



## WITHOUT PROPS – PART 2

The examples listed in this section can be adapted and used as a point of reference to inspire Scouts, open their eyes, and/or get them thinking.

### 1. The LEAD STEER

- In the early 1800s, before railroads, the only way to move cattle from the west to the big cities was to drive the huge herds of cattle across the plains to places like Kansas City and St. Louis. Trails like the Chisholm Trail were marked as the best routes that would provide water, food, river crossings, and safety from man and beast. Cowboys would be on the trail for weeks at a time moving the cattle before finally arriving at their destination.
- Each herd had a lead steer, which was usually an older longhorn that had been trained to lead the way along the trail. The cowboys would get the lead steer moving each morning, and he would slowly start leading the way up the trail to the destination. The herd would fall into line behind the lead steer and follow him. Cowboys would ride on the flanks and the rear to keep the stragglers from wandering away from the herd. The lead steer was so special that after completing a trail drive, the cowboys would drive him back home to lead another herd up the trail. This would be repeated time and again.
- The story of the lead steer points out that leadership is a valuable skill and that it is a skill that can be taught. As Scouts we will be given many opportunities.

### 2. LEARN HOW TO BEND

- In the field across the lane were two trees. One was a mighty Red Oak tree. Its wood was hard and its trunk was thick and strong. The other was a lean Willow tree. Its wood was a lot softer and its trunk was slimmer and more supple.
- One day a hurricane passed over the area with winds well over 100 miles an hour. How would the two trees fare in this terrible weather? Would the slender willow tree blow down from the force of these very strong winds?
- When the hurricane passed, pieces of branches and leaves were scattered all over the area. There were broken and torn off parts from all kinds of trees, even from far away. The big oak had cracked and fallen in the storm. But, the lean Willow tree was still standing. It had lost many leaves and was a little bent to one side, but it was still standing. It must have been tossed and blown, whipped back and forth in the heavy wind, but it was still

standing. How could this be? How could the mighty oak, with all its great strength, break and fall, and this smaller tree, with softer wood, remain standing against the force of the winds? The answer is simple. The willow tree knew how to bend.

— Learning to bend is not a sign of weakness, it's really a sign of strength. Often, for the good of the group, it's important to compromise. Instead of being stubborn about what we want and the way we think things should be done, there will be occasions when we've just got to bend.

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### 3. LEAVE A TRACE

— We spend quite a bit of time learning how to 'Leave No Trace' on our camping trips. We take extra care to ensure that we leave as little impact as possible and let others enjoy the unspoiled outdoors. But, you all know that no matter how hard we try, we do leave a trace—a footprint, some matted down grass, a broken twig.

— When camping, we concentrate on the *physical* traces we leave behind. But, every day, we are leaving a trace of our passing. Everywhere we go, everyone we meet, and everything we do leaves a trace that we were here. If we tell a little brother to shut up, that can leave an ugly trace that takes a long time to heal over. If we thank our mother for being a great mother, that will leave a good trace.

— We may only interact with a stranger for a couple seconds or with our friends for a couple hours, but no matter how long it is, we leave a trace of our passing all the time. It's up to us to leave a trace that makes the world a better place.

— We may not think giving a cheerful "hello" to a kid at school, or a courteous "thank you" to someone that serves you, or a helpful holding the door open for a stranger, or a friendly smile to a small child in the mall really makes any difference, but it does! So, no matter what we do, we *will* leave a trace. Let's do our best to make it a *good trace*.

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### 4. A LESSON IN TRUST

— It seems that before the first man walked on the moon, NASA found an area of New Mexico where the topography was similar to the surface of the moon. They decided that it would be a good idea to take the astronauts and the lunar lander there to check out the equipment. They arrived at the area and unloaded all their gear.

— During the second day while working with the equipment they noticed a flock of sheep on the horizon. As it drew closer they could see several dogs herding the flock and two Navajo Indians walking behind. The Scientists knew that they were Navajo because the reservation was near by. The Two Navajo Indians set down on the ridge and watched the scientists work for several hours.

— Seeing the Navajos watching them, two of the scientist decided to go talk to them. After walking up the ridge they soon discovered that the old Navajo could only speak in his native tongue but his son could speak English. The old man said several things and his son translated, "He says, 'What are those things down there?'" The scientist explained that they were men in space suits and that they would be traveling to the moon by

rocket and once there they would get out and be the first men to walk upon the moon. The old man nodded and said a few more words that the son translated, "So, they will walk upon the moon?" And the scientist confirmed. The old man nodded and said a few more words. The son said, "He wants to know if he can send a message to the moon with these astronauts." At this the scientist became very excited and searched their gear until they found a tape recorder. The old Navajo recorded his message. The scientist asked the boy to translate but he wouldn't.

– They worked about a month next to the reservation but every time they asked someone to translate the message they would listen to it, smile and shake their head no. Finally they found a Professor of Native American studies that agreed to translate the message in exchange for some funding on a research project. He listened to the tape and smiled. He said, "This message is a warning, it says, 'Look out for these guys, they are coming to steal your land.'"

– The reason the old Navajo sent this message was because he did not trust the white man. Trust is very fragile, it takes only one action on our part to destroy the trust others have in us. Often times when trust is breached it can never be rebuilt. A Scout is Trustworthy.

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## 5. LESSONS FROM THE GEESE

– Next fall, when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in a V formation, you might consider that science has discovered why they fly that way:

A) As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in V formation, the whole flock creates at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

– People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going faster and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

B) When a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power from the bird in front.

– If we had as much sense as a goose we would stay in formation with those who are headed in the same direction that we are.

C) When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back and another goose flies point.

– It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs whether it's with people or with geese flying south.

D) Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

– If we behaved as sensibly as geese, we'd make sure our honking was encouraging and helpful.

E) Finally, when a goose gets sick, or is wounded by gunshots, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or it dies, and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group.

– If we had the sense of a goose, we would stand by each other like that.

## 6. The LION AND THE MOUSE

- Once when a lion was asleep a little mouse began running up and down upon him. This soon wakened the lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws to swallow him.
  - "Pardon, O King," cried the little mouse. "Forgive me this time, I shall never forget it. Who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?"
  - The lion was so tickled at the idea of the mouse being able to help him, that he lifted up his paw and let him go.
  - Some time after the lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who desired to carry him alive to the king, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a wagon to carry him on. Just then the little mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the sad plight in which the lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts. "Was I not right?" said the little mouse.
  - Size does not determine one's value. Even the smallest of us can be of immeasurable service to the greatest.
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## 7. LIVING BY THE SCOUT LAW

- What does it mean to be a good person. What does it mean to be a good Scout? Listen to these simple examples of things we might do on any given day:
    1. telling the truth
    2. sticking up for the kid being picked on
    3. handing out papers for the teacher
    4. letting everyone play a game
    5. saying thank you to the clerk at a store
    6. helping a kid that dropped his books instead of laughing at him
    7. playing fair to have fun rather than to win no matter what
    8. looking for a little fun in every job we have to do
    9. using our boring old cellphone for another year because it still works
    10. asking our buddies to not use bad language around us
    11. listening to music that doesn't promote hate, violence, and other trash
    12. taking some time to appreciate and be thankful for all we have
  - Those twelve ways were a simple example of each of the twelve points in the Scout Law.
  - Being a good person by obeying the Scout Law is something we can do in all kinds of worthwhile and simple ways.
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## 8. LOOK AT THE TURTLE

- What can we learn about ourselves from the turtle?
- First we see he has a shell—his armor, his means of defense. Secondly, we see the turtle's persistence. He's slow, he's plodding, but he always gets where he's going. His persistence is memorialized in the age-old story of the tortoise and the hare. The persistent tortoise outlasted the showy, flashy, and very fast hare. Finally, we see that the turtle can go nowhere unless he first sticks out his neck.
- We are like the turtle in that we have many built in ways to

protect ourselves—our instinct to survive and to shelter ourselves from danger. Like the turtle, our greatest accomplishments do not come from skill alone, but require our persistence and determination. And like the turtle, often we accomplish nothing until we stick out our necks once in a while and dare to take a little risk.

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#### 9. MADE A DIFFERENCE TO THAT ONE

– A young man was walking down a beach at sunset. As he walked along, he began to see an old man in the distance. As he walked nearer, he noticed that the old man kept leaning down, picking something up and throwing it out into the water. Time and again he kept hurling things out into the ocean. As the young man approached even closer, he noticed that the old man was picking up starfish that had been washed up on the beach and, one at a time, he was throwing them back into the water.

– The young man was puzzled. He approached the old man and said, “Good evening, sir. I was wondering what you are doing.”

– “I’m throwing these starfish back into the ocean. You see, it’s low tide right now and all of these starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I don’t throw them back into the sea, they’ll die up here from lack of oxygen.”

– “I understand,” the young man replied, “but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach. You can’t possibly get to all of them. There are simply too many. And don’t you realize this is probably happening on hundreds of beaches all up and down this coast. Can’t you see that you can’t possibly make a difference?”

– The old man smiled, bent down and picked up yet another starfish, and as he threw it back into the sea, he replied, “Made a difference to that one!”

– Whatever effort we make to serve and assist, no matter how seemingly insignificant, can be meaningful, well-appreciated and worth providing.

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#### 10. The MORE YOU PUT IN

– The chaplain and his young son were camping just outside a small seaside town. Not far away was a tiny church that had no minister, so the chaplain offered his services for the Sunday. No fee was payable. As the chaplain and his son were passing out of the door after the service, the son noticed a small box which had on it the words “For Contributions”.

– “Father, don’t you think you should put something in the box?” the son asked.

– “Certainly,” the chaplain said. He dug into his pocket, pulled out a dollar, and put it into the box. The two had gone a little way back to the camp when a man came running after them.

– “It’s our custom to give the minister whatever is dropped into the box,” he said when he caught up with them. “I found this dollar and here it is.” He handed back the money the chaplain had donated.

– After the man had left, the boy looked up at his dad. “Father,” he said, “if you had only put more into the box, you would have got so much more out.”

– Isn’t that true about everything – Scouting, living? The more we put in, the more we will get out.

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## 11. The NEW SCOUT

– There was a new boy who moved into town just after his 11th birthday. For a long time he had dreamed about becoming a Scout. He was a bit timid and didn't push himself into things, but usually waited for an invitation.

– Well, one night this new boy came down to visit our troop meeting. He looked in through the window and saw doing things and heard our voices. But, he couldn't quite force himself to come down those steps. It wasn't so very long ago that maybe you might have been in the new boy's place. Maybe you were inclined to be timid, too.

– He waited around awhile and went home, without getting his nerve up to actually come in. He was pretty miserable about his failure, and he came back a week later. Again, he waited outside the door, but just couldn't force himself to come in uninvited. Finally he saw a Scout coming down the street, heading for the meeting. That Scout was you!

– Now, that's all of the story I'm going to tell. What happened? Did you just brush by him, or did you invite him to come in?

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## 12. NO BURDON TO CARRY

– There is an old story of the missionary who was traveling through the Himalayas with a guide in the bitter cold. Night was coming and the guide said, "If we don't reach the shelter by nightfall, we are in danger of freezing to death." Just as they came to a narrow path, they heard the cries of a man who had fallen over the edge. The guide said, "Do not stop. God has brought him to his fate. He must work it out himself."

– The missionary replied, "God sent me here to help my brother. I cannot abandon him." The guide went on and the missionary climbed down a steep path. When he found the man, he saw that his leg was broken and he could not walk. The missionary made a sling from his blanket and tied the man to his back. He then began a body torturing climb. He made his way through the deepening snow. It was dark and it was all he could do to follow the path. He persevered, and faint with exhaustion, he finally saw the lights of the shelter. As he moved toward the light, he stumbled for the first time and nearly fell. He did not stumble from exhaustion, but over an object. As he brushed the snow off the object, he looked down and saw that it was the body of the guide.

– Years later when a student asked him, "What is life's most difficult task?" He replied, "To have no burden to carry."

– Opportunities to be of service are not burdens. On the contrary, they should be welcomed. They add appreciable purpose to our lives.

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## 13. OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES

– Once upon a time, there was a kingdom ruled by a thoughtful king. Through this kingdom, there was a road with a big rock, right in the middle.

– One of the king's ambassadors returning from a trip complained about how the kingdom was going to pot and rode his horse around the rock. A rich merchant came by and complained about the delay as his driver slowly edged around the rock and hurried on. A countess in her carriage whined that the king should take

better care of the road system. Many other people came by and went around the rock throughout the day.

– Then, a poor peasant came by carrying a large load of vegetables he hoped to sell in the market. When he approached the rock, he set down his burden. He pushed and pulled at the rock until he finally got it moved to the side of the road. Where the rock had been was a leather purse. The peasant opened it and saw many gold coins and a note. The note read, “These coins are a reward for your efforts to improve our kingdom. Signed, the King”

– Taking time to fix a problem is better than just complaining about the problem.

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#### 14. **OUR TROOP IS LIKE A BICYCLE**

– Have you ever thought about how a bicycle works? Most of us just hop on and let it take us where we want to go without giving it a second thought. A closer look shows it takes a lot of different pieces doing their part and working together to make transportation happen.

– When you push the pedal with your foot, a lot happens to make the wheels turn. The pedal turns a crank that turns a gear, which pulls a chain that turns another gear, which turns a hub, which pulls the spokes, which turns the wheel, which pulls the tire that pushes against the road to make the bike go.

– When you want to stop, you pull a lever that pulls a cable against a housing, which causes another lever to move, which pushes a pad against the wheel. Changing gears involves levers, cables, housing, springs, and pulleys working together.

– If any one part fails to work when it is supposed to, the whole system fails to work. At best, if it still can be ridden, it doesn’t operate in top form.

– In our troop, we are the parts, just like on the bicycle. Our patrols are like the pedaling, braking, and gear-changing systems. The senior patrol leader is like the rider. He directs a pedal or a lever (your patrol leaders) to do their part, and they in turn ask their patrol members to do theirs. If we choose not to do our part, our patrols suffer and our troop doesn’t work well. The troop is our vehicle to adventure, fellowship, and good times. And each of us is a very important part.

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#### 15. **The PARABLE OF THE MULE**

– A mule fell into the farmer’s well. The farmer heard the mule “praying”—or whatever mules do when they fall into wells. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbors together, told them what had happened and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

– Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck him. It dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back, he could shake it off and step up! This he did, blow after blow.

– “Shake it off and step up. Shake it off and step up. Shake it off and step up!” He repeated it to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or how distressing the situation seemed, the old mule fought panic and just kept right on shaking it off and

stepping up!

– It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well! What seemingly would bury him actually helped him, all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity!

– That's life! If we face our problems and respond to them positively, and refuse to give in to panic, bitterness, or self pity, the problems that come along to bury us usually have within them the very potential to benefit us.

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#### 16. PERSISTENCE

– I'd like to share a quote from Calvin Coolidge, who was our thirtieth president, serving from 1923 to 1929. He was known as a man of few words. One of his nicknames was "Silent Cal," but here's one thing he said that I really like, "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not—nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not—unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not—the world is full of educated derelicts. What is powerful is persistence and determination. The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."

– John Thurman, a great Scouter from England remarked, "Determination remains the enduring answer to most problems."

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#### 17. PUT YOUR SKILLS TO USE

– A flock of turkeys had a training meeting. All the turkeys went, and there, the head turkey taught them how to fly. At first they were taught how to make short flights off the fence to the ground. This was certainly new to them, and it was a lot of fun. Then they'd glide from the top of the shed. Wow! That was exciting! Eventually, they learned how to take off from a running start, glide and flap, and slowly lift. They learned how to catch thermal wind currents, soar up and fly high into the sky! They even learned how to perform some fancy acrobatics.

– They could look down and see the whole farm in great detail. They could see what was on the other side of hills and woods that had previously blocked their view. They could see vast horizons that they had never known. It was a wonderful and exciting and exhilarating experience. After the meeting, all the turkeys walked home.

– Moral of the story? We should put to practice the skills that we learn.

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#### 18. A QUIET HERO

– Think of your favorite and most famous professional sports figure. I bet the last time he played, with all his athletic ability, his performance was impressive. I'm sure he gets lots of publicity, and makes lots of money, too. What a star star! And for many who root for his team, he's probably quite a hero.

– Well, at the risk of offending some of you, I don't think that's such a big deal. A while ago, on a special outing, I met another kind of hero. He was a very small, 12-year-old Scout who was very homesick. Some of you might simply think of him as a little wimp who can't stand to leave his mommy. But, actually, that's pretty

insensitive thing to think about a kid whose feelings are tearing him up to the point of crying in front of his friends, who probably hates himself for being weak and feeling homesick.

– To make things worse we were at the base camp for a canoe trip on a rain-swollen river, and more than one boy and adult were having second thoughts. The homesick Scout came to me as we were loading the canoes and said, “I don’t think I want to do this. I think I want to go home.”

– When he had made similar comments the night before, the other Scouts had joked and tried to distract him. But, there comes a time when a boy has to either go forward or back. We walked away from the others and I put my hand on his shoulder. I said, “In five minutes, we’ll be leaving. You can be in the canoe with us or you can be in the truck going back.” Then I walked away and left him to his thoughts.

– He came with us on the trip. A couple of his buddies gave him a friendly punch on his shoulder, but nobody cheered. Now, those big-time professional athletes, I guess they’re okay. And though this young Scout’s accomplishment wasn’t printed in the papers or discussed on talk shows, to me, he’s a special kind of hero. The quiet kind.

– Each of us as individuals face our own kind of unique challenges with obstacles that are difficult to overcome. Facing our individual challenges might not seem like a big thing to others, but doing so bravely, in its own right, is really a valuable and worthwhile accomplishment.

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## 19. The REAL MEASURE OF WEALTH

– People often measure how wealthy a person is by how much money he has. The notion is, the more money you have, the happier you are. Is this really true? If it was, why are there so many unhappy people who have lots of money? If you ever saw the movie, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” there’s a bitter, crabby, old, sourpuss of a man who has lots of money, and then there’s the main character who is a hard-working, giving guy with lots of friends, but who doesn’t have a lot of money. At the end of the movie, he’s dubbed the richest man in Bedford Falls.

– Along the same lines, a friend of mine related how he was driving on an open stretch of road early one morning and he was passed by a person in a BMW wearing an expensive-looking suit. He caught a glimpse of the man’s face. It was all tight and drawn. The man really looked stressed out.

– A minute later, my friend passed an old guy with a straw hat in a beat-up truck with some vegetables in the back. He had a little smile on his face.

– What a remarkable contrast. Who was happier? Who was richer? Wealth can also be measured by how much you’ve served others, how many times you’ve given a helping hand, how much gladness you’ve contributed to other people’s lives, and of course, how much love you’ve given and received.

– The real measure of wealth is how much we’d be worth if we lost all our money.

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## 20. SCOUT SALUTE AND HANDSHAKE

– Our Scout salute and handshake are ancient signs of bravery and respect. Back in the days when George Washington was

general of the Continental Army, men carried weapons for their protection. When they met one another there was an uneasy moment as each watched the other's right hand. If it went toward his sword or gun, there was a battle, but if it went to his hat it was a salute of friendship or respect.

– The left-handed shake comes to us from the Ashanti warriors whom Baden-Powell knew over a hundred years ago in South Africa. He saluted them with his right hand, but the Ashanti chieftains offered their left hands and said, "In our land only the bravest of the brave shake hands with the left hand, because to do so we must drop our shields and protection." The Ashanti knew of General Baden-Powell's bravery, for they had fought both against him and with him, and they were proud to offer him the left-handed shake of bravery and respect.

– That's the origin of the hand salute and the origin of the Scout handshake.

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## 21. The STATION

– Tucked away in our subconscious is an idyllic vision. Maybe we see ourselves on a long trip spanning a great distance. Maybe we're traveling by train. Through the windows we drink in the passing scene of cars on nearby highways, city skylines and village halls, children waving at a crossing, cattle grazing on a distant hillside, smoke pouring out of a power plant, row upon row of corn and wheat, expanses of flatland giving way to rolling hillsides, mountains, and valleys.

– But, uppermost in our minds is the final destination. On a certain day at a certain hour we will pull into "the station." Bands will play and flags will be wave. Once we get there, many wonderful things will come true and the pieces of our lives will fit together like a completed jigsaw puzzle. While on the train, we restlessly pace the aisles, impatiently waiting—waiting for the station.

– "When we reach the station, that will be it!" we cry. "When I'm 18!" "When I can buy a new car!" "When I've put my last kid through college!" "When I've paid off the mortgage!" "When I reach the age of retirement! Finally, I'll live happily ever after!"

– Sooner or later we must realize there is no station, no specific place to arrive at once and for all. The true joy of life is the trip. Reaching some imaginary station is just an illusion. It constantly outdistances us.

– "Relish the moment!" is a good motto, especially when coupled with Psalm 118:24: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." So, stop pacing the aisles and counting the miles. Instead, climb the mountains, go barefoot more often, swim more rivers, watch more sunsets, laugh more, cry less. Stop and smell the roses.

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## 22. THANKSGIVING AND THE SCOUT SLOGAN

– At Thanksgiving we always think of everything we are thankful for, things like friends, family, freedom, food, and fun we can have.

– Another part of Thanksgiving is the giving part. We can be

thankful for our ability to give. Not everyone can give money, but everyone can give time. You can give by doing a Good Turn every day. To do a Good Turn, you don't expect to be rewarded or paid. Maybe you can help shovel a neighbor's sidewalk, offer to get groceries for an elderly person, or just do a favor for someone. It can be as simple as holding a door for a person. Whatever kind of Good Turn you do, don't take more than a thank you for doing it.

— Now is a good time for us to begin being good Scouts and follow the Scout slogan, "Do a Good Turn Daily."

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### 23. THIS WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER

– If you sometimes get discouraged, consider this fellow: He dropped out of grade school, ran a country store, went broke, spent fifteen years paying off his bills, married, became unhappy in his marriage, ran for the House of Representatives and lost twice, ran for the Senate and lost twice, delivered a speech that initially left his audience indifferent, was attacked daily by the press, and despised by half the country.

– Despite all this, imagine how many people all over the world have been inspired by this awkward, rumpled, brooding man who signed his name simply: A. Lincoln.

— Don't get discouraged when things don't always go your way. Like Abraham Lincoln, carry on, follow your heart, and continue to do what you truly think is best.

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### 24. THREE BRICK MASONS

– Three brothers were all equally skilled at a craft taught to them by their father, that of a brick and stone mason. The work was hard, as it required lifting heavy bricks and cement, and they were exposed to the elements of severe weather on a daily basis. However, each viewed their work very differently.

– When asked what he was doing, the first brother said, "I'm making a living so I can pay my bills." When asked the same question, the second brother replied, "Can't you see? I'm laying bricks." But the third brother, working next to the other brothers, replied, "I'm building something that will be used and appreciated by people for years and years to come."

— As we go about our daily tasks, we shouldn't lose sight of what we're really doing with our life. We should give ourself a higher vision and see things as they effect more than just us.

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### 25. The TRAVELER AND THE TRACKER

– Once a Traveler and a Tracker set out to explore the world together. As they wound their way through the wilderness, the Traveler was amazed at the Tracker's habit of pausing several times a day to pray. "Why do you pray to something intangible?" the Traveler asked. "How do you know that God exists?"

– Now the Tracker was very skilled in noticing things and, through the years, had gained much insight reading the smallest signs. And he answered the Traveler this way, "I know God exists when I see the leaves turning yellow. I know God exists when a trout jumps at a fly, and when grass waves in the dry wind. I know God exists when clouds shade my head and the stars wink at night." "So you see," said the Tracker, "I know God exists, for I can see his footprints throughout the Universe."

— God, the Great Spirit, is everywhere present. We just have to open our eyes to glimpse the constant wonders of his creation.

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#### 26. TRICK OR TREAT

– A young university student was walking along with one of his professors when they came across a pair of shoes that belonged to a very poor, old man working in a field nearby. Our young friend suggested hiding the old man’s shoes, but the professor objected. “We must never amuse ourselves at the expense of others,” he said. “Why not put a dollar in each shoe and see what he will do?”

– Together they did this, then hid themselves behind a bush. Soon the old man returned for his shoes. He put one foot into a shoe, then quickly removed it to see what was causing the discomfort. Finding the dollar, he examined it closely, then looked about to see who might have put it in his shoe. There was no one around, so he started to put on his other shoe and, to his amazement, found a dollar in it, too. Overwhelmed, he looked up toward Heaven and thanked God aloud for this unexpected gift.

– The student was deeply moved by what he had witnessed.

“Now,” said the professor, “is not the treat better than the trick?”

– Doing for others carries with it its own reward. Real happiness lies in making others happy.

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#### 27. TRIM YOUR SAIL

– Small-Boat Sailing is an interesting merit badge. When you take this merit badge, you learn how to tack. In a sailboat, you can’t get upwind by steering straight into the wind. You have to move into it at an angle, with the mainsail close-hauled, and the centerboard down. By putting together a series of tacks, which looks like a big zigzag pattern as you go through the water, you can actually get yourself upwind of your starting point.

– Sailors have a saying for this: They’ll tell you to “trim your sail so as to gain an advantage, even in an adverse wind.” A good sailor knows how to take the very wind that is trying to blow him backward from his intended course, and use it instead to move his boat forward. His forward progress might not be fast with all those tacks, but it’s steady.

– There’ll be times in our life when we’ll encounter an “adverse wind.” Everything seems to be moving against our intended course. Well, maybe we can’t steer straight into the opposing “wind,” but by trying a different “tack,” we can find a way to move forward. That’s one of the secrets of success in Small-Boat Sailing, and it works in real life, too.

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#### 28. TWO LITTLE WORDS

– What do you suppose is the most valuable two word sentence you can say? Some of you might say, it’s “We won!” Others would vote for, “Here’s money!” Well, a really valuable two-word sentence is, “Thank you.” It isn’t used as often as it should be. How often do we use it? And how often do we say thank you even to the persons who are closest to us, like our mother and father? How often do we say it to our friends or even strangers when they

do something for us?

– It's so easy to forget, especially if the Good Turn is done by somebody in our family. Too often we take for granted the many things our parents and other family members do for us.

– Here's a challenge for us. Between now and next troop meeting, see if we can find some reason to say thank you every day to some member of our family. We may be surprised how they will react. A simple thank you costs nothing, but it means so much to those who matter most to us.

– Good manners can be the difference between being just another Scout, and a Scout who shines really brightly in the eyes of those around him.

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## 29. UNSAYING MY WORDS

– Once there were two Indian boys that were very good friends. They explored, fished, and hunted together. They were both great athletes and well-liked by all in their tribe.

– In their village, there was also a young girl that they both began to like and compete for. One of the boys, out of jealousy, told the girl that the other boy had done something very bad which would disgrace him and his family. This was completely untrue.

Afterwards, the boy felt ashamed of what he had done. He told the girl that he had lied and he apologized to his friend for what he had said. But, as he walked around the village, he could hear others repeating the false words he had spoken about his friend.

– Very troubled by this, he went to the tribal medicine man for advice. "How can I undo this terrible thing I have done?" he asked.

– The wise man told him, "Shoot three ducks and three geese. Pull off all their feathers and put the feathers in a leather bag. Bring me the bag and the birds."

– The boy did this. He gave the birds to the wise man and the wise man said, "Now, take the bag of feathers to the top of the great mountain, open it, and shake out all the feathers. Then, return here."

– The boy climbed the mountain, released all the feathers into the wind, and returned to the wise man. The wise man said, "Now, go back up the mountain and pick up every single feather you released and put them back in your bag."

– The boy replied, "But, that is not possible. The feathers have blown far away. I can never recover all of them." The wise man said, "So it is with your words."

– Think about the impact of your words before you say them. It's very difficult to take back something you've said.

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## 30. WALKING THE RAILS

– Have you ever tried walking the rails? As a youngster growing up, I had to walk about a mile to school. The railroad track ran past both my house and the school. It was the shortest and quickest route. I can remember many times while walking to and from school that I would try to walk the rails, seeing how far I could go without falling off. I usually didn't get too far before a foot would slip and I would be off the rail and on the crosstie.

– I read once of a group of Scouts who happened upon some abandoned railroad track. Each Scout took his turn trying to walk the entire length of a track without falling off. None of the boys was able to go the entire length without falling off.

- Two of the boys got their heads together, and after some discussion came running to the group, smiling from ear to ear. They told the group that they were willing to bet that they could walk the entire length of a track without falling off. The others in the group thought it was a good bet, because they had already seen each of the boys fail in the attempt to accomplish the feat. So the bet was accepted and the two boys moved toward the track.
- Each of the boys got on one rail and began their walk, side by side walking down the track. Soon one of them became a little shaky, so the boys stopped. They then did something none of the other boys had thought of. They reached out and joined hands! After joining hands, they were able to walk the entire length of the track without falling off. Joining hands and supporting each other, they were able to accomplish what neither of them could accomplish alone.
- When we help another, we help ourselves. When we lend a helping hand, we receive one in return. Neither of the boys could walk the length of that track separately. But, by joining hands, the task was made relatively easy.
- There are many rails in life that have to be walked. Some of them are very difficult to master by ourselves. But if we are willing to extend a hand and receive a hand, we will find that walking the rails of life is much easier to accomplish.

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### 31. WHOSE JOB IS IT?

- This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody:
  - There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it.
  - Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.
  - Anybody could have done it. But Nobody did it.
  - Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job.
  - Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.
  - It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.
  - Yes, this sounds crazy, and it is. We benefit by being a part of the group. When there's a job to be done, for the good of the group, we should go do it, and for the good of the group, get it done!
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### 32. WHEN THE NIGHT ENDS

- A wise teacher asked his students, "How can we determine the hour of dawn—when the night ends and the day begins?"
- "When, from a distance, you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep?" one of his students suggested.
- "No," the teacher answered.
- "Is it when you can distinguish between an oak tree and a hickory tree?" another student asked.
- "No," he replied.
- "Please tell us the answer, then," said the students.
- "It is when you can look into the face of a human being and have enough light to recognize in him your brother," the wise teacher

replied. "Until then, it is night, and the darkness is still with us."

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### 33. WISDOM

- Walt Disney was a prominent figure within the American animation industry and throughout the world, and is regarded as a cultural icon, known for his influence and contributions to entertainment during the 20th century. As a Hollywood business mogul, he founded The Walt Disney Company and gave his name to the Disney Land and Disney World theme parks along with four other theme parks throughout the world.
  - He was once asked what a person would need to do to be like him. Disney named four steps:
    1. Think! Think about the values and principles that guide you in your business and personal life.
    2. Believe! Believe in yourself.
    3. Dream! Dream of something you want to do.
    4. Dare! Dare to make your dream a reality.
- 

### 34. WORKING HARD

- A new postal clerk felt privileged to land his job with the civil service. So, without a second thought, he cheerfully sorted the mail as quickly and efficiently as he could. When at a conveyer belt, he hustled from one end to the other, and was happy to keep his pace up throughout his shift.
  - Other workers, who had been on the job for years, resented his work pace. They didn't want anyone working faster than they worked; it might attract negative attention to them from the foreman. The new postal worker wasn't expecting anything when, after just a short time as a clerk, he was approached by one of the foreman who remarked, if you keep doing such a good job, you're going to be considered for a promotion as a manager.
  - The slow worker is frequently the first to be laid off, while the conscientious worker is usually the first to be considered for a higher position. Two thirds of the word "promotion" is "motion".
- 

### 35. WORKING WITH EACH OTHER'S DIFFERENCES

- Everyone please stand up and cross your arms over your chest. Which arm is on top? Right or left?
- Recross your arms so the other one is on top. How does that feel? Which way is correct? (*Wait for responses.*)
- Neither way is right or wrong, just different. In many ways, all of us are different.
- If we can work with each other's differences, then we can make a positive difference in the world.

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