



## SCOUTING FORMS CHRISTIAN LEADERS

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The Boy Scouts of America needs little introduction. For over ninety years, Scouting in the United States alone has proven itself, again and again, to be an ideal program for both the Scouts and the adults who work with them. Scouting spans the years from boyhood to young adulthood to which boys and young men commit themselves voluntarily.

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting is the necessary link established by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to work hand-in-hand with the Boy Scouts of America. To begin with, the Scout Oath and Law of the Boy Scouts of America embodies values and morals that are solidly Christian, indeed Catholic. Doing one's best; helping others at all times; paying attention to moral, mental and physical well-being; and striving to grow in virtue are all essential parts of Scouting.



In the Catholic Church, there is one particular aspect of Scouting that deserves special attention today. Scouting has tremendous potential for developing Christian leaders from among Catholic youth. It provides a powerful complement to the Church's ministry to Catholic youth. Scouting, under the tutelage

of adult Catholic leaders, offers young people a unique opportunity to grow in faith and in leadership in the company of their peers.

In these our times many of our young men and women are struggling with an identity crisis. They sometimes find themselves uncertain and confused. Boys involved in the Scouting experience from boyhood to adulthood, and boys and girls in Venturing, have a real opportunity to come to know self in a safe and wholesome environment. They learn personal ideals that give clarity of purpose to their lives. They are able to attain skills that will benefit them for a lifetime.

Training, challenging, and supporting young men and women to develop responsibility, maturity, and leadership are constant elements of Boy Scouting and Venturing. At the same time, youth involved in Scouting are called on to be independent, to grow in self-reliance, and to learn to interact with others --- to experience interdependence.

Through the religious emblems program, Scouts have an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and to engage in regular service to their parish churches. Through the presence and activity of Scout chaplains, Scouts have an opportunity to develop lasting friendships with priests and religious outside the customary parish and school settings. Frequently called upon to lead religious services, to help out in parish or diocesan activities, to engage in programs directed toward justice and charity, Scouts

