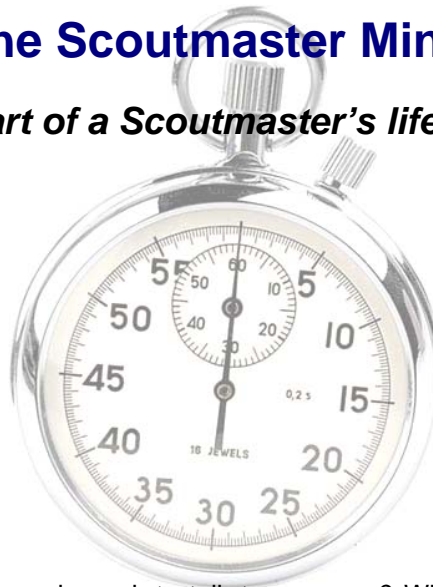


The Scoutmaster Minute

At the heart of a Scoutmaster's lifelong impact



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What if you had just one minute each week to talk to your son? What if there was only one minute where activity ceased and he stood before you, looking up and listening, waiting to hear what you had to say? One minute for you to guide him on his path; one minute to share your convictions; one minute to shape his life; one minute each week to teach him how to be a man. And what if not one son but a hundred sons stood before you for that weekly minute, silent and waiting for you to speak? What would you say, and how would you say it?

**The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is:
To prepare young people to make ethical and
moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in
them the values of the Scout Oath and Law**

What is the Scoutmaster Minute?

- A story with a purpose
- Usually given at the end of a meeting or maybe a trek by the Scoutmaster or acting Scoutmaster
- Takes about a minute
- Your chance to plant a thought in the minds of your Scouts (and adults!) that will stick with them over their lifetimes—"instilling in them the values..."

What can it do?

- Inspire, challenge, instruct, maybe leave a lasting memory and alter a life...or a hundred
- Steve Fossett: "There is nothing more significant in our development as young Scouts than the positive influence of a Scoutmaster who cares and inspires us to achieve. The words of my Scoutmaster...have never left me, and I think about him whenever I take on a new challenge. His presence is always with me in those quiet moments of reflection and thanks."
- But live it yourself—Scouts listen because you *live* what you say

How it fits in the program

- The Scoutmaster might only connect personally with ~ 5 Scouts/week in a way that influences their lives
 - o Scoutmaster Conferences
 - o Discussion with Senior Patrol Leader
 - o Casual conversations
 - o ...and Scoutmaster Minutes
- In a large troop with many Assistant Scoutmasters, that means most Scouts (other than Senior Patrol Leader and other significant junior leaders) may connect with the Scoutmaster only every few months
- The Scoutmaster Minute is the one time where the whole troop is listening to you
 - o This is how you move the troop—this is the payoff for the time invested in organizing and training

Type of Scoutmaster Minutes

- Aimed at Scouts—end of troop meetings
- Aimed at adults—end of troop committee meetings
- Aimed at both—end of troop and Eagle Courts of Honor, in troop newsletter, sometimes on treks
 - o Courts of Honor include family and friends—maybe their only exposure to Scouting

How long should it be?

- It's pretty hard to say something meaningful in < 1 min
- Senior Patrol Leader handbook: 5 min for Scoutmaster at end of meeting
- But often less is more—if your talk drags on, Scouts will tune out and forget what you said. A simple idea or a simple phrase could stick with them for years. So keep it under 2 min unless there's something really important or special.
- Focus on one idea and stay on track. Use every second—every word—wisely.
- About 200-300 carefully chosen words (Gettysburg address is 272 words)

What is in it?

- Scouting principles: Scout Oath, Law, motto, and slogan, Outdoor Code/Leave No Trace, Aims and Methods of Scouting
 - o Cover every element over time
 - o Return again and again to the core values—reinforcing, explaining, illuminating, challenging
 - Trustworthy
 - Duty to God
 - Be Prepared
- Your vision for the troop as you study your troop's strengths and weaknesses
 - o The hidden values of high adventure and of having a high adventure mindset
 - o The value of being in Nature: Go on more treks
 - o Why we care so much about the patrol method
 - o Deserving your leadership and rank badges by doing solid work
 - o Serving younger Scouts by leading them
- Your experiences with the Scouts (So go on lots of treks! Pay attention during Scoutmaster Conferences!)
- Memories of things that moved you as a child: What stuck with you and still affects you?
 - o Your own Scouting experiences
 - o Memorable things you learned from parents, grandparents, teachers
- History: Quote Baden-Powell and other historic leaders; relate incidents from their lives that Scouts can understand
- *Scouting* magazine: Pass on compelling stories, Chief Scout Executive Roy Williams' thanks to adult leaders, etc.
- Scouting-related literature: B-P's biography ("Two Lives of a Hero"), the writings of Rudyard Kipling, Jack London, Robert W. Service
- Things you've learned outside of Scouts
- Current events: Things in the news that reinforce or illustrate Scouting principles
- Modern culture: Positive and negative examples from movies, sports, music, etc.
- Seasonal: Webelos bridging season, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Scouting for Food, Duty to God between Thanksgiving and Christmas
- Your heart. Be passionate and personal. Share your weaknesses and strengths. Be honest about how you need help from others, including God.
- And an appropriate dose of humor helps...

How to prepare?

- Be Prepared: Always prepare at least an idea, but be open to spontaneity if you see something important happening in the meeting
 - o Churchill: "There is in the act of preparing, the moment you start caring."
- Keep your mind open to what's going on—current events (especially with a Scouting connection), the life of the troop, your son's life, what you hear in Scoutmaster Conferences or observe on treks
- Have a place to jot down ideas as soon as you have them and keep a list of potential Scoutmaster Minutes
- Let an idea gel in your head—eventually write it down (perhaps), wait, and edit it
- Pros and cons of actually writing out your Scoutmaster Minutes
 - o Helps to work out ideas

- “Concentrates” what you’re saying—if you don’t write it, it will probably be longer than it should or you will overlook an important point
- Risks coming across as a reading or performance
- Takes more time (I spent about an hour to write and edit each Minute)
- Watch for a relevant situation/time to give it

Delivering it

- Memorized vs. spontaneous—or something in between
- No matter what, don’t just read, especially in a flat reading voice
- My own experience
 - Early attempts at memorizing; hitting blank spot
 - Better: printed out on clipboard
- Be aware of the troop’s mood and what’s been happening that day, and be prepared for reacting to things like Scouts answering a rhetorical question—but stay focused
- Don’t expect immediate, positive feedback

Other guidelines

- Illustrations, especially illustrations from campouts, make it much easier to remember principles
- Avoid revealing something about any Scout, but especially your own son, that would embarrass him
- Support the patrol method. You are not their leader; the Senior Patrol Leader is. Look for ways to talk about patrols and build them up as teams.
- Make sure group is settled down—best to rely on your Senior Patrol Leader for that
- Don’t just repeat tired platitudes—speak from the heart, let your passion come through, make the principle come alive, illustrate it with something they have experienced themselves or can easily relate to, and issue a challenge an 11-17-year-old boy can respond to
- Keep track of your Minutes—give them to Scouts who age-out or achieve Eagle?

Website references

Scoutmaster Minutes (quality varies...I didn’t care much for these)

- http://www.netwoods.com/d-smminute.html#sm_min
- <http://usscouts.org/usscouts/smminute.asp>
- <http://www.scoutxing.com/scoutmaster/scminute.htm>
- <http://www.boyscouttrail.com/boy-scouts/boy-scout-minutes.asp>

Scouting magazine (almost always has useful ideas and quotes)

- <http://www.scoutingmagazine.org/>

Works and history of Robert S.S. Baden-Powell

- An amazing website of all things B-P: <http://pinetreeweb.com/B-P.htm>
- Excellent “Two Lives of a Hero” biography, but apparently it’s out of print: http://www.scouters.com/catalog/store/templates/product/generic.asp?pf_id=1515&dept_id=

Poems, stories that may be appropriate for Scouting situations

- Rudyard Kipling: <http://whitewolf.newcastle.edu.au/words/authors/K/KiplingRudyard/index.html>
- Robert W. Service: <http://www.explorenorth.com/library/service/bl-service.htm#works>
- Jack London: <http://london.sonoma.edu/Writings/>