

CED 714 - Religious Inclusivity in Scouting: The Commissioner's Role

Policy and Practice Resources

This document provides a compilation of policy and practice statements/excerpts relevant to religious inclusivity.

Scouting America's Registration Policy

"It is the philosophy of Scouting to welcome all eligible youth, regardless of gender, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, or gender identification, who are willing to accept Scouting's values and meet any other requirements of membership. Young people of all religious backgrounds are welcome in Scouting, with some participating in units for youths of a particular religion and the greater majority participating in units open to members of various religious backgrounds."

Source: Rules and Regulations of Scouting America

Religious Involvement and Scouting America

"Scouting America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God and, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life. Only persons willing to subscribe to these precepts from the Declaration of Religious Principle and the Bylaws of Scouting America shall be entitled to register."

Source: Excerpt from the Declaration of Religious Principle on Adult Application form

Scouting America's Religious Principles

"From time to time, issues related to advancement call for an understanding of the position of Scouting America on religious principles.

"Scouting America does not define what constitutes belief in God or practice of religion. Neither does Scouting America require membership in a religious organization or association for membership in the movement. If a Scout does not belong to a religious organization or association, then the Scout's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be considered responsible for religious training. All that is required is the acknowledgment of belief in God as stated in the Declaration of Religious Principle and the Scout Oath, and the ability to be reverent as stated in the Scout Law."

Source: Guide to Advancement

Defining “Duty to God”

Note: Scouting America does not provide a standardized definition of “Duty to God” and instead generally allows Scouts to form their own definitions. Some rank requirements include that the Scout “Tell how you have done your duty to God,” but does not further specify what that duty includes. One of the few examples of an explanation can be found in the BALOO instruction materials:

“Remind the participants that duty to God may be practiced as ‘respect for other people and their beliefs.’”

Source: Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation Instructor Syllabus

Conducting Family & Reverence Adventures (Cub Scouts)

“The Family & Reverence Adventures are commonly done at home with the Cub Scout’s family because most dens have members from different faiths. In these situations, the den leader’s role is to make sure each family in their den knows the requirements and is aware of what they need to do at home to complete the Adventure.

“If your pack is chartered by a religious organization and every member of the den is also a member of that same religious organization, you can consider conducting these activities at den or pack meetings under the guidance of someone from your chartering organization.

“Still, leaders should ensure that every parent and guardian is aware of the content and the activities that the den will do and allow parents to opt out and complete the requirement at home, should they choose to do so.”

Source: Aaron on Scouting (official Scouting America blog)

<https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2024/12/09/cub-scoutings-family-reverence-adventures-are-great-for-winter-break/>