

WHAT IS A BOY SCOUT?

A Glimpse of the Life of the Boy Who "Belongs"

A SCOUT! He enjoys a hike through the woods more than he does a walk over the city's streets. He can tell North or South or East or West by the "signs." He can tie a knot that will hold, he can climb a tree which seems impossible to others, he can swim a river, he can pitch a tent, he can mend a tear in his trousers, he can tell you which fruits and seeds are poisonous and which are not, he can sight nut-bearing trees from a distance; he can reef a sail or take his trick at the wheel, and can pull an oar or use paddles and sculls; he knows the stars by name and can find his way by them; he can identify birds and animals and fish and knows the ways and habitat of each.

A Scout walks through the woods with silent tread. No dry twigs snap under his feet and no loose stones turn over and throw him off his balance. His eyes are keen and he sees many things that others do not see. He sees tracks and signs which reveal to him the nature and habits of the creatures that made them. He knows how to stalk birds and animals and study them in their natural haunts. He sees much, but is little seen.

A Scout, like an old frontiersman, does not shout his wisdom from the housetops. He possesses the quiet power that comes from knowledge. He speaks softly and answers questions modestly. He knows a braggart but he does not challenge him, allowing the boaster to expose his ignorance by his own loose-wagging tongue.

A Scout holds his honor to be his most precious possession, and he would die rather than have it stained. He knows what is his duty and all obligations imposed by duty he fulfills of his own free will. His sense of honor is his only taskmaster, and his honor he guards as jealously as did the knights of old. In this manner a Scout wins the confidence and respect of all people.

A Scout can kindle a fire in the forest on the wettest day and he seldom uses more than one match. When no matches can be had he can still have a fire, for he knows the secret of the rubbing sticks used by the Indians, and he knows how to start a blaze with only his knife blade and a piece of flint. He knows also the danger of forest fires, and he kindles a blaze that will not spread. The fire once started, what a meal there in the open! Just watch him and compare his appetite with that of a boy who lounges at a lunch counter in a crowded city. He knows the unwritten rules of the campfire and he contributes his share to the pleasures of the council. He also knows when to sit silent before the ruddy embers and give his mind free play.

A Scout practices self-control, for he knows that men who master problems in the world must first master themselves. He keeps a close guard on his temper and never makes a silly spectacle of himself by losing his head. He keeps a close guard on his tongue, for he knows that loud speech is often a cloak to ignorance, that swearing is a sign of weakness, and that untruth shatters the confidence of others. He keeps a close guard on his appetite and eats moderately of food which will make him strong; he never uses alcoholic liquors because he does not wish to poison his body; he desires a clear, active brain, so he avoids tobacco.

A Scout never flinches in the face of danger, for he knows that at such a time every faculty must be alert to preserve his safety and that of others. He knows what to do in case of fire, or panic, or shipwreck; he trains his mind to direct and his body to act. In all emergencies he sets an example of resourcefulness, coolness, and courage, and considers the safety of others before that of himself. He is especially considerate of the helpless and weak.

A Scout can make himself known to a brother Scout wherever he may be by a method which only Scouts can know. He has brothers in every city in the land and in every country in the world. Wherever he goes he can give his signs and be assured of a friendly welcome. He can talk with a brother Scout without making a sound or he can make known his message by imitating the click of a telegraph key. A Scout is kind to everything that lives. He knows that horses, dogs, and cats have their rights and he respects them. A Scout prides himself upon doing "good turns," and no day in his life is complete unless he has been of aid to some person.

A Scout does not run away or call for help when an accident occurs. If a person is cut he knows how to stop the flow of blood and gently and carefully bind up the wound. If a person is burned his knowledge tells him how to alleviate the suffering. If anyone is dragged from the water unconscious, a Scout at once sets to work to restore respiration and circulation. He knows that not a minute can be lost.

A Scout knows that people expect more of him than they do of other boys and he governs his conduct so that no word of reproach can truthfully be brought against the great brotherhood to which he has pledged his loyalty. He seeks always to make the word "Scout" worthy of the respect of people whose opinions have value. He wears his uniform worthily.

A Scout knows his city as well as he knows the trails in the forest. He can guide a stranger wherever he desires to go, and this knowledge of short-cuts saves him many needless steps. He knows where the police stations are located, where the fire-alarm boxes are placed, where the nearest doctor lives, where the hospitals are, and which is the quickest way to reach them. He knows the names of the city officials and the nature of their duties. A Scout is proud of his city and freely offers his services when he can help.

A Scout is a patriot and is always ready to serve his country at a minute's notice. He loves Old Glory and knows the proper forms of offering it respect. He never permits its folds to touch the ground. He knows how his country is governed and who are the men in high authority. He desires a strong body, an alert mind, and an unconquerable spirit, so that he may serve his country in any need. He patterns his life after those of great Americans who have had a high sense of duty and who have served the nation well.

A Scout chooses as his motto "Be Prepared," and he seeks to prepare himself for anything--to rescue a companion, to ford a stream, to gather firewood, to help strangers, to distinguish right from wrong, to serve his fellow men, his country, and his God--always to "Be Prepared".

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