
Chapter 12

SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

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Spiritual Fellowship

Spiritual fellowship is a thread woven through all Scout programmes. It takes into consideration the variety of religious beliefs and denominations held by both leaders and children in a Colony.

The programme concept fosters an attitude of love, respect and caring for other human beings and our natural surroundings. Sharing, helping family and friends, helping to look after the environment and acceptance of others are principles honoured by all religions around the world. Through these types of experiences, young children discover God's love for them and the world.

Setting the Example

A child is subtly influenced by what is seen and heard. Leaders who strive to live their Faith and who let their convictions positively influence and warm all of their actions, share these outlooks with the Beavers in their Lodge and Colony.

Helping

The idea of helping others and doing something useful for them is not always easy for Beavers to understand. Encourage them to be thoughtful of other members of the Lodge and Colony, brothers and sisters at home, and friends at school and in their neighbourhood. Encourage them to be thoughtful of parents by helping around the house.

By encouraging Beavers to help others, to share and carry out good deeds, you will be reinforcing the spirit that we offer to do these things without expecting something in return. You will also be helping the Beavers to keep both their Scout Promise and Motto.

Love of Self

One important and often overlooked aspect in spiritual development is a person's self-image. It is important to help Beavers realise that they are loved for their own sake and that their talents and abilities are appreciated. A Beaver Scout Leader can guide children positively, to help them accept and understand themselves better. This is where the Eager Beaver Awards can come in.

Show your love by:

- Encouraging Beavers to do their best
- Congratulating them for their efforts

- Accepting them bearing in mind their age and development
- Listening to them
- Empowering them to do and learn more

Although Beavers are only five, six or seven, they are on the road to adulthood. Find ways to make the journey both easy and fun. A Beaver's growing self-awareness strengthens his/her spiritual growth and, in turn, is helped by it.

Programme Goals

Scouting provides children between the age of five and seven with simple, flexible and positive experiences with "sharing" as the key. Your Colony gives Beavers opportunity for growth and development. Each Beaver will gain more understanding of fellowship and spiritual values through his/her activities than through direct teaching. The spirit of Beaver Scouts is caught, not taught. Spiritual emphasis is a continuous thread running through the programme of a Beaver Colony.

Spiritual fellowship is clearly intertwined to the Beaver programme goals, it encourages leaders to "find examples of God's love for them and the world." When you look at the other goal statements, you see that they also reflect the idea of God's love as it shows itself in a variety of ways:

- Love and joy
- Health and a positive sense of self
- Belonging and sharing
- Cooperating
- The beauty of the world around us
- Friendship
- Caring for others

Promise and Motto

Spiritual fellowship is also fundamental to the Beaver Promise and Motto. Here is an exercise to help you generate programme ideas. As a leadership team, discuss the meaning of the words of the Beaver Scout Promise and Motto. List activities that will help you develop these concepts at Colony meetings. Focus on ideas about:

- How to love God
- How to take care of our environment
- How to have fun
- How to work hard
- How to help our family and friends
- How and when to share

The following are a few ideas to get you started.

How to Love God

- ❖ Taking care of nature
- ❖ Saying grace at meals; saying thank you; saying sorry
- ❖ Praying at opening and closing ceremonies; thoughts for the day
- ❖ Respecting property, people, animals and all other living things
- ❖ Singing
- ❖ Doing a Scout's Own

How to Take Care of the World

- ❖ Planting a tree
- ❖ Sorting out our own litter
- ❖ Recycling as much as possible
- ❖ Warning friends and other people of any unsafe places
- ❖ Doing good deeds
- ❖ Practice safety at all times

How to Have Fun

- ❖ Carolling at Christmas; singing; campfires
- ❖ Touring a church, synagogue, temple
- ❖ Playing cooperative games
- ❖ Doing craft work (for example: What "God" means to me)
- ❖ Star-gazing
- ❖ Observing the environment around you

How to Work Hard

- ❖ Sharing with chores at meetings
- ❖ Setting up before and cleaning up after a crafts session
- ❖ Trying to keep neat and clean
- ❖ Taking care of the uniform

How to Help Family and Friends

- ❖ Doing chores at home
- ❖ Setting the table

- ❖ Making crafts for the family (for example: Mother's Day and Father's Day or else why not invent an occasion: Special Cousin Day or Favourite Auntie Day)
- ❖ Helping friends
- ❖ Helping those younger than you
- ❖ Letting others help you

How and When to Share

- ❖ Taking turns with equipment and in games
- ❖ Sharing materials and ideas between Lodges
- ❖ Sharing a day outing with a Cub pack
- ❖ Sharing games (for example: if you have something in excess, find someone who needs what you have to complete a project)

Log Chew

Give your Beavers an opportunity to discuss their feelings after such activities. Accept the Beaver's point of view even though it may not coincide with yours.

If you feel the child has missed something, try to direct the Beaver's thinking to that area, but let the child draw his/her own conclusions. The Beaver may not be ready to absorb the kinds of thoughts or perspectives you have. Consult with parents/guardians in order to gain knowledge and sensitivity of the child's development in this area.

If you have children of different beliefs, they can be given the chance to talk to the whole Colony about it. They can tell/show the others interesting facts so that everyone can learn from each other.

Remember...

THE WORLD IS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE IT IS DIVERSE !!

Scouts' Own

A Scouts' Own provides time to reflect on ways to fulfil the Scout Promise, the Motto and our personal commitment to our spiritual values. A Scouts' Own can be a structured and planned part of a Beaver event, or a very spontaneous coming together in a celebration of life.

- Involve Scouters, Beavers, and perhaps a spiritual adviser when preparing a Scouts' Own.
- It should be acceptable and meaningful to all faiths represented. Do this by taking one of two approaches.
 - Ask your Beavers, their parents or spiritual advisors to provide contributions meaningful to their various faiths.
 - Choose material with universal appeal (i.e. focus on common threads such as love, friendship, helping others, the environment, etc.)
- You can hold a Scouts' Own at any time and in any place. Ideally wherever it is most meaningful to your group. In a sense, you could consider even a prayer during a meeting as a quick Scouts' Own.
- To be sure that a spiritual observance of some kind is part of your programme, schedule a Scouts' Own and take time to see that it happens. Though it may involve a spontaneous moment, it is always wise to be prepared.
- A Scouts' Own can present spiritual messages in the form of prayer, songs, skits, short stories or games for discussion. Involve your Beavers by asking them to help with the planning (perhaps by lodges) and ensure every one of them participates in some way.
- Beavers can be divided into Lodges and each lodge assigned a specific task.
- Keep it simple, clear and short; no longer than 10-15 minutes.

Finding God's Love

The Beaver programme's first emphasis is to "find examples of God's love for them and the world." The focus of this first emphasis is to help Beavers discover God's love, to experience it and share it with others. You may find these suggestions and guidelines helpful for developing programmes in which Beavers can make this discovery.

Keep it Simple

You can practise spiritual fellowship in all phases of the Beaver programme without getting into too much detail.

Encourage positive spiritual attitudes by teaching and practising them at Beaver meetings and encouraging Beavers to use them at home. It is important to keep spiritual emphasis simple. Use religious teaching at meetings only in conjunction with specific themes and topics; remember to consider Beavers who do not belong to that faith.

Spiritual Themes

Creation: Read a story of how the world was created to the Beavers at a meeting. Then go on a nature hike, along the way, discuss the things you read in the story.

Holiday

Pick a religious holiday. Try exploring holidays of different faiths and beliefs. Stage a play, make puppets, and ask a minister, priest or other spiritual leader to come in to tell the story.

In the downloads section on Scoutkeeper you will find a booklet named [Beaver through Faiths and Beliefs](#) which will come in handy for this purpose.

Scouts' Own

The purpose of a Scouts' Own is to promote a fuller understanding of the Beaver Scout Promise. You can have a Scouts' Own any time. Remember to keep it simple bearing in mind the participants ages.

Children's Hymns

During sing-songs, include some spiritual hymns that Beavers know and understand. They love to sing. The livelier the better. If they do not know the words you can teach it to them. Make sure that you participate in the singing too.

Opening and Closing

Thought/s of the Day:

Each week let a Beaver or a Lodge help during the opening or closing ceremonies with a thought of the day. Beavers can prepare these with a leader or at home with a parent / guardian. It gives them an opportunity to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.

Evening Prayer:

Some Groups say or sing a prayer each evening.

Spiritual Customs From Around the World:

Different spiritual customs are practised in different countries. Beavers love to hear about things that other children do. Share with them the ways in which children their age from different cultures and religions practise the same spiritual message. One such example can be the Festival of Light or Diwali that happens in India.

Refer to the booklet [Beaver through Faiths and Beliefs](#) found in the downloads section on Scoutkeeper under Beavers.

Stories with Moral and Spiritual Emphasis:

Use a Beaver story to express a key thought or message. Refer to the booklets [Beaver through Fables](#) and [Ganni Beaver reads meaningful Stories](#) found in the downloads section on Scoutkeeper under Beavers.

Beavers' Prayers

Hey God!

Hey God! Did you really create the stars? And that great white moon, that looks so far? And did you really make planets like Mars? And Saturn and Venus and all like that?

Hey God! Did you really make fluffy, wobbly puppies? And kittens and ducks and jumpy frogs?

And did you really make goldfish and guppies? And creepy crawly things beneath old logs?

Hey God! Did you really make mud so it would squish?

And rainbows to chase that can't be caught? And did you really make the clams and starfish?

You did? Well thanks. Thanks a lot!

(By Andy Jensen, Victoria, B.C.)

Thank You

Thank you for the sky above;

Thank you for the birds that fly;

Thank you for the earth below;

Thank you for the trees that grow;

And thank you God,

for you and me!

Activities

Have the Beavers try to count the stars in the night sky. There are so many, and they look much the same, just like most Beavers look the same when they are all together. And yet, there is only one special place like Earth, and each Beaver is a special child. Tell them, “There is no other child exactly like you.”

Do this for about 15 minutes, talk about the experience.

“Who is a special friend in the Colony?” God made that person, too. Write a letter to your friend, tell the person why you like his/her friendship. Perhaps Keeo, Brown Beaver, Tictac, Bumble Bee or Sunshine can help write what is necessary. Make your friend a card and give it to him/her with the letter.

If you do this exercise, make sure all Beavers receive a card and a letter. Being able to receive a gift is as important as being able to give one. Have your Beavers share their feelings and insights about what they have done.

When building a programme around the emphasis of finding God’s love, remember that the Beaver’s personal discovery of the importance of him/her self and of everything and everybody else must be encouraged and, in some way, expressed. It is only through this personal experience that the Beaver can build a true capacity to appreciate and express peace, joy, love and goodwill for all.

References

Refer to the following booklets to help you with this chapter:

- ➔ *Beavering through Fables*
by the Training Department, Scout Association of Malta
- ➔ *Beavering through Faiths and Beliefs*
by the Training Department, Scout Association of Malta
- ➔ *Ganni Beaver reads meaningful Stories*
by the Training Department, Scout Association of Malta