



Be with Them

By Young Men General Presidency

No matter where you go in the world, you are likely to find faithful Latter-day Saints, men and women, who are committed to their faith. One clear sign of their commitment is that they willingly fulfill callings, sharing their time and means to be with those they are called to serve. They have many other demands on their time, but they serve anyway, and their sacrifices make their service sacred. To such devoted disciples of Jesus Christ, these are not mere assignments or tasks to complete to make the ward run smoothly. Over time, a connection grows with the people they serve, and their offering becomes a true labor of love.



We have all been blessed by special leaders like these—someone who touched our lives and was with us at the right time to lift and guide us. We never forget such leaders, and their memory becomes a reservoir of strength throughout our lives. In many ways, they are an answer to prayers—the prayers of parents, the prayers of leaders, and often the prayers of the young man himself.

Before long, it becomes our turn to be that leader. The responsibility to bless and minister to the next generation of young men falls to us and, when this happens, we feel more keenly than ever the needs and challenges our youth face. So we match their prayers with our own. We strive to be always “at our post,” so the Spirit can take us by the hand and help those in our charge.

In a recent Church News article, our Young Men General President, Stephen W. Owen, reminded us how important it is for leaders of young men to be with them. “As we spend time with young men,” he explained, “we will be blessed to know them personally and begin to see them as God sees them. This allows us to become a true servant and instrument in our Heavenly Father’s hands to guide, touch, and lift all within our reach.”

Brother Owen continues: “If you teach or lead youth, look for ways to be with them — in all kinds of settings, not just during an hour at church. This is how you will find your most meaningful teaching opportunities. Take an interest in them and in their lives. Show them that you notice their good qualities. Help them feel that you are a fellow laborer, a fellow traveler on the path back to the Savior.” (“The Next Generation of ‘Impact Teachers,’” [Church News](#), Jan. 12, 2017)

It’s one thing to prepare a lesson to teach the young men once a week. It’s another thing to prepare ourselves to be with them “in all kinds of settings.” Heavenly Father does not ever “wing it” as He attends to our needs, and we certainly should never wing it as we minister to those young men who need our example and support.

We may never really know how much of an impact we will have on the young men we serve. But as we ponder and pray to know the needs of each precious soul, we can feel the peaceful assurance that God loves them and He will care for them. And we will find that one way He meets their needs is by calling leaders who are willing to “be with them.”

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Scouting—Isn't It About Time?

by Bonnie H. Cordon, 2nd Counselor, Primary General Presidency



Some months ago, I was asked to speak at a Scouting venue. In preparation, I wrote to my missionary son and asked what stood out to him in Scouting and what made the biggest difference for him during his teenage years.

His response made me ponder the critical role of leaders in the lives of boys.

He wrote, "What influenced me most were trusted leaders. Dad is the biggest reason I love Scouting—because it meant I had time to do awesome activities with him. When I think of Scouting, I think of my dad. He was my bishop and my leader."

Scout leaders motivate boys to be proactive and to push for greater things, not becoming complacent with where they are but pushing themselves to greater heights.

He continued, "I vividly remember my favorite campout. My dad and I were to hike to a lake where we would meet up with the rest of the troop. We hit the trail and after several miles arrived at dusk at the appointed lake. However, upon arrival we found ourselves alone. We tried calling to the others, but no one answered. Finally, with darkness falling around us, we set up camp. I remember the fire dad built. He carefully explained that in the morning we had to leave the campsite better than we found it.

I remember waking up the next morning very early to find dad's sleeping bag empty. I unzipped the tent and found him fly-fishing on the shore of the mist-shrouded lake. He caught and cooked our breakfast. I loved to hear him talk as I peppered him with questions of life.

Later in the day we found the troop's campsite at a nearby lake. The rest of the time was fun, but that first day was the greatest."

President Spencer W. Kimball gives voice to why my son's first day at camp was the greatest: "Boys need heroes close by. They need to know some man of towering strength and basic integrity, personally. They need to meet them on the street, to hike and camp with them, to see them in close-to-home, every day, down-to-earth situations; to feel close enough to them to ask questions and to talk things over man-to-man with them." ("[Boys Need Heroes Close By](#)," April 1976, general conference)

President Thomas S. Monson shared, "The greatest gift a man can give a boy is his willingness to share a part of his life with him." ("[Run, Boy, Run](#)," Oct, 1982, general conference)

Scouting offers a wide spectrum of experiences that inspired leaders can draw on to be with boys. Dedicated leaders can increase their vision, touch their hearts, mentor their ambitions, and expand their understanding of our Lord and Savior with living examples from their own lives.

President Monson shares the twelve points of the Scout Law and their counterpart in the message of our Master, Jesus Christ.

- ◆ *A Scout is trustworthy.* What did the Lord say? "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." ([John 17:4](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is loyal.* "Get thee behind me, Satan." ([Luke 4:8](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is helpful.* "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." ([John 5:8](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is friendly.* "Ye are my friends." ([John 15:14](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is courteous.* "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." ([Matt. 7:12](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is kind.* "Suffer the little children to come unto me. ... And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." ([Mark 10:14, 16](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is obedient.* "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." ([John 6:38](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is cheerful.* "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." ([John 16:33](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is thrifty.* "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." ([Luke 18:22](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is brave.* "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." ([Matt. 26:39](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is clean.* "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." ([D&C 38:42](#))
- ◆ *A Scout is reverent.* "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." ([Matt. 6:9](#))

"Such inspired teachings, when taught by devoted leaders to precious boys of promise, influence not only the lives of the boys; they also affect eternity." ("[Run, Boy, Run](#)," Oct, 1982, general conference)

"Nobody knows what a boy is worth;
We'll have to wait and see.
But every man in a noble place
A boy once used to be". Author Unknown

Inspired leaders know the worth of their boys, and build them to stand in noble places. Thank you for being those leaders.

Stan's EYO Blog #21: Love, Leadership, and Service

by Stan Stolpe, [LDS-BSA Relationships EYO Blogger](#)



In earlier blogs I have written about the application of the fundamental and basic Scout leadership principles as presented in Wood Badge—obtaining and maintaining a personal mission, vision, and goals as we serve as leaders of eleven-year-old (EYO) Scouts. In this blog, I desire to expand on how to transform your vision into action—for a vision is only as valuable as your passion is visible. To be an effective EYO Scout leader, learning and seeing with clarity the relationships between love, leadership, and service will give direction to your program and provide a lasting impact on the youth you lead. By serving them, they will see the gospel in action and feel the Savior's love through you. They may not always remember how to tie the bowline or recite from

memory the five most common signs of a heart attack, but they will never forget how you made them feel because of your love and service.

When we truly love the young men we serve in Scouting, we come to know them personally. We connect with them, show interest in their lives, and more importantly, we listen to them. The focus of our attending the EYO Scout meeting is THEM; not the program or activity of the evening or having conversations with other adults, but genuine interest in the Scout. As an EYO Scout leader, we show concern with their success. We walk beside them when they fail. We stand side by side with them as they try new things until they find success.

I can still recall the faces of Scouts who have learned a skill and have come to demonstrate their new Scout skill to me. As they finished demonstrating their skill, I can still see the look in their eyes as they turned to me and look longingly for my approval. I tried to meet that need with equal excitement for them. How I served them was to celebrate their accomplishment with equal enthusiasm to their need. The results were infectious. Boys excitedly sought me out on Sundays to share things with me or just to talk about their lives. They had a friend, and they knew it. Not just a peer, but an adult. To young Scouts, their leaders (or adults) represent the world, and if we show them that they are lovable, they in turn can learn to love themselves, finding acceptability.

Many young Scouts, despite the fact that they may know a lot of people and have parents and siblings who love them, may be keenly aware of their personal isolation and loneliness. When we as Scout leaders take a personal interest in our Scouts and show our love for them, it helps them feel that they are personally worthwhile. As we get to better know the Scouts in our charge, we are able to attend to their needs, and they then begin to grow, not only in stature, but in their sense of self-worth.

We can use the tools of Scouting for the betterment of the youth. For example, we can brief the board of review on questions to ask to get the EYO Scout to talk about his experiences and solidify in his mind the values he is learning; we can give these hints to the board because we have come to know the Scout and his needs. We can have the Scout demonstrate his skill in the gathering time at a court of honor. We can praise him in front of his parents. By focusing on serving the boys, we learn to bring out the best in each Scout and build him into becoming a leader in the future.

I recall taking over as Scoutmaster in a ward several years ago. There was one boy who was being ridiculed and picked on by the other Scouts. It appeared to be the focus of the group as a whole. I could see how destructive the other boys were being to this young man. So I put this young man beside me at every opportunity. I knew the others would be less likely to torment him if I was next to him. As I modeled for the other young men my genuine interest in and love for this Scout, things changed. As they saw that I could sincerely like him, they changed, treating him differently and with respect, which in turn changed how the Scout felt about himself. This is called the “virtuous cycle.” It was not long before his parents were commenting how this Scout could not wait for Wednesdays, and that he now had a desire to progress in Scouting, whereas previously he had no desire.



Our vision should give us a passion, and that passion should give us the drive, desire, and motivation to work, plan, and train ourselves and the youth we serve in the ways of Scouting. It takes a lot to run an effective Scouting program. Do not let anyone kid you, a Scout calling takes more than an hour a week. In fact, it can easily consume up to 3 to 4 hours a week in planning and executing the program (between personal planning, training the boys, and training ourselves). It takes time as we reflect on each boy in our charge and see their individual needs and ways we can serve them through purposeful design for their success. As you go to training and gain new skills, think how you can use those new skills to better serve the boys. It is one reason we go to training, to learn to serve these young boys in ways we may not have previously envisioned.

Loving leadership means the relationship matters. It inspires and energizes. The young EYO Scout wants to be respected, recognized, and genuinely cared for. By nourishing them through service leadership, we directly influence their progress and elevate them, enriching their lives. As we find our passion to serve the EYO Scouts in our charge we are readily reminded of *D&C 4:2*: “Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.”

As you embark as an EYO Scout leader may you find the passion to serve these young men with all your heart, might, mind, and strength.

Church Responds to BSA Policy Announcement

January 31, 2017

In response to media inquiries about a recent Boy Scouts of America policy change, the following statement has been released:

The Church is studying the announcement made yesterday by Boy Scouts of America. Boy Scouts has assured its religious chartering organizations that, as in the past, they will be able to organize their troops in a way fully consistent with their religious beliefs. In recent years, the Church has made several changes to its programs for youth and continues to look for ways to better serve its families and young people worldwide.

Mac's Message #79: An Influence for Good

By Mac McIntire, LDS-BSA Relationships Scout Blog

It is impossible to measure the impact a faithful Scouting leader can have on the life of a young man. You can be a defining influence that helps establish a firm foundation of spiritual and moral character that prepares him for the opportunities and challenges in his future.

Association with adults is one of the eight methods of Scouting. "Boys learn a great deal by watching how adults conduct themselves. Scout leaders can be positive role models for the members of their troops. In many cases a Scoutmaster who is willing to listen to boys, encourage them, and take a sincere interest in them can make a profound difference in their lives" ([National Eagle Scout Association](#)).



In the Book of Mormon, Helaman had a relationship with his "stripling warriors" that went beyond being their military commander. He understood his personal responsibility for the spiritual and temporal safety of these young men. He reinforced and strengthened the faith that their mothers had instilled within them. He loved them. He prayed with them. He worried about them. He stood beside them in difficult times. And he did everything he could to keep his young men safe in a troubled world. He viewed them as his sons; and they called him their father.

To have a close relationship with your young men you have to be deeply engaged in their lives. Boys require not only your physical presence, but also your mental, emotional, social, and psychological investment in them. Boys become strong men of character by interacting with strong men and women of character. They gain experience by watching others. They learn from mentors and role models who take seriously their responsibility to set a righteous example. The experiences your youth have interacting with you can become deeply implanted life lessons and resources that they can draw upon throughout their lives. The love, warmth, and caring they feel now in your presence, may someday sooth them in future moments of despair or grief.

You can create an eternal bond with your young men the same way the Savior did with his disciples. Have unconditional love for them. Talk with them. Walk with them. Eat with them. Share personal stories that inspire, uplift, and teach. Counsel with compassion. Correct with kindness. And you always, always, always seek after the lost sheep, "that one soul shall not be lost" ([Moses 4:1](#)).

I encourage you to get close to your boys. Be with them. Share your insights around the campfire, in teaching moments, in reflection exercises after Scouting activities, and in Scoutmaster Minutes. Use the scriptures as your field manual. Have meaningful, morning and evening prayer with your boys at campouts. Read the scriptures together. Hold devotionals. Invite the Spirit to be the constant companion of your youth. Do all that you can to teach your boys to love God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength. Teach them to serve their fellow man, to do a good turn daily, and to be prepared for all that life holds in store for them.

Good leaders don't see their boys as they are, but rather as they can be. Good leaders project themselves into the future, see the end from the beginning, and they then take the vital steps necessary to achieve their desired outcome. As a Scouting and Aaronic Priesthood leader, you are in the business of growing and saving boys. I encourage you to see every interaction you have with your youth as an opportunity to teach, mold, encourage, and influence a boy for good. I pray the Lord will bless you with the vision, desire, and capacity to magnify your stewardship at this vital stage in the lives of your young men.

The “Scout-led Troop” and the Priesthood of God

By Bill Chapman, LDS-BSA Relationships The Boy-led Troop Blog #1



Years ago, just before the beginning of an Eagle Scout court of honor, I was standing in the back of the chapel and overheard a conversation between two of our wonderful young Eagle Scout candidates. One of them said to the other, “Right after this meeting, let’s burn our Scout shirts!” They both laughed and we moved on to a wonderful evening of recognition of the accomplishments of these young men and the others who had achieved the highest award in Scouting.

Even though I knew these Scouts were “half” joking, this one statement continued to haunt me because I knew there was a kernel of truth in it. My initial reaction was to blame the Scouts and ask them to have more respect for the Scouting movement and all that their Scout shirts represent. However, the more I thought, pondered, and prayed about this comment, I realized that it was not so much a reflection on these Scouts as it was on the program that we, their adult leaders, had delivered to them.

The program that these Scouts had experienced, and at the time I was a strong proponent of, was one in which the Scouts would show up for their troop meeting on a typical Tuesday night and the adults would teach the Scouts and test them on whatever they needed to know or do to pass off the next merit badge. To these Scouts, and many others like them, I imagine it felt like they were going to another class just like the ones they go to at school. An adult stands at the front of the class lecturing the “students.” The students take notes and try to understand and remember the material being taught; they may have homework to do after class and will be tested on their mastery of the subject matter. Many Scouts don’t like school very much and, hence, the comment about burning their Scout shirts. Where did we go wrong?

Several months after I heard the comment about Scouts wanting to burn their shirts, I was called (for the third time) to be Scoutmaster in my ward. Although about 30 years earlier I had completed what was then-called “Scoutmaster Basic Training,” as well as a great deal of other Scout training such as Wood Badge, Philmont, etc., I decided it would be appropriate for me to update my training. I attended an all-day “Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training” where I live in Southern California.

Up to this point in time, I had always experienced some level of anxiety each week leading up to our troop meetings, wondering whether the Scouts were going to approve of the activities that I had prepared for the meeting. Of course, I would do my best to discuss the planned activities before the meeting with my senior patrol leader, but, in reality, he had little to say about what was going to happen and I felt that he did not seem to have much interest, anyway. From the comments during the leader specific training and speaking with other Scouters at the breaks, I was amazed to hear them talk about how much fun their troops were having and how involved their Scouts were in planning their activities and troop meetings. I was glad I had updated my training and felt like this “Scout-led” troop concept was a totally new idea, but at the same time was something I already knew about. It resonated with some gospel principles I understood, like moral agency, priesthood keys, missionary preparation, etc.

Even prior to this training, I was well aware of the idea of a “Scout-led troop,” and at least theoretically endorsed that concept. However, hearing the Scouters talk about it at the training led me to believe that the LDS troops that I have personally been involved in, and others I had observed, were far from achieving the goal of a “Scout-led troop” as described by the Scouters in the training.

Thus began my passion to learn about and implement a “Scout-led troop” in our ward. I attended a non-LDS troop’s patrol leaders’ council (PLC) meeting to see what this would look like in real life. I was amazed at what I saw. This was a fairly large troop and the PLC consisted of about 10 to 12 Scouts. The senior patrol leader and his two assistants ran the meeting like a bishopric or stake presidency. Other than me, their invited guest, there were no other adults sitting at the table where the PLC was held, although there were a few adults in the back of the room and the Scoutmaster would occasionally come over and check on things, answer questions, etc. But it was clear who was in charge. The adults would answer questions and act as counselors or advisers, but it was the Scouts who were running things.

In all the bishopric youth committee meetings, stake youth council meetings, etc., I had never seen anything quite like this. I thought, “This is what the Lord had in mind when he said we need to train our young men at an earlier age to become effective missionaries, fathers, husbands, etc.” However, I was concerned that although Scout literature and the training I received clearly taught that the Scouts should be running their own program, a typical Boy Scout troop includes Scouts from ages 11 through 17. *Continued*

I thought to myself, "There is no way we can expect a 12- or 13-year-old Scout to conduct a meeting and lead a group of other Scouts like this 17-year-old (who looked like he was already shaving) did." Nonetheless, this was such a powerful experience that I wanted to do an experiment and try this out in our own troop.

As I studied, pondered, and prayed about gospel principles relating to the things we were going to do, I felt like I began to receive personal revelation. Almost everything I have ever read or heard the brethren say when addressing the youth begins with some statement about the confidence they have in our youth. For example, on page 5 of the Duty to God pamphlet, the First Presidency states the following: "Heavenly Father has great trust and confidence in you and has an important mission for you to fulfill." Similarly, on page ii in the For the Strength of Youth pamphlet, the First Presidency repeats this message, as follows: "Our dear young men and young women, we have great confidence in you."

Are the brethren just patronizing our youth or do they know something we don't know? Is it enough for a deacons quorum president to stand at the front of his quorum, announce the hymn, who will be giving the prayer, sit down, and wait for the "real" leaders to take over and run the quorum? Is that what it means to hold and exercise the keys of the priesthood? Or, in a troop meeting is it enough for the senior patrol leader to give a few announcements and turn the time over to the Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmasters, who are really running things?

The Lord has never been reluctant about putting youth in charge of big responsibilities. He gives 12-year-old young men His holy priesthood. Although it is the "lesser" priesthood, it is God's holy priesthood, nonetheless. (See D&C 84:26.) These young men hold real power and authority to do God's work on the earth. They have the duty to administer holy ordinances, such as the sacrament, collect sacred fast offerings on an errand from the bishop, and they even hold "the keys of the ministering of angels" (D&C 13:1). The Lord called a 14-year-old boy to lead the Restoration of the gospel and His Church on the earth.

As I discussed my proposal to let the Scouts plan and run their own troop with my assistant Scoutmasters, bishopric members, and committee members, I could see that there were mixed reactions to this proposal. A number of parents and other adults involved in Scouting in the ward had very high expectations that our troop would continue to place a heavy emphasis on advancement and that this "experiment" might dramatically reduce that advancement. However, we received enough support from the bishopric and my assistant Scoutmasters that we decided to move forward with the plan.

Time and space in this initial blog post do not permit a detailed description of what happened next, but a few examples will suffice for now and I will share more examples in future blog posts. Suffice it to say that we have had our ups and downs but from my personal perspective, the results have been nothing short of miraculous. I have seen a troop go from being largely adult led to Scout led. The Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters train the senior patrol leader how to run the troop and, as long as everything is done within Church and BSA policy, the Scouts run their troop. *(Editor's note: If the senior patrol leader is not the deacons quorum president or if it is a boy of another faith, the senior patrol leader would also counsel with the deacons quorum president. [Scouting Handbook 5.2])*

At troop meetings, the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters sit in the back of the room along the wall. The senior patrol leader or assistant senior patrol leader conducts the meetings. The patrol leaders conduct their patrol meetings. Occasionally, whoever is conducting might ask a question of the Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmasters but those interruptions are rare. The only time the Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmasters address the troop in a troop meeting is during the "Scouter's Minute," which literally lasts about one minute.

After each troop meeting, the patrol leaders' council meets on one end of the room and, again, the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters sit up against the opposite end of the room. The PLC has real authority to plan their troop meetings, campouts, service projects, and other activities. If they go "out of bounds," or start to plan something that is not within Church or BSA policy, the Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmasters train the Scouts on what those boundaries are.

The meetings have a lot of energy, noise, and enthusiasm but some very important things are happening. These young men are having an opportunity to exercise real leadership and authority under the supervision of adults. What I see is a group of very young men taking on some very significant responsibilities, doing the best they can, and achieving amazing things.

I would invite any of you who read this blog post and feel so inclined to share your experiences—both positive and negative—in the comment section on the blog. The goal of the blog is to open up a dialogue among LDS Scouters nationwide so we can learn from each other and bless the lives of these young men! I look forward to hearing from each of you.

Safety Moment—The Character of Safety

Contributed by Steven Hoskins, LDS Risk Management Division

“Every wrong choice is preceded by a series of unwise choices.”

—Andy Stanley, *The Best Question Ever*

As a young boy I grew up in a small farming community in Southeastern Idaho. The summers could be hot and sometimes boring. One particularly hot July day a group of my friends and I decided the best way to solve those two problems was to go water skiing--but there was a slight problem—no boat and no way to get a boat and no place to go if we had a boat. Did these small problems dissuade a group of enterprising teenagers? Not in the least. Although we did not have a boat we did have some skis, a rope, and a pickup truck. More importantly, we had access to irrigation canals which had roads close to this haven of flowing water. So off we went. No adult supervision, no permission slip, no real plan except to find a dirt road next to an irrigation canal and to hook the rope to that old pickup and go water skiing.

We made so many “unwise” decisions it is hard to know where to start. No one bothered to look to see how deep the canal was. Why would we? Our goal was to stay on top of the water, not in the water. No one looked to see if there were any obstructions either in the canal or along the road—such as a rock, diversion dam, a fence post, a sign, or even a bridge which could interfere with the skier. No one knew exactly how fast the pickup needed to be moving to actually pull a water ski. We thought thirty or forty miles per hour would suffice. How would we get up on the ski? We obviously couldn’t sit in the water with our lifejacket and wait for the boat and rope to line up as we had done on the lake because we did not have a life jacket (pfd) and the water in the canal was flowing, not still. We did not even consider those simple little details because all we wanted was to get on those skis in that nice cool water. We ignored the no trespassing signs and every other danger sign. We did not contemplate how we would stop or even evaluate the myriad of things that could go wrong because the excitement of the moment was upon us. Once the first boy put the skis on and sat down on the bridge, a shear act of stupidity was ready to unfold.

We drew straws to see who would go first, and the rest of us piled into the back of that old pickup truck (another serious lapse in judgment). At the infamous cry of “Hit It!” the pickup truck surged forward, reaching the point of no return in a matter of seconds—actually milliseconds. Consequence control was gone for us and we were not prepared for that second bridge which came upon us quickly. Any of my readers will immediately recognize how utterly ill-advised this course of action was and how wrong it was to put those water skis on and to tie the tow rope to the bumper of that old truck. Warning signs were everywhere, but all were ignored. Why? Because each decision which led to the canal water skiing seemed innocent and inconsequential—at first. But once the skis were mounted and the pickup truck moved forward, we left the safety of the road and quickly reached the rapid conclusion of a dangerous course of action. The momentum of getting those skis in the water was just too great. The consequence now was inevitable and there was no one with sufficient character and good sense to say “STOP!” Just as with most “adventure situations,” a series of decisions was required and making the “right” choice anywhere along the way would have avoided the potential for disaster.

Here are some ideas for how to make better decisions regarding the safety of you and your youth:

1. **Heed the warning signs.** In my case not only was there an actual “No Trespassing” sign, but there were other signs showing water depth. The speed of the water flow, rock- and grass-covered canal banks, the bridge, road obstructions, lack of experience, or even the wisdom of water skiing on a canal were all there but were ignored in the excitement of the adventure. As experience is gained and as training is sought and implemented, leaders are better able to recognize the warning signs of potential danger or excessive risk. When those signs appear, **stop** and **retreat**. Let caution hold greater influence than adventure or excitement. How many times do we just not recognize the warning signs because we have not been properly trained or we don’t know what they are? The best place to start learning about warning signs is through training.



Stay on the Path

2. **Stay on the path.** Or, as Elder Ballard stated, "Stay in the boat and hold on." Do you ever allow pressure and other demands, whether from competing interests (many of which are legitimate), "summit fever," or even from the boys themselves cause you to compromise on safety? How many times do we as adult leaders want to be liked more than worry about the ramifications of saying no? How many times are we worried about being identified as the "fun killer," so we ignore the warning signs of potential risks. How many times do we review the Guide to Safe Scouting before embarking on an activity, or simply shrug and say "that won't happen to me"? Have we adequately planned for the activity? Are you familiar with the handbooks of the Church and do you communicate your trip plans with the bishop and parents? It takes character to eliminate unwise choices. When dealing with unsafe activities, seldom does one overarching event occur which results in injury. Generally there is a series of what appear to be harmless steps that lead to stepping off the edge. In my case, one was telling my buddy in the pickup truck to "Hit It!" David Lynn in his article entitled "Managing Safety: Three Steps to Build Character in Safety" (<http://ehstoday.com/safety/management/three-steps-build-character-safety-1101>) makes the point well, "Train yourself to recognize the signs that prompt you to act with prudence and develop the *courage* to turn back to safety." (Emphasis added).
3. **Recognize fear for what it is.** Fear can be a debilitating emotion. It is defined as the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat. However, fear can also be the alarm we need to inform us to stop doing what we are doing, retreat, or re-evaluate our course of action. Normal fear can be a great gift. An unwise decision can produce a feeling that is disquieting, or makes us feel ill at ease. This can be a healthy fear telling us to turn back, to retreat, or to listen. This healthy fear is a gift and is sometimes the Spirit prompting us to stop and think.



It takes some effort to build the character necessary to avoid making unwise decisions, especially given the pressures an adult youth leader has to ensure the youth are constantly engaged in a good time. Looking to the cool flowing water of that canal became an irresistible temptation that almost resulted in serious injury. Better choices would have stopped the impetus of what could have been a catastrophic consequence.

SCOUTING HANDBOOK FEATURED SECTION

We have had numerous questions in our office regarding the three overnight camps for the EYO Scouts. Please note that the number of campouts reflects the boy's year (birthday to birthday), not a calendar year. *Emphasis* has been added for clarification. Please also see our [EYO Blogs](#).

6.2 Scouting for 11-Year-Olds, Paragraphs 4 & 5: Eleven-year-old Scouts participate in rank advancement. They are encouraged to complete *as many of the* First Class rank requirements as possible before turning 12, *with the exception of the requirement for six overnight camps*.

Eleven-year-old Scouts may participate in *three one-night camps a year*, which meets the camping requirements for advancement to the rank of Second Class. If desired, these overnight camps may be held with the ward's Boy Scout troop [*not at week-long Scout camp*]. The eleven-year-old Scout leader plans the camps in consultation with the ward Primary presidency, the bishopric adviser to the Primary, and the ward Scouting committee. *No other Scout-sponsored overnight camping* should be planned for eleven year-old Scouts.

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Contact Us

LDS-BSA Relationships

15 W South Temple, Ste 1070
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 530-0004
ldsbsa@scouting.org
Visit us on the web at
www.ldsbsa.org