

Holding a Scout's Own



The world we live in is becoming more and more materialistic. People are obsessed with the things they own or the things they achieve. But there is much more to life than what you own or what you achieve. Sometimes it's good to stop and think about the world around you, and to explore with others what the world means to you. A Scout's Own is an informal service that gives you the chance to do just that.

So what does a Scout's Own look like? Each one should be different, but will involve a gathering of Scouts which can range in size from a single Patrol to a whole Jamboree. They are usually based around a theme and include elements such as thoughts, stories, songs, drama or prayers that will help the participants to think about the theme.

As with many other aspects of Scouting, it is important that you yourself are involved in planning the Scout's Own. That way the service will mean more to you. While there are no hard and fast rules, the following are some general guidelines to consider when putting a Scout's Own together:

1. They should be relatively short. Fifteen to twenty minutes is a good guideline.
2. Ideally they should take place in a quiet and peaceful atmosphere, and where possible in a location in the out of doors. If you have to hold the Scout's Own indoors, try to create a special atmosphere by using candles for example.
3. There should be as much involvement by the Scout's participating as possible. If the Scout's are allowed to be passive during the service the chances are that they will not get anything of value from the service.
4. While a Scout's Own can of course include humour and noise, it should be remembered that the reason for the service is to encourage the participants to think about the theme you have chosen. So always

balance the 'lively' elements of the service with time for thought and reflection.

5. Scout's Owns are not Religious Services, nor are they meant as a substitute for them. You can of course include prayers or readings from different religions, but only if they help you think about the theme of your service.

So what themes should you pick? This is entirely up to you. The Scout Law and Promise are central to everything we do in Scouting and quite often a Scout's Own will be based on part of one of these. But you might want to consider a general theme such as respecting the environment or the importance of friends. You also might want to link your Scout's Own to the activity you are carrying out.

It is important to remember that the Scout's Own should be open to people of all religions. If you are including prayers or passages from religious books, you should ensure that you do not offend anyone. The best way to do this is to consider who will be participating in the service and you should not conduct the Scout's Own from any particular religious point of view. Take care of words used, if the group is 'mixed', your belief in God or a spiritual entity may differ from other peoples beliefs. If you are unsure of what to say or phrase to use, then ask those people who are attending for their guidance.



Some material which may be used as part of a Scouts Own

A Thought for Scout Sunday -- From Baden-Powell, Scouting for Boys

The old knights were very religious. They were always careful to attend religious services, especially before going into battle or undertaking any serious difficulty. They considered it the right thing always to be prepared for death. Besides worshipping God in church, the knights always recognized His work in the things which He made, such as animals, plants, and all scenery.

And so it is with peace scouts today. Wherever they go they love the woodlands, the mountains, and the prairies, and they like to watch and know about the animals that inhabit them, and the wonders of the flowers and plants.

No man is much good unless he believes in God and obeys His laws. So every Scout should have religion.

Religion seems a very simple thing: First: Love and serve God. Second: Love and serve your neighbour.

In doing your duty to God always be grateful to Him. Whenever you enjoy a pleasure or a good game, or succeed in doing a good thing, thank Him for it, if only with a word or two, just as you say grace at a meal. And it is a good thing to bless other people. For instance, if you see a train starting off, just pray for God's blessing on all that are in the train.

In doing your duty towards man, be helpful and generous, and always be grateful for any kindness done to you, and be careful to show that you are grateful. Remember again that a present given to you is not yours until you have thanked the giver for it.

While you are living your life on earth, try to do something good which may remain after you.

One writer says: "I often think that when the sun goes down the world is hidden by a big blanket from the light of heaven, but the stars are little holes pierced in that blanket by those who have done good deeds in this world. The stars are not all the same size; some are big, some are little, and some men have done great deeds and others have done small deeds, but they have made their hole in the blanket by doing good before they went to heaven."

Try to make your hole in the blanket by good work while you are on earth.

It is something to be good, but it is far better to do good.

"No man is much good unless he believes in God and obeys His laws. So every Scout should have a religion....Religion seems a very simple thing: First: Love and Serve God. Second: Love and serve your neighbour." - (Scouting For Boys, 1908)

"The atheists....maintain that a religion that has to be learnt from books written by men cannot be a true one. But they don't seem to see that besides printed books....God has given us as 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." - (Rovering To Success, 1930)

"Christ gave His life to show us that example, namely, to "Be Prepared" - no matter what it costs to ourselves - to do the right thing for others" (Adventuring To Manhood, 1936)



SCOUTS

"It is curious to me that men who profess to be good Christians often forget, in a difficulty, to ask themselves the simple question: "What would Christ have done under the circumstances?" and be guided accordingly. Try it the next time you are in any difficulty or doubt as to how to proceed."
(Adventuring To Manhood, 1936)

Wood and water ... wind and tree
Wisdom ... Strength ... and courtesy
Scouting's spirit go with thee

Children are children all over the world
They share the same big sky of blue
They share the same sun and the wind and the rain
The moon, and the same stars as you
They find games to play, just like you, everyday
They have birthdays and holidays, too
Did you ever think children all over the world
Are just little children like you?

The Dash

I read of a person who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.
She referred to the dates on her tombstone from the beginning...to the end. She noted that first came the date of her birth and spoke of the second with tears, But said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.
For that dash represented all the time that she spent alive on earth,
And now only the ones who loved her know best what that little line is worth.
For it matters not, how much we own; the cars, the house, the cash,
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.
So think about this long and hard, are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left. (You could be at "dash midrange")
If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and what's real,
And always try and understand the way other people feel.
And...be less quick to anger, and show appreciation more
And love the people in our lives like we never loved before.
If we treat each other with respect, and more often wear a smile,
Remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.
So, when your eulogy is being read with your life's actions to rehash.
Would you be pleased with the things they say about how you spent your----
DASH?

Diversity and Pluralism

Pass out a new penny to each person and explain:

Pluralism and diversity are sides of the same coin in Scouting.

The "tails" side stands for all of the many ways we are different from each other; culture, hair color, religion, ethnic background, and so on. It stands for everything that makes us individuals in our lives and Scouting. This is diversity.

The "heads" side of the coin stands for how we bring those individual differences together in Scouting and other areas of our lives to enrich and work for the same goals in this organization. This is pluralism.

So when you put this penny in your pocket or purse, or when you see a penny, it will remind you of the definitions of diversity and pluralism.

Do Good

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.





For the Campfire

Opening:

The life of a fire is like the life of a person. In its infancy, it is faint and weak and must be carefully nourished and tended. As it catches, it crawls and spreads like a child exploring its world. In its adolescence, it flares fast and bright, racing for new height. Soon, it will burn with the steady heat and light of its adulthood.

Closing:

A fire, in its later life, goes dim. No longer does it have the fierce brightness of its youth. Still, it gives a gentle, steady warmth, just as an elderly man or woman shares the warmth of understanding and the steadiness of experience. And, this is a fact of life: all things must die. The memory of those passed on lives deep and dear in our hearts. This fire will fade to cold ash, but its flame will glow in our memory.

by Greybeard

The Four Immeasurable Vows, Tantric Buddhism

May everyone have happiness and be the causes of happiness; this is immeasurable kindness;
May all things be liberated from suffering and the causes of suffering; this is immeasurable compassion;
May everyone be free from sadness and always stay happy; this is immeasurable joy;
May everyone be free of hate toward others, and develop faith in the equality of everyone; this is immeasurable fellowship
Friendship

I don't want to change you;
You know better than I what is best for you:
I don't want you to change me;
I only want you to accept me and respect my way;
Then our friendship will be rich,
Based on reality, not a dream.

--13th century Chinese thought

The Gift of the Trees

We all know (don't we?) that happiness comes from giving to others.

Long ago, when the Great Spirit first put human beings on earth, people were concerned and afraid. "Where will we find food and water?" they asked. The trees laughed softly. "We are your sisters," they said. "We will help you."

The maple tree spoke up: "I will give you sweet water to drink and make into sugar." The elm tree said, "Use my soft bark to make your baskets and tie them together with my tough cords." The hickory tree said, "My cousins and I will fill your baskets with sweet nuts." And she called the chestnut, beech, and walnut to help. The great pine tree whispered softly, "When you get tired, I will make you a bed. My cousins the balsam and cedar will help me."

There was sunshine in the people's hearts as they set out to explore their new world. But soon they came to a deep, wide river. "How will we ever cross the river?" they asked. The trees laughed and laughed. "Take my white skin," said the birch. "Sew it together with the cords of the elm tree and you can make a boat that will carry you across the widest river."

When the sun crossed the sky to his lodge in the west, the people felt cold. Then the balsam fir tree whispered, "Good people, there is much sunfire in my heart. Rub my branches together and you will make a fire." So the people made fire. And that night they slept soundly on the branches of the great pine tree. The north wind blew cold, but there was sunshine in the hearts of the people.

Now when children ask how they can repay the friendship of the trees, a wise person answers, "They do not ask for payment. But you can give trees your care and attention. You can give love and care to every plant and flower--that makes your life beautiful."





A Girl Scout Garden

How do you get a Scout troop/group going?

Answer: You plant one.

First, plant five rows of Peas:

Preparedness, Promptness, Perseverance, Politeness, Praise

Then, plant five rows of Lettuce:

Let us be open, Let us be honest, Let us be understanding, Let us be unselfish,
Let us help one another

Next to them, plant four rows of Squash:

Squash indifference, Squash negativism, Squash intolerance, Squash complacency

No garden is complete without Turnips:

Turn up for meetings, Turn up with determination, Turn up with new ideas

But without many hours of work and care no troop can grow. Without the help of every member, the Girl Scout 'garden' will turn to weeds:

Don't wait to be asked---ask for it!

Don't say I can't---do it!

Don't wait for someone else---be first!

Build the soil, pull the weeds, and reap the harvest.

Global Interdependence

Let's be fanciful for a moment and demonstrate our global interdependence by considering the doings of a hypothetical citizen:

His day begins as he steps out of his pyjamas garment which originated in Thailand, and he washes with soap invented by the ancient French. He shaves, an activity first developed by the ancient priests of Iraq and made a little less unpleasant by the use of a razor made of steel, an iron-carbon alloy discovered in Turkestan. Then, down to breakfast. The table cloth is made of cotton from Uganda and the cutlery of South African or Zimbabwe chrome, nickel from Canada and vanadium from Peru. A cup of Indian tea or Kenyan coffee, a slice of Danish bacon, an egg from poultry which has been raised on food imported from any of thirty countries from Iceland and Chile to Japan, and he's ready to go.



Our subject then dons a close-fitting suit, a form of dress native to Iran; he then adjusts his tie, which is, of course, the remnant of a shoulder shawl from Croatia. Then, complete with hat that originated in Korea, and umbrella, invented by the Chinese, he will dash for the train, which the British invented. He then pauses to buy a newspaper using coins which first made their appearance in ancient Turkey. Then he settles back to scan today's news---which will be set out in Arabic characters on a Chinese invention of paper, by means of a German printing process. He'll snort with disgust at the antics of those dreadful foreigners, and thank a Hebrew God in a Indo-European language that he is 100 per cent---a decimal system invented by the Greeks---a speaker of English, a word of course derived from Angle, a district in Holland.

But if his ancestors had really been minding their own business all those centuries, our subject could then have cut a dashing figure in a wolf-skin with a face covered in hair.

There is no escaping the fact that we are hopelessly indebted to all mankind for the very sinews of our life. A thousand tiny filaments join us to every race under the sun.

If a Child Lives With...

If a child lives with:

Criticism, she learns to condemn;
Hostility, she learns to fight;
Ridicule, she learns to be shy;
Shame, she learns to feel guilty.

But if a child lives with:

Tolerance, she learns to be patient;
Praise, she learns to appreciate;
Fairness, she learns justice;
Security, she learns to have faith;
Approval, she learns to like himself;
Acceptance and friendship,

Then the child learns to find love in the world.

--author unknown

Indian Blessing of the Four Winds

O Great Spirit:

Bless us from the North with the cool winds that calm our passions
Bless us from the East with the winds that bring and renew life
Bless us from the South with the warm wet winds that invite growth
Bless us from the West with the winds that lead us through this life to the next
Fill the sky so that we may sense Your presence
And bless us from Mother Earth from which we have come and to whom we shall return.

Lesson from the Geese

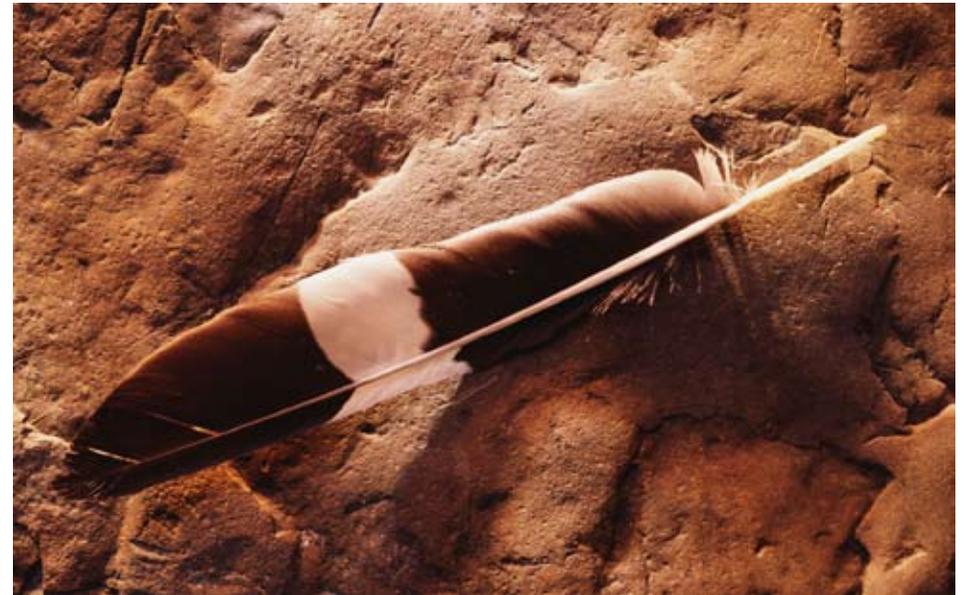
Have you ever wondered why migrating geese fly in V formation?
As with most animal behaviour, it shows us a valuable principle of mutual aid.

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird following. By flying in their V-group formation, the whole flock adds more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

When a goose falls out of foundation, it suddenly feels the resistance and quickly gets back in to take advantage of that lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point. The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

When a goose gets sick, wounded, or shot down, two others drop out of formation and follow to help and protect. They stay until the ailing member is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out, either on their own, with another group, or to catch up with the flock.





Life's Lessons Learned, by Age Level

I've learned that you can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk. Age 6

I've learned that I like my teacher because she cries when we sing "Silent Night".
Age 7

I've learned that when I wave to people in the country, they stop what they are doing and wave back. Age 9

I've learned that just when I get my room the way I like it, Mom makes me clean it up. Age 12

I've learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up. Age 13

I've learned that although it's hard to admit it, I'm secretly glad my parents are strict with me. Age 15

I've learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice. Age 24

I've learned that brushing my child's hair is one of life's great pleasures. Age 25

I've learned that wherever I go, the world's worst drivers have followed me there.
Age 29

I've learned...that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live, so that no one will believe it. Age 39

I've learned that there are people who love you dearly but just don't know how to show it. Age 41

I've learned that you can make someone's day by simply sending them a little card.
Age 44

I've learned that the greater a person's sense of guilt, the greater his need to cast blame on others. Age 45

I've learned that children and grandparents are natural allies. Age 46

I've learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift my spirits for hours. Age 49

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a man by the way he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. Age 52

I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you miss them terribly after they die. Age 53

I've learned that making a living is not the same thing as making a life. Age 58

I've learned that if you want to do something positive for your children, try to improve your marriage. Age 61

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. Age 62

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's glove on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back. Age 64

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, the needs of others, your work, meeting new people, and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you. Age 65

I've learned that whenever I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision. Age 66

I've learned that everyone can use a prayer. Age 72

I've learned that it pays to believe in miracles. And to tell the truth, I've seen several. Age 73

I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch --- holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.
Age 85

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. Age 92



SCOUTS

Like a Spider's Web

Peace is like a spider's web,
Vulnerable yet indestructible;
Tear it and it will be rewoven;
Peace does not despair.
Begin to weave a web of peace;
Start in the centre
And make peace with yourself
And your God;
Take the thread outwards
And build peace within your family,
Your community,
And in the circle include those you find hard to like;
Then stretch your concern into all the world.
Weave a web of peace and do not despair.

Our World

If we could at this time shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 1000 people, with all existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look like this:

There would be 584 Asians, 124 Africans, 95 Europeans, 84 Latin Americans, and 52 North Americans. 165 would speak Mandarin, 86 would speak English, 83 Hindu, 64 Spanish, 58 Russian, and 37 Arabic. Half of the village would consist of people who speak one of at least 207 other languages. 329 people would be Christian, 178 Moslem, 132 Hindu, and 62 Buddhist. The village would have 330 children and 60 people over the age of 65. Three-quarters of the wealth of the entire world would be in the hands of 200 people; another 200 people would only 2% of the world's wealth. Seventy would own automobiles, about one-third would have access to clean, safe drinking water, and three of the people would die every year from lack of food. Twenty-eight babies would be born into the village each year and two would die. 335 of the adults would be unable to read or write; only 12 people would have a college education. There would be 5 soldiers, 7 teachers, 1 doctor, and three refugees from war. One person in the village would have an HIV infection that has not developed in to AIDS.

When one considers our world from such an incredibly compressed perspective, the need for both tolerance and understanding becomes glaringly apparent.



Practice Random Kindness and Senseless Acts of Beauty

It's a crisp winter day in San Francisco. A woman in a red Honda, Christmas presents piled in the back, drives up to the Bay Bridge tollbooth. "I'm paying for myself, and for the six cars behind me," she says with a smile, handing over seven commuter tickets.

One after another, the next six drivers arrive at the tollbooth, dollars in hand, only to be told, "Some lady up ahead already paid your fare. Have a nice day."

The woman in the Honda, it turned out, had read something on an index card taped to a friend's refrigerator: "Practice random kindness and senseless acts of beauty." The phrase seemed to leap out at her, and she copied it down.

Judy Foreman spotted the same phrase spray-painted on a warehouse wall a hundred miles from her home. When it stayed on her mind for days, she gave up and drove all the way back to copy it down. "I thought it was incredibly beautiful," she said explaining why she's taken to writing it at the bottom of all her letters, "like a message from above."

Her husband, Frank, liked the phrase so much that he put it up on the wall for his seventh graders, one of whom was the daughter of a local columnist. The columnist put it in the paper, admitting that though she liked it, she didn't know where it came from [sic] or what it really meant.

Two days later, she heard from Anne Herbert. Tall, blonde, and forty, Herbert lives in Marin, one of the country's ten richest counties, where she house-sits, takes odd-jobs, and gets by. It was in a Sausalito restaurant that Herbert jotted the phrase down on a paper place mat, after turning it around in her mind for days. "That's wonderful!" a man sitting nearby said, and copied it down carefully on his own placemat.



"Here's the idea," Herbert says. "Anything you think there should be more of, do it randomly."

Her own fantasies include: (1) breaking into depressing-looking schools to paint the classrooms, (2) leaving hot meals on kitchen tables in the poor parts of town, (3) slipping money into a proud old woman's purse. Says Herbert, "kindness can build on itself as much as violence can." Now the phrase is spreading, on bumper stickers, on walls, at the bottom of letters and business cards. And as it spreads, so does a vision of guerrilla goodness.

In Portland, Oregon, a man might plunk a coin into a stranger's meter just in time. In Patterson, New Jersey, a dozen people with pails and mops and tulip bulbs might descend on a run-down house and clean it from top to bottom while the frail elderly owners look on, dazed and smiling. In Chicago, a teenage boy may be shoveling off the driveway when the impulse strikes. What the hell, nobody's looking, he thinks, and shovels the neighbor's driveway, too.

It's positive anarchy, disorder, a sweet disturbance. A woman in Boston writes "Merry Christmas!" to the tellers on the back of her checks. A man in St. Louis, whose car has just been rear-ended by a young woman, waves her away, saying, "It's a scratch. Don't Worry."

Senseless acts of beauty spread: A man plants daffodils along the roadway, his shirt billowing in the breeze from passing cars. In Seattle, a man appoints himself a one man vigilante sanitation service and roams the concrete hills collecting litter in a supermarket cart. In Atlanta, a man scrubs graffiti from a green park bench.

They say you can't smile without cheering yourself up a little -- likewise, you can't commit a random act of kindness without feeling as if your own troubles have been lightened if only because the world has become a slightly better place.

And you can't be a recipient without feeling a shock, a pleasant jolt. If you were one of those rush-hour drivers who found your bridge fare paid, who knows what you might have been inspired to do for someone else later? Wave someone on in the intersection? Smile at a tired clerk? Or something larger, greater? Like all revolutions, guerrilla goodness begins slowly, with a single act. Let it be yours.

Seven Steps to Stagnation

It's never been done that way.
We're not ready for that, yet.
We're doing fine without it.
We've tried that before, and it didn't work out.
It costs too much.
That's not our responsibility/We're not authorized to do it.
Experts say it won't work.

Ten Commandments of Human Relations

Speak to people---there is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
Smile at people---it takes sixty-five muscles to frown, only fifteen to smile.
Call people by name---the sweetest music to anyone's ear is the sound of their own name.
Be friendly and helpful---if you would have friends, be friendly.
Be cordial---speak and act as if everything that you do is a real pleasure.
Be genuinely interested in people---you can like everybody if you try.
Be generous with praise---cautious with criticism.
Be considerate of the feelings of others---it will be appreciated.
Be thoughtful of the opinions of others---there are three sides to a controversy; yours, the other person's, and the right one.
Be alert to give service---what counts most in life is what we do for others.

Ten Needs

To climb a mountain and to look afar.
To sit around an ember campfire, with good friends.
To test your strength and skill, on your own.
To be alone with your own thoughts and with God.
To be ready to reach out and find the hand of an understanding adult, ready and willing to help.
To have a code to live by---easily understood and fair.
A chance to play hard, just for the fun of it--and to work hard for the thrill of it.
To have a chance to fail--and know why.
To have and to be a good friend and to have a chance of proving both.
To have a hero, and a vision to measure her by.



SCOUTS