires that the boys record basic weather data like temperature, barometric pressure, and observable conditions for a week. And the *Paws for Action* Adventure has the boys properly displaying an American Flag for a month.



The Elective Adventures for Bears are even more in-depth. The *Beat of the Drum* Adventure is all about learning about Native American culture. It incorporates history, research, reading, writing, physical fitness, creative writing, arts and crafts, community awareness, choreography, and more!

#### *Beat of the Drum* Adventure Requirements:

- Learn history & culture of American Indians who lived in your area. This requires researching history
- Write a legend. This creative writing project requires that the Bear Scout write a legend similar to a Native American legend. Boys will have to research and be familiar with other Native American legends before writing their own.
- Make a dream catcher. This creative crafting project requires boys to research a traditional Native American craft.
- Make a craft like ones made by American Indians. This creative crafting project requires boys to research a traditional Native American craft.
- Make a drum and write a ceremonial song. This encourages Scouts to be creative as well as learn about music and rhythm.
- Visit an Order of the Arrow dance ceremony or Native American event. This encourages learning about another culture and experiencing an event first hand.
- Learn & demo ceremonial dance steps. This encourages learning about another culture, physical activity, and choreography.
- Create a dance. This encourages creative thinking, crafting, and respect of other cultures.

Many of the Bear Adventures require some in-depth learning and can provide an outline for great unit study programs. They cover a multitude of subjects, are fun, and let the boys be rewarded for their learning when they receive belt loops and patches!

#### Webelos and Arrow of Light

The last two years of Cub Scouts are somewhat combined. Webelos is for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade (9-10 years old) and Arrow of Light is for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (10-11 years old). Both of these levels work from the same handbook. Each rank has its own Required Adventures, but they share Elective Adventures. Webelos Scouts have five Required Adventures and must complete two of eighteen Elective Adventures. Arrow of Light Scouts must complete four Required Adventures and three of the eighteen Elective Adventures (and these should be different electives than were completed at the Webelos level).

Webelos and Arrow of Light begin to prepare Scouts to be Boy Scouts. One of the big differences between Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts is how the units are led and organized. In Boy Scouts the boys run the pack, with guidance, but minimal help from the adult leaders. The Adventures for Webelos and Arrow of Light really begin to encourage independent learning, planning, and cooperation. Nearly all of the Required Adventures are longer term projects that require a combination of collaboration and independent work. For example, the *Stronger, Faster, Higher* Adventure for Webelos requires that the boys learn about the importance of exercise, how to properly stretch before exercising, and then practice several exercises daily, like pushups, curls, 20 yard dash, jumping rope, and more, for one month and track their weekly improvement. They also have to work together to plan, build, and lay out a fitness obstacle course consisting of several fitness stations. They then have to run the course and be timed, then show improvement at the next Den meeting. What's more, they also have to work with younger Scouts to teach them



a fitness game. This incorporates all sorts of important skills and learning opportunities. And each Required Adventure focuses on a completely different topic, from first aid, to cooking, to community service, and more.

#### Webelos Required Adventures

- Cast Iron Chef
- Duty to God and You
- First Responder
- Stronger, Faster, Higher
- Webelos Walkabout

#### Arrow of Light Required Adventures

- Building a Better World
- Camper
- Duty To God In Action
- Scouting Adventure

#### Webelos and Arrow of Light Elective Adventures

- Adventures In Science
- Aquanaut
- Art Explosion
- Aware and Care
- Build It
- Build My Own Hero
- Castaway
- Earth Rocks
- Engineer
- Fix It
- Game Design
- Into the Wild
- Into the Woods
- Looking Back, Looking Forward
- Maestro
- Moviemaking
- Project Family
- Sportsman

The Elective Adventures are even more in-depth than they were for Bears. Webelos and Arrow of Light Scouts are required to research, read, and write a lot more to complete their Elective Adventures. And many of them focus on longer term projects that must be actively worked on over a period of time. The Elective Adventures also give the Scouts more opportunity to choose requirements from the Adventures that interest them most. For example, the *Adventures in Science* Elective Adventure has the Scouts complete an experiment to learn what types of fertilizer and conditions help plants grow better, report on their findings, and optionally, repeat the experiment with changed variables. They are also required to choose four items from several topics, including learn about the Solar System and build models of the planets, build and launch a model rocket, design and test different types of circuits, learn about the night sky and report their observations over a six hour period, explore safe chemical reactions and report, experiment with the properties of motion on a playground and design a test

to answer several questions, read a biography of a scientist and tell the Den about that scientist, and visit a scientific location. These all require a significant investment in learning about the topics and provide great opportunities to learn about these topics in depth. They also incorporate a number of subjects that can be expounded on in a homeschool program, including reading, science, history, writing, physical fitness, math, and more! Most of the other Elective Adventures are just as exciting!

*Into the Wild* Adventure Requirements:

Do six of the following: (any 6)

- Collect & care for an insect, amphibian, or reptile 'zoo' for a short time and then let them go. This requirement has the Scout catalog the creatures in their 'zoo', learn about those creatures, and record observations.
- Set up an aquarium or terrarium for at least a month and report to your Den with what you've observed, pictures, and drawings.
- Watch & identify a birds in your neighborhood for one week and write down what you saw, their behavior, and any other observations.
- Learn about the bird flyways closest to you. This requires researching the migration habits of birds and reporting what was learned.
- Watch at least 4 wild creatures; report your observations. This requires observation skills and also writing about those observations.
- Identify and learn about creature that only lives in your area and tell why it survives in your area. This requires research, reading, and communicating what was learned.
- Give examples of 2 of the following (any 2). These require Scouts to examine their role in the natural world and communicate what they learned.
  - Producer, consumer, & decomposer in food chain.
  - How have humans changed the balance of nature?
  - How you can help protect the balance of nature.
- Learn about aquatic ecosystems & wetlands in area, talk about the importance of wetlands, and list three ways you can help. This requires Scouts to examine their role in the natural world and communicate what they learned.
- Do One of the following (any 1). These require Scouts to actively engage in the world around them, applying things they've learned in this Adventure.
  - Visit a museum of natural history or zoo and talk to your Den about what you saw.
  - Create a video of a wild creature doing something and share it with your Den.

Even though many of the Webelos and Arrow of Light Adventures give boys the option of doing some of the requirements, all of the requirements cover interesting topics and provide a guide for learning. To complete these Adventures the boys only have to do the minimum requirements, but a homeschool program may incorporate all of the requirements into a week or more of learning. Completing Adventures will earn Webelos and Arrow of Light Scouts pins that they can proudly wear on their uniforms!

## More Cub Scouts!

The Cub Scouts program is designed to grow with the Scouts. In the beginning most of the Adventures are quick, easy forays into learning about the world around them. As the boys get older the Adventures promote more independent learning, longer term projects, teamwork and cooperation, planning, and learning beyond the minimum requirements.

There are several other requirements that must be completed by all Cub Scouts, too. These involve youth protection and cyber safety. The safety of our youth is very important to the BSA and all leaders must complete training that includes Youth Protection Training every two years. Scouts and parents are also required to cover safety items each year also.

In addition to all the above learning opportunities, Cub Scouts has a number of optional learning opportunities as well. Three Fires Council has a reading program that awards Scouts patches for hours spent reading a variety of materials. There are programs that award Scouts for learning about outdoor ethics, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), religion, emergency preparedness, world conservation, and more! Each of these programs is an additional learning opportunity beyond the main requirements and are excellent opportunities to expand your homeschool program.

The Handbooks for each rank provide a great outline for learning about a variety of topics. And there are many more resources available online and at the local Scout Stores. It is up to the parents and Scouts to decide how much or how little of each Adventure is completed and how deeply each subject is tackled. The Cub Scout motto is "Do Your Best", and by incorporating these topics into a homeschool curriculum boys can do even better than that! Cub Scouts can prepare boys to be better citizens, better learners, and better people. And it definitely prepares them for the challenges of Boy Scouts and beyond!

## Boy Scouts

Boy Scouts is a very different program than Cub Scouts. All BSA programs hold to the same core values outlined in the Scout Oath and Scout Law, but in Boy Scouts it is the boys that run the Troop. There are plenty of adult leaders as well, but they function mainly as advisors and guides. In Boy Scouts the boys will learn about planning and preparation, teamwork and cooperation, organizational and leadership skills, and more.



Boy Scout Troops are generally broken up into Patrols. Each Patrol will have several boys of varying ages, unlike Cub Scout Dens where all boys are the same age. Each Patrol will have responsibilities within the Troop and each boy will have responsibilities within his Patrol. Troops will have events and activities that they plan, and it is up to the boys to plan these activities together. For example, if the Troop wants to go on a camping trip, the boys will plan the dates, location, meals, equipment, cost, transportation, etc. Each Patrol may be responsible for part of the project, like cooking meals, cleanup, equipment management, activities, etc. If the Troop doesn't have the funds to do the activity the boys will be responsible for planning fundraisers to earn money. The adult leaders will help facilitate the boys' plans, but it is the boys that really run the Troop. These are important life skills that boys will need and Boy Scouts is a great way to foster these skills.

## Boy Scout Ranks

Like Cub Scouts, there are several ranks in Boy Scouts. Each rank has certain requirements that must be met to achieve the rank. These requirements come in many different forms, from earning Merit Badges, to completing community service, to participating in activities, to demonstrating important skills and values.



There are currently 7 different ranks for Boy Scouts, plus the Eagle Palms for completing Merit Badges beyond the requirements for Eagle Scout rank. There is no timeline to complete these Ranks, other than by the Scout's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Like other aspects of Boy Scouts, earning ranks is determined completely by each individual Scout. It is possible for a dedicated Scout to advance to First Class or even Life within a year or two!

- **Scout** – Scout is the first rank a Boy Scout achieves. This is awarded when the Scout completes some very basic requirements.
- **Tenderfoot** – The Tenderfoot rank is awarded when the Scout completes requirements in the areas of Scoutcraft, physical fitness, citizenship, personal growth and Scout Spirit.
- **Second Class** – The Second Class rank is awarded when the Scout completes requirements in the areas of Scoutcraft, physical fitness, citizenship, personal growth and Scout Spirit.
- **First Class** – The First Class rank is awarded when the Scout completes requirements in the areas of Scoutcraft, physical fitness, citizenship, personal growth and Scout Spirit. At this point, Scouts stop practicing the Scout skills, and start working on leadership.
- **Star** – The Star rank is awarded when the Scout serves actively in the troop, team or crew in a position of responsibility for at least 4 months; performs at least six hours of community service; and earns six merit badges (four of which must be among the 13 required for Eagle Scout rank).
- **Life** – The Life rank is awarded when the Scout serves actively in the troop, team or crew, serves in a position of responsibility for six months, and performs six hours of community service.[6] A Scout must also earn five merit badges (at least three of which must be required for the rank of Eagle) for a total of 11, including the six previously earned. Finally, the Scout must pass a Scoutmaster conference, and board of review.
- **Eagle** – Eagle Scout is the highest rank attainable in Boy Scouts. Requirements include earning a minimum total of 21 merit badges, including all required badges that were not previously earned, and demonstration of Scout Spirit, service and leadership. This includes an extensive service project that the Scout plans, organizes, leads, and manages.

## Merit Badges

Merit Badges are the second main area of the Boy Scout advancement program. Some Merit Badges are required to earn some ranks, particularly the Eagle Scout rank. Unlike Cub Scout Adventures, there are no timelines for earning Merit Badges. They can be worked on from the day a boy joins Boy Scouts until he turns 18. There are currently 136 different Merit Badges that can be earned, and each one requires the Scout to delve into its topic in great detail. These are excellent educational guides for homeschool programs! The wide variety of topics and guided learning mean the Merit Badge programs can be tailored to just about any homeschool style. To learn more about each Merit Badge, you can visit <http://meritbadge.org/> or <http://usscouts.org/mb/mbindex.asp>

### Agribusiness

Animal Science, Farm Mechanics, Plant Science

### Arts And Crafts

Art, Basketry, Bugling, Leatherwork, Metalwork, Music, Pottery, Sculpture, Theater, Wood Carving

### Business and Industry

American Business, Entrepreneurship, Pulp and Paper, Salesmanship, Textile

### Conservation

Environmental Science, Fish and Wildlife Management, Forestry, Soil and Water Conservation, Sustainability

## Hobbies

Backpacking, Camping, Chess, Coin Collecting, Collections, Cooking, Dog Care, Gardening, Hiking, Home Repairs, Indian Lore, Model Design And Building, Pets, Pioneering, Radio, Rowing, Scouting Heritage, Stamp Collecting

## Natural Science

Archaeology, Astronomy, Bird Study, Geology, Insect Study, Mammal Study, Nature, Oceanography, Reptile and Amphibian Study, Weather

## Communications

Moviemaking, Journalism, Photography, Signs, Signals, and Codes

## Personal Development

American Cultures, American Heritage, Citizenship In The Community, Citizenship In The Nation, Citizenship In The World, Communication, Disabilities Awareness, Family Life, Genealogy, Personal Fitness, Personal Management, Public Speaking, Reading, Scholarship, Search And Rescue, Traffic Safety, Wilderness Survival

## Physical Science

Chemistry, Digital Technology, Electricity, Electronics, Energy, Nuclear Science, Space Exploration

## Professions

Animation, Architecture, Dentistry, Engineering, Game Design, Inventing, Landscape Architecture, Law, Medicine, Mining In Society, Programming, Robotics, Surveying, Veterinary Medicine

## Public Service

Crime Prevention, Emergency Preparedness, Fingerprinting, Fire Safety, First Aid, Lifesaving, Public Health, Safety

## Sports

Archery, Athletics, Canoeing, Climbing, Cycling, Fishing, Fly Fishing, Golf, Geocaching, Horsemanship, Kayaking, Motorboating, Orienteering, Rifle Shooting, Scuba Diving, Shotgun Shooting, Skating, Small-Boat Sailing, Snow Sports, Sports, Swimming, Water Sports, Whitewater

## Trades

American Labor, Automotive Maintenance, Composite Materials, Drafting, Graphic Arts, Painting, Plumbing, Welding, Woodwork

## Transportation

Aviation, Railroading, Truck Transportation

## More Boy Scouts

Boy Scouts is journey of learning, self-improvement, service, leadership, and citizenship that prepares boys for adulthood. In addition to the ranks and multitude of Merit Badges, there are many, many other learning opportunities for Boy Scouts. Events and activities are available constantly. It's less a matter of finding something to do and learn and more a matter of deciding which opportunities to grab on to. From local, national, and global service projects to adventure camps, vocational experience to leadership opportunities, Boy Scouts's motto "Be Prepared" will inspire young men throughout their lives. You can learn more about many of the other opportunities here: <http://usscouts.org/usscouts/awards.asp> and <http://www.scouting.org/>

## Venturing

Venturing is a co-ed program run by the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women ages 14 to 21. The Venturing program is structured a bit differently than Boy Scouts, however it can be done in conjunction with the Boy Scout program. Any boys that have earned their Life Scout rank before joining Venturing may continue to work toward Eagle Scout until they turn 18.

Like Boy Scouts, Venturing encourages independent learning opportunities, but with a focus on adventure, leadership, service, and personal growth.



## Venturing Advancement & Awards

The Venturing Advancement track includes the Bronze, Gold, and Silver awards.

**Bronze.** The introduction to specific Venturing skills. Venturers may earn one or more of the five Bronze awards: Arts and Hobbies, Sports, Sea Scout, Outdoor, or Youth Ministries. One Bronze is required for Gold.

**Gold.** Intermediate level requiring at least 12 months' tenure and work. Requirements are based on three areas: personal development, service, and leadership. Gold requires a pre-approved plan of action and a crew review board consisting of youth and adults conducted by the crew president. It is appropriate to present the award at a court of honor. Gold is required for Silver.

**Silver.** This is the highest award for Venturers. In addition to earning a Bronze and Gold Award, Venturers do additional work in the areas of leadership, emergency preparedness, and ethics. Silver requires a pre-approved plan of action and a board of review.

The Venturing awards include Ranger, Quest, and TRUST awards:

**Ranger.** The Ranger Award is an additional award/growth opportunity based on outdoor/high adventure requirements. A Venturer must complete eight requirements and at least four of 18 electives. The Outdoor Bronze Award is half of Ranger. There is no board of review.

**Quest.** The Quest Award is based on fitness and sports. A venturer must complete five core requirements and at least one of the five electives. There is no board of review. The Sports Bronze Award is the first requirement.

**TRUST.** The TRUST Award will help Venturers learn about themselves, their communities, and their religion and culture, as well as those of others. They must complete five areas of requirements with the support of a religious leader in their community.

It is appropriate to present these awards at a court of honor or Eagle/Silver banquet, and to recognize them in local and school newspapers.

(This information was taken from the Venturing Advancement Policies #33088, pp. 36-38)

## Wrap-up

The Boy Scouts of America programs offer ample opportunities to guide homeschool families and individual students through positive, life enriching educational experiences. From ages 5 to 21, and beyond, Scouting provides enrichment opportunities. Even adults can benefit from the multitude of training and educational opportunities provided through Scouts. All that a homeschooling family needs to do is follow the paths provided.

By George Jaros – Cubmaster, Pack 131 DeKalb, IL

