

NOVEMBER – DUTY TO GOD AND THE CUB SCOUTS

Music Full then Under

AARON: Hello, everybody. Thanks for tuning in to the November CubCast. This being the month of Thanksgiving, we thought it would be a good time to revisit a more reflective topic that we did several years ago.

AMY: Just like other aspects of Cub Scouting that have been reviewed and updated, so has the "Duty to God" part of our program.

AARON: And, hopefully, we'll all be more enlightened on this by the end of the show. So, let's start that journey right now.

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AARON: Kee Ostler has been involved on the unit, district, council, and national levels over the past 15 years. She currently serves as district roundtable Cub commissioner and chairperson for both the Montana New Adventure Training Modules Committee and the Montana Council Day Camp committee. For the last several years, Kee has been part of the team that has been rewriting the program for the new Cub Scout handbooks, den leader guides and pack meeting plans. She told us that even though her children are well past the Cub Scout age, she remains gold and blue through and through. Welcome to CubCast, Kee.

KEE: Thank you. Glad to be here.

AARON: So tell me what do we mean by "Duty to God?"

KEE: The Duty to God adventures in the Cub Scout program are a religious thing. As Scout leaders, our goal is to meet a boy at the stage he's at and help him move forward. So with that goal in mind, let's think for a minute about both the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. They lay the foundation for those goals that we would like them to build their lives upon.

We start our meetings with the Scout Oath; we then go on afterwards with the Scout Law. Between the statement "Duty to God" in the Scout Oath and ending the Scout Law with "reverent," both clearly state that faith is integral. What should be clear, though, is that neither of them are telling you how each boy in his family should worship. The Boy Scouts of America doesn't promote any specific faith. We respect each family's individual belief system.

AMY: I have two boys in Scouting. I've been a den leader for many years. My oldest son noticed our neighbor was struggling, and we just finished talking about the Duty to God in our den. And he comes to me and he's like, "Mom, our neighbor needs help, and I'm going to help them (be)cause that's what a good Scout would do." I'd like for you to explain to us how the new Duty to God program is different from the previous Cub Scout program.

KEE: Think about it this way... Revising the Scout program was similar to gardening. We wanted to keep what was working - because there were so many things that were great - and prune back which wasn't helping us grow so that our Cub Scouts could move forward. We've expanded the program to meet our boys' needs. The important things have stayed: Emphasis on God, emphasis on duty to those around you and on your family, like your young Scout recognizing that his neighbor needed help. That was a beautiful way that the Duty to God program was put into practice. The awards are still the same. The delivery (has) changed just a little bit. The requirements for each rank are more in-depth. There's more

of an emphasis on each Cub Scout learning about his faith by doing and not simply sitting and being told about it.

Each rank is also tailored to help boys learn at that age. For example at the Tiger rank he works primarily with his family and how they worship together. But as he progresses through Wolf, Bear, and Webelos, his maturity and learning styles are expanding. So there's an added chance for that to be reflected in his world around him. Starting in the Wolf rank, he gets to explore the faith in others like the groups of people that came to America for religious freedom. And in both Bear and Webelos, we see how that awareness of the world around him is reflected in his opportunity to combine faith with works like service projects or helping to plan and participate in either an interfaith or a religion-specific worship service.

AARON: Why couldn't the Duty to God program have just stayed the same as it was?

KEE Simply put, it changed because our boys deserve the better program. One of my favorite quotes from Robert Baden-Powell is that boys are not sitting-down animals. They definitely are curious about the world around them, and instead of squashing that, the new Cub Scout adventures embrace how boys learn and encourage them to learn by doing. This learning by doing approach doesn't just keep them engaged and excited, but it also helps prepare them for the independence and more in-depth activity that they're going to experience as Boy Scouts when they get older. We respect what was there before and we just have built upon that and encouraged it to work with the way the boys grow.

AMY: How can den leaders motivate or encourage parents to help their child earn the Duty to God adventure?

KEE: Unless their chartered organization is a religious one, you might have

boys of all different faiths in your den. So, being familiar with the Duty to God section for your boys in their den is integral. The Cub Scouts are taught at each rank to respect the beliefs of those around them.

So going back to the Scout Law, *A Scout is reverent*. And the definition of this is a Scout's reverent to God, he's faithful in his religious duties, and he respects the beliefs of others. So, clearly communicating with each Cub Scout's family that the Duty to God section is meant to be done with their family and that as a den leader, you're there to support them. Because this is required for rank advancement, it's critical that families are involved with the Duty to God adventures. We encourage families to be involved at every single level and have fun with us (be)cause it's a great place to be, but the Duty to God one is especially important to do with their Cub Scout. The other thing that den leaders can do is to be aware of what awards are available and how to find them.

AARON: Kee, can you go over some resources that are available for leaders to learn more about Duty to God and the adventures?

KEE: I'd be glad to. First, the best way is to read those adventures in both your leader guide and the boy handbook for each rank. It really helps you to understand what the overview is and how you can help the families learn with their boys and help them to progress with it. Many of the major world religions have created a religious emblem that can be earned during a Cub Scout's journey, and we want to make sure that all boys are included. So, for those that have religions that haven't created a specific emblem, there are alternative requirements in each handbook for the boys to be able to earn something. Every boy, no matter what their religion is, has the opportunity to earn the religious knot. This is a patch that's sewn onto the uniform. And it's the only one other than the Arrow of Light rank patch that can go onto their Boy Scout uniform. There are lots of fabulous resources online for both families and leaders. One of them is

www.praypub.org which helps you understand what the specific religions offer and just recently, cubscouts.org is now live, and there are new things being added as we speak. Each day, go back and check. Now, if you're a district or a council Scouter, you might wish to contact various religious groups in your district and let them know. They may not even be aware that they can work with the youth in their specific religions and you might encourage them to sponsor a religious-emblem workshop.

AMY: Wow. It is so exciting to have all these great Cub Scout resources new to us. Is there anything else about Duty to God we might want to share with our listeners?

KEE: I'd like to share that we need to enjoy this process. The Duty to God adventure really helps our boys look at the world around them and recognize that they're part of something larger. It's an exciting time to be involved in the boys' development. So, I encourage den leaders and parents alike to just find little ways to remind the boys that they're connected to something larger than themselves.

AARON: Well, as you explained, Kee, Duty to God is such an important part of the Cub Scout program. Thanks so much for being on CubCast for this enriching discussion.

KEE: Thank you for having me.

AMY: Now, let's head next door to hear what ScoutCast is doing; then, we'll be back with Reminders and Tips.

(Scoutcast – Scout Safety)

AMY: Now let's jump into Reminders and Tips for November. First, let's talk membership inventory. By now, all your new youth and adult applications from your recruiting drive should be submitted to the council office. It's a good idea to compare the MyScouting Tool's records to your own to make sure there are no discrepancies and that all those new folks are properly registered.

AARON: Now, ask yourself this: Do all of your dens have den chiefs? Talk to your commissioner or Scoutmaster about recruiting a Boy Scout to serve as a den chief. Being a den chief counts as a leadership position for the Scout's advancement. So you're doing a good turn by hiring a den chief. He'll also make a great program assistant.

AMY: As a bonus, you'll find you have a lot more time for yourself, and having this assistant will make you being a leader so much easier. Download the October 2013 CubCast to learn all about the joy of having a den chief.

AARON: Speaking of making your life easier, the Holiday Gift Guide in this month's *Boys' Life* magazine has lots of great ideas for what to get the kids for the holidays. Be sure to check it out.

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AARON: And that sadly brings us to the end of the November CubCast. Thanks to our guest, Kee Ostler, for joining us.

AMY: Don't forget to come back next month as we investigate how to prepare, not physically, but mentally for the family and resident camping. Until then, I'm Amy Hutcherson.

AARON: And I'm Aaron Derr. We leave you now with a Thanksgiving favorite from the Think & Grin section of *Boys' Life* magazine: What do you call a live turkey at Thanksgiving? Lucky.

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