

The Purpose of the Boy Scouts of America As It Relates to Religious Groups

The history of the Scouting movement reveals the key to its purpose and success. There was Scouting in America before there was a “Boy Scouts of America” unifying all American Scouting groups for boys into one organization. Many religious groups had formed Scout troops as a part of their ministry to the youth and families in their neighborhoods. Scouting developed as a movement and became a part of many religious groups’ youth ministry.

Today, the leaders of many churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples have formed Scouting units. The Boy Scouts of America provides support for groups operating Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, and Venturing crews.

During the first six years (1910–16), the Scouting movement became so popular throughout America that the Congress of the United States recognized Scouting’s potential as a positive program for youth and granted a charter to the Boy Scouts of America to make the program available through religious and other community organizations.

The Boy Scouts of America issues two kinds of charters in each local council area: One type of charter is issued to a community organization such as a church or religious institution or one of its affiliate groups to operate Scouting units to serve the youth and families within its community. The other type of charter is issued to a local Scouting council: (1) to provide service to help the chartered organization be continuously successful in its Scouting program, and (2) to extend an invitation to other organizations to become involved.

A council is divided into geographical areas called districts. The district is the structure closest to the religious group and to the families and the youth who benefit from the program; therefore, it is a most important part of the total Scouting structure. A district must help make Scouting happen.

The local religious group operates a Scouting unit—a Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, or Venturing crew—to develop in youth desirable qualities of character, to train them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and to develop in them personal fitness. The various support system levels of the Boy Scouts of America—district, council, area, regional, and national—assist religious groups and other organizations by providing literature, training, camps and high-adventure bases, district, council, and national camping events, and other resources to enrich the Scouting experience and better achieve Scouting’s mission.

This time-tested program has worked. Since 1910, more than 98 million lives have been directly touched by community organizations (mostly religious groups) of the United States through the Scouting program.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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