

Sample Activities

The ship activities that follow have been successful across the country. Use these suggestions as you develop your own ship program.

Tabletop Piloting

Besides being lots of fun, tabletop piloting is an active way to learn skills required in piloting any boat. If you have a large enough chart of your local waters, just place it on the table. Otherwise, make up a fairly accurate chart on brown wrapping paper.

Make up buoys, lighthouses, and obstacles as necessary. Buy or make small boats to match the usual vessels docked, moored, or operating in the area.

Dream up problems. Be sure they have clear solutions. Set up a score of one to 10 points for the maneuvers that must be done correctly. Have judges deduct one point for each mistake. Score on either an individual or crew basis.

For example: "Joe, this is your sailboat. Place it at the mouth of the inlet. There is a 10-knot wind coming out of the west. Bring your boat in for a landing here at point X on this dock." With these instructions, Joe then maneuvers his sailboat on a tabletop seaway.

The Predicted Log

This is a seafaring piloting contest that pays off in the Sea Scout's ability to solve problems when piloting. The projects involve reading charts and judging tides, currents, and weather conditions in order to predict arrival at specific checkpoints.

This is an outdoor activity using motorboats. Different sized boats may compete against each other on an equal basis, since this is not a speed race.

Checkpoints—Before the contest starts, give all teams a list of checkpoints. Using their charts and knowledge of the waters, each team submits the time of the day at which they will pass each checkpoint. Since this is not a speed race, they are allowed to take off as they please in order to pass the checkpoints at the times they have predicted.

Checkpoints should be landmarks that are well-known and easily-recognized. For example, a jetty, a high bridge, or a specific channel buoy may be used as checkpoints. To ensure accurate timing, some reference point must be designated so that the team will know when they are being judged "at the checkpoint."

Each checkpoint must, of course, be manned, and each boat properly identified.

Choosing the winner—The winner will be determined on the basis of the smallest accumulated error of time. For example, if boat A is $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes late at the first point and $2\frac{1}{4}$ minutes early the second point, its accumulated error thus far is $5\frac{3}{4}$ minutes. Scoring takes place after all the checkpoint men and women have turned in their logs and the logs are compared with the predictions of the teams.

Membership Party

Do you need more members? Do you need to add new enthusiasm and vigor to your existing membership? If so, plan a membership party now.

A membership party is any special ship activity designed to attract new members. It is generally organized around an exciting activity to which everyone invites their friends. In addition to showing them a good time, your ship should, through slides, movies, or snapshots, spotlight the activities you have held in the last year. Get your most articulate Sea Scout to give an interesting commentary on them. Once this is done, give a preview of your ship activities for next year, emphasizing the long cruise and big things you plan to do.

Add some refreshments and follow up your sales job with personal commitments, and you have a successful membership party. Many ships hold one in September and one in February every year.

Water-Safety Demonstration

A water-safety demonstration is simple to set up, yet is very important. It teaches through examples the techniques of being safe while getting maximum enjoyment from water sports.

Make arrangements for a site where there will be a natural audience, such as a beach, yacht club, or marina. Be sure to get the cooperation of the local authorities. Get their ideas on what safety demonstration is most needed, and then organize to do the job. Keep in mind that it takes at least a half-hour to put on a worthwhile show, so organize a fairly brief, yet active and interesting, show.

Demonstrations, such as launching a boat, rowing correctly, installing an outboard motor, handling a swamped boat, wearing personal flotation devices properly, rescuing from the shore by boats or swimming, and resuscitation are possibilities.

Progressive Dinner

A progressive dinner is a traveling dinner party. This different kind of party has two old favorites—dates and food. Couples gather at the home of a Sea Scout. From the batch of simple corsages provided, each boy chooses one and pins it on his girl. Fruit juice and appetizers are served.

Then everyone moves on to the second home, where the buffet-style salad course is served. At the third home, the group sits down to the main course. Parents and ship committee members are on-hand to do the serving.

Then the group moves on for buffet dessert. This is followed by a social program at this home or the ship meeting place.

Hosts and hostesses should be thanked publicly by the activity committee chair, as well as the individual guests. Ships have been known to climax the occasion with a surprise gift of appreciation to the activity chairperson.

A theme or motif may be used to give unity to the program and decorations. This may conform to an appropriate season or holiday. For example, the salty sea offers enough variety in themes. The group could cruise from one country to another as they visit the various homes.

Waterfront Maneuvers

This is a competitive event that is exciting and yet simple to organize. All you need is a safe waterfront and at least two rowboats or canoes. There are other small items related to some of the events, but in general, if you have your boats, canoes, and adequate lifeguards, you are pretty well set to go.

This activity involves head-to-head competition in the following events. Be sure to keep score and recognize the winners.

Water Spaniel Special—This event involves three Sea Scouts in each boat, with two at the oars and one at the stern. Line up the boats on shore, about 50 yards away from a line of floating blocks. Number each block to correspond with a number on each boat. The first crew to find its block and bring it back to shore is the winner.

Skin Diving Search—Objects such as a boat anchor, bailing cans, or other fairly large pieces of waterfront equipment are placed in a marked area not more than 10 to 12 feet deep. Teams of two divers compete within a 10-minute time limit to see which team can bring up the most equipment to a designated area.

Tug-of-War—Two boats are tied stern to stern, about 20 yards apart, with a Sea Scout at the oars in each boat. Using a marker as a guide, the boat that pulls its rival across the mark wins.

Canoe Filling—Two teams of two Sea Scouts are each in a canoe, with a bucket tied to a 6-foot rope attached to each canoe. The object is to sink the opponent's canoe by filling it with water using the bucket. Contact is not allowed between the two canoes.

Be a "Square Rigger"

Back in the days of towering sails, there were also towering men. The men who sailed those square riggers had to be physically fit, and were tested nearly every day by the sea and sails. Why not recapture the wonderful fitness of those days by planning and conducting a "square rigger" physical fitness activity for your ship?

Use the President's Physical Fitness Award as a guide to set up this activity. It has suggested physical fitness activities designed for high school-age youth. For each activity, there is a set of standards that must be met by each age group. List the highest standard as the square rigger. This should be a real challenge for each member.

Get a consultant (a physical education instructor or an athlete) to help you give the tests and analyze the results.

Competition against a standard is a good way to bring about enthusiastic interest in this program. Some ships offer a special inexpensive prize, or they reserve places on a cruise for those who qualify as square riggers.

After the initial activity is over, urge all participants to improve themselves by regularly doing the exercises involved. Then surprise them sometime later by staging a rerun of the activity to check their improvement.

Exchange Visits

Ever dream of going to Florida, California, or Maine, yet felt you could never go? There is a way that Sea Scouts ships can afford it—through exchange visits.

Invite another ship from a community where you would like to go to visit your ship. Do this with the understanding that you, in turn, will visit them. This enables both groups to act as hosts in order to cut down on expenses. Keep these points in mind as you make arrangements.

Selecting your guests—Once you have located the part of the country you would like to visit and the place that you feel is within the range of what you can afford, contact the Boy

Scout office there and ask to be put in contact with a ship that might like to exchange visits with you.

Select the group carefully. By personal correspondence, make sure they are a congenial group. Find out what they would like to do and make sure they know what you have in mind before you make final arrangements. Check arrangements for coed housing, if required.

When and where—Once the arrangements have been made and the other group arrives, your ship provides meals and lodging in your homes. Follow a prearranged program for the period of their stay.

You can plan socials and sight-seeing tours of local museums, factories, and colleges. Arrange for religious services according to your visitors' faiths.