

Deseret Peak District
January 2017 Round Table
Unit Commissioner

Lori Duke

ldduke@msn.com

435 830-8713

Teresa McRae

cameron_m@hotmail.com

435 830-1296

Scout Law:

A Scout is Reverent

Theme:

Passport to Other Lands

Duty to God

Lord Baden Powell said:

"The Scout, in his promise, undertakes to do his duty to his king and country only in the second place; his first duty is to God. It is with this idea before us and recognizing that God is the one Father of us all, that we Scouts count ourselves a brotherhood despite the difference among us of country, creed, or class. We realize that in addition to the interests of our particular country, there is a higher mission before us, namely the promotion of the Kingdom of God; That is, the rule of Peace and Goodwill on earth. In the Scouts each form of religion is respected and its active practice encouraged and through the spread of our brotherhood in all countries, we have the opportunity in developing the spirit of mutual good will and understanding.



"There is no religious "side" of the movement. The whole of it is based on religion, that is, on the realization and service of God.

"Let us, therefore, in training our Scouts, keep the higher aims in the forefront, not let ourselves get too absorbed in the steps. Don't let the technical outweigh the moral. Field efficiency, back woodsmanship, camping, hiking, Good Turns, jamboree comradeship are all means, not the end. The end is CHARACTER with a purpose.

"Our objective in the Scouting movement is to give such help as we can in bringing about God's Kingdom on earth by including among youth the spirit and the daily practice in their lives of unselfish goodwill and cooperation."

Thoughts:

I think we as leaders concentrate on the scouting activities and forget that scouting is based on duty to God. It's first and foremost in the scout oath.

I hear a lot that there is no way to complete the requirements for the religious emblem in a den or pack meeting because religion is not part of scouting. **THIS IS WRONG.**

The BSA does not recognize one religion but has the following stance on religion, page 28 of the Cub Scout Leader Book:

BSA Policy: Religious Principles

In its Charter and Bylaws, the BSA maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God. No matter what the religious faith of a member might be, this fundamental need of good citizenship must be kept before the member. Although the BSA recognizes the religious element in the training of a member, it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training.

The BSA does not define what constitutes a belief in God or the practice of religion.

The BSA does not require membership in a religious organization or association in order to join Scouting but strongly encourages membership and participation in the religious program and activities of a church, synagogue, or other religious association.

The BSA respects the convictions of those who exercise their constitutional freedom to practice religion as individuals without formal membership in religious organizations.

When a Scouting unit is associated with a church or other distinctly religious organization, no members of other denominations or faiths shall be required, because of membership in the unit, to take part in or observe a religious ceremony distinctly unique to that organization or church. Only people willing to subscribe to these declarations of principles shall be entitled to certificates of leadership in carrying out the Scouting program.

We as leaders need to give those in our charge the tools to incorporate duty to God into every scouting activity. **How do we do that?** Training, knowledge of not only the scouting program but also the religious emblems programs for the religions of the boys in our units. Get to know the boys by visiting our units regularly.

The LDS Church in their Scouting handbook said the following of Scouting and its purpose in their programs:

Purpose of Scouting in the Aaronic Priesthood and Primary Scouting can help young men and boys enhance close relationships with their families and the Church while developing strong and desirable traits of character, citizenship, and physical and mental fitness. Under priesthood leadership, Scouting should complement the efforts of Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Primary classes in building testimonies in young men and boys. Scouting under Church sponsorship should become an extension of the home, Primary classes, and Aaronic Priesthood quorums. Scouting functions as part of the Church's activity program for boys and young men. Scouting activities should be planned to fulfill gospel-centered purposes.- LDS Scouting handbook section 1.1

Cub Scout Duty to God Requirements

Tiger Circles: Duty to God. Complete Requirement 1 plus at least two others.

REQUIREMENT 1. Discuss with your parent, guardian, den leader, or other caring adult what it means to do your duty to God. Tell how you do your duty to God in your daily life.

REQUIREMENT 2. With a family member, attend a religious service or other activity that shows how your family expresses reverence for God.

REQUIREMENT 3. Earn the religious emblem of your faith that is appropriate for your age or grade.

REQUIREMENT 4. Help with a local service project and talk with your den or family about how helping others is part of our duty to God.

REQUIREMENT 5. With the approval of your parent/guardian, den leader, or other caring adult, think of and then carry out an act of kindness or respect that you think shows duty to God.

Wolf Required Adventure

Duty to God Footsteps Complete Requirement 1 or 2 plus at least two others.

REQUIREMENT 1. Discuss with your parent, guardian, den leader, or other caring adult what it means to do your duty to God. Tell how you do your duty to God in your daily life.

REQUIREMENT 2. Earn the religious emblem of your faith that is appropriate for your age, if you have not already done so.

REQUIREMENT 3. Offer a prayer, meditation, or reflection with your family, den, or pack.

REQUIREMENT 4. Read a story about people or groups of people who came to America to enjoy religious freedom.

REQUIREMENT 5. Learn and sing a song that could be sung in reverence before or after meals or one that gives encouragement, reminds you how to show reverence, or demonstrates your duty to God.

REQUIREMENT 6. Visit a religious monument or site where people might show reverence. Create a visual display of your visit with your den or your family, and show how it made you feel reverent or helped you better understand your duty to God.

Bear Required Adventure: Fellowship and Duty to God

Complete the following requirements.

REQUIREMENT 1. Discuss with your parent, guardian, den leader, or other caring adult what it means to do your duty to God. Tell how you do your duty to God in your daily life.

REQUIREMENT 2. Complete at least one of the following:

2A. Identify a person whose faith you admire, and discuss this person with your family.

2B. With a family member, provide service to a place of worship or a spiritual community, school, or community organization that puts into practice your ideals of duty to God and strengthens your fellowship with others.

REQUIREMENT 3. Complete at least one of the following:

3A. Earn the religious emblem of your faith that is appropriate for your age, if you have not already done so.

3B. Make a list of things you can do to practice your duty to God as you are taught in your home or place of worship or spiritual community. Select two of the items and practice them for two weeks.

Webelos Required Adventure: Duty to God and You

Complete Requirement 1 and at least two others of your choice.

REQUIREMENT 1. Discuss with your parent, guardian, den leader, or other caring adult what it means to do your duty to God. Tell how you do your duty to God in your daily life.

REQUIREMENT 2. Earn the religious emblem of your faith that is appropriate for your age, if you have not done so already.

REQUIREMENT 3. Discuss with your family, family's faith leader, or other trusted adult how planning and participating in a service of worship or reflection helps you live your duty to God.

REQUIREMENT 4. List one thing that will bring you closer to doing your duty to God, and practice it for one month. Write down what you will do each day to remind you.

Arrow of Light Required Adventure: Duty to God in Action

Complete Requirements 1 and 2 plus at least two others of your choice.

1. Discuss with your parent, guardian, den leader, or other caring adult what it means to do your duty to God. Tell how you do your duty to God in your daily life.

2. Under the direction of your parent, guardian, or religious or spiritual leader, do an act of service for someone in your family, neighborhood, or community. Talk about your service with your family. Tell your family how it related to doing your duty to God.

3. Earn the religious emblem of your faith that is appropriate for your age, if you have not done so already.

4. With your parent, guardian, or religious or spiritual leader, discuss and make a plan to do two things you think will help you better do your duty to God. Do these things for a month.

5. Discuss with your family how the Scout Oath and Scout Law relate to your beliefs about duty to God.

6. For at least a month, pray or reverently meditate each day as taught by your family or faith community.

Resources:

<https://www.praypub.org/religious-emblems>

http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/awards_central/religiousemblems.aspx

http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-879_WB.pdf

<https://www.lds.org/callings/primary/leader-resources/faith-in-god?lang=eng>

<https://www.lds.org/callings/primary/leader-resources/scouting-in-primary?lang=eng>

Training

DUTY TO GOD

Time Available

10 minutes

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this training session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the role of religion in the Boy Scouts of America.
2. Understand the increased emphasis on duty to God in all rank requirements.
3. Explore ways a boy can demonstrate his duty to God.

Suggested Presenters(s)

Presenters could include a minister, the district religious emblems coordinator, or Scouters who are lay leaders at their place of worship and who accept the BSA's nonsectarian Declaration of Religious Principles.

Presentation Method

Present a review of rank advancement requirements that involve a Scout's duty to God, coupled with ways in which the boys can demonstrate their duty to God.

BSA Reference Materials

- Cub Scout handbooks
- Boy Scout 2016 rank requirements
- BSA Declaration of Religious Principles
- Duty to God religious emblems brochure
- November 2014 CubCast on Scouting.org

Online Resources

- www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/2016BoyScoutRequirementsFAQs.pdf
- Bible reading program, www.praypub.org/biblebasics/
- National Catholic Committee on Scouting religious activity awards, <http://nccs-bsa.org/activities/index.php>
- National Jewish Committee on Scouting religious activity awards, www.jewishscouting.org/store/

Presentation Content

- The BSA National Charter and Bylaws contain the BSA Declaration of Religious Principles. Key provisions include:
 - “The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of

citizen without recognizing an obligation to God.”

— “The activities of the members of the Boy Scouts of America shall be carried on under conditions which show respect to the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion, as required by the 12th point of the Scout Law, reading, ‘Reverent. A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.’”

— “The Boy Scouts of America, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, **but it is absolutely nonsectarian** in its attitude toward that religious training.”

— “In no case where a unit is connected with a church or other distinctively religious organization shall members of other denominations or faith be required, because of their membership in the unit, to take part in or observe a religious ceremony distinctly unique to that organization or church.”

- All Scouts now say the Scout Oath and Law, which include “duty to God” and “a Scout is Reverent.”
- The new Cub Scout requirements contain a duty to God element at every rank. Each Cub Scout handbook includes a series of age-appropriate nonsectarian activities that help boys learn and demonstrate their duty to God.

— Each Cub Scout handbook also includes a discussion about the importance of religion in the boy's life, together with examples of ways the boy can complete his duty to God requirement.

— Bear and Webelos ranks include an option for the Cub Scout to complete his duty to God requirement by earning the religious emblem for his age and faith.

— Since not all faiths have a religious emblem, and since not all congregations offer them, both the Bear and Webelos ranks have an alternate way to complete the duty to God requirement.

— If a Scout's faith uses the same religious emblem for fourth and fifth grades, and if the Scout earns it as a Bear, he will need to complete the alternate requirement as a Webelos Scout.

- The 2016 Boy Scout rank requirements now include a duty to God element for all ranks above Scout.

— The duty to God element is now part of the requirement to show Scout spirit:

— “Demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Tell how you have done your duty to God. ...”

- Does including “duty to God” as a part of the Cub Scout and Boy Scout rank requirements put too much emphasis on religion? Does it create a requirement of belonging to a religion?

— Not as written. There is no requirement that a Scout identify a religious faith as part of his duty to God— although, if the Scout does have a religious faith, it is likely to be part of the self-reflection and expression. It is important to note that Scouting is nonsectarian and promotes no specific religion. In fact, a boy need not belong to any official religious institution—he could practice his beliefs privately at home.

— However, while membership in an organized religion is not necessary or implied, a Scout does have to ascribe to the Declaration of Religious Principles, and express belief in a higher power. The parent or guardian's signature on the BSA Youth Application acknowledges this condition of membership.

- Unlike the Cub Scout rank requirements, the Boy Scout rank requirements do not elaborate on how a Scout is to do his duty to God. Does this mean troop leaders need to examine and evaluate a Scout's Duty to God, and then determine whether it is sufficient by some standard?

— No. The verb in the requirement: is “*Tell* how you have done your duty to God.” Not demonstrate, discuss, show, prove, etc.

— The troop leader is merely to listen to the Scout *tell* about how he (the Scout) believes he has done *his* duty—that is the requirement. The idea is for the Scout to have a self-reflection about belief and reverence. Nothing more is required.

— The requirement does not indicate that a discussion or a two-way conversation should take place. This is a monologue by the Scout, not a dialogue between a Scout and his leader.

— The telling might be a very brief statement, depending on the Scout and the family's beliefs, and on where the Scout is in his development of understanding of such matters, which often evolves as the Scout matures.

- A unit leader's beliefs about God may be different from those of the Scout. With the requirement “tell how you have done your duty to God,” a troop leader might believe that the Scout should do more or do something differently to show duty to God. Can a boy be withheld from advancing for that reason?

— No. The troop leader does not evaluate whether a Scout's expression of how he shows duty to God is sufficient by any standard. In signing off the requirement, the leader simply acknowledges that the Scout *has told* how he has done *his* duty to God. The leader should make no judgment and the Scout should not be held to any specific standard of belief or level of activity in order to complete the requirement.

— There will often be differences of belief among troop members and troop leadership—but the troop leader's beliefs do not establish a standard for the Scout. The policy of the Boy Scouts of America is that “the home and the organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life.” The troop leader is to respect those differences, with no attempt to impose his or her personal beliefs on the Scout.

- For more information on the Boy Scout duty to God requirements, see the FAQs at

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/2016BoyScoutrequirementsFAQs.pdf

Although the Boy Scout requirements do not include specific activities for demonstrating a Scout's duty to God, unit leaders should make their Scouts aware of the following *optional* religious activities and awards that can help deepen a Scout's faith:

- Earning the religious emblem for his age and faith.

— If the religious emblem takes several months to complete, a Scout might use the continued pursuit of his religious emblem to tell how he has done his duty to God for more than one rank (if he completes one rank while pursuing his religious emblem and completes the religious emblem while working on his next rank).

— If a younger Boy Scout is unable to earn a religious emblem, the duty to God discussions and examples in the Bear and Webelos handbooks might serve either as reminders of the things he is already doing in his faith life, or might serve as guideposts for his duty to God.

- Serving as the troop's chaplain's aide.
- Participating in Scout Sunday or Scout Shabbat services.

— The Scout shops sell annual nonsectarian Scout Sunday patches for Scouts who attend services related to Scout Sunday. The National Jewish Committee on Scouting sells a similar patch for Scouts who participate in Scout Shabbat services.

- Other religious activities and awards

— P.R.A.Y. recently introduced the Bible Basics RP3 program to encourage more Christian Scouts to read their Bible and put what they learn into action. The Bible Basics

program currently consists of four subjects, each with three Bible stories to read, discuss with parents, and put into action. A fifth subject is coming soon. A patch is available upon completion of the requirements for each subject.

— The National Catholic Committee on Scouting has three series of religious activities (with two more coming) and two international activities. The activities offer youth and adults fun, easy ways to learn more about their faith and Catholic role models, and become more aware of the faith community around the world. Several patches are available.

— The National Jewish Committee on Scouting has announced a Passover Patch, which will be available for sale through the next 10 years. Also, each year starting with 5775/2015, the NJSC will issue a "rocker" depicting one of the 10 plagues. The design of the rockers is such that they will form a mural that encircles the central 10-sided patch.

— Duty to God hike/ride.

— Some councils or districts organize a duty to God or Ten Commandments hike or ride that involves visits to several places of worship and an overview by a religious leader of key tenets of the faith practiced at each place of worship.

— Including different faiths in the program enhances the educational value of the event.

— An event that includes Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, and other places of worship would be ideal, if feasible in light of the local demographics.