

Lord Baden Powell's Thoughts About the Scouts' Own Service

For an open Troop, or for Troops in camp, I think the Scouts' Own should be open to all denominations, and carried on in such a manner as to offend none. There should not be any special form, but it should abound in the right spirit, and should be conducted not from any ecclesiastical point of view, but from that of the boy. Everything likely to make an artificial atmosphere should be avoided. We do not want a kind of imposed Church parade, but a voluntary uplifting of their hearts by the boys in thanksgiving for the joys of life, and a desire on their part to seek inspiration and strength for greater love and service for others.

A Scouts' Own should have as big an effect on the boys as any service in church, if in conducting the Scouts' Own we remember that boys are not grown men, and if we go by the pace of the youngest and most uneducated of those present. Boredom is not reverence, nor will it breed religion.

To interest the boys, the Scout's Own must be a cheery and varied function. Short hymns (three verses are as a rule quite enough-never four); understandable prayers; a good address from a man who really understands boys (a homily "talk" rather than an address), which grips the boys, and in which they may laugh or applaud as the spirit moves them, so that they take a real interest in what is said. If a man cannot make his point to keen boys in ten minutes he ought to be shot! If he has not got them keen, it would be better not to hold a Scouts' Own at all.

Written by Baden Powell
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Obligation to God

Charter and Bylaws, the Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God. No matter what the religious faith of the member might be, this fundamental need of good citizenship must be kept before the member. The Boy Scouts of America recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training.