

Chapter 14 - Spiritual Fellowship

Scouting has always been concerned with the spiritual development of its members. Spiritual development is not quite the same as religious development, because religion includes social and dogmatic teachings as well. Neither does “spiritual” mean only a belief in God, because this excludes spiritual experiences that have to do with the Cubs’ growing awareness of themselves. In Scouting, we define “spiritual development” as all your Cubs’ experiences that lead to an awareness of God and self, and the relationship between the two.



Scouting tries to help young people develop and strengthen:

- their belief in and understanding of their God,
- their belief in themselves and their personal worth, by giving them opportunities to expand their knowledge and awareness of themselves,
- their spiritual values, by translating them into positive action.

Scouts Canada does not expect you to be a religious instructor. It simply asks you to give your Cubs a variety of experiences that will bring alive their spiritual selves. You can use many types of activities to help them recognize their God beyond the written word and see His work in everything around them. Scouting wants to make an impact on young people’s social development by instilling in them a definite set of values. In the area of spiritual development, Scouting accepts the uniqueness of each individual and simply tries to help Cubs recognize, understand, and explore their spiritual natures.

Love and Serve God

The combination of the right personal relationships, service to others, religious observances and instruction (Religion-in-Life program), and adult example need to be part of all Scouting activities and program. Our aim is to help Cubs define their individual roles and relationships to fellow Cubs, society, their religion, and their community.

Spiritual development is closely associated with how an individual relates to others. Both the Golden Rule (“Do to others as you would have them do to you”) and the commandment “Love your neighbour as yourself,” express basic truths common to pretty well all major world religions.

There is practical expression of a Cub’s spiritual development in the Religion-in-Life program that we encourage Cubs to take, guided by their spiritual advisers. The spiritual aspects of Scouting reinforce this program.

1. The Promise helps members understand duty to God in terms of loving and serving God and other people.
2. The emphasis on small group operations in the Cub section reinforces spiritual development by helping members learn to work in close harmony with others in the six.



3. The badge system emphasizes service to others and co-operative activity.
4. The star and badge system encourages development of individual potential and capabilities to prepare Cubs for better service to God and other people.
5. Scouting activities in the outdoors help to develop an awareness of God in the natural world.
6. Scout literature promotes close co-operation with religious institutions and using Scouts' Own and other appropriate forms of worship.

Although Scouting's approach to spiritual development relieves Scouters of the task of teaching religion, its emphasis on developing proper relationships with others places responsibilities on you to:

- Help Cubs gain a growing understanding of loving and serving their God,
- See that relationships among Cubs in the six and pack foster and promote their continuing spiritual development,
- Help Cubs find activities that will foster spiritual growth through service to others, set a personal example.

In other words, spiritual development is not confined to the Religion-in-Life program. It is part of the total Scouting experience, and you have an important role to play.

Meeting Specific Needs



Because Scouting is inter-denominational and interfaith, the specific interpretation of "duty to God" depends on each Cub's religious background. When Scouters and Cubs belong to the same faith and denomination, it's quite easy, but things become more challenging when the pack represents various faiths and denominations.

Canada's cultural mosaic includes Christian and non-Christian faiths; it's important to give Cubs from all belief groups equal consideration. Some denominations do not permit their members to participate in prayers or religious instruction led by someone who is not of their faith. In these situations, the best approach is silent personal prayer that everyone can take part.

Before the silent prayer, offer your Cubs some thoughts to help them form their prayers. For example, you might say something like, "Tonight, when you say your prayers, remember to pray for Gino, who is sick, and ask God to help all of us keep our Cub Promise."

Some of you may feel this is a weak compromise, but those who use it find it affects their Cubs deeply. It's a lesson in tolerance and brotherhood. You ask each Cub to think and pray as an individual. It may be the first time some of them have ever tried to do it, and they may find a spirit growing from within. For others, it may mean the difference between mechanically mumbling a memorized prayer and actively praying. For those who are used to praying by themselves, the experience is just as hallowed.

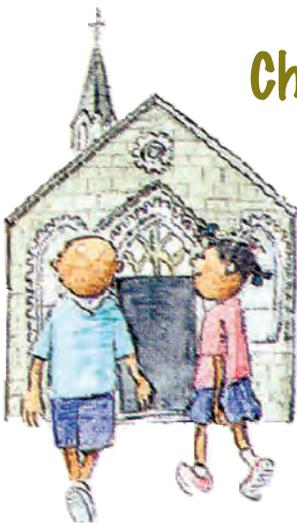
Guidelines

If Cubs of different denominations or faiths are in your pack, learn something about the obligations of each religion and, if possible, get to know the religious leader in each case. Ask your group committee to make the necessary contacts to see that you get the information.

Bylaw, Policies & Procedures (B.P. & P.) states: "In planning programs, all Groups/Sections, whatever their sponsorship, shall respect the religious obligations of the members. Members may be excused upon the request of parents or guardians if any program is thought to contravene the rules of their own faith."

When planning activities, take special care that your program doesn't conflict with any of your Cub's important religious observances. A few general guidelines for spiritual development will help you in most situations.

1. When you identify some of the spiritual needs of your Cubs in a specific way, it is appropriate and possible for you to take action.
2. There are no guaranteed successful or even best approaches. A little careful thought and your own common sense and imagination are your most valuable tools.
3. You will probably be amazed at the wide range of opportunities for spiritual development open to you within the basic program and operating principles of the Cub section (e.g. badge system, outdoor emphasis, youth leadership). Baden-Powell designed the Scout method to help Scouters meet the needs of their Cubs' total development, including their spiritual needs.
4. Try more than one approach at the same time. Sometimes combinations work at both the group and individual level.
5. More often than not, the ways you find to encourage spiritual development will tie in well with your other program objectives.



Church Parades

Use church parades with discretion. The pomp and ceremony has public relations value, and a church parade reinforces the spiritual side of Scout Sunday or Remembrance Day. But attending a religious institution is basically a family affair; Scouting doesn't serve family unity if it regularly separates Cubs from their families on Sundays.

Church parades for packs with members of mixed denominations or faiths can have an unsettling effect because they segregate the Cubs, dividing rather than uniting them with God.



Scout Sunday is one occasion when most packs (and even some Areas) hold Scout services, usually at their chaplain's church. They are often joint services held with other sections of the group and, frequently, with the Girl Guides of Canada. Parents generally are invited.

It's important to plan such a service well ahead with clergy, keeping in mind that most of the congregation will be young and restless boys and girls. Carefully select hymns and prayers oriented towards young people. The service might include: a parade into the church with section flags, a reading of the lesson or a prayer by members of Scouting (or Guiding), a good but brief sermon, and a reaffirmation of their Promise by members of each section in turn and their leaders. If you collect an offering, consider reserving it for a special purpose such as the Canadian Scout Brotherhood Fund.



Many Faiths and Many Ways

Scouting is a worldwide community of people from many races, cultures and faiths. Canadian Scouting is committed to recognizing the rights of all religions in our increasingly multicultural country. Common threads and themes that run through the world's great religions have evolved through the ages in the form of truths towards which human beings strive.

Different cultures have provided answers to spiritual questions in their own unique ways. As a result, we have many organized systems of beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that promote similar spiritual values. Today, because of immigration patterns and our ability to travel from one part of the globe to the other in a matter of hours, people of different faiths are beginning to see a need to develop a flexible approach to spirituality. To live together peacefully as neighbours, we need to accept each other's distinct ways of expressing our relationships with the powers and principles of the universe.

Loving one another means coming together in harmony to accept individual rights, and searching for common elements by which we can collectively express our spiritual selves. There are many ways and many faiths.

Inter-Faith Celebrations

When people of many faiths come together, the result can be an uplifting and profoundly spiritual experience. It's exciting for Cubs of mixed faiths to discover that they all like to have friends, they all are fascinated by how a frog jumps, they share similar ideas about stars, and they can teach each other about different points of view. Leaders and Cubs begin to appreciate how a variety of faiths and ways add to their outlook and ability to live in harmony.

Before you participate in an inter-faith celebration or a service of a faith different from your own, consider these things:

- Search for common themes. Ask the religious advisers from the faiths involved to help you plan the service. Together, build a simple program of song, prayer, readings, and activities that support the common themes and suit the setting for the service.
- Keep the service brief. Cubs can sit still only for a short period; ten minutes is a good length for a Scouts' Own. For a more formal service, plan a maximum of 30 minutes.

- Show respect for other people’s faith and its practices and rituals by your example. Explain the practices and their meanings to your Cubs, or ask someone of the faith to do it for you.
- Before you attend a worship service of a faith different from that followed by the majority of your Cubs, describe some of the details of the service so they will not be surprised by unfamiliar ritual. Where possible, explain certain aspects of the service and some of the expectations that may be involved (e.g. removing hats or keeping the head covered).

Religion-in-Life Program

Scouting offers Cubs an opportunity to learn about their own religion through the Religion-in-Life program. It enables them to work with their spiritual adviser at their level of ability in a structured goal-oriented way.

Many of the faiths represented in Canada have designed Religion-in-Life programs for Scouting. The requirements for their programs are available on Scouts Canada’s web site, www.scouts.ca or your local Scout office.

Encourage your Cubs to participate in the Religion-in-Life program of their faith and earn the Religion-in-Life emblem to wear on their uniform. Consult parents and contact the appropriate spiritual adviser to help make it happen.



Prayer and Grace

Leaders are often concerned because they’re unsure of the purpose behind such things as prayer and grace. We know many ways to pray or say grace, but don’t know exactly what, for example, a prayer is supposed to accomplish or how it relates to Cubs and Scouting. Let’s explore this in greater detail.

Prayer:

Why do we pray? Praying heightens our awareness of common, everyday acts to give us a greater understanding and appreciation for them. A greater knowledge of ourselves and our relationship with others leads to a fuller awareness of, and commitment to, our spiritual and religious convictions.

Prayer is important. It gives Cubs a greater knowledge of themselves, what they experience, and what they feel. It helps them appreciate things they do every day and leads them to a sense of the importance of who they are, what they have, and others around them.

Look for ways to pray in ways that communicate in a Cubs’ language. Invite them to make up and share their own prayers. For example, they might offer as prayers simple expressions of what they liked about an experience.

Some Cubs may not feel comfortable with this kind of sharing. Respect their feelings. Sometimes, by simply leading a prayer, you set an example they will follow when they feel ready.

Closing ceremonies, campfires, or a moment while gazing at a starry night offer good opportunities to introduce prayer. Take a few minutes to share some spiritual thoughts after a nature walk, exploring a swamp, or any other experience that brings you and your Cubs closer together.

Prayer can be formal (as it usually is at worship services or inter-faith gatherings), or spontaneous and informal as it is when prompted by a situation. Informal prayers may be more comfortable for Cubs to create and say. You might start them off at a teachable moment with one or two of your own. Here are some examples:

- Like the stars that look the same but are all different, we are all different because of the greatness of God.
- My friends are good to me, and I am good to my friends. I am glad I was not created alone.
- I love doing many things; I will keep my Promise as I do them.
- I learned a lot tonight at Cubs. Thank you everyone.
- Thank you God for creating us all so that we could come together.
- There's a whole planet full of people out there. I'm one of them. I can do almost anything. I'm ready for challenge. I'll do my best. I was meant to live, and I will. I can help. If I can make my life worthwhile, I can also help to make other lives worthwhile.

Here are a few samples of prayers useful for closing ceremonies and other occasions.



Softly falls the light of day,
As our campfire fades away,
Silently each Cub should ask,
Have I done my daily task?
Have I kept my Cub Law too?
Taught to me by old Baloo.
Always tried to do my best?
God, grant me a quiet rest.

Don't walk before me;
I may not be able to follow.
Don't walk behind me;
I may not be able to lead.
Just walk beside me,
And be my friend.

Bread is a lovely thing to eat;
God bless the barley and the wheat.
A lovely thing to breathe is air;
God bless the sunshine everywhere.
The Earth's a lovely place to know;
God bless the folks who come and go.
Alive's a lovely thing to be;
Giver of life, we say, "Bless thee!"

The Lord walks between you and
me while we are absent one from
the other.
(Cubs usually say it together,
hands joined in a circle.)



Each religion and denomination has traditional prayers for children of Cub age. Ask your chaplain or spiritual adviser to help you choose appropriate prayers for your celebration.

Grace:

Grace reminds us that we do not live to eat, but eat to live. When we say grace, it helps us become more aware of food as a physical blessing; it helps us realize our good fortune.

Cubs love to eat. They enjoy their food, and sharing meals with friends. Say grace at all meals, giving thanks in ways that build on the Cubs' pleasure with good food and good friends. Draw them toward an awareness of God's part in creating food and the people who grow, prepare and deliver food to them. End your graces with a hearty "Thank You!" that expresses the joy of coming together to nurture both body and spirit.

It's always nice to sing a grace. Here's one that many packs use.

Johnny Appleseed

Oh, the Lord is good to me
And so I thank the Lord,
For giving me the things I need,

The sun and the rain and the appleseed,
The Lord is good to me.
Johnny Appleseed. Amen.

Program Ideas

When you decide what activities you're going to conduct, conscientiously choose some that give opportunities for spiritual expression. Use opening or closing ceremonies, campfires or nature walks. Before you begin an activity, ask yourself what your Cubs can discover or learn in this experience, and how you can help them experience it.

Look for teachable moments in games, crafts, Sixers' Councils, rallies, stories, adventure themes, and other activities. As they present themselves, seize opportunities to reinforce a Cub's experience, self-image and the good feeling and sense of well-being that comes with caring for others and loving and serving God.

Cubs Need:

- To be loved and to love
- Security and reassurance
- Acceptance and forgiveness
- To achieve and to serve
- Encouragement to try again and do their best
- To learn and understand God through nature
- To give and to receive
- To work as part of a group where they can experience, share, and come to know themselves.



Cubs do not always relate very well to adult ways of expressing spirituality. Things difficult for adults to define are even more complicated for youth. Yet, they know that friendship is a desirable thing, that they like to belong, that a moose is a fascinating animal, and that helping someone else feels good.

Cubs hear adults talk about God, but often find it easier to relate to the idea when an adult helps them connect a personal experience or feeling with a sense of something beyond themselves. The experience may be enjoying a hay ride with friends, finding a crystal, sharing companionship with a good buddy, or counting shooting stars. When they say to themselves, "I like being here and I'm glad to be alive," they are ready to express thanks to a higher power for making them a part of creation.

Plan several discussions with your Cubs relating to the Promise, Law and Motto. Here are some questions to consider.

- What does it mean to respect yourself? How does this relate to exercise, drug or alcohol abuse, or doing your best in school?
- What does it mean to do your best? Everyone is different. Some people are good at some things and not so good at others. How can you make the best of your abilities and skills?
- How can you love and serve God today? How can you help others, care for nature, and express your own beliefs?

- What does it mean to respect the Old Wolf? How can you learn to listen to advice? How can you give your opinion constructively?
- What is the best way to solve a problem with your friends? How can you cooperate with others and work as part of a team?
- How can you tell people you care about them?
- What kinds of good turns can you do at a pack meeting, at camp, on a visit, or at home? Make a list.
- How does taking care of yourself mean you're loving and serving God? How can you best take care of yourself?
- Is there a connection between forgiving someone (or yourself) and doing your best? How do they work together? What can you learn from mistakes?
- How can you show love and friendship to fellow Cubs?

The Cub Elements

You can integrate spiritual activities into all parts of the program with very little effort; just build on the Cub program's seven elements. Following are several examples of activities for each element.

Games

- Take the opportunities that games offer. Discuss and point out good sportsmanship and fair play, skills, doing your best, and recognizing your own and other people's abilities.
- Create different teams to extend friendship bases.
- Use games to discover the need for rules and structure.
- Ask Cubs to turn a competitive game into an exciting cooperative game where everyone wins.

Crafts

- Make greeting cards to send to people for special holidays and other occasions.
- Make tray favours or gifts for people in hospitals or those confined to their homes.
- Make or repair toys to donate to community services that help people in need.
- Make a get well card for a member of the pack.

Music

- Sing familiar spiritual songs or hymns around the campfire.
- Stage musical shows for parents or senior citizens.
- Sing carols in a local hospital or door-to-door on Christmas.
- Learn spiritual songs from other faiths, and celebrate in song a broad base of religious occasions.
- Sing graces before meals.



Storytelling

- Watch movies or videos of Aesop's Fables or similar stories with a message.
- Use stories of good turns found in newspapers and magazines.
- Learn about famous spiritual and religious leaders, and the contributions they made.
- Introduce your Cubs to a variety of religions and religious leaders.
- Supply Cubs with the opening parts of a story, and ask them to add sentences in turn. For example: "Jamie's mother gave him some money to go to the store on an errand. On the way he met some friends and...."

Playacting

- Give each six an everyday situation. Ask members to act it out and provide their own ending for the story. For example: “Jamie’s Mom gives him some money to go to the store on an errand. On the way, he passes a music store and sees a record he really wants. The record costs exactly the amount of money his Mom gave him. What should he do?”
- Make puppets based on characters from fables, and create a puppet play from the story.

Outdoors

- On a hike, look for and talk about the natural forces at work in Earth.
- Build in a quiet time for a Scouter’s Five or reflection and sharing around the campfire.
- Clean up the grounds at a public or religious institution or the camp chapel.
- Go star-gazing, and talk about the wonders of space.



Other Ideas

Many Activity Area requirements can have a spiritual focus. Here are just a few. Go through the requirements to see how many others you can find.

- Make a greeting card.
- Plant a tree or shrub in a community park, a church yard, or another public place.
- Plant vegetables in the spring, and donate the produce to the local food bank.
- Make simple toys to donate to organizations that serve people in need.

If developing our spiritual selves means developing a healthy sense of being part of a marvellous and good creation, activities that suggest wanton destruction of creation and the creative process are not likely to help us achieve a healthy sense of being. Sometimes the toys or tools we use are intended to destroy; there’s no other use for them. Sometimes it’s not so much what we play or work with, but how we use it that is destructive.

Scouts’ Own

A Scouts’ Own is a Scouting tradition offered to enhance the spiritual aspect of an activity. Here’s the purpose of a Scouts’ Own: to worship God and promote a fuller understanding of the Promise, Law and Motto. A worship service creates an environment that helps us concentrate on our relationship with ourselves, others, and God (or the powers and principles of the universe). A Scouts’ Own provides time to reflect on ways to fulfil the Promise, Law and Motto, and our personal commitment to our spiritual values.

A Scouts’ Own can be a structured and planned part of a Cubbing event, or a very spontaneous coming together in celebration of life.

Following are a few details to remember when you're planning and conducting a Scouts' Own.

- Involve Scouters, Cubs, and perhaps a spiritual adviser when preparing a Scouts' Own. It should be acceptable and meaningful to all faiths represented. Do this by taking one of two approaches:
 1. Ask your Cubs or their parents or spiritual advisers to provide contributions meaningful to their various faiths.
 2. Hold an inter-faith Scouts' Own by choosing material with universal appeal (i.e. focus on common threads such as love, friendship, helping others, the environment, etc.).
- You can hold a Scouts' Own at any time and in any place. The best time and place is whenever and wherever it is most meaningful to your group. In a sense, you could consider even a prayer during a meeting as a quick Scouts' Own.
- To be sure that a spiritual observance of some kind is part of your program, schedule a Scouts' Own and take time to see that it happens. Though it may involve a spontaneous moment, it's always wise to be prepared.
- A Scouts' Own can present spiritual messages in the form of prayer, songs, skits, stories, games or discussion. Involve your Cubs by asking them to help with the planning (perhaps in sixes), and ensure every one of them participates in the service in some way.
- Keep it simple, clear and short; no longer than 10-15 minutes.

