

TRY, AND TO O

His wondrous work, which when coupled with active performance of His will in service for others constitutes the concrete foundation of religion.

"The Promise that a Scout makes on joining has as its first point: 'To do my duty to God.' Note that it does not say 'To be loyal to God,' since this would merely be a state of mind, but to do something, which is the positive, active attitude.

"The main method in the Boy Scout Movement is to give some form of positive training rather than merely to inculcate negative precepts, since the boy is always ready to do rather than to digest.

"Therefore, we put into his activities the practice of Good Turns in his daily life as a foundation of future goodwill and helpfulness to others. The religious basis underlying this is common to all denominations, and we, therefore, interfere with the form of none."

"No man is much good unless he believes in God and obeys His laws. So every Scout should have a religion."

"Religion seems a very simple thing: first love and serve God; second, love and serve your neighbor."

"There is no religious side to the movement. The whole of it is based on religion, that is, on the realization and service of God."

In order to experience Scouting to the fullest, Scout leaders *must* ensure that boys have the opportunity to learn values, laws, and guidelines held dear by their religious heritage. Although every Scout may be able to repeat the Scout Oath from memory, many do not know what is their duty to God and country. Several specific promises are made in the Scout Oath, the first of which is to "...do my duty, to God..." Since duty to God is the first commitment mentioned in the Scout Oath, it should receive a higher priority than perhaps given in the past. To many boys, because these are lofty words, the statement may have no meaning. Consider the story of the two-year old who always ran to the corner to play with a friend. His mother or father retrieved him with a little pat on his bottom, and told him he was not allowed to go to the corner. Finally after a dozen such episodes, the little fellow asked his mother, "What's a corner?" How could he do his duty without a clear understanding of the duty? He did not

comprehend the words. Likewise, we must help our boys learn their duty, especially their religious duty.

Unless we are the boys' minister, we should encourage them to seek out their spiritual leader to learn the requirements for earning their religious emblem. These requirements will help them come to a fuller understanding of their duty to God. Attainment of the award provides the Scout with a knowledge of his faith's religious teachings, values, laws, and guidelines.

Although no percentage of the number of boys receiving their religious award is available, an examination of a few numbers may give a feel for how few earn their religious emblem. In a recent year, 975,589 boys were registered in Boy and Varsity Scouts. By the end of that year, 24,103 Boy and Varsity Scouts had earned their religious award for that year. Since a boy could be in Scouting from one to several years and earn the religious award once, an exact percentage is unattainable. However, we can estimate that if all boys were in Scouting for six years, and these other numbers were constant, 144,618 boys (24,103 boys per year over 6 years) would earn their religious award out of the total of 975,589 boys. This figure is still only 14.8 percent of the total enrollment who earn their religious award. This estimate is not encouraging.

The low percentage may not be a reflection of the boys' indifference, but may be due to the lack of emphasis given by Scout leaders. Certainly, fire starting and cooking are important, but Scoutcraft must be balanced with the duty to God that is fundamental to the beliefs of Scouting.

Most of us are involved in Scouting because we believe we can make a positive difference in the lives of young boys, and, in turn, build a better society. Scouts grow up to be leaders in their community and the nation. Let us commit ourselves to double or triple the number of boys who receive their religious award. In this way, boys will not only recite the Scout Oath but practice the principles to its fullest. We may very well be making a valuable contribution toward, "a lovely, lovely world."

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TAKING QUALITY UNIT AWARDS THE NEXT STEP:

Unit Religious Awards

by Ed Henderson
National Camp School Chaplain

Troops have them draped on flag poles and displayed across church meeting rooms... rows of *Quality Unit* award ribbons, often dating back for decades. The *Quality Unit* award has been recognized by councils for many years as one of the best ways of highlighting a top-notch Scout troop.

Did you know however, that there's another award your pack, post or troop could be earning which also demonstrates that yours is a quality unit? It is not given by the BSA, but by your own church body. The unit religious awards are bestowed upon a troop by a church's National Scouting Committee, and can be thought of as a religious *Quality Unit* recognition.

Many religious faiths that have strongly supported Scouting for years, are now going the extra step by providing their own awards for units to earn. Over the last ten years, at least seven new awards have been offered, such as the *Pope Paul XII Unit Award* by the Roman Catholic Church, and the Lutheran Bishop's *Recognition of Excellence* award. These awards typically are developed and administered by the respective national Scouting committee of the faith that sponsors your church.

While specific requirements vary between denominations, they all have familiar themes. Most are styled like the BSA's *Quality Unit* program by providing a dozen or so achievements, and require the units to accomplish a certain percentage of them, including a few key items. Many, like the Baptist's *Unit Award of Excellence* recognize the importance of the BSA's *Quality Unit* award by making it the first requirement for earning their *Unit Award of Excellence*.

The National Unit Religious Awards and the Associations that provide them:

Pope Paul VI National Unit Recognition
National Catholic Committee on Scouting
1325 West Walnut Lane
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, Texas 75015-2079

The Lutheran Recognition of Excellence Award
The National Lutheran Association of Scouters
8520 MacKenzie Road
Saint Louis, MO 63123-3453

The Disciples Unit Award of Excellence
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Nat'l Assoc.
2004 Bluebonnet Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76111

Bishop's Award of Excellence
National Association of
United Methodist Scouters
Office of Scouting YES Ministries
P.O. Box 859
Nashville, TN 37202-0859

Baptist Unit Award of Excellence
Association of Baptists for Scouting
Order Item # 77-328
1325 West Walnut Lane
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, Texas 75015-2079

Frank L. Weil Memorial Unit Recognition Award
National Jewish Committee on Scouting
1325 West Walnut Lane
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, Texas 75015-2079

Presbyterian Unit Award of Excellence
National Association of Presbyterian Scouters
Unit Award Committee
P.O. Box 112087
Carrollton, TX 75011-2087



All of these recognitions require that a certain percentage of the unit's Scouts should have already earned or be in the active process of completing their personal BSA Religious Emblem that is appropriate for their age. Fortunately, many of the awards recognize that there may be Scouts from several faiths within a unit, and so they only require that Scouts be working on the award appropriate for their home church.

Other requirements may ask that packs and troops participate in Scout Sunday, traditionally the first Sunday of February for most faiths. If the unit is away at campouts on Sundays, it should have a regular plan for conducting a vesper service and have a Chaplain Aide as well as an adult chaplain. At least once a year the unit should be involved in some kind of service project that directly benefits the church.

While the Scouts are called upon to perform most of the tasks needed to earn the award, part of the burden also falls on the shoulders of adults, both in the troop and at the sponsoring body. Historically, troops and churches/synagogues that are in constant communication and work closely together have the best relations and often make for the strongest units. In recognition of this, many of these awards require that either the Scout leader or committee chairman be active in the church, or that a certain number of the Troop Committee be made up of church members.

Even the clergy members are called upon to get involved. Among all of the various awards, one common theme calls for an annual meeting between the chartered organization representative (COR), Scoutmaster and church head. Priests, ministers and rabbis are also frequently called upon to insure that the unit's Scouts are given an opportunity to earn their religious awards if they attend the church.

Some of the awards, like the Jewish *Frank L. Weil Memorial Unit Recognition* award, go a step beyond the church-unit relationship by encouraging units to get behind the council's Friends of Scouting (FOS) effort, and recharter with the council on time.

In providing for these unit achievement recognitions, the national Scouting associations have provided many opportunities for the COR, Scout leader, committee, board of deacons, and pastor to come together to make both the unit and the church stronger.

Other national associations are likely to consider the value of these awards as a way of encouraging Scouters and religious leaders to work together. Contact your church's national Scouting association to see if it has an award. Most of the awards listed here have an informational brochure with all of the requirements. When completed and signed by the Scout leader and pastor, rabbi, or minister, the national association typically awards a certificate or ribbon to the unit. Most also offer patches which can be purchased for individual Scout wear. Some church associations, like many Catholic Archdioceses, may want to present the award to your Scouts at a large mass where other adult and youth recognitions are handed out.

AND REVERENT