

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

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WHY WE NEED CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Cub Scouts are growing up in a complicated world. They are faced with conflicting messages that are often hard for them to grasp. Some influences, such as peer pressure, may provide boys with the positive support they need to help them do the right thing; but in some cases these same influences can cause boys to act in ways that sharply contradict positive values.

Since its origin, the Scouting program has been an educational experience concerned with values. In 1910, the first Scouting activities were designed to build character, physical fitness, practical skills, and service. All of these elements remain part of Cub Scouting today. As Cub Scouting has progressed through the years, the importance of making good decisions based on sound values has been integral and steadfast.

Scouting helps teach values to boys and helps them develop character. Character development is a process begun in early childhood, and the family is the first and most important source for raising children of character. But for character development to be comprehensive, it must seek to develop all areas of a child's character—knowledge, commitment, and practice. Toward that end, character education must be present in all areas of a child's life, including the home and educational, religious, and civic arenas. Scouting honors the home, religious institutions, schools, and communities as critically influencing the character development of youth.

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Cub Scouting activities

- involve the parents, adult leaders, and friends of Cub Scouts;
- are based in home-centered programs that teach essential core values central to the development of good character;
- encourage character development, physical coordination, family unity, and enthusiasm for learning;
- reinforce the qualities embraced by the Cub Scout Promise and the Law of the Pack. (See Chapter 2 for the Cub Scout Promise and the Law of the Pack.)

WHAT IS CHARACTER AND HOW IS IT DEVELOPED?

Character can be defined as the collection of core values possessed by an individual that lead to principled moral commitment and action. Character development refers to the processes by which these values are learned and practiced.

People have debated for a long time on how character is developed. Some think that character is developed by clearly instilling moral knowledge; that is, children must be *told* what is right and good—period. Others argue that children develop character by *learning to reason* about what is right and good. Still others argue that character is developed by habitually *practicing* what is right and good.

So, how is character developed? The answer is this: Character development requires attention to each of these concepts, and more.

PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING CHARACTER

In general, three basic principles underlie character development:

1. **Core values are the basis of good character development.** In helping boys develop character, Cub Scouting promotes 12 core values.

Cub Scouting's 12 Core Values

1. Citizenship	7. Honesty
2. Compassion	8. Perseverance
3. Cooperation	9. Positive attitude
4. Courage	10. Resourcefulness
5. Faith	11. Respect
6. Health and fitness	12. Responsibility

These values are at the core of what it means to be involved in Scouting.

In essence, character development requires making clear the values that underlie the Scouting way. If we want Cub Scouts to be honest, responsible, and courageous, we must be as diligent and skilled about teaching these values as we are about teaching the other aspects of the program.

In Cub Scouting, character development defines the core values and requires that we discuss them and try to make them an active part of the language and culture of the Cub Scout.

2. **Character must be broadly defined to include thought, commitment, and practice.** It is not enough to memorize words and slogans. Cub Scouts must learn to use their reason when evaluating competing values. They must be committed and have the skills necessary to act on their convictions despite peer and-worldly pressures.

Not every Scouting activity will be designed to develop each of these three areas; sometimes, an activity is designed for just fun and relaxation. Sometimes, the only goal is to convey knowledge. But activities that have the greatest effect on character involve all three areas—knowledge, commitment, and practice.

For example, a service project is just an activity until Cub Scouts *reflect* on the experience, until they consider how it made them feel, or until they think about how to fix the problem. The key is to avoid omitting any aspect in the development of the complete moral person.

3. **Core values should be promoted throughout all phases of life.** Just as it isn't enough to develop any one area of character to the exclusion of another, it isn't enough to focus on character development in one area of a Cub Scout's life. Character development must be promoted throughout all phases of life, whether in the den, at home, at school, at a place of worship, or in the community.

The character development program will challenge Cub Scouts to consider the core values from the perspective of six general areas:

- God
- World
- Country
- Community
- Family
- Self

Character development should not be viewed as something done occasionally as part of a separate program, as part of only one area of life. Character development should be a part of everything a Scout does. Character development lessons can be gained from every aspect of the Scouting experience. Your goal as the Cub Scout leader is to seek out and maximize the many opportunities to incorporate character development, to encourage the young Cub Scout that character is important to the individual, to the family, to the community, to our country, to the world, and ultimately to God.

Just as character development should extend into every aspect of a boy's life, so character development should extend into every aspect of Cub Scouting. Den leaders and pack leaders should strive to promote the 12 core values throughout service projects, ceremonies, games, skits, songs, crafts, and all the other activities enjoyed at den and pack meetings. Program support for ideas is available through *Cub Scout Program Helps* and at your monthly roundtable.

DEFINING THE 12 CORE VALUES

The 12 core values are interconnected and interdependent. No one value is more important than another, so they are discussed on the following pages alphabetically. Age-appropriate applications for each core value are included. The goal is not simply that Cub Scouts would *know* the values but that they would act in accordance with them in their lives.

Quote: "The measure of a man's character is what he would do if he knew he never would be found out."
—Thomas B. Macaulay

- 1. Citizenship:** Contributing service and showing responsibility to local, state, and national communities.

Quote: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."
—John F. Kennedy

Some Practical Applications:

- Know the names of the president and vice president of the United States.
- Know the names of your state governor and heads of local government.
- Respect the flag of the United States.
- Know and understand the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Know and understand our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."
- Be a good neighbor.
- Obey laws and rules.
- Respect people in authority.
- Protect the environment and our natural resources.
- Be helpful. Do a Good Turn for your family, school, or community.

- 2. Compassion:** Being kind and considerate, and showing concern for the well-being of others.

Quote: "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."
—Aesop

Some Practical Applications:

- Be friendly. Smile. Be interested in and sensitive to the feelings of others.
- Show kindness. Be kind to those less fortunate than yourself.
- Help those in need.
- Consider the feelings and needs of others when playing, talking, or working together.
- Help someone who is being treated unfairly.
- Look for ways to include others in the group.
- Be willing to forgive others.

- 3. Cooperation:** Working together with others toward a common goal.

Quote: "United we stand, divided we fall."
—G. P. Morris

Some Practical Applications:

- Be helpful to others and work together.
- Do your part in a project.
- Listen to and consider the ideas of others.
- Be unselfish.
- Be cheerful.
- Share things with others.
- Be happy for the good fortune of others on the team.
- Use everyone's special talents.
- Be friendly.
- Be willing to share the credit.

- 4. Courage:** Doing what is right regardless of how hard it is or what the consequences are.

Quote: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Some Practical Applications:

- Tell the truth despite the consequences.
- Admit mistakes when you make them.
- Apologize for mistakes and wrongdoing.
- Accept the consequences of your actions.
- Stand up for people who are less fortunate than you.
- Stand up for the beliefs of your faith or religion.
- Resist peer pressure to do the wrong thing.
- Stand up for your beliefs about what is right and wrong.

- 5. Faith:** Having inner strength or confidence based on our trust in a higher power.

Quote: "All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Some Practical Applications:

- Define your duty to God as it is taught in your family.
- Understand and practice your religious tradition.
- Stay hopeful when things get tough.
- Be cheerful about your duties.
- Look for the good in all situations.

- Remain confident in difficult situations.
- Overcome disappointments.
- Figure out what you *can* do; don't worry about what you *can't* do.
- Show reverence for churches, holy places, and religious or spiritual objects that are meaningful to the faiths of others.

6. Health and fitness: Being personally committed to keeping our minds and bodies clean and fit.

Quote: "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

—*Old proverb attributed to Benjamin Franklin*

Some Practical Applications:

- Eat and drink things that are good for you.
- Limit the amount of "junk food" in your diet.
- Maintain personal cleanliness.
- Make exercise a regular part of your life.
- Don't smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol.
- Never use illegal drugs.
- Go on a hike.
- Ride a bike, skateboard, or scooter (always with appropriate safety gear!).
- Play on a sports team, such as one for basketball, baseball, football, or soccer.
- Practice an individual sport, such as swimming, gymnastics, skating, or tennis.
- Learn about mental fitness. Discuss how personal habits and media influences can affect mental alertness.

7. Honesty: Telling the truth and being a person worthy of trust.

Quote: "Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom."

—*Thomas Jefferson*

Some Practical Applications:

- Don't lie.
- Don't cheat.
- Don't steal the personal property or ideas of others.
- Keep your word.
- Be trustworthy.
- Do what you say you will do.
- Tell the whole truth regardless of the consequences.
- Be loyal to your family, friends, religion, and country.
- Don't gossip, spread rumors, or talk behind people's backs.

- Don't withhold information, thereby leading to the harm of someone else.
- Don't ask people to do things that are wrong.
- Return what you borrow.

8. Perseverance: Sticking with something and not giving up, even if it is difficult.

Quote: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

—*Thomas H. Palmer*

Some Practical Applications:

- Finish what you start.
- Never give up.
- Continue to work hard even if you're not successful at first.
- Work to get better at things you aren't very good at.
- Set personal goals for improvement.
- Always do your best.

9. Positive attitude: Being cheerful and setting our minds to look for and find the best in all situations.

Quote: "If you have a lemon, make lemonade."

—*Howard Gossage*

Some Practical Applications:

- Be positive in your thoughts and words. Be cheerful. Look for the bright side of all situations.
- Keep a good sense of humor.
- Be optimistic.
- Think good thoughts.
- Believe in yourself.
- Trust your friends, family, and teammates.

10. Resourcefulness: Using human and other resources to their fullest.

Quote: "There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

—*Robert F. Kennedy*

Some Practical Applications:

- Think about *how you can*, rather than *why you can't*.
- Focus on what you do have, not on what you don't have.
- Identify personal strengths.
- Use the talents of those in your group.
- Conserve the earth's natural resources.
- Recycle household waste.
- Compost kitchen waste for use in gardens.

- Fix up an old bicycle rather than buy a new one.
- Clean up an old playground.

11. Respect: Showing regard for the worth of someone or something.

Quote: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

—*The Golden Rule*

Some Practical Applications:

- Treat other people as you would like to be treated.
- Be kind and courteous to people who are different from you.
- Be courteous; use good manners and good language.
- Take care of school and public property.
- Honor the country’s flag, laws, and public officials.
- Appreciate the religions of other people.
- Obey the rules and instructions of adults.
- Use dangerous objects (e.g., knives, fire) with adult supervision.
- Respect others even if you do not agree with all of their ideas.
- Treat the environment (trees, rivers, land, air) with care.
- Have confidence in your abilities.
- Keep yourself neat and clean.
- Stay in shape.

12. Responsibility: Fulfilling our duty to God, country, other people, and ourselves.

Quote: “The price of greatness is responsibility.”

—*Sir Winston Churchill*

Some Practical Applications:

- Be dependable; do what you say you will do.
- Finish your homework.
- Take care of chores at home.
- Be helpful.
- Accept the consequences for your actions.
- Take care of your personal possessions.

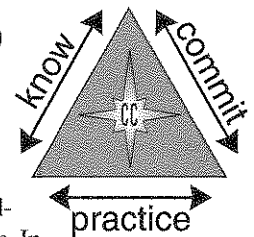
The 12 Core Values and the Scout Law

Boy Scouts learn the Scout Law: *A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.*

Nearly all the 12 core values of Cub Scouting relate to the 12 points of the Scout Law.

CORE VALUE	SCOUT LAW
Citizenship	Helpful
Compassion	Friendly, kind
Cooperation	Helpful, cheerful, friendly
Courage	Brave
Faith	Reverent
Health and fitness	Clean
Honesty	Trustworthy, loyal
Perseverance	Thrifty
Positive attitude	Cheerful
Resourcefulness	Thrifty
Respect	Courteous, obedient
Responsibility	Helpful, trustworthy

CHARACTER CONNECTIONS®



Character can be most fully developed when the complete person is considered. As mentioned above, this involves three critical areas: (1) knowledge, (2) commitment, and (3) practice. In Cub Scouting, using these three critical areas and relating them to values will be referred to as *Character Connections*.

Know: Character development includes developing moral knowledge and moral reasoning. Children must understand what honesty means, and they must understand and interpret what a situation calls for and decide how to apply the principles of honesty.

Commit: Character development also includes attention to moral motivation. Children must be committed to doing what they feel is right. They must be able to take the perspective of others, consider how others feel, and develop an active moral conscience.

Practice: Character development also includes attention to the development of moral habits through guided practice. Children need opportunities to practice what is good, to do what is right but difficult, and to experience the core values as they live in the world.

In an effort to make character development an integral part of Cub Scouting, the 12 core values are integrated throughout the boys' handbooks and advancement programs. Character Connections are found at various places in the handbooks and encourage boys to reflect on the three dimensions of character—knowledge, commitment, and practice.

Character Connections ask the Cub Scout to consider the following:

Know. What do I think or know about the core value? How does the context of this situation affect this core value? What are some historical, literary, or religious examples representing the core value?

Commit. Why is this core value important? What makes living out this core value difficult? What will it take to live out this core value?

Practice. How can I act according to this core value? How do I live out this core value? How can I practice this value at school, at home, and with my friends?

Character Connections will encourage Cub Scouts to consider how the core values and activities relate to the six general areas of concern for the boy, namely, God, world, country, community, family, and self. This part of character development extends the moral lessons to broad and diverse contexts, thus maximizing growth potential.

Character Connections try to help in the development of the complete moral person across a broad range. They should be viewed as part and parcel of Cub Scouting as a whole, and not as an “add-on.” Character development is taking place whether we intend for it to happen or not; therefore, we want to use all opportunities—in our den and pack activities, ceremonies, and program—to guide that development in a thoughtful and constructive way.

THREE COMMON MYTHS ABOUT CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Myth 1: Good character develops naturally.

Frequently, we are led to believe that just as naturally as we grow taller, we also grow morally—we naturally will evolve into a moral person possessing good character. But character development is a difficult and ongoing process that is never complete. We are all working on developing our character,

overcoming bad habits, establishing and reestablishing good habits. Character development is something that requires constant attention and diligent effort by everyone.

Myth 2: At some point, if your character isn't already developed, it's too late.

We've all heard it, or at least thought it: “It's too late for that person.” When is it too late? When you're 5, 8, 15, 25, 50 years old? Developmental research shows that when it comes to character development, it's never too late—thankfully, for all of us. Old habits die hard, but we *can* overcome them.

Character development can be put on hold for a while and then restarted. Frequently, our behavior lags behind our knowledge. We know what we should do, but we just can't make ourselves act according to that knowledge. Nonetheless, when it comes to character development, *it's never too late*.

Myth 3: Our character is the same regardless of the context.

In reality, we all possess multiple “moral personalities,” depending on the context of a situation and the people we are with. If we're with people from church, then we say and do certain things; with friends, something else; and in front of our children, something else again.

It's important to remember that the moral person is always acting in a moral context and that these contexts mediate our thinking and behavior. The more developed our character, the more consistent our thinking and behaviors become.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The goal of character development is to teach children to

- be capable of considering the moral elements of all situations,
- apply the correct moral principles,
- be capable of acting according to the courage of their convictions.

Ultimately, we are all engaged in character development. The first question is about whether we choose to do it. The second question is how thoughtful and persistent we are about it.

In Cub Scouting, boys experience values-based activities with caring leadership and family support. By reinforcing the elements in the Cub Scout Promise and the Law of the Pack, and by using Character Connections with the advancement program and activities, you can help teach values and develop character in boys through Cub Scouting.

MAKE A CHARACTER CONNECTION WITH ANY ACTIVITY

Leaders can emphasize more values and make more character connections as boys participate in the many activities they enjoy in Scouting. You can connect values while going on a hike, cooking an outdoor meal, or working on a project very easily, using this three-step method:

1. **Plan it.**
2. **Do it.**
3. **Review it.**

1. Plan it. Before the activity, gather the group and have a short discussion. Planning the Character Connection only takes a couple of minutes. Highlight one or two values that you would like the youth to learn by doing this activity.

- Will they need to show respect?
- Will they need to be honest?
- Will they need to cooperate?
- Will they need a positive attitude?

Identify the ways that youth might encounter these values in the activity.

- Will there be challenges or difficulties in the experience?
- Will there be a need to cooperate?
- Will there be temptations?
- Will they need to follow rules?

Explain leader expectations about learning the values in the activity.

- Why will these values be important on this activity?
- How can they use these values in this experience?
- What rules and consequences apply to these values in the experience?

2. Do it. As you conduct the activity, highlight both positive and negative experiences that are teachable moments during the activity. Some teachable moments must be done as they happen because the impact is lost if discussed at a later time. Others can be emphasized effectively during the review at the end of the activity. For these, make mental or written notes from the experience that could be discussed after the activity.

3. Review it. After the activity, gather group together and have a discussion involving all members. Celebrate positive examples of where the values were demonstrated in the activity and highlight areas for improvement.

- What part of the value does the group need to practice?
- What did the group learn about using the value?
- Discuss the experience and determine ways the value could be used at home, at school, etc.

*From *Sports Plus: Developing Youth Sports Programs that Teach Positive Values*, by Jeffrey Pratt Breedy. Project Adventure, 1977. Used by permission.

