

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Troop 502

# Interfaith Worship Guide

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# Introduction

"A Scout Is Reverent. He is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others." So reads the twelfth point of the Scout Law. Baden-Powell once said of the scouting movement: "There is no religious side to the movement. The whole of it is based on religion, that is, on the realization and service of God."

While the words of Sir Baden-Powell stress the importance of religion and the realization and service to God, they do not specify in the belief of a particular religion or being other than God. God can manifest him, or herself, to people differently and it is important that within the scouting movement we are inclusive of all of God's people regardless of their particular and specific beliefs.

This guide is intended as a Chaplain's Aide reference for Troop 502, or any scouting organization, to help in selecting inclusive prayers and worship services. The contents of this guide have been assembled by searching through various prayer books, worship service bulletins and religious texts from a variety of sources to select prayers, hymns/songs and messages that use inclusive language and do not refer to a specific religion or god.

You will surely notice that much of the content comes from the Christian faith. However, every effort was made to find and include inclusive content from other faiths as well including Native American, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu and other sources. The main criteria when including from other faith's was the inclusive nature of the language.

As Scouts, we are called to be inclusive in all that we do and our worship should not be any different. There is more that we people on this earth have in common than we have in difference and I hope this guide will help Troop 502 be inclusive in our worship of our Creator.



James Russ  
Assistant Scout Master  
Troop 502  
September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## How to Use this Guide

Worship Guidance from Scouting Founder,  
Lieutenant General Sir Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell,  
1st Baron Baden-Powell, OM GCMG GCVO KCB DL:

To interest the boys, the Scouts' Own [i.e., a worship service] must be a cheery and varied function. Short hymns (three verses are as a rule quite enough - never more than four); understandable prayers; a good address from a man who really understands boys (a homely "talk" rather than address) which grips the boys, and in which they may laugh or applaud as the spirit moves them, so that they have a real interest in what is said. If a man cannot make his point to keen boys in ten minutes he ought to be shot! If he has not got them keen it would be better not to hold a Scouts' Own at all.

November 1928

This guide has been constructed to include a number of inclusive prayers organized by type of event, activity, time of date and purpose. Look through the appropriate sections and the prayers for your event or activity and select a prayer that speaks to you at that time.

There are two complete worship services included at the end of the guide: one for a typical morning worship service and one for an evening Scout Vespers. Use them as is, or feel free to modify the services by replacing portions with other prayers included in this guide, or appropriate inclusive components you may find elsewhere.

Remember that the two most important things are to include everyone and that it is not important that you follow a specific format for worship but that you worship.

# Prayers

## General Prayers

### An Interfaith Lord's Prayer

Our Father-Mother God, all harmonious,  
Adorable One.  
Thy kingdom is come; Thou are ever-present.  
Enable us to know, as in heaven, so on earth, God is omnipotent, supreme.  
Give us grace for today; feed the famished affections; And Love is reflected in love;  
And God leadeth us not into temptation, but deliver us from sin, disease, and death.  
For God is infinite, all-power, all Life, Truth, Love, over all and All.

### Prayer for Strong Character

O Lord, our God! Assist Thy loved ones to be firm in Thy Faith, to walk in Thy ways, to be steadfast in Thy Cause. Give them Thy grace to withstand the onslaught of self and passion, to follow the light of divine guidance. Thou are the Powerful, the Gracious, the Self-Subsisting, the Bestower, the Compassionate, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful.

### Native American Prayer for Strength

Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice we hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world, hear us!

We come to You as Your many children; We are weak and small.  
We need Your wisdom and Your strength.

Let us walk in beauty, and make our eyes ever behold the red and purple sunsets.

Make my hands respect the things You have made, and make our ears sharp so we may hear Your voice.

Make us wise so we may understand the things You have taught our people. Let us learn the lessons You have hidden in every leaf and rock.

We ask for wisdom and strength; not to be greater than others, but to fight our greatest enemy - ourselves.

Make us always ready to come before You with clean hands and a straight eye,  
So as life fades away, as a fading sunset, our spirits may come to You without shame.

## Truman's Prayer

Oh! Almighty and Everlasting God, Creator of Heaven, Earth and the Universe;  
Help us to be, to think, to act what is right, because it is right;  
Make us truthful and honorable in all things;  
Make us honest for the sake of right and honor and without the thought of reward.  
Give us the ability to be charitable, forgiving, and patient with everyone.  
Help us to understand their intentions and their shortcomings - even as You understand ours!

## A Short Prayer of Thanks

Dear God, we thank You today  
For the adventure of Scouting,  
For the unselfishness of parents and mentors,  
For the patience of teachers  
And for the encouragement of friends.

## Sioux Indian Prayer

O' great spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me! I am small and weak, I need your strength and wisdom.

Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things you have made, and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so that I may know the things you have taught my people.

Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy – myself.

Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes.

So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame.

*Chief Yellow Lark, Sioux, 1887*

# Outings, Travel and Camp Prayers

## A Prayer for Travel

Lord, protect and guide us as we set out this day. Make our ways safe and our homecoming joyful. Let us have Your wisdom so that we make good and right choices in all the places that we go. Give us enjoyable and steady companions and good leaders, and let us not be lonesome.

## Beginning, or Leaving for, Camp Prayer

Bless us, O Great Spirit, as Scouts gathered together in this camp.  
Grant that no harm may spoil our brotherhood.  
Make us live together in wellness and good fellowship, ever mindful of Your example and of our Scout Oath and Law.  
We thank You for old friends and for new friendships.  
We give thanks for the days of our gathering, and we pray that we safely return to our homes, with thanks for Your beautiful creation and the joy of life.

## Starting the Day

Dearest Father, our Savior and Guide:

We praise Your name above every name, over all the earth, over all the sky, over all creation. We are Your unique creation, and we bow to serve and worship You.

As we begin our day, Lord; we pray to You for guidance. At the close of our daily toils, we thank You for protecting us from the world which tries to swallow us.

As we lay down each night, knowing that You provide rest for those who love You, we thank You for providing the skill and knowledge needed to face the challenges of each day.

We ask You:

For wisdom, in our preparations to serve You, our families, and our fellow Scouts;

For endurance and strength to overcome the challenges before us.

For patience to humbly accept Your will, even as we attempt to swallow our pride over our earthly successes,

To lead us through the trails of life; and as we touch the lives of those we pass, may we be prepared to help, to comfort, to defend if necessary, all those who are in need.

Always giving Glory and Honor to You, O Lord.

### A Prayer for Good Weather

Almighty and most merciful God, we humbly ask of You, in Your great goodness, to restrain any difficult conditions with which we will have to contend. Please grant us fair skies. Graciously hear us as Scouts who call upon You that, armed with Your light, we may travel without harm and cheerfully do our best in good fellowship.

### A Hiking Prayer

O God,  
As we walk the majesty of Your creation,  
We thank You for the open air,  
For the sunshine and clouds,  
For the early morning mist,  
The noontime heat and the shadows of the night,  
For the hills and the valleys,  
The woods and the streams,  
And all living things.  
May Your Spirit be always with us as our constant companion,  
And may the trail's end rise to greet us like the meeting of a friend.

### Wondrous Creation

Our mighty Father in Heaven, hear this prayer we offer as we humbly approach Your throne knowing we cannot go anywhere without You.

From rocky mountains to dusty plains;  
Raging river to deep blue oceans;  
Rolling green hill to majestic forests;  
Magnificent canyons to musty swamps.

You breathe life into every living thing we see;  
From hummingbirds to grizzly bears;  
Tender mushrooms to towering redwoods;  
From misty sunrise to red splashed sunset;  
We find Your handprint everywhere we look.  
Even the cool evening breeze whispers Your power and love into our ears.

Father, help us to see You everywhere we look;  
Confirm in us a respect for Your creation that reflects our awe of You.

May we accept the charge of service to creation and each other with sincere and humble hearts. In your wondrous name we pray.

## A Prayer for Scouts

O God of the mountain and valleys,  
Of the forest, meadows, and plains.  
Be our guide as we walk together the trail of life,  
And may Your love, made known to us in the stories of our faith,  
Be known to others through the words and deeds of our lives;  
This day and always.

## Camper's Prayer

God of the mountains and hills, make me tall and strong.  
Tall enough and strong enough to right some wrong.  
God of the stars, make me steadfast and sure.  
God of every lake and stream, flow through my life and make it clean.

God of the trees and woods, keep me fresh and pure.  
God of the rain, wash from my life all dirt and stain.  
Pure and strong let me remain.

God of the seed and soil, plant in my heart Thy love.  
God of the darkness and day, through shadows or light, be my stay.  
Guide Thou my way.

God of the radiant sun, light Thou my life.  
God of the glorious dawn, make each day a fresh start.  
God of the evening peace and quiet, keep me free from fear and strive.  
God of the carefree birds, sing in my heart.

God of the surging waves and sea, wide horizons give to me.  
Help me to see the world as Thou would have it be.  
God of the lovely rose, make me lovely, too.  
God of the morning dew, each day my faith renew.  
God of all growing things, keep me growing, too.

*George Earle Owen*

## Morning Prayer

God, my Father, thank you for bringing me to the beginning of a new day;  
thank You for the peace and rest of the night that is past.  
Each day gives me many opportunities of expressing my love for You;  
all my senses, all my talents come from you;  
by your power and presence help me to use them well today,  
doing everything for your honor.  
Preserve me from all that is evil, so that all I think and do and say may be pleasing to  
You.  
Amen.

## Evening Prayer - Taps (Can be sung to the tune)

Day is done, gone the sun,  
From the lake, from the hills, from the sky;  
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.

Fading light dims the sight,  
And a star gems the sky, gleaming bright,  
From afar, drawing nigh, Falls the night.

## Prayers Before Service/Eagle Projects

### A Short Prayer of Service

Good God, grant us inspiration to creatively do our part in making this a better world for all its inhabitants, grace to realize that our efforts are inadequate without Your support, and acceptance of the results of our actions, whether we succeed or fail, knowing we have given our all and done our best.

### A Prayer for Cheerful Service

O God, help us,  
To do the work that lies before us this day,  
Able and cheerfully,  
And in the spirit of glad sacrifice,  
And bring us to our beds tired  
But happy and healthy.

### A Prayer for Strength to Change

Most Gracious God,  
Today we stand in Your presence amazed at all that You have created.

Give us the strength to see You as we reflect upon our life and the community.

Stretch us to rely on You in those moments when we are strong and when we are weak.

Challenge us to never find contentment in a world that needs helping hands and humble hearts, yet inspire us to be the change and a light where all who are lost can find acceptance because through our work they saw You. Use us to honor You as we work here today.

# Meeting Prayers

## Opening Prayers

### Prayer for a Meeting

Dear Lord,  
As we begin this meeting, we know that You are here with us.  
Make our hearts and minds ready to plan,  
And do those things that will be pleasing to You;  
And to serve our troop (patrol, crew post, or ship), our homes, our communities, and our country.  
Where we fail, forgive us and help us start again the way You would have us go.

### A Scout Prayer I

Dear God, help us to carry Your Spirit in our lives, that we may share it with others by living it ourselves.  
Help us to offer all that we have and are in Your service.  
And help us to live the spirit of Scouting so Your Spirit will live on through us.

### A Scout Prayer II

O Lord, we thank You for the work of Lord Robert Baden-Powell, who in his wisdom and vision founded the world Scouting movement.

We thank You for the efforts of those men and women who have brought Scouting to millions of youth the world over.

We dedicate ourselves to the principles of our Movement; To do our best to do our duty to God and our country.

We ask You, O Lord, to give us the strength and courage, each of us, to live up to the Scout Oath and Law, and the high ideals of the world brotherhood of Scouting.

## Closing Prayers

### Troop 502 Closing Prayer

May The Great Scoutmaster in the sky  
Watch over and keep us.  
Troop 502 ... Dismissed

### An Indian Benediction

O Great Spirit, Bless us from the north with the cool winds that calm our passions. Bless us from the east with the winds that bring and renew life. Bless us from the south with the warm wet winds that invite growth. Bless us from the west with the winds that lead us through this life to the next. Fill the sky so that we might sense Your presence. And bless us from mother earth from which we've come and to whom we shall return.

### A Scouting Benediction

Dear God, thank Uou for the opportunity to be here in Your garden. Give us the strength to endure, the wisdom to enjoy each moment, and the courage to push ourselves further than we have ever before. Bless our troop and our leaders as we journey through Boy Scouting. Amen.

# Graces and Other Blessings of Thanks

## Ho Non Wah Blessing

For the wind and the water  
We thank Thee, Oh Father,  
For Friendship and Brotherhood  
We pledge our service.  
And for the food before us,  
We are ever grateful.

## Philmont Scout Ranch Grace

For food, for raiment,  
For life, for opportunity,  
For friendship and fellowship,  
We thank Thee, O Lord.

## Florida Sea Base Keys Blessing

Bless the creatures of the sea,  
Bless this person I call me,  
Bless the Keys You made so grand,  
Bless the sun that warms the land,  
Bless the fellowship we feel,  
As we gather for this meal. Amen.

## Northern Tier Wilderness Base Grace

For food, for raiment,  
For life, for opportunity,  
For sun and rain,  
For water and portage trails,  
For friendship and fellowship,  
We thank Thee, O Lord.

## Scout Prayer of Thanks

Dear God, we thank You today  
For the adventure of Scouting,  
For the unselfishness of parents and mentors,  
For the patience of teachers,  
And for the encouragement of friends.

## Philmont Scout Ranch Prayer of Thanks

We thank You, O God, for this day,  
For morning sun and evening star,  
For flowering trees and flowing streams,  
For life-giving rains and cooling breeze,  
For the earth's patient turning,  
The changing of the seasons,  
The cycle of growth and decay, of life and death.  
When our eyes behold the beauty and grandeur of Your World,  
We see the wisdom, power, and goodness of its Creator.  
We awake and behold! It is a great day.

# Worship Services

## Morning Worship

### **Call to Worship**

Our Lord! We seek divine guidance so that we may remain steadfast in what is just.

We seek divine guidance in order to be firm in righteousness.

We seek from You a tongue that speaks the truth and a heart which is pure and clean.

We seek divine guidance in the manner that I express my gratitude for Your favor and worship with devotion.

### **Invocation: A Native American Prayer**

O Great Spirit of the Heavens,

In the day's infinite blue and amid the countless stars of the night season, remind us that You are vast, that You are beautiful and majestic beyond all of our knowing or telling, but also that You are no further from us than the tilting upwards of our heads and the raising of our eyes.

Amen.

### **Hymn/Song: America The Beautiful**

O beautiful for spacious skies,

For amber waves of grain,

For purple mountain majesties

Above the fruited plain.

America! America!

God shed his grace on thee,

And crown thy good with brotherhood

From sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for pilgrim feet

Whose stern impassion'd stress

A thoroughfare for freedom beat

Across the wilderness.

America! America!

God mend thine ev'ry flaw,

Confirm thy soul in self-control,

Thy liberty in law.

### **Responsive Reading: Boy Scout Oath Responsive Prayer**

Leader: On My Honor I Will Do My Best ...

All: Almighty God, keep us always mindful that our honor is a possession to be cherished as dearly as life itself. Endow us with firmness of purpose and uncommon integrity that will enable us to fulfill those responsibilities with which we are charged. Make us ever conscious of the trust others have placed in us as Scouts.

Leader: To Do My Duty to God ...

All: Creator of the universe, how often we forget the true source of life's joys and pleasures. How often, too, have we failed to remember the origin of the inward strength that has enabled us to be aware of Your continual presence in our daily lives. Help us to understand the rewards of service.

Leader: And My Country ...

All: We thank You, Almighty God, for the privilege of living in the United States of America. Keep foremost in our minds that the freedoms that we enjoy were earned through the unselfish sacrifices of those who have gone before us. As the strength of a country is in her people, let us never avoid our responsibility to maintain this nation as a beacon of hope and freedom to all mankind.

Leader: And to Obey the Scout Law ...

All: O God, accept the heartfelt thanks of us Scouts and Scouters for men of vision and leadership as Lord Robert Baden-Powell, Ernest Thompson Seton, Daniel Beard, and James E. West. Keep always before us the ideals that they set forth, and grant us the courage to live by them when others may not. Allow us never to forget that our actions may be the examples others choose to follow.

Leader: To Help Other People at All Times ...

All: Grant us forgiveness, patient Lord, when we place the wants in our lives above the necessities of others. Teach us to recognize and understand the problems facing others and prepare us for each day's task of helping all those in need.

Leader: To Keep Myself Physically Strong, Mentally Awake, and Morally Straight.

All: God of our ancestors, let us never forget that our bodies and minds are but temporary gifts from You. Help us to preserve, strengthen, and use them for the betterment of ourselves, our homes, and our country.

## **Scoutmaster's Minute / Meditation**

### **Offering Invitation (Optional)**

Take, O Lord, and receive all our liberty, our memory, our understanding, and our entire will: all that we have and possess.

You have given them to us, O Lord, now we give them back to You.

All things are Yours: do with them according to Your will.

Give us Your love and Your grace for this is enough for us.

Amen.

### **Hymn/Song: God Bless America (Optional during offering if received)**

God bless America, land that I love,  
Stand beside her, and guide her  
Thru the night with a light from above.

From the mountains to the prairies  
To the oceans white with foam,  
God bless America, my home sweet home.  
God bless America, my home sweet home.

### **Prayer**

O God,  
Light of the minds that know You,  
Life of the souls that love You,  
Strength of the thoughts that seek You,  
Help us to know You so that we may truly love You,  
And so in loving You we may fully serve You,  
Whose service is perfect freedom;  
In Your Mighty Name, Amen.

### **Benediction**

The light of God surrounds us;  
The love of God enfolds us;  
The power of God protects us;  
The presence of God watches over us;  
Where we are, God is!  
Amen.

## Vespers Service

### **Call To Worship: Native American Call to Worship**

O Great Spirit! Watch over us as we begin this day.  
Protect us as we live in Your care.  
Give us bounty and hold us from harm.  
We are Your children and wish only to please You.  
We hold our Mother Earth close to our hearts and wish her goodness.  
We thank You for Your love.

### **Invocation**

We worship You by developing our good minds so that we may learn the difference between right and wrong.  
We worship You by standing for what is right and good and against what is deceitful and evil.  
We worship You by actions of righteousness.  
We worship You in every person who seeks to follow Your way of righteousness.  
Amen.

### **Hymn/Song: America (My Country 'Tis of Thee)**

My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty,  
of thee I sing;  
Land where my fathers died, Land of the pilgrim's pride,  
from every mountainside Let freedom ring!

My native country, thee, Land of the noble free,  
Thy name I love:  
I love thy rocks and rills, Thy woods and templed hills;  
My heart with rapture thrills Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze, And ring from all the trees,  
Sweet freedom's song:  
Let mortal tongues awake, Let all that breathe partake;  
Let rocks their silence break, The sound prolong.

Our fathers' God, to Thee, Author of liberty,  
To Thee we sing:  
Long may our land be bright With freedom's holy light; Protect us by Thy might,  
Great God, our King!

### **Responsive Reading: Scout Law Responsive Prayer**

Dear Lord, Bless all those everywhere who contribute to shape the hearts, minds and bodies of Scouts. Let us remember what they have taught and apply it each day:

Leader: When facing deceit and dishonesty,

All: Let us be *Trustworthy*.

Leader: If we see stubbornness and unfaithfulness,

All: Let us be *Loyal*.

Leader: Where there is disregard of others,

All: Let us be *Helpful*.

Leader: When we find people in despair,

All: Let us be *Friendly*.

Leader: In an atmosphere of bad manners,

All: Let us be *Courteous*.

Leader: Where there is cruelty and crudeness,

All: Let us be *Kind*.

Leader: Though wrongdoing and unruliness are common,

All: Let us be *Obedient*.

Leader: While others grumble and complain,

All: Let us be *Cheerful*.

Leader: In a world spoiled by waste and extravagance,

All: Let us be *Thrifty*.

Leader: When confronted with danger and temptation,

All: Let us be *Brave*.

Leader: As we see wickedness and unhealthiness everywhere,

All: Let us be *Clean*.

Leader: If we witness desecration and dishonor,

All: Let us remember to be *Reverent*.

All: As Scouts, let us stand out; our bodies strong, our minds trained, and spirit true; To You, Lord, our home and country we pledge ourselves and our service.

## **Scoutmaster's Minute / Meditation**

### **Offering Invitation (Optional)**

O God, most merciful and gracious, of whose bounty we have all received, accept, we beseech Thee, this offering of Thy people. Remember in Thy love those who have brought it and those for whom it is given, and so follow it with Thy blessing that it may promote peace and goodwill among men. Amen.

### **Hymn/Song: God Bless America (Optional during offering if received)**

God bless America, land that I love,  
Stand beside her, and guide her  
Thru the night with a light from above.

From the mountains to the prairies  
To the oceans white with foam,  
God bless America, my home sweet home.  
God bless America, my home sweet home.

### **Prayer**

Dear God, thank You for the opportunity to be here in Your garden. Give us the strength to endure, the wisdom to enjoy each moment, and the courage to push ourselves further than we have ever before. Bless our troop and our leaders as we journey through Boy Scouting. Amen.

### **Benediction**

May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.  
May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and grant you peace.

### **Scout Vespers (Tune of Oh Christmas Tree)**

*Silently depart during song*

Softly falls the light of day,  
While our campfire fades away.

Silently each Scout should ask  
“Have I done my daily task?

Have I kept my honor bright?  
Can I guiltless sleep tonight?

Have I done and have I dared  
Everything to be prepared?”