**A SCOUT GUIDE TO**

**PRAYER**

**AND**

**LEADING AN**

**INTERFAITH WORSHIP**

**SERVICE**

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**PREFACE:**

For many people, including myself, the thought of being in charge of the opening prayer or an interfaith worship service can be terrifying. The purpose of this folder is try to help the Scouts understand what it means to be reverent while taking some of the fear of the unknown out of the equation. By providing step by step instructions with examples, I want to empower the Scouts to be able to start somewhere and grow confident enough in themselves to come up with their own ideas. My hope is that all Scouts can feel comfortable leading our troop in prayer or participating in a service when we are in the middle of a campout.

--Chris Luplow

**DEMONSTRATING "DUTY TO GOD" WITH SENSITIVITY**

When we conduct Scouting activities, it is important that we call attention to a Scout's "Duty to God" through the saying of a grace at meal times, a prayer at appropriate times; e.g. the start of a banquet or awards meeting; or in the songs and closings we use. However, it is equally important that we as leaders act with extreme sensitivity to the content of the grace, prayer, or song. The grace, prayer or song should be selected because it expresses a powerful, universal expression of thanks, blessing, praise, joy or other value without reference to a single religion, its customs or the name of its deity.

We are concerned that we do not place a single Scout in the position of doubting the values of his own faith or feeling singled out and isolated because of his own faith. We should never create a climate were a Scout feels compelled to choose between Scouting and his religious beliefs.

Frequently, it is best if the prayers acknowledge a common maker, such as the Maker of All Things, God, the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts, or the Great Spirit, because each Scout can relate the words to his own faith. A grace, prayer or song that singles out for adoration Jesus Christ, the Prophet Elias, the Prophet Mohammed, the teacher Sidhartha (Lord Buddha) or any other name sends conflicting messages to a Scout with a different faith. He may think that he is in the wrong place or he may get the idea he is not wanted. This can be prevented by reviewing all prayers, graces and songs in advance to make sure that they do not indicate a preference for a particular faith or set of beliefs.

The key thing is that while we as Scout leaders should try to encourage a Scout to understand and exercise his “Duty to God”, we must at the same time be very careful that our actions are not misinterpreted by any Scout to mean that his faith is unacceptable or that he should be in a different faith. Remember that Scouting does not define what a religion is and does not require membership in any particular religious group. We are interested in promoting a Scout’s better understanding of his “Duty to God” because it aids good character development and improves citizenship skills. By using graces, prayers, songs and closings, we can help Scouts to remember that duty and to begin thinking about that duty.

--Michael F. Bowman

**HOW TO OPEN A TROOP MEETING WITH PRAYER**:

Relax and make it a personal and group conversation with God. It doesn’t have to follow any specific guidelines. It doesn’t have to be flowery, long, or feel like it was written by someone else. It should be from the heart and reflect the way YOU feel reverent toward God. Here are some basic ideas and starting points. Choose any you feel represents the way you want to pray.

**Start with a greeting such as**:

(Dear) Heavenly Father, God, Creator, Great Scoutmaster, Lord, or Great Spirit.

**Be thankful**:

- Thank you for this day, this troop, our fellow Scouts, and our leaders.

- Thank you for bringing us together to learn to become better citizens of your creation.

- Thank you for Lord Baden-Powell and his vision for Scouting.

**Ask for guidance or help**:

- Help us to learn to do our best every day.

- Teach us to better follow the Scout Oath and Law in our daily lives.

- Help us become better stewards of your creation.

- Make us examples to others.

**Closing**:

- Please be with us as we work and play this evening.

- Please keep us safe on our next adventure to \_\_\_ (our next hike, campout, etc.)

**Ending**:

AMEN

**Example**:

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for this day, this troop, our fellow Scouts, and our leaders.

We ask that you help us learn to do our best every day.

Please keep us safe when we leave here and on our next adventure.

AMEN

**PRAYER EXAMPLES:**

**SCOUT PRAYERS**

1

God, be with us during this meeting that all we say and do may be meaningful in your sight.

Amen

2

Lord, we thank you for bringing us safely to this place.

Throughout our time together, help us to understand that, as we serve one another, we are also serving you.

Amen

3

O God, be with us as we meet. We have many issues to discuss and decide.

Guide us in our deliberations that your will may be done.

Amen

4

Lord, we thank you for this day.

Help us to do our best every day, and forgive us when we slip.

Teach us to be kind to other people and to help them at all times.

Bless our parents and teachers and leaders and all the members of Scouting.

Bless us, Lord, in your love for us.

Help us to be a better Scouts and let us do our best for you.

Amen

5

Be Thou a bright flame before me,

Be Thou a guiding star above me,

Be Thou a smooth path below me,

And be a kindly shepherd behind me,

Today, tonight and forever.

6

For each new morning with its light,  
For rest and shelter of the night,  
For health and food,  
For love and friends,  
For everything Thy goodness sends.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

7

Lord, teach me to be generous,

to serve you as you deserve,

to give and not to count the cost,

to fight and not to heed the wounds,

to toil and not to seek for rest,

to labor and not to look for any reward,

save that of knowing that I do your holy will.

8

Lord, in this evening hour we pray  
for strength to do our best each day.  
Draw near to us that we may see  
the kind of Scouts that we should be.

In serving others, let us see  
that we are only serving thee.  
Bless us, O Lord, and have no doubts  
that we can be the best of scouts.9

Dear Heavenly Father,

Help to keep my honor bright and teach me that integrity of character is my most priceless possession.

Grant that I may do my best today, and strive to do even better tomorrow.

Teach me that duty is a friend and not an enemy, and help me face even the most disagreeable task cheerfully.

Give me the faith to understand my purpose and life, open my mind to the truth and fill my heart with love.

I am thankful for all the blessings you have bestowed upon my country.

Help me to do my duty to my country and to know that a good nation must be made from good men.

Help me to remember my obligation to obey the Scout Law, and give me understanding, so that it is more than mere words.

May I never tire of the joy of helping other people or look the other way when someone is in need.

You have given me the gift of a body, make me wise enough to keep it healthy, that I might serve better.

You are the source of all wisdom, help me to have an alert mind, teach me to think, and help me to learn discipline.

In all that I do and in every challenge I face, help me to know the difference between right and wrong, and lead me in obedience on a straight path to a worthy goal.

Amen

**NATIVE AMERICAN PRAYERS**

1

**OH, GREAT SPIRIT**

Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds and whose breath gives  
life to all the world, hear me. I come before you, one of your many children.  
I am weak and small. I need your strength and wisdom. Let me walk in beauty and  
make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset; my ears sharp so I may hear  
your voice. Make me wise, so I may learn the things you have taught my people,  
the lessons you have hidden under every rock and leaf. I seek strength, not to  
be superior to my brothers, but to be able to fight my greatest enemy--myself.

Make me ever ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes, so  
whenever life fades, like the fading sunset, my spirit will come to you  
without shame.

--Chief Yellow Lark, a Blackfoot Indian

2

Morning star wake us, filled with joy  
To new days of growing to man from boy.

Sun, with your power, give us light  
That we can tell wrong and do what's right.

South wind, we ask, in your gentle way  
Blow us the willingness to obey.

North wind, we ask, live up to thy name,  
Send us the strength to always be game.

East wind, we ask, with your breath so snappy,  
Fill us with knowledge of how to be happy.

West wind, we ask, blow all that is fair  
To us, that we may always be square.

Moon, that fills the night with red light,  
guard us well while we sleep in the night.

Akela, please guide us in every way,  
We'll follow your trail in work or play.

3

O Great Spirit! Watch over us as we begin this day.

Protect us as we live in your care. Give us bounty and hold

us from harm. We are your children and wish only to please

you. We hold our Mother Earth close to our hearts and wish

her goodness. We thank You for your love.

4

O Great Spirit, make me sufficient to my own personal necessities.

Give me the strength to mind my own business at all times, and to lose no good opportunity for holding my tongue.

When it is appointed for me to suffer, let me take example from the dear well-bred beasts and go away in solitude to bear my suffering by myself, not troubling others with my complaints.

Help me to win, if win I may, but -- O Great Spirit -- if it not be that I may win, make me at least a good loser.

**GRACES**

**Camp Ho Non Wah Grace**

For the wind and the water

We thank thee, O Father,

For Friendship and Brotherhood

We pledge our service

And for the food before us,

We are ever grateful.

**Camp Rainey Mountain Grace**

Through the spirit of camping, may you bless this food, Great Creator.

May it keep us strong and steadfast,

In service, devotion, and conservation,

For the tranquility of these hills.

Amen

**Philmont Grace**

For food, for raiment  
For life, for opportunity  
For friendship and fellowship  
We thank thee, O Lord.

**Camp Raven Knob Grace**

In Silence we seek Thee

In Grace we believe in Thee

For blessing this meal

For the fellowship we feel

Scouting thanks you O Lord

Amen

With our heads bowed in reverence,

We give thanks for the food before us,

And ask for Your help and blessing

In facing the challenges of the trail ahead.

Amen

We thank You for the morning light,

For rest and shelter of the night;

For health and food,

For love and friends;

For everything Your goodness sends.

Amen

The Lord is good to me and so  
I thank the Lord for giving me the things I need  
The sun and the rain and the Appleseed  
The Lord is good to me.  
Amen

As we gather round this our humble table,

In the midst of all Your creation,

Prepare our hearts, minds and bodies,

That we may see Your glory,

In the beauty of land around us,

And not be spiritually blind.

With thanks for Your many gifts,

We ask You to Bless this food to our use,

That we may be prepared,

To face the challenges of the trail ahead.

Amen

We find ourselves surrounded by startling beauty,

And awe inspiring vistas as we make camp,

For all of these things,

And the blessing of nourishment we are thankful.

Amen

Even when it rains, and the wind blows cold,

We remember Your many blessings,

And take this time to give thanks,

For the warmth of fellowship,

The nourishment of food,

And the strength you give.

Amen

On the trail today, we were reminded that in all we could see and name,

There was evidence of the wonder of Your creation and Your guiding light.

Later, as we prepared our meal amid the flicker of flame

In the growing darkness of the coming night,

We were also reminded of the light of Your truth

In the midst of all of the uncertainties in our own lives.

We thank You for helping us to see what Your love gives

And ask that by Your blessing, we may use the gift of food before us,

To renew our strength to live our Scout Oath and Law.

Amen

**INTERFAITH WORSHIP SERVICE:**

There are several elements that can be used when conducting an interfaith worship service. Not all elements have to be part of the service, but there should be a logical flow. I would recommend, as a minimum, opening with a call to worship/invocation followed by a central theme and finishing with a benediction/closing prayer. I will explain and list examples of each element and then provide examples of full services. These examples are only meant to help the Scouts start somewhere. They are encouraged to use appropriate substitutes.

**ELEMENTS**

**Introduction**

**Call to Worship/Invocation**

**Hymns**

**Readings**

**Messages**

**Prayers**

**Benediction**

**INTRODUCTION**

While it is not necessary to provide an introduction, I like to point out the BSA policy of respecting religious beliefs, especially if there are others present:

1

The Scout Law teaches, “A Scout is reverent. A Scout is reverent toward God. A Scout is faithful in their religious duties. They respect the beliefs of others.”

**CALL TO WORSHIP/INVOCATION**

This can be as simple as the leader speaking to the group or in the form of a call and response. It lets everyone know the service is starting:

1

Eternal God, open my lips, that my mouth may declare your glory.

2

Teach me, Father, when I pray, not to ask for more,

But rather let me give thanks for what is at my door.

For food and drink, for gentle rain, for sunny skies above,

For home and friends, for peace and joy, but most of all for love.

3

God calls us together to worship this morning. From our work and play within the world, God gathers us to give thanks for creation’s goodness, for the strength to labor, for the wisdom to relax.

4 (Include as few or many of the responses as desired)

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made,

**All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Leader: For wind in whispering pines, for eagles soaring high, for purple mountains rising against an azure sky,

**All: We thank you, O Lord.**

Leader: For friends who walk with me along the awesome trail, for those who share their care for me, especially when I fail,

**All: We thank you, O Lord.**

Leader: As the sun rises over the tall lonesome pine, may your care and love for us in all our actions shine.

**All: O Lord, walk with us along the trail, Amen.**

5 Psalm 100:2

Leader: Eternal God, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your glory.

**All: Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing.**

6 Isaiah 40:31

But they who wait on 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.

7 Native American

O Great Spirit! Watch over us as we begin this day.

Protect us as we live in your care.

Give us bounty and hold us from harm.

We are your children and wish only to please you.

We hold our Mother Earth close to our hearts and wish her goodness.

We thank you for your love.

8

We thank You, O God, for this day, for morning sun and evening star: for flowering of trees and flowing of streams, for life-giving rains and cooling breeze; for the earth’s patient turning, the changing of 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 awake and, behold! It is a great day!

9 Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his! We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him, bless his name! For the Lord is good, his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

**HYMNS**

There is no requirement to have a hymn sung or even present in the service. Hymns may be performed solo or as a group. If there are some musically inclined Scouts, a hymn may be a good way for them to express their own personal reverence to God:

1 God Bless America

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 oceans, white with foam,

God bless America, my home sweet home,

God bless America, my home sweet home.

2 All Creatures of our God and King

All creatures of our God and King, Lift up your voice and with us sing. Alleluia,

Alleluia! Thou burning sun with golden beam, Thou silver moon with softer gleam, O praise Him, O praise him, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

3 My Country, ‘Tis of Thee

My country, ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;

land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim’s pride,

from every mountain side Let freedom ring!

My native country, thee, land of the noble free, thy name I love;

I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and templed hills;

my heart with rapture thrills, like that above.

Let music swell the breeze, and ring from all the trees sweet freedom’s song;

let mortal tongues awake, let all that breathe partake;

let rocks their silence break, the sound prolong.

Our fathers’ God, to thee, author of liberty, to thee we sing;

long may our land be bright with freedom’s holy light;

protect us by thy might, great God, our King.

4 America the Beautiful

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,

For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain.

America! America! God shed his grace on thee,

And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for pilgrim feet whose stern impassioned stress

A thoroughfare for freedom beat across the wilderness.

America! America! God mend thine every flaw,

Confirm thy soul in self control, thy liberty in law.

5 Here I Am

I the Lord of sea and sky

I have heard my people cry

All who dwell in dark and sin

My hand will save

I have made the stars of night

I will make their darkness bright

Who will bear my light to them?

Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord

Is it I Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night

I will go Lord

If you lead me

I will hold your people in my heart

I the Lord of wind and flame

I will tend the poor and lame

I will set a feast for them

My hand will save

Finest bread I will provide

‘Til their hearts are satisfied

I will give my life to them

Whom shall I send?

6 This is the Day

This is the day

This is the day

That the Lord has made

That the Lord has made

Let us rejoice

Let us rejoice

And be glad in it

And be glad in it

This is the day that the Lord has made

Let us rejoice and be glad in it

This is the day

This is the day

That the Lord has made.

**READINGS**

Like the call to worship, the reading can either be done by a single reader to the audience or as part of a call and response. Even if there is no specific message or lesson in the service, the reading can express reverence and serve as the focus:

1 Psalm 95:1-7a Praise and Obedience

Come! Let us raise a joyful song to the Lord, a shout of triumph to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving and sing psalms of triumph to him.

For the Lord is a great God, a great King above all gods. The depths of the earth are in his hands, the peaks of the mountains belong to him; the sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land which his hand fashioned.

Enter in! Let us bow down and worship, let us kneel before the Lord who made us, for he is our God, we are the people he shepherds, the flock in his care.

2 1 Cor 12:4-7 Gifts and Service

There are many gifts; but always the same Spirit; there are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord. There are many different forms of activity, but it is the same God who empowers them in everyone. To each is given manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

3 Matthew 5:3-9 Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

4 Scout Beatitudes

Blessed are the Scouts who are taught to see beauty in all things around them, for their world will be a place of grace and wonder.

Blessed are the Scouts who are led with patience and understanding, for they will learn the strength of endurance and the gift of tolerance.

Blessed are the Scouts who are provided a home where family members dwell in harmony and close communion, for they shall become the peacemakers of the world.

Blessed are the Scouts who are taught the value and power of truth, for they shall search for knowledge and use it with wisdom and discernment.

Blessed are the Scouts who are guided by those with faith in a loving God, for they will find Him early and will walk with Him through life.

Blessed are the Scouts who are loved and know that they are loved, for they shall sow seeds of love in the world and reap joy for themselves and others.

5 Hebrews 10:22-25

Let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been purified form a guilty conscience and with bodies washed with clean water. Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.

6 The Scout Law

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

**All: A Scout is Trustworthy**

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

**All: A Scout is Loyal**

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

**All: A Scout is Helpful**

Leader: Courtesy is the mark of all faiths. It is shown in thoughtful acts and kindly respect for everyone.

**All: A Scout is Courteous**

Leader: Kindliness is the way people show respect for others.

**All: A Scout is Kind**

Leader: 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.

**All: A Scout is Obedient**

Leader: Our moods make our days. If we are grouchy, our day is gloomy. If we are happy, our day is always happier.

**All: A Scout is Cheerful** Leader: The world offers many gifts. a wise person uses them with care.

**All: A Scout is Thrifty**

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

**All: A Scout is Brave**

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

**All: A Scout is Clean**

Leader: 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.

**All: A Scout is Reverent**

**All: Give us clean hands, clean words, and clean thoughts, o 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.**

7 Luke 6:36-38 Forgiveness

Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and there will be gifts for you; a full measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing, will be poured into your lap, because the standard you use will be the standard used for you.

8 The Scout Oath

**All: On my honor I will do my best**

Leader: Our honor is a quality we possess because of our dignity as human beings and children of God. Our best means to give all we have. It means to keep striving to do what we know is right, and in the Oath, it means we will try to be good Scouts by fulfilling our Scout duties as expressed in the Scout Law.

**All: To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law**

Leader: Our duty to God and country means two things: obedience and loyalty. The duties we owe to God, to our country, to parents, to one another, and to ourselves comes from one of God’s commands. The Scout Law sums up all the qualities a Scout should have to be a good Scout.

**All: To help other people at all times**

Leader: We have been told to love our neighbor. Real human charity or love prompts us to want to help others at all times. Our Scout training will give us the skills and knowledge to help us do this.

**All: To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.**

Leader: Scouting offers us many opportunities to grow stronger. To be alert and ready, we must give special care to our gifts of intellect and will. Morally straight means we must try to know what is right and true, and to love what is good and choose it.

9 Jeremiah 29:11-13  Hope in the Midst of Suffering

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

10 Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 For Everything There is a Season

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.

A time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot.

A time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build.

A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain.

A time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away.

A time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak.

A time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

11 Robert Frost The Road Not Taken

I shall be telling this with a sigh.

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –

I took the one less traveled by.

And that has made all the difference.

12 Buddhism The Four Immeasurables

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.

This is immeasurable loving kindness.May they be free of suffering and the cause of suffering.

This is immeasurable joy.May they never be disassociated from the supreme happiness which is without suffering.

This is immeasurable compassion.May they remain in the boundless equanimity, free from both attachment to close ones and rejection of others.

This is immeasurable equanimity.

13 Psalm 19:1-6 God’s Glory in the Heavens

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, and like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other.

Nothing is hidden from its heat.

14 Black Elk The Sunset

Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and round about beneath me was the whole hoop of the world. And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell and I understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being.

And I say the sacred hoop of my people was one of the many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father. And I saw that it was holy...

But anywhere is the center of the world.

**MESSAGES**

**The message should provide the central focus and theme of the service. All other elements should reflect on the message if it is included. The message can involve nature, recent skills that have been mastered, mistakes made and lessons learned, or anything else a Scout wants to work into the service. There are many sources for messages. This may be the longest individual part of the service. Other references may include recent sermons, Chicken Soup for the Soul, the Upper Room, or an internet search for devotions.**

**1**

**The Buddha Shakyamuni’s Words on Kindness in the Metta Sutta**

This is what should be done by one who is skilled in goodness, and who knows the path of peace:

Let them be able and upright, straightforward and gentle in speech.  
Humble and not conceited, contented and easily satisfied.  
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.  
Peaceful and calm, and wise and skillful, not proud and demanding in nature.  
Let them not do the slightest thing that the wise would later reprove.  
Wishing: In gladness and in safety, may all beings be at ease.  
Whatever living beings there may be; whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,  
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,  
The seen and the unseen, those living near and far away, those born and to-be-born,  
May all beings be at ease!

Let none deceive another, nor despise any being in any state.  
Let none through anger or ill-will wish harm upon another.  
Even as a mother protects with her life her child, her only child,  
So with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings,  
Radiating kindness over the entire world, spreading upwards to the skies,  
And downwards to the depths; outwards and unbounded,  
Freed from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down free from drowsiness,  
One should sustain this recollection. This is said to be the sublime abiding.  
By not holding to fixed views, the pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,  
being freed from all sense desires, is not born again into this world.

2

**Work Hard, Play Fair and Paddle Your Own Canoe**

--Fr. William Hibbert

“Work hard, play fair, and paddle your own canoe.” These are the words of Walter Jones, who was the equivalent of an Eagle Scout as a boy in Canada. He became an active Scout leader in both Canada and the United States throughout his life.

His favorite advice to youth is summed up in these words, “work hard, play fair, and paddle your own canoe.” Walter’s wish was for every person to reach his or her full God given potential in life. To “work hard” does not necessarily mean hard physical labor. It means to dedicate oneself to getting a good education, to helping out at home, in the neighborhood and community where you live, and to finding the career that best fits your abilities and gifts. This will help you support your family and make you a productive citizen willing to give of yourself and make your community better. To “play fair” means to have fun in life, to enjoy time with family and friends, to know the benefits of recreation without always having to come in first, and to develop the kind of values and character that will make others want to spend time with you. To “paddle your own canoe” means not to compare yourself with others, but to be fully the person God would have you to be.

The challenge for each of us as we leave here today is to consider how we can apply these words of advice to our own lives. How does your Scouting experience help you fulfill these concepts? God does indeed want us to be the best we can be, and one way to reach that potential is to “work hard, play fair, and paddle your own canoe.”

3

**Resources that Orient the Compass of Life**

--Fr. William Hibbert

One requirement for advancement in Scouting is to learn how a compass works and how to orient a compass to find a direction for travel. It also requires a Scout to learn how to read a topographical map with all its colors, lines, and symbols and to use a map and compass together to complete a hike or bicycle trip without getting lost. These orienteering skills will help give you some of the best Scouting expreriences you can enjoy.

What are some other “maps” that help us orient our direction in life? The Scout Oath and the Scout Law are among those “maps” with which we are most familiar. So are our families, friends, teachers, coaches, and religious leaders. But best of all are the sacred scriptures and sacred writings of our faith traditions. It is here that we find the teachings that give us guidance and direction for the journey of life so we can live life as fully as possible. The sacred writings of most of our faith traditions tell us that God is personal, loving, and just and wants to have a personal relationship with us. In almost every faith tradition is found the teaching that we know as “The Golden Rule,” which says that we should do to and for others what we expect others to do to and for us. Our scriptures and sacred writings are the compass, the map, the chart, and the guide for us to draw near to God. You are encouraged to use them as a daily reminder of your promise as a Scout to strive to live the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for giving me many ways to know your will for my life. Give me the wisdom to follow you. Amen.

4

**Perseverance**

--Fr. William Hibbert

There’s a common saying, “Every journey begins with one step.” We can also say, “Every journey continues with one more step.” Someone once said that “great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance.” Can you think of times in your own life when this has been true, when you’ve accomplished a task or project simply because you refused to give up when it would have been much easier to quit than to continue?

Many times when life seems to be an ordeal we can make it into an adventure by our attitude, by how we inspire others to take ”one more step” toward reaching the goal or finish line. Every day life holds the risk of sidetracking us from what we set out to accomplish. In Scouting, perseverance may involve doing the requirements to reach the next rank, staying the course when the weather turns bad, or finishing a competitive game when we know we cannot come in first place. What other examples can you think of in your Scouting experience and in your life? No matter how great the distraction, we can finish the course if we stay focused and keep going and give it our Sctouting best. God will help us do that if we daily make an effort to know that God is with us. Sometimes experienceing that through the examples of our friends and leaders, even more than through our own efforts, helps us keep focused on what is truly important.

Prayer: God, give me the strength to endure, the wisdom to enjoy each moment, and the courage to push myself further that I ever have before. Amen.

5

**When night ends...**

--Henri Nouwen

"How can we determine the hour of dawn - when the night ends and the day begins?" the rabbi asked of his students.

"When, from a distance, you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep?" one of his students suggested.

"No" the rabbi answered.

"Is it when you can distinguish between a fig tree and a grapevine?" another student asked.

"No" he replied.

"Please tell us the answer, then" said the students.

"It is when you can look into the face of a human being and have enough light to recognize in him your brother," the wise teacher replied.

"Until then, it is night, and the darkness is still with us."

6

**The Meaning of Reverence**

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 sow our reverence by living our lives according to the ideals of our beliefs. The United States 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.

7

**Living in the Deep Water**

--Fr. William Hibbert

In a commencement address, the Governor of Rhode Island talked about living life in the deep water. By that he meant to live life as fully as possible. Some people live only in the shallow water, superficially, and they never discover how wonderful life can truly be.

The greatest deep water experience you can ever have is to honor God by living your life fully and with integrity. It is to deepen your relationship with God, to learn about yourself, to deepen your relationships with others (such as family, friends, neighbors, and fellow Scouts) and to plunge fully into the enjoyment of God’s magnificent creation. It means to live deeply in whatever arena of life you are in, be it school studies, sports and athletics, your work, your recreation and play, or your service to others.

Think of the ways that Scouting is for you a “deep water” experience, how much fun you’ve had, and how you are better prepared for life because you have not been afraid to test the deep water. Most every faith tradition calls us to live thankfully and abundantly and joyfully, to “live in the deep water.” Promise yourself that you will always live life in the deep water, that you’ll honor God and self by living thankfully, joyfully, abundantly, and according to the principles embodied in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. You have only one life to live. Live it in the deep water. You’ll never regret doing so.

Prayer: Be with me, God. Walk with me. Make me aware of your presence this day. Help me to live fully each good experience today. I will give you glory.

8

**The Road Not Taken**

--Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth.

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day.

I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh.

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –

I took the one less traveled by.

And that has made all the difference.

**PRAYERS**

A prayer can be used anywhere in the service between the Invocation and Benediction. It will help if it reflects the message, if one is used, but this is not necessary. Any of the Scout and Native American prayer examples given earlier will suffice. I will give some additional examples as well:

1

God, help me to honor you with my life today. Help me to do my best for you in things I will learn today, in my companionship with my friends, and in reaching the goals that you have helped me set for myself.

Amen

2

Almighty God of hill and plain,

O’er which we hike in sun and rain,

On mountain top and valley low,

Protect us Lord where ever we go.

And from our grateful hearts we’ll raise

Glad hymns of thankfulness and praise.

3

Master of the Universe, grant me the ability to be alone.

May it be my custom to go outdoors each day

Among the trees and grass, among all living things.

And there may I be alone, and enter into prayer,

To talk with the One to whom I belong.

May I express there everything in my heart,

And may all the foliage of the field,

All grasses, trees and plants, may they all awake at my coming,

To send the powers of their life into the words of my prayer

So that my prayer and speech are made whole

Through the life and the spirit of all growing things,

Which are made as one by their transcendent source.

4

We thank you, O God, for this day, for morning sun and evening star; for flowering of trees and flowing of streams, for live-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 awake and behold! It is a great day!

Amen

**BENEDICTION**

The benediction is a prayer said at the end of the service. The purpose is for the leader to pronounce a blessing and ask for guidance. It lets everyone know the service is ending:

1

May the Lord bless you and keep you!

May the Lord let His face shine upon you and be gracious to you!

May the Lord look upon you kindly and grant you peace!

Amen

2

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen

3

Dear God, thank you for the opportunity to be here in your garden.

Give us the strength to endure, the wisdom to enjoy each moment, and the courage to push ourselves further than we have ever before.

Bless our troop and our leaders as we journey through Scouting.

Amen

4

May the road rise to meet you.

May the wind always be at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

The rains fall soft upon your fields.

And until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

5

O Great Spirit, bless us from the north with the cool winds that calm our passions. Bless us from the east with the winds that bring and renew life.

Bless us from the south with the warm wet winds that invite growth.

Bless us from the west with the winds that lead us through this life to the next.

Fill the sky so that we might sense your presence.

And bless us from mother earth from which we’ve come and to whom we shall return.

6

And now, may the great Scoutmaster of all true Scouts be with us until we meet again.

**EXAMPLE SERVICE:**

The Scout Law teaches, “A Scout is reverent. A Scout is reverent toward God. A Scout is faithful in their religious duties. They respect the beliefs of others.”

\* - please stand if able

\***Call to Worship**

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made,

**All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Leader: For wind in whispering pines, for eagles soaring high, for purple mountains rising against an azure sky,

**All: We thank you, O Lord.**

Leader: For friends who walk with me along the awesome trail, for those who share their care for me, especially when I fail,

**All: We thank you, O Lord.**

Leader: As the sun rises over the tall lonesome pine, may your care and love for us in all our actions shine.

**All: O Lord, walk with us along the trail, Amen.**

\***Invocation**

Teach me, Father, when I pray, not to ask for more,

But rather let me give thanks for what is at my door.

For food and drink, for gentle rain, for sunny skies above,

For home and friends, for peace and joy, but most of all for love.

\***Hymn**

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 oceans, white with foam,

God bless America, my home sweet home,

God bless America, my home sweet home.

**Responsive Reading**

The Scout Oath

**All: On my honor I will do my best**

Leader: Our honor is a quality we possess because of our dignity as human beings and children of God. Our best means to give all we have. It means to keep striving to do what we know is right, and in the Oath, it means we will try to be good Scouts by fulfilling our Scout duties as expressed in the Scout Law.

**All: To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law**

Leader: Our duty to God and country means two things: obedience and loyalty. The duties we owe to God, to our country, to parents, to one another, and to ourselves comes from one of God’s commands. The Scout Law sums up all the qualities a Scout should have to be a good Scout.

**All: To help other people at all times**

Leader: We have been told to love our neighbor. Real human charity or love prompts us to want to help others at all times. Our Scout training will give us the skills and knowledge to help us do this.

**All: To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.**

Leader: Scouting offers us many opportunities to grow stronger. To be alert and ready, we must give special care to our gifts of intellect and will. Morally straight means we must try to know what is right and true, and to love what is good and choose it.

**Reading**

1 Cor 12:4-7

There are many gifts; but always the same Spirit; there are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord. There are many different forms of activity, but it is the same God who empowers them in everyone. To each is given manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

**Message**

“Work hard, play fair, and paddle your own canoe.” These are the words of Walter Jones, who was the equivalent of an Eagle Scout as a boy in Canada. He became an active Scout leader in both Canada and the United States throughout his life.

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**Prayer**

God, help me to honor you with my life today. Help me to do my best for you in things I will learn today, in my companionship with my friends, and in reaching the goals that you have helped me set for myself. Amen.

\***Benediction**

May the Lord bless you and keep you!

May the Lord let His face shine upon you and be gracious to you!

May the Lord look upon you kindly and grant you peace!

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Updated March 2020

**INTERFAITH SERVICE PLANNING WORKSHEET**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Leader: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Helper 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Helper 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Helper 3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Helper 4: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| **Include?**  **Y/N** | **Elements** | **Element #** | **Order of Service** | **Assigned to** |
|  | Introduction |  |  |  |
|  | Call to Worship  /Invocation |  |  |  |
|  | Hymn(s) |  |  |  |
|  | Reading(s) |  |  |  |
|  | Message |  |  |  |
|  | Prayer(s) |  |  |  |
|  | Benediction |  |  |  |

Notes:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_