

Introducing an Additional Scout Promise Option

Two Promises, One Scouts Canada

Scouts Canada continues to be a relevant and inclusive youth organization for current and new youth in Canada. It is our hope that, with an additional Scout Promise for members to choose from, we can improve the inclusivity of our programming while continuing to drive our retention and recruitment objectives.

The development of an additional Scout Promise comes as a pragmatic response to membership feedback and a desire for greater flexibility and inclusivity.

Introducing an Alternate Scout Promise

Committed to inclusivity and diversity in Scouts Canada's membership, structure, and programs, we strive to remove barriers that make Scouting less accessible to individuals in Canada.

Spirituality has been one of the three main principles of Scouting since its inception more than 100 years ago. The wording of the Scout Promise and Law may vary in different National Scout Organizations as appropriate to the local culture, but they are all based on the Promise and Law.

Some of our current members and potential members have requested an alternate Promise to better reflect their personal values. In the United Kingdom and Australia, Scouting organizations have introduced an additional Promise that omits references to the Queen or God, and can be recited as an alternative to the traditional Promise.

By providing an additional Promise for members to choose from—where they can commit to their country or personal affirmation, rather than the Queen or God specifically—Scouts Canada can create an open space for youth to express their unique dedication. With a similar rhythm for each Promise, Scouting youth can recite the separate Promises simultaneously while maintaining the same stride.

Now is the opportunity to further reflect Scouts Canada's relevancy and commitment to diversity and inclusion in an ever-changing world, by welcoming a new alternative Scout Promise.

Two Promises, One Scouts Canada

	Promise	Additional Promise Option
Beavers	I promise to love God and to help take care of the world.	I promise to be kind and to help take care of the world.
Cubs	I promise to do my best, To love and serve God, To do my duty to the Queen; To keep the law of the Wolf Cub Pack, And to do a good turn for somebody every day.	I promise to do my best, To be true to myself, To do my duty to my country; To keep the law of the Wolf Cub Pack, And to do a good turn for somebody every day.
All others including Volunteers	On my honour; I promise that I will do my best; To do my duty to God and the Queen; To help other people at all times; and to carry out the spirit of the Scout Law.	On my honour; I promise that I will do my best, To respect my country and my beliefs, To help other people at all times; and to carry out the spirit of the Scout Law.

Scope of Change

Within Scouts Canada and the Canadian Path program, the focus is around Spirituality and its importance to the growth and development of youth and adults as part of SPICES. **This emphasis of spirituality in our programming will not be affected by an additional Scout Promise option.** In the Spiritual “SPICES”, there is **commitment to recognizing the diversity of faith traditions and values within the Canadian context** as well as the number of people for whom the spiritual path lies outside of any particular organized faith group or tradition.

Spirituality, within the SPICES, is described as:

“In the midst of Scouting adventures, youth members have experiences in which they recognize that they are part of a larger spiritual reality and learn to respect the spiritual choices of others. (Note: The larger spiritual reality could include, but is not limited to: a relationship with God, Allah, Jehovah, Heavenly Father, Supreme Being, the eight-fold path of Buddhism, a Higher Power, a connection with nature and the earth and a connection with the global community.)”

Further, within the development of the Beliefs & Values Program Area, it is noted that:

“During adventures in this Program Area, youth explore personal values and beliefs as well as the diversity of cultures and faiths that make up our communities, our nation and our world.”

- Exploring and reflecting upon the beliefs, values and attitudes that are part of our society
- Understanding our own beliefs, values and attitudes in relation to others
- Respecting diversity of culture and faith
- Developing group, team and individual codes of practice in relation to the environment, working together and being a Scout

By introducing an additional Scout Promise for youth to recite as an alternative to the existing Promise, the values and intention behind the Canadian Path’s Spirituality “SPICES” can be demonstrated in a clearer, more inclusive way.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do you have to believe in God to join Scouts Canada?

You do not have to believe in God to join Scouts Canada. Scouts Canada is proud of its commitment to diversity and welcomes members of many different faiths, denominations and non-religious backgrounds. You need not belong to an organized religion, and may choose to recite the Alternate Scout Promise, which does not include the term, "God".

Spirituality is and has been one of the three main principles of Scouting since its inception more than 100 years ago. In Scouting, the term 'spirituality' appeals to a broad concept that may relate to: faith that is not associated with a doctrine, religious beliefs, or an appreciation for existence outside of oneself.

Is Scouts Canada a faith-based organization?

No. While Spirituality is one of the three main principles of Scouting, Scouts Canada welcomes all youth and volunteers regardless of their faith, denomination or non-religious personal affirmation.

Why provide an additional Promise option that removes the reference to 'Duty to God'?

Some of our current members and potential members have requested an alternate Scout Promise to better reflect their personal values; historical and secular references to God may not be as clearly understood or as easily followed today as they were 100 years ago.

Scouts Canada now has the opportunity to further reflect our relevancy and commitment to diversity and inclusion in an ever-changing world, by welcoming a new alternative Scout Promise.

Why 'my country' instead of 'the Queen' or 'Canada'?

In a country such as ours with sustained immigration levels of new Canadians, we are mindful that Scouts Canada stems from a global movement. By providing an alternative commitment to one's country, rather than Canada or the Queen, Scouts Canada is creating a more inclusive place for youth to express dedication to their countries of citizenship.

Will the Spirituality "SPICES" remain a primary component of program?

Yes. In the Spiritual "SPICES", we maintain our commitment to recognizing the diversity of faith traditions and values within the Canadian context as well as the number of people for whom the path of personal affirmation lies outside of any particular organized faith group or tradition.

Can the 'Religion in Life' badge still be achieved?

Yes. An Alternate Scout Promise will not affect the 'Religion in Life' badge.

Can the 'Spirituality Award' badge still be achieved?

Yes. An Alternate Scout Promise will not affect the 'Spirituality Award' badge.

What does this change mean for faith-based Groups and Groups sponsored by religious institutions?

In cases where a religious sponsor is actively engaged, the Scout Groups they sponsor tend to be faith-based as well and we do not anticipate any issues or changes. Religious sponsors that are not actively engaged tend to serve as sponsors because they view Scouting as one of Canada's leading youth development organizations. From that perspective, nothing has changed.

They can continue to use the original Scout Promise which includes reference to God, but it is important to note that the choice of Promise is made by the individual youth and their parent, not by the Group, Council or sponsor.

