

Seeing how Scout Sunday (the day closest to the Anniversary Day) this year is on this coming Sunday, and since the poster provided me the best opportunity to post my reflections, I'm forwarding this posting from a suggestion sent to the US Scouting Service Project, to which I responded to earlier this evening.

Hi Anna!!

You asked about one of my favorite days of the year:

> I am looking for some info on the history of Scout Sunday, and why we have
>it.

Scout Sunday started somewhere around the middle 40s. It is a natural outgrowth of the weekly Scout Week celebration that the BSA originated.

Each day of Scout Week was dedicated and demonstrated one of the seven (at that time) methods of Scouting to the community:

*patrol method - idea that youth lead and are the decision-makers of what Scouting activities will take place. Each year, the BSA sends its national youth representatives: the National Chief of the Order of the Arrow, Scouting's national service society; the National President of the Venturing Officers' Association, representing young men and women in our newest program with a wealth of history; and a Cub Scout, selected in various ways each year -- together with the National President, the Chief Scout Executive, and a volunteer selected for his or her service to the program over the past year. They meet with the President of the United States, with Congressional representatives, and present a "Report to Congress" on the status of the BSA over the last year. Likewise in many States, similar type events go on during a day of Scouting Anniversary Week.

*adult (male back then) association - getting young men to rub elbows with responsible adults so as to later follow their positive examples. During this week, special dinners to honor adults (District and Council recognition dinners, special Good Scouter dinners, and other programs) for their support and willingness to do this unpaid important work

*outdoors - the idea that Scouting is done as an outdoor activity, to strengthen minds and bodies. Many Troops hold special outings during this week, and some Troops camp out during this week.

*advancement - each Scout "scores his own points" and "sets the goal" for his advancement progress. Many Packs and Troops hold special dinners or award ceremonies (the Blue and Gold Banquet for Cub Scouts and Scouters; special Courts of Honor for Scouts and Scouters) and recognize Scouts whom have advanced in the past few months as well as those whom have advanced or have made special personal achievements in Scouting.

*uniform - not just a nice thing to wear, but the "billboard," "calling card" and "daily reminder" of what Scouting is and what Scouts are. In many communities, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts are encouraged to wear their uniform during school, at work and at other times during that week.

*service - to others, to the unit, and to himself and his family. Most Troops and Packs hold service projects or contribute to canned food drives, special programs for the elderly or infirmed, or perform personal services

like cleaning sidewalks of snow for people whom cannot do it themselves.

*ideals - the Scout Oath and Law and the daily application of those ideas.

Scout Sunday (Sabbath) is an extension of the Ideals of Scouting, Anna. The idea that a "Scout is Reverent" and that Scouts promise to do their "duty to God." It's a little more than that, over the many years. Scout Sunday reminds our communities that Scouting is still there and still provides a respite from all of the harmful things in that community; from the noise of the gangs and the raunchiness of the television and movies. Scouting still provides a way for a person to look inward into his or her life and discover that there really is "Something or Someone greater than mankind" while participating in various Scouting events and activities by himself or with others.

Finally, Anna, Scout Sunday reminds our religious bodies that they are one third of what it truly takes to "raise a child"; the other two being the Scout's parents and programs such as Scouting. It tells the church or synagogue body that "the development of young men and women in the Boy Scouts of America should not be limited to those men and women giving of their time freely and with no other compensation on this Earth than a warm smile, a hug, or a handshake." They have a role to play too...and so does their parish members, their congregations, and their church lay and summoned leadership.

Scout Sunday is important to me personally, Anna, because it reminds me even now as an adult, that God's hand is on every aspect of my life. It is a time for me to stand proudly in the audience while I watch our future ministers and priests and rabbis present a message to all of us. To watch my Savior's admonition of children being a part of church and faith and witnessing. To see the eyes of my fellow citizens light up when they talk with me over cake and coffee afterwards downstairs, or around the corner, and say "I didn't know you were in Scouts...", even though I know that they see me leave my place in uniform each week for months.

Scout Sunday is an important day, Anna, but no more important than the other six days making up the traditional Scouting Anniversary Week. While the tradition was started to make people in church aware of Scouting, and to allow Scouts to live out parts of what we pledge each week, the day is set aside for restoration of faith, for being with family and with our fellow Scouts and Scouters as we worship and fellowship together.

Settummanque!