

PROMISE AND LAW

A DISCUSSION GUIDE



FOR SCOUTS

UPDATED 2018

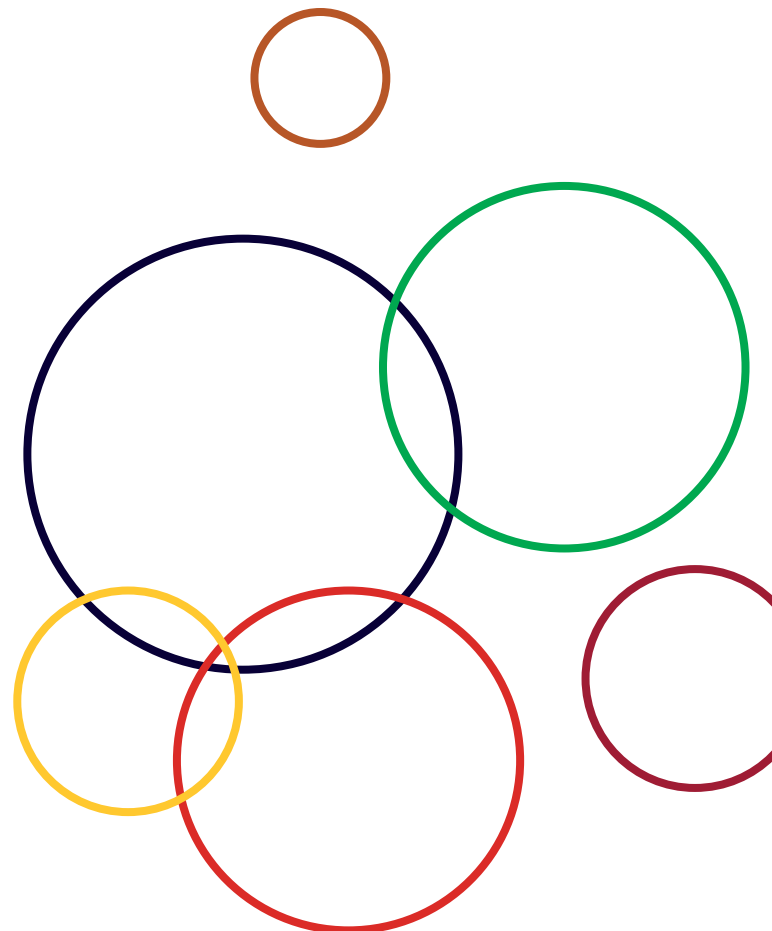


PROMISE AND LAW

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Scouts Australia has recently updated the Australian Scout Promise and Law. This discussion guide has been developed to support facilitating discussion about the Promise and Law with Scouts. The intention is not to be a list of questions which must be discussed every time a prospective Scout prepares to join the Scout Movement, but instead, as a guide to explore concepts with Scouts as they increase their knowledge of Scouting. Adults may choose to have regular conversations with their Scouts regarding the Promise and Law, and some of the questions in here may produce different responses from different youth members at different times in their Scouting journey.



AUSTRALIAN SCOUT PROMISE

VERSION 1

On my honour, I promise
To do my best,
To be true to my spiritual beliefs,
To contribute to my community and our world,
To help other people,
And to live by the Scout Law

VERSION 2

On my honour
I promise that I will do my best
To do my duty to my God, and
To the Queen of Australia
To help other people, and
To live by the Scout Law



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WHAT DOES ON MY HONOUR MEAN?

Your honour is made up of a few different things. It includes your reputation – how you want other people to see and think of you – as well as the good feeling you get when know you’ve done the right thing. When you make your promise, you recognise that if you keep not trying to do your best, that your reputation as someone who keeps their promises may suffer. Being human, we all know that it’s very hard to do your best at all times, but we are still promising that we will try to do this.

HOW DO I DO MY BEST?

Your best is the best that you can possibly do at the time. You don’t have to do things perfectly, and you don’t have to do things better than everyone else. You just have to be happy that you’ve done the very best you can possibly do.

WHAT DOES SPIRITUAL BELIEFS MEAN TO ME? HOW AM I TRUE TO THEM?

Your spirituality is your deep feelings or beliefs about your purpose in life, your connection to others and the meaning of life. Every person has some sense of where they fit in this world

– maybe even just being part of nature.

So when you say that you will be true to your spritual beliefs, this means that you will consider what your spiritual beliefs are, and what you need to do to fulfil your beliefs.

For some people – perhaps you – a religion helps you understand your place in the world. As part of your religion, you might be expected to do certain things, like attend religious services, fast (not eat) at certain times of the year, or take part in special traditions.

There might be other things that help you to understand your place in the world, how you connect to others, your purpose and the meaning of life – perhaps a connection with humanity, or nature, or something else. These beliefs might not come with the same kinds of traditions and expectations as religious beliefs, but there might be other ways you should stay true to them. For example, a belief in humanity might mean making a conscious effort to help others in your community understand each other better.



DEFINITION OF SPIRITUALITY:

The definition of spirituality for Australian Scouting is the feelings or beliefs of a person regarding their purpose in life, connection to others and place in the world around them. These spiritual feelings or beliefs may change as a person develops and guide their actions throughout their life.

Spiritual Development occurs in Scouting through:

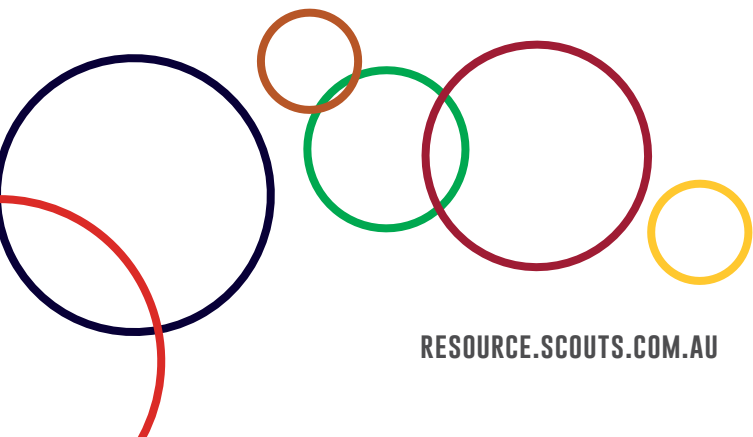
- Exploring a connection with nature and the world around us
- Searching for meaning in life’s experiences
- Learning about different religions and non-religious belief systems
- Learning about and respecting others spiritual beliefs
- Participating in Scouts’ Owns, reflections or other activities

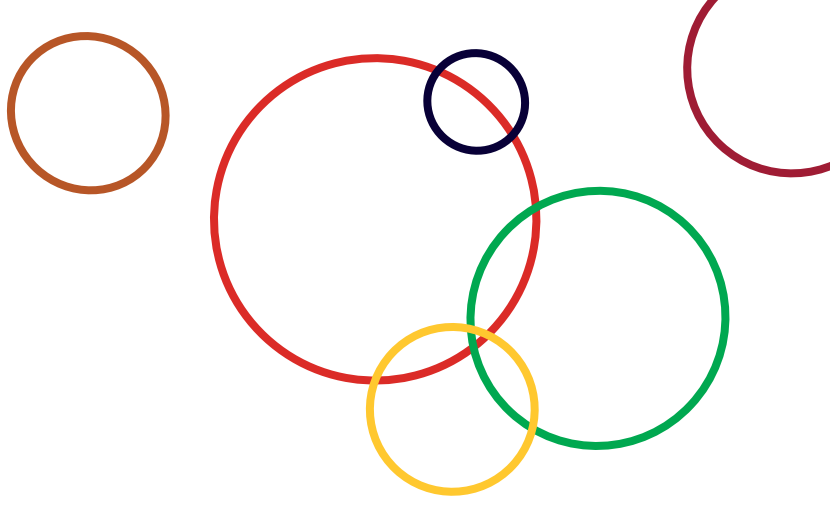


This allows young people to develop, question and refine their **spirituality**



Through making the Scout Promise, members commit to ‘being true to’ their spiritual beliefs (**Duty to God**)





HOW CAN I EXPLORE MY BELIEFS? WHAT IF MY BELIEFS CHANGE?

There are lots of different ways that you can explore your beliefs, and you can choose which ones work for you.

The first place that a lot of us learn about our beliefs is from our parents and other family members. Have a chat with them about what they believe. Different people in your family might have different beliefs, and different friends might too. Think about which beliefs make sense to you and how they make you feel.

You can also learn more about different beliefs by speaking to people who are experts in particular beliefs. This could be a Priest, an Imam, a Rabbi, a Monk, or a Nun. You could also speak to someone from a local Humanist society, or biologists, anthropologists, sociologists and environmental scientists. Every one of them will be able to tell you something different about their perspectives on spirituality, how they find meaning in their life. Perhaps you could have some of these people come to your Troop night, and talk to your Troop about their views of the world?

It's good to learn about lots of different belief systems, as it allows us to better understand each other and the different perspectives we have of the world. In learning about other belief systems, your own beliefs might evolve, or they might stay the same. That's okay! All we're asking you to promise is to consider them, and stay true to them.

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE THE SAME BELIEFS AS YOU?

That's absolutely fine! There are lots of different sets of beliefs in the world, and every single one of them's different. Different beliefs bring different perspectives, and different ways of thinking, and different ways of doing things. And the more of these, the better!



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WHAT IS MY COMMUNITY?

We all are part of lots of different communities. Your Scout group is one. Your school another. The suburb or town you live in, an ethnic, cultural or religious group you're a part of, your sports team or any hobbies you have – these are also lots of other communities you're a part of. You can even extend the boundaries of these communities further, to international communities, like Scouting worldwide.

Of course, we also can't forget that Australia is a massive community.

Communities can be thought of as a group of people who identify as a member. So, if you think of yourself as an Australian, and so do other people, you're a part of the community of Australians. Other communities have different ways of identifying each other as members – as Scouts, it's taking a Promise, wearing a scarf (or necker!) and wearing the fleur-de-lys on our uniform, as well as paying a registration fee each year. What are some other communities that you're a part of?

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO MY COMMUNITY? HOW AM I ALREADY CONTRIBUTING TO MY COMMUNITY?

Different communities need you to contribute to them in different ways.

- Your school (or your Scout group!) might ask you to look after younger students and help out at working bees or fundraisers.
- Your sports club might ask you to commit to always attending training and to bring oranges to share once a season.
- As a member of your local community, perhaps you can contribute by picking up rubbish in your local streets, or letting your local government know if something needs fixing.
- And as a member of the Australian community, you can contribute by finding ways to make Australia better for everyone. When you're older, this might include voting and

paying taxes, but even now there are ways you can contribute. You can use your voice to help others find theirs, or you can volunteer for other community organisations.

What ways are you already contributing to your communities? What new ways could you find to contribute to your communities?

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO OUR WORLD? HOW AM I ALREADY CONTRIBUTING TO OUR WORLD?

Our world is the world that we all share – and in sharing our world, we all have an obligation to look after and contribute to it.

Our world consists of many parts, and each of those parts need looking after. The natural environment, people, plants, animals, and the built environment too – each of us need to do our bit to look after them, but there are lots of different ways to do so.

Jane Goodall, Ban Ki-moon, Caroline Chiscolm, Eddie Mabo, Rosa Parkes, Leonardo da Vinci, Jane Austen, Robert Baden-Powell – all contributed to our world in different ways, having found something that they were good at and using that skill to improve people's lives, in their local community, and the wider world around them. Do you know some of the things that these people have done?

You don't have to be famous to contribute to our world though – have a think about the people around you making contributions to our world by small acts. Making sure rubbish doesn't end up in the sea can make an impact all over the world, and you can have an even bigger impact by finding ways to get other people to stop rubbish ending up in the sea.

What other ways could you contribute to our world, that could have an impact – big or small – globally? Think about things that make people, animals, the and the environment (built and natural) happier, healthier, and safer. See what things you can start doing!



HOW DO I HELP OTHER PEOPLE? WHAT MORE CAN I DO TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE?

Baden-Powell wrote in *Scouting for Boys* that;
“[w]hen you get up in the morning remember that you have got to do a good turn to someone during the day”.

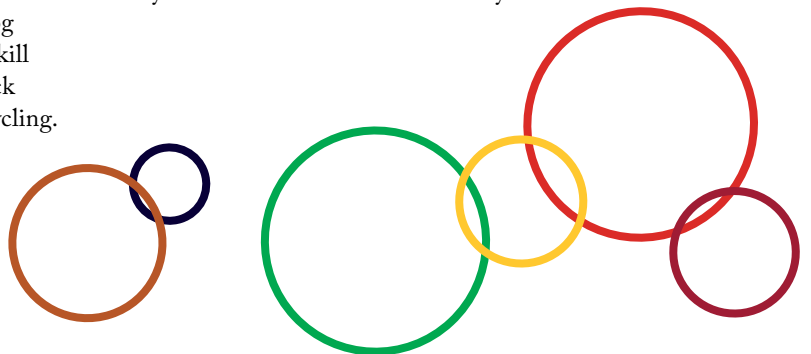
A good turn is doing something good for someone else. It doesn't have to be massive: you've probably heard about the idea that Scouts help little old ladies cross roads. Well, that was one of the suggestions BP gave for a good turn. It certainly isn't all that we do, but if you see someone who's struggling to cross a road, offering them help – and giving it if they want it – is a good thing for a Scout to do.

There are lots of other things you can do to help other people. Maybe a friend at school needs help with their homework? Or your neighbour's going away and their dog needs feeding and walking? Perhaps you've got another skill you could use? Some people make blankets or toys for sick babies and children, or collect old mobile phones for recycling. What can you come up with?

ARE THERE DIFFERENT WAYS THAT I HELP OTHER PEOPLE FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE?

Everybody needs different help. You might help your best friends by looking after them when they're unhappy, but you might help your parents by being patient if they're busy or stressed.

One thing you should remember though is the difference between being helpful, and being responsible. Doing the dishes at home might be helpful if you've got a roster and it's your brother's turn to do them, but taking turns to do dishes in your home is being responsible – it's part of living with other people. The same goes for tidying up after yourself or doing other chores around the house – just like everyone has to take turns cooking, cleaning, and taking care of a campsite, everyone has to do the same around your home.



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HOW AM I LIVING BY THE SCOUT LAW?

The Scout Law is a set of principles every Scout promises to follow throughout their life. We'll talk a bit more about the Law later on, but to live by it, you're using these Laws to help you decide what it is you're going to do every day of your life. If you find something challenging, have a think about the Scout Law – they might be able to help you to make your decision.

HOW DO I DO MY DUTY TO THE QUEEN OF AUSTRALIA?

When you do your "duty to the Queen of Australia", you're not doing things specifically for Queen Elizabeth II. This is another way of saying you'll do your duty to others – one of the core principles of Scouting. Because Australia is still a constitutional monarchy (our country has a Queen as our head of state, in charge of our country), you might prefer to acknowledge her when you promise to do your duty to others, instead of to "my community and our world".

HOW DO I DO MY DUTY TO MY GOD?

Find out what your God asks you to do. Perhaps you're expected to pray, go to certain places, or take part in certain traditions. Your parents, or elders from your religion, might be able to help you understand what your duty to your God (or Gods) is.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO VERSIONS OF THE PROMISE? WHICH VERSION WOULD I PREFER TO MAKE?

There's a few differences between the two versions of the Promise, but there are two key differences.

VERSION ONE

"be true to my spiritual beliefs"
"contribute to my community and our world",

VERSION TWO

"do my duty to my God"
do my duty "to the Queen of Australia"

You can't pick and choose which parts of which version you would like – you have to take all of one, or all of the other. When you're deciding between the two, though, you should think carefully about the words of both versions of the Promise, and which set works better for you. You can talk it over with your family and friends, your Scout Leaders, your teachers at school, or other people you know. But in the end, it's your choice which one you choose to make – no one else can make it for you.

AUSTRALIAN SCOUT LAW

BE RESPECTFUL

Be friendly and considerate
Care for others and the environment

DO WHAT IS RIGHT

Be trustworthy, honest and fair
Use resources wisely

BELIEVE IN MYSELF

Learn from my experiences
Face challenges with courage



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WHAT DOES RESPECT MEAN? HOW DO I DEMONSTRATE MY RESPECT?

Having respect is about caring for others' feelings and thinking positively – about yourself, others, the environment, animals, or things. For instance, when you're at school and it's time to work quietly, you should stay quiet to respect everyone else and allow them to work in peace. At home, you might show your respect to other members of your family by keeping the volume down on music that you're playing, or the TV.

Then there's respect for yourself. Showing respect for yourself involves things like looking after yourself – getting enough exercise, eating responsibly, keeping yourself neat and tidy. This doesn't mean that you have to always look immaculate, go on a diet, and run for an hour every day – it just means that you make sure you're healthy. Others will have more respect for you if you can show that you respect yourself.

You should show respect to your environment too – whether your bedroom, your school, the local shopping centre, a forest you're camping in or the top of the tallest mountain you can climb. What are the different ways you can do this?

How do you show your respect?

HOW AM I CONSIDERATE?

Being considerate is about thinking about what impact the things you do will have on others. Talking when you're meant to be working in class can stop others from being able to work properly. Messing around with a ball when you're meant to be cleaning up on Scout night will make the clean up last longer and stop the other Scouts in your troop from enjoying the rest of the activities planned for the night.

On the other hand, seeing that a new Scout in your troop is nervous about playing a rough game for the Scout night is a good opportunity for you to be considerate of them – perhaps you change the game, or you could help look after them in the game so that they know how to play it. On camp the hot water in the showers might be limited, so you should be considerate of others and not use it all yourself. And if you use the last of the jug of water at dinner time, be considerate of others and refill it!

What other ways can you be considerate?

HOW AM I FRIENDLY?

What do you do when someone new comes along to a Scout night. Or joins your class at school, or your sports club?

It can be intimidating to be a new person joining a group of people, but by being friendly you can make it much easier for the new person. When they join you, say hi, and introduce everyone. Have a think about the games that you're going to play during the night – a rough game might be okay normally, when you all know each other and are comfortable that you know each others' limits, but it might scare someone new joining you.

It's also important to be friendly to people you've known for a while. It's okay to not get along with everyone you know. However, that doesn't mean you can't still be friendly to them. What ways can you be friendly towards people, whether they're a friend of yours or not?

You should also be friendly to people you only meet briefly and aren't necessarily ever going to see again. When you buy something at the supermarket or your school canteen, catch a bus, or see your neighbours in the street, a friendly smile, a 'hi', or a please and thank you, can really brighten their day.

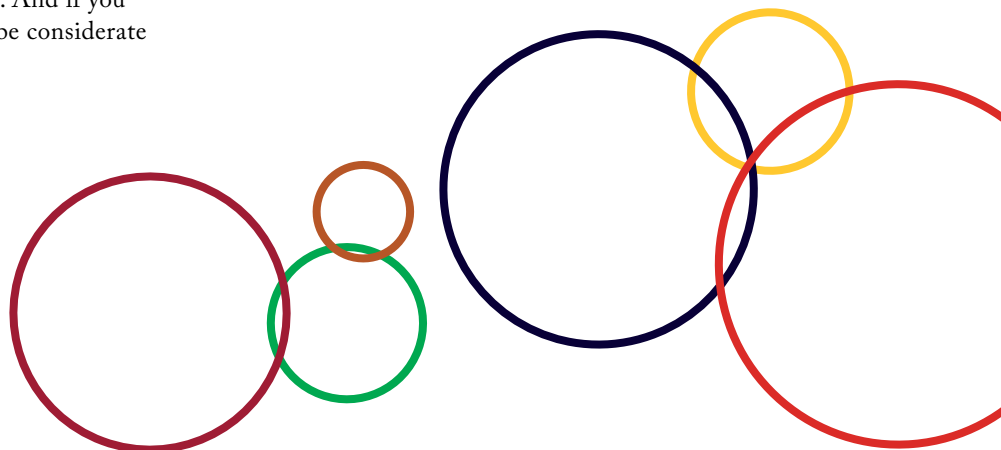
HOW DO I CARE FOR OTHERS?

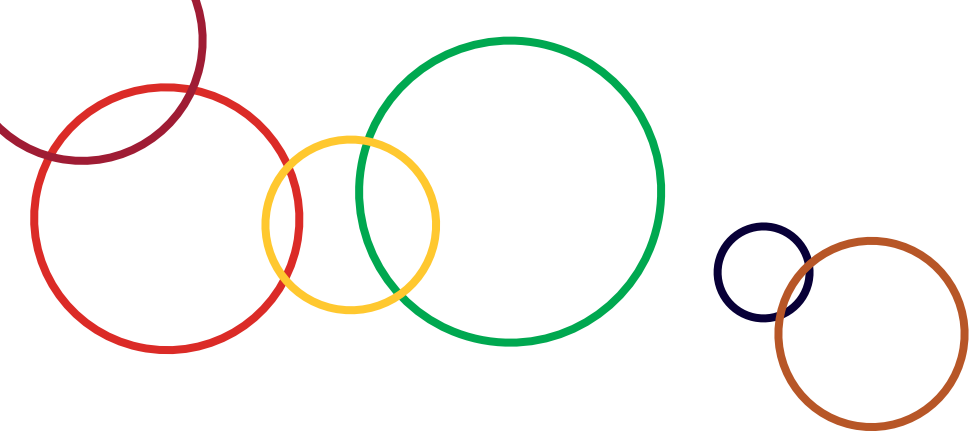
There's a few different parts to caring for other people.

First of all, you need to realise that not everyone is the same as you – everyone's life has been different, meaning that they'll see the world a little differently to you. This can mean that something you find really easy someone else might need help with, or something you don't know how to do someone else might be an expert at.

Caring for others is all about understanding that everyone comes from somewhere different, and so the things you need to do to care for each person is different. Have a think about the different things that people do to care for you – your parents? Your Scout Leaders? Your teachers at school? Your friends?

And what do you do to care for others?





HOW DO I CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

The environment can be many different things – it can be your bedroom, your classroom at school, or your entire suburb or town. It could be your local park, the camping ground you're staying in, or a national park. It could also be an environment nowhere near you – depending on where you live, you might never see the Great Barrier Reef, the Great Dividing Range, or the Nullabor. In fact, every part of the world we live in is part of our environment, and everything we do has an effect on some part of it. This gives us a lot to think about when we're trying to care for it!



Here are some things to think about. You won't be able to do all of them all of the time, but you should try as a Scout to do as many of them as you can as much of the time as you can:

- Dispose of waste properly – know what can be recycled, and recycle it! Sometimes you might have to do a little more work to recycle something, like taking it to a recycling centre, but it's worth it. Don't put food waste in landfill – find a way to compost it. It won't decompose in landfill.
- Think carefully about what you use or buy.
 - Before you buy new clothes, think carefully about them – are you going to get good use out of them? Do you need new ones, or can you repair or keep on wearing the ones you've already got?
 - Can you make better use of the food you're buying – can you remake it into something else?
 - Can you buy a different version of something that has less packaging?
 - What ingredients or products are used to make the things you buy? Have a think about terms like 'fair trade', 'sustainable sources', and 'no animal testing'. Do some research so you know what they mean.
 - Take a reusable bag with you whenever you go shopping, and make sure your parents do the same – don't get new disposable plastic bags every time you go out.
 - Don't use disposable picnicware (cutlery, plates, bowls, cups, straws, takeaway containers) or excess packaging – try reusable coffee cups, reusable plastic cutlery, and reusable plastic containers.
- Use power, gas and water carefully – don't use more than you need. Turn off lights when you're not in the room, don't use heaters or air conditioners if you don't really need them, and take short showers (aim for under four minutes!).
- Keep your local environment clean:
 - Pick up rubbish left lying around.
 - Help to plant local trees and plants to keep your local environment green.
 - Think carefully about using things that can easily end up in your local environment, and avoid letting them get away – bits of polystyrene, balloons that get away, bits of glitter.

What else can you do to care for your environment?

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WHAT DOES RIGHT MEAN?

This law is probably the most difficult one to understand. Sometimes it's hard to know what the right thing to do is. Hopefully the other Scout Laws, and the Scout Promise, can help you make your decision. Will what you do help other people? Is it considerate? Respectful? Honest? Is what you want to do consistent with your spiritual beliefs, or your Duty to your God? Will it contribute to your community and our world, or mean you're doing your duty to the Queen of Australia? Hopefully, once you've answered these questions, you'll have been able to figure out what the *right* thing to do is.

The right thing is not always the easy thing – owning up to something you did that was wrong, giving up something you like for others, doing something that you really don't want to do – but if it's the right thing, then as a Scout, you've should try to find the way to do it.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT YOUR DEFINITION OF RIGHT IS CONSISTENT WITH MINE?

All of the Scout Promise and Law is open to interpretation – we all have different interpretations of how we should contribute to our communities and world, how we should do our duty to the Queen of Australia, what our spiritual beliefs or our god requires of us, how to be respectful.

Every person is different, and has experienced different things in life, and thinks differently as a result. Just because you and someone else have different definitions doesn't mean that either of you are wrong. Both of you could be right, one of you could be right, both of you could be wrong. Talk to each other about why you think you're right – having discussions about things like this will give you both a much better understanding

of why you've think what you think. Maybe the other person knows something that you don't, and once you know that thing, you might decide that what they think makes more sense. Or maybe you still disagree with them.

Sometimes your decision will be easy – lighting your Scout Hall on fire is very unlikely to be the right thing to do, while making sure you write a menu for camp that doesn't include anything that anyone in your patrol is allergic to is rarely going to be the wrong thing. But when something's a challenge, make sure you think about it, and talk with other people about it – you never know what you'll learn.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE TRUSTWORTHY?

Whenever you go on camp, your leaders trust that you will look after your tents, and not intentionally damage them. When your leaders let you build a fire, or use a pocketknife, they'll trust you to do so safely.

If your friend lends you a pen or their computer at school, they'll trust that you'll look after it and return it.

If your parents give you money to spend on lunch at school, they'll trust that you'll use it for what you're meant to use it for.

Being trustworthy is all about doing what you'll say you'll do. If you are using something that belongs to someone else, you're trusted to look after it and return it. If you've said you'll be somewhere, other people are trusting that you'll be there, or that you'll let them know if you can't make it. If you're a Patrol Leader or an Assistant Patrol Leader, your patrol is trusting you to look after them, and to help them if they needed.

It's a privilege to be trusted by other people, so you should always make sure your actions reflect that trust.





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HONEST?

Being honest is all about telling the truth. It might be difficult to tell the truth, but that's where it's even more important to do it. Admitting that you don't know how to do something; that you've done something you shouldn't have, or haven't done something you should've; telling someone the truth about how you feel or if you're uncomfortable with something that's happening – you need to be honest to yourself, and honest with others around you. Often when something goes wrong, what makes people most upset is when someone lies about it.

Something else you should always be honest about is if someone has hurt you or done something to you that you're uncomfortable with. Even if they tell you that no one will believe you, or that it's going to be something secret between you and them, you should always tell someone, preferably an adult. If the first one doesn't believe you (even though they should), tell someone else until you find someone that will believe you and will help you.

When have you been honest about something but found it really difficult to do so?

WHEN IS IT OK NOT TO BE HONEST?

There are, however, occasions when it's okay to not be honest. If being honest is going to put you or others in danger, then it's okay to lie – if someone is threatening you in the street, telling them that one of your parents is going to be with you in a moment, or that you've already rung the police, might help you get out of the situation.

There are also some 'good' lies that we tell all the time – if you've planned a surprise party for your best friend, you might need to lie to them so that it stays a surprise!

Can you think of some other times it's okay to tell a lie?

WHAT DOES FAIR MEAN TO ME? HOW AM I FAIR?

There are two ways we can think about being fair. These are being 'equitable' and being 'equal'.

One way of thinking about the difference is to imagine that we've all gone to see a sports game together. We're all standing at the boundary, with a fence in front of us, and a low roof above our head.

When we're equal, the fence is the same height for everyone. The problem with this is that some of us are really short, some of us are really tall, and some of us are somewhere in between. This can mean that, even though the fence is the same height, not everyone can see over the fence.

On the other hand, to make it equitable, there might be some blocks on the ground, for shorter people to stand on. Now everyone can see over the fence – but some things have had to be changed for some people.

Equality means everyone gets identical resources to the opportunity. Equitability means everyone gets different resources, in order to have equal access to the opportunities. But both of these are different kinds of fairness.

Whenever you're trying to be fair, have a think about what way you need to be fair. For instance, setting equal standards for a hike in the award scheme might seem fair, but if someone has a physical impediment that means hiking is a lot more difficult for them than it is for other people, it would be more equitable to set different standards for the hike for them.

However, if your troop is getting together for a single night for dinner, and you've got a few different allergies and dietary requirements in the troop, it might be easier to make a single meal that everyone can eat, and be equal, instead of giving everyone something slightly different. On a longer camp, on the other hand, you might focus on being more equitable.

What are some examples you can think of where you need to make sure you're being fair in your troop?

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WHAT DOES USE RESOURCES WISELY MEAN?

We've all got access to lots of different resources. Food, water, money, time, our natural environment, the tents in your Q-Store, an internet connection, books, the people that you know and the knowledge that you and everyone else has.

There's a limit to every resource we have, so we have to use them wisely. When you're going on a camp, you've got a limited budget to buy food, gas, wood, or anything else that you need for the camp. You've got limited time to organise it, and you're making good use of everyone's time when on camp. You may also only have access to the campsite you want to go to a certain number of times per year, and everyone only has enough time to go on camps so many times a year.

We also want to make sure we're avoiding wasting too much. Try your best to figure out how much food you're actually going to need on a camp, so that you're not throwing it all out at the end. If you don't use all of your food, save what you can for the next one, or split up things that won't last amongst your patrol to take home. Think carefully about activities that involve using a lot of water, or destroying edible food – can you do them in a way that the water isn't wasted, and if the food isn't going to be eaten, can you get food that was going to be thrown out anyway?

And before you go out to buy something new for your camp or your hall, or around your home, have a think about what you've already got – you might not need to buy something new, which will save you money! If your jeans have a hole in

them, you might be able to repair them instead of buying new ones. If you've grown out of a shirt, perhaps you can give it to someone else, or you might be able to turn it into something else. Perhaps your hall needs a new table – maybe you can find another table at the local tip which you can repair and use?

So whatever you're planning or doing, think about how you're using the resources that you have available to you, so that you don't waste them.

HOW DO I BELIEVE IN MYSELF?

Think of something you're scared of doing. Public speaking? Rock climbing? Scuba diving? Maths tests? It's okay to be scared of things – everybody's scared of something sometimes. But do you believe that you can do whatever it is that you're scared of doing? Do you believe that, if you try really hard, take lots of deep breaths, focus – that you can achieve it?

Believing in yourself is all about believing that you're able to do things if you set your mind to them. You might not be able to beat Usain Bolt in the 100m sprint, but that doesn't mean that you can still beat your own personal best over 100m. You mightn't be able to climb that rock climbing wall today, but perhaps you can work towards it, and will be able to do it next time.

What's something that you could work on, where you're not believing in yourself as much as you could?



WHAT KIND OF CHALLENGES DO I FACE? HOW CAN I APPROACH THEM WITH COURAGE?

We all face all sorts of challenges every day. Have a think about some of the things that challenge you. Speaking in front of your class at school? Playing a sport? Completing your homework? Making friends? Using a lift, or abseiling?

Everyone faces different challenges, and something that might be really easy for you could be really difficult for someone else – and it's not always easy to tell why.

What do you do when you're faced with a challenge? Nelson Mandela once said that "courage (is) not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it". Sometimes it takes time to gather the courage to face a challenge. You might need to take lots of little steps, and that's okay. So long as you persevere, and keep on going back you're still being courageous.

HOW DO I LEARN FROM MY EXPERIENCES? WHICH EXPERIENCES CAN I LEARN FROM?

Things don't always go perfectly the first time you do them – but that's okay! And sometimes they do, which is fantastic. But every time you do something, you should think about how it went well, and how it didn't. Remember **Plan > Do > Review**? Reviewing activities and events that you run is all about helping you to learn from your experiences.

Whether your experience tells you that not studying means you're going to do badly on a test, or that doing something nice for a friend on their birthday makes both you and them happy, remember it, so that next time you know whether to do the same thing, or something different.

