

Duty to God

The first phrase of the Boy Scout Oath is, "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God." However, the BSA is absolutely nonsectarian, leaving it to the Scout and his family to determine who or what "God" is and how that duty is defined. There is no requirement for the Scout to be a member of an organized religion. The full BSA Statement of Religious Principles can be found in the BSA Bylaws (Article IX. Policies, Section 1, Declaration of Religious Principle).

http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/bsa_charter_and_bylaws.pdf

By signing the youth application for a boy to join the troop, parents are stating that they understand the Declaration of Religious Principle and are comfortable having their son involved in the BSA program.

As of January 2016, each Boy Scout rank from Tenderfoot through Eagle has a requirement which reads, "Tell how you have done your duty to God." Troop 542 counts on the parents or guardians of the Scout to help prepare him to be able to do that. Our Troop leaders would be happy to discuss this with you if you have any questions.

The Scout could be asked about his duty to God in any of the following settings:

- During the first quarter of our program for first year Scouts, the boys will be introduced to the principles of Scouting including Scout Spirit, the Boy Scout Oath and Boy Scout Law. The group will discuss some ways that scouts may do their duty to God, however no individual responses from boys are requested at that time.
- During his Scoutmaster's Conference, which each Scout must have for every rank advancement, the Scout will be asked to "Tell how you have done your duty to God." He should be prepared with a meaningful response. Scouts are encouraged to talk with their parent's prior to the Scoutmaster Conference about what their duty to God might mean to them. A Scout's meaningful response in this setting is one way to complete the actual requirement for a rank.
- During a troop review board, which is required for every rank advancement from Tenderfoot through Life, the Scout might be asked to tell how he does his duty to God. Our Troop believes in inclusion within the guidelines set by the BSA. There are many ways our Scouts fulfill their duty to God and the troop leadership would be happy to discuss this requirement with you directly if you have questions.
- During a district Eagle board of review, conducted by the district and not within our troop's control, the Scout may be asked how he has done his duty to God.

If a Scout has difficulty answering how he has done his duty to God in the final three of these settings, he will be given the opportunity to formulate a response, with help from his parents if needed, following the meeting. Remember, there are a limitless number of ways in which a Scout can fulfill his duty to God. However, the boys must be able to formulate a response that is consistent with his family's values and meaningful to the Scout.