

Emphasizing Duty to God in Scouting

by  
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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated foremost to my Lord and Savior Jesus. I pray this honors the Father and achieves His will.

Secondly, this thesis is dedicated to my family for their love and support. I cannot express how much I appreciate my wife's love and support over the years; I know I've tested both. However, she is always there for me. My son, who is teaching me to be a father, has had his work cut-out for him. Without either, this work would not have begun, nor been completed.

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## Introduction

Scouting teaches boys to do their duty to God through program delivery, special observances, and partnerships with various faith-based organizations, because the Boy Scouts of America believes in an obligation to God, and Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, believed that religion is a key component of the movement. The purpose of this thesis is to explain how and why Scouting encourages boys to be reverent. Using existing resources, Scout Leaders can and should help boys to understand their duty to God and incorporate it into their lives, especially if we understand the stance of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) on religious principle and Baden-Powell's thoughts on Scouting.

Duty to God can be defined as recognizing that God exists, being thankful for His blessings, following His precepts, and attending worship services. Duty to God is at the foundation of Scouting in America, and can be found in the Bylaws of Boy Scouts of America Declaration of Religious Principle. Parents applying for a boy's membership and adults applying for leader-membership must agree with the Declaration of Religious Principle which states, "The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God. ... The recognition of God as the ruling and leading power in the universe and the grateful acknowledgment of His favors and blessings are necessary to the best type of citizenship and are wholesome precepts in the education of the growing members. No matter what the religious faith of the members may be, this fundamental need of good citizenship should be kept before them. 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. Its policy is that the home and the organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life.”<sup>1</sup>

Duty to God is incorporated into Scouting through its mission, objectives/Aims, and Methods of Scouting. “The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.”<sup>2</sup> Scouting has three objectives called “Aims of Scouting.” The three objectives are character development, citizenship, and personal fitness. The Aims of Scouting are achieved by the “Methods of Scouting.”<sup>3</sup> The methods constitute program delivery and are utilized in Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and leader training.

In addition to program delivery, Scouting builds character through its recognition of Special Observances. These observances include Scout Sunday and Sabbath, other religious dates, and Scout’s Own services. These observances directly support the belief that Scouts have a duty to God by strengthening and complementing program delivery.

BSA has many partnerships with faith-based organizations that emphasize a Scout’s duty to God. These partnerships include both faith-specific religious groups and individual religious charter organizations. Examples of faith-specific religious groups are the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, the National Jewish Committee on Scouting, Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y.) representing Protestant and Independent Christian Churches, and the Islamic Council on Scouting. Individual religious charter organizations may consist of churches, temples, or mosques. The faith-based partnerships also strengthen and complement program delivery, too.

Other resources provided by BSA that support the emphasis of a Scout's duty to God include the Relationships Division and the Religious Emblems Coordinator. These resources complement program delivery by coordinating the activities of the faith-specific religious groups that created and monitor the Religious Emblems Program.

In summary, Scout Leaders have many existing resources to help boys understand their duty to God. Boys that understand their duty to God grow into men who are more likely to practice their faith. For example, "Men who were Scouts as youth attend religious services more frequently than those who were never Scouts. In fact, nearly one quarter of non-Scouts never attend, compared with 17 percent of men with Scouting backgrounds."<sup>4</sup> The resources that enable boys to understand their duty to God include Program Delivery, Special Observances, Faith-based Partnerships, and BSA's Religious Support and Baden-Powell's thoughts on Scouting.

## I. Program Delivery

The Scouting program (Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts) teaches boys to do their duty to God through program delivery. Program delivery is a Method of Scouting used to achieve the Aims of Scouting. In Cub Scouting, it includes the Cub Scout Promise, Advancement requirements, and Service. Program Delivery in Boy Scouting is similar to Cub Scouting and includes the Boy Scout Oath and Law, Rank advancement requirements, and the Chaplain Aide Program. Just like in education, boys learn to do their duty to God through the consistent practice of the Methods of Scouting.

## A. Cub Scouts

It was recognized in the 1920's that many boys who were too young for Boy Scouts were eager to have their own program. After analyzing several existing programs, BSA authorized an experimental program called Cubbing. Based on Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book it was similar to Baden-Powell's Wolf Cubbing in England. The experiment produced positive results, and Cubbing was founded in 1930; the program name was changed to Cub Scouting in 1945. Linked to the values taught at home and church, Cubbing was established to provide a bridge to Boy Scouts for younger boys.<sup>5</sup>

From its beginning, the Cub Scout program was designed to both complement and to be a bridge to the Boy Scout program, and to provide a foundation based on faith and other values. This can be observed in the Cub Scout Promise.

### 1. Cub Scout Promise

The Cub Scout Promise is similar to the Boy Scout Oath in that the boy promises to do his duty to God first. Then he promises to do his duty to his country. That is the way it should be; to put God first in all things. The promise is an important part of the Cub Scout Program Delivery because each Cub Scout recites the promise at each meeting and learns through repetition that he has a duty to God.

Table 1: Cub Scout Promise

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cub Scout Promise</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">I promise to do my best To do my duty to God and my country, To help other people, and To obey the Law of the Pack.</p>
--

In addition to learning that a Cub Scout has a duty to God through repetition of saying the Cub Scout Promise, each Cub Scout handbook explains what a duty to God is. The duty to God stated in the Promise is further clarified by Advancement Requirements.

## 2. Advancement Requirements

Advancement, a program delivery tool, requires boys to advance through Cub Scouting by earning badges. While completing advancement requirements, boys learn and practice their duty to God. The first badge earned in Cub Scouting is Bobcat, which requires the boy to learn and recite the Cub Scout Promise. A first grade boy in a Tiger den must first earn the badge of Bobcat before earning the Tiger Cub Badge; other than having to learn and say the Cub Scout Promise, the boy has no other achievements to complete which reinforce a duty to God. One of the twelve achievements for the Wolf Badge is Duty to God. The four requirements to earn the eleventh achievement (Duty to God) for the Wolf Badge are, "11a Complete the Character Connection for Faith.; 11b Talk with your family about what they believe is their duty to God.; 11c Give two ideas on how you can practice or demonstrate your religious beliefs. Choose one and do it.; and 11d Find out how you can help your church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or religious fellowship."<sup>6</sup> Also, a Cub Scout in a Wolf den may earn the religious emblem of his faith. The Bear Badge requires a boy achieve either Achievement 1 - Ways We Worship (similar to the Wolf Badge Duty to God Achievement) or complete Achievement 2 – earn the Religious Emblem of his faith in the first of four areas of emphasis – God, Country, Family, and Self.<sup>7</sup> A Scout in a fourth or fifth grade Webelos den has one foot in Cub Scouting and the other in Boy Scouting; he is being prepared for Boy Scouts and is expected to be capable of understanding at a deeper level than younger Cubs.

Advancement for a Webelos Scout is more complex. One of eight Webelos Badge requirements is Faith and asks the boy to learn about and practice his faith, and he may earn the religious emblem of his faith.<sup>8</sup> In addition, he learns and explains the Boy Scout Oath and Law. Both of these are elements of Boy Scout program delivery used to emphasize a duty to God.

### 3. Service

Another element of Cub Scouting program delivery is service. Actually, service is found in both the Cub Scout Promise and in Advancement Requirements. The Cub Scout Promise teaches Bobcat, Tiger Cub, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos Scouts to help other people. Advancement Requirements for Wolf, Bear, and Webelos include service in varying levels and beneficiaries. For example, Wolf Badge Achievement Requirement 11d asks the Scout to identify how he can help his church, synagogue, mosque, or temple; Bear Badge Achievement Requirement 1b indicates that acts of service to others is a way we worship.

## B. Boy Scouts

“The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.”<sup>9</sup> One of the three objectives (Aims of Scouting) is character development, which is achieved through program delivery. Program Delivery in the Boy Scouting program emphasizes duty to God through the Boy Scout Oath and Law, Rank Requirements, and the Chaplain Aide Program.

## 1. Scout Oath and Law

Table 2: Boy Scout Oath and Law

<b>Scout Oath</b>	<b>The Scout Law</b>	
	A Scout is	
On my honor I will do my best	Trustworthy	Obedient
To do my duty to God and my country	Loyal	Cheerful
and to obey the Scout Law;	Helpful	Thrifty
To help other people at all times;	Friendly	Brave
To keep myself physically strong,	Courteous	Clean
mentally awake, and morally straight.	Kind	Reverent

At each meeting, the Boy Scout should recite the Scout Oath and Law. Just like in the educational system, he learns he has a duty to God through repetition. He states that he has a duty to God first and then to his country. Then he follows the Scout Oath with a recitation of the Scout Law which reminds him that a Scout is reverent. The twelfth point of the Scout Law is like an exclamation point, adding emphasis to the Oath.

“The Scout Oath for the BSA (was) developed from the original version by Lord Baden-Powell, the main difference was that the second line stated that ‘I will do my duty to God and the King.’ The Scout Law for the Boy Scouts of America was originally adopted in 1910. By 1911 it was adjusted to what it is today. The original version by Lord Baden-Powell had only 10 points to the Scout Law (the eleventh and twelfth of the BSA version were added when the BSA was founded).”<sup>10</sup> The Boy Scout Oath and Law are one of three methods of program delivery that emphasize a Scout’s duty to God.



Illustration 1: Boy Scout Oath and Law

## 2. Rank Requirements

Rank Requirement is the second method of Boy Scout program delivery that emphasizes a Scout's duty to God. In order to join a Boy Scout troop, a Joining Requirement asks the boy to "Understand and agree to live by the scout oath and law."<sup>11</sup> The Tenderfoot Rank Requirement 13 reads, "Demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath (Promise) and Scout Law in your everyday life. Discuss four specific examples of how you have lived the points of the Scout Law in your daily life."<sup>12</sup> Second Class Rank Requirement 11 is the same as Tenderfoot Rank Requirement 13 except the Scout has to "Discuss four specific examples (different from those used for Tenderfoot requirement 13) of how you have lived the points of the Scout Law in your daily life."<sup>13</sup> First Class Rank Requirement 12 is similar to the Second Class Requirement 11, however



there is an additional First Class Rank Requirement. The additional requirement is First Class Rank Requirement 4e which reads, "On one campout .... Lead your patrol in saying grace at the meals ...."<sup>14</sup>



Illustration 2: First Class Requirement: Saying Grace

Emphasis on a Scout's duty to God does not end with the rank requirements for First Class; rank requirements for Star and above continue to focus the boy on the Oath and Law's daily practice. For example, Star and Life Scout Rank Requirement 2 reads, "Demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath (Promise) and Scout Law in your everyday life."<sup>15</sup> Eagle Scout Rank Requirement 2 continues this focus with an addition; it states, "Demonstrate that you live by the principles of the Scout Oath and Law in your daily life. List the names of individuals who know you personally and would be willing to provide a recommendation on your behalf, including parents/guardians, religious,

educational, and employer references.”<sup>16</sup> Three Eagle Palms may be earned after the rank of Eagle and each Palm’s Rank Requirement 2 is the same as Star and Life Scout Rank Requirement 2. An additional Rank Requirement for Star, Life, and Eagle Scout rank requires a boy to serve in a troop leadership position, one of which may be the Chaplain Aide.

### 3. Chaplain Aide Program

The Chaplain Aide Program is the third method of Boy Scout program delivery that emphasizes a Scout’s duty to God. It is described by the *Handbook for Chaplains and Chaplain Aides in Boy Scout Troops and Venturing Crews* which states, “The chaplain aide is an approved youth leadership position in Boy Scout troops and Venturing crews. The purposes for this leadership position are to: Make the 12th point of the Scout Law more meaningful in life; Promote a greater understanding of and appreciation for all religions; and Provide Boy Scouts and Venturers with the opportunity to work with an ordained member of the clergy, thereby gaining insight into the religious professional life. ... As a chaplain or chaplain aide, your principal duty is to plan for and/or conduct meaningful worship opportunities.”<sup>17</sup>

### C. Scout Leaders and Training

Scout Leaders should help boys grow spiritually. “It is a Scouter’s responsibility to help each youth member grow in his or her chosen religious teachings, not to suggest or dictate what faith group or beliefs to follow. Scouters should encourage youth members to develop in their own faith while guiding and encouraging them to do their duty to God in accordance with their religious dictates.”<sup>18</sup> However, this author does not

believe that most leaders sufficiently understand this responsibility after completing only Basic Leader Training.

### 1. Basic Leader Training

Basic Leader Training (BLT) programs may be too basic. This author does not recall that his BLT courses emphasized that leaders should encourage spiritual growth. That includes both courses taught by a person or a Cub Scout Den Leader course recently taken online. The following finding supports the recollection that BLT's lacked an emphasis on spiritual growth. A 1988 BSA Relationships Committee, Duty To God Task Force Report recommended, "BSA leader training materials should provide examples of how the concept of duty to God can be lived out in the lives of Scouts and demonstrated in the Scouting experience. ... Such materials and literature should also help and encourage leaders to assist Scouts in fulfilling their religious obligation, thereby exemplifying the concept of duty to God ...."<sup>19</sup> Several recommendations made by the Task Force were not adopted, such as changes to the Boy Scout Oath. However, other training courses emphasize that leaders should encourage spiritual growth.

### 2. Wood Badge and Other Training

Wood Badge is an exceptional Scout Leader training course for teaching leaders how they can emphasize duty to God in Scouting. The course provides leaders with the perspective of Boy Scouts which helps to understand the Patrol Method and how Boy Scout troops operate. In specific, each patrol has a patrol-leadership team which includes a Chaplain Aide who is responsible for emphasizing a spiritual element at the patrol level by leading or encouraging prayer before patrol-level meals and working with the other Chaplain Aides to prepare a Scouts' Own. The course emphasizes a duty to God through

prayer at appropriate times, such as flag ceremonies, and before troop-wide meals, and allows the participant to experience a Scouts' Own.

Other leader training opportunities teach an emphasis on duty to God in various levels. In the Cub Scout program, Webelos Leader Outdoor Experience (WLOE) (currently Outdoor Skills for Webelos Leaders (OWL)), emphasizes prayer at appropriate times, such as flag ceremonies and before meals. However unlike WLOE, the current OWL syllabus does not include a Scouts' Own. In the Boy Scout program, Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (OLS) emphasizes prayer at appropriate times, such as flag ceremonies and before meals, and includes a Scouts' Own. The University of Scouting (UOS), a one-day supplemental training opportunity similar to Cub Scout Pow Wow but for all levels of Scouting, offers knowledge and skills training on specific topics; however, UOS offers so many good classes to choose from that the few classes focused on duty to God often get passed over. Finally for Commissioner's, the College of Commissioner Science (CCS) offers advanced training and continuing education courses to help develop leadership, communications, management, and Commissioner skills to improve Commissioner service, but courses focused wholly on duty to God are in the continuing education or advanced training. Of the above supplemental training programs, the author enjoyed Wood Badge, WLOE and OLS the most because the programs emphasized duty to God through experiential-training such as a Scouts' Own.

In addition to the Scout Leader training mentioned above, motivated individuals can find a lot of information in print and on the internet to use for self-education. However, one needs to exercise caution and consider the source. Fortunately many BSA

articles and publications are online, such as the previously cited *Handbook for Chaplains and Chaplain Aides in Boy Scout Troops and Venturing Crews*, No. 522-036, (2012), at ([http://scouting.org/filestore/membership/pdf/522-036\\_web.pdf](http://scouting.org/filestore/membership/pdf/522-036_web.pdf)). Other online articles and publications are noted in the Appendices.

## II. Special Observances

In addition to program delivery, Scouting emphasizes duty to God through its recognition of Special Observances. These observances include Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath, other religious dates, and Scout's Own services. These observances directly support the belief that Scouts have a duty to God by complementing program delivery.

### A. Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath

Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath are special observances recognized by BSA that help Christian and Jewish Scouts focus on their duty to God. According to an online BSA article, "*A Scout is Reverent: Scout Sunday Observance*," "The Boy Scouts of America designates the Sunday that falls before February 8 (Scouting Anniversary Day) as Scout Sunday, which is the primary date to recognize the contributions of young people and adults to Scouting. However, each chartered organization can use either of two other options to celebrate this special day. An organization can adopt a specific Sunday to celebrate. In the instance of the United Methodist Church, Scout Sunday is celebrated on the second Sunday in February. It also is permissible for a local church to celebrate on the Sunday most acceptable to the pastor and congregation."<sup>20</sup> Scout Sabbath is usually the Saturday following February 8.

Scouts may serve the church or synagogue during the worship service in a flag processional, serve as a greeter, participate in a responsive reading, or in some other aspect of worship. Even if the church or synagogue is not the chartered organization, the Scout should be encouraged to wear his uniform because a Scout is reverent. He may be asked why he is wearing his uniform, and he should explain to his congregation that it is Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath and a Scout is reverent. Observing Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath will reinforce a Scout's understanding of his duty to God.



Illustration 3: Scout Sunday

## B. BSA Calendar of Religious Dates

In addition to Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath, BSA recognizes about 50 special observances of various faiths that focus Scouts on their duty to God. The special observances and dates can be found on the BSA Calendar of Religious Dates for 2012.

Some of the faiths are Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity (Catholic and Protestant), Islam, and Judaism.<sup>21</sup> Scouts may ask the religious leader of his place of worship if and when it is appropriate to wear his uniform to a particular worship service.

### C. Scouts' Own

A Scouts' Own is a special observance by Scouts and for Scouts; it is usually held at weekend campouts or other activities to practice their duty to God. If the participants are of the same faith, the observance may be faith specific; however, if it is unknown or if the group consists of various religions then the observance should be an interfaith service.



Illustration 4: A Scouts' Own

An online BSA article, "*Conducting an Interfaith Service*," explains, "An interfaith service (also known as a Scouts' Own) is a gathering of Scouts consistent with the 12th point of the Scout Law. This can be in groups as small as two or as large as a

world Scout jamboree, though groups of a few patrols work best. .... An interfaith service is held for the development of the Scouts' spirituality. Spirituality is that which is beyond the material, that which gives meaning and direction to one's life. Scouting is primarily concerned with how people live out their beliefs in everyday life. Hence, an interfaith service should connect in some way to the Scout Law, the ethical code of Scouting. Usually, mentioning the Scout Law, making allusions to it, and/or including a recitation of the Law as part of an interfaith service provides this connection. An interfaith service may simply include ethical content that the Scouts themselves can connect to the Scout Law."<sup>22</sup>

A Scouts' Own may be a simple prayer giving thanks to God during a break while hiking, or if in camp, it may be a short interfaith service as noted by Baden-Powell: "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 ... 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 homely "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."<sup>23</sup>

### III. Faith-based Partnerships

BSA has many partnerships with faith-based organizations that support Scouting and emphasize a Scout's duty to God through the Religious Emblems Programs. The partnerships include both faith-specific religious groups as well as individual religious charter organizations. Examples of faith-specific religious groups are the Baha'i Committee on Scouting, Islamic Council on Scouting, LDS-BSA Relationships Office, National Catholic Committee on Scouting, National Jewish Committee on Scouting, Members of the Churches of Christ for Scouting, and Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y.) representing Protestant and Independent Christian Churches.



Illustration 5: Faith-based Partnerships

## A. Individual Religious Charter Organizations

Charter Organizations support local Cub and/or Boy Scout Units and may be community or individual religious organizations; the Individual Religious Charter Organizations may consist of churches, synagogues, temples, or mosques. According to a 2008 report from the BSA Relationships Division, the top 15 Individual Religious Charter Organizations were the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, United Methodist Churches, Catholic Churches and organizations, Presbyterian Church (USA), Lutheran Churches, Baptist Churches, Episcopal Churches, United Church of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Independent community churches, Churches of Christ, Independent evangelical churches, The Salvation Army, Church of God, and Jewish Synagogues and Centers.<sup>24</sup> The local religious organizations support the units by establishing them through the charter process and emphasizing a duty to God through Program Delivery, Special Observances, and the Religious Emblems Programs.

## B. Religious Emblems Programs

Over 20 different faith-specific religious groups participate in the Religious Emblems Programs. Some of the faith-specific religious groups include Buddhist, Catholic, Churches of Christ, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, and Protestant and Independent Christian Churches.



Illustration 6: Examples of Religious Emblems

The BSA Duty to God brochure states, “The religious emblems programs are programs (youth faith-specific religious educational courses and adult recognition) created by the various religious groups (faith-specific) to encourage youth to grow stronger in their faith. ... The Boy Scouts of America has approved of these programs and allows the recognition to be worn on the official uniform, but each religious organization develops and administers its own program. ... The religious emblems programs should be presented to youth members and their families as an optional program for them to complete through their religious organization. Religious instruction should always come from the religious organization, not from the unit leader”<sup>25</sup> The Religious Emblems Programs is a resource Scout Leaders can and should use to help boys to understand their duty to God.

However, instruction of Religious Emblems Programs is not always available through local religious organizations because they may be unfamiliar with the programs. For example, the BSA Duty to God brochure states, “Although the religious bodies (faith-specific religious groups) at the national level created the religious emblems programs, the local religious institution may not be aware of these programs. It may be helpful to write for more information or even obtain a copy of the curriculum to give to your religious leader. ... Each program determines who may serve as counselor ...”<sup>26</sup> Although BSA prefers that religious instruction come from the religious organization, P.R.A.Y. defines a counselor as, “The pastor, or someone appointed by the pastor (such as a parent, Sunday School teacher, congregational lay leader, or other qualified adult).”<sup>27</sup>

Since this author could not find a local church offering a Religious Emblems Program, he has taught programs offered by P.R.A.Y., under authority of his pastor, and with the approval of students' parents. According to the P.R.A.Y. website, "The following is a partial listing of the denominations that use the P.R.A.Y. program: African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Assembly of God, Baptist, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal, Church of God, Episcopal, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and Independent Christian churches."<sup>28</sup> The author has taught programs for students of Baptist, Pentecostal, and United Methodist Church denominations, who completed each program with a final review by their pastor.

The following Table 3 is an analysis of 2010 P.R.A.Y. program usage by BSA council by program from data at the P.R.A.Y. website. The table is interesting because the highlighted row is the Middle Tennessee Council (MTC), and its totals are higher than the average Council. In fact, of 298 BSA Councils, there are only 13 Councils with higher grand totals. The Council with the highest grand total is 820.

Table 3: Analysis of 2010 P.R.A.Y. Program Usage Data

2010 P.R.A.Y. Program Usage by BSA Council by Program	God & Me	God & Family	God & Church	God & Life	Four Star	Adult	Adult2	Adult3	Grand Total
298 BSA Councils	19,718	17,036	5,837	2,320	387	1,017	226	24	46,565
Average Per Council	33	29	10	4	1	2	0	0	79
Middle Tennessee Council BSA	78	119	56	16	4	7	4		284
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
High (13 Councils w/ grand total > MTC)	322	306	127	47	15	19	6	2	820

The following Figure 1 is from the P.R.A.Y. 2010 Annual Report on the P.R.A.Y. website. It depicts the usage by agency: BSA (80%), Girl Scouts of America (14%), Sunday school classes and Camp Fire USA (5%), and American Heritage Girls (1%). One could speculate that other Religious Emblems Programs would follow the same pattern of distribution.

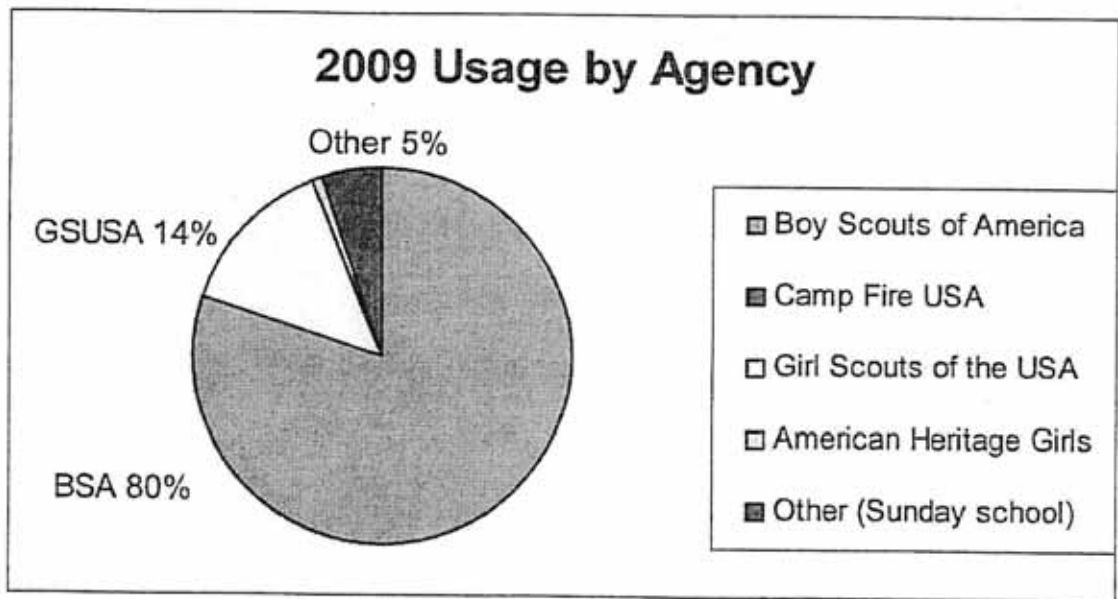


Figure 1: P.R.A.Y. Program Usage by Agency

1. Alternate Bear Badge Achievement

As previously noted, the Religious Emblems Programs are optional. For instance, the Cub Scout Bear Badge may be earned by completing Achievement 1 - Ways We Worship or alternately Achievement 2 - earn the Religious Emblem of his faith. Completing either achievement will satisfy the first of four areas of badge-requirements (God, Country, Family, and Self).

The Bear Badge is the only badge in Cub Scouting where earning the Religious Emblem of his faith is an alternate requirement for earning a badge. In Boy Scouting, no ranks require a boy to earn the Religious Emblem of his faith. However, the Religious Emblems Programs are promoted in the Boy Scouts.

## 2. Chaplain Aide Promotion

Each Boy Scout troop should have a Chaplain Aide, an approved leadership position, to provide the spiritual element of Scouting, and promote the Religious Emblems Programs. For instance, the *Handbook for Chaplains and Chaplain Aides in Boy Scout Troops and Venturing Crews* lists the following Chaplain Aide duties, “5. Present an overview of the various religious emblems programs to the unit at least annually, instructing members to contact their own religious leader to guide them in the appropriate study programs. 6. Present an overview of the religious emblems programs to Cub Scout dens or packs and other Scouting units on request.”<sup>29</sup>

The following Figure 2 is from the P.R.A.Y. 2010 Annual Report on the P.R.A.Y. website. The interesting thing to note here is that program usage appears to decline at the Boy Scout level (God and Church and God and Life); Four Star are those boys who earned all four Religious Emblems. The decline may be due to the fact that many boys do not cross-over into Boy Scouts or stay in the Scouting program. Alternate reasons may be that Religious Emblems Programs are not promoted well enough by troops, alternate rank requirements do not exist, as in Cub Scouting, or boys may not desire to complete additional Religious Emblems Programs after earning the youth religious emblems square knot.

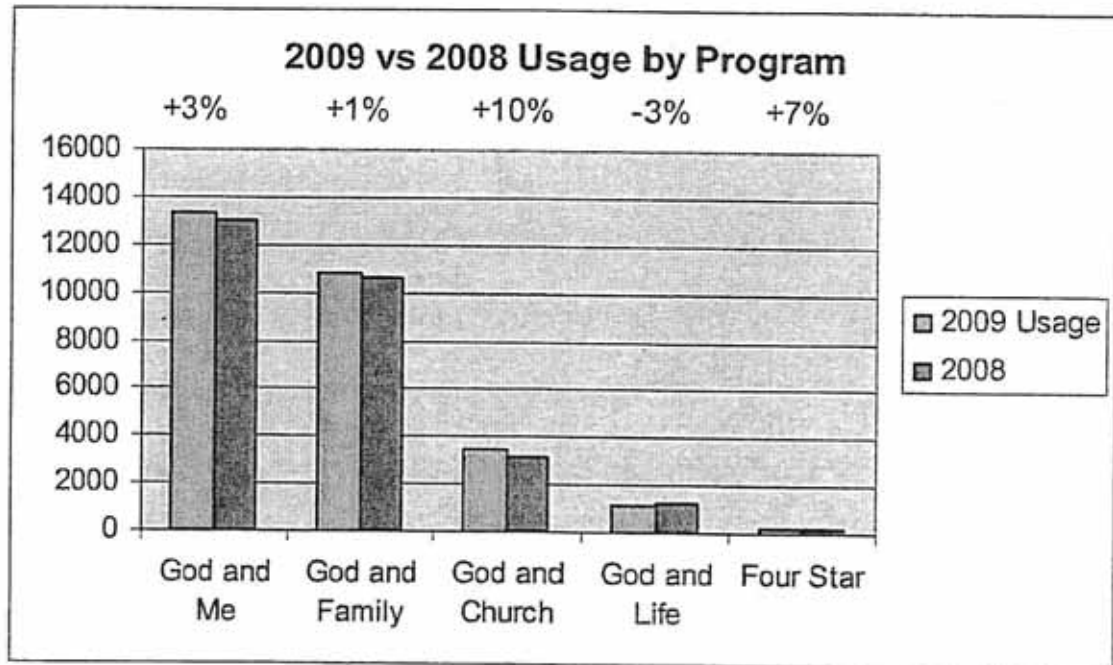


Figure 2: P.R.A.Y. Program Usage by Program for 2009 vs. 2008

#### IV. BSA Religious Support and Baden-Powell

BSA provides support to its partners and volunteers through the Relationships Division and the Religious Emblems Coordinator positions to emphasize a Scout's duty to God. These resources complement Program Delivery by coordinating the activities of the faith-specific religious groups that created and administer the Religious Emblems Programs. In addition, Baden-Powell's thoughts on Scouting provide the founder's insights on the importance of emphasizing a duty to God in Scouting.

##### A. Relationships Division

BSA has a Relationships division which provides support through a listing of resources available to councils, community and religious organizations, and Scouters. In 2008, the Relationships Division issued a publication titled *Resources 2008–2009, A*

*Bibliography of Materials for Council Use With Chartered Organizations*. The publication states, “The purpose of the Relationships Division is to support local councils as they work with local organizations to extend the Scouting program through new-unit organization. ... In the pages of this guide, you’ll find resources for establishing and maintaining relationships with the community, with religious groups, and with labor organizations. We’ve also included a handy reference chart with detailed information on the religious emblems programs available through the Boy Scouts of America, as well as a list of available special-interest literature and a valuable compendium of BSA Web resources.”<sup>30</sup> This is a useful resource for councils, commissioners, community and religious organizations, and unit-level Scouters for emphasizing duty to God in Scouting.

## B. Religious Emblems Coordinator

A BSA Youth Development Team task force recommended two new positions to promote the Religious Emblems Programs for emphasizing duty to God in Scouting; the positions are Religious Emblems Coordinator at the Council and District levels. The *Winter 2011 BSA Edition of the P.R.A.Y. Newsletter* announced the positions’ three purposes are, “1. Encourage all youth to earn the emblem of their faith. 2. Promote religious emblems usage like the Boy Scouts of America promotes other youth advancement. 3. Establish goals with the council and district advancement committees for the number of religious emblems to be completed within the year. .... (and to reinforce) the values taught in Scouting and through the faith-based organizations.”<sup>31</sup> These two positions are a great resource for emphasizing a duty to God by providing a bridge between Scouting and faith-based organizations.



### C. Baden-Powell's Thoughts on Scouting

Lord Baden-Powell's thoughts on Scouting comprise another resource; they provide his insight on the importance of emphasizing a duty to God in Scouting. The following quote is from a BSA article: "Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scouting movement, believed that a person's religion is not in how he behaves; rather it is in what he believes. This is where the Scout Law intersects with spirituality. In developing character, Scouts may connect their spirituality to the Scout Law so that the living out of their religious faith is also an active expression of the Scout Law."<sup>32</sup>



Illustration 7: Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell

Footsteps of the Founder is a compilation of quotations made by Lord Robert Baden-Powell in a number of books and magazines. The following quotes are from that publication and clearly indicate his belief in emphasizing a Scout's duty to God. "Our highest loyalty is to God; we can show that by carrying out our duties to the Church to

which we belong, and by keeping our Promise as Scouts.”<sup>33</sup> “Religion can and ought to be taught to the boy ... and it can be well introduced to boys through the study of Nature.”<sup>34</sup> “.... But we insist on the observance and practice of whatever form of religion the boy professes.”<sup>35</sup> “I have been asked to describe more fully what was in my mind as regards religion when I instituted Scouting and Guiding. I was asked: ‘Where does religion come in?’ Well, my reply is: ‘It does not come in at all. It is already there. It is the fundamental factor underlying Scouting and Guiding.’”<sup>36</sup>

### Conclusion

The conclusion of this thesis is succinctly stated in a BSA brochure which states, “Central to the Scout Oath (or Promise) is the pledge to ‘do my duty to God.’ The 12th point of the Scout Law states, ‘A Scout is reverent.’ These commitments to the prominence of God in one’s life form a cornerstone of the Scouting program. When properly interpreted by an adult Scouter of strong faith to young people, even the unchurched begin to understand their need for God.”<sup>37</sup>



Illustration 8: Scouting’s Religious Heritage

In conclusion, Scouting has a religious heritage, and Scout Leaders have many existing resources available to help boys understand and do their duty to God. These resources include Program Delivery, Special Observances, Faith-based Partnerships, and BSA's Religious Support and Baden-Powell's thoughts on Scouting. Scouters should use these resources to strengthen the boys' spirituality, because religion is at the foundation of Scouting.

## Appendices

### Personal Biographical Sketch

Eleven years of service as a Walton Trail District adult leader, with a seven-year interruption; I started as an Assistant Webelos Leader with my nephew's den. After he had crossed over to Boy Scouts, I served one year as an Assistant Scout Master, and decided to focus on my family, as we were expecting. When my son was in first grade, he wanted to be a Cub Scout so I volunteered to be his den leader. Since then, I have served as a Tiger Cub, Wolf, and Bear Den Leader; Assistant Cub Master; Cub Master; and, Assistant Scout Master/Troop Chaplain. My BSA Supplemental Training includes: Baloo; Cub Scout Pow Wow; Train the Trainer; WLOE; OLS; Staffing the District Committee; Unit Commissioner Basic Training; College of Commissioner Science - Bachelor (11/2009), Masters (11/2010), and partial Doctorate (11/2011); and Wood Badge: SR 938. Other BSA volunteer service includes: Religious Emblems Counselor - God and Me (2007), God and Family (2008), and God and Church (2010); Cub Scout Day Camp - Bear Den Leader (6/2006), Webelos I Leader (6/2007), and Webelos II Leader (6/2008); District Training Staff: BLT Staff (2006-07, 07-08, 08-09, 09-10, and 10-11); Baloo Staff (4/2007); District Pinewood Derby Chair (2008); District Cub Scout Roundtable Staff: (2008-09); Unit Commissioner: (5/2009 – current); Council Training Staff: OWL (9/2009), and Cumberland Merit Badge University Instructor (3/2010, 3/11, 3/12); Order of the Arrow Ordeal (6/2012). I am a member of First Baptist Church Lebanon and The Gideons International.

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