



VENTURING BSA

11 IDEAS TO WORK WITH VENTURING AGED YOUTH

Adapted from Cooper Wright, Advisor, Crew 1519

1. **Let the Youth Lead**

- Model your own positive behavior
- Treat youth with respect in your actions and words
- We are developing young men and women and changing them into leaders
- We are not making widgets

2. **Team Building is Key**

- It's spending time together (to get to know each other) that is the key to success
- Let the youth decide what they want to do - sometimes it's just fun stuff
- Movies (like White Squall or Lord of the Flies) present excellent group dynamics
- Give the unit some special identity
- Design special T-shirts
- Use special totems

3. **Develop a Team that Works Together**

- Incentive games
- Ropes courses
- In-door rock wall climbing
- Swimming

4. **Be Clear with Your Own Expectations**

- What exactly are your expectations & do you have them clearly identified?
- Be ready to negotiate and change
- Go easy - lighten up - have fun!

5. **Let the Youth Set the Rules for the Unit**

- Have the youth develop no more than 5 rules, such as:
 - Crew first •• The Golden Rule •• Communicate •• Eat everything •• Have fun
- Everyone signs the rules and distribute copies
- Hold everyone (including the adults) accountable to the rules

6. To Change Behavior, Coach by Asking Questions

- When a youth comes to you, resist the urge to answer his question. Rather, reverse the question back to him or her
- Ask another question if necessary. The youth members will surprise themselves with what they already know, or can figure out
- Ask “What did you learn?”
- Help the youth members critique themselves and their performance

7. Reward the Positive

- The things that get rewarded are the things that get repeated
- Try very hard to find the good in each young person
- Find creative ways to tell each person
- Praise openly and in front of his peers
- Reward the group for the individuals actions

8. Teach the Youth the Interpersonal Skills They Need and Then Trust Them

- Treat others like you would like to be treated
- Open and direct communications
- Discuss and practice leadership and followership
- Guide the youth to solve their own problems as a group
- Use Roses and Thorns every day (or whenever needed)

9. Allow the Youth to Make Mistakes

- Teach them what is correct, but then let them make mistakes
- Unless safety is compromised, mistakes are the best teacher.
- Try to be quiet and hike the extra miles when they miss a trail sign!

10. Use Teens to Communicate with Teens

- Always, always, always work through your youth leader!
- Youth-to-youth communications is the best way to connect to kids
- Remember, you are developing leaders. You must resist the urge to tell a youth, to correct a youth
- Coach the unit’s youth leader and let him/her do the communicating

11. Find Ways to Have Fun!

- Venturing-age youth seek out things that are fun to do
- They will find a way to make things fun
- Smile and laugh a lot
- Lighten up!