

# 1. Suggested Inter-Religious Celebration

## **OPENING CEREMONY**

Procession with American flag, state flag (if available) and unit flags.

## **OPENING REMARKS**

“On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty to God.” It is hard to describe duty to God for any one person. This duty is based on a person’s own religious teachings. Duty to God is different for people of different faiths; however, for all people, it means living according to the teachings of their religion.

Membership in the Boy Scouts of America explicitly requires recognition of a Supreme Being, belief in God and respect for other Scouts’ and Scouters’ belief in God is an expectation that has been repeatedly affirmed by the National Council of the BSA. Whether the sponsor of a Scouting unit is secular or religious, duty to God is a basic tenet of our movement. We express it each time we recite the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

We invite all Scouts and Scouters attending this inter-religious service to join in prayer in a way that we hope all will find comfortable. Let us express thanks for the many blessings that God has given to us and ask for the wisdom and skills to carry out and enhance the Scouting program. We hope that this observance will be a positive experience that will help you encourage appropriate religious observances within the world brotherhood of Scouting.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

O great Spirit! Watch over us as we begin this day. Protect us as we live in your care. Give us bounty and hold us from harm. We are your children and wish only to please you. We hold our Mother Earth close to our hearts and wish her goodness. We thank you for your love.

~ Lakota Blessing

**-OR-**

For this time and this place  
For your goodness and grace,  
For each friend we embrace,  
We thank thee, O Lord.

## WORSHIP MESSAGE

“In doing your duty to God, always be grateful to Him. And it is a good thing to bless other people. In doing your duty toward man, be helpful and generous, and always be grateful for any kindness done to you and be careful to show that you are grateful. Remember again that a present given to you is not yours until you have thanked the giver for it.

While you are living your life on this Earth, try to do something good which may remain after you. It is something to **BE** good, but it is far better to **DO** good.

First love and serve God; second, love and serve your neighbor.”

~ Lord Robert Baden Powell

## INVOCATION

Almighty Creator, thank you for the opportunity to be here in the midst of the beauty and majesty of your creation. Give us the strength to endure the challenges of this day, the wisdom to enjoy each moment, and the courage to push ourselves further than we ever have before. Bless each Scout and each leader as we journey together through the adventure of Scouting. Amen.

## READING

The true servants of the gracious God are the following:  
Those who walk upon earth with humility  
and when they are tempted by the evil ones, they respond: Peace;

Those who pass the hours of the night in prayers and  
standing before the Lord;  
Those who pray: Lord turn away from us the punishment  
of hell, for it is a heavy torment,  
it is indeed an evil dwelling place;  
Those who are neither extravagant nor stingy in spending,  
but keeping a balance between the two;  
Those who repent and believe and do good deeds.

~ From the Koran, Al-Furqan, part 19, chapter 25

### INSPIRATIONAL READINGS

The World, we are told, was made especially for humans – a presumption not supported by all the facts. Why should humanity value itself as more than a small part of the one great unit of creation? And what creature of all that the Lord has taken the pains to make is not essential to the completeness of that unit – the cosmos? The universe would be incomplete without humans; but it would also be incomplete without the smallest trans-microscopic creature that dwells beyond our conceitful eyes and knowledge. From the dust of the earth, from the common elementary fund, the Creator has made Homo Sapiens. From the same material God has made every other creature, however noxious and insignificant to us. They are earth-born companions and our fellow mortals.

~ John Muir, “The Father of the National Parks”

### “My Heart Soars”

The beauty of the trees,  
The softness of the air,  
The fragrance of the grass,  
Speaks to me.

The summit of the mountain,  
The thunder of the sky  
The rhythm of the sea  
Speaks to me.

The faintness of the stars,

The freshness of the morning,  
The dewdrop of the flower,  
Speaks to me.

The strength of the fire,  
The taste of salmon  
The trail of the sun,  
And the life that never goes away,  
They speak to me,

And my heart soars.

~ Chief Dan George, OC (Geswanouth Slahoot); actor,  
musician, poet, author – Tsleil-Waututh Nation,  
North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

### GROUP PRAYER/EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE

*~ To be read together by entire group ~*

Bless us, O Great Spirit, as Scouts gathered together in this setting.  
Grant that no harm may spoil our brotherhood and sisterhood.  
Make us live together in wellness and good fellowship, ever mindful of  
Your example and of our Scout Oath and Law.  
We thank You for old friends and for new friendships.  
We give thanks for the days of our gathering, and we pray that we  
safely return to our homes, with thanks for Your beautiful creation and  
the joy of life.

“Out of His fullness, we have all received grace in place of grace already  
given.”

~John 1:16 – (NIV)

### **~Expressions of Gratitude ~**

*Please take this moment to share any expression of gratitude you  
may have.*

## SONG OF PRAISE

### **Michael, Row the Boat Ashore**

Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah  
Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah  
Sister help to trim the sail, Hallelujah  
Sister help to trim the sail, Hallelujah

The river is deep and the river is wide, Hallelujah  
Green pastures on the other side, Hallelujah  
(Milk and honey on the other side, Hallelujah)

Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah  
Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah  
Sister help to trim the sail, Hallelujah  
Sister help to trim the sail, Hallelujah

Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah  
Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah!

Michael's boat is a music boat, Hallelujah  
Michael's boat is a music boat, Hallelujah  
Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah  
Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah

The trumpets sound the jubilee, Hallelujah  
The trumpets sound for you and me, Hallelujah

*~ Traditional African-American spiritual - "Michael, Row the Boat" is an old American folk song that hails from the slave era. It was sung through the years and, most notably, became a popular anthem during the Civil Rights movement in the United States. Its existence was first noted in the early 1860s and was first published in 1867 in [Slave Songs of the United States](#), although the song itself is probably much older. The song was passed down orally long before it was ever recorded or written down. Because of this, there are many versions in circulation. Essentially, all variations of the lyrics describe finding God and one's family on the other side of the river in the Promised Land.*

## PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY (In Unison)

Our God and God of our ancestors, we ask your blessings for our country – for its government, for its leaders and advisors, and for all who exercise just and rightful authority. Teach them insights from your words, that they may administer all affairs of state fairly, that peace and security, happiness and prosperity, justice and freedom, may forever abide in our midst

Creator of all flesh, bless the inhabitants of our country with your spirit. May people of all races and creeds forge a common bond in true harmony, to banish hatred and bigotry, and to safeguard the ideals and free institutions which are the pride and glory of our country.

May this land under your providence be an influence for good throughout the world, uniting all people in peace and freedom – helping them to fulfill the vision of your prophet: “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they experience war any more.”

And let us say, Amen. (*Siddur Sim Shalom*)

## GOD BLESS AMERICA

God bless America,  
Land that I love,  
Stand beside her, and guide her,  
Through the night with a light from above.  
From the mountains,  
To the prairies,  
To the oceans, white with foam,  
God bless America,  
My home, sweet home,  
God bless America,  
My home, sweet home.

## PRAYER/SILENT REFLECTION

Master of the universe Grant me the ability to be alone;  
May it be my custom to go outdoors each day  
Among the trees and grass, among all living things.  
And there may I be alone, and enter into prayer,

To talk with the one to whom I belong.  
May I express there everything in my heart,  
And may all the foliage of the field  
(All grasses, trees and plants),  
May they all awake at my coming,  
To send the powers of their life into the words of my prayer  
So that my prayer and speech are made whole  
Through the life and the spirit of all growing things,  
Which are made as one by their transcendent source.

~ Rabbi Nachman of Bratislava (1772-1811)

We need to find God, and He cannot be found in the noise of restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature – trees, flowers, grass- grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence. We need silence to be able to touch souls.

~ Mother Theresa

*~ Please take a moment of silence for personal reflection/prayer  
in the manner according to your faith ~*

## RESPONSIVE READING

**RESPONSE:** Blessed are the Scouts.

**Leader:** Blessed are the Scouts who are taught to see beauty in all things around them, for their world will be a place of grace and wonder.

**ALL:** Blessed are the Scouts.

**Leader:** Blessed are the Scouts who are led with patience and understanding, for they will learn the strength of endurance and the gift of tolerance.

**ALL:** Blessed are the Scouts.

**Leader:** Blessed are the Scouts who have a home where family members live together in love, for they shall become the peacemakers of the world.

**ALL:** Blessed are the Scouts.

**Leader:** Blessed are the Scouts who are taught the value and power of truth, for they shall use what they learn to help others.

**ALL:** Blessed are the Scouts.

**Leader:** Blessed are the Scouts who are guided by those with faith in a loving God, for they will find God early and will walk with God through life.

**ALL:** Blessed are the Scouts.

**ALL:** Give us clean hands, clean words, and clean thoughts, O God. Teach us to work hard and to play fairly. Forgive us when we are unkind and help us to help others. Send us strength to do a good turn each day and so to live after Thy will. Amen.

### INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGE

#### ***“The Crayon Box” by Shane DeRolf***

While walking into a toy store the day before today  
I overheard a crayon box with many things to say.

“I don’t like Red!” said Yellow.

And Green said, “Nor do I.

And no one here likes Orange, but no one knows just why.”

“We are a box of crayons that do not get along,”

Said Blue to all the others, “and something here is wrong.”

Well, I bought that box of crayons and took it home with me  
And laid out all the colors so the crayons all could see...

They watched me as I colored with Red and Blue and Green

And Black and White and Orange and every color in between.

They watched as Green became the grass

And Blue became the sky,

The Yellow sun was shining bright

As White clouds drifted by.

Colors changing as they touched

Becoming something new.

They watched me as I colored,

They watched ‘til I was through.

And when I finally finished, I began to walk away,

And as I did, the crayon box had something more to say.

“I do like Red!” said Yellow.



And Green said, "So do I!

And Blue, you were terrific so high up in the sky!"

We are a box of crayons, each one of us unique,

But when we get together, the picture is COMPLETE.

We can learn a lot from crayons; some are new, some lovingly used, some are sharpened, some are broken, some are bright, some have strange names – all different colors, all fitting perfectly together in the same crayon box.

### RECOGNITION

Call all Scouts and Scouters who have received a religious emblem or other religious recognition during the past year to the front. Recognize each person for his or her accomplishment.

### RECITATION OF THE SCOUT OATH AND SCOUT LAW

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law, to help other people at all times, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.

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

### OFFERING (if appropriate)

If no local appeal is considered appropriate, consider the World Friendship Fund, which was developed during the closing days of World War II. At that time, there was a great need to rebuild Scouting in those nations that had been wracked by war and were just emerging from the shadows of totalitarianism.

Over the years, this fund has provided Scouts from around the world with Scouting literature, uniforms, summer camp equipment, computers, and other Scouting-related supplies.

## ACT OF FRIENDSHIP/PEACE:

Lord, make me a channel of Your peace.  
That where there is hatred, I may bring love.  
That where there is wrong, I may bring forgiveness.  
That where there is discord, I may bring harmony.  
That where there is error, I may bring truth.  
That where there is doubt, I may bring faith.  
That where there is despair, I may bring hope.  
That where there are shadows, I may bring light.  
That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.  
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted,  
to understand rather than to be understood.  
To love, than to be loved.  
Help us to learn that it is by self-forgetting that we find;  
It is by forgiving that we are forgiven;  
It is by dying that we awaken to Eternal Life.  
Amen.

~ St. Francis

Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter; whoever finds one finds a treasure.  
Faithful friends are beyond price, no amount can balance their worth. Faithful  
friends are life-saving medicine; those who fear God will find them. Those  
who fear the Lord enjoy stable friendship, for as they are, so will their  
neighbors be.

~ Ecclesiastes 6:14-17

*~ Take a moment to turn to those around and offer a sign of  
friendship and peace ~*

HYMN/SONG OF PRAISE:

**Let There Be Peace On Earth**

Let there be peace on Earth  
And let it begin with me.  
Let there be peace on Earth  
The peace that was meant to be

With God as our Father,  
Brothers all are we  
Let me walk with my brother  
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me  
Let this be the moment now;  
With every step I take  
Let this be my solemn vow –  
To take each moment, and live each moment  
In peace eternally  
Let there be peace on Earth  
And let it begin with ME!

CLOSING PRAYER:

Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart,  
and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land,  
and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath  
been made and His praise glorified.

~From the Baha'i Writings

**-OR-**

May we all remain fast and firm in faith, that the glory of glories may rest  
upon us. Thou art Gracious, the Bountiful, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

~ From the Bahai Faith, Abdul Bahai.

## BENEDICTIONS:

And now in your journey, may the trail rise up to meet your stride,

May the sun shine softly on your backpack,  
May the cool, clean waters carry your canoe safely to your next portage,  
May the wind bring warm blessings to your encampment,  
May your Scouts find in you a fine example of the adult they hope to be.  
Peace be with you this day and forevermore. Amen.

May the time be not too distant, O LORD, when all Your children will understand that they are brothers and sisters, so that, one in spirit and one in fellowship, they may be forever united before You. Then shall Your kingdom be established on earth, and the word of Your prophet shall be fulfilled: "The Lord will reign for ever and ever." Amen.

~ From the Jewish Sabbath Service

## SCOUTMASTER'S BENEDICTION

And now may the Great Master of all scouts be with us until we meet again.