Message from the Young Men General Presidency

Remembering the purpose of Duty to God and Scouting

2013 marks 100 years of the partnership between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Boy Scouts of America. One of the great defining threads of both of these organizations is “Duty to God.”

Often times it is wise to pause and reflect on why we do what we do. In the hustle and bustle of life, we can become too preoccupied with completing a task, unintentionally thinking the measurable completion of the task is more important than the intent of the task.

The story is told of a father who was feverishly working on a talk that he was asked to give at church in a few weeks. While preparing for the talk, one of his sons asked him if he could help him with his homework. The father responded, “Sure, but can you wait?” His son said okay and off he went. An hour passed and his other son came to him and asked if he could give him a ride to his basketball game. The father responded, “Could you ask your mother?” This son likewise said okay and off he went. Freed from another distraction, the father returned to preparing his talk. At the top of page one was the title of his talk, “Finding and Spending Meaningful Time With Your Children.”

The purpose of Duty to God is to strengthen a young man’s testimony and his relationship with God, learn and fulfill his priesthood duties, and apply standards from For the Strength of Youth (the why). The purpose of Scouting is to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law (the why).

There are various projects, assignments, merit badges, rank advancements, etc. (the what) that are critical in accomplishing the purpose of Duty to God and Scouting, but they are not the end objective. The key is maintaining an appropriate focus and balance on why we are doing what we are doing. This can be difficult, because those things that matter most are usually those things that are most difficult to measure. Hence, the need to pause from time to time and remind ourselves what is our purpose and am I fulfilling it.

May we remember and help our young men to remember that they are sons of God “and as such they have a divine nature and destiny” (The Family: A Proclamation to the World).
Capturing the Vision of Scouting

David L. Beck
Young Men General President

When I was a mission president, one particular zone was having a lot of success. I asked one of the zone leaders, “Elder, what’s going on here?”

He said, “President, in high school I ran cross-country with a handful of friends. We trained hard and competed together. For four years none of us could break a certain time barrier on the 5K. But at a cross-country race during our senior year, one of us finally broke that barrier. Then, within seven days of that meet, the whole group had broken the time barrier.”

The cross-country runners—like the missionaries in that zone—succeeded because, in the zone leader’s words, “they believed they could do it.”

Young Men advisers called by inspiration to serve in Scouting can succeed too. But a believing attitude requires that they be strong in the Spirit, committed to strengthening the young men they serve, and properly trained.

Learning Our Duty

One of the tools Satan uses against the Church is to convince priesthood holders that they can do tomorrow what they should do today. But the Lord tells us, “Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence” (D&C 107:99; emphasis added).

This counsel is foundational to any calling we receive in the Church, including callings in Scouting. And a key word to this counsel is now.

In a program as demanding as Scouting, some leaders are concerned and tentative and might feel inadequate or overwhelmed. These feelings are normal. The best way to deal with such feelings is to just jump in—now. The Lord has called you, and He will qualify you and bless you to the degree that you learn your responsibilities and magnify your calling.

100 YEARS OF SCOUTING IN THE LDS CHURCH—A TIMELINE

1875
1897
1899

Training is essential to understanding Scouting and feeling confident that we can implement the program. Training motivates us to succeed because as we develop a degree of mastery, we gain confidence that we really can be successful Scout leaders. We hope Young Men advisers, in addition to receiving training, are given enough time in their Scout callings to make a difference in the lives of the young men they serve.

Young Men advisers in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should be the best implementers of Scouting in the world. Training is an important step toward that end.

Strengthening Young Men

Scouting is more than camping and merit badges. Scouting is spirituality, duty, growth, and leadership. When the Church adopted Scouting in 1913, leaders wanted a program that would develop and strengthen young men. Properly trained leaders can better understand Scouting and appreciate the program’s potential to help young men grow.

We have a legacy of doing hard things in the Church. We’ve always done hard things, and we will continue to do hard things. Hard things stretch us and allow us to bless others. Our youth are the future of the Church, and they must be prepared for difficult days ahead. Scouting is one way to help prepare our young men to do hard things, such as serve as faithful full-time missionaries.

When properly implemented, Scouting and Duty to God strengthen faith in Jesus Christ, character, relationships, and skills. In addition, they provide opportunities for young men to develop abilities that are essential to the priesthood ministry to which they are called, such as leading and serving.

Scouting and Duty to God help prepare young men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and temple ordinances and to bless others as full-time missionaries. Scouting has proved for many young men to be a major component in building a bridge to activity in the kingdom of God.
Scouting’s outdoor program is part of its message of self-reliance, but it’s more than that. It’s a relationship-building program in which young men work with each other and with their advisers, doing things that stretch them physically and emotionally. It puts them in contact with nature, freeing them from the distractions of a world that is growing increasingly noisy. And it allows them an opportunity to commune with the Spirit and to reflect upon their lives and their relationships, including their relationship with Deity.

**Being Strong in the Spirit**

“If any man among you be strong in the Spirit,” the Lord tells us, “let him take with him him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also” (D&C 84:106).

If there ever were a time when our young men needed to associate with adult advisers who are strong in the Spirit, that time is now. As leaders of young men, we have the blessing of working with them during the time that they transition from childhood to adulthood. It is a time fraught with temptations and challenges. What a great privilege and an awesome responsibility we have.

Young men need to be guided, motivated, and strengthened by those who are strong in the Spirit. They need to discover through spiritual experiences the intrinsic motivation of being a disciple of Christ—to taste for themselves the fruits of the gospel and of the Spirit.

Young men need to know that their leaders are men of God who can be trusted, who truly care about them, and who take seriously their Scout callings. Trusted leaders can become a powerful resource to help and bless young men.

To “edify in meekness” means to build up in meekness. A meek man edifies young men with patience, gentleness, and an absolute commitment to do God’s will. Confidence and trust are built in young men when they feel that their leaders have the Spirit of the Lord with them.

The Lord also tells us, “Therefore, … let not the head say unto the feet it hath no need of the feet; for without the feet how shall the body be able to stand?” (D&C 84:109). Just as the feet provide support for the physical body, so does the Aaronic Priesthood help support and strengthen the Church. For the body—the Church—to stand now and in the future, we need to acknowledge and honor the Aaronic Priesthood by helping our young men become strong in the Spirit.

Contemplate a simple 14-year-old farm boy with limited formal education. God took him and trusted him to be His instrument in the Restoration of the Church in this dispensation. When you look at a young man, think of Joseph Smith and realize that any young man—with God’s priesthood power—has the capacity to do great things now.

**Becoming Shepherds of Young Men**

Thank Heavenly Father for this season in your life to influence young men. Be there for them and give them a vision of what they can become as they learn their duty as priesthood holders—whether they are wearing a Scout uniform or a white shirt and tie.

Young men need shepherds, and we need to be the kind of shepherds God expects us to be (see Ezekiel 34:1–16). Our efforts as Young Men advisers and Scout leaders can have eternal consequences (see Jacob 1:17–19).

The adversary does not want us to act, and he will do everything he can to deter us. I pray that we will press forward in preparing the young men of this Church by engaging them in good and glorious things—the great work of the Aaronic Priesthood and the wonderful Scouting program.

“Impossible to measure is the great good which has come from this organization during the past century. ... I believe in Scouting. I believe in the goals of the organization. I believe in the power of Scouting to bless and enrich lives for good.”

- President Thomas S. Monson


*Article and quote from Ensign, June 2012*
As a child, I enjoyed reading the Aesop’s fables. I particularly liked the one about the ant and the grasshopper. It is about a grasshopper who spent the summer hopping about, chirping and singing. An ant passed by, carrying an ear of corn. The grasshopper invited the ant to join him in the fun, but the ant refused. Winter came and the grasshopper died of hunger, while the ant enjoyed the fruit of his labors together with his colony.

This is a great year. In 2013 we celebrate 100 years of Scouting in the Church. One hundred years in which boys have been faithfully and quietly setting and reaching small and short-term goals that allow them to fulfill higher and long-term aspirations. One hundred years of storing a wealth of strength and character, all of which has resulted in several generations of righteous men. One hundred years of boys doing their best, fulfilling their duty to God and their country, helping other people, and obeying the principles of Scouting.

We want to extend our appreciation to the leaders who have given those boys the inspiration to keep trying and achieving. We are grateful for all the time they have spent kneeling down on prayer, preparing spiritually, and counseling together in order to find ways to bless the life of each of those boys. Thanks for not giving up; thanks for having enough faith to see the potential inside every 8-year-old boy and to know that your efforts are worth and appreciated.

President Monson has said: “Impossible to measure is the great good which has come from this organization during the past century. … I believe in Scouting. I believe in the goals of the organization. I believe in the power of Scouting to bless and enrich lives for good.” (http://www.lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/president-monson-discusses-strengths-of-scouting)

Brothers and sisters, let us continue helping our boys so they can be prepared to stand strong for their beliefs and principles as they face the winters in their life. By doing so, we will help our boys feel Heavenly Father’s love for them, learn and understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, feel and recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost, and prepare to make and keep sacred covenants (Handbook 2, 11.1). With that reservoir in their heart, they will strengthen their present and future family and will be able to do the challenging things that will be required of them as they grow up. In addition, we will be building our own spiritual reservoir for our own family and our own winters.

2012 Year-End Membership Statistics

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was the number one chartered organization in the BSA in terms of registered traditional youth and units for the year 2012.

| 2012 Total Traditional Units: | 37,856 |
| 2012 Total Traditional Youth: | 430,557 |

Those units and youth are broken down into the following:

- **Total Packs:** 10,446
- **Total Cub Youth:** 147,163
- **Total Troops/Teams:** 19,294
- **Total Scout/Varsity Youth:** 218,426
- **Total Crews:** 8,116
- **Total Venturing Youth:** 64,968

How do the 2012 membership statistics compare to previous years?

| 2011 Total Traditional Units: | 37,894 |
| 2011 Total Traditional Youth: | 421,086 |
| 2010 Total Traditional Units: | 37,925 |
| 2010 Total Traditional Youth: | 412,675 |
Why I Love 50-Mile Hikes

David C. Pack, Scout Executive
Utah National Parks Council, Orem, Utah
Director of LDS-BSA Relationships, 2007 to 2012

I love 50-mile (80 km) hikes, not so much because they’re fun but because they teach young men to do hard things.

Most young men who start 50-milers think they’re prepared, but it doesn’t take long—just a few miles up that first ridge—before they wonder who talked them into it. That night, unlike on other campouts, they’re quiet and they go to bed early rather than stay up late talking.

The next morning, there’s a solemn feeling in the camp—not a lot of discussion. And as the young men start their climb again, they contemplate life and death. By that afternoon they’re missing their mothers and wondering whether they’ll ever see them again.

By the second night around the campfire, you have the most teachable, ready-to-learn, ready-to-listen-to-the-Spirit young men you will ever see. You won’t see them that way in priesthood meeting or at home or at school or on activity night. As a result, there will be an opportunity around that campfire for testimony bearing and teaching that will sink deep into their hearts and that they will remember for a lifetime.

Such experiences require dedicated adult leaders who are willing to get out with the young men, mentor them, allow them to lead, and be there for them.

By the last day of a 50-miler, the young men feel that they have accomplished the hardest thing they’ve ever done—and they’ve survived! They go home realizing that doing better in school and serving a mission may not be so difficult after all. The bar has been raised for them. In the process they come to love and appreciate their parents more, and they can’t wait to see them again.

When we do and teach hard things, we bring young men to a level of competence and confidence that prepares them for the future—the opportunity to serve an honorable mission, be successful in school, become a worthy husband and father, and do other things the Lord expects of them.

That’s why a functioning Aaronic Priesthood quorum is so important in the life of a young man. When we successfully integrate Duty to God and Scouting into an Aaronic Priesthood program, we help the priesthood quorum strengthen its young men and prepare them for the future.

Article from Ensign, June 2012.

Register TODAY for the Priesthood Leadership Conference on Scouting at Philmont

Session 1:  June 29 – July 5, 2013
Session 2:  July 6 – July 12, 2013

2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the LDS Church-directed Priesthood Leadership Conferences held at Philmont Scout Ranch.

Applications are still being accepted for stake presidency members and those stake Young Men presidents and high councilors who are accompanied by a member of the stake presidency.

Applications can be downloaded from our website www.ldsbsa.org on the Philmont page. Please complete the one-page application form and return to the LDS-BSA Relationships office in Salt Lake City, Utah. The conferences are filling up quickly, so submit your application as soon as possible. Further information is available on the LDS-BSA Relationships website www.ldsbsa.org.
Young Asian refugees bond with Scouting Troop 1262
Program helps boys make transition to life in the U.S.

For many refugees from Burma, adjusting to the urban, fast-paced environment of the Salt Lake Valley can prove a challenge. But the refugees' rural, mountain-loving upbringing can make them first-rate Boy Scouts.

Scout Troop 1262 is sponsored by the Columbus Branch of the South Salt Lake Stake and includes more than four dozen Scouts. It's perhaps unlike any troop in Scouting with a remarkable backstory of service, faith and fellowship.

In 2008 refugees from Burma (also known as Myanmar) began immigrating into the Salt Lake Valley. They were usually placed in low-cost apartments. For most, the view from their windows was framed by blacktop and concrete. This was a major adjustment for the teenage boys who were used to traversing the hills near their refugee camps in search of food (mainly small animals and birds).

The boys had a love of the outdoors and loved to roam free. Growing accustomed to the fast-paced U.S. culture — and being confined to small areas — was overwhelming for some. Also, these boys had grown up surrounded by war and violence. Some exhibited hostile tendencies. Sitting in a school classroom day after day often proved difficult. They were able to understand little of what was said in English — and they felt a great deal of sociological pressure to escape into any kind of a comfort zone that would give them some acceptance and purpose.

Unfortunately, many refugee boys found such acceptance in the form of gangs and other undesirable activities.

With the encouragement of missionaries and neighbors who were members of the Church, many of the Burmese refugee families began attending Church services. Many of them were baptized and became active in the Church. However, some of the young men struggled with the three-hour meeting block. A few of the boys started getting into trouble and found themselves in the juvenile court system.

Welcome Hand, a humanitarian organization for refugees, sponsored Scout Troop 1262 in 2009. The boys immediately connected with the Scouting program. "Scouting is a natural for them," said Bob Roylance, 73, the troop Scoutmaster. "They come from the mountains and love to be outdoors." Fourteen boys attended the first Scout camp in 2009, 24 attended the Evergreen summer camp in 2010, and 41 young men attended the Bear Lake Aquatics Camp in 2011. During one summer camp the boys were presented the Tomahawk Award for being the top troop in the camp. They received a standing ovation from the boys in the other troops.

Many of these boys began joining the Church along with their families and many attended Church in their local wards. Approximately 300 Burmese refugees in the Salt Lake Valley have joined the Church over the past four years. The Church and the Scouting program have offered many of the refugees a positive outlet to find friendship and wholesome outdoor activities. It's believed that gang activity in the South Salt Lake area has declined since the formation of Troop 1262.

Three years ago the Columbus Branch was created for Burmese members under the South Salt Lake Stake. The
Boy Scout troop was a catalyst toward the formation of the branch. More than 25 of the young men have been baptized and are serving in the Aaronic priesthood. Last month, 12 of the young men gave sacrament meeting talks and shared their testimonies. Such moments were special highlights for the branch and troop. It’s expected that a number of the refugee young men will serve full-time missions and return to provide quality leadership for their people.

Brother Roylance said Scouting has proven “absolutely critical” in helping the young men make the ongoing transition into full Church activity. He and his assistants look for opportunities to use Scouting activities to teach key gospel principles. “Sometimes I’ll go over the Scout Law and talk about how it applies to the gospel.”

More than 50 boys are registered in the troop, with more expected to soon join. Eleven Scouts have achieved the Life rank and are working on their Eagle award. Troop 1262 has brought happiness to not only the Scouts, but also to their families.

Article from Church News, week of Saturday, June 16, 2012.
Photos courtesy of Bob Roylance.

“Be Prepared” for Winter Safety

Winter is often one of the most exciting times to be outdoors. Fewer people, quiet solitude, bright stars, not to mention the activities that cannot be done in summer, such as skiing, snowshoeing, sledding and just playing in the snow—oh and did I mention no bugs and your tent mates don’t smell as bad. Even if you live in an area where these activities are not available, there are still many reasons to recommend winter activities. Winter is a time when young men can be taught in a way that occurs at no other time. My boys did not truly appreciate the hardships endured by the Willie and Martin handcart companies until they spent a night in below freezing temperatures.

Along with the fun come dangers that are different or often exacerbated from summer outdoor activities. Let’s discuss a few. First, winter activities, especially camping are unforgiving. Any mistake is magnified because of the cold and weather conditions. With less sunlight there is simply more danger from the dark. Plan accordingly; make sure you have adequate light sources for what you are doing. In winter everything takes longer to do. Simple tasks such as cooking can take much longer, even if the eggs aren’t frozen solid in their shell.

- **Equipment is vital.** Let parents know what you are doing, type of equipment needed, type of clothing (especially shoes) required to prevent hypothermia and have a pre-inspection where everything is laid out. Bring along some extra clothing, extra sleeping bags, and extra food—just in case. Everyone cannot afford winter quality sleeping bags; double bagging is a good way to increase the warmth at night. A warming tent, fire (where allowed) or propane heater can provide a way for boys to warm up. Remember no open flames in tents.

- **Activity planning is a must.** The boys must be kept active to keep them warm, but just as importantly to keep them busy. When it is dark, boredom sets in fast. Have a backup plan, just in case. If safety conditions warrant, have the courage to cancel, re-schedule or leave the activity early.

- **Hydrate.** Cold dry air sucks moisture from the body resulting in less efficiency which means the boys get cold. Three quarts a day is a good rule of thumb, but don’t eat the snow, the obvious dangers of what is in it notwithstanding. Just to melt the snow takes a significant number of calories that would otherwise help heat the body.

- **Practice winter skills before going out.** A campout at a local park or backyard is a great tune up for the real thing.

- **Winter clothing should include wool, fleece, or synthetics but never cotton—cotton kills in the winter.** Layered clothing is better than a single garment. Not only is stagnant air trapped, but moisture wicking is facilitated, keeping you warmer.

Winter and cold weather camping, when warmed by good companions and dedicated leaders, can create memorable experiences as well as opening the heart to feel the glow of the Spirit. Get out there but be SAFE.

A more detailed article on Winter Safety can be found on our website www.ldsbsa.org under “Resources.”

Article submitted by Steven Hoskins, Church Risk Management
A Purpose Driven Celebration

On May 21, 1913, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America. Since the beginnings of that dynamic partnership, millions of youth and adults have registered as participants and leaders in LDS Church-sponsored Scouting units, and leaders of the two organizations have worked together to instill character, citizenship and fitness in young men.

“Impossible to measure is the great good that has come from [Scouting] during the past century. Skills have been learned, values have been established, good deeds have been done, and lives have been enriched.”

–President Thomas S. Monson, 2010

Our 100th Anniversary provides a unique opportunity to celebrate this heritage by:

- **Sharing** why the LDS Church has embraced Scouting for 100 years.
- **Strengthening** LDS Scouting leaders’ ability to provide a quality Scouting program in each unit, ward and stake.
- **Serving** more youth in units chartered by the LDS Church.

2013 Celebration Events

**MAY 23** – BSA National Meeting - Grapevine, Texas
*Duty to God Breakfast*
Keynote speaker: LDS Church Presiding Bishop, Gary Stevenson

**MAY 24** – BSA National Meeting - Grapevine, Texas
*LDS Reception*

**JUNE 29 - JULY 12** – Priesthood Leadership Conferences
Philmont Training Center - Cimarron, New Mexico

**JULY 19 - DECEMBER 31** – LDS Church History Museum - Salt Lake City, Utah
- American Originals: Norman Rockwell and Scouting
- A Good Turn Daily: 100 Years of Scouting and the Aaronic Priesthood

**JULY 22** – BSA National Jamboree - Summit Bechtel Reserve
*Monday Night Stadium Show*

**OCTOBER 29** – 100th Anniversary Commemoration - Salt Lake City, Utah, In conjunction with BSA National Executive, Regional Board and Committee Meetings

Centennial Memorabilia

The LDS-BSA Relationships office is collecting memorabilia from this historic year. We invite councils to submit complimentary patches, pins, shirts or other items made in conjunction with events this year to: 15 West South Temple, Suite 1070, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101

Centennial Commemoration Items

Commemorate this historic year with specially designed Centennial Celebration items. These items are available for sale on our website www.ldsbsa.org/shop. Check back often as more items will be added throughout the year.

- **Centennial Patches:**
  - One or two-sided uniform patch with button loop
  - Jacket patch
  - Available NOW!

- **Centennial Coin:** Double-sided 1 ¾” coin with quote “May you uphold Scouting’s tradition, for it can be as a lighthouse beacon, in the world of stormy seas.” - President Thomas S. Monson. Available March 2013.

- **Centennial Lapel Pin:** 3/8” x 5/8” lapel pin. Available NOW!

- **LDS-BSA Centennial History Book:** The historic events of the past 100 years are chronicled in this 150+ page hardbound keepsake book. This in-depth history contains photos, facts, and timelines detailing Scouting within the Church M.I.A., Young Men, and Primary organizations, and is compiled by a team of LDS and BSA historians. Available June 2013.