

Duty to God

A leader's obligation! Are we doing OUR best? When a youth member is invested and takes their Promise to do their best to do their duty to God, do you as a leader leave it at that or do you include in your program as a means for your members to do their duty? You would not expect them to pitch a tent without showing and teaching them, you would fail them as a leader if you did not instruct them in the ways of doing their duty to the Queen or making them aware of the Scout Laws. You undoubtedly teach them knots, pioneering, camping, how to survive in the bush, how to do this and that for different badge work. But what do you offer them to assist them in their Duty to God? Several times I have been confronted by an older Scout who did not know what a Scouts Own was, but when I met a trainee leader who had been a Cub Scout, Scout and Venturer who had never been to one I finally realised what I suspected for some time: that we as leaders had let this first and most important part of OUR Promise fall into disuse. We are NOT doing OUR best! Nor do I feel are we being adequately trained to fulfill the role. Nor do many of us actively seek training in how to present a Scouts Own as we do other aspects of our leader role. Sure, each training weekend has a Scouts Own, but often I feel the session following is all too brief. I hope to include discussion and hopefully feedback from you leaders out there. It is YOUR duty as much, if not more than, your Scouts. You can introduce Duty to God into your Section meetings by including a prayer in your opening and closing parades. My Troop uses a Troop prayer after flag break and a simpler prayer, written in a permanent book by each Scout in turn, after flag strike. At left is a selection of Scouts' Prayers showing an awareness and concern for the state of the world and events, which impinge on their lives.

Activities .

Duty to God is often expressed by Scouts as 'Saying Prayers'. How one perceives themselves

and their relationship with God will influence how deeply this praying becomes part of one's life.

- This activity could be used to help individuals to focus their understanding and feelings. Our relationship with God is very personal, it is suggested an activity such as this would not be shared, but the paper after completion be folded and slipped into our pockets. Prepare a sheet for each participant. There are six columns (two under each heading), participants are asked to circle words from each of the six columns which the feel best describes themselves and their relationship with God at that time. For example;

Column 1 - Dear Friend; Column 2 - Your fearful servant; Column 3 - Begs for help. (See bottom of next page.)

- Perhaps an inquiry on prayer would help the Scouts in the Troop to express their feelings and understandings. This activity should be conducted in a non-judgemental atmosphere. The feedback could give the Leader an idea of where the Troop is in its understanding of the place of prayer in its life, and perhaps form a basis for members to develop a new pattern for Troop prayers. Have a copy for each member of the Troop or Patrol.

Answer the following statements according to the following:

A - strongly agree **B** - agree **C** - not sure **D** - disagree **E** - strongly disagree

1. Prayer is something you should do only if you feel like it

A B C D E

2. The chief time to pray is when you are in trouble.

A B C D E

3. Prayers should be read at all Troop meetings.

A B C D E

4. Prayers are dull.

A B C D E

5. There is no evidence that prayers are answered.

A B C D E

6. You get a feeling God is there when you pray

A B C D E

7. Prayers at Scout meetings do not mean much.

A B C D E

8. Prayers should be selected by guides, not only be adult Leaders

A B C D E

9. One should say prayers at least three times a day.

A B C D E

10. It is more important to pray for others rather than for oneself.

A B C D E

- Types of Prayer ...

Give each participant a sheet of paper on which he/she outlines one of his/her hands. On the thumb write - Prayer is the key which opens the door to God; index finger write Adoration - praise; middle finger write - Confession - repentance; third finger write - Thanks giving - for all God's goodness and provision; little finger write - Supplication - bringing before God the needs of others and yourself. These guidelines can be of help when Scouts are writing their own prayers.

- A handful of prayers

Each participant clenches one fist. They extend their thumb and fingers as the Leader makes the relevant statement. My thumb is nearest to me, so I remember to pray for my dearest and nearest.

Next comes my index finger with this I remember to pray for teachers and schools.

The middle finger is my longest finger; it reminds me to pray for those in authority, prime ministers and governments, and anyone give authority to make decisions which effect others. The next finger is the weakest on my hand so I pray specially for the sick, lonely and those in need

Finally with my little finger I pray for my own needs.

- I shall pray for you...

End a meeting with a prayer for each member. Begin by explaining that for a whole week everyone is to pray for the person next to them. Then, going in a clockwise direction, start them off by saying: 'I shall pray for Susan.' then Susan says, 'I shall pray for Stephen, " and so it goes on until the last person says they will pray for you.

- Thank you

Stand in a circle and tell the Scouts that you will give them a few moments to think of a thing or someone they would like to thank God for. Explain you will say your 'thank you' in turn, and it doesn't matter if people say the same thing. Then start them off by saying your 'thank you'. This activity is particularly good at the end of a camp.

Title for God		Title for myself		My message	
Dear	God	your sinful	servant	needs	love
Heavenly	Father	your frightened	son	begs for	help
Gentle	Son	your confident	daughter	thanks for	forgiveness
Kind	Spirit	your fearful	child	asks for	you
Forgiving	Creator	your sorrowful	creature	requests	courage
Loving	Lord	your grateful	brother	appreciates	confidence
Just	Savior	your confused	sister	enjoys	faith
Mysterious	Redeemer	your joyful	follower	has	patience
Unseen	Friend	your lonely	believer	deserves	peace
Merciful	Protector	your faithful	disciple	searches for	an answer
Powerful	Judge	your eager	prodigal	hopes for	understanding
Faithful	Master	your angry	friend	fears	friendship
All wise	Brother	your peaceful	seeker	loves	strength
Patient	Guide	your struggling	minister	longs for	generosity