

Scouting and the LDS Church

- Of the five principle responsibilities given a bishop, the one listed first is president of the Aaronic Priesthood. This stewardship has many facets, not the least of which is for the development of the young men in the ward.

“Members of the bishopric watch over and nurture young men and young women in the ward. They help Aaronic Priesthood holders accomplish the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood.”

-Church Handbook of Instructions
Ward Administration
Book 1, Chapter 3, page 11
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

- How the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood and Primary are to be accomplished is further defined. Scouting is the approved activity program for the young men and boys in the Church.

“Scouting

In areas where the Church has approved affiliation with Scouting, the Church endorses and sponsors Scouting for young men. Scouting should be used to support the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood and help young men put into practice the gospel principles they learn on Sunday.

-Church Handbook of Instructions
Aaronic Priesthood
Book 2, Chapter 2, page 187
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

“Scouting

In areas where the Church has approved affiliation with Scouting, the Church endorses and sponsors Scouting for boys ages 8 through 11. Scouting should be used to support the purpose of Primary by helping boys put into practice the gospel principles they learn on Sunday and by preparing them to receive the priesthood.

-Church Handbook of Instructions
Aaronic Priesthood
Book 2, Chapter 5, page 237
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

- Typically, the Bishop assigns this responsibility to one of his counselors.

“Ward Leaders’ Responsibilities for Scouting

The Bishop

...The bishop is responsible to provide general direction for Scouting and ensure that it is properly organized and functioning.

Bishop’s Counselors

The bishop’s counselors help the bishop by overseeing the Scouting programs for eight-, nine-, ten-, and eleven-year-old boys and the Aaronic Priesthood quorums. Under the bishop’s direction, counselors should see that the various Scouting programs are organized as needed and that adult leaders are called and trained.

Relationships with the Boy Scouts of America

The bishop assigns one of his counselors or another worthy adult to serve as the ward’s representative to the Scout district or council. The leader works with the District Commissioners or District Executive assigned to the ward to-

- *Register participants and ensure that all Scouts and leaders are registered.*
- *Encourage well-planned programs.*
- *Assist boys and young men in achieving progress in Scouting.*
- *Inform Aaronic Priesthood and Primary leaders of meetings or training opportunities.*
- *Help organize a committee for each Scouting age group in the ward.*
- *Encourage unit leaders and committee members to participate in Scout training.*
- *Help provide recognition for boys, young men and their leaders.”*

-Scouting Handbook
page 2
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

- The stake presidency also has a responsibility for Scouting in the Church.

“The Stake Presidency

The counselor in the stake presidency who is the chairman of the stake Aaronic Priesthood committee directs the stake’s youth programs under the direction of the stake president. He sees that Scouting is organized and functioning in the stake and develops a positive working relationship with the Boy Scouts of America.”

-Scouting Handbook
page 2
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

- Scouting, by Congressional charter, must team with a partner in the community to deliver its program.

“That the purpose of this corporation shall be to promote, through organization and cooperation with other agencies, the ability of boys to do things for themselves and others, to train them in Scoutcraft, and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues, using the methods which are now in common use by Boy Scouts.”

-Sec. 3, federal charter, Boy Scouts of America
June 15, 1916, by the United States Congress

- The LDS Church, Scouting’s original and oldest partner, fully supports and endorses this relationship.

“The Partnership Relationship

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.”

-Scouting Handbook
page 2
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

- Each year, through the re-chartering process, the Church and the BSA renew the terms of their partnership.

“Why have we adopted Scouting? We were the first religious body to adopt Scouting as a part of the youth program of the Church. Some two and one-half years after Scouting came to America, it was made an official part of the program of the Church.

Someone has said that it isn't mentioned in the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and of course that is true. Neither is the Primary nor the Sunday School, but one of our Articles of Faith clearly indicates that "if there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (Article of Faith 13). Scouting is a help. It is a tool in achieving the objective of the building of real men. It helps to build character. It trains for citizenship. It helps to build leadership. It helps to prepare people to live in a wholesome manner, in a full and enjoyable manner here in this life, and prepares them for the life to come.”

-President Ezra Taft Benson
Eagle Recognition Banquet
Logan, Utah, 22 March 1974

- One element of that agreement is for the chartered organization (the Church) to appoint someone from within the sponsoring organization who will serve as the Chartered Organization Representative (COR).

“The chartered organization agrees to...appoint a chartered organization representative who is a member of the organization, will represent it to the Scouting district, and will serve as a voting member of the local council.”

-The Chartered Organization Representative
page 11
Boy Scouts of America

- While they have several duties, one of the duties of the COR is to participate in the district as a district officer or on a district committee.

“As chartered organization representative, you hold a key position in Scouting. While much honor is attached to the position, it is not an honorary one. There is work to it, important work. Whatever time and talent you invest will come back to you a hundredfold in satisfaction.

Your responsibilities fall into the following three areas:

1. *You head the “Scouting department” in your organization and are responsible for the success of its Scouting units.*
2. *You represent your organization as a voting member of the BSA local council, the overall governing body of the local Scouting organization.*
3. *You are a voting member of the district committee where your chartered organization is located and you are encouraged to serve as needed as may be agreed, as a member of one of the district committee’s committees. Regularly, chartered organization representatives are invited to report to the district on the “state of the program” within their units. This is also a good time for the chartered organization representative to request any needed support.”*

*-The Chartered Organization Representative
page 2
Boy Scouts of America*

- There are a variety of opportunities for service within the various district committees. Please note that district committee positions in and of themselves are not Church callings. Committee members and officers are chosen by common consent of the district board. District committee members are registered with the Boy Scouts of America in addition to their unit positions and are expected to participate in training for their district duties.

Standing committees include:

1. Finance –raises funds through the Friends of Scouting (FOS) campaign to support the council
 2. Membership –recruits new members and leaders.
 3. Leadership Training –conducts training courses instructing unit leaders on Scouting methods and policies
 4. Camping –promotes camping and manages camp facilities
 5. Activities and Service –plans and sponsors district activities and service projects
- In addition to the committees, the district has a commissioner staff. Commissioners exist to serve units and help promote quality Scouting within the district. While the district committee focuses on district operations, Commissioners focus on individual Scouting units.

A COR represents the unit to the district, the commissioner represents the district to the unit. Together, they form the communication link between Scouting and the Church. A commissioner is a district position and is someone from outside of the Scouting unit. In Scouting. The commissioner is not “called” by a Church authority. The District Commissioner recruits unit Commissioners. A unit commissioner’s duties closely parallel those of the bishop’s counselor’s over Scouting.

*The unit commissioner is a generalist whose passionate overriding mission in Scouting is to **help other units succeed**. Specific responsibilities include:*

1. *Facilitate the on-time annual charter renewal of all assigned units.*
2. *Know each phase of the Scouting program and be able to describe what each is and how each works. Review Scouting program literature.*
3. *See that the unit leadership participates in adequate training.*
4. *Work to assure effective and active unit committees.*
5. *Involve unit leaders in roundtable.*
6. *Help each unit earn the Quality Unit Award.*
7. *Make certain proper techniques are used to select and recruit unit leaders.*

8. *Know the district and council.*
9. *Visit unit meetings. Visit regularly with the unit leader.*
10. *Continue to grow as a commissioner through training, experience, and consultation with others in the district. Set the example.*

-Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service
pages 13-14
Boy Scouts of America

- The belief that Scouting is an ineffective, out-dated, uninspiring program doggedly persists. When properly applied, it is a wonderfully powerful tool for developing men; exactly the kind of men that our Heavenly Father desires them to be. The responsibility for delivering such a program lies with us, the priesthood leaders. President Ezra Taft Benson was one of the strongest and most influential leaders the Scouting movement has ever seen. Not surprisingly, he spoke out many times on Scouting as a Church leader.

"Where Scouting is available, please understand that this is not an optional program. Make certain priesthood leaders in your regions understand this. It is an economically, socially, and spiritually sound program. It builds men of character and spirituality and trains them for citizen and leadership responsibility. Scouting teaches a boy to take care of himself and stand on his own two feet. It is an inspired program for a demanding time. This is that time!"

-President Ezra Taft Benson
"How to Be an Effective Regional Representative"
Regional Representatives Seminar
Salt Lake City, Utah, 31 March 1978

"Scouting helps prepare boys for Church responsibility. If this were not true, we would drop the program tomorrow, because we want these boys to become better men and boys and honor their priesthood and to be faithful members of the Church and kingdom of God. Scouting will help them do that and so it isn't any wonder that President Heber J. Grant at one time said, "It is my desire to see Scouting extended to every boy in the Church." President David O. McKay said, "Scouting is not an optional program. It is part of the official program for boys in the Church. We desire every Mormon boy to have the benefit and blessing of Scouting.""

-Elder Ezra Taft Benson
Eagle Recognition Banquet
Logan, Utah, 22 March 1974

"I would to God that every boy of Boy Scout age in America could have the benefits and the blessings of the great Boy Scout program. It is truly a noble program; it is a builder of character, not only in the boys, but also in the men who provide the leadership. I have often said that Scouting is essentially a spiritual program, a builder of men. It is established, as is our government and its Constitution, upon a deeply spiritual foundation."

-President Ezra Taft Benson
So Shall Ye Reap
page 138

"It is one of the choicest experiences in my life to serve in and participate in Scouting, which I have done for almost seventy years. Scouting is a great program for leadership training, teaching patriotism, love of country, and the building of strong character. It is a builder of men, men of character and spirituality. As I have said many times, I would hope that every young man would become an Eagle Scout and not settle for mediocrity in the great Scouting program of the Church."

-President Ezra Taft Benson
"When I Was Called as Scoutmaster"
Boy Scout Satellite Broadcast
Salt Lake City, Utah, 14 February 1988

"Give me a young man who has kept himself morally clean and has faithfully attended his Church meetings. Give me a young man who has magnified his priesthood and has earned the Duty to God Award and is an Eagle Scout. Give me a young man who is a seminary graduate and has a burning testimony of the Book of Mormon. Give me such a young man, and I will give you a young man who can perform miracles for the Lord in the mission field and throughout his life."

-President Ezra Taft Benson
Conference Report April 1986
Ensign 16 [May 1986] page 44

"We need to give them something wholesome to do. Only a warm heart can kindle warmth in another. Young people ask for a fair chance to succeed. Let us help provide wholesome challenges

and opportunities, and they will complete the job of becoming well-adjusted, useful citizens. To awaken the youth of this land and to rekindle in the hearts of its leaders the high ideals of Scouting is to render one of the greatest services to our country. To guide right the millions of eager, yearning, active youth who are enrolled in Scouting and the many more who might be added is the mightiest of obligations. To win their confidence is one of the greatest responsibilities and privileges of life. Let us mobilize men, hundreds of them, who love boys; who believe in them; who not only have the technical skills, but who will inspire them, because boys need inspiration even more than they need information.

Let us get men who are boys' men; who can appeal to them and inspire them to want to live right; who believe that it is best to be good-not goody-good, but happy, full of life, full of vigor-who want them to play and have a clean, wholesome time in life. It pays to live a good life. Scouting can help to emphasize and impress this fact upon the boys of today, the men of tomorrow, and us as men. Can we ignore such a challenge? Are you so busy and self-centered that you cannot take time out to help build a bridge for that boy? Scouting offers us that challenge. It is a tremendous test of leadership, devotion, and courage. Is that nobility within us going to rise up in majesty and answer the call? I have faith in the manhood of America; we will not let our boys down. Upon the character of our boys depends America's future. They are our hope. Scouting, as a great spiritual character-building program, needs to grow as never before. America must be kept strong and free. May God bless us in this task of building men, real men."

*-Ezra Taft Benson
God, Family, Country
pages 214-15*

"Ours is not a boy problem; it is a man problem. Our boys want Scouting; we want them to have it. Our problem is leadership. Our great need is to provide the leadership to meet the demands of the boys. Through Scouting we can help them develop real character; we can teach them cooperation; we can help them develop qualities of leadership; we can teach them the value of staying power."

*-President Ezra Taft Benson
The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson
Page 242
Bookcraft*

"When you help a boy, a satisfied feeling takes hold of you. It never leaves and this is why-you have helped a boy on his way to manhood, honorable manhood, and you have enriched your own life in the process."

*-President Ezra Taft Benson
Eagle Recognition Banquet
Logan, Utah, 22 March 1974*

"If we have the right kind of leadership through real boys' men, they will have it, enjoy it, and receive the blessings which come from the program. The responsibility rests with the priesthood-stake presidencies and bishoprics-to see that this leadership is provided and that every boy is reached."

*-Ezra Taft Benson
Conferecer Report April 1951
Improvement Era 54 [June 1951], page 423*