

Scouting in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED 1) TO DESCRIBE VARIOUS SCOUTING POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (LDS) FOR COUNCIL AND DISTRICT LEADERS, 2) TO HELP FELLOW SCOUTERS BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW LDS SCOUTING UNITS FUNCTION, AND 3) TO BE A REFERENCE FOR LDS SCOUTERS.

HOW THE CHURCH PARTNERS WITH SCOUTING A good example of how the Church partners with Scouting is by comparing Sunday church meetings to a chemistry class and Scouting to a chemistry laboratory. A concept is taught by priesthood leaders on Sunday and, by partnering with Scouting, the success of the Sunday teaching can be tried in the Scouting laboratory during the week. In other words, trustworthiness can be taught in a church meeting and the Scout is given an opportunity demonstrate his trustworthiness practice while involved in rank advancement and camping with his Scout unit. The next Sunday gives the Scouting leader, also his priesthood leader, another opportunity to reinforce the previous Sunday's teaching and the Scouting implementation opportunity. If there is any disconnect, the round of Sunday teaching and Scouting can continue until the principle is implemented in the life of our youth.

Additionally, besides the support of the ward, there is a group of leaders at the stake level to assist ward leaders with Scouting. "The counselor in the stake presidency who is the chairman of the stake Aaronic Priesthood committee...sees that Scouting is organized and functioning in the stake and develops a positive working relationship with the Boy Scouts of America." [LDS] Scouting Handbook

OUR SCOUTING HERITAGE The Young Men Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA or MIA) was organized June 10, 1875 under the direction of Brigham Young, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ("LDS" or "Church"). Its purpose was to provide activities, particularly along spiritual and cultural lines, for the young men of the Church. Later, athletics were included in the program. As news of the organization of the Boy Scouts of England in 1909 and the Boy Scouts of America in 1910 was received by Church leaders, the Scouting idea was investigated by the Athletic Committee of the YMMIA. On November 29, 1911, the MIA Scouts were officially recognized by the General Board of the YMMIA. The MIA Scouts, upon invitation from the National (BSA) Council, became a part of the Boy Scouts of America by official action of the National Council's Executive Board on May 2, 1913. The National Charter was issued to the Church on May 21, 1913, which became the official date of entry of the MIA Scouts into the National BSA organization.

SIZE OF SCOUTING IN THE CHURCH According to the BSA Relationships Division, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is #1 in units (34,954) - - this is an increase of 595 Scouting units over 2003. For the year ending December 31, 2004, the Church is #1 in youth membership (401,769) again. There are also 200,605 adults registered.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON LDS SCOUTING

- The [LDS] *Scouting Handbook* (revised 6/97) should be followed by members of the Church.
- Another excellent source is *On My Honor: A Guide to Scouting in the Church* by Thane J. Packer. ISBN 1-57008-439-4.
- "Scouting in the LDS Church" is traditionally offered as a class at an annual University of Scouting.
- For more information, see www.LDS-Scouts.org, www.mormon.org and www.lds.org

STANDARD IDENTIFICATION It is advantageous to have all LDS Scouting units identified on their charters and rechartering documents with LDS initials followed by the name of the ward and the stake, i.e., LDS Lake Villa 1 Ward, Buffalo Grove Illinois Stake.

DUTY TO GOD AWARD Elder F. Melvin Hammond stated:

"Our effort was to find something that would be compatible with priesthood principles and also with Scouting. Duty to God embraces Scouting, which is wonderful for our young men. I see no conflict at all between Duty to God and Scouting. Duty to God focuses more on the spiritual -- bringing young men to Christ. Scouting is primarily an activity program with some spirituality as well. They are complementary to one another." *The Ensign*, January 2002, p. 9



There are "crossovers" that link Scouting advancement requirements and Duty to God Award requirements on www.LDS-Scouts.org - see the Resources area.

SERVICE ON DISTRICT & COUNCIL LEVELS It is critical that Latter-day Saints do their fair share by being involved in district and council Scouting. The *LDS Scouting Handbook* (p. 1) states: "Priesthood leaders may participate as volunteers in district and council Scouting committees and activities to solidify relationships between Scouting and the Church. In every instance, leaders should do everything possible within Church policies to create good will, mutual understanding, and cooperation between the two partners."

KEY SCOUT LEADERS MEETING This meeting can save significant time coordinating multiple Scouting units sponsored by one chartered organization (ward). In the BSA FastStart videotape and Viewer's Guide (BSA Nos. AV-034 and AV-034VG) the Chartered Organization Representative (COR) is shown meeting with Scouting leaders to discuss transitions, policy issues, service projects, etc. This monthly meeting is to last no more than one hour and is usually followed by individual Scouting unit committee meetings.

KEEPING CURRENT WITH REGISTRATIONS In a March 17, 1999 letter sent to "General Authorities and the following leaders in the United States: Area Authority Seventies; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops and Branch Presidents" Elder Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles states, "All adults called to serve in Church Scouting should be worthy and exemplify gospel living. Please be sure that the current membership record of each member called to serve in the Scouting program is in the local unit. Also ensure that all Scout leaders are registered with the Boy Scouts of America *before* they begin their service." The directive to have all adults registered prior to serving was also emphasized by President Thomas S. Monson during a recent Priesthood Session of General Conference. To help with this process of prompt registration of both adults and youth, stakes can have money deposited with the Local Council. Individuals do not need to be members of the Church to register and serve with or attend LDS Scouting units. All are welcome!

CLARIFICATION ON COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS

The BSA has been sensitive to LDS needs and usually turns to LDS leaders for recommendations of individuals to serve as commissioners for LDS Scouting units. An old *Bulletin* (1991-1) reiterated the policy. It stated: Voluntary service as a commissioner in Boy Scouts of America comes only at the invitation of local district or council personnel of Boy Scouts of America. Bishops or stake presidents do not call Church members to serve in district or council positions, including any position of commissioner.

THE FOUR T's During a local Priesthood Conference on Scouting (May 1996), Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone introduced his four T's. The four T's are: Testimony, Training, Time, and Tenure. Ask a LDS Scouter or church leader for a more full explanation.

TRAINING The *LDS Scouting Handbook* places an increased responsibility on Church leadership, both stake and ward, to train LDS Scouting leaders. This means that the stake and ward leaders need to know the Scouting program and must be trained themselves. Each stake, and hopefully ward, should have a complete FastStart videotape series --- including the Venturing videotapes. Additionally, the Boy Scouts of America sponsors Basic Training and other courses to help leaders learn Scouting methods and skills. Scouting leaders may enroll in these courses to supplement training from local priesthood leaders. However, Church leaders should not participate in Scout training such as Basic Training or Wood Badge on the Sabbath, or overnight camping that includes mixed groups of men and women, whether adults or youth, unless it is a family camp. In all cases in which funds may be expended for training, priesthood leaders should ensure that *Budget Allowance Guidelines* for the local unit are followed. *LDS Scouting Handbook* (1997), p. 1

ROUNDTABLE ATTENDANCE While BSA basic training and supplemental Church training is an excellent foundation, monthly roundtables for Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, and Venturing adult leaders are excellent sources to renew skills and learn about district/council events. Monthly Venturing roundtables may not be available in each district, thus LDS Venturing leaders should attend the optional "area" Venturing roundtables.

FRIENDS OF SCOUTING The *LDS Local Unit Budget Allowance Guidelines* emphasize that "Stake presidents and bishops should ensure that all friends of Scouting fully understand the need and benefit of supporting this activity and provide them with the opportunity to contribute." The Friends of Scouting (FOS) campaign should stand alone. It should not be associated with any other solicitation for funds.

ORDER OF THE ARROW The Order of the Arrow (OA) is an activity that supports the teachings of the Church regarding cheerful service and brotherhood, and membership is encouraged by the Church. Not only should troops and teams hold elections for their youth, but adults should be recommended for membership and participate as well. Each troop and team should have an active "OA Troop/Team Representative." PLEASE encourage all Arrowmen to keep their lodge dues current.

ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD SCOUTS This LDS patrol is known as a "New Scout patrol" in Scouting nomenclature. Both the ward Primary presidency and the Scoutmaster have responsibility for this age group. There is an official BSA uniform patch for leaders of eleven-year-old boys, which is available at the Church Distribution Centers (Item #33234000).

TIGER CUBS One difference between LDS and non-LDS Scouting is the Tiger Cub program. The Church has not adopted the Tiger Cub program as part of its activities for Primary-age boys, who do not start Cub Scouting until their eighth birthday.

ADVANCEMENT Boys in LDS Units advance on their birthday. When a boy turns eight he joins the Pack's Wolf Den. On his ninth birthday he joins the Bear Den. At ten he joins the Webelos Den where he has one year to earn both his Webelos badge and the Arrow of Light. At eleven he joins an EYOS patrol under the direction of the Primary. When the boy turns twelve he continues in the Troop but moves into the patrol for 12 and 13 year old boys. The Varsity Team is open to boys 14 and 15 and the Venturer Crew is for young men age 16 until they graduate from High School.

MONDAY NIGHT ACTIVITIES In a letter to "members of the Church throughout the World," the First Presidency stated:

Monday nights are reserved throughout the Church for family home evenings. We encourage members to set aside this time to strengthen family ties and teach the gospel in their homes...Where practical, members may also want to encourage community and school leaders to avoid scheduling activities on Monday evenings that require children or parents to be away from their homes. Church buildings and facilities should be closed on Monday evenings. No ward or stake activities should be planned, and other interruptions to family home evenings should be avoided.

LDS Scouters should participate actively in their district and/or the council, thus gaining the respect of others so that Mondays will be freed for Family Home Evenings.

OVERNIGHT CAMPING Cub Scouts including WEBELOS do not participate in overnight camping. Eleven Year Old Scouts (EYOS) do not participate in week long summer camp. However they should participate on three one-night camping experiences. EYOS do NOT camp with the Boy Scout Troop.

VALUABLE QUOTES

"There is no religious side to the Movement. The whole of it is based on religion, that is, on the realisation and service of God." Lord Baden-Powell

"The promise of the Scout Oath and the twelve points of Scout Law prepare young men for the 21st century." President Gordon B. Hinckley

"Scouting is an excellent program which develops character in young men. I am grateful for the influence of Scouting in my life and the lives of my sons and grandsons." President James E. Faust

"Scouting adds adventure to quorum programs." Thane J. Packer

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DEFINITIONS

WARD A local Church unit under the direction of a bishop, usually consisting of approximately 500 Church members.

STAKE A number of wards, usually six to twelve, organized under the direction of a stake president.

PRIMARY An organization within the Church for children under twelve years of age. Primary is responsible for Cub Scouts and the Eleven-year-old Scout patrol.

AARONIC PRIESTHOOD A priesthood to which worthy LDS young men are ordained beginning at age twelve.

BISHOP A lay clergyman presiding over a ward. The Church has no paid clergy. The bishop is also the Institutional Head for Scouting purposes.

MORMON Another name for a Latter-day Saint. Members of the Church are sometimes called Mormons, because of *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*, which is used as scripture in addition to *The Holy Bible*.

LDS SCOUTING AREA RELATIONSHIPS COMMITTEE The proper name for the LDS Scouting Committee. It was established "Under the direction of the Area Presidency."

EYOS and VARSITY LEADER SPECIFIC TRAINING may need to be scheduled by the stake.