message from the young men general presidency

Duty to God

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently released its new booklet for young men ages 12 to 18 entitled “Duty to God.” The booklet is available to young men of all faiths. Its purpose is to help young men learn and fulfill their duty to God. Fulfilling their duty to God is not a one-time project, but a lifelong experience. This booklet provides opportunities for young men to learn their duty to God, make their own plans to fulfill those duties and then share their experiences with others.

It allows a young man to make plans that fit his own interests and needs. By allowing a young man to make his own plans, he takes responsibility for his own growth.

The booklet contains a number of suggested activities and projects from which a young man can select to help him learn, grow and be of service. The suggested activities develop spiritual attributes, skills and talents that can help each young man.

The principles and guidance in the Duty to God booklet are compatible with those taught in Scouting by Lord Robert Baden-Powell. Said he: “I have clearly stated that our objective in the Scout movement is to give such help as we can in bringing about God’s Kingdom on earth.” He also stated, “In the Scout and Guide Movements, we merely lay before the boys and girls the simplest fundamental ethics of religion, and then get them to put these into practice…We put them as Christ taught them in their two simple forms: ‘Love thy God with all thy heart; and the second is like unto it – Love thy neighbor as thyself.’”

Today we live in a world in which the application of moral and spiritual values is declining. We need to help young men learn and live moral principles, so they can have joyful, productive and fulfilling lives. If young men will learn, understand and apply the principles taught in the Duty to God booklet and in Scouting, they will become honorable fathers, individuals of high moral character and responsible citizens.

We salute fathers, mothers and Scouting leaders who spend countless hours working with young men, teaching them their duty to God and helping them learn skills, through Scouting and other activities, that will help them become Men of God and honorable citizens.

The Young Men General Presidency

For additional information on the new Duty to God program, including a downloadable version of the booklet, please visit: http://lds.org/dutytogod

Scouting in Primary

A priesthood conference on Scouting was held in the Metropolitan Washington D.C. area on September 17-19, 2010. Over 2,000 attended the conference sessions and regional firesides. The format of the conference was structured similar to a “mini-Philmont” experience. President David L. Beck, Andres Ramos and Cheryl A. Esplin attended and presented along with local leaders.

The theme for the conference was Doctrine and Covenants 13:1, which teaches doctrines of priesthood power, priesthood purposes and priesthood preparation. The specific purposes of the conference were to strengthen and instruct priesthood, auxiliary, and Scouting leaders in their duties to:

1. Focus on the one: strengthen families and priesthood quorums in efforts to save each and every young man and boy.
2. Plan with a purpose: know mandates, programs, and each boy and young man.
3. Keep the end in mind: help each boy and young man prepare for the priesthood, a mission and to be a worthy husband.

Leaders were taught how to use the tools of Primary, Duty to God, and Scouting to help boys prepare for and accomplish the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood and to build faith and testimony.

The Primary General Presidency

Visit us online at www.ldsbsa.org
Scouts Told: Be 'Lights' to the World
Varsity teams find unity in 'On Target' adventure

July 17th combined all the elements of a nearly perfect Saturday morning for David L. Beck. The Church's Young Men general president found himself that day in the shadow of the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple, donning a green Scout uniform and talking to hundreds — if not thousands — of Aaronic Priesthood holders about their duty to God. The temple, Scouting and the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood constituted a powerful, even sacred, mix for Brother Beck and many others who participated in a Varsity Scout activity that stretched across several western U.S. states.

This year's edition of Varsity Scouting's annual "On Target" occurred at an ideal time for Brother Beck and other Young Men leaders. The Church's revised Duty to God program is in its maiden weeks, and "On Target" offered Brother Beck an apt opportunity to remind the Scouts about their personal sacred priesthood duties. The Varsity Scouts were not all gathered in one place. Instead, they were scattered across dozens of encampments on high Utah peaks encircling the Mount Timpanogos temple and in other sites in Idaho, Nevada and Arizona. It was impossible for Brother Beck to visit each cline, so the Young Men general president utilized the airwaves to deliver his Saturday morning message via ham radio in a pavilion built just a few steps from the temple. Meanwhile, Varsity Scouts by the score gathered around receivers in their respective mountain camps to listen to his words.

"The great thing about Scouting is you can have a lot of fun and at the same time learn important lessons that will help you in your life to find success and happiness," said Brother Beck, speaking into a radio microphone. One of the pleasures of any campout, he said, is to witness the morning sun as it rises above the peaks and brings light and warmth to all below.

Brother Beck referred to the Savior's words that His followers are the light of the world and that a city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. "Young men and their leaders should be as a light to the world," he said. "Collectively, you should be like a city on a hill that cannot be hid. Individually and collectively, you should be an example of living the Scout Oath, Law, motto and slogan."

At the beginning of the Scout Oath, a young man pledges to "do my best, to do my duty to God and my country."

"Duty to God requires us to live the ideals of the Scout Law — we are trustworthy, obedient, clean and reverent," he said. "I hope today as you participate in this activity that you will reflect upon your life and how you are living the ideals of the Scout Law."

Young men who fulfill their duty to God, he added, are also — in Scout fashion — helpful, friendly, courteous and kind. "We help other people at all times. We are like that sun that comes on a cold morning on the mountaintop, warming the lives of those who we interact with. We do a good turn daily."

The youth leader spoke of the power of collaboration. Young priesthood leaders can accomplish much more when they work together. "Seek to reach out to others and include them in your lives ... think about someone that you know that you could reach out to and bless by connecting with them."

After concluding his ham radio message, Brother Beck stepped from the broadcast pavilion and looked high to the many peaks surrounding the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple. Varsity Scout teams were stationed on nearly every peak. They used reflective mirrors to signal to Brother Beck below, who returned the signal with a mirror of his own. Mirror reflections could be seen atop mountain peaks across Utah County. The reflections signaled unity among the Varsity Scouts while serving as a visible acceptance of Brother Beck's challenge to share their gospel light with others.

Brother Beck appreciated the symbolism of the signaling exercise. "These young men can and should be the lights of the world by the way they live and the way they reach out and seek to bless others' lives with friendliness and kindness."

Article and photos by Jason Swensen, Church News, July 24, 2010
Philmont fosters 'a Zion experience'
Leaders trained for nearly 50 years at encampment

For almost half a century, priesthood leaders and their families have traveled from all corners of the United States (and sometimes Canada) to gather for a week or two each summer at a pristine encampment in northeastern New Mexico known as Philmont.

There they find gospel learning, new friendships, outdoor adventure and, in the words of countless LDS Philmonters, "a Zion experience."

Again this year, hundreds of stake presidents, counselors from stake presidencies and stake Young Men leaders gathered for the annual Priesthood Leadership Conference at Philmont Scout Ranch. Most were accompanied by their wives and children, leaving their homes for a week to populate sprawling tent cities and enjoy a week of spiritual and Scouting instruction. This year's leadership conference was held in two sessions from June 26-July 2 and July 3–9.

"It's been a wonderful experience being with these many priesthood leaders and their families," said David L. Beck, Young Men general president, who presided at the leadership conference. Brother Beck was joined at one or both sessions by his counselors in the Young Men general presidency, Brother Larry M. Gibson and Brother Adrian Ochoa. Rosemary M. Wixom, Primary general president, and her counselors, Sister Jean A. Stevens and Sister Cheryl A. Esplin, also participated, along with members from the Young Men and Primary general boards.

Philmont's Priesthood Leadership Conference is undoubtedly a Scout camp. Each day, the priesthood leaders pull on their Scout uniforms and gather together for training sessions on myriad aspects of Scouting. The sessions are taught by Brother Beck, Sister Wixom and their counselors and general board members, along with Scouting's LDS Relationship director, David Pack.

But the LDS gathering at Philmont is much more than talk of merit badges, rank advancements and troop activities. Participants in each session function as a ward for the week they are together. The leadership training is anchored in the Sabbath Day where families dressed in Sunday best gather for priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, Primary and sacrament services. LDS Philmonters even accept callings. A stake president from say, Kansas, may teach the CTR class out on the Philmont picnic grounds. A Relief Society sister from Arizona may be asked to lead the outdoor gospel doctrine class. Young Mia Maids and Beehives gather with other girls from around the country for Young Women instruction.

Sabbath worship extended far beyond the Philmont training facilities. Hundreds of Mutual-aged boys and girls participated in weeklong treks through the Philmont backcountry. During the trek, they gathered at various outdoor settings on Sunday to sing hymns and listen to instruction from Brother Beck, Sister Wixom and other youth leaders. The trekkers participate in the outdoor meetings offering impromptu talks. At one service, Brother Beck recognized the singing talents of one young woman from Texas — so he asked the girl and her sister to stand and sing a duet of "Joseph Smith's First Prayer."

It's also a week of bearing and sharing testimonies and spending time with families in a peaceful, natural setting.

This year's Philmont training was staged just as Church units throughout the world are implementing the new Duty to God program. Brother Beck said the local priesthood leaders arrived at camp enthused and eager to learn more about Duty to God.

"We've asked them to learn about the program and to develop a plan to implement Duty to God — and then to share their experience with others," he added.

Other annual Philmont traditions include a priesthood meeting in the Philmont woods and plenty of patriotic fun and family activities, including a colorful children's parade.

Priesthood leaders were also encouraged to return home and stage "Little Philmonts" in their wards and stakes so thousands of others can enjoy the spirit and instruction found at Philmont.

Article by Jason Swensen, Church News, July 10, 2010
Young Men Commit to Serve God, Mankind
National Jamboree, a time of memories and maturing

Years from now, young Aaronic Priesthood holders who participated in the ongoing 2010 National Scout Jamboree will certainly recall their 10 days of fun and adventure in sweltering Virginia.

They'll probably smile as they remember the patch trading, serpentine food lines and live shows. Maybe a few will attribute their interest in, say, scuba diving or rock climbing to what they first learned at Jamboree. And some will plan for the day when they can return to the Jamboree with their own sons.

More likely, however, their most lasting memories will be the commitments they've made — those spiritual challenges that transcend patches and merit badges and outdoor fun. LDS Scouts here at Jamboree are, yes, pledging to "Do a good turn daily." But they're also committing to serve God and their fellow Scouts and men. Many have accepted a leader's challenge to serve a mission. They are being asked to offer their testimonies with fellow Jamboreers and share copies of the Book of Mormon.

This year's edition of the quadrennial National Jamboree, which runs through Aug. 4, has much to offer LDS Scouts. There is a prominent Church presence, providing Scouts of all backgrounds opportunities to learn of the mission of the restored gospel, meet general Church youth leaders and connect with their ancestors across generations.

Brother Larry Gibson, first counselor in the Young Men general presidency, has greeted LDS Scouts and their friends by the thousands while at Jamboree. He's convinced the young men here will return to their homes better equipped to serve as priesthood men and future missionaries.

LDS Scouts, he added, can realize three other benefits from the National Jamboree. "First, they get the experience of being away from home. Second, the Jamboree allows them to integrate with young men of every faith. And third, they learn they can be an example, a shining light to the world."

As he and other leaders mingle with LDS Scouts and speak at campsite firesides, they encourage the young men to make the most of the recently revised Duty to God program and prepare now for their fast-approaching missions.

Scouts of all backgrounds have also been lining up at Church-sponsored tents to earn the George Albert Smith Award, which was introduced at the Jamboree. All award candidates are required to learn about the Scouting lessons of President Smith. LDS Scouts are also required to speak to their leaders about how the Jamboree is helping prepare them for missionary service.

Award electives include challenges to meet Scouts from different states or countries, to share two articles of faith and their testimony with another and to read and record their feelings about President Thomas S. Monson's Scout-themed address, "Run, Boy, Run." The title is taken from the closing lines of the musical "Camelot." King Arthur's Round Table has been destroyed by the jealousies of men, the infidelity of a queen and mistakes of the past. The king and his forces are preparing to meet the armies of Lancelot. Tom, a young boy of Warwick, stows away to help the king, revealing his desire to become a knight. Tom declares his knowledge of the Round Table,
repeating the familiar goals, "Might for right! Right for right! Justice for all!" Arthur formally knights him as "Sir Tom of Warwick." Commissioned to depart the battlefield, to return to England, to renew the dream of Camelot, to grow up and to grow old, Sir Tom places aside the weapons of war; and armed with the tenets of truth, he hears his monarch command, "Run, boy, run!" A boy had been spared, an idea safeguarded, a hope renewed (See Ensign, Nov. 1982, p. 19.) (Ensign Article - "Run, Boy, Run!")

The George Albert Smith Award has proven to be even more popular than Church youth leaders anticipated. Gary Pack is taking some time from his full-time job with the Church’s Family History Department to teach wave after wave of Scouts here about how they can discover their own past.

"Our challenge is to teach the boys that they have a personal history, that we all have stories," said Brother Pack.

The genealogy merit badge tent is one of the most popular stops because it’s one of the few badges that can be earned, in full, while at the Jamboree. Family History Department workers and volunteers from nearby stakes staff the two merit badge tents.

Brother Pack said he is touched by the vast number of Jamboree volunteer staffers of all backgrounds who leave work and pay their own way to serve at the Jamboree. "These are people who believe in the value of Scouting," he said.

Full-time missionaries from the Washington D.C. South Mission have also been familiar faces here, sharing copies of the Book of Mormon and encouraging LDS Scouts to follow suit.

More than 4,000 LDS Scouts are believed to be participating in the National Jamboree. They look forward to Sunday's Aug. 1 outdoor sacrament service, which is expected to be presided over by Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve.

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**2010 Stats**

- **Sessions Held:** 2
- **Total Faculty and Family Members:** 93
- **Priesthood Leaders:** 315
- **Family Members at Philmont:** 715
- **Mountain Trek Young Men & Women:** 139
- **Total Participants:** 1,169
- **Number of LDS Stakes Represented:** 183
- **Number of States Represented:** 32
- **Number of Councils Represented:** 65

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**2011 LDS Scouting Leadership Conference**

**Session 1:** June 25-July 1, 2011
**Session 2:** July 2-July 8, 2011

Invitations will be mailed from LDS Church headquarters to each stake president in the United States in November 2010.

**NEW PHILMONT PARTICIPATION POLICY:** The LDS Scouting Leadership Conference at Philmont is for STAKE PRESIDENCY members and their families. Due to the high demand to attend the conference, only stake presidency members will be immediately registered. In addition, if members of the stake presidency register and would like a high councilor and/or stake Young Men president to attend with them, those applications will be immediately accepted as long as space is available. All other applications will be placed on a waiting list.

When openings occur, wait list applicants will be contacted by the LDS-BSA Relationships office. If you are a high councilor or stake Young Men president, encourage your stake presidency to submit their applications and you will all be accepted to the conference.

In addition, Philmont is a family experience as well as a marvelous training opportunity. Each priesthood leader is encouraged to bring his wife and family to Philmont.

Philmont information and updates are also available on our website: [www.ldsbsa.org](http://www.ldsbsa.org)
Scouting Success

On February 8, 2010, the Boy Scouts of America will celebrate its 100th birthday. Scouting was founded in England by Lord Robert Baden Powell, a military hero, in 1907. The Scouting movement was brought to the United States by American journalist William Boyce, who became acquainted with the organization when a young Boy Scout helped him through the thick London fog. Boyce was so impressed with the helpful boy who wouldn't accept a tip, that he made an appointment to see Lord Baden Powell and learn more of the Scouting movement. He eventually founded the Boy Scouts of America based on the ideals and activities designed by Baden Powell.

There may not be many similarities between the lives of boys in 1910 and the lives of boys in 2010; however, the values on which the Boy Scouts of America was founded remain unchanged. Boys today are probably more familiar with computers than camping, ipods rather than ice skating, and the internet rather than insect identification; yet they still benefit from being trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. Despite shifting world values and tremendous moral opposition, the goals of the Boy Scouts of America are still to build character, citizenship and fitness.

In 1913, the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chose to adopt Boy Scouting as the activity arm of the priesthood. In a one-of-a-kind relationship, the LDS church has partnered with the Boy Scouts of America for 97 years. While Church leaders encourage us as members to support all good organizations, only in the case of the Boy Scouts of America is the church actually "married" to a gentile association.

Worthy adults are called to be registered, trained, adult leaders in the Boy Scouts of America, and youth are registered, uniform-wearing participants in the organization. We also find references to Scouting within our very Church manuals. While some Church members may question this partnership ("Why does the Lord's Church need to partner with an outside organization to accomplish its goals with the youth?"), it is clear that our prophets and leaders today remain firm in their commitment to the Boy Scouts of America as part of our priesthood organization.

And whether or not we are boys or men or are active in the Scouting organization, the Boy Scouts of America has likely touched our lives in a positive way.

I'm a daughter and I'm grateful for Scouting. My dad works full-time for the Boy Scouts of America, so I learned to tie my knots at a young age. I spent most summers of my life living in a cabin with my family at a Scout camp. I can pass a swim check. I can paddle a canoe and row a rowboat. I can cook eggs on top of a #10 can. I can identify constellations. I can shoot a bow and arrow, and I can recite the Scout Law. I also learned at a very young age the importance of being "mentally awake and morally straight." These values are important, even for a girl, and my childhood was richly filled with my dad's Scouting activities.

I'm a girl and I'm grateful for Scouting. Most of the young men I dated were Scouts and went on to become Eagle Scouts. On a date, they knew how to open the door and show respect. They could carry on an intelligent conversation. They weren't afraid to sing - a quality I appreciate. Their Scouting activities had taught them to work with their hands, follow through on an assignment, and make something of their lives. I had good dating experiences, thanks to good Boy Scouts.

I am a wife and I'm grateful for the Boy Scouts of America. Aside from the fact that I met my husband while working at Scout camp (I was a cook and he was a shooting sports director), I'm grateful for the type of husband that he is because of his Scouting experience. Leadership responsibilities as a youth taught him to conduct a meeting, work well with people, and be polite. Because of his role as a young patrol leader, he knows how to lead and preside over our family. Beyond his leadership skills, however, he can fix things around the house. He even mends his own clothes! His sewing skills were developed sewing on patches and beading Indian costumes - a hobby he picked up through Scouting. When we are stuck in the snow or want to cook in a Dutch oven, he has the knowledge and experience to help us. My married life has benefited from Scouting.

I am a mother and I'm grateful for Scouting. My oldest son went to his first, week-long Scout camp last year. He packed his own back pack. He set up his own tent. He built his own fire. He wrote his own skit. He made his own arrow. He crafted his own cardboard boat. He rowed himself across the lake ... and sank. But he grabbed his paddle and swam to safety. He cried. He wanted to come home early. He stuck it out ... and came home a different boy. Last week he conducted a court of honor, attended the baptism of a fellow Boy Scout, organized a campout, and bore his testimony in Sacrament meeting. I'm grateful for Scouting.

Despite what the world teaches, boys are different than girls. As the mother of four sons, it is obvious to me that boys are often rambunctious, noisy, and active and are generally in need of greater physical and mental direction. Thank goodness for Scouting activities which provide them with productive, moral ways to use their hands and minds.

Baden Powell said that "Scouting is a game with a purpose." Scouting's purposes have always supported my purposes-as a daughter, woman, wife, and mother. And so, even though I'm a girl, I am grateful for Boy Scouting. I look forward to 100 more years of this inspired program, for my benefit, my children's benefit, and the benefit of my grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Thank you, Baden Powell, and Happy 100th Birthday to the Boy Scouts of America!

Article and photo by Nettie Francis, wife of Mark R. Francis, Scout Executive, Central Wyoming Council, Casper, WY.
Celebrating 100 Years of Scouting in Corn Mazes

All over the nation, corn mazes have been created in honor of the Boy Scouts of America’s 100th Anniversary. These corn mazes would put any Scout’s orienteering skills to the test! Here are a few of our favorites:

Jonamac Orchard- Malta, IL
During the month of September this corn maze donated $1 of each admission fee to the local Friends of Scouting campaign. They also hosted a Scouting weekend where Scouts and their families camped out and enjoyed bonfires, hayrides and tried their luck at navigating the corn maze at night. For more information on visiting this corn maze:  http://www.jonamacorchard.com/corn-maze

MazePlay- Firth, ID
This 15-acre, 7 mile maze shows a Scout saluting, an American flag, an eagle, life, star and first class badge. The words created in the corn bear the words “On My Honor” and “BSA 100”. The owners and creators of this maze are donating 25% of the profits to the Grand Teton Council. For more information on visiting this corn maze:  http://www.mazeplay.com/wild-adventure-corn-maze

Cornbelly’s at Thanksgiving Point- Lehi, UT
Known as Utah’s Original Corn Maze, Cornbelly’s celebrates Scouting’s 100th Anniversary with the 100 year logo in 12 acres of corn with interactive passports, bridges, spinning wheels and more! For more information on visiting this corn maze: http://www.cornbellys.com/cornfieldmaze.htm
**2010 National Scout Jamboree: Hispanic Scouts Relish Experience**

Colorado branch raised money for cross-country drive

Six months, 1,700 miles and a big chunk of cash was all that stood between the Boy Scouts from the Melissa (Spanish) Branch, Colorado Springs Colorado Stake, and the 2010 National Jamboree.

But a Scout (besides being Thrifty, Loyal, Helpful, et al.) is also Resourceful. At the beginning of the year the boys and their leaders decided they'd work tirelessly in their neighborhoods to earn the money they needed to make it to Ft. A.P. Hill. With the guidance of their enthusiastic Scoutmaster, Isaac Gonzalez, the boys became adroit in the art of fundraising. Almost every weekend there was something going on to flush out a few dollars. The Scouts hosted spaghetti dinners, staged movie nights, sold tamales, washed cars, hustled landscaping jobs and stenciled curbsides.

The money they raised wasn't nearly enough to buy airline tickets — so they took to the road. For three days, the boys and their leaders navigated two donated vans eastward to Virginia. They made stops to tour Church sites in Nauvoo and Carthage, Illinois, before arriving safely at the National Jamboree for 10 days of fun, adventure, achievement and spiritual development.

Brother Gonzalez, a native of Mexico, said it was important that the boys be at Jamboree to learn more about themselves and, in some cases, better understand and appreciate their adopted country. "And third," he said, grinning, "we want them to have fun."

Mission accomplished. "I really like the archery, scuba diving and doing the rapelling," said deacon Douglas Fajardo. "We had to do a lot of fundraising, but I'm proud that we got here in six months."

Eighteen-year-old Alfredo Soto served as an assistant Scoutmaster at the National Jamboree. His training here, he said, has helped him prepare for future leadership and service. "I'm putting in my mission papers in December — by next July, I'll be serving my mission."

Besides participating in the many Jamboree activities available to LDS Scouts, the Melissa Branch troop enjoyed a bilingual fireside presided over by Brother Adrian Ochoa, second counselor in the Young Men general presidency. Brother Ochoa, the boys said, became emotional as he talked to them about fulfilling their duty to God and full-time missions.

"We've tried to give them an experience they would never forget," said Gerry Pearce, who served as one of the troop's jamboree leaders. "They are a phenomenal group of kids."

*Article by Jason Swensen, Church News, August 7, 2010. Photos by Jeffrey D. Allred, Deseret News*