



About Xtreme Venture Scouts

The Xtreme Venture Scouts

Our Venture Scout Group is one of the oldest and longest running in St. Patrick's Region. It is currently only one of two Venture Scouts groups in the Region. We are attached to a reasonably sized Scout Group. We don't have a Scout Den due to the large geographical area we cover but we meet in Room 1, Basketball Hall, Oblate Fathers Tyrconnell Road, Inchicore on Thursdays from 8 to 10pm. However we are usually out and about on activities at least 1 or 2 Thursdays every month. We are a fairly active young group with an increasing membership.



The Xtreme Concept

Well let's see, it's a bit like Microsoft's plan for world domination, if we had our way the Scout Shop would be completely out of stock of Venture Scout Uniforms. Oh hang on who am I fooling, the Scout Shop never has the uniform in stock. It is one of the things that makes us different from your run of the mill youth club, we're part of a worldwide youth organisation with a membership of over 26 million. ScOUTing is what makes us different too - with the emphasis on the outdoors, ah joy to the ears of Baden Powell. All too many Scouts and Scout Leaders have this concept of Venture Scouts sitting around drinking tea, well that's wrong, we don't sit around and drink tea, how dare they - those snotty nosed Scouts. We sit around drinking Bottled Water! Now that's Xtreme Venture Scouting - are you getting idea? Seriously we are out and about more often than not; just have a look at our programme. When this section started it only had six members, it has continued to grow because we make Venture Scouting work! You've got to make it work, Xtreme Venture Scouting is not like Scouts and for any Scout who joins it's very different to what they are used too. We try (and do) make it different. Venture Scouting is the smallest section in our association and nobody asks why. It doesn't really work - you need to be Xtreme to make it work! That's what we are - Xtreme (taa daa!). Too many Venture Leaders have left groups because they felt it was going nowhere, members got bored because they weren't doing anything, The Leader said the Venture Scouts wouldn't get up and do anything and so on. Well let's be honest, they do need a gentle push every now and then.

We are not saying we are perfect, far from it, we've got lots of problems (and that's just the Leaders) we still have a long way to go, we have a lot of things we'd like to achieve. However, what we are doing and the programme we run is exciting and invigorating and yes we do the Scouty things too. We try and have as many camping expeditions during the year to build up Scouting skills which we feel are very important. However our Scout Group isn't mixed so this is always a problem as the girls are learning from scratch and playing catch up with the lads who have ScOUTing experience. We also have more girls joining than fellas so we have a waiting list to try and keep the balance 50:50.

What we are saying is that you too should be Xtreme, and that is where "Xtreme" comes into play. Be Xtreme in whatever way you can, a way that will make your group unique. It need not be that you go abseiling every week or that you go rafting in some river in Switzerland each Easter. It's that something special that makes your group unique. You don't need a budget of thousands, yes some things cost money but hey there is always bag packing at your local supermarket, which also helps to build up arm muscles. We try and be Xtreme in the wide variety of things we do, while still catering for the interests of the group. Needless to say you do need a large sense of humour.

Why the Xtreme Venture Scouts?

Well to answer this you've got to come and meet us. In a nutshell, most of us are completely barmy and raving mad ... and that's just the Leaders! We try to do everything to the Xtreme, but we are not an extremely active hill walking group, we just do an extremely wide variety of different activities from hill walking to quads, from cinema to ice skating, from community service to foreign expeditions. We like to do a wide variety of activities. This is what makes our group successful; we participate in a wide selection of activities and programmes selected by our members.



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So what else is Xtreme? Our mad cap ideas, our web site, our use of mobile phones and text messaging, the abnormal amount of biscuits we eat, the number of meals out we eat, the amount of Jack O'Patsy cups we want to collect and Earl Grey tea we drink, the list goes on, just ask any member and they'll tell you we're mad!

We re-launched as Xtreme Venture Scouts in January 2003 after running a competition for a name and logo, Margaret Humphreys came up with the winning logo. The name was a change from the 91st Bluebell / Inchicore or 91st Oblate, nobody knew who we were.

The concept behind the logo it is that if you want to be Xtreme you need to keep us in your sights. We are not claiming to be the best, far from it, we are just striving to be better or for that matter Xtreme. We've a long way to go yet and hopefully the strengths of Venture Scouting in the in our group can be built on. We owe a lot to the Leaders of the past who have put the time and effort in making the section what it is today.

Weekly Meetings

The weekly meetings are the most important factor from the point of view of holding the Group together. These are in effect the bread and butter of Venture Scouting and usually the factor, which determines whether they leave or stay in Scouting.

The Venture Scouts and Leaders run the meetings together. Our meetings last 2 hours. This consists of about an hour to an hour and a half of activity on the subject matter of the meeting and the rest is in effect the social side where we have a cup of coffee or bottled water and an informal chat or discuss up and coming activities. We try to keep this element informal and leave any big decisions to the formal meeting once a month rather than taking major decisions every week over coffee.

Activities

Our Group strive on activities and although we have problems with money we try to have as many activities as we can. As a minimum we have at least one activity a month. Like our meetings we try to have a bit of variety. Hiking is great but if you are doing it all the time it becomes a bit of a pain. Over the last year our activities have included Quads, canoeing, hill walking, Abseiling, Climbing, Ice skating, Cinema, Bowling, Q-Zar, Venture Scout Ball, Ventact South, Annual Expedition, just to mention a few.

It's the people you are with and the friendship and 'craic' that develops that makes an activity and what we are doing is only of secondary importance. Certainly, we all have great memories of the activities we have taken part in. It has got to the stage in the Group that you would be afraid you would miss something if you do not go on an activity. In a lot of cases we miss the company of certain nutcases (one or two in particular) in our Group if they are not there for some reason or other. This is what Xtreme Venture Scouting is all about - the bonding together of a Group of young people who achieve things by themselves for themselves. In a lot of cases friendships are forged which can last a lifetime.

The highlight of the year is our Annual Expedition, recent Expeditions have included; Scotland, Switzerland, England, France, Bulgaria, Romania and of course good old Ireland. For 2003 we are off to Barcelona, Spain.

It is the activities that make a Venture Scout Group. Look, if you have a Venture Scout Group or are thinking of starting a Venture Scout Group as a result of reading this you have got to make sure that activities play a major part in the programme - that's where the 'crack' is believe me.

Links with the Scout Troop

We have been working with the Scout Troop and they have come on a number of activities with us. There will be no real problems with friendship and bonding as they already know the Venture Scouts and with the method of forming teams to run programmes and activities they won't be long finding their feet.

We have close bonds with the Scout Troop as well as the other Sections in the Unit and assist in activities and the like when requested. This is a great way for the other sections to get to know us. The Venture Scouts are seen as sort of big brothers and sisters.



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Transition

The nature of Xtreme Venture Scouting is that you are preparing the members for their transition into adulthood. So at one side we are bringing in new and younger members and at the other end we are sending out into the world young men and woman. Venture Scouting is the last Section in the chain from Beavers, so ultimately the Venture Scouts will be leaving Scouting or they may become Xtreme Rover Scouts.

It's hard for a Venture Scout Leader as close friendships and bonding can develop but like it is for all parents eventually they must leave the nest. We think it is important that we don't see Venture Scouts as a training ground for Leadership. Venture Scouting is a type of finishing school where we get to do some of the real personal development of young people. Going to college and preparing themselves for their future place in society is just as important and the Venture Scouts should be left to choose but certainly encouraged to look after their education first, then when that is taken care of, and if there is still an interest in Scouting then they might consider Leadership.



Leaders in our Group take this transition through Venturing very seriously and we try to encourage our lot to build their C.V. when they are with us. How to manage a Group. How to work in teams etc. these are the things employers are looking for and we try to get this across to our gang. The Rogha Award, the Explorer Belt, and the President's Award are all C.V. builders we encourage each of our Venture Scouts to achieve. We have devised a kind of timetable for their time in Venturing. Year one - Management skills and starting on the Rogha Award, year two - The Explorer Belt and completion of Rogha Award, year three - the President's Award and Leadership skills. Of course this is only a suggestion some follow it others don't, in the end it is a personal choice.

Issues

We have tried to give paint a picture of our Group. There are a lot of things that happen in our Group which would take many pages to explain. The issues that face young people and which we spend hours talking about over coffee and on activities. The problems with relationships and who is going with who and also who is breaking up with who. All of these problems or challenges (as the positively minded person should say) will arise in any Venture Scout Group worth its salt. That is the nature of the role of Venture Scouts. What we think is important, and it certainly worked for us so far, is to create a correct framework of friendship, teamwork and craic coupled with an active programme which is devised and managed by the Venture Scouts themselves and equally managed and encouraged by the Leaders.

So you think you are Xtreme enough to join?

Firstly we'll say that Venture Scouting is for everybody, but not everybody is for Venture Scouting! We suggest you come along and give us a try. You should be aged between 14½ and 19, either male or female and from planet Earth, however we already have a few spacers in our group, so if you are a spacer you're also welcome - we don't discriminate. We meet on Thursday nights from 8 to 10pm in Room 1, the Basketball Hall, Oblate Fathers, Tyrconnell Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8. However, we suggest you send us an email (info@xtremeventurescouts.org) first to check that we are there on the night you want to drop down.

If you are interested in joining, visit our website, www.xtremeventurescouts.org and get an application form from our downloads section.