Sea Scout SKILLS

Oaths and Codes

Oath

- Something, as the truth of what one says, a promise that one makes, that is corroborated by an oath;

Code

- Any set of traditional rules of conduct that are considered morally binding upon the individual as a member of a particular group, a resident of a particular place, or a participant in a particular activity; customary socially acceptable behavior (as of an individual or group);
- A formal statement of such a set of rules or standards. [1]

It is not clear as to when the first oaths or codes were affirmed or written, but it could be argued that since it seems to be in human nature to seek clarification and to make promises, it is likely that the first oaths and codes were executed soon after man learned to communicate with one another.

The Boy Scouts of America celebrates its various oaths and codes as they help its membership to better understand its mission, core values, and methods for presenting its various programs. From Cub Scouts to Venturing and Sea Scouts, the oaths and codes of the BSA illuminate those paths we expect our young men and women to follow not only as a Scout, but as a citizen, family member and friend.

Sea Scout Customs

Oaths and codes have held a place of high regard and esteem throughout Sea Scout history. From the earliest Sea Scout group that held to the principles of Lord Baden-Powell's Scout law choosing to be model Scouts and citizens in their thoughts, deeds and programs. Today's Sea Scout is asked to know, understand, and hold fast to the values set forth in Scout Oath and Law, the Venturing Code, the Sea Promise and the codes and bylaws established by their Ship.

Scout Oath

"On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law;

"To help other people at all times;

"To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

The Scout Oath (or "Promise" in other Scouting organizations worldwide) is the Scout's first pledge to do her honor and to set a straight path in life and adherence to the oath is required of all Scouts according to the Constitution of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) which states "All members of the Scout Movement are required to adhere to a Scout Promise and Law reflecting ... the principles of Duty to God, Duty to others and Duty to self, and inspired by the Promise and Law conceived by the Founder of the Scout Movement...."

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1908 Lord Baden-Powell, the father of the Scouting movement, penned the original Scout law. The original law had only nine principles as compared to the twelve we know today. Do you know what those nine principles were?

1. "oath" and "code." Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged. Merriam-Webster, 2002. http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com (13 Aug. 2006).

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Oaths and Codes

Each of the six elements of the Scout Oath (honor, duty to God, duty to country, obedience to the Scout Law, physical strength, mental awareness, and moral direction) are critical to a Scout's success in the Sea Scout program and in life.

Scout Law

The Scout Law is derived from Baden-Powell's original law as he penned it in 1908. Sea Scout's should do their best to remember and understand the twelve points of the Scout Law.

Study them and discover what they mean to you. The Scout Law is an excellent reminder of our responsibilities to others, our ships and our communities.

The Scout Law

A Scout Is

- Trustworthy
- Loyal
- Helpful
- Friendly
- Courteous
- Kind
- Obedient
- Cheerful
- Thrifty
- Brave
- Clean
- Reverent

Venturing Code

"As a Venturer, I believe that America's strength lies in our trust in God and in the courage, strength, and traditions of our people.

"I will, therefore, be faithful in my religious duties and will maintain a personal sense of honor in my own life.

"I will treasure my American heritage and will do all I can to preserve and enrich it.

"I will recognize the dignity and worth of all humanity and will use fair play and goodwill in my daily life.

"I will acquire the Venturing attitude that seeks truth in all things and adventure on the frontiers of our changing world."

The Venturing program was founded in February 1998 and focuses on serving the needs for young men and women aged 14 - 21 - Sea Scouts is part of BSA's Venturing program. The Venturing Code

Sea Promise

As a Sea Scout, I promise to do my best:

To guard against water accidents;

To know the location and proper use of the lifesaving devices on every boat I board;

To be prepared to render aid to those in need;

To seek to preserve the motto of the sea, Women and children first.

The Sea Promise is nearly as old as the Sea Scout program itself and reflects the very nature of our program. It is an excellent guide and reminder to all Sea Scouts and adult leaders of the nature of the responsibilities we share as shipmates.

As members of Sea Scouts, we should not only memorize this important promise, but strive also to live and keep it foremost in our lives.

Ships Code and Bylaws

The oaths and codes we discovered so far have been written by other people for your benefit and the benefit of all Scouts. Unique to the Sea Scout program, however, is the Ship's Code and Bylaws. These are a set of guidelines that are developed by the Ship's youth members to guide and direct your Ship's programs

Resources

Here are some great resources you may want to explore to learn more about ship's bells and watchstanding.

- Scout Promise Background and History
  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scout_Promise
- Scout Law Background and History
  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scout_Law
- Venturing Program
  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venturing

Oaths and Codes

My Notes on these Sea Scout Skills

Sea Scout SKILLS

WORK SHEET

Oaths and Codes

You've studied the skills, now let's put them to use. Try your hand at the challenges you'll find on this worksheet. If you have questions or need help, be sure to ask your Ship's leaders.

1. What do the twelves principles in the Scout Law mean to you?

A Scoout is:

Trustworthy

_____

_____

Loyal

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Helpful

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Friendly

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Courteous

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Kind

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_____

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Obedient

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Cheerful

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Thrifty

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Brave

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Clean

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Reverent

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2. What does the word "oath" mean to you? Have you ever taken an oath?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Sea Scout SKILLS

WORK SHEET

Oaths and Codes

3. There are six main elements to the Scout Oath. What are the six elements and what do they mean to you?

4. With your ship's youth leaders, review and discuss your Ship's Code and Bylaws. If they are not yet written, work with other members of your ship to develop them.

5. In your own words, briefly describe the Venturing Code. What does the Code mean to you?

6. The Sea Promise is nearly as old as the Sea Scout program itself. Why do you think the Sea Promise is so important to our program and what does it mean to you?

7. Write a personal Code that describes those things that you feel are important to your success and growing to be a great contributor to our society.

8. List some common Codes and Promises that you know of -

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SAMPLE SHIP'S CODE AND BY-LAWS

Preamble:

Venturing Code/Sea Promise

As a Venturer, I believe that America's strength lies in our trust in God and in the courage, strength and traditions of our people.

I will, therefore, be faithful in my religious duties and will maintain a personal sense of honor in my own life.

I will treasure my American heritage and will do all I can to preserve and enrich it.

I will recognize the dignity and worth of all humanity and will use fair play and goodwill in my daily life.

I will acquire the Venturing attitude that seeks truth in all things and adventure on the frontiers of our changing world.

As a Sea Scout, I promise to do my best:

To guard against water accidents

To know the location and proper use of the lifesaving devices on every boat I board

To be prepared to render aid to those in need

To seek to preserve the motto of the sea: Women and Children First.

Introduction

The elected ship youth leaders are expected to live by and enforce the Ship's Code and Bylaws. New members should be given a copy and asked to sign or otherwise indicate that they understand and agree to the ship code and bylaws.

Ship Bylaws

1. **Objectives.** The objectives of Ship 123 are to:

   Seek water-based high adventure

   Become the best-trained, run, and qualified Sea Scout Ship in the nation

   Be able to respond to any situation through skills, teamwork, and leadership.

2. **Membership.** Membership shall be open to all young adults who meet BSA's standard age requirements. No prospective member shall be disqualified because of race, color, creed, or sex. All members must be registered as Venturers and agree to the ship code and bylaws.

   There will be no less than two (2) registered adult leaders present during any organized meeting or activity of the ship. There will be no limit, however, on the maximum number of adult leaders.

3. **Youth Leaders.** The elected youth leaders shall be the Boatswain, two Boatswain's Mates, Yeoman, and Purser. The Boatswain shall appoint Activity Chairs and make other assignments as needed. The duties of the youth leaders shall be as prescribed in the Sea Scout Manual.

   The normal term of office shall be for one year starting on the first general meeting in July. In the event that a youth leader resigns, quits, or is expelled, a temporary youth leader will be appointed and approved by current youth leaders.

   No member shall serve more than two successive terms in the same office. Elections shall commence by nomination. On the night of the election, any youth member may present nominations from the floor. If the nomination is seconded and the candidate agrees to serve, he or she must be included on the ballot.

4. **Ship's Business**. Ship's business will be conducted as described in the Sea Scout Manual. Voting shall be by simple majority, with the exception of changes or amendments to the bylaws, which will require a two-thirds vote of the total membership.

5. **General Meetings.** The general meetings will follow the format set forth by the Boatswain. This format should include program in the form of lecture, hands-on training, and teaching. It is the responsibility of the Boatswain to follow through with each program, and be sure the program is being offered to all members on an equal opportunity basis.

   The activities of the general meetings will be recorded by the Yeoman or appointed substitute. The meeting minutes will be published in hard copy in a format set forth by the Yeoman.

6. **Youth Leaders' Meetings.** The activities of the Youth Leaders' meetings will be recorded by the Yeoman or appointed substitute. The meeting minutes will be published in hard copy in a format set forth by the Yeoman. These minutes will serve as a reference for the youth leaders while planning activities that were discussed at the meetings.

7. **Communications: Newsletter and Web Site.** A web site containing current, relevant information will be updated by the Yeoman who will work with an appointed person on the development

and maintenance of the web site.

A newsletter announcing past and future events of the ships will be delivered to the parents no less than once per year.

8. **Dues.** January is the beginning of Ship 202's fiscal year. Dues will be $15 per quarter.

9. **Money Earning.** All money-earning projects must comply with BSA policy and be approved by a majority vote. Members who do not participate in their share of projects are not entitled to benefits of the funds earned. The money earned will be put into a general fund.

10. **Uniforms.** The following uniforms are prescribed for the ship:

    Work uniform:
    Chambray blue shirt
    Navy blue slacks (dickies)
    Ship hat

    Semi-Casual Uniform:
    Ship hat
    Ship Polo shirt
    Serviceable blue jeans or Navy blue slacks (dickies)

    Dress Uniform:
    The dress uniform shall be the National Standard Service Dress Whites

11. **Finance.** All checks will require one signature, either from the Purser or from Treasury Committee Member.

    All budgets must be adopted by the ship in a majority vote and approved by the Ship Committee. The ship may pay for driving expenses if at least three hours long, and accounted for in advance.

    An assigned Ship Committee member will ensure that the youth purser is doing his/her job and will assess quarterly audits. Purser is expected to give a budget report at every youth leaders' meeting.

    The ships debit card will be held by the Skipper. All receipts must be provided to the purser for proper record keeping.

12. These bylaws are secondary to the national, council, and district guidelines, and the Guide to Safe Scouting.

Developing Your Own Ship's Code and Bylaws

Developing your own ship's code and bylaws isn't as difficult as you might think. Read over this sample and the sample in the Sea Scout Manual. In a meeting designated for the purpose of developing this important document, discuss the concepts and ideas that best suit the needs of your ship. You will probably visit several drafts of the code and bylaws before your ship develops its final copy. Use the space below to write down some ideas that you think are important for the ship's code and bylaws.