1. Just when did "coed" Scouting start? How widespread is it?

Robert Baden-Powell founded the world Scouting (or Boy Scouting) program in 1908, then founded the separate world Guiding (or Girl Guiding) program in 1910 with his sister Agnes. In the US, William Boyce founded the Boy Scouts of America in 1910, and Juliette Gordon Low founded the Girl Guides of America in 1912 (Low renamed her program Girl Scouts in 1913 in order to improve recruitment). All world Scouting/Guiding programs were single-gender in the early years, and virtually all Girl Guide/Girl Scout programs remain single-gender today.

Worldwide Scouting, on the other hand, has gradually opened its ranks to girls, starting in the 1960's. Today well over 90% of all world Scouting programs are open to girls. Scouts Canada, for example, became fully coed in all program sections in 1998. Boy-only Scouting continues mainly in several predominantly Muslim countries in Africa and the Middle East.

2. OK, so when did *Scouting America* (BSA) become coed?

Actually, beginning over 50 years ago, in 1969! The BSA's high-school and college-aged Explorer program (renamed Venturing in 1998) began admitting girls as unregistered "associate members" in 1969, then as full members in 1971. Sea Explorers (renamed Sea Scouts in 1998) also opened to female membership in 1971. Note that the Eagle Scout award was closed to all females until 2019.

The first adult position open to women was Den Mother, in 1936. Other adult positions gradually opened to women until 1988, when the BSA opened all positions in all programs to men or women.

Cub Scouting (Kindergarten through grade 5) began admitting girls in 2018. Cub Scout packs can be boy-only, girl-only, or coed (BSA calls the last category 'family' packs).

Scouts BSA (formerly called 'Boy Scouting') began admitting girls in 2019. Girls and boys must be in separate single-gender troops, although BSA is currently testing a "combined" troop program, and Troop 97 is one of the pilot troops.

Note that in all programs, participation and advancement requirements are identical for boys and girls, and all adult positions are open to both men and women. The Scouts BSA *Handbook for Boys* and *Handbook for Girls* are identical except for gender-specific photos.

3. What about Troop 97?

Troop 97 began in 1952. In 2019, the 'linked' Troop 97 for girls became one of the first two female troops in the county. As part of the national 'Combined Troop Pilot Program', which began in September, 2024, all our Scouts are members of one troop. This especially simplifies life for those families that have both a daughter and a son in Troop 97.

All adult positions in both troops are open to either men or women. But note that BSA requires at least one BSA-registered woman over age 21 be present on any activity involving girls. This means that we need to register as many moms as possible so that we never have to cancel a girls' activity.

4. What about the 'Girl Scouts'?

GSUSA (Girl Scouts of the USA) and BSA have always been separate organizations, and their programs are significantly different. Note that girls in Scouts BSA are called 'Scouts' and not 'Girl Scouts'. Girl-only programs in most countries are called Girl Guides rather than Girl Scouts.

5. Terminology

Scouting America (known as **Boy Scouts of America / BSA** from 1910 to 2024) has four traditional Scouting programs (it also has non-traditional school- and work-based programs):
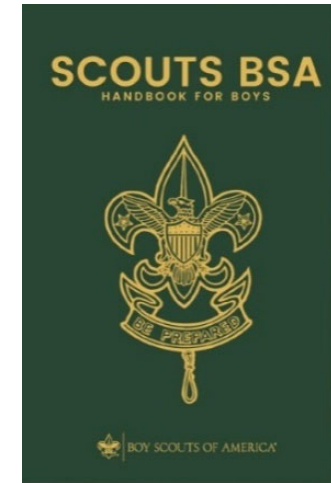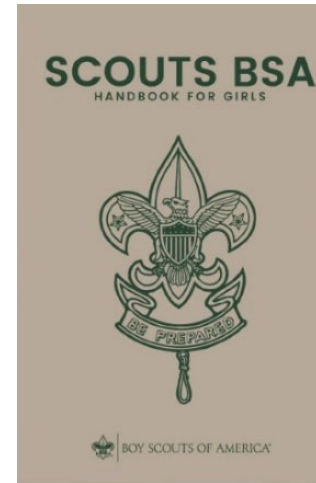
- **Cub Scouts**—Youth members are called Cub Scouts (grades K–3) or Webelos Scouts (grade 4) or Arrow of Light Scouts (grade 5) and are part of a 'pack'.
- **Scouts BSA**—Youth members are called Scouts and are part of a 'troop'.
- **Sea Scouts**—Youth members are called Sea Scouts and belong to a 'ship'.
- **Venturing**—Youth members are called Venturers and belong to a 'crew'.

Note that youth age 14 & up can opt to be Scouts, Sea Scouts, or Venturers.

Girls and Boys in *Scouting America*
(Boy Scouts of America / BSA)

Here are some answers to your questions

Troop 97 BSA
for Boys and for Girls

Email **info@troop97.net**