

Court of Honor Rank Advancement Ceremony 3: What Is A Boy Scout?

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- **[Leader 1]**

- What is a Boy Scout?

- **[Leader 2]**

A Scout! He enjoys a hike through the woods more than he does a walk over the city's streets. He can tell North or South or East or West by the "signs." He can tie a knot that will hold, he can climb a tree which seems impossible to others, he can swim a river, he can pitch a tent, he can mend a tear in his trousers, he can tell you which fruits and seeds are poisonous and which are not, he can sight nut-bearing trees from a distance; he can reef a sail or take his trick at the wheel, and can pull an oar or use paddles and sculls; he knows the stars by name and can find his way by them; he can identify birds and animals and fish and knows the ways and habitat of each.

A Scout walks through the woods with silent tread. No dry twigs snap under his feet and no loose stones turn over and throw him off his balance. His eyes are keen and he sees many things that others do not see. He sees tracks and signs which reveal to him the nature and habits of the creatures that made them. He knows how to stalk birds and animals and study them in their natural haunts. He sees much, but is little seen.

A Scout, like an old frontiersman, does not shout his wisdom from the housetops. He possesses the quiet power that comes from knowledge. He speaks softly and answers questions modestly. He knows a braggart but he does not challenge him, allowing the boaster to expose his ignorance by his own loose-wagging tongue.

A Scout holds his honor to be his most precious possession, and he would die rather than have it stained. He knows what is his duty and all obligations imposed by duty he fulfills of his own free will. His sense of honor is his only taskmaster, and his honor he guards as jealously as did the knights of old. In this manner a Scout wins the confidence and respect of all people.

- **[Leader 3]**

A Scout can kindle a fire in the forest on the wettest day and he seldom uses more than one match. When no matches can be had he can still have a fire, for he knows the secret of the rubbing sticks used by the Indians, and he knows how to start a blaze with only his knife blade and a piece of flint. He knows also the danger of forest fires, and he kindles a blaze that will not spread. The fire once started, what a meal there in the open! Just watch him and compare his appetite with that of a boy who lounges at a lunch counter in a crowded city. He knows the unwritten rules of the campfire and he contributes his share to the pleasures of the council. He also knows when to sit silent before the ruddy embers and give his mind free play.

A Scout practices self-control, for he knows that men who master problems in the world must first master themselves. He keeps a close guard on his temper and never makes a silly spectacle of himself by losing his head. He keeps a close guard on his tongue, for he knows that loud speech is often a cloak to ignorance, that swearing is a sign of weakness, and that untruth shatters the confidence of others. He keeps a close guard on his appetite and eats moderately of food which will make him strong; he never uses alcoholic liquors because he does not wish to poison his body; he desires a clear, active brain, so he avoids tobacco.

A Scout never flinches in the face of danger, for he knows that at such a time every faculty must be alert to preserve his safety and that of others. He knows what to do in case of fire, or panic, or shipwreck; he trains his mind to direct and his body to act. In all emergencies he sets an example of resourcefulness, coolness, and courage, and considers the safety of others before that of himself. He is especially considerate of the helpless and weak.

- **[Leader 4]**

A Scout can make himself known to a brother Scout wherever he may be by a method which only Scouts can know. He has brothers in every city in the land and in every country in the world. Wherever he goes he can give his signs and be assured of a friendly welcome. He can talk with a brother Scout without making a sound or he can make known his message by imitating the click of a telegraph key.

A Scout is kind to everything that lives. He knows that horses, dogs, and cats have their rights and he respects them. A Scout prides himself upon doing "good turns, " and no day in his life is complete unless he has been of aid to some person.

A Scout does not run away or call for help when an accident occurs. If a person is cut he knows how to stop the flow of blood and gently and carefully bind up the wound. If a person is burned his knowledge tells him how to alleviate the suffering. If anyone is dragged from the water unconscious, a Scout at once sets to work to restore respiration and circulation. He knows that not a minute can be lost.

A Scout knows that people expect more of him than they do of other boys and he governs his conduct so that no word of reproach can truthfully be brought against the great brotherhood to which he has pledged his loyalty. He seeks always to make the word "Scout" worthy of the respect of people whose opinions have value. He wears his uniform worthily.

- **[Leader 1]**

A Scout knows his city as well as he knows the trails in the forest. He can guide a stranger wherever he desires to go, and this knowledge of short-cuts saves him many needless steps. He knows where the police stations are located, where the fire-alarm boxes are placed, where the nearest doctor lives, where the hospitals are, and which is the quickest way to reach them. He knows the names of the city officials and the nature of their duties. A Scout is proud of his city and freely offers his services when he can help.

A Scout is a patriot and is always ready to serve his country at a minute's notice. He loves Old Glory and knows the proper forms of offering it respect. He never permits its folds to touch the ground. He knows how his country is governed and who are the men in high authority. He desires a strong body, an alert mind, and an unconquerable spirit, so that he may serve his country in any need. He patterns his life after those of great Americans who have had a high sense of duty and who have served the nation well.

A Scout chooses as his motto "Be Prepared," and he seeks to prepare himself for anything--to rescue a companion, to ford a stream, to gather firewood, to help strangers, to distinguish right from wrong, to serve his fellow men, his country, and his God—always to "Be Prepared".

- **[Leader 2]**

This was from the First Edition of *Handbook For Boys*. Copyright 1911, Boys Scouts of America

- When a boy joins our Boy Scout Troop he doesn't fit the description from the old *Handbook for Boys*. Learning to be a Boy Scout is an iterative process, which takes the form of rank advancement. A boy joins Scouting, learns some basic skills and becomes a Tenderfoot scout; after more learning he becomes a Second Class, then First Class scout. Typically, years of hard work is required to advance to the rank of Star, Life and finally Eagle. Tonight we have several boys advancing in their Boy Scout careers, taking another step closer to meeting the definition of a Boy Scout.

Scout

- **[Leader 3]**
- Call **[Scouts]** and parents forward.
- **[Hold the Scout card up.]** I am the Scout. My badge represents the international brotherhood of Scouting which I have joined.
- **[Scouts]** completed the Scout rank by learning about our Troop and the Patrol method, as well as the Scout Oath and Law, and the Outdoor Code.
- Congratulations.

Tenderfoot

- **[Leader 4]**
- Call **[Scouts]** and parents forward.
- **[Hold the Tenderfoot card up.]** I am the Tenderfoot. My three points stand for the three parts of the Scout Oath. You find me on the Mariner's Compass, forever pointing the way to the North Star and a safe journey in life. On my face are two stars representing truth and knowledge, a shield which is the emblem of a nation molded together in justice, and an Eagle to guard the freedom of my land.
- **[Scouts]** completed the Tenderfoot rank by learning basic first aid and camping skills, and by learning about safe hiking, among other things.
- What was the toughest requirement? How did you complete it?
- Congratulations.

Second Class

- **[Leader 1]**
- **[Hold the Second Class card up.]** I am the Second Class. The ends of my scroll are turned up in the willing smile of the scout. On my face is the motto "be prepared", and suspended from me is the knot, tied there to remind you of the slogan of the Boy Scouts of America, "do a good turn daily."
- We don't have any Scouts advancing to the Second Class rank tonight.

First Class

- **[Leader 2]**
- Call **[Scouts]** and parents forward.
- **[Hold the First Class card up.]** I am the First Class Scout. I was Tenderfoot and I laid a course by the stars of truth and knowledge and I guided myself with the righteousness of justice and freedom. As a Second Class Scout I added a smile that I might be a friend to all and bound myself together with the knot of duty to others.
- **[Scouts]** earned the First Class Rank by learning CPR, how to orient a map, and how to tie several knots, among other things.
- What was the toughest requirement? How did you complete it?
- Congratulations.

Star

- **[Leader 3]**
- Call **[Scouts]** and parents forward.
- **[Hold the Star card up.]** I am the Star. Now that I can stand alone, I have earned the right to improve on my own. To me goes the honor of choosing my field. Before me lies an horizon of endless opportunity.

[Do this piece for each Scout earning Star; identifying what merit badges they did to complete the rank]

- **[Scout]** completed the Star rank by earning several merit badges, including Communications, Environmental Science, Swimming, Camping, Atomic Energy, and Wilderness Survival, as well as several other requirements.
 - What was the toughest requirement? How did you complete it?
 - Congratulations.

Life

- **[Leader 4]**
- Call **[Scouts]** and parents forward.
- **[Hold the Life card up.]** I am the Life. I have shown the whole world that Scouting is in my heart. I have mastered the knowledge of subjects that will benefit my country and my fellow man. I am ready to reach for my wings to fly.

[Do this piece for each Scout earning Life; identifying what merit badges they did to complete the rank]

- **[Scout]** completed the Life rank by earning several merit badges, including Communications, Environmental Science, Swimming, Camping, Atomic Energy, and Wilderness Survival, as well as several other requirements.
 - What was the toughest requirement? How did you complete it?
 - Congratulations.

Eagle

- **[Leader 1]**
- An Eagle Scout should step forward to read the last statement.
- **[Hold the Eagle card up.]** I am the Eagle. Since the beginning of time, man has used me as a symbol of royalty, power, victory and valor. My strength and courage has inspired men throughout the ages. I am prepared to stand for the virtues of freedom, strength and pride. I am prepared to serve my God, My Country and My Fellow Man. I am prepared to stand for Honesty, Truth and Integrity. I am prepared to lead others and to accomplish set tasks to the best of my ability. I am prepared to cross all lines of race, creed and nationality. I am prepared to be self reliant and resourceful. I am prepared. I am a Boy Scout, and I will do my best to help my fellow Scouts become Eagle Scouts.

Please join me in congratulating the members of our Troop that have received the ranks of Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life. **[Applause.]**

- **[The rank of Eagle should be presented at an Eagle Court. It's far too special to be lumped together with the ranks the other Scouts have earned.]**