Guidebook for Chaplains’ Aides

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# Thank you for Serving as a Chaplains’ Aide

In much the same way that a Grubmaster ensures that the Scouts receive physical nutrition, Chaplains Aides (CA) are tasked with ensuring that the Troop (and the individual scouts) have the opportunity for spiritual sustenance. This does not mean that you must serve as a “pastor” or other member of clergy, but that you must facilitate opportunities for the Scouts to practice the Reverence aspects of the Boy Scout program.

# You do not have to do this alone

In fact, it is strongly suggested that (a) your Troop have more than one active Chaplains’ Aide and (b) you and the Troop should be comfortable with additional Scouts helping deliver the Reverence Program. For example:

* It may be unlikely that you attend every campout during your term as CA, so having two CA’s increases the likelihood that one will be present for every campout.
* It is unlikely that you’ll want to deliver every aspect of a Scouts’ Own Service (SOS), such as singing the songs, and delivering the message, and leading the prayers and other service elements. So, asking additional Scouts to lead the song or a repetitive reading helps.

In fact, switching between CA’s and other Scouts serves other purposes, as well:

* It keeps the Scouts’ Own Service interesting, by varying the presenters
* It enables Scouts who may not be ready to volunteer as a Chaplains’ Aide to get some minor experiences, so that they may eventually grow into that role.

# Expectations of Your Service

Your Troop may have different expectations, but most Troops have a minimum participation requirement for those serving in any leadership role. But as a suggestion:

* Directly lead or co-lead at least 4 of the 6 Scouts’ Own Services on monthly campouts. And for any SOS that you are not able to attend, ensure that other Scouts are pre-designated and prepared to deliver those services. Successful SOS delivery includes preparation before the Troop departs for their monthly events, and debriefs after each SOS on how to improve.
* Offer the Opening Prayer or Benediction for special Troop functions, such as Courts of Honor.
* Ensure that prayer activities at weekly meetings are delivered, in conjunction with the PLC’s plan for the meeting schedule.

Note, failure to meet these requirements may result in less than full-credit being awarded for service.

# Scouts’ Own Service

Often as part of a monthly campout or other Summer/Winter camp, a Scouts’ Own Service (SOS) is intended to provide an inclusive experience that enables every Scout to worship their understanding of our Creator.

## Inter-Faith Considerations

* For multi-faith (traditional) Troops, consider using worship elements that are expressly designed to be “Interfaith”. There are several websites and books that offer a range of programs, including those where the Scout Law is explained through multiple theological scripts, songs such as “God Bless America”, etc.

*If there are two faiths that are recognized as comprising a significant majority of the Troop, consider dual Chaplains’ Aides that are representative of each major faith. This is NOT to deliver parallel/separate services, but to promote understanding and inclusiveness of the single Troop reverence program.*

* For Troops that share a common faith, choose worship elements that are believed to be common-usage across those churches. For example, “Christian non-denomenational”, choose songs “Our God is an Awesome God” and a consistent use of the Holy Bible (which also has Scout Law and Oath versions that have Christian supporting scripture). When in doubt, ask a few other Scouts “*are you familiar with this song*?”

## Order of Service

Your goal is to provide a relatively short (10-15 minute) service that enables each Scout to have a period of Reverence – within the established functions and culture of your Troop.

Typical elements and an Order of Service include:

1. Welcome – and opening prayer
2. First Song – goal being something well-known for bringing hearts into a state of reverence
3. Responsive Reading, often using Scripture or pre-prepared literature
4. Short message, devotional or lesson. *As an option, this is the one portion of the service where the youth Chaplains Aides may opt to invite an adult to deliver the ‘message.’*
5. Additional song or reading
6. Benediction prayer

## Worship Aids

The Chaplains Aides will create and maintain a Chaplains’ bag, containing materials to deliver a more thorough series of worship experiences. The materials may include:

* Lyric sheets for songs that can be distributed by the beginning of service
* Responsive reading materials, which can be handed to non-CA Scouts who are helping deliver the worship service
* Copies of other materials collected by previous Chaplains’ Aides

Suggestions:

* If you want the Scouts to use their phones to download the lyrics to a song:
  + An ideal method is to email them a single web link (or the lyrics themselves); since some song versions may have slightly different variations.
  + Please provide the song names to the Scouts before service begins, so that they can spend time beforehand to search and locate the song. Otherwise, the flow of service will stop while the Scouts are locating their phones and then the songs or other material.

# Covenant of Chaplains

In accepting the role of Chaplain’s Aide, I recognize that I will play a crucial role in the reverence aspects of my Troop and the lives of my fellow Scouts. I also recognize that my role is considered a Leadership Role, as defined by BSA, for the purposes of rank advancement; and therefore agree to seek out feedback so that I can develop as a leader while serving.

With that recognition and the intent to be recognized as having served my Troop:

* I will personally deliver at least 4 of 6 monthly Scouts’ Own Services during Troop camping activities. Satisfactory SOS delivery includes doing the following:

Prepare prior to departure for the campout weekend

Facilitate the SOS itself

Debrief meeting on how to improve with the Troop Chaplain or Scoutmaster

During my term of service, I personally led Scouts’ Own Services on the following dates:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* For those SOS events that I do not directly lead, I will ensure that another Scout(s) is pre-prepared to deliver a reverence event for the Troop, including notifying the SPL and an Adult Leader who will be the acting Chaplains’ Aide prior to departure for the event. In addition, both the Chaplains Aide and the acting CA will participate in a joint debrief with the Troop Chaplain or Scoutmaster

1. Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Acting CA Scout \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Acting CA Scout \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* In support of the Chaplains’ function, I will conduct an inventory assessment of the Chaplains’ backpack and then ensure that an adequate variety of hand-outs and worship-aides are in good condition and usable, when required.

This Covenant is agreed to between Chaplain and Chaplains’ Aide, starting on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Chaplains Aide: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This Covenant has been satisfied, as noted by 🗹 at the completion of the service period, as of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Chaplains Aide: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_