



Leadership Planning

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items during your planning meetings when choosing ethics as your program feature.

1. What are our group's needs for advancement as it relates to ethics?
2. What do we want to do for our main event?
3. Do we know an expert in ethics?
4. Are there any other topics that the material can relate to?
5. Are our members mature enough to explore this topic?
6. To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

PARENTS CAN HELP WITH THE ETHICS PROGRAM FEATURE BY:

1. Providing expertise on the topic of ethics
2. Providing support for the main event
3. Sharing personal experiences, if appropriate
4. Sharing copies of the codes of ethics of their professions or organizations
5. Providing a moral base and values for their children to develop
6. Maintaining current Youth Protection certification, which is required of all adults providing transportation for or participating in outings

Key Definitions

Ethics is the study of values and of how we ought to live. It denotes systematic, rational reflection upon a particular behavior.

Values are defined as standards or ideals that serve as guides or standards by which we live and make decisions.

Morals are modes of conduct—practical applications of ethical principles.

Ethical Controversies

Ethical controversies are dilemmas based on complex situations in which rendering a decision or action is difficult because different people, based on their principles and values, can view the situation differently. Challenging youth to think about ethical controversies is a great way to promote personal growth, because it requires reflections on the teachings of family, religious leaders, teachers, and others as they consider different points of view and strive to understand why they think and feel the way they do.

In addition to establishing and achieving multiple goals across the three areas of personal growth, Venturers who seek recognition—specifically the Pathfinder and Summit awards—will need to participate in and then lead an ethical controversy. Ideas for ethical controversies can be solicited from the group or individuals according to their collective or personal experiences.





Ethical controversy discussions can be used to explore ethical standards and dilemmas that apply to the interest areas of your unit's members. The activities can be staged as single activities during one unit meeting, or the unit can explore the ethical issues in depth over several meetings.

Ethical judgments are a part of every profession, hobby, and recreational activity, as well as every relationship. Pose these questions, and others like them, for thought and discussion about relationships or interest areas within your unit.

- Should it be legal for a police officer to take a second job?
- What do you do when your boss does something illegal?
- Is it right to refuse jury duty?
- When is censorship OK?

Discussions based on questions like these can help your unit tackle tough issues in an interesting, organized, and active way. The questions themselves can easily be adapted to your particular interests.

THE VALUE OF ETHICAL CONTROVERSIES

Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore, and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief.

—Franz Fanon, French philosopher



Fanon's quote underscores the importance of rational discussion and the value of helping youth learn through participation in ethical controversies. A respectful conversation can show that there are two sides to most questions and that the gray area between right and wrong is sometimes difficult to define. It also provides the opportunity for participants to learn to understand and respect both sides of an argument and to keep emotions in check when responding to a point with which they disagree.



Instructions for Ethical Controversies

Ethical controversies are dilemmas without easy answers, dilemmas in which each side might have valid arguments. The following situation is an example.

You have been summoned for jury duty in your county. One of the cases on the docket is the well-publicized prosecution of a man for a series of assaults that occurred within a 5-mile radius of your house. These were especially brutal crimes that occurred over several months. The assailant entered the open windows of the homes of the victims and assaulted and robbed them. Because you live in the area where the robberies occurred and where the defendant lives, you are concerned about your safety during and after the trial. You also are concerned about your ability to be entirely fair and objective as a juror. Your choices (position statements) are as follows:

- To avoid any possibility of revenge or intimidation, you ask to be excused from participation on the jury, or
- You serve on the jury anyway since you believe it is your civic and moral obligation to serve, and that attempting to avoid jury duty would be shirking your responsibility.

To use the above opposing positions as learning activities for your unit, follow these instructions.

Organize the Activity

Divide the unit into groups of four. Include any adults present. If possible, divide into groups so that Scouts and Venturers work with people they don't know very well.

Divide each group of four into two groups of two. Give each pair a copy of a position statement. Be sure to assign the pairs opposing sides. It does not matter whether the participants agree with their assigned position.

Conduct the Activity

An ethical controversy activity has five simple steps. Describe and conduct them one at a time. Allow enough time to complete each step before moving on. All groups of four should work on each step at the same time. The entire activity takes from 45 minutes to two hours.

1. **Learn the position.** With your partner, develop as many arguments as possible to support your assigned position. You also can work with a pair from another group that has the same topic and position.
2. **Present your position.** Present your arguments to the other pair. In turn, listen closely to their position, making sure you understand their arguments. Clarify your understanding by restating what others say.
3. **Discuss the issue.** Defend your position and critique the opposition. Try to persuade the opposing pair that you are correct; then listen to their defense and critique. Remember to be critical of ideas, not people.
4. **Reverse positions.** Switch positions with the other pair. Take a few minutes with your partner to review your new position. Present and defend your new position as if you really believed in it.
5. **Try to reach consensus.** Work toward finding a position that all four believe is the correct one. This may be a position already discussed or a completely new one. Change your mind only when you are convinced by rational arguments.

Follow Up

After the activity is over, discuss it as a large group. Ask each group of four how they arrived at their final position. Compare the positions chosen and the arguments used to support them. Reflect on the process, discussing both the activity and how group members related with each other.



I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures which are required, avoiding those twin traps of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.

I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemist's drug.

I will not be ashamed to say "I know not," nor will I fail to call in my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a patient's recovery.

I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know. Most especially must I tread with care in matters of life and death. If it is given me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humility and awareness of my own frailty. Above all, I must not play at God.

I will remember that I do not treat a fever chart, a cancerous growth, but a sick human being, whose illness may affect the person's family and economic stability. My responsibility includes these related problems, if I am to care adequately for the sick.

I will prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure.

I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.

If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of healing those who seek my help.

Ethics in Journalism

Journalists play a critical role in keeping the public informed about the issues of the day. Various journalism organizations, newspapers, and broadcasters have developed codes of ethics for journalists. Here are some main principles common to many of them:

- Be accurate. Present facts honestly and fully. Treat all sides of a controversial issue fairly.
- Name your sources. Whenever feasible, journalists should say where they got their information.
- Respect people's privacy.
- Correct your mistakes. If you publish something that is wrong, publish a correction promptly.
- Avoid conflicts of interest. Don't report on something in order to benefit yourself.
- Clearly label as opinion any statements of the journalist's own views on an issue. Keep those opinions on the editorial page of the newspaper or on a commentary segment of a newscast.
- Never plagiarize, or copy someone else's work without attributing the material to the original author.
- Avoid stereotyping people. That is, don't present a simplified image of a group of people—for example, people of a particular race, age, religion, region, or disability—based on the idea that all people in the group are similar. Each person is an individual.

Ethics in Education

Like other professionals, teachers and education administrators live by a code of ethics. For example, the National Education Association's code of ethics begins with commitment to the student—helping each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society—but also includes commitment to the profession—helping to raise professional standards, promoting a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, achieving conditions that attract others to careers in education, and helping prevent the practice of teaching by unqualified persons.



ETHICS GAMES

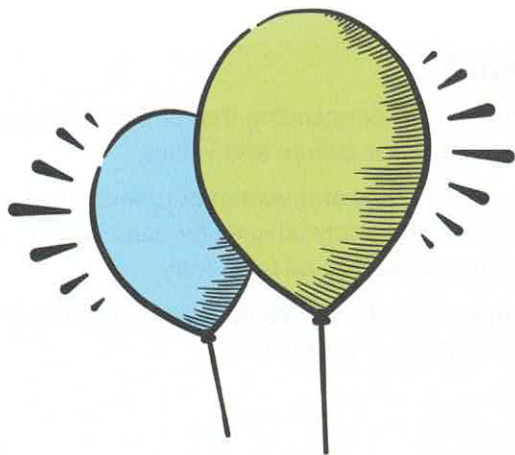
Balloon Bounce

Equipment: An inflated balloon for each team

How to play: The object is for each team to try to keep its balloon in the air the longest by hitting it back and forth between the members. A team is out when its balloon touches the floor or bursts. Players are not permitted to catch or hold a balloon, but they may redirect the flight of other teams' balloons.

Scoring: The team that keeps its balloon in the air the longest wins.

Notes: After the game, discuss how different people with different opinions need to work together.



Showing Our Values

Equipment: A set of 3-by-5-inch cards, each of which shows one point of the Scout Oath or Scout Law; an 11-by-17-inch (or larger) poster board for each participant or team; art supplies

How to play: Prepare the cards before the game. Shuffle the cards and have each youth or team choose one. Provide each youth or team with a poster board and art supplies, and have them create a sign that represents the card they were given.

Scoring: Display all the signs and have the larger group vote on which is best, most colorful, most artistic, etc.

Notes: The exploration of values is what is important here. The art contest is just a bonus.

Life's Little Riddles

Equipment: For each team, several blank index cards and a pencil or pen

How to play: Teams huddle in separate parts of the room. The leader calls out one topic from the list below, and the teams try to list as many answers as they can on an index card. (One person on each team is selected to write the answers, but all members are expected to contribute.) After 2 minutes, move on to the second topic. Continue until all topics have been covered.

Topics: Santa's reindeer, the planets, the original 13 colonies, the nine Supreme Court justices, the last seven presidents of the United States.

Scoring: Score 1 point for each correct answer, and deduct 1 point for each incorrect answer. The team with the most points wins.



Ring on a String

Equipment: A ring; a string that is long enough for all players to handle at one time

How to play: Have the group form a circle, facing inward, with one person in the middle. Slip the string through the ring and tie the ends together. Place the string inside the circle and have each person hold it with both hands. The idea is to pass the ring around the circle from hand to hand, unnoticed by the individual in the middle. That player tries to guess where it is by pointing to the hand he or she thinks is holding the ring. If correct, the ring holder goes to the middle, and the guesser takes his or her place in the circle. The person in the middle must keep guessing until he or she locates the ring.

Scoring: This game is not scored, but rather is used as an activity to represent how values and ethics are passed on person to person.

Notes: Another learning point is that our society is a circle and that others notice our values and ethics. Do we live the ethics we want others to see?



E.D.G.E. Ideas

Explain how it is done—Tell them.

Demonstrate the steps—Show them.

Guide learners as they practice—Watch them do it.

Enable them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.

EXPLAIN

- Explain the definitions of ethics, morals, and values.
- Present codes of ethics from various professions.
- Explain how the Scout Oath and Scout Law form the basis of Scouting's ethical code.

DEMONSTRATE

- Give Scouts examples of how you have made ethical decisions.
- Show internet videos on ethics.
- Invite ethics experts to discuss their work with Scouts.
- Show Scouts how ethics affect their daily lives.
- Tour a facility where ethics codes guide decisions.

GUIDE

- Have Scouts look for stories of ethical dilemmas in newspapers and magazines.
- Have Scouts create posters that illustrate points from the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Guide Scouts in discussing ethical controversies.
- Guide Scouts in developing a code of ethics for your unit.
- Encourage Scouts to create a bulletin board of media stories involving ethics.
- Guide Scouts as they plan and conduct an ethics conference.

ENABLE

- Foster an understanding that others' ethics are based on their culture and values.
- Prepare Scouts and Venturers to recognize, analyze, and apply ethical standards when facing pressure to be unethical.
- Prepare Scouts and Venturers to make ethical decisions over their lifetimes.

MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

● ESSENTIAL	■ CHALLENGING	◆ ADVANCED
Day Activity	Overnight Activity	Day Activity
A day of ethical controversy—Ethical controversies are dilemmas without easy answers in which each side might have valid arguments. Spend a morning debating several topics; then participate in a fun group activity.	Field trip of ethics—Arrange to visit a courthouse, hospital, or seat of government. Meet with an individual who is responsible for that institution's ethics. As appropriate and as time allows, tour the facility.	Ethics conference—Organize and host an ethics conference for youth in your area. Invite experts on topics. Provide time for debate. After reaching consensus, take action, perhaps by making a presentation to public officials or a legislative body.



ETHICS

Meeting Plan: Ethics, Values, Morals, and Choice



Week 1 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Invite early arrivers to look for examples of ethical controversies in recent newspapers or magazines or in online news sources.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	Have an adult who deals with ethical issues, such as a doctor, lawyer, or religious leader, explain the definitions of ethics, values, and morals. Discuss the sources for each individual's moral code.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	<p>NOTE: The skills instruction portion of this module consists of a single learning activity per meeting. The Essential, Challenging, and Advanced levels will be revealed in the responses given.</p> <p>Play Where Do You Stand?: Place in a line down the middle of the room signs or markers that read, "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Not Sure," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." Have the entire group begin at the "Not Sure" marker. The leader reads a statement, and then each individual moves to the marker that represents his or her opinion.</p> <p>Here is a list of sample statements; add or subtract statements as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pizza is the best food ever. • Basketball is a dumb game. • You should always help others. • I just love spinach. • It is wrong to lie. • It is OK to steal if you are hungry. • Slavery is wrong. • Capital punishment is necessary to protect society. • It is OK to underpay employees. • Women should get paid the same amount as men. <p>As time allows, invite small groups to discuss their answers on the more serious topics and how they reached different conclusions.</p>		7:20 p.m.
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin planning for participation in the main event. • Work on individual advancement as needed. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Balloon Bounce (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.






ETHICS

Meeting Plan: The Values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law



Week 2 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Invite early arrivers to brainstorm ethical controversies that affect teenagers.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 20 minutes	Display the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Lead a discussion about what each point of the Oath and Law mean. Ask how the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law lead to ethical decisions.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 30 minutes	   <p>NOTE: The skills instruction portion of this module consists of a single learning activity per meeting. The Essential, Challenging, and Advanced levels will be revealed in the responses given.</p> <p>Do the first part of the Showing Our Values activity (described earlier). The judging will occur after breakout groups meet. Projects must be completed in the time allotted. Clean up before moving to the next activity.</p>		7:30 p.m.
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on menus for the main event. • Work on Scout skills as needed. 		8 p.m.
Activity 10 minutes	Have each individual or group present its Scout Oath or Scout Law sign. Have them explain what they have created. Collectively judge each sign to decide which ones best represent their topic.		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.




ETHICS

Meeting Plan: Applied Ethics



Week 3 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Invite early arrivers to brainstorm ethical controversies their parents face in their careers.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	Discuss how ethics are applied in different professions. Compare and contrast ethics in sports, politics, medicine, education, journalism, etc.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes	 <p>NOTE: The skills instruction portion of this module consists of a single learning activity per meeting. The Essential, Challenging, and Advanced levels will be revealed in the responses given.</p> <p>Form multiple groups and give several 5-by-7-inch cards and a different color marker to each. Assign each group a different profession to explore: medicine, journalism, politics, sports, business, etc.</p> <p>Have each group list the main ethical points to which their assigned profession is bound (e.g., medicine: do not harm, sports: don't cheat), one point per card.</p> <p>Brainstorm for 20 minutes; then come together to share as follows: One group explains one of its points and lays down the corresponding card. The next group does the same thing but decides if its point is more or less important than the first group's point. Continue until all cards have been shared and ranked. As a large group, discuss whether the rankings need to be changed.</p>		7:25 p.m.
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on individual advancement. • Review plans for participation in the main event. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Life's Little Riddles (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.




ETHICS

Meeting Plan: The Law and Situational Ethics



Week 4 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Invite early arrivers to informally discuss one of the Venturing ethical controversies vignettes found at www.venturing.org/assets/ethical_controversies_vignettes.pdf .		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss situational ethics that take into account the particular context of an act when evaluating it ethically, rather than judging it according to absolute moral standards. Discuss how laws do or don't take situational ethics into consideration. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 45 minutes	 <p>NOTE: The skills instruction portion of this module consists of a single learning activity per meeting. The Essential, Challenging, and Advanced levels will be revealed in the responses given.</p> <p>On an easel pad, make four columns labeled "Principle," "The Law," "Exceptions," and "Alternatives." Under the first column, list a principle such as "Do not steal." Have the group brainstorm what should go in each of the other columns: what the law says (e.g., stealing is a crime), when violating the principle might be warranted (e.g., when you're homeless and starving), and any alternative actions that would allow the original principle to be maintained (e.g., seeking out food assistance from a charity).</p> <p>Go through this process for several topics. Discuss whether the laws are in line with ethical principles. Discuss whether one principle can trump another (e.g., is it OK to steal from the rich to give to the poor like Robin Hood did?).</p> <p>Potential topics might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stealing Cheating Telling the truth Giving to the poor Taking land for public or private purposes Withholding medical treatment Paying taxes 		7:15 p.m.
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	Finalize plans for participation in the main event.		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Ring on a String (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



ETHICS

Main Event: A Day of Ethical Controversy



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 4 to 6 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Essential (Tier I)

Ethical controversies are dilemmas without easy answers in which each side might have valid arguments. Spend a morning debating several topics; then participate in a fun group activity.

Equipment List

- An appropriate meeting room/location
- A list of prepared ethical controversies
- Copies of required materials for each team
- Lunch (either individual or group)
- Equipment for the chosen fun activity

Activity

- Create groups of four (include adult leaders).
- Have each group divide into teams of two.
- Provide each team with a copy of a position statement on a particular issue, one pro and one con.
- Follow these steps, as described earlier:
 - Learn the position.
 - Present your position.
 - Discuss the issue.
 - Reverse positions.
 - Try to reach consensus.
- Discuss other issues as time allows.
- Enjoy a fun group activity together.

Safety

- When debating, it is important to be respectful of others. No activity is worth hurting another's feelings.
- Follow the policies in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* during your fun activity.
- Use the buddy system and follow all BSA Youth Protection guidelines related to interactions between adults and youths.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes



ETHICS

Main Event: Field Trip of Ethics



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 6 to 8 hours or overnight

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Challenging (Tier II)

Arrange to visit a courthouse, hospital, or seat of government. Meet with an individual who is responsible for that institution's ethics. As appropriate and as time allows, tour the facility.

Equipment List

- Appropriate attire to visit facility
- Notepad and pens or pencils
- Camping equipment, if staying overnight
- Water and food
- Thank-you notes

Activity

- Contact the facility you wish to visit.
- Connect with the appropriate representative at the institution, and explain the issue you want to discuss.
- Tour the facility.
- Camp as appropriate.
- Write thank-you notes.

Safety

- Follow the policies in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.
- Use the buddy system and follow all BSA Youth Protection guidelines related to interactions between adults and youths.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes



ETHICS

Main Event: Ethics Conference



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 6 to 8 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____



Advanced (Tier III)

Organize and host an ethics conference for youth in your area. Invite experts on topics. Provide time for debate. After reaching consensus, take action, perhaps by making a presentation to public officials or a legislative body.

Equipment List

- Meeting place
- Projector and screen, as appropriate
- Lunch and snacks
- Thank-you gifts for presenters

Activity

- Recruit experts.
- Send out invitations.
- Set the agenda.
- Hold the forum, including:
 - Give introductions.
 - Have presentations and a forum.
 - Make and serve lunch.
 - Continue presentations and discussions.
 - Close session.
- Clean up.
- Send thank-you notes.

Safety

- Follow the policies in the Guide to Safe Scouting.
- Use the buddy system and follow all BSA Youth Protection guidelines related to interactions between adults and youths.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Books

Handbook for Venturers

Harvey, Stephen, and Richard L. Light, eds. *Ethics in Youth Sport: Policy and Pedagogical Applications*. Routledge, 2014.

Malik, Kenan. *The Quest for a Moral Compass: A Global History of Ethics*. Melville House, 2015.

Maxwell, John C. *Ethics 101: What Every Leader Needs to Know*. Center Street, 2005.

Panza, Christopher, and Adam Potthast. *Ethics For Dummies*. For Dummies Publishing, 2010.

Websites

National Education Association Code of Ethics

Website: www.nea.org/home/30442.htm

Political Ethics

Website: scholar.harvard.edu/files/dft/files/political_ethics-revised_10-11.pdf

Situational Ethics, Social Deception, and Lessons of Machiavelli

Website: frohnmayor.uoregon.edu/speeches/situationalethics/

Tallanasty Ethics Game

Website: media.miamiherald.com/static/media/projects/ethics_game/

Venturing Ethical Controversies Vignettes

Website: www.venturing.org/assets/ethical_controversies_vignettes.pdf

Related Program Features

Citizenship, Duty to God, Mentoring, Outdoor Ethics

Photo and Illustration Credits

Pages 38-1 (Shutterstock.com/©ibreakstock), 38-2 (Shutterstock.com/©Hriana), 38-3 (Shutterstock.com/©bikeriderlondon), 38-5 (Shutterstock.com/©Kheng Guan Toh), and 38-7 (Shutterstock.com: *balloons*, ©denk creative; *pencil*, ©Kolesov Sergei; *index card*, ©Donald Sawvel)

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Gordon Lowe, Provo, Utah, and Jim Virgin, Vancouver, Washington, for co-creating the Ethics program feature.