



Membership Standards

What is the January 1, 2014,
change, and how does it affect
me?



Youth Members

August 29, 2013

Boy Scouts of America

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in helping others as they prepare to help young people in Scouting!

This course is intended to provide some basic information about the change in the membership standards of the BSA that will become effective January 1, 2014.

The course is intended to be conducted with an individual or in a small-group setting. It can be facilitated by unit, district, or council trainers.

This syllabus is intended to be read verbatim to ensure that a consistent message is being relayed. Too often people have inaccurately "read between the lines" and that should not be a part of the information.

Trainers should be familiar with the content of the slides and the FAQ documents, and have the skills to be able to present it effectively.

Necessary Resources:

- Computer and projector (or large monitor) to show slides
- FAQ Document(s) for participants.





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There has been a wealth of information in the news, in social media, on the Web, and around the campfire about the resolution passed by the voting members of the Boy Scouts of America in May – some of it accurate and some of it slanted in one direction or the other.



Youth membership in the Boy Scouts of America is open to all youth who meet the specific membership requirements to join the Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, Sea Scout, and Venturing programs. Membership in any program of the Boy Scouts of America requires the youth member to

- (a) subscribe to and abide by the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law,
- (b) subscribe to and abide by the precepts of the Declaration of Religious Principle (duty to God), and
- (c) demonstrate behavior that exemplifies the highest level of good conduct and respect for others and is consistent at all times with the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.



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What has not changed:



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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 Law.



The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people like you to make ethical and moral choices over your lifetime by instilling in you the values of the Scout Oath and Law.



The Scout Oath begins with duty to God and the Scout Law ends with a Scout's obligation to be reverent, and that will always remain a core value of the Boy Scouts of America.



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Scouting's vision is to serve every eligible youth in America, and this policy would allow us to serve more youth and focus on their development.



The vision of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law; and this policy will allow us to serve more youth and focus on their development.



Any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting.



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The *Boy Scout Handbook* continues to define “morally straight” as: “Your relationships with others should be honest and open. Respect and defend the rights of all people. Be clean in your speech and actions and faithful in your religious beliefs. Values you practice as a Scout will help you shape a life of virtue and self-reliance.”



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Youth are still developing, learning about themselves and who they are, developing their sense of right and wrong, and understanding their duty to God to live a moral life.



We know that you and other youth are still developing, learning about yourselves and who you are, developing a sense of right and wrong, and understanding your duty to God to live a moral life.



Accordingly, simply stating he or she is attracted to the same sex, but not engaging in sexual activity, does not make a youth ineligible for membership.



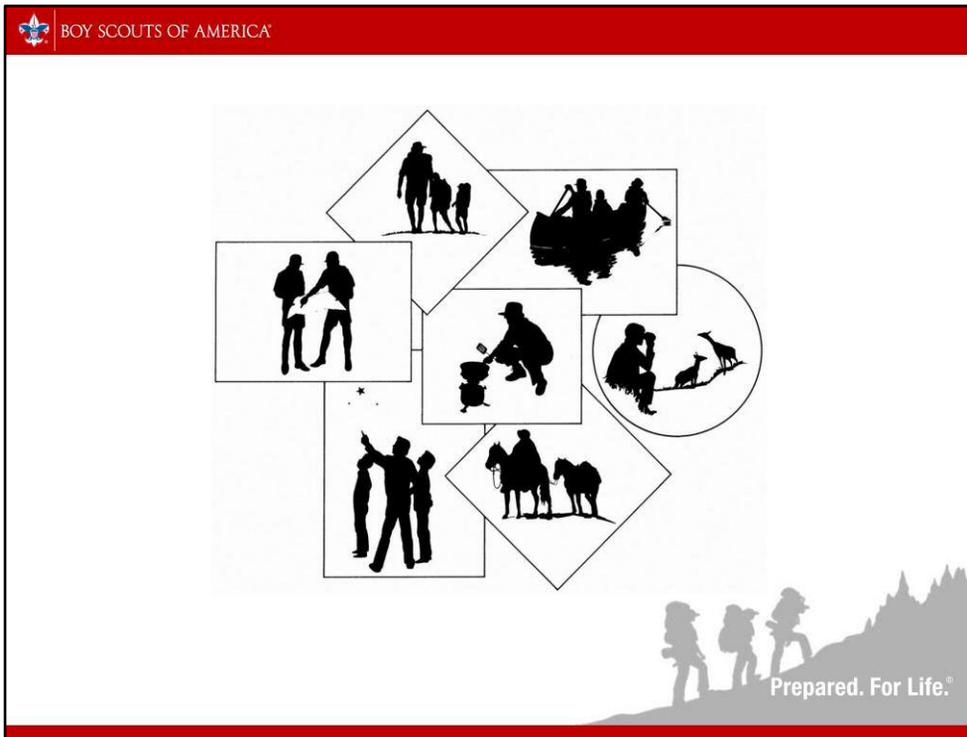
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How a Scout behaves – lives by the Scout Oath and Law – is the key factor.



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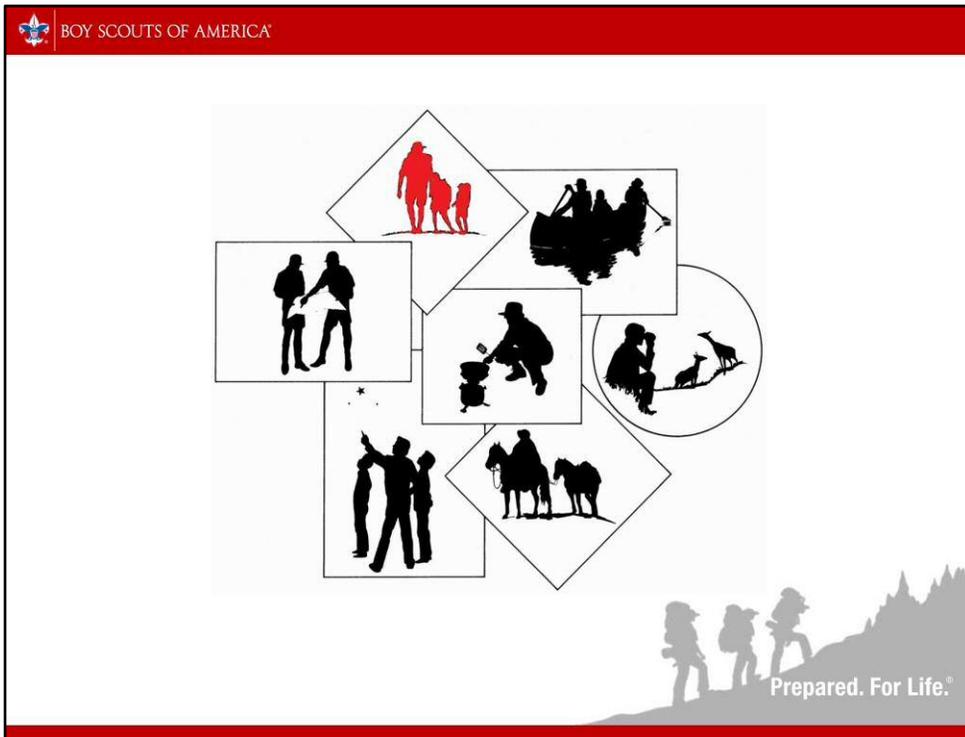
In large part, how this affects you depends on your role in Scouting, and on you!



There is no conceivable way the BSA can come up with an answer to every possible situation that might arise – no more than we have been able to for the past 103 years. Ultimately, people in leadership positions must exercise good judgment, common sense, and discretion when navigating through the “What if?” examples. The acid test must be the Scout Oath and Law and/or “Does a person’s behavior disrupt the delivery of the program?”

A list of Frequently Asked Questions can be found on www.scouting.org that will help you with some of the ones the BSA has heard and answered.

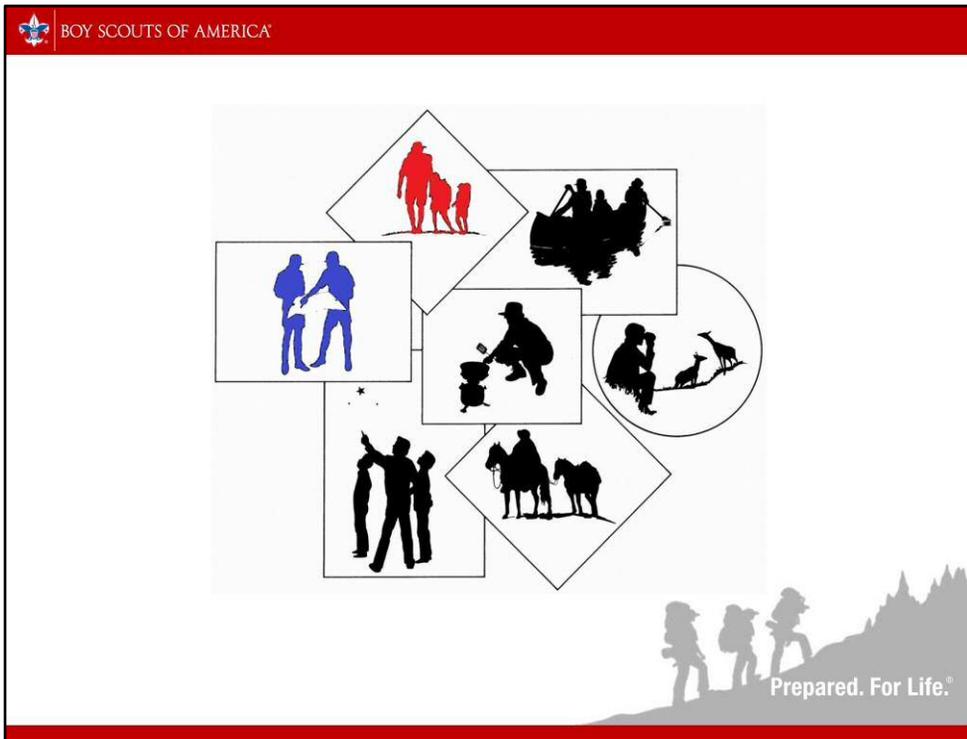
What follows are some things to keep in mind.



It might be called a den, a squad, or a crew, but the idea is the same – the Patrol Method.

You and a group of your friends participating in Scouting together, supporting each other, and learning Scouting skills together under the guidance of a quality adult leader and advisor is one of the biggest keys to the success of Scouting.

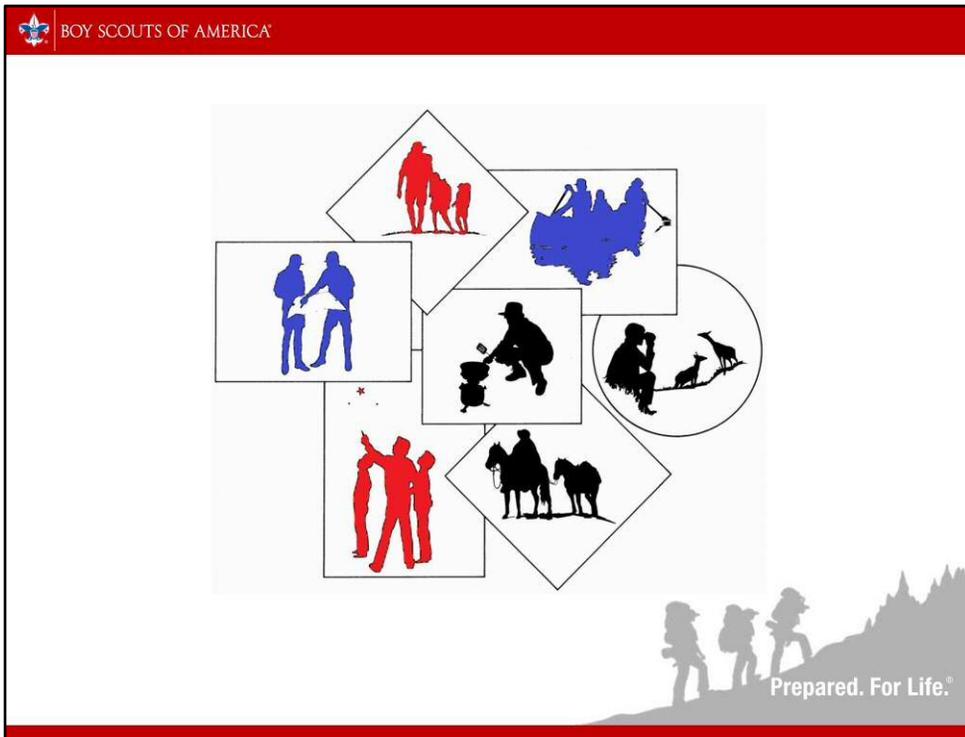
Properly done, the Patrol Method will create a positive environment for each member of the patrol.



Scouting's longtime policy of two-deep leadership as well as barring one-on-one contact between adults and youth members are designed to protect you from uncomfortable or unsafe situations.

Be sure that when you are put in a situation that is uncomfortable, you let a trusted adult know.

It is not OK for you to be in one of those situations, so do not be afraid to tell someone.



For generations the “buddy system” has been a safety measure for Scouting activities. The long history of its use in Scouting has shown that it is always best to have another person with you when involved in any outdoor or strenuous activity.

You should never be made uncomfortable with your buddy. If you are, let your leaders know immediately.

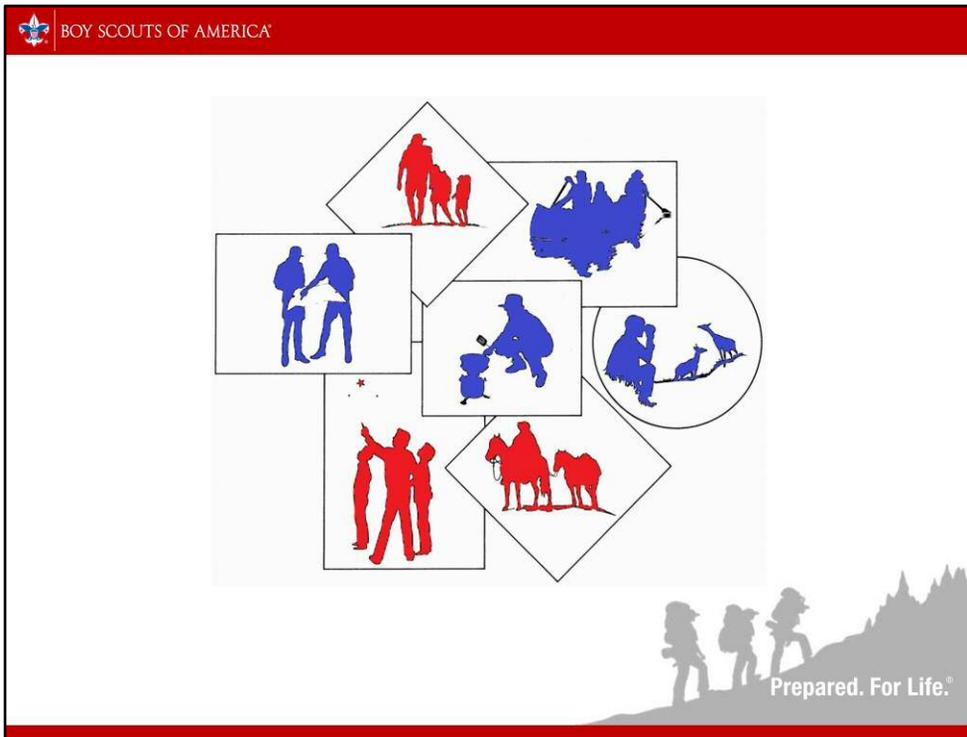
When in a leadership role assembling buddy teams, you should be sure to take some things into consideration:

- The members of the buddy team should know each other, and preferably be from the same patrol, den, squad, or crew.

- The buddies should be part of the selection process.

- And buddies should be of approximately the same age (no more than a three-year age difference) and Scouting experience level.

Circumstances will dictate when a buddy team can be coed, but buddy teams may *not* be coed in sleeping, tenting, bathroom, shower, or other privacy situations. They can be coed in group activities such as training sessions, aquatics, climbing, or other public activities.

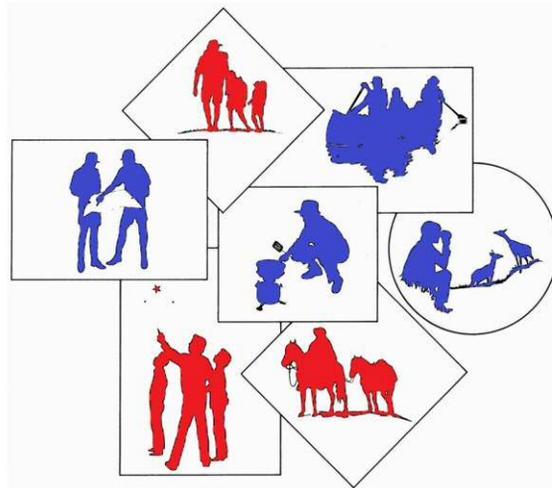


As has always been the case, Scouting teaches respect and courtesy for all people. No member may use Scouting to promote or advance any social or political position or agenda.

Remember, a Scout is friendly, a Scout is courteous, and a Scout is kind!

You need to respect others and treat others as you want to be treated. Bullying, hazing, and teasing – for any reason – are also not appropriate in Scouting.

Your unit leaders must address any mistreatment of others that might occur, regardless of the reason.



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If you are unsure about something that is going on in your Scouting experience or in your life, visit with your unit leaders, parents, school counselor, and/or your religious leaders.

As we said earlier, you and other members of Scouting are still developing, learning about yourselves and who you are, developing your sense of right and wrong, and understanding your duty to God to live a moral life.

This is a time of change in your life and in the lives of others your age.

When in doubt, think of the words in the Scout Oath and Law, and their meanings. Ask yourself, “How do they apply?” Then act accordingly or seek advice from adults you respect.



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It is now up to each of us to provide the best possible program so that character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness become real in your life and in the lives of other youth in Scouting.