

Commitments - The Law of the Scout Movement



Rituals strengthen a community and remind what agreements are in place.

The Law of Scouting

Rituals strengthen a community and remind people what agreements apply. This is confirmed by Isabel Mutti, cantonal leader of the Pfadi Kanton Bern.

In the "Pfadi", children from the most diverse backgrounds meet weekly to form a conspiratorial community. How important are common values and agreements? Isabel Mutti: To be able to lead a group and hold it together, it needs agreements and basic values about the behavior and beliefs in the group. They make responsible, create identification and convey a sense of belonging. Already the common goal is the first agreement. Without a goal and tasks, a community cannot exist.

How can commitments and rituals help in the task as a main leader? A main leader promotes the social and self competence of the children. Rituals help her strengthen a group's sense of community. If the goal is lost sight of, the tasks remain undone or the agreements are not kept, common rituals can again "show the right way". Commitments - understood as a jointly made statement of intent - can be used to establish and document progress made by the group or individual.

What are commitments most likely to be for you: a leadership tool, a team-building tool, or a set of measures for discipline? A bit of everything. Commitments allow me as a leader to steer the group in a desired direction. So it is a leadership tool. Through the joint development and the binding nature of the commitment, wishes and demands of the group can be included. In this sense it is an instrument of team building. At the same time, however, it is also a disciplinary measure if agreements are broken.

How do you go about introducing a new ritual? Do you predefine it or does it come from the children alone? Whether I predefine a ritual, whether it is a wish of the children or the group, or whether it comes from group life, is quite different for me. For me there may and should be all three types of origin. Often a clear separation is not possible anyway. In our scout group, for example, all the children take turns drawing and writing down the afternoons they have spent in a group book. The basis, namely the book, comes from me. How the children arrange it, is decided by them. A second example is the "Scout Law". The basic ritual is exactly the same everywhere. When it is spoken or how it is lived is handled differently in all scout sections. So the group helps to shape the

ritual.

What exactly is the Scout Law? The Law is a set of rules for living together. It is based on the goals of the Scout Movement and reads: be open and honest; understand and respect others; offer our help; seek joy and pass it on; decide and take responsibility. In order for rules, rituals or commitments to be followed, members must understand the meaning of the rule. It must be clear to them what each point means. Only then can they abide by them. This is not only true in the Scouts. Our "law" is often a guideline for life far beyond Scouting.

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