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# Venturing Leadership Skills Course

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



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## Introduction

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### What Is Leadership?

"Leadership is an elusive concept that, at times, can be vague and ambiguous."  
Phillips, Lincoln on Leadership

"Being the leader doesn't make you one." Gordon, Leader Effectiveness Training

"Trying to describe leadership is like having several viewers trying to compare what they see in a kaleidoscope when the mere act of passing the kaleidoscope shakes up the design." Neal Maxwell, A More Excellent Way

Our impressions and attitudes toward leadership are gained from observing other leaders, and from our own experiences. Most of us, when selected or elected into a leadership role for the first time had no training and few leadership skills. We learned from the "school of hard knocks" the difficulties acquainted with leadership.

### Why This Course?

Leadership is one of the most challenged institutions in our society today. In recent surveys, public opinion concerning leadership was reported to be at an appalling level. Of the adults questioned in one survey, 55% expressed feelings of alienation from those in leadership positions, and only 18% felt they could count on their supervisors.

Our educational systems constantly are challenged to deal with the issue of leadership. Business schools around the country are challenged to produce graduates who not only possess the knowledge needed, but also the "social conscience" and "team mentality," as well as know how to deal with "the people side" of leadership.

Venturing, the young adult division of the Boy Scouts of America, was created to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults. Teaching leadership skills to our nation's teenagers ; our future leaders, is one important mission that Venturing can address.

Abraham Lincoln expressed the need for youth leadership training in this way:

*A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting, and ; when you are gone, attend to those things which you think are most important. You can create all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him.*

*He will assume control of your cities, states, and nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities and corporations...the fate of humanity is in his hands.*

The Venturing Leadership Skills Course (VLSC) was created to help teach young adults the attitudes and skills that good leaders demonstrate. Practicing and mastering these skills will help enable Venturers to have positive leadership experiences. VLSC is a series of leadership modules divided into four categories: **Vision, Communication, Organization, and Synergism**. Each module is introduced by an activity and followed by reflection. It is recommended that the modules be conducted in the order listed.

The Venturing Leadership Skills Course was specifically designed to be taught to all Venturers in the crew. It is recommended that the crew advisor and/or the crew officers conduct the course. If your crew is small, you may want to conduct the course with other crews and/or groups.

Choose an outdoor setting to conduct the course. Completion of this course is a requirement for the Silver Award and the Venturing Advisor Award of Merit.

VLSC can be conducted on the district or council level, but it was designed to be conducted at the unit level. The unit may choose to hold the course at a weekend retreat or at several crew meetings.

# Venturing Leadership Skills Course Weekend Retreat Schedule

## Friday

5:00 – 7:30 p.m.	Arrival, check-in, setup
7:30 – 7:45 p.m. 7:45 – 9:00 p.m.	Introduce the Venturing Leadership Skills Course Section 1 - <b>VISION</b>  Module 1 - <b>“Vision on Video”</b>
9:00 – 10:00 p.m.	Cracker-barrel

## Saturday

7:00 – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Section 2 - <b>COMMUNICATION</b>  Module 1 - <b>“Blind Triangle”</b> Module 2 - <b>“Interrupt Me”</b>
9:30 – 9:45 a.m.	Break
9:45 – Noon	Section 3 - <b>ORGANIZATION</b>  Module 1 - <b>“Paper Tower”</b> Module 2 - <b>“Juggling Balloons”</b>
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Section 4 - <b>SYNERGISM</b>  Module 1 - <b>“Trust Circle”</b> Module 2 - <b>“Venturing on the Moon”</b> Break Module 3 - <b>“Knots”</b> Module 4 - <b>“Potato City Council”</b>
4:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Close



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## How to Conduct a Reflection

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We can make our experiences more meaningful and effective if we reflect on them. In Venturing, reflection is simply the process of the Venturers talking about their experiences immediately afterward.

Reflection provides an opportunity for everyone in the group to have input into what happened. Unless we plan times during which everyone gets a chance for input, it is possible that those individuals who are less assertive or confident might never say anything, even if they have valuable insights.

Reflection is best accomplished by asking open-ended questions such as "What," "How," "When," and "Where." In reflection there are no right or wrong answers. Ask questions about the good things first, like "What was good about the way decisions were made?" or "What did the group do well?" Then you can ask about improvement: "What was the problem with the way you were communicating?" or "Were there any problems with what happened?" This is the evaluation part of reflection.

In the Venturing Leadership Skills Course, reflection is also used as an opportunity for teaching and instruction.

All participants should be reminded of the ground rules of reflection:

1. No putdowns allowed; every response is welcome and valid.
2. The person conducting the session should not show disapproval of a response or a person, either verbally or nonverbally.

We should conclude reflecting time by asking questions that involve setting goals. Ask: "What skills did we use today that we should continue to use?" or "Is there anything we did that we should stop doing?"