

Choice 1: The Development of the Scout Law

First Reader: One of the oldest surviving set of rules for how men should behave comes to us from the ancient Greeks. In the third century B.C., young men of 17 took the following oath to become citizens of Athens:

- We will never bring disgrace on this, our city, by an act of dishonesty or cowardice.
- We will fight for the ideals and sacred things of the city both alone and with many.
- We will revere and obey the city's laws, and will do our best to incite a like reverence and respect in those above us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught.
- We will strive increasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty.
- Thus in all these ways we will transmit this city, not only not less, but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

Second Reader: With the growth of modern religions, another, simpler idea of how men should behave developed. Referred to as the Golden Rule, it is taught by religions as diverse as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Brahmanism. Christianity's version is found in Matthew 7:12: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

Third Reader: During the Middle Ages, the code of chivalry was developed to teach knights how they should behave. One form of this code read as follows:

- Be always ready with your armor on, except when you are taking your rest at night.
- Defend the poor, and help them that cannot defend themselves.
- Do nothing to hurt or offend anyone else.
- Be prepared to fight in the defense of your country. At whatever you are working, try to win honor and a name for honesty.
- Never break your promise.
- Maintain the honor of your country with your life. Rather die honest than live shamelessly.
- Chivalry requires that youth should be trained to perform the most laborious and humble offices with cheerfulness and grace; and to do good unto others.

Fourth Reader: In the early years of the twentieth century, a man named Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell took all these codes of conduct for men and turned them into a code of conduct for boys. His Scout Law, as he called it, read as follows:

- A Scout's honour is to be trusted.
- A Scout is loyal to the king, and to his officers, and to his country, and to his employers.
- A Scout's duty is to be useful and to help others.

- A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what social class the other belongs.
- A Scout is courteous.
- A Scout is a friend to animals.
- A Scout obeys orders of his patrol leader or Scoutmaster without question.
- A Scout smiles and whistles under all circumstances. A Scout is thrifty.

Fifth Reader: A few years later, Baden-Powell's program and ideas crossed the Atlantic Ocean. With the founding of the Boy Scouts of America, Baden-Powell's Scout Law was turned into a code that more than 90 million boys have learned and lived by.

Will all Scouts and Scouters please stand and rededicate themselves to the Scout Law:

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.