

Suggestions for Religious Observance

It is vital that the faculty of each Boy Scout leader training course gives careful consideration to the religious obligations of the course participants. This is particularly true for weekend courses. As a rule, provision is made for four major faiths-Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Mormon.

Some faiths have firm requirements regarding the observation of the Sabbath. Consulting with the council's religious advisory committees on Scouting will be helpful in assuring that provision is made for these requirements. If the religious requirements of an individual cannot be met, discuss this with the Scouter in *advance* of the course so that a decision regarding attendance can be made.

Throughout the entire training course there should be strong emphasis on the spiritual ideals of Scouting. Although the Boy Scouts of America is nonsectarian, it is not nonreligious. Leaders should have an experience in training that will emphasize the fact that they can be positive in their religious influence on boys without being sectarian. By their spirit, their example, and the way they present the program to the boy, unit leaders can do much to develop spiritual values.

"The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no boy can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing his obligation to God . . ." (article IX, section 1, *Charter and Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America*).

The BSA expects a member to accept the religious principles stated in the Bylaws, the Cub Scout Promise, the Scout Oath and Law, the Varsity Scout Pledge, the Venturing Oath, and the application for membership.

The commitments involved are belief in God, reverence toward God, fulfillment of religious duties, and respect for the beliefs of others.

Religious instruction is the responsibility of the parents or religious institution to which the member belongs.

Here are specific suggestions for the Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Mormon observances:

Protestant Religious Observances

Location of the camp and availability of ministerial services will determine the form of observance that fits a particular situation.

1. Secure the services of a Protestant minister from a neighboring community. This can be done through a local ministerial association or Protestant committee on

- Scouting; otherwise an invitation can be extended by the course director to an individual minister.
2. If the location of the course is not convenient for securing the services of a minister, Protestant laypersons in the group can conduct a Protestant worship service. At the opening of the course, a committee should be named to arrange the services. Use the suggested order of service on the next page. It should be reproduced and distributed to the attending Scouters.
 3. Pathways to Worship, No. 33584, is available from the Supply Division. It contains several devotional services and campfire vespers.

Catholic Religious Observances

The following alternatives are fundamentals that can serve as a guide to those making arrangements.

1. Invite an ordained priest to say Mass at the encampment. If this is not practical, consult diocese or council chaplain.
2. Provide time and transportation for Scouters; of Catholic faith to attend Mass at a nearby Catholic church.
3. 3. If neither of these can be assured, the fact must be made known to any Scouter of Catholic faith who is contemplating taking the course. The choice is then a matter of conscience for the individual.

Regardless of which of these arrangements is made, no Scouter of Catholic faith should be obligated to attend any religious activity as part of the course, nor should the Scouter's absence from such an activity be a source of embarrassment to that individual. Interfaith services are certainly occasions in which Catholics may and will participate, but they do not substitute for the responsibility to worship with the Catholic community at Mass on Sunday.

Jewish Service

Jewish religious services are held Friday evenings and/or Saturday mornings. If possible, invite a local rabbi to camp to conduct services. Traditional Jews will not travel by automobile on the Sabbath, sundown Friday to nightfall Saturday.

A booklet, *Jewish Religious Service for Scouts and Explorers*, is available from Jewish Relationships, BSA.

Mormon Service

Mormons will provide for their services. They ordinarily do not participate in Protestant

services. A member of the Melchizedek Priesthood is usually approved to organize and conduct a sacrament service.

Offerings at Religious Services-World Brotherhood Offering

It is customary to receive an offering for the World Friendship Fund, which is used to provide training and training supplies for Scouters to countries less fortunate than our own. This offering is sent to the International Division, using the form found in this section. Scouters attending other services should be given the opportunity to participate.

Grace at Meals for Scout Camps

It is essential that grace at meals be conducted in a manner conducive to reverence.

Catholic

Blessing Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts that we are about to receive from your goodness, through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Grace After Meals

Almighty God, who livest and reignest forever, we give thee thanks for all thy benefits. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Jewish

Hebrew Blessing Over Bread

Baruch Ata Adonoi, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, harnotzi lechem min

English translation of above

Blessed is the Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who causes bread to come forth from the earth.

Protestant

Morning Grace

Gracious giver of all good, thee we thank for rest and food.
Grant that all we do or say, in thy service be, this day.

Noon Grace

Father, for this noonday meal we would speak the praise
we feel.
Health and strength we have from thee; help us, Lord, to
faithful be.

Evening Grace

Tireless guardian on our way,
Thou hast kept us well this day.
While we thank thee, we request
Care continued, pardon, rest.