



Spiritual Formation Workbook based on the Aims and Methods of Scouting

A Messengers of Peace Service Project

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You are encouraged to reproduce this workbook and distribute it in any form or medium in an effort to strengthen others' faith. That means share on facebook, save on your computer and send by email to your friends. Start a small group study over the Lenten period. Remember: the intent is to deepen the spiritual health of the participant while raising support for Scouting ministries. © 2014 Ty LaValley. All rights reserved.

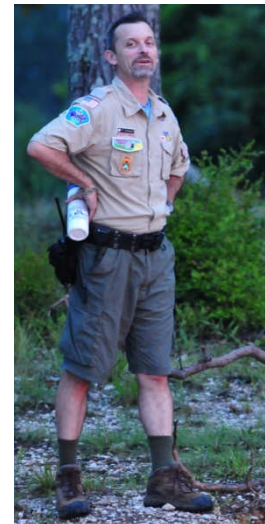
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This is the Author at the end of the program day, during Summer Camp. This photo was taken at Robert E. Knox Scout Reservation, near Lincolnton, GA, on Clarks Hill Lake (Strom Thurmond Lake). As Christians and Scouters we need to give ourselves away completely for the benefit of God's Kingdom.

Photo taken by LaMarr Walker





All participants who complete the 40 Day Shepherd Challenge may mail in the form in the back of this workbook to receive this fully embroidered three colored patch. The cost is FREE. This Workbook is FREE. You are FREE to share this with your friends and colleagues.

If you are interested in becoming a Scouting Ministry Specialist in the United Methodist Church, then go to:
<http://www.gcumm.org/ministries/scouting/specialist.html> for more information.



This Book is Dedicated to the Glory of God and in Honor of Frank and Michele Patterson. Two Christian Scouters that Impacted My Life in So Many Positive Ways

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Foreword

Someone once said that the greatest sin is the un-lived life! Perhaps it might be better stated that the greatest sin would be to have a life lived without experiencing it with one another, without relationships designed to help us grow and mature along life's path. Fostering relationships with oneself, one another, and most importantly with God is such a fundamental facet of a person's journey in life. As people of Faith we are called by God to enter into community learning from one another, teaching one another, experiencing from one another, walking a journey of trust. Hand in hand and in devotion to God we are constantly seeking what is true and right, striving to live our lives making ethical and moral choices not simply as individuals but as a people, a people called to serve one another and Almighty God. While we may stumble from time to time, if we focus on God and rely on the support of those who we are in positive Godly relationships with, then we cannot fail.

To grow in maturity of Faith and to learn to live life more abundantly one must continue to cultivate their relationship with God on a daily basis. This relationship is a result of the particular practices that an individual puts into effect that will deepen their Faith and their individual experience. Therefore, Spiritual Formation is probably one of the most important aspects of an individual's life. It is a unique journey full of wondering as well as wandering but it is also ultimately fulfilling and a profound opportunity for guidance and direction if our hearts and minds are open to the occasions set before us. Spiritual Formation is not a means to an end but is an ongoing process and is and chance for maturation as a spiritual being sharing in the graces and glories of our creator. Through this development we allow ourselves to be transformed by entering into a deeper relationship with God, His creation, and with one another. In essence, God is constantly forming us into the person He wishes us to be sharing in the bounties of His blessings and treasured creation. We are never stagnate we are forever changing, developing, and moving forward.

The idea of bringing together Faith and Scouting may seem foreign to some people however; it is the synthesis of these two concepts that truly make up the Scouting experience. When one considers that a Scout must have respect for self, others, and creation (nature) it would seem that there is a logical parallel to Faith, especially considering that Reverence and Duty to God is the capstone of the Twelve Points of the Scout Law and Oath itself. Scouting similar to Faith instills in an individual a sense of Servant Leadership with a commitment to personal as well a communal growth, empowering them to become a willing learner, serving from a keen and enthusiastic heart rather than coercion, and humbly offering self-sacrifice. Scouting, much like Faith helps one to become a steward of creation rather than an owner of it and it inspires one do what is right not for his or her own credit, but for the betterment of others and for their surroundings. As with a Christian, Scouts should be exemplary of human behavior and a model edifying what is best about humanity especially of our youth. Also, they should be sincerely living out daily what they believe and stand for, taking to heart the Oath, Promise, Codes, Slogans, and Motto. Equally, the Christian must be living out their Creeds, prayers, and beliefs not simply using them as recitation exercises for Sunday mornings.

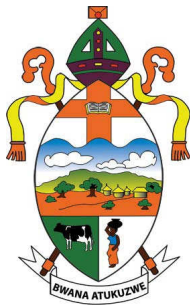
Spiritual Formation Workbook Based on the Aims and Methods of Scouting

This Spiritual Formation Book is wonderful compilation sharing both the Christian Faith and the Principles of Scouting. It allows one to see how easily Faith and Scouting go hand in hand and rather than being diametrically opposed to another, they complement one another. The most superb part of this workbook is that it does not water down the Christian perspective or the Scouting perspective but gives each one a comparative complimentary observation. It is a workbook for all ages Scouting or not and is one that is worth repeating over and over again. As an Anglican Bishop, an Eagle Scout, the father of two Eagle Scouts, and the husband of a very active Scouter I highly recommend this workbook from both the Faith family as well as the Scouting family.

May the blessing of COMPASSION and FORGIVENESS be upon you so that like Jesus you will feel and relate with others, console and comfort them in their need!

† Gregory A. Francisco

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Live simply, Love generously, Care deeply, Speak kindly and Leave the rest to God.

Introduction

“The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make moral and ethical choices over the course of a lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.”

The mission of the Church is to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The area where these two missions intersect is the subject of this spiritual formation workbook. Inside these covers is a buffet of spiritual formation practices for you to try. If it works then keep the practice. If one practice doesn't work for you, then try some others. The ultimate goal is to introduce you to practices that put you in a posture to hear from God.

Since many of the practices may appear new to you, I attempted to begin with familiar territory: The Aims and Methods of Scouting. The aims are character, citizenship, and fitness. The methods are Ideals (Scout Oath, Scout Law, ...), the patrol method, outdoors, advancement, adult association, personal growth, leadership, and the uniform. I added a section on group dynamics and the part that the E.D.G.E. method plays in assisting the group dynamics process. This special session uses the Beatitudes and Lord's Prayer as individual parallels to the group dynamics and E.D.G.E. method. The 40 day study ends with a session on setting S.M.A.R.T goals.

For the participant that is beginning from the perspective of a Christian with little or no Scouting experience, I began in familiar territory: Scripture. All Scripture selections have been taken from the New Testament. I did this because the small group interaction in the Gospels and connectional dynamic in the Epistles closely resemble our own setup in Scouting units. The majority of the sessions have a devotional reading feel, yet new challenges are included to stretch your comfort zone. Allow yourself to enter into the Scouters' hiking boots as we walk this trail together.

At the conclusion of this *40 Day Shepherd Challenge* you will look to your left and right and notice, as the disciples on their way to Emmaus, that it was Jesus walking with you the whole time instructing you. It is my hope that Scouters who complete this challenge will view their Scouting activities as an expression of their ministry in the world. Likewise, I hope that non-Scouting Christians will see Scouting as an opportunity to extend the mission of the Church into the world.

The end of this workbook has a special section about my own call to become a Christian and the call of full time professional Christian vocation after a career in the military. I talk about the joys and pains within the church. By reading this you will know that I am like everyone else that is trying to make meaning in a life that is somewhat confusing at times.

Yours in Christ and Yours in Scouting,

Ty LaValley

Ty LaValley

Scouting Ministry Specialist in the United Methodist Church

Day One

Ideals: Trustworthy

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – John 16: 12-15

I have much more to say to you, but right now it would be more than you could understand. The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth. The Spirit doesn't speak on his own. He will tell you only what he has heard from me, and he will let you know what is going to happen. The Spirit will bring glory to me by taking my message and telling it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine. That is why I have said that the Spirit takes my message and tells it to you.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Even when we don't understand the truth of who God is. We still acknowledge God as ultimate Truth. To deny God as the Trustworthy One leaves us on uncertain ground in every area. Our mere existence is relegated to chance and our purpose based on our own appetites.

Jesus was speaking to his disciples at the last supper with the pain of knowing that his work was incomplete at the time. Judas was betraying him, Peter would deny him, and Thomas would misunderstand him, and the people would yell "Crucify Him". They did not yet have the Spirit of Truth living in them. They

were in very close proximity to the Truth (Jesus) as they shared in his ministry, yet it had not yet taken up residence in them.

We have the benefit today of having the Spirit of Truth, from the one who is Truth, living in us today. When we accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior then we receive the Spirit of Truth to live that belief as we are ready to receive it. We have a Spirit perspective. With this knowledge we then order our lives in such a way that we manifest that Truth in everything we see and do. We become trustworthy because God is trustworthy.

Spiritual Formation Practice: The Examen (Vespers)

This ancient practice is a way to gather your day. God often speaks to us through the events of our day. When we write them down, a pattern develops. A close examination of our day helps God make his plans clear to us. The technique is similar to Roses and Thorns in our after action reviews.

This is done at the end of the day much like Vespers is done at the end of the evening's campfire. As we stare into the embers we reflect on our day and ask God to open our hearts. It is Truth time.

Roses in my day

Thorns in my day

What is God saying to me?

Day Two

Ideals: Loyal

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Mark 14:17-26

While Jesus and the twelve disciples were eating together that evening, he said, “the one who will betray me is now eating with me. This made the disciples sad and one by one they said to Jesus, “You surely don’t mean me!” He answered, “It is one of you twelve men who is eating from this dish with me.”

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

When people of Jesus’ time shared a meal, it was a very intimate event. Regardless of their religion, race, social status, gender, education level...., they had to acknowledge that they had the same biological need for the food that was prepared for them and served from a common dish.

The only thing that mattered was they shared a fellowship at this meal. Do we sit down at a common table and acknowledge each other as brothers and sisters in Christ? Have we sat down at a common table with contempt in our hearts? Have we sat down at the common table with the sole purpose of persuading the other people to achieve our goals? Have we come to the Lord’s Table with plans to do our own will?

We ask ourselves, “Is it I?” We can justify our actions in our own minds. We are all tempted to be disloyal because “The other person’s” intentions did not line up perfectly with our idea of some predetermined outcome. In little ways we set out to make sure our interests are being taken care of.

Jesus calls us to be loyal regardless of the outcome. Even in the face of betrayal Jesus continued to be loyal to the purpose of God by choosing the Cross. He chose to be loyal to his friends by continuing to teach one more Truth: “Take this, it is my body.”

God’s love is not conditional! When we reject God’s purpose in our life, God continues to pursue us. That is loyalty.

Vespers

Roses in my day

Thorns in my day

What is God saying to me?

Day Three

Ideals: Helpful

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Acts 9:10-18

A follower named Ananias lived in Damascus, and the Lord spoke to him in a vision. Ananias answered, “Lord, here I am.”

The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the house of Judas on Straight Street. When you get there you will find a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. Saul is praying, and he has seen a vision. He saw a man named Ananias coming to him and putting his hands on him, so that he could see again.”

Ananias replied, “Lord, a lot of people have told me about the terrible things this man has done to your followers in Jerusalem. Now the chief priests have given him the power to come here and arrest anyone who worships in your name.”

The Lord said to Ananias, “Go! I have chosen him to tell foreigners, kings, and the people of Israel about me. I will show him how much he must suffer for worshipping in my name.”

Ananias left and went into the house where Saul was staying.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

God is like a radio beacon for an approaching aircraft. The avionics on the aircraft take the signal and display it on a screen to indicate where the aircraft is in relation to the desired glide slope and direction needed to land on the airfield at the correct spot. To ignore it would be a disaster. God is always transmitting to us. We are on a course that God has called us to be on. When we let go of the noise and tune into God’s frequency, we hear God’s call on our lives. The only response is: “Lord, here I am.”

Notice in our Scripture reading that God had gone in front of Ananias and began to soften the heart of Saul. Ananias was not making a cold call to an enemy, rather to a person chosen by God. God was not interested in the reasons

Ananias shouldn’t go. God emphatically commanded, “Go!”

God places youth and other adults in our path along the Scouting trail. Many have issues. God has placed us in a position to help. Before I knew God, I saw God in others. My Scoutmaster took time for me when others saw a kid with a chip on his shoulder. I took his help and it began a lifelong journey to help other people around the world and at home. In God’s timing, I have saved lives, preached God’s love to tens of thousands of people. I have served as a clown, puppeteer, administrator, teacher, and writer. This is why Scouting is not just a program to me. It is a ministry.

Spiritual Formation Practice: The Breath Prayer

This prayer can be said in a single breath. It is a reminder that you have God with you at all times. A common form is to say a name used for God and follow it up with a prayer request

Lord, Here I am

All knowing Father, hear my prayer

Abba, thank you

Day Four

Ideals: Friendly

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Luke 19: 1-10

Jesus was going through Jericho where, a man named Zacchaeus lived. He was in charge of collecting taxes and was very rich. Jesus was heading his way and Zacchaeus wanted to see what he was like. But Zacchaeus was a short man and could not see over the crowd. So he ran up ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree.

When Jesus got there, he looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, hurry down! I want to stay with you today.” Zacchaeus hurried down and gladly welcomed Jesus.

Everyone who saw this started grumbling, “This man Zacchaeus is a sinner! And Jesus is going home to eat with him.”

Later that day Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “I will give half of my property to the poor. And I will now pay back four times as much to everyone I have ever cheated.”

Jesus said to Zacchaeus, “Today you and your family have been saved, because you are a true son of Abraham. The Son of Man came to look for and to save people who are lost.”

Spiritual Formation Practice: Bible Study Notes

Context: Jesus turned his face towards Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), yet stopped to be friendly to Zacchaeus when others shunned him. Jesus called him by name and ate with him. Validation of the person not the sin.

Zacchaeus’ situation: He was very wealthy yet not given a place in the front of the crowd. He lowered himself by acting below his station in life by running (elders didn’t run, others ran for them) and by climbing a tree (a childish thing to do).

Divine Imperative: “I want to stay with you today.” The Greek translation is: It is Necessary. Jesus said that he came to look for and save people who are lost. Jesus recognized the need.

Zacchaeus’ response: He made restitution to those he wronged as a response to the act of Grace by Jesus. His response showed his faith (a true son of Abraham – the father of faith). He was not saved by his response. We are saved by Grace through faith. Grace requires a response.

Thoughts: When we put together groups of people in Scouting units, we are bound to have some people that get on our nerves or act in ways that we don’t agree with. It is easy to shun them and surround ourselves with people we like. Don’t be like the crowd that shunned Zacchaeus. Be like Jesus who called Zacchaeus by name, validated him as a child of God, and loved him to the point that he made a choice to change his ways and help those he wronged. More importantly, he made an eternal difference. Look for the overlooked one today!

Day Five

Ideals: Courteous

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Romans 12: 9-16

Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love others as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself. Never give up. Eagerly follow the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord. Make your hope make you glad. Be patient in times of trouble and never stop praying. Take care of God’s needy people and welcome strangers into your home.

Ask God to bless everyone who mistreats you. Ask them to bless them and not to curse them. When others are happy, be happy with them, and when they are sad, be sad. Be friendly with everyone. Don’t be proud and feel that you are smarter than others. Make friends with ordinary people.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Personal Reflection

Some of the most discourteous people I know are the ones that will smile to my face and talk about me behind my back. Other forms of a lack of courtesy are those that only talk to me when they want something. I also get annoyed when I am going through something Good or bad and want to share with someone only to realize that they are mentally somewhere else or trying to one-up me. Guess what? Sometimes that person is me! We must always be on guard to serve as Christ serves. We must put aside our own issues and be in the moment with the youth we serve. It is difficult. Our

cultures are different. After 20 years of youth and children’s ministry I can say that it is sometimes like serving in a foreign mission field. We have to dive into this mission field and understand it from their perspective. Good manners dictate that we take Paul’s words and make them our own. God’s Holy Spirit will guide us. When it gets tough remember that you are called to this and God’s mission is awesome. Hold on to the hope that you are doing God’s will in the lives of these youth and children. Most of all: Pray! It keeps us all connected.

A.C.T.S. as a posture for Prayer

A=Adoration: Say something awesome about God.

C=Confession: What do you need to confess today?

T=Thanksgiving: What are you thankful for?

S=Supplication: What do you need to ask God to do for you?

Day Six

Ideals: Kind

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – 2 Timothy 2: 22-26

Run from temptations that capture young people. Always worship with people whose hearts are pure. Stay away from stupid and senseless arguments. These only lead to trouble, and God’s servants must not be troublemakers. They must be kind to everyone, and they must be good teachers and very patient.

Be humble when you correct people who oppose you. Maybe God will lead them to turn to him and learn the truth. They have been trapped by the devil, and he makes them obey him, but God may help them escape.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Depth Bible Study

A depth Bible study begins with Scripture and digs deeper into the disciple’s heart. It is sometimes referred to as an onion Bible study due to its ability to draw tears as you draw closer to the core.

was being urged to show restraint in dealing with these folks so as to not divide the church.

What does the Scripture Say?

- Avoid temptation
- Worship with other believers
- Don’t get drawn in to trouble
- Be humble
- Your example will set the stage for God

What does the Scripture mean for the people of today?

- Our world is hyper-connected. We make judgments and comments that are instantly beamed into hundreds of phones and inboxes with the push of a touch screen. In an instant, we have involved ourselves and others in an argument that we have had little time to think through. What does this do to community?

What did the Scripture mean to the people of the first century?

- The church was beginning to get people that were teaching false ideas. Timothy

What does the Scripture mean for me?

Intercessory Prayer

It is impossible to pray to God for a person and still have the same amount of contempt in your heart that you had when you started. Abe Lincoln said the best way to destroy your enemy is to make him your friend. It is not easy to pray for someone who is wronging you, but you do have to start somewhere. Choose a starting point:

- Pray for the desire to want to pray for them.
- Pray for them to know you.
- Pray for God to open their heart and yours to the hurt.
- Pray to know them as God knows them and then pray for their needs.

Day Seven

Ideals: Obedient

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Ephesians 4: 23-24

Let the Spirit change your way of thinking and make you into a new person. You were created to be like God, and so you must please him and be truly holy.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Contemplation

We are human beings not human doings. At the core of our existence we are God’s creation and are created in God’s image. This means that we are able to relate to God through the Spirit. When we fill our days with doing, we are crowding out the Spirit with physical preoccupations. The ultimate goal is to do good as an outward expression of the inward relationship with God. Contemplation is a spiritual formation exercise designed to stop doing and start being. This being starts by the renewing of our minds by the Spirit which leads to the making of a new person. This new

person is able to be obedient to God as directed by the Spirit. This goes beyond the modern psychological understanding of moving towards that which we think about, which is merely an expression of willpower. We will move towards what we think about, but the directive is from God. Contemplation puts us in a posture to hear from God and be renewed. Renewed is not redirected. It is a complete renewal of our minds. It is a new way of thinking and a new perspective.

An Exercise in Contemplation

As a child I was into martial arts and still enjoy the discipline that goes with it. For my contemplation exercise I put on a blindfold and play some non-lyrical music (pipes work) while stretching. I am in an area that I can’t hit anything. I breathe in and out to cleanse my thoughts then go through a series of katas (forms) that are progressively more difficult than the last one. I created them to where I start and stop in the same location (if done right). I end with more cleansing breaths and tell God about my worries and my desire to be with him. I then place my palms up when I am ready to receive from God. When I am prompted to end, I simply thank God for the gift of time with him.

A Boy Scout Approach to Contemplation

Take a walk in the woods and have a talk with God. When you get to a spot that feels right, sit down and be receptive to God’s presence. This time with God will be renewing to your mind. It is possible to do this with the buddy system, however, both must agree to respect the other’s time with God. Sunrises, sunsets, starry nights, dying embers, and isolated ponds are great places for contemplation.

Day Ten

Ideals: Brave

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Luke 8: 43-48

In the crowd was a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. She had spent everything she had on doctors, but none of them could make her well.

As soon as she came up behind Jesus and barely touched his clothes, her bleeding stopped.

“Who touched me?” Jesus asked.

While everyone was denying it, Peter said, “Master, people are crowding all around and pushing you from every side.”

But Jesus answered, “Someone touched me, because I felt power going out from me.” The woman knew that she could not hide, so she came trembling and knelt down in front of Jesus. She told everyone why she had touched him and that she had been healed right away.

Jesus said to the woman, “You are now well because of your faith. May God give you peace!”

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Sometimes the bravest thing we can do is to never give up. The woman in this story was a social outcast (her flow of blood made her ritually unclean. She was unable to touch other people without rendering them ritually unclean. She was unable to attend synagogue or Temple services. She was unable to make sacrifices for a sin offering. The Greek translation says she spent all her property on therapy. She was destitute and desperate, yet she persisted. She resolved to wake up each day and keep trying. One day she took a huge risk. She entered into a crowd of people and touched a Holy man on

his way to save someone. The crowd could have killed her for this. I do not believe she was putting others at risk because her faith revealed to her that Jesus could heal her. On that hope she entered the crowd. Jesus healed her physically but also made it clear that she was also restored to God because of her faith.

Jesus told her to go in peace, which in this case means: to join peace or to be set as one again. If you are struggling with something – don’t give up. Be brave in the Lord when your own abilities want to give up.

Spiritual Formation Practice: The Campfire

Write down, on a separate piece of paper, what you are struggling with. Give it to the Lord in prayer then burn it in the campfire. Reflect on God’s mercy in the embers of the fading fire.

Day Eleven

Ideals: Clean

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Mark 10: 46-52

Jesus and his disciples went to Jericho. And as they were leaving, they were followed by a large crowd. A blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus son of Timaeus was sitting beside the road. When he heard that it was Jesus from Nazareth, he shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!” Many people told the man to stop, but he shouted even louder, “Son of David, have pity on me!”

Jesus stopped and said, “Call him over!”

They called out to the blind man and said, “Don’t be afraid! Come on! He is calling for you.” The man threw off his coat as he jumped up and ran to Jesus.

Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?”

The blind man answered, “Master, I want to see!”

Jesus told him, “You may go. Your eyes are healed because of your faith.”

Right away the man could see, and he went down the road with Jesus.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Acting in an unclean way is sometimes a matter of meeting the expectations set by others who never took the time to know the person they declared unclean. A person who is told that he or she is no good may sabotage success as a form of control over the situation. Even though the behavior is counterproductive, they succeed in their mission to push others away before they are rejected. In Scouting, these are the kids that need us the most.

Bartimaeus means Son of the Unclean One. Take the time to feel the pain for this stigma placed on him by the crowd. The belief was that he was blind because his father sinned! He wanted to see. He made a scene and refused to stop until acknowledged by Jesus. Think about the kids in our programs that cry out for attention. Do we hear them? How can you help one child? Pray for that one child. Follow the directions in the box below:

Spiritual Formation Practice: Intercessory Prayer

God placed this person on your heart. Now that you know this truth, it is an invitation for you to join God’s work in this child’s life. God is already at work in this child’s life. God brought this child to you. Listen to God’s prompting on your heart and mind. Your prayer for this child is the most important thing you can be doing right now. Again, listen to what God would have you do. Resolve to do it.

Day Twelve

Ideals: Reverent

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – John 17: 1-8

After Jesus had finished speaking to his disciples, he looked up toward heaven and prayed:

Father, the time has come for you to bring glory to your Son, in order that he may bring glory to you. And you gave him power over all people, so that he would give eternal life to everyone you give him. Eternal life is to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, the one you sent. I have brought glory to you here on earth by doing everything you gave me to do. Now, Father, give me back the glory that I had with you before the world was created.

You have given me some followers from this world, and I have shown them what you are like. They were yours, but you gave them to me, and they have obeyed you. They know that you gave me everything I have. I told my followers what you told me, and they accepted it. They know that I came from you, and they believe that you are the one who sent me. I am praying for them, but not for those who belong to this world. My followers belong to you, and I am praying for them. All that I have is yours, and all that you have is mine, and they will bring glory to me.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

To be reverent is to be aware of God as the One True God.

The Greek word is ginosko: to know absolutely; to be certain. This is not to be confused with gnosis, which is mere knowledge. This level of certainty is revealed by God. God is always revealing himself to us but we so often fall for cheap substitutions. Reverence should never settle for superstition. We know that ancient religions have been built around the belief that the Sun was a god. People did not understand

it. They feared it. They built entire cultures around superstitious practices that appeased this god. Centuries after Christ was resurrected people gained knowledge (gnosis) of the Sun's place in the universe. The Sun god became a footnote.

Our true act of reverence is to seek God's revelation to us that he is the loving creator who desires a relationship with each one of us, his creation. We are reverent when we build a relationship with God in our daily walk.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Prayer Walk

With a prayer partner (buddy system) take a silent walk in the woods. Be aware of God's presence in the midst of you walk. God's power and grace is revealed in the little things all around us. Everywhere you look, life thrives. Even in winter the trees trust in God's provision. Find a quiet spot and reflect on God's love for you and your love for God. Let the warmth of the Sun warm your heart. God is present. Gaze into the vastness of the universe and be assured that you are not alone.

Day Thirteen

Ideals: On My Honor

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Luke 14: 7-11

Jesus saw how the guests had tried to take the best seats. So he told them:

When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the best place. Someone more important may have been invited. Then the one who invited you will come and say, "Give your place to this other guest!" You will be embarrassed and will have to sit in the worst place.

When you are invited to be a guest, go and sit in the worst place. Then the one who invited you may come and say, "My friend, take a better seat!" You will then be honored in front of all the other guests. If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honored.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Honor is not something we reach out for and grab. Honor is bestowed on us as a result of our efforts to honor God. The key to honor is to serve in genuine humility. This is not a false humility that gets upset when a deed is not recognized. Genuine humility results when we realize the limits of our deeds in light of the greatness of God. When we see ourselves as instruments of God's will and humble ourselves to serve then we bring honor to God who in turn honors us.

Some kids in our program come from a culture of respect rather than honor. They jockey for

position within their social circles to get the respect that they believe they deserve. For some, this is peer pressure driven. Respect in this context is based on what can be taken or demanded. The key to reaching these kids is to incarnate honor at all times. Substitute the phrase: "On my Honor I will do my best...", with the phrase: As a servant of the God Most High I will do my best...

Every task, every interaction, and every decision becomes an opportunity to honor God who in turn honors us.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Mentoring

Who can you identify as a mentor in your life?

Who can you mentor?

Day Fourteen

Ideals: Do my Best

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Mark 12: 41-44

Jesus was sitting in the temple near the offering box and watching people put in their gifts. He noticed that many rich people were giving a lot of money. Finally, a poor widow came up and put in two coins that were worth only a few pennies. Jesus told his disciples to gather around him. Then he said:

I tell you that this poor widow has put in more than all the others. Everyone else gave what they didn't need. But she is very poor and gave everything she had. Now she doesn't have a cent to live on

Spiritual Formation Practice: Sensory Bible Study

In a sensory Bible study, the reader places himself or herself in the story from the perspective of the people in the story.

The reader then uses all five senses to imagine what it may have been like at the time. For this story, I chose the widow.

Smells: The smell of the burnt offerings are everywhere in the city. The perspiration of the pilgrims making the arduous trek from their towns.

Tastes: The dust is everywhere in the air from the thousands of feet shuffling about. The dust is all I have to eat. There is no one to care for me.

Sights: My clothes are common compared to some of the fine people around me. The crowd is large in the Court of the Women where the Treasury is located. There are people

everywhere in the city for the Passover celebration. I approach one of the thirteen Trumpet shaped funnels where I will deposit my offering.

Sounds: I can hear people speaking in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and other languages. I can hear the metallic sound of so many coins being poured into the Trumpets around me. So many of these people have so much to offer God.

Feel: I reach into my pouch and pull out my last two Leptas which is 1/64th of a day's wages. I feel how thin they are and take note of my own thin frame. These two thin coins represent all I own. I know God doesn't need my two thin coins, but I need to give them. I feel the coins leave my hand and disappear into the Trumpet. I offer myself to God!

Day Fifteen

Ideals: Duty to God & Country

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – John 2:18-22

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus, “What miracle will you work to show us why you have done this?” “Destroy this temple,” Jesus answered, “and in three days I will build it again!” The leaders replied, “It took forty-six years to build this temple. What makes you think you can rebuild it in three days?” But Jesus was talking about his body as a temple. And when he was raised from death, his disciples remembered what he had told them. Then they believed the Scriptures and the words of Jesus.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Theological Bible Study

A theological Bible study seeks to answer the questions: What does this passage say about God? What does it say about people? What does it say about the relationship between God and people? The religious leaders were demanding to know by what authority Jesus cleansed the Temple. In their minds, he was disrupting the operations of the Temple. They confused their duty to God and country with their duty to the institution that they created.

What does this passage say about God?

- God is to be worshiped with pure worship
- God is sovereign
- God is capable of more than we can imagine

What does this passage say about people?

- We tend to create systems to make the intangible tangible
- We tie up our identities in the systems that we create
- We protect our systems against change

What does this passage say about the relationship between God and people?

- God desires a relationship with us that is free from materialism and ritualism
- Our bodies become the Temple of God with worship of God from within
- The resurrection spoken of by Jesus provides a way for our eternal life with God

Spiritual Formation Practice: Simplicity

Clean out a room, closet, garage ... Practice letting go.

Day Sixteen

Ideals: Duty to Others

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Luke 10:27

The man replied, “The Scriptures say, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.’ They also say, ‘Love your neighbors as much as you love yourself.’”.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Bible Study

The Shema found in Deuteronomy 6:5 states: “Hear O Israel: The Lord is our God, The Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.” (NRSV) It was a declaration of faith. The second part of the statement is found in Leviticus 19:17-18; paraphrased as: Don’t hate in your heart, talk it out, don’t act on your anger or let it build up inside. It finishes with: “but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.” (NRSV)

Our duty to others is to love our neighbors as ourselves. By loving our neighbors, we are loving God with our total being.

- The heart (kardia) is the core of who we are. The center of our emotions, thoughts and feelings. Does your duty to others cause you to truly feel for the other person?

- The soul (psuche) is the human spirit that enables communication with God’s Spirit. This should not be confused with Pneuma, which is the rational and immortal soul. Does your duty to others cause your prayers for the other person to be elevated to the point where your soul is crying out to God’s Spirit?
- The strength (ischus) is the physical abilities of a person. Does your duty to others cause you to use your gifts and other abilities to help them?
- The mind (dianoia) is the deep thought including imagination and understanding. Does your duty to others cause you to keep searching for a solution when roadblocks have been thrown in the way?

Spiritual Formation Practice: Service

What have I done for:

God

Others

Myself

Day Seventeen

Ideals: Duty to Self

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Luke 10:27

The man replied, “The Scriptures say, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.’ They also say, ‘Love your neighbors as much as you love yourself.’”.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Yes, this is the same Scripture verse as Day 16. While yesterday we focused on loving your neighbor as yourself, today we will see how important it is to love yourself. Each one of us is a valuable child of God. We are so valuable that God sent his only begotten Son to die for our sins. Let that sink in! The Son of God left his place of glory in Heaven to share in the human experience in order to make a way to the Father. When a person becomes a Christian, the same creative essence that formed the universe re-creates us. God’s Spirit

then takes up residence in our bodies. We are therefore able to approach God as new creations. This also means others can too. When dealing with others remember this truth. Go loves you and God loves the other person too.

A poor self-image results in negative treatment of others, negative treatment of self, or both. Don’t forget to take care of yourself or you will be no good to anyone.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Self-Care

What do you really love to do?

When was the last time you did it?

How will you carve out some time to do it?

Day Eighteen

Ideals: A Good Turn Daily

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

I pray that God, who gives peace, will make you completely holy. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept healthy and faultless until our Lord Jesus Christ returns. The one who chose you can be trusted, and he will do this.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

John Wesley, an Anglican priest and the founder of Methodism explained the Grace of God in three movements: Prevenient Grace is the grace that exists before we are even aware of God's provision. Justifying Grace is the grace that sets us right with God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Sanctifying Grace is the grace that forms us into the image of Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sanctification is the process of being made holy. The Greek word *hagion* means to separate to one's self like a sanctuary of a church. We are set apart for a holy purpose. This holy purpose is to be in a relationship with God and to respond to this relationship by doing good things. Doing a good turn daily contributes to our sanctification and becomes a means of Grace to others.

God is interested in our complete sanctification: Spirit, soul, and body. The listing of these three together makes it clear that our Spirit (*pneuma*: the immortal soul), our souls (*psuche*: our human spirit that allows communication with God), and our bodies (*soma*: our complete physical body) are all involved in this sanctification.

When we do a good turn daily, we are doing the will of God whose goal is to draw us closer to him. We become more set apart from the profane world in which we reside. This being set apart does not mean cloistered away into a little world that is out of touch with the world. The phrase: in the world but not of the world may sound like a cliché, however, it is true.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Rhythm for Life

A Rule for Life or Rhythm for Life (whatever you feel more comfortable with) is a scaffold of disciplines that set limits to your activities while acknowledging the longings God has place on your heart. It is a daily rhythm for life.

Examples include:

- Give thanks for all I have
- Spend each morning with God through a devotional reading and prayer
- Put my wants behind the needs of others

Day Nineteen

Ideals: Be Prepared

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – 2 Peter 3:14-16

My friends, while you are waiting, you should make certain that the Lord finds you pure, spotless, and living at peace. Don't forget that the Lord is patient because he wants people to be saved. This is also what our dear friend Paul said when he wrote you with the wisdom that God had given him. Paul talks about these same things in all his letters, but part of what he says is hard to understand. Some ignorant and unsteady people even destroy themselves by twisting what he said. They do the same thing with other Scriptures too.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

The Greek translation says that we are to be eager to be found at peace without spot of blemish. He is referring to the return of Christ in the end times. For the author of Second Peter, being prepared was a matter of eternal salvation. From this passage we can understand what is necessary to be prepared. Being prepared is **a matter of attitude**. We are to be eager to be prepared. Being prepared is **a matter of intentionality**. We are to be intentional about spiritual

formation practices that lead us towards being spotless and without blemish.

Being prepared is **a matter of correct teaching and interpretation**. If we pick and choose which Scripture is pertinent in our lives or misinterpret the Scripture to justify our position, then we are on shaky ground.

Being prepared is **a matter of sensitivity**. The writer of Second Peter believed the Lord's return was going to happen in the near future. We must act as if Christ will return at any time.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Pack for a Trip

When you prepare for a camping trip you place certain items in specific locations based upon when you will need them. Prepare for your spiritual journey by placing things in your spiritual backpack. What practices from this workbook have been helpful so far? Which practices are dead weight and need to be left in the garage?.

Day Twenty

The Patrol Method

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Acts 2:42-47

They spent their time learning from the apostles, and they were like family to each other. They also broke bread and prayed together. Everyone was amazed by the many miracles and wonders that the apostles worked. All the Lord's followers often met together, and they shared everything they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. Day after day they met together in the temple. They broke bread together in different homes and shared their food happily and freely, while praising God. Everyone liked them, and each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Life in the early church thrived within the small groups characterized by the apostles' teachings, prayers, and shared meals. I can imagine them gathering together at the Temple for large group teaching and worship before retiring to their small groups in individual homes. In these homes I see them sharing their food and discussing what they heard in a more intimate environment.

Our patrols are like these small groups that met in homes. In a patrol, members share food,

chores, and sleeping arrangements. In a patrol, members exercise the lessons that they have learned. In patrols, members stretch their leadership abilities and nurture new kids that find themselves in an otherwise foreign environment. I would like to suggest that each patrol have its own Chaplain's Aid. This Chaplain's Aid can work with the others to form a Scouts Own Worship Service for the larger Troop.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Participate in a Small Group

Are you in a small group? Does your small group have a structure that allows for a good balance of outreach to the stranger and in-reach to care for its members? Does it have a spiritual maturity that enables a healthy balance of Biblical learning and life application?

Day Twenty-one

The Outdoor Code

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Romans 8:18-25

I am sure that what we are suffering now cannot compare with the glory that will be shown to us. In fact, all creation is eagerly waiting for God to show who his children are. Meanwhile, creation is confused, but not because it wants to be confused. God made it this way in the hope that creation would be set free from decay and would share in the glorious freedom of his children. We know that all creation is still groaning and is in pain, like a woman about to give birth. The Spirit makes us sure about what we will be in the future. But now we groan silently, while we wait for God to show that we are his children. This means that our bodies will also be set free. And this hope is what saves us. But if we already have what we hope for, there is no need to keep on hoping. However, we hope for something we have not yet seen, and we patiently wait for it.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

“As an American, I will do my best to be clean in my outdoor manners, be careful with fire, be considerate in the outdoors, and be conservation minded.” Built into the Methods of Scouting is the Outdoor Code. Every Scout takes on the responsibility to protect the environment. It is an act of stewardship. What we do in our lives impacts the environment. Our Scripture passage today is a reminder that creation, along with us, is awaiting the time when it will be made whole by the Creator. When humanity fell in Genesis 3 all of creation felt the penalty of Sin. Animals had to die to

cover the shame felt by Adam and Eve. It won't always be this way. In Isaiah 11:6-9 we get a glimpse of the “Peaceable Kingdom.” Perhaps you have seen the painting by Henri Rousseau where all of Creation is in harmony. We don't need to wait for the redemption to be an instrument of God's redemption. Every service project becomes an opportunity to renew our world and teach young people the importance of our ministry of stewardship. In this lesson is the humble expectation that we will also be redeemed.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Stewardship

With a family member, build a bird feeder or some form of natural habitat for a small animal. Terracotta pots work great for toad habitats. Use your imagination and involve others.

Day Twenty-two

The Outdoor Classroom

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 6:25-29

I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth more than birds? Can worry make you live longer? Why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow. They don't work hard to make their clothes. But I tell you that Solomon with all his wealth wasn't as well clothed as one of them.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Lectio-Divina

The outdoor classroom has a way of reinforcing the lesson. If it is cold, we are motivated to dress appropriately and build a fire. If it rains we are motivated to set up camp quickly and properly. Jesus used nature as a classroom to talk about worry. The disciples could relate because they were near the objects every day. Today we will try on the practice of Lectio-Divina, also known as Sacred Reading. The focus is on listening to Scripture rather than the quantity of Scripture read. If you have never done this before, then it will seem redundant. I ask you to please give it a chance and approach it with an open mind.

Begin with three minutes of silence

Lectio 1 (reading) – Read the passage slowly. Allow the words or phrases to speak to you.

Sit silently for two minutes

Lectio 2 – Reread the passage slowly. Allow words, phrases, and images to speak to you. Make a mental note.

Sit silently

Lectio 3 – Reread the passage slowly until you encounter a word, phrase, or image that grabs your attention. This is an invitation for God to talk to you.

Meditation

- Ponder the word, phrase, or image
- Play with it in your heart and mind
- Let it interact with who you are: your hopes, fears, dreams, and memories...

Know that you are encountering God in these moments.

Day Twenty-three

Advancement: Merit Badges

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

I am not anyone’s slave. But I have become a slave to everyone, so that I can win as many people as possible. When I am with the Jews, I live like a Jew to win Jews. They are ruled by the Law of Moses, and I am not. But I live by the Law to win them. And when I am with people who are not ruled by the Law, I forget about the Law to win them. Of course, I never really forget about the law of God. In fact, I am ruled by the law of Christ. When I am with people whose faith is weak, I live as they do to win them. I do everything I can to win everyone I possibly can. I do all this for the good news, because I want to share in its blessings..

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

I always considered merit badges to be an opportunity to “try on” new ideas and concepts that I otherwise wouldn’t be able to experience. I never intended to make Eagle (I was a Star Scout). I just wanted to explore the possibilities. Firemanship merit badge made it possible to be in a fire station. Canoeing and Rowing gave me the freedom to leave the shoreline and explore some more. Wilderness Survival and First Aid were badges that would define my life. The list goes on.

The Apostle Paul shares his desire to experience many different settings as a tool for spreading the Good News of Christ. He meets people

where they are. He intentionally gives up his right to self to show others the freedom that is available in the Christian life. Paul does this for the Good News because he wants to share in its blessings. Every encounter promotes God’s kingdom. Every encounter brings Paul closer to the kingdom. Paul understands that he and the Good News are an inseparable partnership.

Adult leaders are beyond the age for merit badges; however, we may still stretch our comfort zones and open ourselves up to new possibilities for the sake of the Gospel, so that we too can share in its blessings.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Witnessing

Consider how God has been at work in your life recently.

Pray to God that you will be sensitive to a time and place to share God’s activity with someone.

Pray for the courage to tell God’s story in your life. You don’t have to be a scholar to share an experience.

Day Twenty-four

Advancement: Board of Review

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Luke 10:17-20

When the seventy-two followers returned, they were excited and said, “Lord, even the demons obeyed when we spoke in your name!” Jesus told them: I saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. I have given you the power to trample on snakes and scorpions and to defeat the power of your enemy Satan. Nothing can harm you. But don’t be happy because evil spirits obey you. Be happy that your names are written in heaven!

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

The 72 disciples went out in buddy pairs with the mission to prepare the towns for Jesus’ arrival. In the midst of this mission they realized they were able to cast out demons in Jesus’ name. Jesus warns them about the dangerous effects of pride and redirects their attention to the ultimate prize – Salvation.

In our own boards of review, we share in the accomplishments of the youth. We get excited in the work they have done and we rejoice with them. In the midst of this celebration, we must

find a way to keep our eyes on the ultimate purpose. For Scouting, that purpose is developing the morals and ethics of the child. As Christians, this is done through the salvation in Jesus Christ and through the sanctification of each person with the help of the Holy Spirit. When I participate in a board of review, I like to ask this question: A Scout is reverent, how has your work in Scouting drawn you closer in your relationship with God? I ask you the same question.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Spiritual Direction

Find a trusted friend that can help you listen to God. God is always present in our lives and working around us. This trusted friend will help you to pay attention to God’s presence and activity.

This person should be:

- Spiritually mature,
- Able to listen to you and the Holy Spirit
- Encouraging

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Luke 18:15-17

Some people brought their little children for Jesus to bless. But when his disciples saw them doing this, they told the people to stop bothering him. So Jesus called the children over to him and said, “Let the children come to me! Don’t try to stop them. People who are like these children belong to God’s kingdom. You will never get into God’s kingdom unless you enter it like a child!”

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

How do we receive the Kingdom of God as a little child? Look at the Scouts in your unit. Put yourself in their shoes and see the world from their perspective. I have spoken to thousands of children in an effort to tell them about Scouting. These room rallies are conducted in their classrooms. I can see their brains go from math and science to a world of infinite possibilities. A tent becomes a place of adventure, a hike in the woods becomes an expedition, and a campfire becomes a mysterious event. They shove off from the

shore to a lily pad covered cove and see the world from a new perspective.

We need to embrace that sense of adventure that God invites us to when we commit to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. I often get comfortable in my routine, but I always keep an ear and eye out for the One who is calling me to even greater adventures. As adults, we can best associate with children by entering their innocent world of infinite possibilities.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Celebration

Celebrate God by doing one of the following:

- Write a poem
- Draw a picture
- Make a collage
- Sing a song
- Go to a place that brings you joy

Day Twenty-six

Personal Growth

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Luke 2:52

Jesus became wise, and he grew strong. God was pleased with him and so were the people.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Today’s Scripture verse follows the only story we have of Jesus as a youth. He went to Jerusalem from Nazareth at which time he may have realized for the first time who he truly was. After this brief interlude the Bible tells us that Jesus went home, was obedient, and grew up. An excellent model of ministry is to have a healthy balance of mental growth, physical growth, spiritual growth, and social growth. Adolescence is about trying on new things until the child identifies who they are in Christ. Jesus

did not do it in a vacuum. I can imagine the town of Nazareth working together to help him develop. The best way for us to help others grow is to have a growth plan for ourselves. One of the after action review techniques used in Scouting is the Stop – Start – Continue method. We break down a major activity into its smaller components and ask what we need to Stop, Start, or Continue. In the boxes below, identify one thing per box that you can Start, Stop, or Continue.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Rhythm for Life	
Wisdom = Mental Growth Mentally Awake I will Start, Stop, or Continue:	Stature = Physical Growth Physically Strong I will Start, Stop, or Continue:
In Favor with God = Spiritual Growth Morally Straight I will Start, Stop, or Continue:	In Favor with Man = Social Growth Help Other People I will Start, Stop, or Continue:

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Galatians 5:22-23

God’s Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. There is no law against behaving in any of these ways..

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Servant leadership is identified by the fruit that it produces. This may only be produced as long as it is connected to the Source (John 15:1-8) Galatians tells us that the Spirit produces fruit in us we know we are being servant leaders when we:

- **Love** others as ourselves
- Have a **joy** that is not dependent on circumstances
- Are at **peace** with each other and our circumstances
- **Patiently** wait for God’s timing
- Do acts of **kindness** for people who may not be able to repay us
- Seek to do **good** at all times
- **Faithfully** attend to the means of Grace – stay in love with God
- **Gently** nudge others to see God in you – the Bible is not a hammer
- Exercise **self-control** over yourself – think theologically rather than react

Spiritual Formation Practice: My Journal

There have been times in the ministry and in Scouting that I was ready to quit. The backbiting, politics, and little kingdom building that goes on when humans are grouped together can be too much to bear alone. Each time I get to that point, I redirect my attention away from the physical to the spiritual. I focus on God’s purpose for me. God reveals the truth to me that I am not alone. My love for the kids and fellow leaders reveals a joy and peace that allows me to be patient. I am able to be kind to someone who is being less than kind to me. I can then focus on the good to be done rather than watching my back for retribution. This strengthens my faith for the next time. With my stress level down, I can be gentler on folks thus more self-controlled when some issue arises.

Day Twenty-eight

The Uniform

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Ephesians 6:13-17

So put on all the armor that God gives. Then when that evil day comes, you will be able to defend yourself. And when the battle is over, you will still be standing firm. Be ready! Let the truth be like a belt around your waist, and let God's justice protect you like armor. Your desire to tell the good news about peace should be like shoes on your feet. Let your faith be like a shield, and you will be able to stop all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Let God's saving power be like a helmet, and for a sword use God's message that comes from the Spirit.

Spiritual Formation Practice:

The Scouting Uniform is like a threaded resume. One good look at it and you can tell that the Scout is part of a worldwide movement that is active in a specific unit in a specific council. You can see the patrol or den that they belong to within the unit. You can see their accomplishments and patches from adventures shared with friends. You can see the position they currently hold. The uniform is very functional for field use and it looks nice.

A Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians he was probably under house arrest. I can imagine him looking at the uniform of the Roman soldier who guarded him. Each piece was functional for the task of a soldier in that time.

- **Belt of Truth** – The belt I wear in the field when running Summer Camp has a place for a water bottle, radio, phone, flashlight, knife, and a first-aid kit. It has things in it that I need to do my job in the field. The Belt of Truth Paul talks

about has years' worth of lessons that stand the test of time.

- **Breastplate of Righteousness (Justice)** – If you are striving to do the right thing then it is hard for people to find fault with what you say and do. They may not agree with you, but your ethics are intact
- **Shoes** – Readiness to go and proclaim the Good News (Be Prepared)
- **Shield of Faith** – soldiers would soak their shields in water to extinguish the flaming arrows of the enemy. Remember your baptism
- **Helmet of Salvation** – when you accept Jesus Christ as Lord, protect that thought and don't let the world change your mind
- **Sword of the Spirit** – The only offensive weapon mentioned. God's Spirit goes out before us. Every time God's Good News is spoken, evil takes a hit.

**The Beatitudes
Matthew 5: 1-12 (NRSV)**

**The Lord's Prayer
Matthew 6: 9-13 (NRSV)**

Forming	Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven	Recognize our sins	Know God as personal and Holy	Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be your name	Explain
	Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted	Recognize the World as Sinful	Longing for God's Kingdom	Your Kingdom come	Demonstrate
Storming	Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.	Renounce the World's methods	God's Will	Your will be done, on Earth as in Heaven	
	Norming	Blessed are those that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled	Acts of piety	Begin with us	Give us this day our daily bread
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.		Acts of Mercy	Forgive and be forgiven	and forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors	
Transforming	Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.	Single Loyalty to God	Strength in Testing	and do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the Evil one	Empower
	Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God	Acts of reconciliation			
	Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven	Unique			

- The Beatitudes are our guideposts along our spiritual journey towards Christ likeness
- Small groups go through a growth process: Forming, storming, norming, and performing. Christian small groups should not focus on performing, rather we are transformational in our mission
- The Lord's Prayer is a means of Grace in which we move from guidepost to guidepost
- The E.D.G.E. method is the way a leader motivates us to move to the next guidepost

Day Twenty-nine

Group Dynamic: Forming

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 5:3

God blesses those people who depend only on him. They belong to the kingdom of heaven!

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

As individuals the first thing we must realize is that we are sinners. Until we realize that we are in need of a Savior, we will continue to attempt salvation through our works, our pilgrimages, our therapies, and even our vices. We will join others in a futile attempt to satisfy a longing that cannot be satisfied apart from the One whose image we are made in.

When we join others in groups we find ourselves forming bonds through shared values and common experiences. We look to others to

find an extension of ourselves. This initial step in group dynamics is actually pretty narcissistic. It is a feel good time and social in nature. What would our spiritual walk look like if we chose to form a group that had a goal of forming Christ in each of the participants? What would our spiritual walk look like if we chose to look for Christ in others instead of ourselves in others? I believe we would be overcome with God's Spirit and say: Oh the blessed joy to be free from myself and in the presence of God!

Spiritual Formation Practice: Inventory Your Group

Do the members reflect you or God?

Do the group goals reflect you or God?

Are others welcome?

How do others join your group?

Day Thirty

E.D.G.E.: Explain

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 6:9

You should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, help us to honor your name.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

The way in which we recognize that we are sinners is to know God as communal, personal, and holy. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he was explaining a better way to live. Words have power. Prayer changes the person doing the praying. Notice the main point of the “Forming” devotional reading (our need for a Savior) and the main point of the “Explain” devotional reading (God as communal, personal, and holy). When groups are in the forming stage the leader explains what is required. The same is true for individual formation. When God begins forming us we must recognize our sinfulness, Jesus then explains our need for a communal, personal, and holy God.

When we say: **Our Father**, we are acknowledging that our Christian life has a community aspect that binds us all together.

We are acknowledging God as personal. Our Father is translated “Daddy”. God is approachable and near.

When we say: **in Heaven, Holy is your name**, we acknowledge God as being in a place of power to answer our prayers yet holy and just. There is an old school contemporary Christian song that says: “More love, more power, more of you in my life.” Love must be the motivator that causes us to seek God. God will use his power to share his love. When we recognize that God’s power is motivated by God’s love for us, then we realize that despite our sinful condition God can rescue us from this sin and re-create us new. We no longer have to do as we always have done. We will find ourselves in a storm as we unlearn the bad things and embrace God’s way.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Breath Prayer

Breath In

Daddy in Heaven

Breath Out

You are Holy

Day Thirty-one

Group Dynamic: Storming

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 5:4-5

God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!
God blesses those people who are humble. The earth will belong to them!

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Once we recognize our sins and realize God’s power and love to change us, we get a new perspective on life. If we choose to become Christian as a means to a relationship with God then we recognize the world as sinful and we renounce the world’s methods. Individually and corporately we go into a storming phase. The status quo and our life’s lessons are no longer sufficient. We face a crisis of belief and a crisis in our relationships. We fight each other and we fight God. We form the “Back to Egypt Committee” that would rather return to familiar bondage than to step into the unknown.

What would our spiritual walk look like if, in the midst of our storms, we embraced God’s love for the world and trusted in his power to transform the world?

What would our spiritual walk look like if, in the midst of our storms, we trusted God to show us a better way than we have yet to imagine?

I believe we would be overcome by God’s Spirit and say: Oh the blessed joy to be free from the limits of this world and directed by your power and love!

Spiritual Formation Practice: Inventory Your Group

How does your group handle injustice?

How does your group handle disagreement?

Day Thirty-two

E.D.G.E.: Demonstrate

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 6:10

Come and set up your kingdom, so that everyone on earth will obey you, as you are obeyed in heaven.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

We participate in the Kingdom of God when we do the perfect will of God in an attitude of trust and love. The Kingdom of God is a direct contrast to the sinfulness of the world for which the Christian mourns in the previous beatitude. Our hearts break because God’s heart breaks. We find ourselves in a storm of unrealized expectations and look to God to help us move to the next guidepost on our journey. When individuals and groups are in a storming phase, they don’t hear logic or dream for a way to achieve self-actualization. They are stuck and need a way out. The leader’s task is to demonstrate the intended behavior. Imagine what it was like at the Last Supper. Close friends gathered and Jesus said one of

them would betray him and Jesus would die. Jesus then goes to the Mount of Olives and prays “Not my will but your will be done.” Jesus then does the will of God, which the disciples didn’t understand at that time. Using Jesus’ demonstrated example the disciples were able to move forward into the next phase, which was norming. Jesus is the Messiah and Savior, but he is also the example of what we are here to do. If you are in the storming phase, then look to the many examples of Jesus in the New Testament. What will emerge are many examples of how Jesus set the acceptable norms for ministry. The Methods of Scouting are the acceptable norms for Scouting. .

Spiritual Formation Practice: Journaling

Some of the best ways to see God’s love demonstrated is to review past journals. If you are honest with yourself in your writing, you can see the full range of human emotions in varying circumstances. You can see what worked and what didn’t work. You can see your own weaknesses and see how God used these weaknesses to bring about positive change in your life..

Day Thirty-three

Group Dynamic: Norming

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 5:6-7

God blesses those people who want to obey him more than to eat or drink. They will be given what they want!
God blesses those people who are merciful. They will be treated with mercy!

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

We are all in the process of becoming. Our acts of piety and our acts of mercy become the norming activities that define who we are and who we will become. The biggest danger we face is to hunger or thirst for a form of righteousness and achieve this form. It leaves us self-satisfied and not motivated to grow. We end up going through the motions and playing church. We must hunger and thirst for righteousness to such a point that we would leave our comfort zone.

Mercy means to step into someone else's shoes and walk their walk with them, seeing what they see and feeling what they feel. This is only possible when we hunger and thirst for righteousness and upon finding that

righteousness, abandon self and show mercy to others as an act of obedience to God's loving purpose. Jesus left Heaven to enter into space and time as a human. He did this to experience what it means to be fully human and show us what it means to be truly human as God intended. Ultimately he gave us what we really needed – Union with God.

What would our spiritual walk look like if we approached every spiritual practice as an opportunity to abandon self and embrace Christ?

What would our spiritual walk look like if we approached every relationship as an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ?

Spiritual Formation Practice: Practicing the Presence of God

Look for times during your day where you can be aware of God's presence

Perhaps it is during an "interruption". Consider it an opportunity to be in God's presence.

Set specific times of the day to pray: shower, breakfast, drive, lunch, bedtime....

Day Thirty-four

E.D.G.E.: Guide

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 6:11-12

Give us our food for today. Forgive us for doing wrong, as we forgive others.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

During the norming phase of group dynamics the role of the leader is to guide the group to what is acceptable. Our hunger and thirst for righteousness is satisfied by the daily bread we receive from God. Our acts of mercy are directly related to the forgiveness we grant and receive. This guiding is done as a continuous process. We cannot go out and get all the bread we need for a lifetime. We cannot resolve to forgive someone and call it done. Hurts have a way of creeping back into our lives and we find ourselves needing to forgive again as reminders of the pain show up. In the Scout Oath we promise to do our duty. When we fail to do our duty we commit

opheilema – the Greek word for debt. Jesus' words guide us to forgive debts and ask for the forgiveness of ours too. We are able to see the other person's need for forgiveness because we have seen our own need.

The beautiful thing about this part of the prayer is that it is a partnership between us and God. It is also a partnership with others as we work in community to grow in Grace.

We are able to trust our daily growth, our daily hurts, and our daily hope to the one true God who guides us to step out of ourselves and see the world from his perspective. We are ready to transform the world.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Count Your Blessings

Did you wake up this morning? Obviously or you wouldn't be reading this. If you have no other reason to rejoice, start with the fact that you are alive.

Take inventory of all you have in life. It can be family, a career that is meaningful, or friends that you share your walk with..

Day Thirty-five

Group Dynamic: Transforming

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 5:8-12

God blesses those people whose hearts are pure. They will see him!
God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called his children!
God blesses those people who are treated badly for doing right. They belong to the kingdom of heaven.

God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me. Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward in heaven. People did these same things to the prophets who lived long ago.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

In order to be a transforming agent of God in a broken and sinful world we must have a single loyalty to God, perform acts of reconciliation, and be different than the world we serve in. Once we approach our Christian life with a purity of heart then our existence becomes a threat to the sinful world around us. We see sin for what it is: a threat to the peace that God desires for each of us. We are called to speak out and act in love

A Peacemaker is not a peacekeeper. A peacemaker does not avoid the conflict; rather

he addresses the issue and deals with it in with an attitude of love and humility. A peacemaker is a transforming agent; however he is not the catalyst for change. God's Holy Spirit is the catalyst that works in the souls of all of us to bring about conviction. The agent is only responsible for communicating the message of the one who sent him. With a pure heart, this communication will reflect God's love in our words and actions.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Detachment

I have heard it said that a good way to live your life is to start at your Eulogy and work backwards. Sometimes I feel like I am attached to my reputation, both good and bad. Sometimes I am attached to my memories, both good and bad. Seldom am I attached to material things, unless they are connected to my memories or reputation.

Identify something you are attached to and turn it over to God. This will help you keep a pure heart.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 6:13

Keep us from being tempted and protect us from evil.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

During the transforming phase of a group the role of the leader is to empower. Our leader is the Holy Spirit. Our petition for empowerment is to give us strength in the testing. The word for testing is often translated to mean temptation, which has negative implications. The Greek word is Peirasmon which implies a test to prove to the ones being tested that they can be good. By passing this test we grow in strength for the next time we face a test. God is not trying to set a trap for us. God knows our

limits and wants us to overcome these limits in his strength, which builds trust. Our times of trials do come. We will face some degree of persecution. The beatitude says that we are blessed in this persecution: Oh the blessed joy that comes from persecution for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. If we believe this then why pray to avoid it? We pray to God to give us only that which we can endure and this makes us stronger.

Spiritual Formation Practice: A Mission Journal

We were on day five of a seven day mission trip to the Gulf Coast to help people that survived Hurricane Katrina. The youth were trying to come to grips with the realization that we were working on an elderly lady's house hit three years prior. It offended their sense of justice that this lady had not received help yet. The mold was bad and the kids were exhausted. They were faced with massive devastation and its impact on someone they were getting to know on a personal level. At one point they all panicked over the mold and stopped working. The leadership rallied them and the kids went back to work until a wall came down revealing black mold in one room. The kids went into a panic mode and once settled down, they drifted into individual pockets of fear with a thousand yard stare on each face. I sealed off the room and gathered the kids and other leaders. We sang some worship songs then I explained to them the following truth: They were being given a rare opportunity where they come to the end of themselves and anything beyond this point would be God working through them. They were free to drink water and cool off under the sycamore tree and nobody would judge them. That is exactly what they did for more than a half hour. Eventually, I looked left and right and found the room full of kids trying to help this lady get at least one more room cleaned out, before we left the next day.

When have you come to the end of yourself to find God empowering you to continue?

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Matthew 5:13-16

You are like salt for everyone on earth. But if salt no longer tastes like salt, how can it make food salty? All it is good for is to be thrown out and walked on.

You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one would light a lamp and put it under a clay pot. A lamp is placed on a lamp stand, where it can give light to everyone in the house. Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in heaven.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Up to this point we have explored the Methods of Scouting from a New Testament perspective. We looked at the group dynamics and E.D.G.E. method employed in our training programs from the perspective of the beatitudes and the Lord’s prayer. These are all methods. They are a means to an end. The end result is character, citizenship, and physical fitness. Let us look at character:

Immediately following the beatitudes, Jesus draws a word picture of what the disciples’ character should look like. Disciples should resemble salt and light. Salt has a preserving effect on meat and adds flavor. Light provides

direction to the pilgrim and stands out as an example. We must remain close to those we serve in order to be a preserving agent. We must be clear in our message of love and hope in order to be a useful light. Our witness must be pure in order to be believable.

As Scout leaders we put on a uniform and with it certain expectations of ourselves and those who watch us. We are judged based on our ethics of who we say we are. The Christian walk is the same. When we say that we are Christians we are using the name of our Lord to identify who we are. If we fail to act like Christ then we have used his name in vain..

Spiritual Formation Practice: Vespers

Roses in my day:

Thorns in my day:

What is God saying to me?

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – John 18:33-38

Pilate then went back inside. He called Jesus over and asked, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Are you asking this on your own or did someone tell you about me?” “You know I’m not a Jew!” Pilate said. “Your own people and the chief priests brought you to me. What have you done?” Jesus answered, “My kingdom doesn’t belong to this world. If it did, my followers would have fought to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. No, my kingdom doesn’t belong to this world.” “So you are a king,” Pilate replied. “You are saying that I am a king,” Jesus told him. “I was born into this world to tell about the truth. And everyone who belongs to the truth knows my voice.” Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?”

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Here we have the ultimate example of Jesus on trial before mankind, yet Jesus, in all his majesty, remains in control. Jesus asks mankind the piercing questions that redirect our energies to the Kingdom of Heaven. We are all called to a citizenship that transcends space and time and owes allegiance to the One True God. Jesus simply states that his kingdom is not of this world. He then reinforces the mission statement found in John’s Prologue (John 1) that he came to testify to the Truth. Whoever accepts this Truth listens to his voice.

As citizens of Heaven, our task is to recognize the Truth that God revealed about God’s self in

the person of Jesus Christ. We are then compelled to listen to the Truth and manifest this Truth in our lives. Citizenship in Heaven is therefore a matter of the heart. Laws, morals, and other extrinsic factors regulate our external behavior; however the heart is the primary motivator for all actions.

The way to involve the heart is to seek the Truth. The heart does not ask the question “What is Truth?” The heart merely opens itself up to the truth of God’s love. What keeps you from seeking the Truth with your whole heart? What external pressures cause your allegiance to focus on a citizenship of this world?

Spiritual Formation Practice: Fasting

Fasting is not always about food. Sometimes it is about an activity. The activity that you are fasting from must be replaced with an activity that draws you closer to God, otherwise it will get filled with something else. Years ago, I realized how much time I was taking reading the newspaper every morning. I cancelled the subscription and did the 34 week intensive Disciple Bible Study. The results were life changing.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – Romans 8:9-17

You are no longer ruled by your desires, but by God’s Spirit, who lives in you. People who don’t have the Spirit of Christ in them don’t belong to him. But Christ lives in you. So you are alive because God has accepted you, even though your bodies must die because of your sins. Yet God raised Jesus to life! God’s Spirit now lives in you, and he will raise you to life by his Spirit. My dear friends, we must not live to satisfy our desires. If you do, you will die. But you will live, if by the help of God’s Spirit you say “No” to your desires. Only those people who are led by God’s Spirit are his children. God’s Spirit doesn’t make us slaves who are afraid of him. Instead, we become his children and call him our Father. God’s Spirit makes us sure that we are his children. His Spirit lets us know that together with Christ we will be given what God has promised. We will also share in the glory of Christ, because we have suffered with him.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Before you knew that you needed a Savior from Sin, God had a plan and began working around you. At some point you answered his call and accepted his sacrifice, claiming him as Lord and Savior of your life. At that point you were justified in God’s eyes and became part of the family of God. The Spirit of God came to reside in you to help you follow the lead of God’s Spirit rather than the fleshly desires and impulses. Spiritual fitness therefore becomes a matter of developing the habits of listening to God. The last 39 days have been an intentional regimen of spiritual formation practices designed to place yourself in a posture for listening to God.

The starting point of good fitness is the art of listening to the right advice. Anyone who has trained his body knows the importance of proper technique and workout rotations. They practice proper nutrition to fuel the workout and promote recovery. Poor advise could set the athlete back weeks or longer if injury occurs. The flesh has many years of learned behavior that must be unlearned through the guidance of the Holy Spirit living within the believer. Each time this behavior and thinking is replaced by God’s way of thinking and behaving the believer grows in Grace. This is called sanctification and is a lifelong process..

Spiritual Formation Practice: Stewardship of the Body

Since the physical body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit we must remember to care for it. The way we feel physically affects the way we are able to focus spiritually. Identify ways to take better care of your body and mind:

Day Forty

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Spiritual Formation Practice: Scripture Reading – John 1:43-51

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. There he met Philip, who was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. Jesus said to Philip, “Come with me.” Philip then found Nathanael and said, “We have found the one that Moses and the Prophets wrote about. He is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.” Nathanael asked, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Philip answered, “Come and see.”

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said, “Here is a true descendant of our ancestor Israel. And he isn’t deceitful.” “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree.” Nathanael said, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God and the King of Israel!” Jesus answered, “Did you believe me just because I said that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see something even greater. I tell you for certain that you will see heaven open and God’s angels going up and coming down on the Son of Man.

Spiritual Formation Practice: Devotional Reading

Nathanael was a man who was searching for meaning. His friend Philip knew it and directed him towards Jesus. Jesus knew Nathanael’s quest for meaning was pure and promised him that he would be in a place where Heaven and earth meet:

What were Philip’s S.M.A.R.T. goals as he left Bethsaida to tell Nathanael about Jesus?: Today I will go to Nathanael, who is meditating under his fig tree, and tell him about Jesus and invite him to come and meet him in Bethsaida. Philip knew it would be pointless to argue so he stated the evidence: Jesus is the one the Law wrote about. Jesus was the one the Prophets spoke about. Jesus is real and near.

What were Nathanael’s S.M.A.R.T. goals as he left his fig tree to meet Jesus?: I will go with Philip to Bethsaida to see if he has any insight into who the Savior of Israel will be.

For 40 days you have meditated under your “fig tree”. You are looking for a place to serve God in a place where Heaven and earth meet. If it were not so, then you would have quit this workbook much sooner. Take some time to go through this workbook and highlight key words and phrases that spoke to you or key words and phrases that you wrote down. Look for patterns and pray for a way to write them down. This is God’s invitation to you to join God in the mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of this world.

Spiritual Formation Practice: S.M.A.R.T. Goals

- Specific
- Measurable
- Action Oriented
- Realistic
- Time Sensitive

About the Author Ty LaValley

What is it about my life that qualifies me to write a workbook on spiritual formation? I am not exactly a Biblical scholar, although I am very fluent in Scripture thanks to fourteen years in full time Christian vocational ministry and a graduate certificate in Christian Education from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Even so, this merely equips me to not be careless with the words I use. I believe the qualification comes from the fact that I am like so many other people: seeking God in a workaday world.

My life story strikes a chord in the life story of others who may share this walk with me. I grew up in a military family that moved around a lot. The home was broken in many aspects and nurturing in others. My parents divorced when I was 8 and I helped raise my little brothers with our father until he remarried. I still can see my mother and grandmother outside the house in Columbus, Georgia saying: "I just want to kiss my babies one last time" and hearing my dad say: "They aren't your babies anymore." It would be ten years before I would see them again.

The Vietnam War was tough on my dad. He found solace for the war in a bottle and was violent during those times. For the most part he would give anyone the shirt off his back if they needed it. He was a very loving man most of the time. He was active in our lives when we did karate, Boy Scouts, and Jr. ROTC. He took us to work with him and we learned how to lead by watching him.

When I turned 17, I graduated high school a half year early and joined the Army. In the Army I found a home that I could love. When I was 18 I deployed to Honduras in Central America to support the Government of El

Salvador and the Rebels in Nicaragua. The unit I served with in Germany contributed to the end of the Cold War when we upgraded all the nuclear warheads with Pershing II missiles. I was able to graduate Airborne School and serve as a paratrooper in the elite 82nd Airborne Division. I was able to take part in the upgrade of the US Army Signal Corps capabilities in three different units. I even chipped away pieces of the Berlin Wall. By the time I was 26 years old, I was already a Sergeant First Class, the same rank my dad and grandfather retired with. My career sent me around the world multiple times and exposed me to cultures and ways of thinking that would inform my theological perspective. I was able to serve God in every setting. Duty in Bosnia opened up doors for me to assist with a Catholic orphanage and with Samaritan's Purse. This set the groundwork for hearing God's call into the ministry.

Shortly after the Cold War ended I was offered a fifteen year retirement which included retirement pay for life and all benefits. At the age of 32, this seemed prudent. I left the Army to answer the call to full time Christian vocational ministry. This experience would set the tone for years of servant ministry. When we left Hawaii on an airplane back to the mainland, we had no idea where we would serve. Within two weeks, God's provision allowed for us to serve Ashland Place United Methodist Church in Mobile, Alabama as the Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministries. It came with a parsonage, a corner office, a decent salary and tuition for me to finish my Bachelor of Science Degree. If I had to do all over again, I would have stayed there. Unfortunately, I was still caught in the performance trap that says I have to seek the next higher level professionally. I moved,

seeking the level of glory I had found in the Army.

For the most part, I enjoyed helping people grow in their faith within the context of the local church. I grew in my knowledge and faith as we worked together to accomplish the mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Working with volunteers to help them realize a goal was the most rewarding. The most memorable time in ministry was when we responded to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 with a worship and prayer service that gave our community a place to belong, find hope, and give expression to their pain.

My least favorite thing about the local church is the way people tend to build up little kingdoms around themselves and guard their ministries against all change. I now know that to be a way to defend their “Temples of Meaning.” This happens when we find meaning in a particular ministry or theological perspective and form a comfort zone around this current understanding. Eventually we add structure to the comfort zone to give it a more permanent feel. When someone or some idea comes along and challenges the structure then we are forced to either rethink our ideas and all the implications that go along with the ideas or repel the person challenging our ideas.

I am of the practice of challenging Temples of Meaning because they allow the builders to settle for less than what God had intended. They become a form of righteousness. This got me into trouble with two local churches. I invited kids, from the surrounding community, to be part of a sports ministry. Youth parents at both churches complained that there was not enough ministry for “our kids”. It seemed the community kids were not happy just playing

basketball. They actually wanted to be part of a church youth group and learn about Jesus. Some parents did not like the idea that we would “expose our kids to those kids.” I held the line and the kids grew through the experience. It did not end well for me. One church eliminated my position when I received recall orders for duty in Iraq and the other one moved me to a new position, not involving youth before eliminated the new position due to budget cuts.

I have spent time on this area of church ministry because I want to be transparent in my attitude towards settling for something less than what God has for you. The devotionals and spiritual formation practices are difficult to do if you don't want to change. In some cases you may find yourself deconstructing Temples of Meaning. The pain that you are feeling is the spiritual baggage leaving your body. Trust God's plan and you will emerge stronger.

I became a Christian the day that I decided to turn everything over to God. I can remember the walk in the Odenwald behind our Kaserne in Darmstadt, Germany. My life goal was to reach the rank that my dad and grandfather reached. At 25 years old, I was on the list for the promotion but had a gaping hole in my heart. I was trying to earn God's love. I went for a walk in the woods to have a talk with God and said:

“God, there has to be more in life than achieving glory. I know you are real. Help me accept the things I hear in chapel and help me change my life to show that I believe them. I gladly turn it all over to you to do with me as you desire.”

I never got promoted again! I did, however, become very useful to God. Anything I did in

ministry appeared to be fruitful. I was a sponge on all things Christian. I wanted to know who I was in Christ and what God's plan for my life was. Opportunities fell in place for me to do clowning and puppetry. I found myself teaching 4th-6th grade classes. I became a Certified Lay Speaker in the United Methodist Church. All this led to people recognizing a call in my life that I would have to answer. Discerning a call into ministry is a communal activity. Answering the call is very personal.

I answered the call while on a field maneuver in Hawaii. I had just finished checking on the guards for my Platoon and set out on a walk to talk to God about all I had discerned. I said:

"God, I know you are calling me into the ministry. I turned my life over to you and you have put me in places where I have been able to do wonderful things in your name. What I can't figure out is how you would have me throw away fifteen years in the Army. When I retire, I will go into full time ministry."

I thought I had five years left to prepare in which time I would finish my degree and get some more experience. God had other plans. Two weeks later the Career Counselor for our unit sat down next to me and told me about a fifteen year retirement plan. It was for SFC (my rank), 31W4 (my job), 15-17 years in the Army (my window). The percentage of retirement pay would be less, however all benefits would be the same. I told God "YES".

My childhood impacted my Christian walk. The church bus from Grace Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia would stop by our apartment in the Baker Place Housing Projects and take us to church. When we moved to Boston, my grandmother would walk us to Mass

at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in the Jamaica Plains neighborhood, after she got off her midnight shift as a nurses aid. When we moved to the adjacent Parrish in Roslindale, I would walk with my brothers one mile to the Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

I remember one time when it was snowing really hard, we decided to take the bus. I got on the bus with my brothers and told the bus driver:

"We each have 50 cents that we could put in the coin holder. If we do that, we won't have any money to put in the offering and we will still have to walk back. If you let us ride for free to church, we promise to give the money to the church."

The bus driver put his hand over the coin receptacle, and tore off three passes for the return trip. Every time we went to ride the bus, the drivers all did the same thing. Did I mention that I was ten years old? The ushers at the church had the offering bags on sticks to pass down the aisle. Every time someone put coins in the bag, they would jingle them. When they came upon the three of us (10, 8, and 6 years old) alone on the pew, they received our collective \$1.50 in coins and never jingled.

Christianity has always informed my Scouting experience. Our apartment in Boston was ¼ mile from the Greater Boston Council Service Center and ¼ mile from St. Thomas Aquinas where our Pack met in 1973. I felt at home in the church when participating in Scouts. Because of my extensive assignments with the military and the ministry, I have had the pleasure of being a part of the eleven BSA councils around the world. Nearly all my Scouting units as an adult have been affiliated

with the United Methodist Church. For many I served as the Chartered Organization Representative to the units. This allowed me to be the liaison for the units and the church. It became part of my outreach to the community in an arena that had structure and training. This is what led me to become a professional Scouter.

When the last congregation was eliminating my position, due to budget cuts, I had six months to create ministry descriptions, recruit fourteen volunteers, and train them to take my place. In the process of doing this I realized how much care I was taking to make sure the Scouting units were taken care of. At the lowest point of the process, I was given a gift from God to boost my self-esteem and give me a sign as to what I should do. I received the BSA Heroism Award for saving a woman's life the previous summer and the United Methodist Silver Torch Award for excellence in youth and children's ministry through Scouting. At that point I decided to explore a career as a Scouting Professional and was commissioned as a District Executive.

I found the volunteer base to be really motivated to help the youth succeed. The members of the core group of volunteers are very dedicated. Some of them have been around Scouting for a longer period than I. Some volunteer are very new and trying to find their identity in this ministry. I hope to serve the needs of both groups as we move forward to serve the nearly 1,800 youth and 700 adults in the eight counties of the Kiokee River District.

Amidst all of the work that goes into accomplishing the mission of such a large group, I hope this Spiritual Formation Workbook gives them the tools to remain connected to the One True Source of ministry.

Family plays a major part in my Christian walk and Scouting ministry. My wife Cheryl is an educator and an inspiration to me. Her dedication to the children is amazing. Our son Joey is a contract anthropologist and his wife Chrissie is a professor. He spends a lot of time in the field and utilizes skills learned in Scouting on a regular basis. It was because of him that I reengaged in Scouting in 1995 when he was a Cub Scout. Our daughter Dana is a college student and was a breath of fresh air during Summer Camp at Robert E. Knox Scout Reservation this past summer. She ran the Trading Post and kept our spirits up as we dealt with all the challenges of running a camp and receiving national accreditation.

Family plays an important part in most people's Christian walk and Scouting ministry. Most of the leaders we recruit are recruited when their child joins Scouting. Many people come back to church after a long break when their child enters the picture. I hope this workbook has helped you draw closer to God and closer to your Christian family as we work to make a better Scouting ministry. **I leave you with the Campfire Vespers and Benediction:**

Tune = O'Christmas Tree

Softly falls the light of day, as 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?

And now, may the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again.

Good night Scouts!

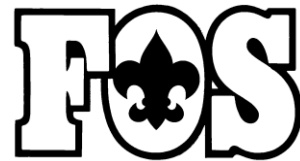


The Georgia-Carolina Council, BSA
1450 Greene Street
Suite 150
Augusta, GA 30901

Thank you for your consideration to support the Georgia-Carolina Council's mission to prepare young people to make moral and ethical choices over the course of a lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Your thoughtful donation will provide support to the youth and children of the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). It cost \$212 to support one Scout for one year in our Council. I would go into all the details, but seriously, you just completed a *40 Day Shepherd Challenge, a Spiritual Formation Workbook based on the Aims and Methods of Scouting*. I think you get it! Any help will be appreciated.

- ___ I will support a Scout for one year \$212
- ___ I will support a Scout for ½ a year \$107
- ___ I will support a Scout for one quarter \$53
- ___ I will support a Scout for one month \$18



___ I am unable to donate at this time, but please send me the FREE Patch
Seriously, it is OK to get a free patch. When I was a child, friends went door to door to pay for my brother's funeral. I don't mind paying it forward.

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