SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

Spiritual fellowship is a thread woven through all Beaver programs. It takes into consideration the variety of religious beliefs and denominations held by leaders and children in a colony.

Beaver program concepts foster an attitude of love, respect and caring for other human beings and our natural surroundings. Sharing, helping to take care of the world, helping family and friends, and acceptance of others are principles honoured by all religions around the world. Through these sorts of experiences, young children find God’s love for them and the world.

SETTING THE EXAMPLE

When a Beaver is exposed to leaders who are sincere in their love for God and others, the child is subtly but wholesomely influenced by them, in whatever way they may express their love. Leaders who strive to live their faiths in their daily lives and let their convictions influence and warm all of their actions, share their outlooks with the Beavers in their lodge or colony.

HELPING

The idea of helping others and doing something useful for them is easy for Beavers to understand. Encourage them to be thoughtful of other members of the lodge and colony, brothers and sisters at home, and friends at school and in their neighbourhood. Encourage them to be thoughtful of parents by helping around the house.

When you lead them to do good turns for sick, shut-in and aged persons by visiting and making cards and little gifts for them, you also reinforce their efforts to help others without looking for something in return. They help others by being ready to share themselves, their abilities, their possessions and their efforts.
LOVE OF SELF

One important and often overlooked aspect in spiritual development is a person’s self-image. By helping Beavers understand that they are loved for their own sake and that their talents and abilities are appreciated, a Beaver leader helps children deepen their acceptance and understanding of themselves in many positive ways. Show your love by:

- Encouraging Beavers to do their best
- Congratulating them for their efforts
- Accepting them as people of their age and development.

Realise that, although Beavers are only five, six or seven, they’re on their way to adulthood. Find ways to make that growth both easy and fun.

A Beaver’s growing self-awareness strengthens his or her spiritual growth and, in turn, is helped by it.

Program Goals
Beavering provides a simple, flexible positive experience with the key idea of “sharing.” Your colony serves Beavers with a wide range of growth development. Each Beaver will gain more understanding of fellowship and spiritual values through his or her activities than through direct teaching. Beavering spirit is caught, not taught. Spiritual emphasis is a continuous thread running through the programs of a Beaver colony.

Spiritual fellowship is clearly tied to the Beaver program goals, which encourages leaders to “find examples of God’s love for them and the world.” When you look at the other goal statements, you see that they also reflect the idea of God’s love as it shows itself in a variety of ways:

- Love and joy
- Health and a positive sense of self
- Belonging and sharing
- Cooperating
- The beauty of the world around us.

Check out the goals in Chapter 3. List specific ways you see God’s love so that you can help your Beavers discover it too.

Promise, Law and Motto
Spiritual fellowship also is fundamental to the:
Beaver Promise: “I promise to love God and help take care of the world.”
Beaver Law: “A Beaver has fun, works hard, and helps family and friends.”
Beaver Motto: “Sharing, Sharing, Sharing.”

Here’s an exercise to help you generate program ideas. As a leadership team, discuss the meaning of the wordings of the Promise, Law and Motto. List activities that will help you develop these concepts at colony meetings. Focus on ideas about:

- How to love God
- How to take care of the world
- How to have fun
- How to work hard
How to help family and friends
How and when to share.

Following are a few ideas to get you started.

How to Love God
- Acting out Friends of the Forest, and taking care of nature
- Saying grace at meals; saying thank you
- Praying at opening and closing ceremonies; thoughts for the day
- Respecting property, people, animals and all other living things
- Carolling, singing
- Doing a Scout’s Own.

How to Take Care of The World
- Planting a tree
- Picking up litter in a local park
- Watching for dangerous places, and warning friends and other people
- Doing good turns for others.

How to Have Fun
- Carolling at Christmas; singing; campfires
- Touring a church, synagogue, temple
- Playing cooperative games
- Doing craft work (e.g. What “God” means to me)
- Going on a sleigh ride or watching the stars.

How to Work Hard
- Sharing with chores at meetings
- Finishing crafts; putting materials away; cleaning up
- Trying to keep neat and clean
- Taking care of the uniform.

How to Help Family and Friends
- Doing chores at home; taking out the garbage; setting the table
- Making Mother’s and Father’s Day crafts
- Offering help to friends
- Helping those younger than you
- Letting others help you.

How and When to Share
- Taking turns with equipment and in games
- Sharing materials and ideas between lodges
- Sharing a day outing with a Cub pack
- Sharing games (e.g. find someone who needs what you have to complete a project)

After any one of these activities, give your Beavers a chance to discuss what they did to find God’s love, how they felt about it, and what they could or would try next time. Accept a
Beaver’s answer even though it may not coincide with yours. If you feel the child has missed something, try to direct the Beaver’s thinking in that area, but let the child draw his or her own conclusions. The Beaver may not be ready to absorb the kinds of thoughts or perspectives you have. Consult with parents and spiritual leaders in order to gain knowledge and sensitivity of the child’s development in this area.

**Scouts’ Own**

A Scouts’ Own provides time to reflect on ways to fulfill 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 Beaver event, or a very spontaneous coming together in celebration of life.

- Involve Scouters, Beavers, 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.
- Ask your Beavers, their parents or spiritual advisors to provide contributions meaningful to their various faiths.
- Choose 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 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, or games for discussion. Involve your Beavers by asking them to help with the planning (perhaps by lodges), and ensure every one of them participates in some way.
- Keep it simple, clear and short; no longer than 10-15 minutes.

**FINDING GOD’S LOVE**

The Beaver program’s first emphasis is to “find examples of God’s love for them and the world.” The focus of this first emphasis is to help Beavers discover God’s love, to experience it and share it with others. You may find these suggestions and guidelines helpful for developing programs in which Beavers can make this discovery.

**Keep it Simple**

You can practise spiritual fellowship in all phases of the Beaver program without really getting into a lot of details. Encourage positive spiritual attitudes by teaching and practising them at Beaver meetings, and encouraging Beavers to use them at home.

It’s important to keep spiritual emphasis simple. Use religious teaching at meetings only in conjunction with specific religious sponsors; remember to take into account Beavers who do not belong to that faith.

**Spiritual Themes**

*Creation*

Read a story of how the world was created to the Beavers at a meeting. Then go on a nature hike; along the way, discuss the things you read in the story.
Holiday
Pick a religious holiday. Try exploring holidays of different faiths. Do a play, make puppets, and ask a minister, priest or other spiritual leader to come in to tell the story.

Scouts’ Own
The purpose of a Scouts’ Own is to promote a fuller understanding of the Beaver Promise and Law. You can have a Scouts’ Own anytime. Remember to keep it simple and on the Beaver’s level.

Children’s Hymns
During sing-songs, include some spiritual hymns that Beavers know and understand. They love to sing.

Openings and Closings

Thoughts for the Day
Each week, let a Beaver or a lodge help during the opening or closing ceremonies with a thought for the day. Beavers can prepare these with a lodge leader or parents, or with the help of Keeo. It gives them an opportunity to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.

Evening Prayer
Some groups say or sing a prayer each evening.

Spiritual Customs From Around the World
Many different spiritual customs are practised in different lands. Beavers love to hear about things that other children do. Share with them the ways in which children their age from different religions practise the same spiritual message.

Stories with Moral and Spiritual Emphasis
Use a Beaver story to express a key thought or message.

Beaver Prayers

Hey God!
Hey God!
Did you really make all those stars?
Did you really make mud so it would squish?
And that great white moon, that looks so far?
And rainbows to chase that can’t be caught?
And did you really make planets like Mars?
And did you really make the clams and starfish?
And Saturn and Venus and all like that?
You did?
You did?
Did you really make fluffy, wobbly puppies?
Well thanks. Thanks a lot!
And kittens and ducks and jumpy frogs?
(By Andy Jensen, Victoria, B.C.)
And did you really make goldfish and guppies?
And creepy crawly things beneath old logs?
And thank you God, for you and me!

Thank You
Thank you for the sky above;
Thank you for the birds that fly;
Thank you for the earth below;
Thank you for the trees that grow;
And thank you God, for you and me!
Activities
On a winter’s evening, have your Beavers try to count the stars in the sky. There are so many, and they look much the same, like most Beavers look much the same when they’re all together. And yet, there’s only one special place like Earth, and each Beaver is a special child. Tell them, “There is no other exactly like you.”

Do this for about 15 minutes, making sure your Beavers are dressed warmly, then go back inside to talk about the experience.

“Who is a special friend in the colony?” God made that person, too. Write your friend a letter and tell the person why you like his or her friendship. Perhaps Hawkeye, Rainbow or Rusty can help write what is necessary. Make your friend a card and give it to him or her with the letter.

If you do this exercise, make sure all your Beavers receive a card and a letter. Being able to receive a gift is as important as being able to give one. Have your Beavers share their feelings and insights about what they’ve done.

When building a program around the emphasis of finding God’s love, remember that the Beaver’s personal discovery of the importance of himself/herself and of everything and everybody else must be encouraged and, in some way, expressed. It’s only through this personal experience that the Beaver can build a true capacity to appreciate and express peace, joy, love and goodwill for all.

RESOURCES
- *World Book Encyclopaedia, Child Craft, The How & Why Library*: includes a section, written at a child’s level, on religious traditions and religious practices of the world.
- *Let’s Celebrate Canada’s Special Days*, Caroline Parry
- Churches or spiritual advisors
- *Lets Celebrate 2, Spirituality in Canadian Scouting, an Interdenominational Resource.*