

The Mission of the Aaronic Priesthood

The mission of the Aaronic Priesthood is to help each young man ---

- **Become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and live by its teachings.**
- **Magnify priesthood callings.**
- **Give meaningful service.**
- **Prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.**
- **Commit to, worthily prepare for, and serve an honorable full-time mission.**
- **Live worthy to receive temple covenants and prepare to become a worthy husband and father.**

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The Purpose and Goals of the Primary

The purpose of Primary is to teach children the gospel of Jesus Christ and help them learn to live it. The goals of Primary leaders should be to ---

- **Teach children that they are children of God and that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love them.**
- **Help children learn to love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.**
- **Help children prepare to be baptized, to receive the Holy Ghost, and to keep their baptismal covenants.**
- **Help children grow in their understanding of the gospel plan, and provide opportunities for them to practice living gospel principles.**
- **Help boys prepare to receive the priesthood and be worthy to use this power to bless the lives of others.**
- **Help girls prepare to fulfill their roles as righteous young women and to live lives of service.**

Scouting in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED 1) TO DESCRIBE VARIOUS SCOUTING POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (LDS) FOR COUNCIL AND DISTRICT LEADERS, 2) TO HELP FELLOW SCOUTERS BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW LDS SCOUTING UNITS FUNCTION, AND 3) TO BE A REFERENCE FOR LDS SCOUTERS. SOME DEFINITIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR RESOURCE PEOPLE ARE OFFERED ON THE REVERSE SIDE.

In a recent letter from the Church's headquarters, Elder Boyd K. Packer stated: "We are grateful for devoted Scout leaders who teach, encourage, and safeguard the young men of the Church."

This will be an exciting year for LDS Scouting in the National Capital Area Council (NCAC). We will be preparing to host over 3,000 LDS Scouts and Scouters at Goshen Scout Reservation during August 12-16, 2003. The theme of the 2003 LDS AARONIC PRIESTHOOD SCOUTING ENCAMPMENT will be "Prepare to Serve, Serve with Honor."

A councilwide PRIESTHOOD CONFERENCE ON SCOUTING for Priesthood and Scouting leaders will be held on Saturday, September 21, 2002 at the Washington DC Stake Center to launch the preparation for the 2003 LDS Scouting Encampment. Every adult leader will be asked to assist their youth in adequately preparing for this "mountain top" experience. General Authorities and mission presidents will be at the 2003 LDS Scouting Encampment to help our youth to prepare spiritually for full-time missions and the challenges of life.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON LDS SCOUTING ■ "A Scouting Testimony: Using Scouting in the LDS Church" (videotape) has been distributed to all Boy Scout councils and LDS stakes. In addition, a transcript of the videotape was printed in *The Scouter Digest* (NCAC, Winter 1999, pages 13, 20, 21, 22, and 35). The videotape/transcript gives an excellent overview of the importance of Scouting in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Besides quotes from Church leaders and a history of Scouting in the Church, other sections cover "Using the Cub Scout Program," "Using the Boy Scouting Program," "Using Advanced Scouting Programs" (Varsity Scouting and Venturing), and "Responding to the Call to Serve."

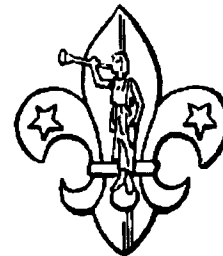
Traditionally a course titled "Scouting in the LDS Church (ECS 702)" is offered by the College of Commissioner Science at the annual University of Scouting. An excellent paperback book by Thane J. Packer is titled *On My Honor: A Guide to Scouting in the Church*. The paperback is published by Bookcraft, Inc. (Salt Lake City, 1998, ISBN 1-57008-439-4). Also visit our new website www.LDS-Scouts.org. In addition, see www.mormon.org and www.lds.org

SIZE OF SCOUTING IN THE CHURCH ■ According to a report titled "Top 10 Chartered Organizations for Religious and Civic/Fraternal 12/31/2001" published by the BSA Relationships Division, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was #1 in units (33,272) and #2 in membership (410,805).

SERVICE ON DISTRICT AND COUNCIL LEVELS ■ In the NCAC the Church sponsors almost 300 Scouting units, which is approximately twenty percent of the total number of traditional Scouting units in the council. It is critical that Latter-day Saints do their fair share by being involved in district and council Scouting. The *LDS Scouting Handbook* (p. 1) states: "Priesthood leaders may participate as volunteers in district and council Scouting committees and activities to solidify relationships between Scouting and the Church. In every instance, leaders should do everything possible within Church policies to create good will, mutual understanding, and cooperation between the two partners."

KEY SCOUT LEADERS MEETING ■

This meeting can save significant time coordinating multiple Scouting units sponsored by one chartered organization. In the BSA FastStart videotape and Viewer's Guide (BSA Nos. AV-034 and AV-034VG) the Chartered Organization Representative (COR) is shown meeting with Scouting leaders to discuss transition concerns, policy issues, service projects, etc. This monthly meeting is to last no more than one hour and is usually followed by individual Scouting unit committee meetings.



KEEPING CURRENT WITH REGISTRATIONS ■ In a March 17, 1999 letter sent to all "General Authorities and the following leaders in the United States: Area Authority Seventies; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops and Branch Presidents" Elder Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles states, "All adults called to serve in Church Scouting should be worthy and exemplify gospel living. Please be sure that the current membership record of each member called to serve in the Scouting program is in the local unit. Also ensure that all Scout leaders are registered with the Boy Scouts of America *before* they begin their service." The directive to have all adults registered prior to serving was also emphasized by President Thomas S. Monson during a recent Priesthood Session of General Conference. To help with this process of immediate registration of both adults and youth, each stake in the NCAC has money deposited with the Registration Office at the Marriott Scout Service Center -- these "registration only" deposits are known as "Z Accounts." Individuals do not need to be members of the Church to register and serve with LDS Scouting units.

TRAINING ■ The *LDS Scouting Handbook* places an increased responsibility on Church leadership, both stake and ward, to train LDS Scouting leaders. This means that the stake and ward leaders need to know the Scouting program and must be trained themselves. To assist with this training, each stake was given at a LDS Scouting Committee's Quarterly Stake Coordinating Meeting a copy of the forty-two page *BSA Audiovisual Catalog* (plus order forms). Each stake, and hopefully ward, should have a complete FastStart videotape series --- including the new Venturing videotapes.

Additionally, the Boy Scouts of America sponsors Basic Training and other courses to help leaders learn Scouting methods and skills. Scouting leaders may enroll in these courses to supplement training from local priesthood leaders. However, Church leaders should not participate in Scout training such as Basic Training or Wood Badge on the Sabbath, or overnight camping that includes mixed groups of men and women, whether adults or youth, unless it is a family camp. In all cases in which funds may be expended for training, priesthood leaders should ensure that *Budget Allowance Guidelines* for the local unit are followed. ■ *LDS Scouting Handbook* (1997), p. 1

continued overleaf

ROUNDTABLE ATTENDANCE ■ While BSA basic training and supplemental Church training is an excellent foundation, monthly roundtables for Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, and Venturing adult leaders are excellent sources to renew skills and learn about district/council events. Monthly Venturing roundtables may not be available in each district, thus LDS Venturing leaders should attend the optional "area" Venturing roundtables.

CLARIFICATION ON COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS ■ The BSA has been sensitive to LDS needs and usually turns to LDS leaders for recommendations of individuals to serve as commissioners for LDS Scouting units. An old *Bulletin* (1991-1) reiterated the policy. It stated:

Voluntary service as a commissioner in Boy Scouts of America comes only at the invitation of local district or council personnel of Boy Scouts of America. Bishops or stake presidents do not call Church members to serve in district or council positions, including any position of commissioner.

This bulletin has been superseded by the *Church Handbook of Instruction* (English approval 9/98), and, unfortunately, the subject has not been included in any current, published document -- but the above is still true.

FRIENDS OF SCOUTING ■ The LDS *Local Unit Budget Allowance Guidelines* emphasize that "Stake presidents and bishops should ensure that all friends of Scouting fully understand the need and benefit of supporting this activity and provide them with the opportunity to contribute." The Friends of Scouting (FOS) campaign should stand alone. It should not be associated with any other solicitation for funds.

ORDER OF THE ARROW ■ The Order of the Arrow (OA) is an activity that supports the teachings of the Church regarding cheerful service and brotherhood, and is encouraged by the Church. Not only should troops and teams hold elections for their youth, but adults should be recommended for membership and participate as well. Each troop and team should have an active "OA Troop/Team Representative." To further support this effort, each stake was provided an "OA Troop/Team Representative Support Pak" at a recent Quarterly Stake Coordinating Meeting. PLEASE encourage all Arrowmen to keep their lodge dues current. Any questions about the OA and the Church that cannot be answered locally should be directed to Don Ellison at 703-866-1997.

VARSITY SCOUT LEADER FUNDAMENTALS can be scheduled by a stake. Please contact P. Adair Petty (703-913-1124 or Paul.Petty@HQDA.Army.mil) for scheduling.

ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD SCOUTS ■ This LDS patrol is known as a "New Scout patrol" in Scouting nomenclature. Both the ward Primary presidency and the Scoutmaster have responsibility for this age group. There is an official BSA uniform patch for leaders of 11-year-old boys (Item #33234000). It is available from the Salt Lake City Distribution Center or at www.ldscatalog.com (click church organizations, aaronic priesthood, and scouting).

TIGER CUBS ■ One difference between LDS and non-LDS Scouting is the Tiger Cub program. The Church has not adopted the Tiger Cub program as part of its activities for Primary-age boys.

MONDAY NIGHT ACTIVITIES ■ A letter to "members of the Church throughout the World," the First Presidency stated:

Monday nights are reserved throughout the Church for family home evenings. We encourage members to set aside this time to strengthen family ties and teach the gospel in their homes...Where practical, members may also want to encourage community and school leaders to avoid scheduling activities on Monday evenings that require children or parents to be away from their

homes. Church buildings and facilities should be closed on Monday evenings. No ward or stake activities should be planned, and their interruptions to family home evenings should be avoided.

LDS Scouters should participate actively in their district and/or the council, thus gaining the respect of others so that Mondays will be freed for Family Home Evenings.

STANDARD IDENTIFICATION ■ It is advantageous to have all LDS Scouting units identified on their charters and rechartering documents with LDS initials followed by the name of the ward and the stake. Questions, please contact Don Ellison at 703-866-1997.

DEFINITIONS

WARD □ A local Church unit under the direction of a bishop, usually consisting of approximately 500 Church members.

STAKE □ A number of wards, usually 6 to 12, organized under the direction of a stake president.

PRIMARY □ A children's organization within the Church for children under twelve years of age. Responsible for Cub Scouts and the 11-year-old Scout patrol.

AARONIC PRIESTHOOD □ A priesthood to which worthy LDS young men are ordained beginning at age twelve.

BISHOP □ A lay clergy presiding over a ward, and also the Institutional Head for Scouting purposes. The Church has no paid clergy.

MORMON □ Another name for a Latter-day Saint. Members of the Church are sometimes called Mormons because of *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ* which is used as scripture in addition to *The Holy Bible*.

LDS SCOUTING AREA RELATIONSHIPS COMMITTEE □ The proper name for the LDS Scouting Committee. It is established "Under the direction of the Area Presidency"

QUARTERLY STAKE COORDINATING MEETINGS OF THE LDS SCOUTING COMMITTEE ■ Who should attend this meeting? Answer: Stake Presidency member(s) with youth responsibilities, High Councilor(s) with Aaronic Priesthood and Primary duties, the entire Stake Young Men Presidency, Stake Primary Presidency members with Scouting responsibilities, and "key" Scouters (e.g., Assistant District Commissioners with responsibility for LDS units). Upcoming meetings are scheduled for February 9, April 27, and October 19, 2003; and February 8, 2004.

Can anyone volunteer to be on the STAFF of the LDS Scouting Committee? YES, please contact Don Ellison for meeting dates and locations. These meetings are traditionally held in the evening on the third Sunday of each month, except the months when we hold Quarterly Stake Coordinating Meetings -- then they are held immediately after that meeting.

The following LDS resource people are available ---

- Stake President designated by the Area Presidency to be the Chairman of the LDS Scouting Committee
 - Pres. Kent W. Colton (703-538-4172 ext. 9000 or KColtonllc@worldnet.att.net)
- Executive Director, NCAC-LDS Scouting Committee and LDS Representative to the BSA Northeast Region's Religious Relationships Committee □ Donald E. Ellison (703-866-1997 or DonEllison@aol.com)
- Director, 2003 LDS Encampment Committee □ Rick Hayward (703-369-5312 or ehayward@kci.com)
- Contact for LDS Week at the Marriott Scout Camp at the Goshen Scout Reservation □ John Ortiz (301-271-0699 or ortizj@gunet.georgetown.edu)
- NCAC Professional Scouter assigned to the LDS Scouting Committee □ Brian C. Luss (301-214-9128 or bluss@boyscouts-ncac.org)
- BSA-LDS Relationships Office □ Bro. Brad Allen (Telephone: 801-530-0004). 36 South State Street, Suite #1175, Salt Lake City, UT 84111

"A Scouting Testimony: Using Scouting in the LDS Church"

Recently the Boy Scouts of America and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints combined their efforts and produced a twenty minute videotape titled "A Scouting Testimony: Using Scouting in the LDS Church." This videotape was sent to each BSA council and each LDS stake for training purposes. The videotape was premiered at the October 16th (1999) Priesthood Conference on Scouting. The reception of the videotape has been exceptional, but there have been numerous requests for a written transcript of the videotape. The transcript follows below:

Mr. Ratcliffe: Hello, I'm Jere Ratcliffe, Chief Scout Executive of the Boy Scouts of America. Since 1913, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has used Scouting as its activity program for young men. The relationship between Scouting and the Church as been as fruitful as it has been long. A very close bond continues to exist between Scouting and families in the LDS Church. Today, we can count over 400,000 Scouts and 180,000 leaders in more than 30,000 units chartered to the Church.

It is important that I take this moment to thank the First Presidency, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, and James E. Faust for all of their years of support for Scouting as well as for all the help and involvement we receive from stake presidents and ward bishops, but we must not take our mutual success for granted. Our long alliance rests upon a close alignment of our values, ethics and ideals of Scouting and the values of the Church and those that they wish to instill in its young people. For that reason, the Church has adopted Scouting as a fitting tool to help accomplish its own purposes. To help us better understand and reaffirm the true meaning of Scouting in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Elder Robert K. Dellenbach of the First Quorum of the Seventy will share some of his reflections with us. As head of the Young Men General Presidency and Chairman of the Church Scouting Committee, perhaps no one better understands the value of our long partnership. I invite you now to hear his wonderful testimony.

Elder Dellenbach: Scouting is a wonderful organization. It has tremendous values for the youth of the Church. Scoutmasters and Scout leaders play a very pivotal role in the life of young men, and today we're going to talk about what you can do to make that role effectual, help to build and strengthen values to teach principles to young men that will be of help to them, a guide to them all the rest of their lives.

Recently, at a major jamboree, President Hinckley said that he loves Scouting. He told the boys to live up to the standards of the Church and that Scouting would provide a wonderful training opportunity for them. He also said, "What a wonderful thing it would be if, across the United States, every young man would be in Scouting."

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, one of the great Scouters in the Church had this to say about Scouting in a recent interview.

President Monson: Who can discount the value of the Scout Oath as a credo for every young man: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and country and to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight." And, "Be Prepared," what a Scout Motto. And the Scout Slogan, "Do a Good Turn Daily." I think you've got Christianity, from my standpoint, pretty well capsulated in that Scout Oath, Scout Motto, and Scout Slogan.

President James E. Faust is also a very strong supporter of Scouting.

President Faust: "I am grateful," said President Faust, "for the influence of Scouting in my life and in the lives of my sons and my grandsons."

History

Elder Dellenbach: The Church has a rich history with the Boy Scouts of America. Way back in 1911, President Hinckley's father was sent to New York with a team of other Church leaders to meet with and to be informed and look at the Scouting movement which was just beginning in the United States. Baden-Powell had started the Scouting movement in England, but it was now being adopted in the United States, and our Church was keenly interested in it. When Brother Hinckley came back to Salt Lake City, he made a presentation to the First Presidency and recommended that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints endorse the Scouting program as one of the major activity programs for the young men of the Church, so long as Scouting endorses the kinds of principles and values which we stand for, particularly as we're taught through the scriptures and through the priesthood principles, we will be compatible and partners as far as I can tell. We want our young men to learn and to grow in righteous ways. Scouting and Scout leaders all across the world are seeking those kinds of values and so we're confident that what we're partnered with is a viable, righteous organization that can help us with the training, teaching and growing of our young men.

Using the Cub Scout Program

When a young boy is in his pre-years, prior to eight years old, he receives a different focus by the Church. But at age eight, he becomes a baptized member of the Church, and the First Presidency has determined that this is the time in that young boy's life to begin the Scouting program, particularly in the Cubing program. We begin a very orchestrated and planned activity training and development program for the young boy. When he becomes baptized at age eight, which the Church has

determined is the right age for us to begin Scouting, he begins on a wonderful journey of growth and development nurtured by church leaders and in coordination with Scouting opportunities, Scouting training, Scouting leaders.

My young grandson, Richard, just started Cubing. He has got his Cub manual. He got his shirt and his little badges and so on. And he is excited. My son, David, is a strong Scouter and he and Richard sit down together and go through the manual and read it together and talk about some of the activities that he's going to be involved in. It's a wonderful father and son relationship where they can work together. Richard, I have seldom seen him so excited as he is now that he is a Cub Scout.

Time is one of the crushing issues of our day. When I was a boy growing up on a farm, I spent a lot of time with my father, my brother, my sisters, my mother, because we worked together. As early as I can remember, I was doing chores, even as a little boy. But that's different today. There aren't cows to milk in most homes. There aren't the fields and crops to tend to, irrigation and so on. Scouting, particularly starting that with the Cub Scouts, provides a wonderful opportunity for parents to participate in the lives of their boys and also for the young boys to receive nurturing and counseling from their parents. It provides a platform whereby these relationships can be strengthened and encouraged. It provides a great opportunity for the parents to spend time with the boy that our hectic world doesn't provide so easily nowadays. We encourage parents to be intimately involved with their Cub Scout boys. The role of the parent is essential in the success of the program because Scouting is not just for the boy. It's for the parents and the family. And as the parents participate and are actually involved in the initial step of getting the boy involved in Cub Scouting with the enrollment form and all that are required, they play a pivotal role in helping that boy to get the fullness of this program and to enjoy the fun and relationship and the learning experiences that he should enjoy.

Using the Boy Scouting Program

When a boy reaches age eleven, then he is eligible to become part of Scouting and he moves from Cub Scouting to Scouting. However, because he has not been ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood, he does not become part of the Deacon's quorum Scout troop. He becomes a member of a separate patrol of that troop, and they have their own separate activities which are wonderful, but he doesn't move into the quorum's troop until he reaches age twelve. When a young man in our Church reaches age twelve, he receives the Aaronic Priesthood and moves from that special patrol to part of the Deacon's quorum troop. Now, of course, we have young men who are not members of the Church who participate also with your young men in the troop. The Boy Scouting program accentuates in many ways some of the developmental desires that the Church has for its young men. When a young man becomes

ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood, he begins a training and a track toward a number of goals. First of all, we want him to be part of his family. We want him to enjoy the family relationships, to bring his parents into Scouting and, through Scouting, to help strengthen the family ties.

Secondly, we feel that there is a compatible relationship with Scouting in terms of the young man's preparation to serve a full-time mission. Many of the skills that Scouting teaches are wonderful skills for a young man to learn and to grow in so that when he receives his mission call at age 19, he is well prepared for his independence and his assignment as a young proselyting missionary of the Church. Scouting certainly does plant in the young man skills and attributes which helps him on his mission and in life.

I have three sons. All three of my sons became Eagle Scouts. And in the process of doing their merit badges and the effort that's required for individual commitment to complete the requirements, the learning skills, how to take care of their clothing, how to feed themselves, how to prepare good meals, how to stay healthy and strong, how to keep their mind focused on goals and objectives, these are all compatible attributes for a young missionary. I'm convinced that many of the attributes and values and skills that one learns in Scouting are lifetime learning opportunities, but they don't expire at age nineteen to twenty, but that they go on into becoming a faithful father and a good husband and to rearing the children that they will have. Those skills are useful in their Church callings, in dealing with people in their professional life, in being a citizen of a community and an honorable citizen of our country.

Using Advanced Scouting Programs

When a young man reaches Teacher age, which is fourteen, he then becomes eligible to participate in the Varsity program. The Varsity program is a step above Scouting in the sense that it provides more opportunities for adventure, for personal growth. And it's also a great opportunity for the young man who has not finished his Eagle to have those touchy points that are required and necessary to round out his Eagle program. Varsity program is a learning and stretching and growing experience which helps that young man as he grows in the priesthood and also as he prepares himself for a full-time honorable mission.

There is a new program in Scouting called Venturing. The Scouting organization has taken the old Exploring program and completely renovated it, but held on to many of the fine and wonderful attributes that it contained. Venturing provides wonderful outdoor activities, high adventure, opportunities for learning about citizenship and socialability. It's a great program for Priest-age boys in the Church. While the Venturing program is an optional program in the Church, as we look down the training path of a young man, we see in Venturing many attributes

and skills which help prepare him for a mission and life. Therefore, we encourage our priesthood brethren to look very carefully at sponsoring a Venturing crew within their own ward or branch.

Responding to the Call to Serve

When a call comes to be a Scouting leader, that call should be taken very seriously. You have a sacred trust that's been put upon you to be responsible in this calling that you've received. There are four major "t's", that I would like to refer to that will help you be successful in your calling as a Scouting leader.

The first "t" is the "t" of testimony. We encourage you to bear your testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to strengthen your testimony, to have that testimony ever available so that the young men will know that you believe in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice and that you want to serve Him all of your life.

The second "t" requires your time. Scouting takes time, and so we expect that you will devote the proper amount of time, not that we expect you to neglect your other duties and responsibilities as a father and as a husband -- a family leader, but time is required to be a good Scouting leader.

The third "t" is to be trained. There are wonderful Scouting training camps and opportunities which give you the skills and attributes so that you will know the fine points of Scouting. Much of what is successful in this world comes down to the small, fine points, and you need to learn those.

And finally, your tenure, the fourth "t", is required, that you stay in Scouting calling a lengthy period of time because, after being trained and learning the attributes of a good leader, we hope that those will endure for a lengthy period of time. As you examine the six priesthood purposes for the Aaronic Priesthood, look carefully at what you are trying to accomplish when you plan an activity. As a young man becomes converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and lives by its teachings, that goal is buttressed and supported by Scouting. And so as you look at what you're going to plan for an activity, a teaching or training opportunity, examine how the priesthood purposes can be taught and trained while in that activity.

Testimony

Some of my choicest experiences in working with young men have been around the campfire. At the end of the day, when we're sharing very tender and intimate feelings of love and friendship and companionship with one another, we can talk about the gospel. We can talk about testimony. We can talk about the values, staying morally clean and being honest, having integrity, being a good son, a good family member and how to prepare for your

mission. I cherish these moments at the campfire and along the trail and in the classroom where we can see one another as we really are, eye to eye and heart to heart.

Brothers and sisters, you have been called to serve. This is a sacred trust which the Lord has placed upon you to lead, guide and direct the lives of young men. Your time and effort, your example, your testimony is so important in their lives. We encourage you to be honorable in your calling, to magnify your calling. Remember what the prophets of old have told us: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6) I testify to you that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ has many facets to it. One of the great blessings in the Church is the Scouting program. I testify to you that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ and, as we reach out and take His hand in our responsibility to teach young men, to be an example to them, to be a force for good in their lives, we will do much to exemplify the teachings and the doctrine of the Savior Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Note: A special thanks to Devy Khou for transcribing the videotape.

For answers about Scouting in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, please contact Donald E. Ellison, Executive Director of the NCAC-LDS Scouting Area Relationships Committee, at DonEllison@aol.com (e-mail) or 703-866-1997 (home telephone).

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THE PURPOSE OF THE ORDER OF THE ARROW (OA)

To recognize those campers - Scouts and Scouters - who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and by such recognition cause other campers to conduct themselves in such manner as to warrant recognition.

To develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit.

To promote Scout camping, which reaches its greatest effectiveness as a part of the unit's camping program, both year-round and in the summer camp, as directed by the camping committee of the council.

To crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others. ■■ *Order of the Arrow Handbook* (p. 8)

EDUCATION and ELECTIONS ■ It is important that our youth and adults understand what the Order of the Arrow (OA) is and the benefits. OA Elections are held annually. After elections, it does not advance the Scouting program when candidates do not progress through the OA ordeal and brotherhood --- other Scouts could have been elected and the value of the OA is not felt in the Scout Troop or Varsity Team.

Additionally, it is important that qualified Adult Scouters be nominated to support the youth OA candidates and members. Troops and Teams may each nominate one Adult Scouter (age 21 or older) each year if, they have held a youth election in which at least one Scout was elected.

SOME HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE "MYSTERY" OF THE OA ORDEAL
The ordeal is discussed in the *Order of the Arrow Handbook*. Quoting from the handbook:

...The mystery in which we cloak these steps is part of the induction. Candidates receive less benefit if they know about the induction in advance...On the other hand, the Order of the Arrow recognizes the right of interested adults to learn about our purpose and methods. Youth should feel free to discuss their experiences with their parents. (p. 29)

Although the contents of the ceremonies are private, they were written to avoid offending any religious belief and have received the approval of religious leaders. The ceremonies are true to Scout tradition and within the spirit of the Scout Oath and Law.

We recognize and respect the right of any parent, Scout leader, or religious leader to be concerned about the content of the ceremony and any other concerns brought to their attention. If after the discussion, a request to attend an Order of the Arrow ceremony is received from any sincerely interested adult, permission will be granted with the understanding that the visitor must not interfere with the ceremony. (p. 31)

[Note --- The *Order of the Arrow Handbook* is very well written and should be studied.]

Any questions about the Order of the Arrow and the LDS Church, please contact Don Ellison at 703-866-1997 or 703-644-1983.

Priesthood Conference on Scouting ■ May 31, 1997

