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In Our Own Way

LIVING A SCOUTING LIFE THROUGH FAITH

A HANDBOOK OF PRAYER AND DEVOTION

Edited by Robert Lee Edmonds

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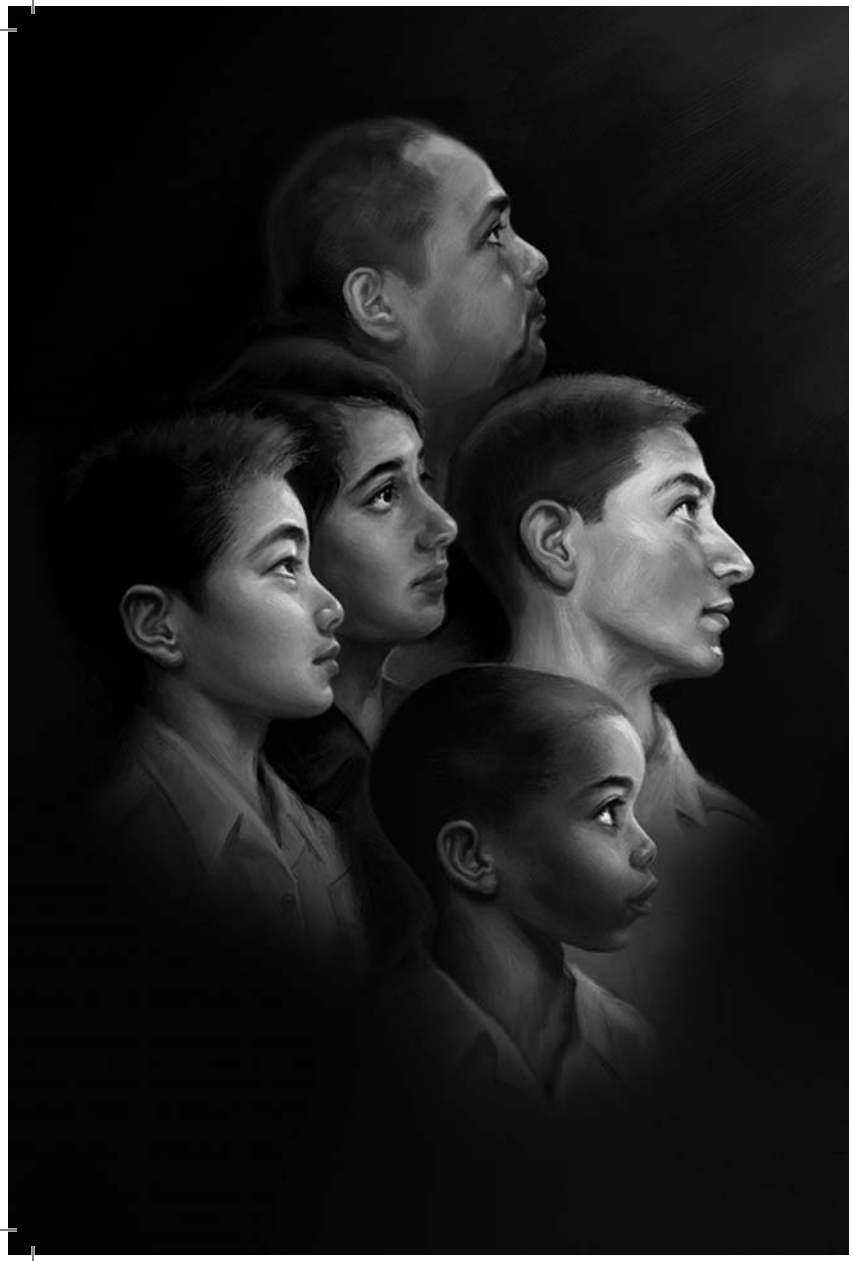
Great Spirit, You have been always,
and before You no one has been.
There is no other one to pray to but You. . . .
You where the sun shines continually,
You in the depths of the Heavens,
an eagle of power, behold!

Excerpt from a prayer by Black Elk,
an Oglala Lakota (Sioux) Holy Man (1863–1950)



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PREFACE

Scouting is deeply invested in spirituality. Faith has always been part of the Boy Scout philosophy. Lord Robert S.S. Baden-Powell once wrote that religion is life itself at its best and that every Scout should treat it as a manner of everyday life.[i] Baden-Powell believed that duty to one's faith means recognizing who and what God is, making the best of the life God has provided, and doing what God wants for us and others.[ii] These devout obligations form the foundation of a Scout's spiritual development and are an integral part of the fundamental principles and purpose of the Scouting movement.

Baden-Powell's beliefs and vision for developing youth guided the concept and structure of this book. *In Our Own Way* features prayers selected and composed by national religious leaders representing many faith traditions and denominations that participate in the religious emblems program of the Boy Scouts of America. This exclusive collection of devotions is organized within three categories that embody the traditional ideals of Scouting: reverence toward God, building good character, and being prepared to always do your best for yourself and

others. In this way every faith speaks directly to these essential Scout virtues in the beauty of their own distinctive words.

In Our Own Way celebrates the roots of our Scouting heritage. It is a handbook for all those sharing the spirit of fellowship with Scouts of every creed, custom, and tradition who, for over a century, have known the importance of reverent faith in God and living a worthy, purposeful life.

Robert Lee "Doc" Edmonds
Colleyville, Texas
18 November 2007

African Methodist Episcopal

Lord Almighty, You alone are pure, holy, faithful, and eternal. You inspire us to be more like You in our character and daily attitude striving for holiness and perfection. You have blessed us with fervent faith that inspires humble worship and thankful praise. May we forever be true to the divine call and will for our lives in word and deed. Amen.[2]

Armenian Apostolic

Your mercy is my hope, Lord.

You who are the glorious first light of our eyes and hearts.

You from whom all good deeds and all life come,
Turn with compassion toward me and bring my soul joyfully back to You.

For without You, I cannot be transformed anew.
Be my guide, Lord, show me the way,
Marking the footsteps on the path that leads to You.
Amen.[3]

Bahá'í

O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be a happy and joyful being. O God! I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life. O God! Thou art more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord.[4]

Baptist

Most Gracious God,
Today I stand in Your presence amazed at all of that You have created.

Give me the strength to see You as I reflect upon my life and the community.

Stretch me to rely on You in those moments when I am strong and when I am weak.

Challenge me to never find contentment in a world that needs helping hands and humble hearts,

Unity Churches

The light of God surrounds me;
The love of God enfolds me;
The power of God protects me;
The presence of God watches over me.
Wherever I am, God is![30]

Zoroastrian

I worship You by developing my good mind so that
I may learn the difference between right and wrong.
I worship You by standing for what is right and
good and against what is deceitful and evil.
I worship You by actions of righteousness.
I worship You in every man and woman who seeks
to follow Your way of righteousness.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the
glory, for ever and ever. Amen.[31]

2

"The religion of a man is not the creed he professes but his life—what he acts upon, and knows of life, and his duty in it. . . ."[1]

—*Lord Robert S.S. Baden-Powell, 1921*

CHAPTER TWO

BUILDING STRONG CHARACTER

The early visionaries of the Scout movement knew that from small acorns grow mighty oaks. At the heart of Scouting is the promise to strive toward developing positive personal values and a sense of duty. When reciting the Oath and Law we make a commitment to measure up to Scouting's high ideals in our conduct and actions to grow into responsible adults, productive citizens, and capable leaders.

Reverent faith in God sets a true moral compass and guides us to an honorable and meaningful life. We look to our Creator for the wisdom, courage, and power of spirit to overcome any challenge and reach our full potential.

The prayers in this chapter show that a faithful duty to God gives us the inspiration and purpose to be our best at all times.

Episcopal

O God, You made us in Your own image and redeemed us through Jesus Your Son:
Look with compassion on the whole human family;
Take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our human hearts;
Break down the walls that separate us;
Unite us in bonds of love;
And work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish Your purposes on earth;
That, in Your good time, all nations and all races, may serve You in harmony around Your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.[13]

General Church of the New Jerusalem (The New Church)

O Lord, be with me continually, life up and turn Your face to me that You may teach, enlighten, and lead me, for of myself I can do nothing that is good.[14]

Hindu

Om! May the Lord protect us both by revealing the true knowledge.
May He declare us safe through the results of true knowledge.
May we both attain vigor together and let our studies be invigorating.
May we not quibble at each other.
Om! Let there be Peace on earth, Peace in the Heavens, and Peace in all the spaces in between.[15]

Islamic

Our Lord! Bestow on us endurance and make our foothold sure.[16]
Our Lord! Forgive us if we forget or fall into error.[17]
Our Lord! Impose not on us that which we have not the strength to bear, grant us forgiveness, and have mercy on us.[18]
Our Lord! Lay open the truth between us and our people for You are the best of all to lay open the truth.[19]
Our Lord! Perfect our light for us and forgive us our sins for verily You have power over all things.[20]

4

"An organization of this kind would fail in its object if it did not bring its members to a knowledge of religion. . . . If it were treated more as a manner of everyday life. . . it would not lose its dignity and it would gain a hold."[1]

—*Lord Robert S.S. Baden-Powell, 1908*

CHAPTER FOUR

SCOUT PRAYERS AND DEVOTIONS

The development of a Scout's outlook begins with respect for God. On our journey along the Scouting trail there are many opportunities where we express our thanks to the Creator for bringing us enjoyment, fellowship, and good health.

Since the founding of the Scout movement there have been many wonderful prayers written and recited at meetings, outings, ceremonies, and other gatherings giving thanks and praise for God's blessings, guidance, and protection.

Included here is a short selection of traditional and popular Scouting prayers and devotions suitable for personal, group, and program use.

Cub Scouting

A Cub Scout Prayer I

Help us, dear God, to love You day by day,
To do our duty to You and enjoy our play.
To keep our Cub Scout Promise the best that we can,
And to do our best always to help our fellow man.

A Cub Scout Prayer II

Dear Lord,
Thank You for letting me be a Cub Scout.
Thank You for helping me to make new friends.
Thank You for my family who helps me.
Thank You for all the fun I have had.
And most of all,
Thank You for helping me when things are hard.

A Cub Scout Prayer III

O God, I do pray
For strength to live my best each day;
Draw near to me, and I shall see
The kind of Cub You'd have me be.

In serving others, I know it's true
That I am only serving You.
Fill me, dear God, with Your great love,
That I may be a better Cub.

A Pack or Den Prayer

We thank You, O Lord, for our pack (den); and for all the boys and families who are touched by Scouting. Make us strong as we work together to help other people, and as we do our duty to You and to our country. Help us remember to live by the Cub Scout Promise and the Law of the Pack.

A Cub Scout Thanksgiving Blessing

Dear God, we ask for Your blessing
For loved ones and friends that are near.
We thank You for food and for love and for life
And the spirit of Cub Scouting that is here.
We thank You for leaders who care about boys,
Who give us their time—that's better than toys!
We thank You for parents who help us learn right,
For those who sew on our badges at night.
For all this, thank You dear Lord, up above,
For being a Cub is something we love!

A Fishing Prayer

Baden-Powell kept this well-known prayer on his desk at his English home, Pax Hill.

Lord, suffer me to catch a fish
So large that even I
In talking of it afterwards
Shall have no need to lie.

Graces and Other Blessings

Philmont Scout Ranch Grace

For food, for raiment,
For life, for opportunity,
For friendship and fellowship.
We thank Thee, O Lord.

Florida Sea Base Keys Blessing

Bless the creatures of the sea,
Bless this person I call me,
Bless the Keys You made so grand,
Bless the sun that warms the land,
Bless the fellowship we feel,
As we gather for this meal. Amen.[19]

Northern Tier Wilderness Base Grace

For food, for raiment,
For life and opportunity,
For sun and rain,
For water and portage trails,
For friendship and fellowship,
We thank Thee, O Lord.

Scout Prayer of Thanks

Dear God, we thank You today
For the adventure of Scouting,
For the unselfishness of parents and mentors,
For the patience of teachers,
And for the encouragement of friends.

Philmont Scout Ranch Prayer of Thanks

We thank You, O God, for this day,
For morning sun and evening star,
For flowering tress and flowing streams,
For life-giving rains and cooling breeze,
For the earth's patient turning,
The changing of the seasons,
The cycle of growth and decay, of life and death.
When our eyes behold the beauty and grandeur of Your world,
We see the wisdom, power, and goodness of its Creator.
We awake and behold! It's a great day.

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"God is . . . a vast Spirit of Love that overlooks differences of form and creed and denomination and which blesses every [person] who really tries to do their best."[1]

—*Lord Robert S.S. Baden-Powell, 1930*

CHAPTER FIVE

MY PERSONAL PRAYERS

These pages are for recording your personal and favorite prayers.