

The Twelfth Scout Law: "A Scout Is Reverent"



A "Scouts' Own" Primer

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The purpose of this primer is to make it easier to plan and conduct a Scout's Own on unit outings and other Scouting events. The Scout's Own is a moment of reflection or expression of faith that can be shared by all of the Scouts present. When all Scouts are of the same faith, a religious ceremony conducted in accord with the practices of that faith is appropriate. When Scouts present represent multiple faiths, the goal is to conduct a Scout's Own with proper dignity and reverence that all can share equally and that causes those present to reflect on Scouting's values and carrying on the Spirit of Scouting in their everyday lives. Most Scouts do not come prepared to participate in a Scouts' Own, but with a few aids, most will join in enthusiastically.

A Scout's Own can be as simple as all of the Scouts joining together, with each in his or her own turn sharing something he or she particularly enjoyed this day, or this outing. The senior patrol leader, chaplain's aide or other appointed leader forms the Scouts in a circle, explains the basic rules, and starts out. He might say something like, "We are going to form up in a circle. Then we will go around the circle and each Scout is to share the one thing they liked best about this outing." End with the Scoutmaster, SPL, or chaplain's aide giving a brief, all-denominational prayer of thanks for all of the positive things they have been able to experience together during this activity.

For a slightly more elaborate Scout's Own, a planning sheet is provided with appropriate suggestions for a simple, multi-faith service that will work for most Scouts. The readings, songs, or prayers suggested are provided in full immediately following the planning sheet. Again, the SPL or chaplain's aide can act as the master of ceremonies or moderator during the actual Scouts' Own, calling up each volunteer unit and introducing them in turn for them to lead or share their portion of the program.

Following the suggested program, a blank planning sheet is provided, in case the Scouts would like to be a little more creative and develop their own program. A number of alternative readings, songs, and prayers are provided that Scouts may select from, or the really creative may have their own favorites to include. Where there are interesting ties to Scouting, these have been included with the pieces to give them additional meaning and relevance. A brief history of religion in Scouting

has also been included, as well as a history of Scout's Own, originally proposed by the founder of Scouting, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, himself.

Remember to be sensitive to other's practices in mixed faith groups. Say things like "Prepare yourself for prayer," rather than "Remove your hats for prayer." The customs of some groups require the head to be covered during prayer. In mixed groups of Christians and non-Christians, it may be more appropriate to end a prayer with "Amen" or "In God's name we pray." rather than "In Jesus' name we pray." On the other hand, if each group present provides a representative selection of their own faith, then each sharing in their own way may be fine. As a Protestant, I have attended Buddhist, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim and Native American ceremonies and not been offended by the fact that others worship differently than I. In fact, experiencing the strength and diversity of God's creation gives me a deeper sense of appreciation and reverence for all of His works.

History of Scouts' Own

In 1897, a young British officer stationed in India, Robert Baden-Powell, developed methods for training new soldiers. Those who became proficient in these methods, he called "Scouts."

Baden-Powell published these methods in a handbook called "Aids to Scouting."

In 1898, then Colonel Baden-Powell was sent to South Africa, where he distinguished himself in combat and became a hero for his part in holding off several thousand Boers for over seven months with just seven hundred British Soldiers.

Upon returning to England, he was given a hero's welcome and he was knighted by a grateful Queen.

He was also surprised, but pleasantly, to find the adolescent boys of England playing at being military scouts and reading his "Aids to Scouting."

Recognizing the opportunity it presented, several leaders concerned with the proper development of England's youth, approached now Major-General Baden-Powell, asking him to assume leadership for a new youth organization they were forming, the Youth Brigade. Baden-Powell accepted this responsibility readily, and wrote a new "Handbook for Boy Scouts" based on his "Aids to Scouting". He included within it, a

nine-point emphasis on moral conduct in a "Scout Law". He included "Duty to God" in the new Scout Oath he prepared.

In 1908, William Boyce visited England and was introduced to Scouting through the famous good deed we all now know (or should!). He returned to America, where, with the aid of James E. West and others, he set up a parallel youth organization, the Boy Scouts of America, the following year. On February 8th, 1910 the Boy Scouts of America was formally incorporated, and in 1918, it was chartered by an act of Congress.

In developing this new Scout organization, James E. West insisted on adding three more Scout Laws, including the twelfth Scout Law, "A Scout Is Reverent".

As an organization with broad appeal to adolescent boys that encouraged good citizenship and moral virtue, Scouting appealed to youth leaders and organized religion from the very founding.

The Roman Catholic Church first began their study in 1910, the year Scouting was founded. The first two churches to sponsor troops were St. Marks in Minnesota and Our Lady of Angels in New York, both in 1912. In 1919, Pope Benedict XV gave formal endorsement of Scouting, and in 1923, Cardinal Hayes chaired the first Catholic Committee on Scouting.

In 1911, the LDS or Mormon Church began a formal study of Scouting under the leadership of Joseph F. Smith, grandson of their first prophet. In 1913 they adopted the Boy Scouts of America as the official boy program of the church.

The Jewish organizations began their formal review in 1915, and in 1926 the National Jewish Committee on Scouting was formed, embracing all four branches of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstruction.

By 1915, of 7,375 Scout troops, over 4,000 were sponsored by Protestant churches. Fully 1,645 Scoutmasters were also ministers. In 1922, the first National Protestant Committee was chaired by Dr. Ray Wyland.

Eastern Orthodox Catholics soon made scouting a part of their youth program.

The Buddhist Committee on Scouting required instruction to all youth on the Noble 8-Fold Path.

American Muslims made Scouting their official youth program in 1955.

A religious award in Scouting evolved within the various religious bodies, with some examples as follows:

The Roman Catholic Church developed their program in 1939. A medal bearing the phrase "Ad Altare Dia" was struck, taken from the 43rd Psalm, "With joy I come to the alter of God".

In 1943, the Lutheran Committee on Scouting introduced their religious program for Scouting with their emblem, "Pro Deo Et Patria"

In 1944, the Jewish committee on Scouting introduced their religious program with their emblem, "Ner Tamid".

In 1945, the National Protestant Committee introduced the "God and Country" religious award.

Today, most of the world's religious organizations provide religious emblem programs to the Boy Scouts. Training is done within the individual's religious body. The emblems are purchased from BSA and may be worn on the uniform.

It has been said, that of every 100 Scouts, 12 of the hundred will receive their first church contact through Scouting, 5 of the hundred will receive church awards, and one will enter the clergy.

Following is a sample Scouts Own, ready to use.

Suggested Scout's Own

Name	Position	Patrol/Unit
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Opening Remarks (The founder of Scouting):

Moment of Silence

Call to Worship:

Opening Hymn (Morning Has Broken):

Opening Prayer (Prayer for Thanks):

A Scout Is Reverent:

Hymn (America, the Beautiful):

Prayer (A Prayer to Our Brothers In the Service):

Hymn (Kum Ba Yah):

Scout Law Responsive Reading:

Hymn (This Land Is Your Land):

Reading (The Law of Life):

Closing (Indian Farewell):

Opening Remarks

The founder of Scouting, Robert S. S. Baden-Powell, believed that Reverence and Duty to God should be an important part of the Scout Movement and of every Scout and Scouter. He originated the notion of a Scouts' Own... "a gathering of Scouts for the worship of God, each in their own way, and to promote a fuller realization of the Scout Law and the Promise, but...supplementary to and not a substitute for regular religious observances." - Aids to Scouting

The Twelfth Scout Law is "A Scout Is Reverent". A Scout believes in God. How he and his family express that belief is determined by them and the teachings of their religion. There are many different religions in the world. Each strives to recognize God and each strives to express "Duty to God" in the way they believe is most correct. All probably fall somewhat short, for we can never truly know God. But we can agree that there is something greater than ourselves, a perfection we can aspire to, but due to our human frailty, never fully achieve, at least not in this life here on Earth.

In the words of Kyna Hendra, ASM, Troop 92, writing for MacScouter, "Scouts' Owns are an acknowledgement of God and his creation and ourselves as part of it, expressed in a way that all the faiths that Scouting embraces can share together. They are a pause in our daily activities to discover something deeper and more permanent in the things we are trying to achieve or learn or enjoy. They are a response to the Creator for the gift of life." Not a non-denominational service, but an all-embracing denominational service.

Call to Worship

They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

Morning Has Broken

Morning has broken, like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird.
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning!
Praise for them springing, fresh from the World.

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall, on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness, of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness, where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning!
Born of the one light, Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning.
God's recreation, of the new day.

Prayer for Thanks

We thank you, O God, for morning sun and evening star, for flowing of streams, for life giving rains and cooling breeze, for the earth's patient turning, the changing of the seasons, the cycle of growth and decay, of life and death. When our eyes behold the beauty and grandeur of your world, we see the wisdom, power and goodness of its creator. We awaken, and behold it is a great day! Amen.

"A Scout Is Reverent" A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.

"The word reverence refers to a profound respect for God. The wonders of the world remind us of our God's creative power. We find it in the tiny lines of a leaf and the great mysteries of the universe. It exists in the kindness of people and in the teachings of our families and religious leaders.

"We show our reverence by living our lives according to the ideals of our beliefs.

"The U.S. Constitution gives each of us complete freedom to believe and worship as we wish without fear of punishment. All your life, you will encounter people who hold different religious beliefs or even none at all. It is your duty to respect and defend the rights of others whose beliefs may differ from yours."

-Boy Scout Handbook, 10th Edition

Hymn, America, the Beautiful

By Katherine Lee Bates

Oh, beautiful, for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain. For purple mountains
majesties, above the fruited plain. America, America! God shed his grace on thee,
and crown they good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.

A Prayer To Our Brothers In the Service

Almighty Spirit, who neither slumberest nor sleepest; protect and assist, we beseech
thee, all those who at home or abroad, by land, by sea, or in the air, are serving this
country of ours, that they, being armed with thy defense, may be preserved
evermore in all perils; and being filled with wisdom and girded with strength, may do
their duty to thy honor and glory; through your Great Spirit. Amen

Kum Ba Yah

Author unknown

Kum ba yah, my Lord, Kum ba yah!
Kum ba yah, my Lord, Kum ba yah!
Kum ba yah, my Lord, Kum ba yah!
Oh, Lord, Kum ba yah!

2. Someone's Crying, Lord, Kum ba yah!
3. Someone's Praying, Lord, Kum ba yah!
4. Someone's Shouting, Lord, Kum ba ya!
5. Someone's Laughing, Lord, Kum ba ya!
6. Someone's Singing, Lord, Kum ba yah!
7. Kum ba yah, my Lord, Kum ba ya!

*This song commemorates the true experience of a group of South African miners who
were trapped in a cave-in and then rescued. Each verse represents the emotions they
felt as they were first trapped, then prayed, then then shouted with joy as they
heard the picks and shovels as rescuers worked to dig them out, then the
uncontrollable elation they felt as they were rescued and brought out of the mine.
The song was brought back to England from South Africa by Robert Baden-Powell,
the founder of Scouting.*

Scout Law Responsive Reading

Scout: A Scout is Trustworthy.

The Group: A true and worthy person recognizes his obligations and does them without being watched or compelled.

Scout: A Scout is Loyal.

The Group: We owe much to many - to home, school, community, nation, and to God.

Scout: A Scout is Helpful.

The Group: The Good Samaritan showed the spirit of doing a Good Turn.

Scout: A Scout is Friendly.

The Group: A real friend is one who remains loyal in victory and in defeat.

Scout: A Scout is Courteous.

The Group: Courtesy is the mark of all faiths. It is shown in thoughtful acts and kindly respect for others.

Scout: A Scout is Kind.

The Group: Kindliness is the way people show respect for others.

Scout: A Scout is Obedient.

The Group: Life is filled with things that we must do whether we like them or not. One of the marks of growing up is our readiness to accept responsibilities willingly.

Scout: A Scout is Cheerful.

The Group: Our moods make our days. If we are grouchy, our day is gloomy. If we are cheerful, our day is always brighter.

Scout: A Scout is Thrifty.

The Group: The world offers many gifts. A wise person uses them with care.

Scout: A Scout is Brave.

The Group: To each of us come danger, difficult tasks, and temptations. In choice of courage or cowardice, we may be brave.

Scout: A Scout is Clean.

The Group: Cleanliness is next to Godliness. To have a clean body, a clean mind, and a clean record is a rewarding achievement.

Scout: A Scout is Reverent.

The Group: Character is determined by the things we worship. If we respect ourselves and our brothers and sisters, and see them as gifts of the goodness of God, we live on a high plane.

In Unison: Give us clean hands, clean words, and clean thoughts, Oh God. Teach us to work hard and play fairly. Forgive us when we are unkind and help us to help others. Send us strength to do a Good Turn each day and so live after thy will. Amen.

This Land Is Your Land

By Woody Guthrie

This land is your land, this land is my land,
From California, to the New York Island,

From the redwood forest, to the Gulf Stream waters,
This land is made for you and me.

As I went walking that ribbon of a highway
I saw before me that endless skyway,
I saw below me that golden valley,
This land was made for you and me.

I roamed and rambled, and I followed my footsteps,
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts,
All around me a voice was sounding,
This land was made for you and me.

When the sun came shining, than I was strolling,
And the wheat fields waving, and the dust clouds rolling,
A voice was chanting as the fog was lifting,
This land was made for you and me.

Royalties from this song were donated by Woodie Guthrie to Scouting. Whenever this song is sung or played commercially, the royalties go to the Boy Scouts of America.

The Tree of Life

By Dr. E. Urner Goodman, Founder
Order of the Arrow

"The tree that never had to fight for sun and sky and air and light,
That stood out in the open plain and always got its share of rain
Never became a forest king, but lived and died a scrubby thing.

The man who never had to toil, who never had to win his share
Of sun and sky and light and air never became a manly man,
But lived and dies as he began.

Good timber does not grow in ease. The stronger wind, the tougher tree,
The farther sky, the greater length, the more the storm, the more the strength.
By sun and cold, by rain and snows, in tree or man, good timber grows."

Indian Farewell

Author Unknown

Until we meet again, may the Great Spirit
Make sunrise in your heart,
And may your moccasins make tracks
In many snows yet to come.

Planning A Scouts Own

Following is a blank outline for planning a slightly more creative Scouts' Own. There are alternative selections to choose from following the outline.

Scout's Own Planning Sheet

Name

Position

Patrol/Unit

Opening Remarks:

Moment of Silence

Call to Worship:

Opening Hymn:

Opening Prayer:

Reading:

Hymn:

Prayer:

Hymn:

Responsive Reading:

Hymn:

Reading:

Closing:

Additional Selections:

Call to Worship I

Psalm 100

Come let us sing unto the Lord: Let us make a joyful noise to the Lord and all the lands. Let us serve the Lord with gladness and come into his presence with singing.

Call to Worship II

Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made and His praise glorified. - from the Baha'i Writings

Songs

Amazing Grace

By John Newton

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I'm found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fear relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
We have already come.
'Twas grace that brought us safe this far,
And grace will bring us home.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I'm found;
Was blind, but now I see.

John Newton was born in London in July 24, 1725, the son of a commander of a merchant ship. When John was eleven, he went to sea with his father. John was pressed into service on a man-of-war, where he found conditions intolerable. He tried to escape, but was caught and flogged. At his own request, he was exchanged for service on a slave ship, where he was brutally abused. He was rescued by a sea captain, and eventually became captain of his own ship, which also was a slave ship. While he had long given up on religion, on a homeward voyage, while struggling to control his ship in a violent storm, he cried out, "Lord, have mercy upon us." He survived the storm and believed that God had saved him in response to his plea. He immediately converted, began to educate himself, and eventually became a minister. Amazing Grace is one of over 280 hymns attributed to him. It chronicles his conversion from sinner and slave shipmaster to Christian salvation.

This Is My Father's World

This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears,
All nature sings and 'round me rings
The music of the spheres
This is my Father's world.
I rest me in the thought,
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
His hand the wonders wrought.
This is my Father's world.
He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

God Bless America

By Irving Berlin

God Bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her, and guide her,
Through the night with the light from above,
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the ocean, white with foam,
God bless America, my home sweet home,

God bless America, my home sweet home.

In 1918, Irving Berlin wrote, "God Bless America." Most people however, never heard the song until Kate Smith sang it on the radio in 1938. Profits from the song soared. Berlin, who was born in Russia, wanted to show his appreciation for America. So instead of making money from the music, he donated all his royalties to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of the United States of America. Irving Berlin discovered one could receive more joy from giving than from spending his money.

Scout Vespers

By Kelly B. O'Neil

Softly falls the light of day,
As our campfire fades away.
Silently, each Scout should ask,
Have I done my daily task?"
Have I kept my honor bright,
Can I guiltless sleep tonight?
Have I done and have I dared,
Every thing to be prepared!"

"Listen Lord oh listen Lord,
As I whisper soft and low.
Bless my Mom and bless my Dad,
There is something they ought to know.
I will keep my honor bright,
The Oath and Law will be my guide.
And Mom and Dad this you should know,
Deep in my heart I love you so.

"Quietly we join as one,
Thanking God for Scouting fun,
May we now go on our way,
Thankful for another day.
May we always love and share,
Living in peace beyond compare,
As Scouts may we find,

Friendships true with all mankind.

"Quietly we now will part,
Pledging ever in our heart,
To strive to do our best each day
As we travel down life's way.
Happiness we'll try to give,
Trying a better life to live,
Till all the world
Be joined in love,
Living in peace under skies above."

Readings

Footprints

Author Unknown

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This greatly bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child. I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Prayers

The Serenity Prayer

Author Unknown

God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change,
The courage to change the things we can,
And the Wisdom to know the difference.

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; they rod and they staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Inspirational Thoughts and Messages

The Golden Rule

There are many faiths represented in Scouting, but the majority of American Scouts are Christian (approximately 80%). As such, most of you know the Golden Rule, which was taught to us by Jesus: "Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you."

What you may not realize, is that virtually every major religion in the world teaches that same basic philosophy of treating others, as you would want them to treat you.

Consider the following admonitions from other faiths:

Blessed are those who prefer others before themselves. —Baha'i Faith

Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. —Buddhism

This is the sum of all duty: treat others as you yourself would be treated. —Hinduism

No one of you is a believer until you desire for another that which you desire for yourself. —Islam

In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, regard all creatures as you would regard your own self. —Jainism

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. —Judaism

Be not estranged from another for God dwells in every heart. —Sikhism

Human nature is good only when it does not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self. —Zoroastrianism

Do not judge a person until you have walked a long distance in his moccasins.—
American Indian Saying

It would appear that we are not so far apart in some of our basic beliefs after all.

If

By Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowances for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your masters;
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken

Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them; "Hold on";

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run -
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a man my son!

Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, but educated in England. He was a friend of Lord Robert Baden-Powell and was a prolific writer. The structure for the Cub Scout program was inspired by the characters in The Jungle Book, written in 1894. Kim's Game was inspired by his book, Kim, written in 1901.

One Last Thought:

"For an open Troop, or for Troops in camp, I think the Scouts' Own should be open to all denominations, and carried on in such manner as to offend none. There should not be any special form, but it should abound in the right spirit, and should be conducted not from any ecclesiastical point of view, but from that of the boy. Everything likely to make an artificial atmosphere should be avoided. We do not want a kind of imposed Church Parade, but a voluntary uplifting of their hearts by the boys in thanksgiving for the joys of life, and a desire on their part to seek inspiration and strength for greater love and service for others.

"A Scouts' Own should have as big an effect on the boys as any service in church, if, in conducting the Scouts' Own, we remember that boys are not grown men, and if we go by the pace of the youngest and most uneducated of those present. Boredom is not reverence, nor will it breed religion.

"To interest the boys, the Scouts' Own must be a cheery and varied function. Short hymns (three verses are as a rule quite enough-never more than four); understandable prayers; a good address from a man who really understands boys (a homey "talk" rather than an address), which grips the boys, and in which they may laugh or applaud as the spirit moves them, so that they take a real interest in what is said. If a man cannot make his point to keen boys in ten minutes he ought to be shot! If he has not got them keen, it would be better not to hold a Scouts' Own at all."

Baden Powell

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This guide is a compilation of Scouts' Own resources gathered from a variety of sources. Contributors include Frank Diaz, Santa Clara County Council Liaison to the Catholic Church, Ed Sheldon, Chaplain for Santa Clara County Council, and Kyna Hendra, author of "The MacScouter's Big 'A Scout is Reverent' Resource Book".

Thank you to all; and may the Great Master of all Scouts be with you!