



A SCOUT IS REVERENT

The Relationships Committee of the Pony Express Council welcomes you to an awesome week of camping at Camp Geiger. Geiger is a beautiful camp with many unique programs. We hope that during your busy week you and your Troop will take time to reflect upon God's Blessings in your life. As you walk the hills and valleys of our Reservation, what a wonderful time to see God's handiwork in the trees, birds, and everything around you.

Our program at Geiger is designed to help each one feel God's presence as you participate in the camping experience. Below are some of the ways your troop can participate in our religious activities and enhance your experience at Camp Geiger:

* Participate in Grace before each meal.

*Participate in the Vesper Services on Monday evening after the evening meal. There is a service for both Protestant and Catholic Scouts and Scouters. Local Priests will conduct the Catholic Mass and our Camp Chaplain, Ken Paden, will conduct the Protestant Service.

*Participate in our "Camp Geiger Duty to God Program". Information about this program is outlined below. The 'Duty to God' patches can be purchased at the Trading Post later in the week. You will find Daily Devotionals that may be used by your troop in the campsite.. We hope that you will involve a scout, such as your Troop Chaplain Aide and an adult to oversee this program.

*Our Honorary Camping Society, "The Tribe of Mic-O-Say", is also designed to provide a very rewarding and uplifting experience.

Have a great week and may God bless each of you with an outstanding camping experience together!

Pony Express Council Relationships Committee

Chaplain Aide Duties

Lead your Troop or Patrol to strengthen their own relationship with God through personal prayer, devotions and participation in religious activities.

Teach the Camp Geiger Grace to your Troop or Patrol and use it for all meals.

Lead your Troop to attend religious services while at Camp Geiger (Monday Evening)

Lead your Troop in daily devotions using the interfaith devotions and prayers provided, being sensitive to the various faiths represented in the Troop. Suggested use: Gather the Troop each morning in Camp for a short Flag Raising Ceremony and follow by reading one of the "Daily Devotions" and follow with a short prayer.

Provide information on religious emblems (God and Country Awards) to the Troop.

Encourage the Troop and Patrols to participate in the "Duty to God Program" while at Camp Geiger and earn a beautiful Duty to God Patch (See program below)

Collaborate with the Camp Master, Scout Master, and the Troop Chaplain in assisting the Troop during any interpersonal difficulties that may arise.

Summer Camp "Duty to God" Program

Participants will earn a beautiful "Duty to God Patch" by participating in this on going program at Camp Geiger. This can be worn as a temporary patch on the pocket of the scout uniform. The purpose of the program is to help youth and adults experience God at Camp and also learn how they can earn their Religious Emblems Award later in their own Church. Patches are available in the Camp trading Post.

Eligibility: Both youth and adults

Program requirements:

1. Participants must complete the four requirements:
 - a. Attend a religious service at Camp Geiger
 - b. Participate in or help lead at least three daily devotionals with your Troop.
 - c. Learn the Camp Geiger Grace or another Grace and repeat/explain these to the Troop Chaplain Aide.
 - d. The Troop leaders must promise to review the Duty to God Religious Emblems Brochure (no. 5-879)* and make a presentation at a regular troop meeting. Youth must promise to attend the presentation and commit to earning the Religious Emblem of their Faith at an appropriate time, or if already earned, help explain to another Scout. Adults would agree to help make the presentation or serve as a counselor in their local church to promote the Religious Emblems Program.
 - e. A second, third, and fourth year patch can be earned by completing the requirements above and by helping explain the program to other scouts at one of the regular meetings of your troop.

Scout leaders may pick up patches at the Trading Post for those who have completed the requirements above and are eligible for the "Duty to God Patch"

* Leaders: For more information go to (www.praypub.org and www.scouting.org/awards/religious/index.html)

Summer Camp Interfaith Devotions



BEING PUT TOGETHER RIGHT

Daniel Beard, one of the founders of the Boy Scouts of America, once said, “This was a good country in the past. It is a good country today. It will be a good country tomorrow unless we fail it.” There’s a story about parents who were having trouble getting their child interested in geography. They thought that if they purchased a puzzle of the United States, the puzzle would spark her interest. And to their amazement this child was able to put together that puzzle in no time at all. They asked her how she did it in such a short time. She explained that on the back of the map was a picture puzzle of the face of George Washington. She said, “When you get the man put together right, the United States comes out all right too.” Now that’s a significant insight. Because the best way to put things together as they should be in our country, in the world, is for each of us to be “put together right.” This story has important applications. Being “put together right” begins with our faith in God. It is living our faith that inspires us and molds us into people who reflect the image of God in our world. Being “put together right” means that we put faith, family, and friends first in the priorities of our lives. More than ever before our society, our nation, and our world need people just like you, people who are being “put together right,” people who will make a significant difference in the world and produce a secure future for themselves and their families.

PRAYER: God, I am thankful that I live in such a wonderful country as the United States of America. I am thankful for all the blessings you have bestowed on my country. Knowing that a good nation must be made from the strengths of its people, help me to be the best citizen I can be so that I will make a difference today and every day. Amen.

CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THE LIGHT

A troop of Scouts was touring Chicago. One of the highlights of their trip was to go to the observation deck near the top of the Sears Tower, a hundred floors above the ground. It was late in the afternoon, and far below busy traffic was moving along the city streets and people were hurrying home from work. One of the Scouts noticed something. People who were walking into the sun, low in the western sky, were walking with their shadows behind them while people walking in the opposite direction, away from the sun, were walking into their shadows. It didn't take him very long to make a connection between what he was seeing and his own faith tradition. Many faiths use the contrast between light and dark as an image of good and evil. To be in the light, or walking toward the light, is to be moving toward God, who is the source of all love and goodness for us and for all God's creation. To be walking away from the light, into one's shadow, can be compared to walking away from God, away from all that is good, into the darkness of separation from God, from others, from self, and even from God's own creation, of which we are a part. The choice is ours, isn't it? We can either choose to do that which is good or that which is bad, to live close to God or away from God and from one another. Which choices have you made in your own life? When have you made them? When have you changed direction and moved toward God and the light? How have you helped a friend, perhaps a Scout of your troop or patrol, to find the direction that leads to the light of God? The next time you are outside on a sunny day observe where your shadow is and make that a reminder of the teachings of your faith tradition about the power of God and the power of evil and the choices we make.

PRAYER: God, you are my light. Help me always to make choices that lead to you and give me the strength to follow them. Amen.

WORK HARD, PLAY FAIR, AND PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE

“Work hard, play fair, and paddle your own canoe.” These are the words of Walter Jones, who was the equivalent of an Eagle Scout as a boy in Canada and an active adult Scout leader in both Canada and the United States throughout his life. He was also a leader in his religious faith tradition in both countries. His favorite advice to his own children and to youth in general is summed up in these words, “work hard, play fair, and paddle your own canoe.” Walter Jones’s wish for every young person, indeed every person, was for each to reach his or her full God-given potential in life. To “work hard” does not necessarily mean hard physical labor. It means to dedicate yourself to getting a good education, to helping out at home in the neighborhood and community where you live, and to finding the career that best fits your abilities and gifts. This will help you support your family and make you a productive citizen willing to give of yourself to make your community better. To “play fair” means to have fun in life, to enjoy time with family and friends, to know the benefits of recreation without always having to come in first, to develop the kind of values and character that will make others want to spend time with you. To “paddle your own canoe” means not to compare yourself with others, but to be fully the person God would have you to be. What other meanings in these words of advice can you think of for your own life? How does your Scouting experience help you fulfill these concepts? God does indeed want us to be the best we can be, and one way to reach that is to “work hard, play fair, and paddle your own canoe.”

PRAYER: God, help me to honor you with my life today. Help me to do my best for you in things I will learn today, in my companionship with my friends, and in reaching the goals that you have helped me set for myself. Amen.

**“YESTERDAY IS HISTORY, TOMORROW IS MYSTERY,
TODAY IS....”**

There's an old saying, "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is mystery, today is..." We can fill in the answer to what today is in many ways. What are some of the ways you would answer that? Let's look at it in light of the opportunities that you have in your life. Yesterday is indeed history. It is past. It is gone. It is only now in your memory. Perhaps it was a really good day, perhaps only an average day with nothing of real note taking place. Or maybe it was the kind of day that we all have from time to time, a day we are glad is over and gone. And then there's tomorrow. Tomorrow has not yet come. We may have plans for tomorrow, things to do, friends to hang out with, school work to complete, places to go, but until tomorrow is here we don't really know whether or not we will be able to fulfill our plans. Tomorrow is filled with unknowns. Tomorrow truly is a mystery for us. But what about today? Today is the only "real" time we have. What are your plans for today? What are your goals for this day? How are you going to honor and thank God today by the things you say and you do, and the things you don't say and don't do? Each new day brings with it a chance for a new beginning. The choices you make today may be influenced by what happened yesterday, and they may affect what you plan for tomorrow. But today is God's gift to you. Be thankful for it and do your best to make it the best day of your life and a day in which you will come closer to the person God would have you to be.

PRAYER: God, today is the day that you have made. Help me to rejoice and be thankful for this day and live it fully. Amen.

THIS FRAGILE EARTH, OUR ISLAND HOME

Astronomer Carl Sagan often presented a vision of planet Earth by reflecting on a spacecraft with intelligent beings approaching Earth from a distant place in the universe. His descriptions of what these beings see as they come closer and closer to Earth, with increasing clarity of the planet and its many life forms and human-made objects, were always very vivid. Many lessons can be learned from such images. On a dark and clear night go off to a place where you can see the myriad of stars and heavenly bodies clearly in the darkened sky. Pick out the pinpoint of light of a distant star and pretend that it is planet Earth and you are looking at it from an almost unimaginable distance. It seems like a very insignificant place amid the visible stars and other objects in the night sky, doesn't it? Reflect on the fact that this is what our Earth does look like from such a distance. Now think of that famous picture of the rising Earth taken from the moon a few decades ago, that exquisite watery blue sphere with its white cloud formations and the broad expanses of its continents clearly visible, this "fragile Earth, our island home." Think about how unique Earth is in our solar system, perhaps even in our Milky Way Galaxy and beyond. Think about our place on Earth as human beings created in the image and likeness of God and what that means in terms of our relationship to all of God's creation, both on Earth and throughout the universe. How privileged we are to be co-creators with our God and to share in the wonders of God's universe! It is a humbling experience, a beautiful experience, and an experience beyond words. Relax, reflect, enjoy, praise and thank God in your own words. And promise to do your part to take care of your world and the people within it.

PRAYER: Thank you for helping me to know that in the immense and beautiful universe you continue to create you have made me unique and special in your image and likeness. Amen.

PURPOSE AND DESIGN IN GOD'S CREATION

God's design of God's creation is a wonderful miracle. The beauty of nature is inspiring. As often as you can, spend at least a few minutes a day to look closely at some part of the natural world around you. Give thanks to God for its design and its connection to all other living things (and nonliving too, such as rock and earth and water and clouds). You will be awed by what you experience and discover. One day the writer of this reflection was sitting quietly in a sunny location in Florida when he happened to catch in his vision the tiniest of brightly colored spiders dropping on a thread of silk from a tree branch. As he watched, this spider swayed in the light breeze until he landed on another lower branch. It was not long before a framework for a web was formed from three or four sturdy single vertical strands placed at some distance from one another. Then the work of shaping the web began in earnest and was accomplished quite quickly. Around and around, beginning from the outside and working toward the center, this tiny spider connected strands of its web together in an exquisite geometric pattern, each circular strand perfectly separated from the next in an exact design. Finally the spider reached the very center and took up residence, waiting for an unsuspecting insect to be caught in the newly constructed web to provide the food and nourishment for the spider's life and species to continue. Each part of God's creation is uniquely gifted by its Creator with all it needs for survival and the continuance of its species. This is no less true for you. The difference is that you are aware of how you are using God's gifts to you. Use them wisely and for their intended purposes, and your life will bring equal glory to God as that tiny little spider in a tree in Florida did.

PRAYER: When our eyes behold the beauty and grandeur of your world, O God, we see the wisdom, power, and goodness of its Creator. Your name alone is exalted. Amen.