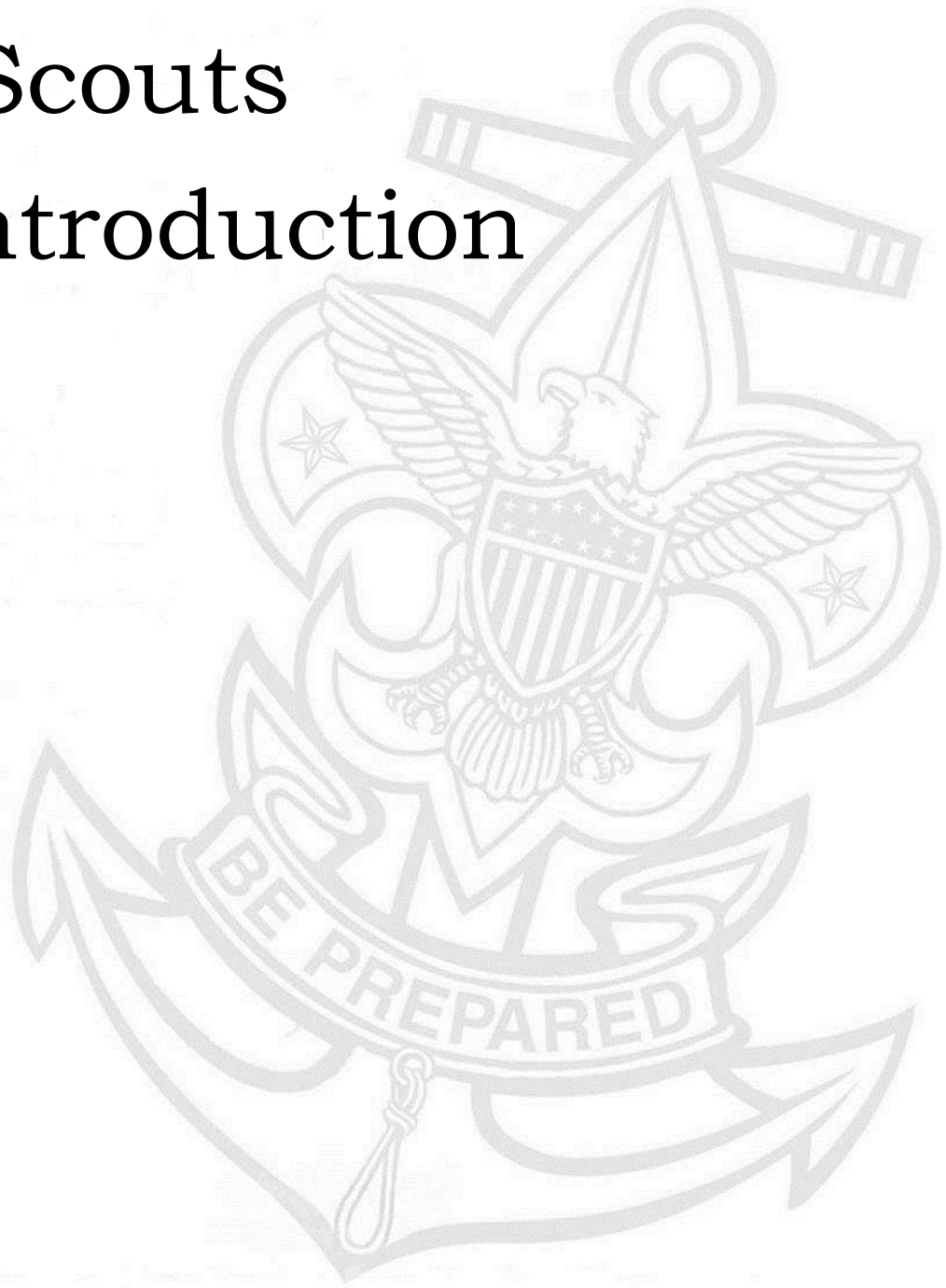


# Sea Scouts

## An Introduction



Boy Scouts of America  
National Sea Scout Support Committee

## Sea Scouts – An Introduction

### **(Slide 2) What is Sea Scouting?**

Sea Scouts is a unique program within the Boy Scouts of America, and it is the second oldest program in the BSA family. Sea Scouts, like Scouts BSA, pursue challenging rank advancement; like Venturers, share a love for high adventure; and like Exploring, offers a viable career path to the marine and maritime industry and the military. Just as the name implies, the Sea Scout program focuses on boating. Activities include in, on, under and around the water programs. Challenging rank advancement, nautical uniforms, and customs and ceremonies prepare youth to be safe on the water and treasure our maritime heritage. A youth must be 13 years of age and graduated from the eighth grade or be 14 to join Sea Scouts. You can stay in Sea Scouts until you are 21 years of age.

### **(Slide 3) Why Sea Scouts?**

In 1910, Lord Baden Powell, founder of Boy Scouts, was concerned by the homeless youth and gangs in England's streets. Europe was politically unstable, and England's merchant marine, backbone of British Navy, was manned by foreigners.

Powell decided to combine the best attributes of seamanship with the character training of Boy Scouts. It would give an avocation to older youth and England would be better prepared for what was ahead.

**(Slide 4)** In 1912, Sea Scouting came to America. Since that time, Sea Scouts have been teaching values through seamanship.

(Note: If your council has Sea Scouts, you may want to insert some local history here.)

**(Slide 5)** In Sea Scouts, youth are taught to always think ahead of the boat. What will happen in thirty minutes, what will happen in an hour? Our nation is currently in the same boat Lord Baden-Powell was in at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century; and thinking ahead of the boat, there continues to be political and economic instability in the world. America will always be dependent on the maritime industry to import resources and to carry the food we produce to the hungry, the goods we manufacture to those who have need and our products to the world. Our Navy and Coast Guard will continue to protect our homeland. Sea Scouts expose and prepare youth for the future, and our nation needs the youth we develop because of their skills, but more importantly because of their values.

### **(Slide 6) Who Can Join?**

Youth (male and female) who are 14 years of age or 13 years of age and have completed the eighth grade and under 21 years of age can join a ship.

### **(Slide 7) Sea Scouts – Mission, Values, and Purpose**

Like traditional Scouts, the Sea Scout mission is to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

You might think that Sea Scouts focuses on specialized information and skills, but learning leadership skills, performing community service, and providing good social experiences are also

critical elements of the program. Sea Scouting is all of these things and more, but the primary purpose is “forming responsible and caring adults.”

**(Slide 8) What Does a Sea Scout Ship Do?**

As with all units in the Boy Scouts of America, the program of a Sea Scout ship is based on matching the interests of members with the expectations of the chartering organization. A ship’s program is also dependent on the kind of water that is available. Many ships on the Pacific Coast use retired military vessels to deliver program. Inland ships sail and paddle on lakes and rivers, and larger sail boats can be found on every coast.

**(Slide 9)** Most ships use Sea Scout advancement to help plan their program. This guarantees that youth will have the necessary skills for safe operation of a vessel. Some ships opt to plan their program around a specialty such as competitive sailing, paddlesports, scuba diving or another aquatics sport. Regardless of the program the youth develop, Sea Scouts develop their skills, serve their communities and have fun.

**Methods of Sea Scouting:**

- **(Slide 10) The Scout Oath and Law**
- **(Slide 11) The Sea Promise**

On the morning of September 8, 1934, en route from Havana to New York, a ship called the *SS Morro Castle* caught fire and burned, killing 137 passengers and crew members. The ship had removed firefighting equipment to make room for more passengers. The devastating fire aboard the *SS Morro Castle* was a catalyst for improved shipboard fire safety, and the Sea Scout Promise was also a result of this disaster.

Seven Sea Scout ships along the New York and New Jersey shore, rendered aid to survivors struggling in the water. Soon after, the Sea Scout Promise was adopted by the National Sea Scout Committee.

Side note: The Sea Promise is a promise to be safe on the water, so it remains with us.

- **(Slide 12) Leadership**

The Sea Scout program is run by the youth members with guidance from adult leaders. During quarterdeck meetings, ship officers work together to plan, and during meetings they conduct the program. As experience is gained, more opportunities arise to contribute to the leadership of the unit.

**(Slide 13)** The boatswain of a ship is the highest ranking youth officer. Working closely with the Skipper, the Boatswain must be in touch with the needs and interests of ship members and address questions and concerns. The boatswain plans and conducts regular quarterdeck meetings and gives leadership to ship meetings and activities. The boatswain is the link between the wishes of the committee and the youth and vice versa.

Other youth officers share the responsibility of leading a ship. The Boatswain’s Mate of Administration supports ship membership and takes the lead on recruitment. The Boatswain’s Mate of Program helps organize activities and the program for meetings. The Yeoman keeps the minutes or ship’s log and the purser collects dues and activity fees. The ship’s Media Specialist manages the ship website and social media.

- **(Slide 14) Adult Association**

To organize a Sea Scout ship, the Chartering Partner will appoint a committee chairman and a Skipper. Mates will need to be added to support the Skipper, and committee members to support the ship.

The Skipper is the key adult leader of a Sea Scout ship, giving direction to the ship program while carrying out the most important duty—advising and coaching the youth officers as they plan, organize, and conduct the meetings and activities of the ship. The Skipper is also a liaison between the adult leaders, the chartered organization, and the youth.

Note: Most ships are co-ed, but can be all male, or all female, depending on the needs of the youth within the community where the Chartering Organization is located. It is important to make sure ship leadership is also co-ed if the ship is co-ed.

- **(Slide 15) Advancement**

Sea Scout advancement rewards individual pursuits of excellence. Each level of advancement marks growth as a seaman and a leader.

- **(click) Apprentice Rank**

New Sea Scouts learn ideals, courtesies, procedures, and responsibilities, and how members of a ship are organized and uniformed. Basic swimming and beginning seamanship skills are required, as is knowledge of safety, emergency procedures, and Safe Swim Defense. Sixteen hours of service in ship projects, activities, or equipment maintenance fill out the requirements.

- **(click) Ordinary Rank**

A Sea Scout attains Ordinary rank through additional service, knowledge of the Sea Scout emblem, U.S. flag etiquette, and land and sea protocols. Successful candidates will participate in strengthening ship membership, serve as an event chair, complete quarterdeck training, pass the Swimming merit badge requirements, and qualify on various safety and emergency procedures, drills, communication methods, and Safety Afloat. They learn about the galley, build on seamanship and boat handling skills, and learn about anchoring, piloting and navigation, and related regulations. Overnight cruise planning and participation provides for skills application, and completing three electives broadens their horizons.

- **(click) Able Rank**

To achieve the Able rank, Sea Scouts master ceremony presentations and demonstrate knowledge of maritime history. They also teach others—perhaps Scouts and Venturers—about the program and fulfill leadership responsibilities. They must pass the Lifesaving merit badge requirements and develop further expertise in safety and first aid. There is a continued progression in seamanship, boat handling skills, anchoring, and piloting and navigation, as well as a deeper understanding of maritime environmental issues. The Sea Scout Long Cruise badge is required for Able, as is completion of four electives.

- **(click) Quartermaster Rank**

The highest award for Sea Scouts presents a challenge that, when met, will affect a young person lifelong. The Quartermaster candidate must think analytically about how the program is delivered and supported, while developing a deeper understanding of Scouting ideals. Most requirements represent intensification of what was learned for previous ranks, but with significant additions in the Quartermaster service project, cruise, and study of weather and forecasting. The cruise involves taking long-term command of a vessel and crew and conducting critical drills.
- **Note:** Boys who have earned First Class in a troop can earn Star, Life and Eagle with a ship.
- **(click) Bar Awards**
  - **Small Boat Handler Bar** – indicates the Sea Scout has the knowledge and skills to be safe on the water. Most of the requirements for this award can be met by completing a NASBLA approved safe boating course.
  - **Qualified Seaman Bar** – denotes a scout not only has the knowledge and skills to be safe on the water, but has also demonstrated the ability to take charge of a vessel and handle it with competence.
- **(Slide 16) Uniforms**

Changes have been made in the Sea Scout look and attitude. In the past, Sea Scouts lacked uniformity in uniforms. In 2000, the National Sea Scout Support Committee developed standards for the traditional dress white, dress blue and work uniforms for youth and adults.

During the Sea Scout Centennial year of 2012, the National Sea Scout Support Committee authorized the New Century uniform that serves as both a work and dress uniform for youth and adults.

**(Slide 17) Traditions of Sea Scouts:**

Seafaring has traditions that go back hundreds of years. Sea Scouts have adapted these traditions to the Sea Scout program and have created traditions of their own.

- **Quarterdeck:** The quarterdeck is a raised deck behind the main mast of a sailing ship. This was where the captain commanded his vessel. In a Sea Scout ship, the youth officers are referred to as the Quarterdeck. They are the leaders of the ship.
- **(Slide 18) Bridge of Review/Bridge of Honor:** Traditionally on a vessel, commands would be passed from the senior officer on the bridge to stations dispersed throughout the ship, where physical control of the ship was exercised. Rank advancement reviews are called a Bridge of Review and rank and awards are presented in a Bridge of Honor.
- **(Slide 19) Landship:** Most ships hold their Bridge of Honor on a landship. A landship can be as simple as a rope lying on the ground in the shape of a ship or it can be quite elaborate with a mast and line suspended from stanchions. Members of the ship board the landship to conduct ceremonies.

- **(Slide 20) Double Salute:** Boarding a landship requires a double salute. In earlier times, it was often the custom to place a crucifix on the mainmast. Every seaman, coming aboard the ship, took off his hat or made the sign of the cross as a form of salute in the direction of the mainmast. When national flags became prominent in the 14th and 15th centuries, sailors would salute the flag, as well, when boarding.

Sea Scouts perform the double salute when boarding a landship, first saluting the center of the ship to signify our reverence and Duty to God. Turning toward the stern of the landship, they next salute the national ensign.

When leaving the landship the double salute is reversed. The first salute is to the flag and the last it to the mast. Note: The Sea Scout double salute is the opposite of the military double salute.

- **(Slide 21) Side Boys:** Centuries ago, when ships were under the command of dandies of the court rather than practical seamen, these worthies were hoisted on board in a chair by side boys.

During landship ceremonies, Sea Scouts will post side boys to show honor to dignitaries that are boarding the ship for the ceremony.

- Two side boys - ship's officers, visiting ships' officers, ship committee members
  - Four side boys - district and council leadership
  - Six side boys – area/flotilla or regional leadership
  - Eight side boys - national leadership
- **(Slide 22) Boatswain's Pipe:** The boatswain's pipe in the early days was known as the "whistle of command" and had its origin in the rowing galley of Grecian ships. The use of a call eliminated confusion and misunderstanding. In the days of sail, men were rigidly trained to respond immediately to the piping.  
  
The pipe is used only by the boatswain, not by the Skipper or the mate. The calls give direction to the crew during landship and flag ceremonies.
  - **(Slide 23) William I. Koch International Sea Scout Regatta:** The William I. Koch International Sea Scout Cup is held every two years. This international event is sponsored by Bill Koch, a former America's Cup winner. Youth spend a week racing in 420's for the Koch Cup which is modeled after the America's Cup. There are usually 10 or more countries involved in the competition.
  - **(Slide 24) USS Eagle:** The U.S. Coast Guard Academy offers an extraordinary opportunity to Sea Scouts to be a part of their Cadet cruise during the summer. The *Barque Eagle* is the 295 foot square rigger that is used to train U.S. Coast Guard Academy cadets and officer candidates for careers in the world's most unique seagoing service. Those chosen to participate serve as regular crew members, and are integrated into the underclass of cadets aboard ship.

Applications are available online in January, and must be sent in before the March deadline.

- **(Slide 25) Group Activities and High Adventure**

There are many events of long-standing held across the nation. Councils host Sea Scout Academies, and most regions sponsor a Safety at Sea event in conjunction with the Coast Guard. Many areas and regions have annual rendezvous and regattas where Sea Scouts compete and showcase their nautical knowledge and skill.

Most ships plan a summer long cruise. Some stay close to home, some utilize the Boy Scouts of America's high-adventure bases, and others choose to explore new venues across the nation and beyond. A ship is only limited by their imagination and ability to fundraise.

- **(Slide 26) Service**

Sea Scouts give service to others. From World War II where over 100,000 Sea Scouts answered their country's call to now, Sea Scouts have been of service to hundreds of communities across the nation. Service can be expressed in individual good turns to others or in organized projects involving the whole ship. In rescues at sea, or facing emergencies on shore, Sea Scouts have saved lives and property. Sea Scout service puts citizenship into action.

### **(Slide 27) Leadership Development**

#### **Youth**

- **Introduction to Leadership Skills for Ships (ILSS):** This training can be taught at the unit, district or council level as a full day course or broken into modules over three sessions. It is the first step in BSA's leadership training for youth and is required for those going to NYLT.
- **Quarterdeck Training:** Each ship's culture and program vary, and each ship's quarterdeck training reflects the level of need of the ship's youth officers. Quarterdeck training typically involves a needs assessment that examines strengths and weaknesses of the unit which leads to the establishment of goals for the ship. Adult mentors may work with officers to guide them as they learn what their responsibilities entail. A desired outcome of quarterdeck training is a vibrant annual program plan.
- **(Click) National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT):** This co-ed, six day program is taught at the council level in an outdoor setting. The course expands upon the skills introduced in ILSS. Check your council's website for dates, registration deadlines and cost.
- **(Click) National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE):** This course is for NYLT graduates who want to further enhance their leadership skills at Philmont, Sea Base or selected regional venues. NAYLE offers Sea Scouts an unforgettable wilderness experience as they use leadership and team-building skills to resolve exciting and challenging high adventure situations.
- **(Click) Sea Scout Experience Advanced Leadership Training, SEAL:** This course is designed to teach leadership skills while underway. The course will jump start youth leaders from new ships and fine tune youth leaders from established ships. The course

is a hard core, physically and mentally demanding, and extremely rewarding hands-on leadership experience. The course is taught every summer in multiple venues. Look for an application and more information at [seascout.org](http://seascout.org).

**(Slide 28) Adult Required**

- **Youth Protection:** Adult leaders must take the Venturing version of Youth Protection before their membership in Sea Scouts is approved. YPT must be renewed every two years by all registered adults. (See [myscouting.org](http://myscouting.org) for the online training.)
- **(Click) Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic Training (SSALBT):** This course is the first step in training for all Sea Scout leaders focusing on the skills and attributes necessary to be an effective advisor in the ship's deliverance of service to youth in your specific geographic location. It is intended primarily to enhance individual knowledge of program, and resources, while emphasizing personal skills necessary for the development of youth in the Sea Scout program. Note: This course can be taken through a series of modules online at [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) or in a face-to-face setting in a ship's district or council.
- **(Click) State Safe Boater's Course (NASBLA approved):** BSA requires this training of vessel operators for a very good cause. The US Coast Guard statistics tell us that 89% of recreational marine accidents are operator error. The top five risks are collision 62%, grounding 9%, capsizing 8%, falling overboard 4%, and fire 4%. It is well worth reading the Coast Guard statistics for your area to learn the most common risk in the waters you sail.

(For complete statistics see [http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/accident\\_stats.htm](http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/accident_stats.htm).) The good news is that boaters who took a boating education class in the last three years were 466 times less likely to be involved in an accident.

**(Slide 29) Adult Highly Recommended**

- **Wood Badge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,** a multi-day training, helps the participant understand the entire Scouting family while teaching contemporary leadership principles that are relevant to Scouting's values-based involvement.
- **(Click) Seabadge,** an advanced Sea Scout management course, is offered on a regional or council level. Seabadge will not teach you to operate a vessel, but it will give you intense training in Sea Scout Ship operations as well as providing an opportunity to network with other Sea Scout leaders throughout the region. Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic Training is a prerequisite for Seabadge.
- **(Click) Introduction to On-Water Leader Skills (I-OWLS),** This program gives adult leaders an introduction to resources and on-the-water skills they need to assist Sea Scouts in achieving Ordinary rank. The material and training presented in Introduction to On-the-Water Leader Skills (IOWLS) closely follows the Sea Scout Manual, the Guide to Safe Scouting, and the ANSI (Approved American National Standard) standards for on-water vessel activities and are meant to serve as an adult training outline. In addition, participants will be given access to lesson plans and support materials that will enable them or their youth to teach Apprentice and Ordinary advancement requirements.



- **(Click) Advanced On-Water Leader Skills (A-OWLS)**, This program models how adult leaders can step back from the helm, set performance expectations for the youth in their unit, and safely conduct an effective Sea Scout program underway. It is the mission of this course to model the methods and objectives of delivering the Sea Scout program while underway (long cruise), and to teach adult leaders how to support youth as they advance in rank, prepare for SEAL, and conduct quartermaster cruises. All adult leaders in Sea Scouting must take the Venturing version of Youth Protection Training.

### **(Slide 30) Leadership Recognition**

The Sea Scout Leadership Award has been established to recognize Sea Scouters who have shown exceptional dedication and have given outstanding leadership and service to Sea Scouting and to Sea Scouts at the level appropriate for the award. To be eligible, a youth or adult must be registered and involved as a Sea Scout for at least one year, and they must hold a leadership position or an office at the unit, district, council, area, region or national level.

All Council level nominations must be submitted to the respective council. Councils must report awards to the office of the National Sea Scout Director, and Area, Regional, and National nominations must be submitted to the office of the National Sea Scout Director.

### **(Slide 31) Program Support**

- *Sea Scout Manual*
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*
- *Guide to Advancement*
- *Guide to Awards and Insignia*
- *Aquatics Supervision*

### **(Slide 32) Closing**

When you walk down the hall on the lowest level of the office in Irving, BSA's core values are on long banners on the I-beams supporting the building. They need to be embraced by all of us.

- **Think strategically – Act Boldly:** Sea Scouts has actively sought out MOUs and MOAs with organizations that greatly enhance our ability to put on a quality program – USPS, USCGAUX, NOAA, National Water Safety Congress, National Boating Federation, BoatUS, National Safe Boating Council, NASBLA (National Association State Boating Law Administrators), and PADI are some of the better known.

Building to Teach is a new partner – the training is free, the focus is STEM, and youth are left with a well-built boat they can use or auction off to raise funds for their ship.

- **Practice Authentic Leadership:** Sea Scouts are not a junior navy. Some misguided units may seem to be, but we are all part of the Boy Scouts of America. Servant leadership is the heart of all our youth and adult training.
- **Assume The Best in Each Other:** Every ship's program reflects the wishes of the youth, the constructs of the chartered partner, the kind of water available, and the community served. Every ship is unique, but no single ship or program is the best. Scout Oath and Law – teach them, say them, live them. They are the glue that binds us together, and they bring out the best in each of us.

- **One family:** We are one family. Packs, troops, teams, crews and ships all share the same values, vision, Oath and Law. What we do for the youth of our nation is priceless.
- **Act in Greater Interest:** It all comes back to servant leadership and our service to others.

**(Slide 33)** You came here to learn more about the Boy Scouts of America and the programs it provides at a cost of personal time, but somewhere at home or out having fun, there are youth that you love and support. Thank you.

You may have heard that Sea Scouts are Scouting's best kept secret. We are small and we do something that is unique to the Scouting program, but at our core, we are not unique. Sea Scouts are the Boy Scouts of America.

We will close with a quote from The Handbook for Skippers, BSA, 1939, "While the Sea Scout program unquestionably has a vocational value, its chief purpose is not to make sailors or seamen. Nor is it even remotely associated with any marine organization or to be regarded as a feeder for the Navy. Its chief emphasis is placed on the "Scout" and not on the "Sea." The best ships in Sea Scouting are making SCOUTS – young men and women who will be marked for their courtesy, their reliability, and their alertness and shipshapeness. The occasional ship which lays all stress on sailing and seamanship invariably fails; it may succeed in making sailors but it does not produce Sea Scouts."