

## How to Host a Scout Sunday Event

Thanks for Scouter Erik Matz, Dan Patch District

A scout is reverent.

On my honor, I will do my duty to God...

Faith is one of Scouting's core values, and Scout Sunday is an opportunity to remind us all of this. It also gives units a chance to connect with the people in a given house of worship, to make them aware of Scouting and its values. Scout Sunday was started in the mid-1940s as part of the annual celebration of the founding of the Boy Scouts of America (8Feb1910). It is celebrated on the Sunday before 8Feb. However, if 8Feb happens to be on a Sunday, then that day will be celebrated as Scout Sunday. Since Scouting makes no distinction in religions, all religions may celebrate this, in an appropriate manner. Each faith has some slight distinctions on when the "official" Scout Sunday may be observed. For example, The Presbyterian Church and United Methodist Church celebrate Scout Sunday on the second Sunday of February, and in the Jewish faith, Scout Sabbath is celebrated on the Saturday after February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day. If there are timing conflicts, then be flexible, it would be better to have the event on an "unofficial" date than not have it at all.

Many units are chartered to a religious organization, and as such, this is an opportunity to provide positive exposure to its members, as well to say "thank you." If your unit is not chartered to a church, you are still more than able to participate or host a Scout Sunday event. There may be a church in which several of your Scouts belong that either charters another unit, or has no unit, but chances are they'd welcome your participation in a Scout Sunday event – just ask! The members of my church have told me how much they enjoy this event; my hunch is that not only do they like to see the youth of their church grow, but it provides a break from the same-old, same-old church service.

This document will focus on Scout Sunday. It will provide information for how to plan and carry out a Scout Sunday service. I created this documents based on my experiences over the last few years, as well as a few websites listed below. These websites provide a lot of information, and I'm going to sample from them collectively the points that I feel are the most important. However, if you don't think you're getting the information you need from this document to put on a Scout Sunday event, check out the websites, or email me (erikmartz@yahoo.com). Finally, once you've had your event, document what you did, what worked, and what didn't, so that the people hosting Scout Sunday next year can do it and learn from your experiences. Always be continuously improving!

<http://usscouts.org/scoutsunday.asp>

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Media/Relationships/ascoutisrevernt.aspx>

[http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Scout\\_Sunday](http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Scout_Sunday)

<http://www.nccs-bsa.org/activities/ScoutSunday.php>

## Timeline

### 2-3 months before Scout Sunday (SS):

Talk with the pastor or appropriate leader at the church, as well as your unit leaders, to secure the date (ref above). Determine a general scope of the event with the pastor, and agree to follow-up on this later (about 1 month before SS).

Your unit may not be the only scouting unit chartered to the church, so ask about this, and then going forward, coordinate with these units as well. You can use this opportunity to strengthen ties between a Cub Scout Pack and Boy Scout Troop.

Check with your unit about any write-up or instructions / guidelines they have on SS. Oftentimes units have this information they can quickly give to someone new to the position of coordinating SS. If not, then during this process take notes and create your own file (electronic document would be easiest – you can archive this on your unit's website).

### 1 month before SS:

Remind your unit (email, website calendar, newsletter, etc.) of the event, and the need for volunteers to participate in the ceremony.

Follow-up with the pastor on the scope of the service, and how the scouts will be participating. Work together to select scripture, songs, etc. that have a scout theme. Determine where in the service the various events will be occurring so this can be printed in the church bulletins.

Ask that an announcement be put into the church bulletin welcoming all scouts (Cub, Boy, Venture, Girl) to participate. Chances are there will be church members who are scouts, but not in your unit. Invite them to participate. Provide a contact person if they'd like to participate in the ceremony.

You'll want scouts to: carry unit flag(s), American flag, recite Cub/Boy/Girl/Venture Scout promises/oaths/laws (depending on the units participating), serve as greeters, acolytes, altar bearers, offering collectors, etc (coordinate this with the pastor). Recruit scouts to read scripture lessons, participate in a scout related reading (see below – consider the ages of the scouts when selecting readings), have the unit leader give a "thank you" speech if this is their chartered organization, or just for allowing them to participate in the SS event. Scoutmasters could give a Scoutmaster Minute on "A Scout Is Reverent."

Plan to spend a little time at the unit meeting just prior to SS to rehearse.

### 1 week before SS:

Make arrangements to order any refreshments for after the service. If you are planning on having a unit display at the church, make arrangements for the people to set this up (mock campsite, uniform/patch or other type of scout collection, pinewood derby track with cars, etc.).

Provide the church with list of scouts participating in the event so they can include these in their bulletins (you may need to provide this information sooner, depending on the church).

Confirm with the church if the scouts will be sitting together, and if yes, where. Arrange to section off pews for this purpose.

### Day of SS:

Have scouts arrive, in full uniform, 30-45min early to rehearse (readings, songs, and especially the flag ceremony & scout law/oath/etc – the bigger group events needing more coordination).

Have greeters and ushers set-up about 15-20min before the service will start. Both scouts and leaders can serve in this role.

If you're going to have a slideshow, make sure your computer and projector are set-up and working.

Ensure that the pews the scouts will be sitting in are marked "reserved for scouts."

Do a quick check with the pastor to make sure they know what the order of events is (remember, this is not in their regular church service – you may need to guide them as well). A lot of the SS stuff may happen at the beginning of the service, and flow together, but stuff like the retiring of the colors can sometimes be overlooked.

Talk to the parents of any of the scouts who are attending, but not members of the church, how the service will go (any rules / guidelines about communion, donations, seating, flow of the service – stuff to make them more comfortable).

Get refreshments set-up.

Make a list of scouts who participate (after SS, you can purchase SS patches for them).

### 1-2 weeks after SS:

Do a recap of what worked, and what didn't. Compile your notes into a SS document for your unit to use next year, or add to the document your unit already has. Get feedback from the scouts, leaders, and church members.

### Other Tips / Suggestions:

Consider a Saturday night church lock-in. Have the scouts make refreshments (dutch oven cooking, cookies they can make in the church kitchen, etc.)

Acknowledge past scouts during the service (ask them to stand-up).

Use this opportunity to award religious emblems to any scouts.

Present the chartered organization (assuming it's the church) with some sort of recognition. Oftentimes the council will have certificates that the units are to give to their chartered organization.

Coordinate SS with a food drive, or another church service project.

Do a photo slideshow of the things the boys have been doing over the year.

If your unit has a Chaplain's Aid, they can show leadership by coordinating this event.

Any boy scouts working on Communications merit badge need to give a 5min speech...they can do one on what scouting means to them during the service.

Suggested Scout Readings ([http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Scout\\_Sunday](http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Scout_Sunday))

### Responsive Reading: The Scout Law

**Leader:** The Scout Law is a guiding light to millions of boys and young adults throughout the world today, but the principles of the law have been brought to us from ancient days.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

**Scouts:** A Scout is trustworthy.

**Leader:** He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. (Luke 16:10)

**Scouts:** A Scout is loyal.

**Leader:** You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. ... (Leviticus 19:18)

For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to thy needy and to the poor, in the land. (Deuteronomy 15:11)

**Scouts:** A Scout is helpful.

**Leader:** Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. (Romans 12:10)

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! (Psalm 133)

**Scouts:** A Scout is friendly.

**Leader:** Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4:29)

**Scouts:** A Scout is courteous.

**Leader:** A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel. (Proverbs 12:10)

**Scouts:** A Scout is kind.

**Leader:** Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth. (Ephesians 6:1-3)

**Scouts:** A Scout is obedient.

**Leader:** A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken. The mind of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly. All the days of the afflicted are evil, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast. (Proverbs 15:13-15)

**Scouts:** A Scout is cheerful.

**Leader:** Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer or ruler, she prepares her food in summer, and gathers her sustenance in harvest. (Proverbs 6:6-8)

**Scouts:** A Scout is thrifty.

**Leader:** Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be in dread of them: for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

**Scouts:** A Scout is brave.

**Leader:** Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of his salvation. (Psalm 24:3-5)

**Scouts:** A Scout is clean.

**Leader:** And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. (Mark 12:30)

**Scouts:** A Scout is reverent, he is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties and respects the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion.

-----  

### Responsive Reading: On My Honor (can be modified for the Cub Scout Promise, etc.)

**Leader:** All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. (Psalm 25:10)

**Scouts:** On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country.

**Leader:** Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord the people whom he has chosen as his heritage. (Psalm 33:12)

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare will they give you. (Proverbs 3:1-2)

**Scouts:** On my honor I will do my best to obey the Scout Law—and the Law is this: A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

**Leader:** And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:37-39)

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

**Scouts:** On my honor I will do my best to help other people at other times.

**Leader:** Remember also the Golden Text: And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. (Luke 6:31)  
Do you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are. (I Corinthians 3:16-17)

**Scouts:** On my honor, I will do my best to keep myself mentally awake.

**Leader:** Wisdom is the principal thing: Do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Get wisdom; get insight. (Proverbs 4:5)

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to thy word. (Psalm 119:9)

**Scouts:** On my honor, I will do my best to keep myself morally straight.

**Leader:** Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)