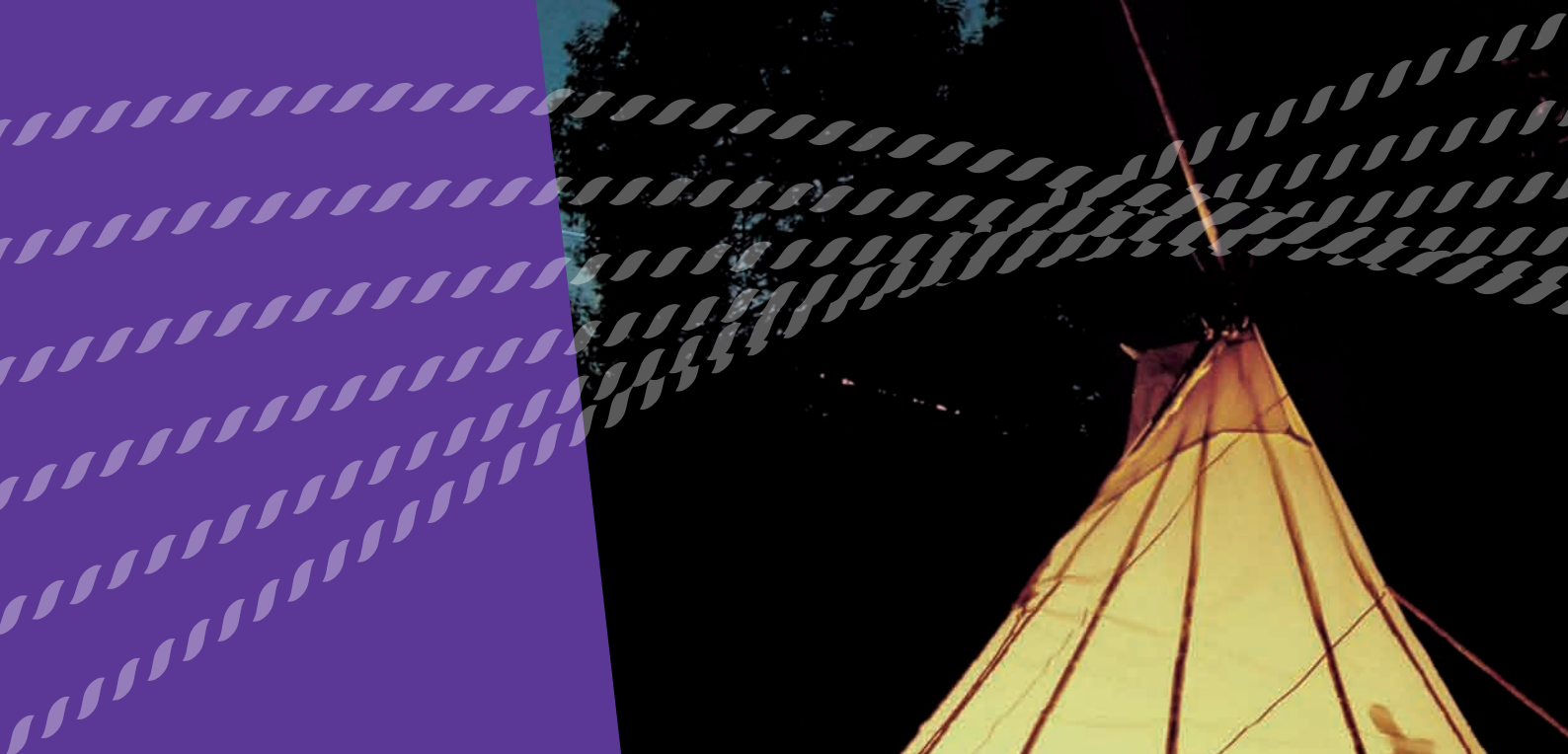


GUIDELINES ON SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT



SCOUTS®
Creating a Better World

Youth Programme



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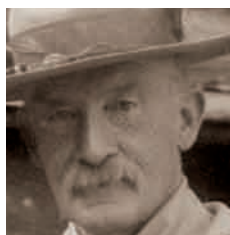
World Scout Bureau
Rue du Pré-Jérôme 5
PO Box 91
CH – 1211 Geneva 4 Plainpalais
Switzerland

Tel.: (+ 41 22) 705 10 10
Fax: (+ 41 22) 705 10 20

worldbureau@scout.org
scout.org

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GUIDELINES ON SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT



"ALL OUR PLANS CONSIST IN ACTING
ON THE CHARACTER OF THE YOUNG
WHEN HE (OR SHE) IS BURNING WITH
ENTHUSIASM, SO AS TO MAKE THE
BEST USE OF IT BY MOTIVATING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF HIS PERSONALITY.
THUS HE WILL BECOME A GOOD MAN
(OR WOMAN) AND A HELPFUL CITIZEN
FOR HIS COUNTRY"

BADEN POWELL

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Introduction

"THE PURPOSE OF THE SCOUT MOVEMENT IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACHIEVING THEIR FULL PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL POTENTIALS AS INDIVIDUALS, AS RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS AND AS MEMBERS OF THEIR LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES." (CONSTITUTION)

These guidelines have been prepared to support Scout Associations in the development of the spiritual aspect of their members. It provides principles and guidance to support programme design rather more than a detailed discussion of the nature of spiritual development. It will take as the norm the understanding of Spiritual Development articulated and reaffirmed by the World Scout Conference in its various Conference resolutions and documents.

These guidelines aim to boost the confidence of Scout leaders by enabling them to identify the ways in which good application of the Scout Method supports spiritual development, while indicating ways to ensure that a wide range of opportunities for spiritual development is made available to young people.

The religious and social world at the start of Scouting's second centenary is in many ways different from what it was in the Founder's time. Globalisation has increased ethnic and religious diversity. Much of the developed world has seen a decline in religion but a steady interest in "spirituality". There are suggestions that some of the emerging generation do not see a need to seek for any meaning beyond their immediate experiences. More recently the rise of religious fundamentalism has placed spiritual and religious issues at the heart of the political agenda. In some places there is a renewed interest in religion. Scouting is well placed to respond to this situation.

Scouting has always had a concern with matters of faith. The centrality of “duty to God” in the Promise has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the Movement, while finding ways of expressing this which are appropriate to the situations of its youth members. For the Founder, religion was not a part of Scouting, but something that lay at its very foundation.

The relationship between the Scout Method and the Scout Promise and Law is set out in the text from Resolution 14/24 of the World Scout Conference (1924) which states that “The Scout Movement has no tendency to weaken but, on the contrary, to strengthen individual religious belief. The Scout Law requires that a Scout shall truly and sincerely practise his (or her) religion.”

At the same time, the Scout Movement has sought to bring together into single associations people of different religious beliefs. It counts within its member associations those which are faith-based and open associations. While holding to the essentials of the Scout Promise and Scout Law, this diversity reflects the variety of local situations which prevail around the world and in which Scouting becomes a concrete reality.

In relation to the spiritual dimension, the Founder was confident of the role of nature as a tool for spiritual development, so again through the Scout Method “Progressive and stimulating programmes of varied activities based on the interests of the participants, including games, useful skills, and services to the community, taking place largely in an outdoor setting in contact with nature.”, Scouting can contribute to young people’s spiritual development.

Young people need to acquire the skills of the spiritual dimension, just as much as they need to develop emotional intelligence, physical coordination, and social skills. They need a vocabulary and grammar with which they can make sense of, critique and integrate their experiences of the spiritual. They need to be able to “explore the invisible”. These guidelines aim to show how the application of the Scout Method, provides an opportunity to help young people develop these skills.



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Part A - General principles



CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING FAITH, SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

Defining faith, spirituality, and religion

"Faith", "spirituality" and "religion" are each said in many ways. In some instances they are used with the same meaning, in others they are used in a contrasting manner. This chapter seeks to describe the main ways in which they are used, so that concrete steps can be taken to attend to them in the Youth Programme.

Scouting and Spiritual Development (2001) surveyed a number of dictionaries for definitions of both "spiritual" and "religious". The WONDER forum report on Spirituality (2001) and numerous other reports map out the wide variety of understandings of "spirituality" and "religion".

FAITH

Faith can be described as a belief in a divinity that involves an individual's progressive adherence and commitment to a propositional network of values, creeds, and practices of organised religion. Faith is often used as a synonym for religion.

SPIRITUALITY

We can identify some basic approaches to understanding spirituality within Scouting and the wider community.

- a) Religion as spiritual
- b) Spirituality as the development of the individual in a religious context
- c) Spirituality as existential development
- d) Spirituality as the search for meaning of things and experiences within oneself

- a) Religion as spiritual: Spirituality as synonymous with religion.

In this approach spirituality is what religion is about: it refers to the transcendental and is contrasted with the material, the secular or the profane. It is the acknowledgement of the existence of an awesome mystery (*mysterium tremendum*), of something beyond us which demands a fundamentally religious response. It is sometimes used to emphasise that religion is not simply sterile and formal.

- b) Spirituality is about the development of the individual in a religious context.

Here spirituality is valued because it relates to the core values of a person and not just their exterior observances. It reflects the nature of spirituality as something deeply personal. If religion is about public expression, here spirituality is about the inner self. It is about the quality of our engagement with and adherence to a set of values and the extent to which we have made them our own. (They have become existentially meaningful for us).

- c) Spirituality as existential development. "The spirit of man"

Spirituality is also used in reference to the human spirit, to the emergence of the true self. It may be expressed in religious, agnostic and atheist forms.

- d) Spirituality is also searching for the meaning of things and of experiences within oneself, in others and in history. It is about this search for meaning and direction that Lord Baden-Powell states: "Spirituality means guiding one's own canoe through the torrent of events and experiences of one's own history and of that of mankind."

In all of these, spirituality would seem to help us to address key questions such as:

- What is the meaning of and purpose of my life?
- Who am I? Why am I here?
- What is my future?
- What defines the differences between right and wrong?

Why should I act rightly? Why is there so much wrong in the world?

RELIGION

What is religion?

The term religion is certainly used in many ways. There are a very large number of religions and each has its own uniqueness. To find a suitable and sufficient definition is really quite tricky, and no legal system has been so bold as to provide such a definition, even though many make use of the term.

Some approaches try to provide a substantive definition, identifying the essential features. It is not clear however that religions are linked in that sort of way. It might be for example that they share features with each other, but that no single feature is shared by all. (For example belief in a deity). But there are other words that are just as difficult, such as "game". (Try it!) Sometimes appeals are made to concepts such as sacredness or transcendence, but these are not much easier to define.

Some approaches use the etymology (from the Latin *religio* – possibly *religare* (to link), *legere* (to gather) or *relegere* (to collect)). Others use sociological, anthropological or phenomenological approaches. While these might be useful to historians and scientists, they all too often leave out something that religious people regard as essential about their religion.

Consequently, Scouting welcomes people of different religious beliefs and has a responsibility to assist them in developing their commitment to their faith. The Youth Programme should:

- help young people in their search for the meaning and direction in their lives
- offer to young people of differing faith commitments opportunities to meet one another and to find a common basis for communication and cooperation on matters relevant to their moral and spiritual concern, recognising that there will be areas of disagreement and differences.

RELIGION AND THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

It should be clear from the above discussion, that religion without some form of spiritual dimension is likely to be empty formalism. However, we cannot simply say that the spiritual dimension is the foundation for the religious, for the religious dimension can also provide a fruitful ground for the spiritual. Indeed for some it is the primary area in which the spiritual is explored and developed.

Single Faith-based Associations

It has always been recognised in Scouting that this close relationship between spirituality and religion is one of the strongest reasons for having single faith-based associations in Scouting. In such associations close partnerships are often formed with religious groups and care should be taken to ensure that Scouts who come from other religious traditions are able to maintain their own beliefs and practices. Single faith-based associations should also seek to cooperate with other associations as the expression of the fundamental fraternity of Scouting and for the up-building of mutual respect and understanding.

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES



SCOUT WEEK IN TAIZÉ (FRANCE)

Scout Week in Taizé is a joint initiative between the Taizé community and members of the International Catholic Conference of Scouting (ICCS) Europe-Mediterranean Region. This event is organised annually (August) in the village of Taizé which is set on a hill in the Burgundy region of France.

The Taizé Community is an ecumenical Christian monastic order in Taizé, Saône-et-Loire (Burgundy) and is comprised of a little over 100 brothers who come from Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant traditions. Over 100,000 young people from around the world make pilgrimages to Taizé each year for prayer, Bible study, sharing, and communal work. The Taizé community is an example of 'communal living' that wants its life to be a sign of reconciliation between divided Christians and between separated peoples.



Scout Week in Taizé provides an opportunity for young Scouters to experience this simple life shared with others. The programme of Scout Week in Taizé is designed to help young leaders in Scouting to view their daily life in the light of the Gospel: pray together three times a day; reflect on the core elements of faith and explore the Promise, the Law, and the principles of Scouting.

During the Scout Week in Taizé, the living conditions are simple - participants have a choice of either indoor, small dormitory accommodation or sleeping in tents provided by Taizé – meal time is also a communal activity, with participants taking turns serving their fellow pilgrims the simple but nourishing menu which Taizé provides for the pilgrims.

Open Associations

Open associations were formed in the earliest years of Scouting and over many years have sought to find ways of dealing with the variety of religious belief and practice amongst their membership.

Often this has been done in partnership with a range of religious groups and faith communities, and most importantly with the Scouts own families. Scouting has seen its role as ensuring that Scouts develop spiritually, according to their own tradition, and has sought to provide opportunities for this to take place, drawing on the help of groups formally outside of Scouting as required.

The specific competence of Scouting in regard to spiritual development is to provide opportunities for young people to explore their own faith and beliefs.. However this does not mean that Scout leaders may not share their own religious beliefs with young people. They are after all the truths that have given them meaning and purpose and it would be strange to suggest that anything as important as this should be excluded from the relationship that forms between a Scout and their leader. The leader should however respect the young person's own journey and the wishes of their families. The leader shares their belief not in the manner of a parent but in the manner of the elder brother or sister, as a fellow traveller.

Spiritual and religious development in Scouting

Spiritual development is connected to young people's efforts to understand the meaning and causes of life experiences; therefore it is not apart from everyday life but part of it. Spiritual development is achieved through reflection on:

- on values that arise from activities and experiences
- on the nature of human character and existence
- on specific religious practices and symbols
- the transcendental and the metaphysical

All these opportunities are present in Scouting so the Youth Programme should give a time and a space for individual reflection and expression as well as helping young people to identify and express shared values stemming from their shared experiences.

It is not by adding religious practice to Scout activities that we can really help young people develop their spiritual dimension but by living and reflecting on experiences having a spiritual meaning, developing in each individual the instinct and the capacity to search for a spirituality in tune with his or her own culture, encouraging people to live their religious choices fully.

Scout leaders should be helped to develop the skills needed to support the spiritual development of young people in Scouting and they should also be role models in relation to their own spiritual and religious development.

In relation to religious development, while it is not the role of the Scout leader per se to give religious instruction, it may be that a leader is competent to instruct, as perhaps in some other speciality such as rock climbing or music, and at times to do as a member of a religious community who has special skills in the education of young people.

In the light of these discussions, we can reaffirm the understanding of Duty to God contained in RAP (Renewed Approach to Programme) as:

"ACQUIRING A DEEPER KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF ONE'S OWN COMMUNITY, DISCOVERING THE SPIRITUAL REALITY WHICH GIVES MEANING TO LIFE AND DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FOR ONE'S DAILY LIFE, WHILST RESPECTING THE SPIRITUAL CHOICES OF OTHERS."

The term "Explorers of the Invisible" can provide a rich metaphor for understanding the work of spiritual development.

In the next section we will see how this metaphor resolves in specific learning objectives and the application of the Scout Method.

Part A - General principles



CHAPTER 2

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT & THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SCOUTING

Scouting and education

Scouting is identified as an educational movement and yet there are many ways in which education can be developed and achieved. When we look at how Scouting talks about itself and its aims we can see that many of these ways and approaches are present. Which approach comes out as most important will vary from place to place.

Here are some examples of how education can be conceived by different groups:

- induction into a particular culture
- equipping young people with the tools for life, including employment and citizenship
- the acquisition of high culture leading to human flourishing
- concerned primarily with personal growth and fulfilment
- contrasted with socialisation, vocational training and psychotherapy
- development of rational capacities which enable self-determination
- critique of the status quo and a stimulus to social change

There are some common features of Scouting as an educational movement:

- it is non-formal rather than scholastic (formal)
- it prioritises the place of young people
- it concerns the growth of the whole person
- it aims at the creation of a better world

The distinctiveness of Scouting as an educational movement lies in the Scout Method, which can be adapted according to the needs of time and place and the priorities for the young people to whom Scouting is offered.

The Scout method

The Scout Method is the structured framework designed to guide and encourage Scouts along the path of personal growth. It is an interdependent group of elements forming a unified and integrated whole.

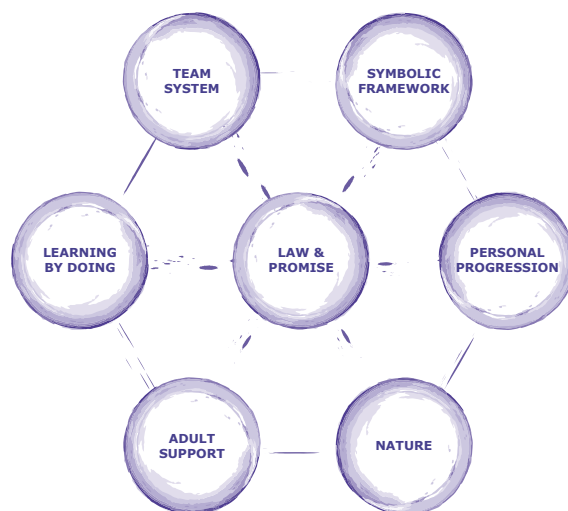
The Scout Method is intended:

- to help each young person to use and develop his or her own capacities, interests and experience of life
- to stimulate the discovery and development of new capacities and interests
- to help find constructive ways of meeting needs at different stages of development
- to open doors to further stages at his or her own individual pace

The elements of the Scout Method can be identified as follows:

- Promise and Law
- Learning by doing
- Symbolic framework
- Team system
- Personal progression
- Nature
- Adult support

Their interdependence is represented in the following diagram.





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The following paragraphs has been adapted from an extract taken from 'The Essential Characteristics of Scouting' – World Scout Bureau , 1998

The **Promise and Law** require a Scout to take personal responsibility. The law articulates many of the values embodied in Scouting. . The values of being trustworthy, loyal, helping others, a friend and brother/sister, courteous, a friend to animals, obedient, cheerful, thrifty and clean. It stands as a constant reminder to the Scout of the sort of person he or she is trying to become.

Learning by doing acknowledges that spiritual development can only be done in the first person and learning by doing ensures that the individual is engaged in the process. Learning by doing includes the work a Scout does to create / towards creating a better world.

The **Symbolic Framework** used should ensure that spiritual development is integrated into the whole of the person. In Scouting, a symbolic framework is a set of symbols which represent Scouting's educational proposal for a particular age range. The purpose of the symbolic framework is to build on young people's capacity for imagination, adventure, creativity and inventiveness in a way which stimulates their development and cohesiveness and solidarity within the group.

The **Team System** (peer group/patrol) provides Scouts with an environment outside their own family in which they learn to listen to and respect others. It offers young people opportunities to experience relationships, life together, authenticity, mutuality, sympathy, forgiveness, a sense of purpose and common vision, the quest for a spiritual reality/the invisible. The peer group also provides an opportunity for Scouts to make sense of their experience and express their beliefs in ways that are relevant to them. We need a small group of friends to have faith in the invisible for us and to pull us through.

An extension to the Team System requires a Scout to go beyond any racial, ethnic, religious and national difference to reach out to the other in a spirit of true brotherhood. The more we learn to live together through encounters (camping, Jamborees and other Scout events & activities), the truer and the more effective the values of openness, welcome, mutual respect and care, tolerance and solidarity mould our character. Spiritual growth is also an experience of being more human, a constant reaching out towards others, spontaneity of real life that ends up to be a bond of communion and family. At the heart of the Scout family what is essential emerges and is deepened. These encounters with other people are always a challenge to our minds and hearts, and there are encounters that influence us for the rest of our lives.

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Personal progression is the element concerned with helping each young person to develop the inner motivation to be consciously and actively involved in his or her own development. It enables the young person to progress in his or her own way at his or her own pace in the general direction of the educational objectives of which spiritual development is an integral part.

Life in nature presents the Scout with opportunities to experience the beauty and wonders of nature and recognise that there are some things that are beyond their control or comprehension. It also encourages Scouts to reflect on the harmful and beneficial effects of human interaction with nature and our responsibility to care for the natural world.

Adults support young people in their spiritual development by sharing with them their common quest. They are able to share their own experience of being "explorers of the invisible" and of some of the things that have helped to make sense of their own lives. Adults might also be important in indicating possible avenues of exploration for young people in their engagement with the spiritual heritage of their communities.

The interdependence of all elements of the Scout Method demonstrates how spiritual development is linked with Scouts identifying and sharing common values and trying together to improve their "common life".

Learning objectives

Some learning objectives for spiritual development within Scouting could help to clarify what it might look like in the context of the Youth Programme. They might be stated as follows:

A Scout is able to get along with and WELCOME others

- A Scout is able to welcome and respect others as brothers and sisters, while acknowledging differences in their religions, cultures, and ethnic groups
- A Scout is able to listen to others and to their experiences before making judgements about them
- A Scout is able to show compassion for the needs and humanity of others

A Scout understands and can WONDER at the natural world

- A Scout is sensitive to the wonders of nature and life
- A Scout is aware of the threats to the natural environment and his/her impact on the world around him
- A Scout is able to act responsibly in responding to the world around him/her
- A Scout is able to recognise that the natural world shows him something that is beyond himself/herself (a spiritual reality)

A Scout WORKS to create a more tolerant and caring society

- A Scout plays an active role in his/her community
- A Scout is able to share responsibility
- A Scout is able to cooperate with others to bring about improvements in society
- A Scout is able to discern and develop talents, acquire and improve his/her skills to enable him/her to better serve and live

A Scout has WISDOM: self-confidence and self-discipline

- A Scout is able to accept responsibility for his/herself and others
- A Scout is able to exercise self-discipline
- A Scout is able to draw conclusions for their personal life and to act upon them

A Scout recognises the need for prayer and WORSHIP*, for a spiritual response

- A Scout is able to explore the spiritual heritage of his or her own community and to use it in making sense of their past and present experiences
- A Scout is able to draw on the spiritual heritage of his or her community to express gratitude, need and sorrow

These will need specifying further for the different age groups, but in doing so the general principles of progressively more responsibility and deeper engagement can be applied.



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**Worship: The term "worship" does not quite say what we want to, but it does provide a way of remembering this aspect of spiritual development.*

Fostering spiritual development

The role of the leader as relating to the spiritual, is not primarily about leading religious ceremony, but is to help young people grow in spiritual development by reflecting on their experiences and living out its consequences. In that perspective:

- The Youth Programme should provide young people with a range of activities and encourage them to search for the meaning of things and of experiences, occurrences and events
- Activities should be fun and attractive. They should EXCITE, CHALLENGE AND MOTIVATE!
- Young people will look to the leader as a companion in the search for meaning more than as a source of authority
- Scout leaders should encourage young people to talk about / find a link between what they live during Scout activities and the values which are transmitted by their own "spiritual heritage"

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES



SCOUTS FROM AUSTRIA AND MONGOLIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM HELP RENOVATE A BUDDHIST TEMPLE

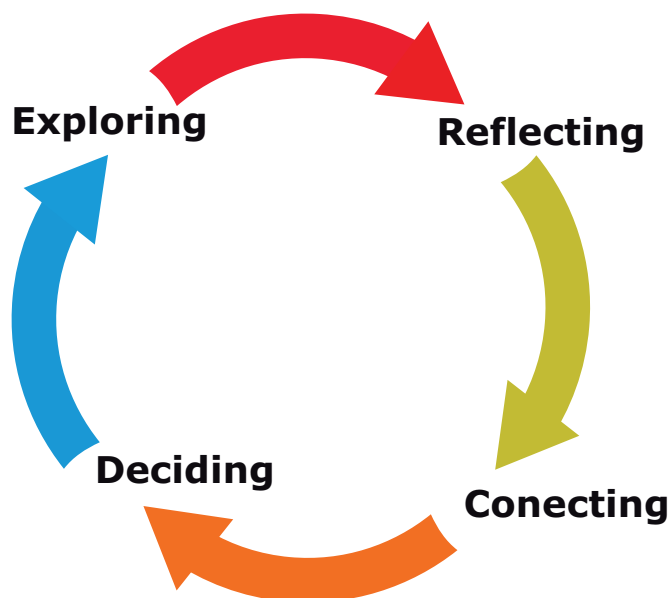
The World Buddhist Scout Brotherhood (WBSB) organises regular expeditions for Scouts to be able to explore and understand Buddhism. Some of the activities organised by WBSB are pilgrimages, expeditions, service projects and educational visits to places with historic references for Buddhism.

In this project 82 Rover Scouts and members of the Scout Network (UK) spent five days removing the old paint and then repainting the temple complex and helping construct a stone wall to replace a wooden fence. The project was organised by WBSB members from the UK and Mongolia who were taking part in the "3 Nations Expedition" co-ordinated by Lama Gankhuyag Magsarjav. A donation of over £1000 fundraised by participants was also given to the temple to help improve facilities.

WBSB believes that Lord Buddha's teachings that one should do good, think good thoughts and purify the mind are very much the same as Baden Powell's, who asks Scouts to develop compassion, strength of character, carry out good deeds and hold good thoughts.



In 2009, Rover Scouts from Mongolia, Austria and Scout Network members from the United Kingdom (UK), took part in a service project at the Manjushiri Temple in the town of Dzuunmod, 40km south of the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar. The temple (Khiid in Mongolian) was built in Dzuunmod as a replacement for the original Monastery which was destroyed by the Communist government in 1937.



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The learning cycle and spiritual development:

Scouts 'learn by doing', so it is important that spiritual development is incorporated into a learning cycle. This is shown in the diagram below, in four steps:

- Exploring
- Reflecting
- Connecting
- Deciding

PHASE 1

Exploring activities have learning objectives, intended purpose, or spiritual values. Scout leaders will need to do a prior reflection on activities while designing the activities within the Youth Programme , "What do we want young people to experience?" "What values may they experience and that can shape their character and life?"

PHASE 2

Reflecting on the experience provided by these activities and becoming an observer of our own thinking and acting so that we learn from the activities. When this is done in the light of Scout Law and values this will lead us to discover and share a spiritual meaning.

PHASE 3

Connecting – creating ideas and possibilities for action and rearranging them into new forms, in light of our reflection and our new insights.

PHASE 4

Deciding – choosing an approach and a method for action "here is the alternative that we choose to take and the reason why".

A Youth Programme should allocate a space and a moment of spiritual reflection at the end of activities for Scouts to reflect upon and share the spiritual dimension of what they have experienced throughout the day.

Part A - General principles



CHAPTER 3

THE SCOUT METHOD AND APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT, 'EXPLORING THE INVISIBLE'

"THE WHOLE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH OF THE [SCOUT] MOVEMENT CONSISTS IN HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE TRANSCEND THE MATERIAL WORLD AND GO IN SEARCH OF THE SPIRITUAL VALUES OF LIFE" (WOSM 1992:5).

Exploring the invisible

"A Scout, as you know, is generally a soldier who is chosen for his cleverness and pluck to go out in front of an army in war to find out where the enemy are, and report to the commander all about them.

"But besides war Scouts, there are also peace Scouts... They understand living out in jungles, and they can find their way anywhere, are able to read meaning from the smallest signs and foot-tracks, they know how to look after their health when far away from any doctors, are strong and plucky, and ready to face any danger, and always keen to help each other."

Scouting for Boys (Oxford, 2004: p13).

In this section we will work through the implications of the theme of "Explorers of the Invisible" for the provision of spiritual development within the Youth Programme of Scouting. Here are some aspects of exploration to better understand 'explorers of the invisible'.

Exploration involves going somewhere new

If Baden-Powell was writing this he might at this point include a yarn, perhaps the story of Abraham or Buddha who left their homelands to go to places far away. The key characteristic of exploration is the newness of the place, and the relative scarcity of information available. But notice that it is usually the newness of the place for the explorer themselves, rather than territory, that is completely unknown. In exploring, the young people experience something new and different that can bring them “somewhere new” and challenge their lives.

Exploration requires personal commitment

Exploration requires significant commitment to the project. No one can explore for me: the explorer is uniquely the one who undertakes the journey. This is perhaps how spiritual development in Scouting is distinguished from religious indoctrination. It requires that the person himself or herself engages with what is presented, with their experiences and with the beliefs of others. To say that we ourselves must explore is not, as we have already seen, to go it alone, but to ensure that we are fully present in the process.

Exploration needs an engagement with its discoveries and experiences

For a given discovery or reflected experience to lead to knowledge and to growth, it is necessary for it not to be endured passively but lived through concretely, actively and voluntarily. It should involve the intellect and also the inner self. It must be an opportunity for reflection and personal renewal.

Exploration has an effect on the explorer

The explorer is often changed by the journey: sometime they gain a new understanding of themselves; sometimes they commit to defending and protecting the environment they have found and the people they have met. Exploring the invisible will also change us.

Someone once described going on pilgrimage as a kind of spiritual bungee-jumping. The experience of many others who have engaged with the spiritual journey bears witness to its ability to transform us and our character. An essential requirement for the spiritual journey is that we are prepared to allow ourselves to be changed.





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Exploration requires appropriate training

While it is true that an infant explores its world and comes slowly to understand it without any specific training, this is not an approach we would recommend for exploration of the physical environment. We do not go to sea until we can sail. We do not try to climb a mountain until we have learned the basic climbing skills. It should be no surprise then to find that there are some skills than can help in exploring the invisible.

We can think of some of the most important skills in terms of the ability to encounter. Whether that is to encounter ourselves, others, the natural world or indeed God or a spiritual reality that is more than these. To encounter is to allow ourselves to be addressed by that which is before us. Just as Kim, the model of the Scout, learned to "notice small details and remember them" (Scouting for Boys p15) so the explorer of the invisible is able to look carefully and listen attentively so that nothing is lost. The idea of friendship can be useful here. Just as friends notice things about each other and are able to listen to what the other is really saying, so the explorer of the invisible is able to form friendships with themselves, others, the natural world and with God or a spiritual reality.

Explorers make use of maps and guides

Before setting out explorers carefully research their field. They seek out the experiences and knowledge of those who have been to that place or similar places before them. These might be recorded as maps or as guide books. No matter how detailed they may be, they are never fully comprehensive. There is always some question to be asked for which the answer cannot be found in a guide book, but the guide should still be consulted to find our way around and of things of special interest to look out for. Religions can be seen as representing the accumulated wisdom of previous "explorers of the invisible". They offer some maps and guides such as spiritual and sacred texts, the accounts of the lives and experiences of those who have meaningfully explored the invisible. For this reason, religions enable Scouts to enter into the "culture" of their religious tradition, help them to better enhance the experience of exploration.

Some religious traditions also speak of giving "food for the journey", and it can be useful to see some religious practices (such as prayers and meditation), rituals and symbols, body language, as part of the equipment and provisions that we carry with us for our exploration of the invisible.



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Exploration requires preparation and planning

Lastly, exploration is not the same as coming across things by accident. Exploration is a deliberate engagement that is carefully planned and prepared for. Spiritual development in Scouting is both exploration and preparation for exploration of the invisible that will go on throughout life. Scouts will be formed through their encounter with the invisible. We hope that the young men and women who leave our Movement will go on to be active citizens.

Exploration can be a life-long project

The most famous explorers can seem to be addicted to exploration. Exploring is what they do and the spirit of adventure an important part of who they are. Even into old age they are still actively searching for new adventures. Sometimes the new adventures are the relationships of marriage and family but they still call on the same spirit of wonder and enquiry into these new experiences and challenges. If Scouting is to be successful it must also leave its members with an enduring spirit of adventure and a desire to be active in seeking out new opportunities for personal growth and development, including their spiritual and religious development. Indeed, the adult who leaves Scouts will continue to grow and change through the rest of their lives, and many of the challenges of later life are more spiritual in their character. A sound approach to spiritual and religious development in Scouting can therefore well prepare Scouts for their adult life.



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Role and training of leaders

We can also make a few comments about the role of the Scout leader and what sort of training might be appropriate for that role. When we prepare our Scouts for exploration there are some generic skills that we can help them with. For more specialist skills we call on others to help us.

In exploring the invisible specialist skills and knowledge might include the practices of prayer or meditation, or first hand knowledge of a given faith or tradition. Some Scout leaders might also have specialist knowledge and there will be times when it is appropriate for them to use and pass them on in their Scouting.

The general skills for exploring the invisible are a spirit of adventure, some basic navigation skills, an ability to support planning, to find further resources and specialist advice and to indicate possibly profitable areas for exploration. There are all things which are best learned by ourselves being explorers of the invisible. As with planning an expedition the Scout leader becomes not a source of authority, , a fellow explorer, who will journey with Scouts, offer them appropriate encouragement, identify some sources of help which can be sought out and teach some basic skills.

As educators, all leaders should also have a basic knowledge of the framework and model for understanding spiritual development in a Scouting context.



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A leader's toolbox for exploring the invisible

In the light of the symbolic framework of exploring the invisible we would encourage leaders to bear the following tools in mind.

These are not the exclusive preserve of spiritual and religious development, but might have particular importance in this aspect of the Programme.

Use genuine experience

"Learning by doing" is one of the most valued elements of the Scout Method. The exploration of the invisible will be most fruitful when it relates to the experiences and concerns of the young people in the group. Sometimes a leader will need to suggest activities which might offer new experiences for their Scouts. Care should be taken not to presume that particular experiences will come with certain activities.

Encourage observation

This is the most natural activity that inquisitive young people carry out. Sometimes we need to learn to see things in new ways. Just as navigation can be broken down into different elements (direction, distance, timing) and allocated to different members of a group, so allocating specific observational tasks can help to develop new sensitivities. For example during the course of a game among Cub Scouts, some may pay more attention to those aspects involving the team as a whole, some to a single companion, some to their opponents, some to the rules of the game, and perhaps others even to the watchful eyes of the leader following the game in the field. Scouts should be encouraged to pay attention to the "unexpected" as much as the things they expected to see.

Making observations of quiet and stillness is a particular skill often associated with exploring the invisible. In such meditations participants can be invited to pay attention to the feelings in their body, their heart and breathing, their weight, the thoughts that come to mind and so on.

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES



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Every year over 4500 Scouts from the Saudi Arabian Boy Scouts Association come to Mecca to offer services to the pilgrims and to help the Hajj administration to ensure a smooth and efficient support to all pilgrims.

Scouts help by providing first aid to the injured, helping lost pilgrims to find their families, and support in organising health check-ups for pilgrims who turn ill. They check for cleanliness and follow up on public hygiene to ensure the healthiness of the pilgrims.

The Scouts interact with the pilgrims with a smile and offer support to especially those who are aged and needy. The annual service has attracted media persons to highlight Scouts and pilgrims have provided testimony for this. This has resulted in building a very impressive image of Scouts, not only with the visiting pilgrims, but also the Hajj administration, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its government.

SCOUTS OFFER SERVICES TO HAJ PILGRIMS IN MECCA, SAUDI ARABIA

The Hajj is the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca), Saudi Arabia. It is currently the largest annual pilgrimage in the world during which around 2 million Muslims visit the holy city. Hajj literally means "to set out for a place", for a Muslim that place is the holy city of Mecca.



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Feeling – value first impressions

Observing first impressions can be particularly valuable as to show us things about our own character. Once we realise how we normally react we can then seek to affirm or change that aspect of ourselves. This part of our hidden self is sometimes difficult to share with others and leaders can help by building supportive relationships within the group and providing opportunities to reflect on first impressions.

Acknowledge emotion and feeling

Learning to cope with emotions and feelings is an important part of growing into adulthood. Because they can seem overpowering and threatening they are often suppressed at first only to pop out in unexpected ways later on. Finding a spoken language can sometimes be difficult, but creative activities can often help young people to find ways to externalise their feelings in safe ways.

Encourage questioning

Spiritual and Religious Development is one of the most demanding aspects of the Scout Programme. Our spirituality is often the most precious part of ourselves and we cannot engage young people in spiritual and religious development without putting our own into question. For this reason it can be tempting to “squash” questioning and move on to safer and more practical matters. Time and courage are needed if we are to enable young people to ask the deeper questions such as “How can I understand this?”, “What must I do in response?”, “What sort of person am I, and who should I become?”

Part B - Specific guidelines



CHAPTER 4 SCOUTS' OWN

Understanding a Scouts' Own

A Scouts' Own is an important and often misunderstood part of Scout activities. It is neither a religious parade, nor a service, nor a ritual. This chapter is intended to help Scouts and leaders run effective Scouts' Owns by providing a definition of Scouts' Own:

Baden-Powell described a Scouts Own as "a gathering of Scouts for the worship of God and to promote fuller realisation of the Scout Law and Promise, but supplementary to, and not in substitution for, regular religious observances." (Aids to Scoutmastership (1919)).

"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." (The Scouter November 1928).

Let us take a look at what the definition means:

A Scouts Own is a **gathering of Scouts**. This can be in small or large groups. In smaller groups, Scouts are able to get involved, share their experiences, and see that spirituality is something that affects them, gives meaning and direction to their lives. In large groups Scouts can enjoy a collective experience, perhaps celebrating the shared values of Scouting and the impact this has on their lives.

"For the worship of God": Prayer, for Baden-Powell should be brief, come from the young people themselves and consist mainly in **saying thank you and in asking**. A Scouts' Own should provide an opportunity for Scouts to pray in this way to **seek wisdom and strength for greater love and service**, according to their own religious traditions. The best way of ensuring that their traditions are respected is to involve them closely in the planning of the Scouts' Own.

"For the full realization of the Scout Law": Scouting is primarily concerned with how people live out their beliefs in everyday life. Hence, a Scouts' Own should connect in some way to the **Scout Law**, the ethical code of Scouting. Usually, this is done by mentioning the Scout Law, making allusions to it, and/or including a recitation of the Law as part of the Scouts' Own. Some Scouts' Owns may simply include ethical content which the Scouts can connect to the Law themselves.

In all of this, what is distinctive is that it is done using other elements of the Scout method. Religious services themselves are often quite tightly structured: a Scouts' own on the other hand offers an opportunity to learn by doing in a manner most appropriate for the particular young people who are present.

Designing a Scouts' own

Scouts' Owns are made up of a combination of **stories** with a moral or spiritual message.

When telling a story or parable, one need not explain its meaning. A parable hides the truth from those who are listening until they are ready to understand it. The Scouts may be turned off by the moralizing instead of leaving thinking about the story, later to find meaning in it.

Reflection on the Scout Law and Promise may take the form of a yarn, story or short play, illustrating some aspect. If a talk is given this should be brief.

To help the Scouts concentrate on the Scouts' Own, it is a good idea to hold it in a special spot not usually used for other activities. Choosing a spot some distance from the camp site is beneficial in another way. At the end of the Scouts' Own, the group can file back to the camp in silence and walking with several paces between each person, allowing a time for silent contemplation of the topic of the Scouts' Own.

Scouts' Owns should be planned by Scouts or leaders. When planning a Scouts' Own, one can draw upon many sources for inspiration. Books of ancient wisdom, such as the Koran, the Christian Bible or other religious texts; children's stories; the writings of Baden-Powell; and the Jungle Book are all good sources.

Remember that a Scouts' Own does not need to fit any prescribed framework: one does not have to include a reading or a prayer if one does not want to. In fact, pointing out that what is being said is a prayer might distract the Scouts from the words.

If one is going to include a prayer, ensure that it is appropriate for those present. Prayers can be worded "We are thankful for..." instead of "We thank God for..." to get around the problem that many religions, such as Jainism and Buddhism, have no conception of God.

While it is important to set a Scouts' Own apart from the rest of the day, if one makes too big a deal of it, the Scouts may be distracted and the point is missed. The Scouts should gain the understanding that thinking about spiritual concepts is a normal part of life and should not be restricted to special places and times.



Scouts' own in open groups

Baden-Powell advised that "the Scouts' Own should be open to all denominations, and carried on in such manner as to offend none." (The Scouter November 1928) Typically this has been achieved by choosing elements which do not have a specific religious reference. Approaches to living together with people of different beliefs have changed in recent decades and it is now more widely recognised that a strictly neutral perspective cannot be found. There may be occasions when to adapt a text might misrepresent it, or itself be the cause of offence. It may then be better to involve young people in choosing a representative range of texts and ensuring that people are placed in the position of being able to think about them rather having to publicly agree with them.

Part B - Specific guidelines



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CHAPTER 5 INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN SCOUTING

"THROUGH THE BOY SCOUT AND GIRL GUIDE MOVEMENT WE HAVE ALREADY INSTITUTED...THE TRAINING OF YOUNG CITIZENS OF THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES TO THINK IN TERMS OF PEACE AND GOOD WILL TOWARDS EACH OTHER...WE HAVE NOW...YOUNG MEMBERS...ALL WORKING UNDER THE SAME SCOUT LAW AND IDEALS, LOOKING ON EACH OTHER AS BROTHER AND SISTER MEMBERS..." (CITIZENS OF THE WORLD, P.23).

"WE HAVE THE GREATEST NEWS IN THE WORLD, AND SHARING IT IS THE GREATEST KINDNESS WE CAN SHOW TO ANYONE. IT IS CRIMINAL TO KEEP SECRET THE WAY TO PEACE AND HARMONY, FORGIVENESS, PURPOSE, AND ETERNAL SALVATION." (RICK WARREN, PURPOSE DRIVEN, P284).

Education to peace and inter-religious dialogue

Religion & violence

World events have reported a plethora of scenes of religious violence, destruction of property and life. People can be members of communities subject to a long history of mutual contempt among religions and religious denominations, of religious coercion, strife and persecution.

On what basis do people of different faith commitments meet one another? How can we find a common basis for communication and cooperation on matters relevant to our moral and spiritual concern in spite of disagreement and differences? How can religion assume its real function in the achievement of personal wholeness and social coherence?



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Promoting dialogue and openness

While there is a clear need for a more detailed treatment of the nature of dialogue and of the role of Scouting in its promotion, we can make some preliminary observations.

Martin Buber, the philosopher of dialogue, argues that knowing someone is prior to knowing about them. Dialogue aims to bring us to a better knowledge of the other person. It was part of Baden-Powell's hope that knowing other Scouts as brothers/sisters would make them more reticent to go to war and help to create a better world order. Scouting itself should aspire to being a model society.

The Scout Method supports dialogue by forming people who are capable of meeting others and recognising that each person is unique and may be from a culture or religion different to their own. . It does so by creating a spirit of open enquiry, by freeing people from the emotional need which prejudice supplies, by helping them find a good enough understanding of their own belief so as to not be threatened by the beliefs of others, by providing opportunities for meeting other people as brothers and sisters, by providing opportunities to encounter the other in action and working together on a common project.

In Scouting's first centenary the dialogue required was between people of different countries and nations. At the start of its second the need is for dialogue and encounter between people of different beliefs and world views, including of different religions.

Scouts are not necessarily trained in explaining their own faith or belief. They are, however, capable of explaining themselves, what is important to them, and what brings richness and meaning to their lives. And this is sufficient for promoting peace through inter-religious dialogue in Scouting, for it is more important that people are respected than that systems of faith and beliefs are understood.

National and international Scout events, and world events in particular offer privileged moments of dialogue and encounter. The most important of these are when Scouts live alongside each other and experience shared life on camp and see at first hand how faith and beliefs impact the lives of their fellow Scouts. At shared meals and through shared activities and experiences, they are able to ask questions of one another in an informal and appropriate manner.

Such events also offer the opportunity for more structured workshops in which Scouts can explore different religious traditions and possibly also come to a better understanding of their own. While Scouting can do this only through its links with faith communities it should ensure that such workshops fully benefit from the sound application of the Scout Method.

The collaboration of the different religious groups present within Scouting (through the World Scout Inter-religious Forum in particular) offers a means for the progressive development of trust between them and of good practice in the educational programme.

This group builds on the examples of good practice in countries and events where young people of different religions come together through Scouting. In many countries there is a great diversity of religions present in local communities and often Scout associations are working to extend Scouting to all members of the community.

Learning to live in harmony with others: Code of practices

In order for Scouts to experience a fruitful and meaningful encounter, and build good relationship with young people from different faith communities, the following guidelines, developed by the Interfaith Network for the UK can be helpful:

- Respecting other people's freedom within the law to express their beliefs and convictions;
- Learning to understand what others actually believe and value, and letting them express this in their own terms;
- Respecting the convictions of others about food, dress and social etiquette and not behaving in ways which cause needless offence;
- Recognising that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our own traditions and never comparing our own ideals with other people's practices;
- Working to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict; and
- Always seeking to avoid violence of words and attitudes in our relationships.

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES



'ALL FAITHS PRAYER', A REGULAR FEATURE IN SCOUT EVENTS IN INDIA

The Bharat Scouts and Guides (BS&G), India, is open to people of all faiths, beliefs and religions. All activities start with a prayer and end with one. An inclusive Scout prayer song is used for this purpose. The prayer is addressed the Almighty without reference to any particular faith/religion. Besides the Scout prayer song, to promote one's own faith and to build respect for all religions, an 'All Faiths Prayer' ceremony is organised in all events, activities, camps and courses, held at different levels (Group, local area, district, state and national). Whatever be the nature of the event, a time slot is always earmarked for the 'All Faiths Prayer'.

The 'All Faiths Prayer' accommodates prayers of all religions and with respect to all faiths & beliefs that are present in the gathering. Normally the following elements are part of the ceremony:

- A Vedic (Hindu) hymn or prayer in Sanskrit.
- Members belonging to other faiths, beliefs and religions either read from their sacred books or share a prayer/hymn/song.
- An integrating element where songs which inspire living together in harmony are sung in English, Hindi and regional languages.
- The ceremony ends with a chanting calling for peace for all.

'All Faiths Prayer' ceremonies are conducted by BS&G, not only to support spiritual and religious development of its members, but also to create awareness on respecting different religious practices, leading to peace and harmony, and to build a sense of compassion and mutual trust between members belonging to different faiths, beliefs and religions.



When we talk about matters of faith with one another, we need to do so with sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness. This means:

- Recognising that listening as well as speaking is necessary for a genuine conversation;
- Being honest about our beliefs and religious allegiances;
- Not misrepresenting or disparaging other people's beliefs and practices;
- Correcting misunderstanding or misrepresentations not only of our own but also of other faiths whenever we come across them;
- Being straightforward about our intentions; and
- Accepting that in formal inter faith meetings there is a particular responsibility to ensure that the religious commitment of all those who are present will be respected.

All of us want others to understand and respect our views. Some people will also want to persuade others to join their faith. In a multi-faith society where this is permitted, the attempt should always be characterised by self-restraint and a concern for the other's freedom and dignity. This means:

- Respecting another person's expressed wish to be left alone;
- Avoiding imposing ourselves and our views on individuals or communities who are in vulnerable situations in ways which exploit these;
- Avoiding proselytism and respecting others when they feel religious body language or rituals negate the essence of their faith;
- Being sensitive and courteous;
- Avoiding violent action or language, threats, manipulation, improper inducements, or the misuse of any kind of power; and
- Respecting the right of others to disagree with us in a gentle and respectful way.



Living and working together is not always easy. Religion harnesses deep emotions which can sometimes take destructive forms. Where this happens, we must draw on our faith to bring about reconciliation and understanding. The truest fruits of religion are healing and positive. We have a great deal to learn from one another which can enrich us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.

The shared values embodied in the Law and Promise provide a basis for living and working together as Scouts. From this basis we can explore our differences and work towards a deeper understanding of each other. These shared values and a commitment to building a more peaceful world make Scouting a privileged place for inter-religious dialogue.

Part B - Specific guidelines



CHAPTER 6

SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT AT LARGE SCOUT EVENTS

Introduction

The specific presence of spiritual and religious development as part of the programme for international events expresses the desire to ensure that participants are given the opportunity to develop spiritually as well as physically, intellectually, and socially through their participation.

The programme for the spiritual development of participants will need to take account of the specific spiritual development needs of participants and the rich diversity of faith communities represented. It will be important not to make assumptions about religious observance within different groups and also to balance respecting the freedom of individuals with respecting religious traditions and practices.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The spiritual and religious development programme (SRDP) aims to help participants to develop spiritually as well as physically and socially through their participation in the event. In particular the following more detailed aims can be stated. These are intended as supplementary to the wider learning objectives for spiritual and religious development – contained in the section outlining the objectives for the 5 'W's: Welcome, Wonder, Work, Wisdom and Worship.



The spiritual and religious development programme aims to help participants to:

- a) identify ways in which they can develop their relationship with God or with the spiritual dimension;
- b) develop their relationship with God or the spiritual dimension;
- c) recognise the benefit of having a personal faith or a relationship with a spiritual dimension;
- d) state scouting values, demonstrate their commitment to them and accept them as a code of conduct for life;
- e) discover how faith and spiritual beliefs impact on individual lives;
- f) articulate their own faith or spiritual beliefs; and
- g) respect the faith and beliefs of others.

The spiritual and religious development programme will typically offer participants:

- a) the opportunity for reflection on their experiences and to express that reflection;
- b) the ability to maintain their own religious observance during the event;
- c) the opportunity to experience some of the cultural heritage represented by faith traditions and human creativity;
- d) a deeper understanding of the Scout Law and Promise as a rule of life; and
- e) a deeper understanding and respect of their own and other faith traditions and spiritual beliefs.

METHOD

The Scout method suggests that SRDP will be enjoyable and active, involve making choices and taking responsibility. It will support the development of character and the skills and knowledge related to the spiritual side of life. SRDP will also involve, but not be confined to, sharing in reflection, prayer and worship. It will also take into account the variety of ages, dispositions and faith experience of the participants in such a way as to provide a range of activities accessible and stimulating for all.

PRINCIPLES

The understanding of faith and spiritual beliefs which underpins SRDP is set out in Scouting and Spiritual Development . Spiritual Development can be defined as:

- Acquiring a deeper knowledge and understanding of the spiritual heritage of one's own community,
- discovering the Spiritual Reality which gives meaning to life and
- drawing conclusions for one's daily life,
- whilst respecting the spiritual choices of others.

SRDP aims to use the Scout Method to give participants the opportunity to access spiritual heritage and to find meaning in their experiences.

SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS

It is likely that those participating in large scale national or international events will include:

- Scouts who are not particularly engaged with a religious tradition
- Scouts with a religious faith of some form (to a greater or lesser extent)
- Scouts seeking to deepen a fundamentally religious response through their Scouting

A sound Spiritual and Religious Development Programme will need to address the needs of all of these groups.

Programme

Even though spiritual and religious development is an integral part of the programme and is present in all true Scouting, the present globalised culture suggests that SRDP should have a clear and specific identity. It might therefore include a number of the following elements.

WORKSHOPS

These should be part of the programme provision of the event, and could usefully be organised in parallel with those provided by NSOs and NGOs.

They might include participation from faith communities such as Buddhism, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and Won Buddhism. These might be drawn from international and/or local groups.

Workshop bases might include activities, a good quality display and a space for prayer and reflection. The experience for participants will be better with more people doing each activities. The number and scale of workshops should be planned in the same way as the rest of the programme.

It may be necessary to treat staff as “specialists” when recruiting. It is unlikely that the general staff will have the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver a wide enough programme.

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES



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WORLD SCOUT INTER-RELIGIOUS FORUM AND THE WORLD SCOUT INTER-RELIGIOUS SYMPOSIUM

World Scout Inter-religious Forum (WSIF) is an informal group of representatives from the different faith communities present in Scouting. This group has been very active over a number of years, providing activities that help young people to explore aspects of faith at large events, particularly at the World Scout Jamborees.

WSIF members meet annually to coordinate their work. They also support and provide technical advices to World Scouting regarding matters of religious and spiritual importance to the movement. WSIF members also contribute to various resources and publications developed by World Scouting in the area of Spiritual and Religious development.

Every three years, the WSIF organises a World Scout Inter-religious Symposium (WSIF) to promote inter-religious and inter-faith dialogue in Scouting.

Member organisations under WSIF are making valuable contributions to strengthening the quality of spirituality in Scouting and working for peace and global understanding through their inter-religious and inter-faith activities.

RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR REFLECTION

Some material should be prepared for participants to assist with reflection which could include thoughts, stories, reading, prayers, activities and pictures. These might draw on both religious and non-religious traditions. Those produced for the World Scout Jamborees ("Explorers of the Invisible" in Thailand 2003, and "Time to Think" in UK 2007). Some guidelines should be provided on how these texts might be used.

SCOUTS OWNS

Scouts Owns are an opportunity for Scouts to come together to reflect on the Law and Promise. There are specific guidelines which deal with these. At large events they could usefully draw on the production skills of those supervising other main stage events.

RELIGIOUS ASSEMBLIES

Many faith traditions gather on particular days, and it is expected that this should be possible at large scale national or international Scout events. Experience suggests that prior preparation and timetabling of these both reassures participants and improves the quality of the gatherings. Breakfast time or evening often provide the best balance of provision against impact on the wider programme.

Faith communities are asked to:

- Encourage participation and hospitality;
- Ensure youth participation and responsibility;
- Remember that there may be people there who are not used to prayer or worship in that tradition;
- Remember the multi-lingual nature of a international events;

Provision for the following will need to be considered for most events, but should not be presumed to be exhaustive:

- Mass (Catholic),
- Divine Liturgy (Orthodox),
- Worship (Christian),
- Jumaa Prayer (Friday lunch time),
- Kabalat Shabbat (Friday evening).

There are separate guidelines below for interreligious / interfaith ceremonies.

CAMP LIFE

Camp life is the primary area in which new relationships are formed and reflection can take place. Living together is also the main place in which Scouts experience the different beliefs and values of their peers and is therefore the primary place for interreligious dialogue.

Provision might be considered for quiet areas which allow the physical space for reflection and personal prayer. These areas would benefit from being suitably equipped and possibly staffed.

It is important that the organisers ensure that participants can continue their normal religious observance during Scout events. Particular consideration should be given to dietary needs, timing considerations, and washing facilities in addition to ensuring opportunities for prayer and meditation. Both contingent leaders and religious bodies should be consulted in planning these.





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INTERFAITH CEREMONY AT LARGE SCOUT EVENTS

An Interfaith Ceremony is a type of Scouts' Own and at a large Scout event can be an important public sign of the willingness of faith communities to work together in Scouting. As an educational activity it is directed more at strengthening the disposition to work together than at developing knowledge of other traditions. It can, however, provide additional stimulus for reflection on the Scout Law and Promise.

- **Do** apply the Scout Method in planning the ceremony.
- **Do** ensure the ceremony is youth led. The participation of religious leaders is not generally expected.
- **Do** appreciate the participation which takes place in the form of reflection on experience assisted by what is presented in the ceremony.
- **Do** use specifically religious elements, specific to identifiable traditions. The aim is richness in diversity rather than a common form. As participation of others is not expected, adjustments need not be made to their form. Thus terms such as Allah and Jesus may be retained.
- **Do** guide content by the question: "What is the message of this religious tradition to humanity on this theme?"
- **Do** take extreme care in asking participants to join in with prayers or actions. This may only be done when the text and meaning is acceptable to all. However note that all texts are value laden and reflect a particular view point and care should be taken not to presume that way is expressed is acceptable.
- **Do** take care in the choice of symbols for common action.
- **Do** invite people to join in only as they feel comfortable.
- **Do** obtain accurate translations of all content to ensure appropriateness.
- **Don't** use an Interreligious Ceremony as a time of shared prayer.
- **Don't** presume what others believe or how they will react.
- **Don't** pray on behalf of others. Prayers may be recited, including prayers for the good of others, but not in such a way as implicates them in the petition.
- **Don't** use the ceremony as an opportunity for proselytisation.
- **Don't** simply declare a religious belief. While a profession of faith may be required in some religions it should be clear that this is personal and should not be the main content of any particular intervention.
- **Don't** explain everything: in the same way as a joke is not funny if it has to be explained, so a symbol is stripped of its power if it needs explanation. Words and actions word together should normally suffice.
- **Don't** let the ceremony be over long.

References & Websites

References

Thanks to:

- The World Scout Inter-Religious Forum
- The Interfaith Network for the UK
- The Scout Association, UK

Websites

www.scout.org/spiritual

www.scout.org/wsis



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World Scout Bureau
Rue du Pré-Jérôme 5
PO Box 91
CH – 1211 Geneva 4 Plainpalais
Switzerland

Tel.: (+ 41 22) 705 10 10
Fax: (+ 41 22) 705 10 20

worldbureau@scout.org
scout.org