

Troop 278 – Ahwatukee

Scout Spirit - What Is It?

If you look in your Boy Scout Handbook at the rank requirements, most of them are pretty straight forward - demonstrate first aid for serious burns, tie a bowline, earn 6 merit badges, etc. However, beginning with the Tenderfoot rank there is an added, more indefinite requirement: *Show Scout Spirit*.

The Scoutmasters have had a lot of questions over the years about what exactly "*Show Scout Spirit*" means. NO it doesn't mean that on Halloween night you dress up as the ghost of Baden-Powell (or any other famous Scout Spirit).

National BSA must have had a lot questions too, because they changed the requirement recently to read "*Demonstrate Scout Spirit* by living the Scout Oath and the Scout Law in your everyday life." That's a little better, but still... what does it mean?

The first thing you need to understand about *Scout Spirit* is that even though the requirement looks the same for each rank, it's really different - *Scout Spirit* for Life Scout is very different (and much harder) than *Scout Spirit* for Second Class. You'll discover that the scoutmasters will only sign you off for one "Scout Spirit" requirement at a time, because each one is harder than the next.

The other thing that you will notice is that unlike almost all the other requirements, you can never convince a Scoutmaster to sign off the *Scout Spirit* requirement on the spot. Tie a bowline, and he'll sign that off; show him your merit badge card and he'll sign off that requirement for Star, but he'll never just up and sign off that pesky *Scout Spirit* one. That's because you must demonstrate *Scout Spirit* in your everyday life, not in the five minutes you're talking to the Scoutmaster. What happens is that at meetings and especially on campouts, the Scoutmasters are like Santa Claus - they're always watching you, to see when you are naughty or nice. *Scout Spirit* should be shown at all times, and generally this requirement is one of the last ones to be signed off for any rank. Scoutmasters will want to see the appropriate *Scout Spirit* for some period of time before they sign off the requirement. For Second Class that may only be for a campout and the last few meetings, but for Eagle it may be for several months.

What are they looking for? Believe it or not, there's a "Scoutmaster's cheat sheet" that the Scoutmaster and his friends all have to give us some idea. Here is just a few of the things we look for: By the way, we expect Scouts to not only follow the items listed for that rank, but also all the items for the previous ranks.

Here are some examples – by no means complete to give you an idea:

Tenderfoot

- Do you attend troop meetings regularly (>75%)?
- Do you participate in troop activities (> 50%,)?
- Are you working hard on scout skills and getting to know other Scouts in the troop
- Do you come to "work" activities like service projects and meetings, as well as fun nights?
- Do you try not to complain even when you get a task like cleanup?
- Are you respectful to troop scoutmasters, other adults and Scouts in leadership positions
- Do you pay attention when we need you to, and know when be quiet? (e.g. scout signs up)
- Have you tried troop campouts & backpacking, have you got the right gear you need to 'be prepared'

Second Class

- Do you participate in lots of troop activities regularly (> 50%, and >75% for elected leaders/ PLC)?
- Do you come to "work" activities like service projects and meetings, as well as fun nights?
- Do you try not to complain or put other people down, even when you get a task like cleanup?
- Are you willing to try new things, and keep trying even when you don't succeed at first?

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- Do you pay attention when we need you to, and know when to stop what you're doing to help out?
- Do you come prepared for campouts? Do you keep track of your stuff, or lose it a lot?
- Do you never bully, harass, or joke around with other Scouts unless they are willing & happy participants?

First Class

- A first class Scout mustn't complain about work, or cleanup, or "whine" about decisions they don't like.
- A Scout must never criticize others harshly, or make fun of other Scouts whose skills aren't as good.
- Do patrol tasks (cooking, camp setup and tear down, getting water, etc.) without being asked
- Keep an eye on others in the troop and help them out - like pickup their garbage, or show them how
- Lend a hand teaching new Scouts some of the basics (and you do it without yelling)
- Start to help out your patrol & troop by offering ideas for events, and help to organize
- Listen & learn well when a Scoutmaster or senior Scout tries to teach you something
- Do you show *Scout Spirit* at home and in school?
- Do you also meet the requirements for Second Class?

Star

- Serving as troop leadership: serve well, help the troop, don't miss meetings, show up prepared & focused
- Are you starting to show the kind of leadership example a First Class Scout should emulate?
- Help organize other Scouts to get things done at campouts (like put up dining flies, set up campfires, etc)
- Watch out for other Scouts and make sure they're doing OK - on the trail, in camp, etc.
- Can you be relied on to finish what you start?
- Be ready to assist & be helpful with things that need doing, don't just "hang out" with your buddies
- Show respect for other Troop Leaders as you would like them to respect you when you're leading?
- Do you also meet the requirements for First Class and Second Class?

Life

- Serving as troop leadership: actively lead when you see something that needs doing
- Can you organize & coordinate other Scouts of all ages (without yelling)?
- Be a major player in the "behind-the-scenes" work that makes the troop run - organizing equipment, making camping arrangements, setting up activities for the PLC?
- Are you a good, patient teacher and example to younger Scouts?
- Are you involved in your school or in the community as a volunteer?
- Do you also meet the requirements for Star, First Class and Second Class?

Eagle

- Do you still participate actively in troop activities?
- Do you set a clear example for other Scouts to emulate
- Do all the adults and Scouts treat you almost as if you were another Scoutmaster?
- Are you involved in your school and community as a leader?
- Do you also meet the requirements for Life, Star, First Class and Second Class?

WARNING: Using this list to ARGUE with a Scoutmaster over whether you have Scout Spirit is a sure way NOT to get it. NO Whining! Get the picture? To show "Scout Spirit" means to live up to your word and be Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful at all times! Good luck, & keep working on that Spirit at every meeting and campout.