

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SCOUTING

THE SCOUT MOVEMENT DEFINED

The Scout movement is defined as:

“.....a voluntary, non-political, educational movement for young people – open to all without distinction of origin, race, or creed, in accordance with the purpose, principles and method conceived by the Founder....”

THE PURPOSE OF SCOUTING

The purpose of Scouting is:

“To contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

PRINCIPLES OF SCOUTING

Scouting is based on three broad principles, which represents its fundamental laws and beliefs. They are referred to as:

1. “Duty to God and Country”
2. “Duty to Others”
3. “Duty to Self”

THE SCOUT METHOD

The Scout method is defined as: “a system of progressive self-education through:

1. A Promise/Oath and Law;

The first element of Scout method is “A Promise/Oath and Law.” The Scout Promise/Oath and Law are the basic tools for the formulation of the principles of the Scout Movement. Here, however, we are concerned not so much with the ethical principles contained in the Scout Promise/Oath and Law. A young person makes of his own free will, a personal commitment to a given code of behavior and he accepts, before a peer group, the responsibility to be faithful to the given word. The permanent identification with these ethical values and the sustained effort to live up to those ideals to the best of his ability (“I will do my best”) are therefore the most powerful instrument in the development of young people.

2. Learning by Doing;

Another basic element of the Scout Method is the concept of active education, or more simply, **LEARNING BY DOING**, which has become a cornerstone of modern education. This concept appears throughout the writing of the Founder, who has systematically emphasized that “a boy is always ready to do rather than to digest.” (1) The idea in

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Scouting that learning must be by observation, experimentation and personal activity was praised by Dr. Maria Montessori, one of the greatest authorities in the field of active education. When asked how her system would be applied to children when they had grown out of the infant stage after six or seven years of age, Dr. Montessori replied: "you in England have the Boy Scout, and their training is a natural continuation of that which I give to the children." (2) A program which is not based upon the concept of "learning by doing" cannot be considered a Scout program.

3. Membership of Small Groups

Membership in small groups (e.g., the patrol) under adult guidance, progressive discovery and acceptance of responsibility and training towards self-government, directed towards the development of character, and the acquisition of competence, self-reliance, dependability and capacities both to cooperate and to lead;

The advantage of small groups as agents of socialization – i.e. facilitating the integration of young people in social life – has long been recognized by social science. In this respect, it is an acknowledged fact that, in the peer group, relationship takes place at the primary level. The small number of people, the lasting character of the relationships, the identification of all the members of the group with the objectives, the thorough knowledge of other persons in the group, the mutual appreciation within the group, together with the feeling of freedom and spontaneity and the fact that social control takes place informally – all these provide an ideal atmosphere for young people to undergo the process of their transformation into the adult age.

This small group operation thus provides opportunities for young people to progressively discover and accept the idea of responsibility and trains them toward self-government. This facilitates the development of young people's character and enables them to acquire competence, self-reliance, dependability and capacities both to cooperate and to lead.

In the above process, the role of adult is one of guidance. It consists in helping young people to discover their potential to assume responsibility in social life. The role of adults should not be conceived as one of control, since young people can only develop fully in a climate of respect and appreciation of their personality. When truly applied, this relationship between young people and adults fulfill an essential need of modern society, since it provides a platform for dialogue and cooperation between generations.

4. Progressive and Stimulating Programs

Progressive and stimulating programs of varied activities based on the interest of the participants, including games, useful skills, and services to the community, taking place largely in an outdoor setting in contact with nature."

The three elements of the Scout Method mentioned above are concretely expressed within a Scout Program, which is the totality of activities practiced by young people in Scouting. This program must be conceived as an integrated whole and not as a collection of miscellaneous and unrelated activities. The Basic characteristic of this program constitutes the fourth element of the Scout Method.

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4.1. The Scout program must be conceived in a progressive way in order to satisfy the need for a gradual and harmonious development of young people. One tool to achieve this progression is the test and badge system (or progressive scheme, advancement plan or system, etc.)

4.2 To achieve its objectives, a program must also be stimulating in order to appeal to those to whom it is addressed. In this respect, the program should be a balanced combination of varied activities which are based on the interests of the participants. This, when observed in the design of a program, is one of the best guarantees for its success.

In the balanced combination in varied activities, games, useful skills and services to the community are three major areas, which should be taken into account by those designing a program. A harmonious combination of activities falling within these three areas constitutes the best way to ensure that the program reaches its educational objectives.

Since the inception of Scouting, nature and the life in the outdoors have been considered as the ideal framework of the Scout activities. The Founder attached a very great importance to nature. Indeed he subtitled "Scouting for Boys", a Handbook for instruction in good citizenship through woodcraft" and he defined woodcraft as being the "knowledge of animal and nature." (3) The importance attached by Baden-Powell to nature was not only due to the obvious benefits of life in the outdoors but also for the physical development of the young people.

Thus, from the point of view of intellectual development, the numerous challenges that nature presents stimulate the creative capabilities of young people and enable them to reach solutions based on combinations of elements which the over-organized life in most cities would never have provided.

Furthermore, from the point of view of social development, the common sharing of risks and challenges and the collective struggle for the satisfaction of vital needs, creates a powerful link between members of the group. It enables them to understand fully the meaning and importance of life in society.

SPIRITUAL TRAINING

Finally, nature plays a fundamental role in the spiritual development of young people. In the founder's own words:

"The atheists maintain that a religion has to be learnt from books. God has given us one step, the great Book of Nature to read; and they cannot say that there is untruth there – the facts stand before them I do not suggest Nature Study as a form of worship or as a substitute for religion, but I advocate the understanding of Nature as a step, in certain cases, towards gaining religion." (4) Consequently, to Baden-Powell, the wonder Of all wonders is how some teachers have neglected this (i.e., nature study) easy and unfailing means of education and have struggled to impose biblical instructions as the first step towards getting a restless, full-spirited boy to think of higher things." (5) Whenever possible, therefore, Scout activities should take place in an outdoor setting in contact with nature, since it provides the ideal environment in which a harmonious and integrated development of the young person can take place.

THE RELIGIOUS POLICY OF THE BSP

Scouting recognizes the necessity of religion in the life of the boy and urges its practice but it does not assume authority for any religious institution.

Article III, Section 2, Declaration of religious Principles as stated in the By-Laws of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines recognizes the existence of GOD. It therefore, maintains that no boy can grow to his fullest potential without doing his obligation to GOD. The Boy Scouts of the Philippines, however, has a non- sectarian approach to the implementation of training and program to our Scouts. Although it recognizes that religion plays an important role in the total development of its members, it respects their right and conviction on matters of religion.

As such, the Boy Scouts of the Philippines is open for membership to all boys and young men regardless of their religious affiliations.

In no case shall any member be required or subjected to take part in the activities of religious denominations other than his own.

WORLD BROTHERHOOD

The Boy Scouts of the Philippines believes in the universality of Scouting and the brotherhood of all men. It is best demonstrated in the adoption of the uniform worn by its members. A distinct feature of the uniform is the neckerchief, which symbolizes the Scout's pride in belonging to a dynamic movement, the largest volunteer organization for boys in the world and the equality of all its members.

The participation of KAB Scouts in the Younger Brothers' Day Program during Jamboree/Scouting activities is a good opportunity for the KAB Scouts to realize that they belong to the World-Wide Brotherhood of Scouts.

Having similar insignias elder Scouts attached to their uniform indicates the universality of the movement to which they belong.