

10 Reasons a Scout is Thrifty

By David Blankenhorn

1. So many Scout Merit Badges – including Citizenship, Entrepreneurship, Fish and Wildlife Management, Gardening, Personal Management, Nature, Public Health, Soil and Water Conservation, and Wilderness Survival – link closely to the concept of thrift. To some people, of course, being thrifty just means being cheap or stingy. But Boy Scouts, of all people, know better! Thrift is a big idea. It means making the wisest use of all that we have. An old poster says: “Real thrift is the saving and intelligent use of health, time, and property of all kinds, including money.” In fact, even the word “thrift” comes from the word “thrive.” So much of what scouting is all about comes from the wonderful idea of thrift.

2. A big part of thrift is taking good care of the woods, of wildlife, and of our natural resources. An old poem for children says, “We will be a thrifty nation, when we all learn conservation!” Boy Scouts, of all people, are committed to wise conservation and care for the natural world.

3. A big part of thrift means planning for the future. To be thrifty means focusing not just on today, but also on tomorrow. Does that idea remind you of anything? What about the Scout motto? – Be Prepared!

4. A major purpose of being a Scout is to build character. The same is true of thrift! Mr. S. W. Straus, a successful business man who many years ago founded the American Society for Thrift, said: “As we build the ideals of thrift, we build character.”

5. Why is a Scout reverent? Part of the answer is that is Scout is grateful for, and wants to take good care of, all that God has given him. This idea is sometimes called stewardship, or being a good steward. Being thrifty is another way of saying being a good steward.

6. A Scout is generous. He promises to “help other people at all times,” and he tries to “Do a Good Turn Daily.” Being generous is a huge part of being thrifty. One reason that thrifty people can be generous is that they work hard and save wisely – so that they have more with which to help others! The famous religious leader John Wesley summed up thrift this way: “Earn all you can, save all you can, then give all you can!”

7. Scouting teaches the way to success. So does thrift. The world’s most famous book ever thrift, written by America’s own Benjamin Franklin, was called The Way to Wealth. As he put it, in a letter to a young friend, “Be industrious and frugal, and you will be rich.”

8. The founders of the Boy Scouts believed that thrift is very important. The very first statement of the Boy Scout Law, in 1910, stressed that “A Boy Scout is Thrifty.”

9. The Boy Scouts and thrift have a long and proud history together! Years ago, the Boy Scouts helped to sponsor “National Thrift Week” – one week each year during which young

Americans (and older ones, too) focused on the great importance of thrift.

10. Today we live in some very challenging economic times. Many Americans are hard-pressed. In difficult times, especially, we need to think creatively and wisely about how we are using money. We need to be smart and we need to have a plan. We need care, discipline, and foresight. We need to reduce waste. We need to save and conserve. In short, in today's tough times, more than ever, we need: – THRIFT!

There you have 'em! Ten good reasons why "A Boy Scout is Thrifty."

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