

A review of the Scout Oath using three different editions of the Boy Scout Handbook

These are the actual words written in their respective Boy Scout Handbooks to help today's Scouts see what us older ones learned.

On my honor...

12th edition, 2009 printing

Honor is the core of who you are - your honesty your integrity, your reputation, the ways you treat others, and how you act when you are on your own.

8th edition, 1972 printing

The signers of the Declaration of Independence pledged to each other "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." That puts honor in pretty high company, doesn't it? Honor is hard to describe. It is of the heart and mind of a person - something not easily seen. It is called integrity. A Scout once said that honor was the thing that made you act the same when on one was watching as you did when you knew you were being watched. In giving the Scout Oath you promise to act according to your own honor - not that of someone else.

6th edition, 1959 printing

The signers of the Declaration of Independence pledge to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. Heroes have died rather than betray their honor. As a Scout, you count your honor as one of your most valuable possessions.

It needs to be noted that in the 8th and 12th edition versions have the definition of the Scout Oath in the beginning of the handbook. In the 6th edition, it is mentioned 5 times and it spends most of these initial introductions to the Scout Oath deal heavily with a Scout's "duties". Duty to God, Duty to Country, Duty to Other People and Duty to Self. Only when we get to the 5th entry does it really break down and address the Oath as you see above. And this is on page 379 when it starts out with "FROM BOY TO MAN "

What kind of man do you want to be? There is a simple way to find the answer - by first answering another question: "What kind of man do I admire most?"

Sit down quietly and alone with a pencil and a piece of paper. Then ask yourself; "Which men from America's past and present do I look up to?" Put their names down. "Why do I admire them? What do I like about them?" Write down the whys and whats.

High on your list may be your father. And perhaps the names of relatives, your Scoutmaster, your religious leader, your best friends.

Your list may include Americans like Washington because of his loyalty to his country... Lincoln for his simplicity and steadfastness...

Theodore Roosevelt for his enthusiasm and fighting spirit... Edison for his energy...

You have made your list. There before you in black and white are the qualities you admire most in others, the things that make you like them. Study those things closely.

See how they add up until they cover each part of the Scout Oath.

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I will do my best...

12th edition, 2009 printing

Do all you can to live by the Scout Oath, even when you are faced with difficult challenges.

8th edition, 1972 printing

These words change the Promise from an almost impossible job into something you can handle. It's still not easy, but since you are the only one who knows what your best is, only you can say whether you really do it. Are you doing your best? If not, then you are only mouthing words with no meaning.

6th edition, 1959 printing

No person who has accomplished anything worthwhile did this by doing his second best - or his third or fourth. He gave the very best that was in him - his best thoughts, his best works.

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Both the 6th and 8th Editions did not break this down into three elements, but addressed them all at the same time. As such, we'll follow that example and present them in a similar manner to also show how they were addressed differently.

12th edition, 2009 printing

To do my duty...

Duty is what others expect of you, but more importantly it is what you expect of yourself.

To God....

Your family and religious leaders teach you about God and the ways you can serve. You can do your duty to God by following the wisdom of those teachings and by defending the rights of others to practice their own beliefs.

and my country...

Help the United States continue to be a strong and fair nation by learning about our system of government and your responsibilities as a citizen. When you do all you can for your family and community, you are serving your country. Making the most of your opportunities will help shape our nation's future.

To do my duty to God and my country...

8th edition, 1972 printing

It's hard to describe duty to God for any one person. The duty is based on the person's own religious teachings. Duty to God is different for people of different faiths. However, for all people, it means living according to the teachings of their religion.

You do your duty to your country by being a good citizen, living by the laws and customs of our nation, and working to solve our country's problems. It will help if you learn about the men and events that have made America great. Their lives will inspire you to serve your nation as they did.

6th edition, 1959 printing

The kind of man you will be depends on your ability to know your duty and to do your utmost to live up to your obligations.

ADDITIONALLY, the 6th Edition goes on to separately address "DUTY TO GOD" in much greater depth. This entire page has been included for you to consider on the next page.

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DUTY TO GOD

page 381 of the 6th Edition

The men who founded our nation held the strong conviction that all men "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." When they signed their names to the Declaration of Independence they did this "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence."

But these courageous men recognized also that for these "unalienable rights" and that "protection," they owed certain obligations and duties to the Heavenly Father of us all.

You learn what these spiritual duties are in your home and in your church or synagogue. Your own spiritual leader, minister, priest, or rabbi teaches you how to know God, how to love Him, and how to serve Him.

By following these teachings in your daily life, by taking part in the practices of your faith, by making use of your leadership ability in your religious activities, you are performing your duty to God as a Scout.

Remember, as you do your duty to God, to be grateful to Him.

As a Scout, living in close contact with nature, you can't help knowing God's handiwork more deeply. As you see the wonders around you, your reverence toward God is strengthened. Sometime when you look up into the starlit sky on a quiet night and realize that Almighty God made this sky with all its stars, thank him as the Creator of all things.

Also there are ways in which you can show your gratefulness by deeds.

God has given you a wonderful body and a thinking brain. He has given artists the gift of painting so that they can inspire their fellow men. He has given writers the power of words so that they can form word pictures of beauty and can lead others to beauty. Composers can stir other people with their music, statesmen can work in the service of their country.

The way to thank God for the abilities He has given *you* is to develop these abilities to the fullest and make the best possible use of them.

You and all men are important in the sight of God because God made you. One way of expressing your thankfulness to God is by helping others - and this, too, is part of your Scout Oath.



Every winter (after the first of the year) we devote some time in the units' newsletter to speak of Scout Sunday.

We inform everyone of the upcoming GOD & COUNTRY Banquet for those Scouts and Scouters who have earned an award of the Protestant faiths so that they can be recognized, again, as a group for their efforts.

The troop also attends and participates in the annual GOD & COUNTRY Camporee at Camp Miakonda each March.

Recently Erie Shores Council has been conducting an annual 10 Commandment Hike at Camp Miakonda in May for Scouts and their families to not only have a chance to take a relaxing hike around our camp, but also to experience men and women of different faiths explaining how Duty To God is ever so important and relevant today as it was for over two centuries that the United States as been in existence; let alone the century (plus) the Boy Scouts have been in existence.

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and To obey the scout law...

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In your thoughts, words, and deeds, the 12 points of the Scout Law will lead you toward doing the right thing throughout your life.

8th edition, 1972 printing

The twelve points of the Scout Law are the rules of the game - the game of Scouting and the game of life. These points are important directional signals for you - signals that can guide you when it's hard to decide what to do.

6th edition, 1959 printing

That law fits you as a boy. It will fit you just as well when you become a man - for a *real* man is everything the Scout Law stands for.

To HELP OTHER PEOPLE at all times...

12th edition, 2009 printing

By helping out whenever you can, you are making the world better. "At all times" is a reminder to help even when it is difficult and even without waiting to be asked.

8th edition, 1972 printing

The help you give to someone is important to that person. But it is even more important to you. You become a better person when you help others.

6th edition, 1959 printing

It is not enough to have the willingness to help other people - you need to have the ability as well. You develop this ability as you advance in Scout rank and learn how to act in an emergency.

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To keep myself physically strong

12th edition, 2009 printing

Taking care of your body prepares you for a lifetime of great adventures. You can build your body's strength and endurance by eating nutritious goods, getting enough sleep, and being active. You should also avoid tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, and anything else that might harm your health.

8th edition, 1972 printing

Big muscles aren't the only sign of physical strength. A healthy body, able to stand up to disease, and carry on when the going gets tough is the kind of physical strength you need.

6th edition, 1959 printing

You owe it to yourself, to your country, and your God to develop your body, to train your mind, to strive to be a boy and man of high character.

The 6th edition actually spends many pages addressing PHYSICALLY STRONG -

Imagine yourself at Idlewild, New York -- one of the busiest air terminals in the world. A whole string of tremendous jet planes are lined up for the hops to Europe or South America or around the world. The passengers stream on board. The crew members are at their post.

The pilots know exactly where they are going and the steps for getting there. But how do they makes sure that they'll reach their goal and return?

Do they have their planes thoroughly checked before take-off? You bet your life they do.

Do they have their instruments tested? Of course they do!

Do they have all possible defects corrected before they speed down the runway? Well, what is your guess?

They don't even trust themselves, alone, to make the final check. They call in master mechanics to inspect the engine, experts to test the instruments, specialists to look over the wings and fuselage and landing gear.

Your body - the "machine" that'll carry you through life - deserves thorough checking and good care.

This edition addressed Physically Strong in many aspects of being healthy.

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Mentally awake

12th edition, 2009 printing

Mentally Awake: Develop your mind both in and outside of the classroom. Be curious about everything around you, and never stop learning.

8th edition, 1972 printing

Mentally Awake: Words describing this are "sharp," "alert," and "bright." When you are mentally awake you see, hear, smell, and even feel things that are missed by others. Did you ever notice that some days in school you remembered things a lot better than others? That's because you were mentally awake on those days. You should be that way every day.

6th edition, 1959 printing

You owe it to yourself, to your country, and your God to develop your body, to train your mind, to strive to be a boy and man of high character.

and morally straight

12th edition, 2009 printing

and Morally Straight: Your relationships with others should be honest and open. Respect and defend the rights of all people. Be clean in your speech and actions and faithful in your religious beliefs. Values you practice as a Scout will help you shape a life of virtue and self-reliance.

8th edition, 1972 printing

Morally Straight: You live and act and speak in ways that mark you as a boy who will grow up to be a man of good character. You are honest, clean in speech and actions, thoughtful of the rights of others, and faithful to your religious beliefs.

6th edition, 1959 printing

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