

BSA TROOP 555

“The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God.”

This sentence is quoted directly from the Charter and Bylaws of The Boy Scouts of America. The BSA believes that the recognition of God as the ruling and leading power in the universe is fundamental to the best type of citizenship and an important precept in the education of young people.

No matter what the religious faith of the members may be, this fundamental need of good citizenship should be kept before them.

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BSA TROOP 555
LAS VEGAS AREA COUNCIL
DUPLICATION PERMITTED WITH CREDIT

THIS GUIDE WAS COMPILED FROM A VARIETY OF RESOURCES, INCLUDING “MEDITATIONS FOR THE TRAIL”, AND OTHERS, AVAILABLE FROM THE US SCOUTING SERVICE PROJECT:
[HTTP://USSCOUTS.ORG](http://USSCOUTS.ORG)

SCOUT'S OWN SERVICE BSA TROOP 555

THE 12TH POINT OF THE SCOUT LAW IS “A SCOUT IS REVERENT.” THEREFORE IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT PATROLS AND TROOPS TAKE A MOMENT ON SUNDAY, AT MEALS, OR AT A STOP ALONG THE TRAIL SO SCOUTS CAN REFLECT UPON THE WONDER OF THE UNIVERSE, THEIR DIRECTION IN LIFE, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GREAT MASTER OF ALL SCOUTS. THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED TO HELP.

BOY SCOUTS  OF AMERICA®

USE OF THIS GUIDE

Outline for a short service and a brief reflection is included below. Scouts leading the service may use the eight pre-arranged services, or may choose to select a particular Call to Worship, prayers, and reflections to which they can add their own materials and unique contributions. A service should reflect the place, spirit, relationships, experiences and faiths of the participants.

OUTLINE

- Call to Worship
- Opening Prayer
- Scripture or other inspirational reading
- Reflection
- Closing Prayer

CALL TO WORSHIP

Here are selections that scouts may use as a *Call to Worship* to start a service, gather the community, and to set the mood for the service.

- Leader says a few words of welcome appropriate to the place and time.
- Read first two paragraphs from “A scout is Reverent” in Boy Scout Handbook.

*O God, open our mouths
that our voices may declare thy glory.
“Come join us in this place to worship.*

*This is the day the Lord has made
Let us rejoice and be glad in it*

*Spirit of Love, Spirit of Truth
Guide us as we pray,
To think and wish and praise the best,
And mean the words we say.*

But those who look to the Lord will win new strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;

They will run and not grow weary.

They will walk on and never grow faint.

*God of the surging waves and sea,
wide horizons give to me;*

Help me to see the world as

Thou wouldst have it be;

God of the lovely rose, make me lovely, too;

God of the morning dew, each day my faith renew.

God of all growing things, keep me growing, too.

—George Earle Owen

The Apostle Paul at the end of his ministry wrote these words to his young friend Timothy: “I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith.” You have come to the end of your time at camp. Do you feel good about having completed the adventure? What do you think was one of your biggest accomplishments?

Not all of your accomplishments have been physical. You have interacted with God’s creation and God’s people. There has been frustration and fun. Intermingled with this has been your reflection on God’s love and care. You have run the race and kept the faith.

*Have you come to a better understanding of yourself and of your fellow campers?
Have you grown in your appreciation of God’s gift to you in nature and in your friends?*

Now is the time to look homeward to friends and family. You have matured. You are now an even greater and finer gift to your family and friends.

For reflection: *What have your friends at camp given you to remember? What would you like to give or do for your family and friends when you get home?*

INSPIRATIONAL READINGS (CONTINUED)

TRAIL'S END

Camper's Prayer

*God of the mountains and hills,
make me tall and strong;
Tall enough and strong enough
to right some wrong.*

*God of the stars, make me steadfast and sure;
God of every lake and stream,
flow through my life and make it clean;
Let me do nothing base or mean.*

*God of the trees and woods, keep me fresh and pure;
God of the rain, wash from my life all dirt and stain;
Pure and strong let me remain.*

*God of the seed and soil, plant in my heart Thy love;
God of the darkness and day,
through shadows or light, be my stay.
Guide Thou my way.*

*God of the radiant sun, light Thou my life;
God of the glorious dawn,
make each day a fresh start.*

*God of the evening peace and quiet,
keep me free from fear and strife.*

God of the gay, free birds, sing in my heart.

PRAYERS FOR USE IN SCOUT SERVICES

It is traditional to end a service with a prayer (often called the Benediction) asking for support in one's life. Many prayers, particular when included earlier in a service, express thanksgiving for the blessings we enjoy in nature, through our families, and in our personal lives. The following prayers are appropriate for use in scouting services.

Philmont Opening Prayer

God, our father, we thank you for the beauty of the earth, for the food we eat, and for the comforts we enjoy.

Help us to love others more, to be concerned with the problems of our day, and to understand Your will in our actions.

Grant us the strength to live wisely and well, to be worthy users of Your creation, and ready and willing workers for the causes of Goodness.

AMEN.

BSA Interfaith Service Benediction

Dear God, thank you for the wondrous opportunity to be here.

Give us the energy and the wisdom to enjoy each moment, and the courage to push ourselves further than we ever have before.

Bless our troop and its leaders as we continue our journey through Boy Scouting.

AMEN.

Philmont Prayer

*Almighty God of hill and plain,
Over which we hike in sun and rain,
on mountain pass and valley low,
protect us Lord where'er we go.
And from our grateful hearts we'll raise
glad hymns of thankfulness and praise.*

Benediction, from Philmont all faith service

May God Bless us and protect us;

May God show us favor and be gracious to us;

May God show us kindness and grant us peace.

PRAYERS FOR USE IN SCOUT SERVICES (CONTINUED)

Philmont Prayer of Thanks

We thank You, O God for this day,

for morning sun and evening star;

for flowering trees and flowing streams,

for life giving rains and cooling breeze;

for the earth's patient turning, the changing of the seasons, the cycle of growth and decay, of life and death..

When our eyes behold the beauty and grandeur of your world, we see the wisdom, power and goodness of its Creator.

We awake and behold! It's a great day. AMEN.

A Scout Prayer

*O God of the mountains and valleys,
of the forest, meadows and plains.*

Be our guide as we walk

together the trail of life.

*And may your love, made known to
us in the stories of our faith,*

Be known to others through

the words and deeds of our lives.

This day and always. AMEN.

Scout Benediction:

May the great Master of all scouts,

be with you until we meet again.

Evening Meditation

Meditating on the Rim of the Grand Canyon,

Meditating in the stillness of the evening hour,

Meditating upon Him who made this

wond'rous sight beyond description,

Our thoughts dwell on our God,

the One, the Almighty.

Our eyes reach our o'er this magnificence,

To take in quickly the breath-taking scene

before in darkness it shall slip away.

We think upon the God, Creator of this beauty,

We think upon the God who hath preserved

all things for mortals such as we;

*And so we glorify Him and in silence meditate beside
the grandeur of this panorama great.*

How manifold are all Thy works, O God!

In wisdom Thou hast made them all.

The earth is full of Thy riches.

Yea, He hath made His wond'rous works

to be remembered.

And we rejoice to seek His face in meditation sweet.

INSPIRATIONAL READINGS (CONTINUED)

COUNTRY THAT I LOVE

“And you will live a long time in the rich and fertile land that the Lord promised to give to your ancestors and their descendants... The land that you are about to enter is a land of mountains and valleys, a land watered by rain. The Lord, your God takes care of this land and watches over it throughout the year.

[Deuteronomy 11:9, 11-12]

Meditation

Being outdoors does something to people—it is not something that can be put into words easily. Something “gets into the blood.” A love for the land, the atmosphere, the people—all these work together in you to make Scouting an experience that you can never forget.

The base of that experience is the presence of God — an awareness that all we have and all we offer to others comes from God.

The brotherhood that we share as God’s children and as Scouts brings us to a sense of peace, a feeling that in some strange way, everything is all right.

In that sense we can call camping a “Scouting Paradise,” a glimpse of that “Paradise” all of us are called to and will one day experience. It can be called a “mountaintop experience,” when we are given a glimpse of the beauty of God’s presence.

For reflection: *How can your own mountaintop experience help you to live in the valleys of your life?*

GRACE

Here are additional prayers for a moment along the trail, or for grace at a meal.

Philmont Grace

For food, for raiment

For life, for opportunity

For friendship and fellowship

We thank thee, O Lord. AMEN.

Old Irish Blessing

May the road rise to meet you,

May the wind be always at your back,

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

The rain fall soft upon your friends,

And until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

Morning Grace: *Gracious giver of all good,*

thee we thank for rest and food.

Grant that all we do or say,

in they service be this day.

Noon Grace: *Father for this noonday meal,*

we would speak the praise we feel.

Health and strength we have from thee;

help us Lord, to faithful be.

Evening Grace: *Tireless guardian on our way,*

Thou has kept us well this day.

While we thank thee, we request

Care continued, pardon, rest.

INSPIRATIONAL READINGS

SETTING DIRECTIONS

“Lord, make me know Your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths.” [Psalm 25:4]

To take a long hike successfully requires much preparation. Physical readiness, adequate planning in terms of equipment, food, clothing, and a planning of itinerary are all ways to set a direction for your patrol. Mental and spiritual preparation are no less important. The wilderness is a place where God can speak to you in new and exciting ways. Just as you prepare for a trek by tapping the resources of advisors, rangers, and those who have gone before you, so too you should prepare for experiencing God on your trek by tapping the resources of God’s Word. Taking a moment each day for prayer and reflection can bring us into deeper contact with the Word of God.

For reflection: *How are you preparing yourself to make this trek a journey with the Lord? What can you do to keep yourself aware of His continuing presence on the trail?*

STARLIT SKIES ABOVE

*“When I look at the sky, which You have made,
at the moon and the stars which You set in their places — What is man that You think of
him,*

Mere man, that You care for him?” [Psalm 8:3-4]

How beautiful are the clear nights in the outdoors! The stars are so plentiful; they seem so close that you can almost touch them. The silence and the beauty of the night helps us realize the power and majesty of God. Yet, this God loves each of us personally and intimately, and the greatest and most beautiful part of his creation lies not in the heavens, but right here on earth. You are the crowning glory of His creative hands.

For reflection: *How do you see yourself as made in the image and likeness of God? What can you do to deepen respect for the beauty and glory of God alive in you?*

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. The end of living and the beginning of survival.”

Meditation

How precious is the gift of life! In the outdoors we can come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of its importance. It is necessary to respect it in all its forms. We can take so much for granted — the air we breathe, the water we drink, the health we enjoy, the beauty of the earth. God gives us life to enjoy and He gives us opportunity to grow, to achieve, to find joy and to find happiness. God gives us the ultimate opportunity — life with Him and fellowship with each other.

For reflection: *How can I show greater respect for life—my own, for others, for the world around me?*

American Indian Invocation

O Great Spirit! Watch over us as we begin this day. Protect us as we live in your care. Give us bounty and hold us from harm. We are your children and wish only to please you. We hold our Mother Earth close to our hearts and wish her goodness. We thank You for your love.

INSPIRATIONAL READINGS (CONTINUED)

FOR LIFE, FOR OPPORTUNITY

In 1854 Chief Seattle sent a letter to the President of the United States protesting the offer to buy Indian land and move his people to a reservation. Part of that letter is reproduced below.

“Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath—the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench. But if we sell you our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow’s flowers.

This we know: The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life: he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

Even the white man, whose God walks and talks with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We shall see. One thing we know, which the white man may one day discover—our God is the same God. You may think now that you own Him as you wish to own our land; but you cannot. He is the God of man, and His compassion is equal for the red man and the white. This earth is precious to Him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. The whites too shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

The 23rd Psalm [As translated from English, to Kiowa Sign language, and back into literal English.]

The Great Father above a Shepherd Chief is.

I am His, and with Him I want not.

He throws out to me a rope, and the name of the rope is love, and He draws me to where the grass is green and the water is not dangerous, and I eat and lie down and am satisfied.

Sometimes my heart is very weak and I fall down, but He lifts me up again and draws me onto a good road. His name is Wonderful.

Sometime, it may be very soon, it may be a long, long time, He will draw me into a valley. It is dark there, but I’ll be afraid not, for it is between those mountains that the Shepherd Chief will meet me and the hunger that I have in my heart all through this life will be satisfied.

Sometimes He makes the love rope into a whip, but afterwards He gives me a staff to lean upon. He puts His hand upon my head and all the tired is gone. My cup He fills till it runs over. What I tell is true. I lie not. These roads that are away ahead will stay with me through this life and after; and afterwards I will go to live in the Big Tepee and sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever.

Meditation. *A long trek crossing rivers and streams; and dealing with the weather, fatigue, and unexpected circumstances and challenges. At times it may seem that the difficulties are insurmountable, the hardships unbearable. However, it often happens that the greatest hardships in life become our greatest opportunities for growth. We have to realize that we are not alone—we have each other and the abiding presence and help of our God, Who will guide us and give us strength. Nothing can separate us from His love. He invites us to trust in Him and to realize that we walk with Him.*

For reflection: *Is there some way that you can help another realize the presence of God on this trek? Can God bring us strength through each other?*

INSPIRATIONAL READINGS (CONTINUED)

THE PRAYER OF CHIEF YELLOW LARK

O Great Spirit: Whose voice I hear in the winds, and Whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me.

I am a man before You, one of your many children.

I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom. Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset. Make my hands respect the things You have made, my ears sharp to hear Your voice. Make me wise so that I may know the things You have taught my people – the lesson you have hidden in every leaf and rock. I seek strength, not to be superior to my brothers, but to be able to fight my greatest enemy- – myself. Make me ever ready to come to You with clean hands and straight eyes, so when life fades as a fading sunset, my spirit may come to You without shame.

WINDS IN WHISPERING PINES

“He (the Lord) traveled on the wings of the wind.”

[II Samuel 22:11, Psalms 18:10]

These words are a line from the book of Psalms. We can often hear the wind moving through the pines and playing a soft melody. It is almost as if the trees were whispering to one another or to us below. Or as if God were playing a lullaby for us on His wind instrument.

The Lord touches all of His creation. He caresses the pines with His wind. He touches us with His love and forgiveness.

The “whispering pines” can become the sound in nature that reminds us of these words, “Be kind and tenderhearted to one another and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you.” [Ephesians 4:32] He who lives by forgiving and being forgiven lives in peace.

For reflection: *Is there one whom you want to ask for forgiveness? Is there one whom you feel the need to forgive?*

EAGLES SOARING HIGH

*“Even those who are young grow weak;
young men can fall exhausted.*

But those who trust in the Lord

will find their strength renewed.

The will rise on wings like eagles;

they will run and not get weary;

they will walk and not grow weak.”

[Isaiah 40:31]

Have you seen an eagle on the trail yet? We can learn from eagles and from so much in nature.

One day a fisherman watched as a mother eagle dropped a young eaglet into the canyon below. The eaglet plummeted and fluttered. It appeared that it was about to be dashed to its death on the rocks below, when out of the sky plunged the father eagle and caught his offspring on his broad back. Then he flew up high and dropped the young one again. This time the mother caught the little one on her back. The routine was repeated until the little eagle learned to fly.

God gives us opportunities to try our wings so that we might learn to fly on our own. Certainly the Scouting experience is one of these learning and growing opportunities. Yet God always watches over us and spreads His wings of protection beneath us.

God said, “I bore you on eagles’ wings.” He has promised, “I will be with you always.”

So lift up your head and rejoice!

For reflection: *What on the trail has caused you a fearful moment?*