

Chaplain Aide Reference Guide



Wood Badge
S7-602-14

The Course for the Wood Badge

CHAPLAINS AIDE MEETING

WELCOME

INTRODUCTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

PATROL	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
BEAVER			
BOBWHITE			
EAGLE			
FOX			
OWL			
BEAR			
BUFFALO			
ANTELOPE			
STAFF			

SCOUTS OWN SERVICE PLANNING WORKSHEET

Include ✂ -YES OR NO	Possible Element	Resource or Source Document	To Be Done By	Notes
	Processional With Flags			
	Call To Worship			
	Invocation			
	Opening Song (#1)			
	Prayer			
	Song (#2) or Special Music or Reading			
	Reading From Religious or Inspiration Sources			
	Personal Moment of Prayer			
	Responsive Reading			
	Group Prayer			
	Offering (World Friendship Fund)			
	Special Music, Performance or Reading			
	Inspirational Reading, Message or Story			
	An Act of Friendship			
	Meditation			
	Closing Prayer			
	Song (#3) or Special Music			
	Benediction			

Other notes:

Roles and Responsibilities for the Interfaith Service
Day 5 October 5, 2014

Call to Worship—

Song—Group — Song *TBD*

Scripture Reading—

Responsive Reading—

Group Prayer—

Personal Prayer—

Message—

An Act of Friendship—

Offering— — World Friendship Fund

Benediction—

Chaplain/Chaplain Aide Basics

Compiled by Andrew A. McCreight, ASM Troop 198/COR Troop 404 for WE5-60-07

Time Allowed – 30 to 45 minutes

Teaching Objectives – Understand the role of religion in Scouting
Understand how to provide religious opportunities in Scout events

Materials Needed – This packet and resource books described below.

Resources - Manual for Chaplain Aides and Chaplains, The Roles of Troop Chaplain and the Chaplain Aide, the MacScouter's Big "A Scout is Reverent" Resource Book, The Big Book of Scout Worship Services

Goals – Describe the duties/responsibilities of the Chaplain and Chaplain's Aide.
Organize and conduct a Scout's Own Service
Become familiar with the Religious Emblems Program

Recommended Facility Layout – Small Group Setting

Delivery Method – Lecture/Small Group Discussion

Introduction

Reverence to God and reverence for one's neighbor and reverence for oneself as a servant of God, is the basis for every form of religion. The method of expression of reverence to God varies with every sect and denomination. What sect or denomination a boy belongs to depends, as a rule on his parents' wishes. It is they who decide. It is our business to respect their wishes and to second their efforts to inculcate reverence, what ever form of religion the boy professes. – Lord R.S.S. Baden-Powell

To serve as a chaplain or chaplain aide is a unique opportunity for ministry. While serving in these offices, you will have the opportunity to help Scouts as they grow, both physically and spiritually. Some techniques to be used are modeling, mentoring, and offering faith-based experiences.

This is supplemental information designed to enable you to perform your duties more effectively. Training provided by the Boy Scouts of America for an adult consists of Youth Protection Training, Fast Start, New Leaders Essentials, and Troop Committee Challenge and for a scout, Junior Leader Training.

Declaration of Religious Principle

The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God and, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but is absolutely non-sectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and the organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life. Only

persons willing to subscribe to this Declaration of Religious Principle and to the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America shall be entitled to certificates of membership.

Chaplain's Duties and Responsibilities

The troop chaplain is an adult who may be a troop committee member, the executive officer of a religious chartered organization, or serves in another leadership capacity. It is customary that the religious leader, or an appointee of the chartered organization, will serve as chaplain if the troop is operated by a religious organization. A troop not operated by a religious organization may select a chaplain from local members of the clergy.

The chaplain should

- Provide a spiritual element for campouts and troop meetings
- Provide spiritual counseling when needed or requested
- Provide opportunities for all boys to grow in their relationship with God and their fellow Scouts
- Encourage Scouts to participate in the religious emblems program of their respective faith
- Assure members and leaders of your interest in them and their activities.
- Be familiar with the chaplain aide section of this manual
- Work with the troop chaplain aide to plan and conduct an annual Scout-oriented religious observance, preferably during Scout Week in February

The Basic Opportunity

In this capacity, you as the chaplain have an opportunity to be a friend to the Scouts and leaders and to contribute to their spiritual welfare and growth. You as the chaplain, by virtue of your position and personality, can encourage the boys in their Scouting work and other aspects of their total lives.

Outreach Opportunities

After housing and schooling needs are met, one of the first contacts a new family has in the community is with a Scouting unit. As new troop members are registered, you will learn of their religious preferences or interests and can extend an invitation to join your congregation in worship, or you may direct them to other opportunities for worship in the community. At no time should the chaplain proselytize.

Accidents, Illnesses, and Other Problems

Ask the leaders to report accidents, illnesses, and other problems of members to you. You should become aware of situations where a pastoral call would be appropriate and beneficial. Leaders who are in regular contact with their members often are the first to know of situations that may need pastoral attention.

If a member misses several meetings, it may be an indication that something is wrong. Ask that the names of absentees be shared with you. As chaplain you have the opportunity to visit and discover the source of the problem. If the problem is with some aspect of the Scouting program or leadership, you should discuss this problem with the appropriate individual or committee.

Sensitivity to Needs

Working with leaders and youth will offer you an opportunity to relate to them at a level where you will become sensitive to needs not yet expressed. Be alert for personal, family, or social situations that may require special care.

Praying in a Group

When present, members of the clergy or chaplain aide may be asked to lead the troop or other Scouting units in prayer. If the group consists of members with mixed beliefs, or if the beliefs of the group are unknown, then prayers should be of an interfaith content. However, if the group is of like belief or the unit is chartered to a religious organization, then it is entirely appropriate to offer belief-specific prayer.

Planning Worship Experiences

Every troop going away for a weekend needs to plan to conduct or attend a service in keeping with the 12th point of the Scout Law. You may be invited to conduct the services or work out a program with the chaplain aide and other adult leaders. An overnight event should include worship experiences, either for the individual or for the troop. You may want to recommend scripture readings or devotional readings to be used at the close of the evening or as a morning meditation.

Religious Emblems

The chaplain is in an ideal position to promote the religious emblems program and encourage Scouts to complete the requirements for the emblem of their faith. Many troops include Scouts of various faiths; therefore, a knowledge of all emblems is helpful. The chart *A Scout Is Reverent*, No. 5-206A, will be most helpful. Since procedures vary among different faiths, the Duty to God brochure, No. 05-897A, is a helpful reference. In addition, call your local Boy Scout service center or the council religious relationships committee for help in identifying ways to promote the religious emblems program and emblem recipient recognition ceremonies.

Chartered Organization Representative

This person is the representative of the chartered organization to the district and local council of the Boy Scouts of America. This person must be able to represent the organization's concern in both policy-making and program. The chaplain should work closely with the chartered organization representative for the interest of the chartered organization and its ministry, as well as for children, youth, and families.

Support of Unit Leadership

Remember, volunteers sharing their time and effort are what makes Scouting work. Support them. Recognize them for a job well done. Commend them personally for their ministry. Thank their family members, too, for their sacrifice makes Scouting possible.

Observe Unit Leadership

Unit leaders are charged with fulfilling the purpose of both the chartered organization and Scouting. The leadership should demonstrate awareness of and understanding of both. It

should be evident that Scouting activities are fulfilling spiritual needs, in addition to developing Scouting skills.

Identifying Service Opportunities

Service projects for advancement are required of all Scouts. Helping others is a Scouting tradition.

You have the advantage of being able to identify many possible service projects for individuals and families, for the chartered organization, for the community, and beyond the community. You will need to be on the lookout for service projects that are helpful and significant.

A particular emphasis in service projects is to focus on concerns and cares of the faith community, such as persons living in impacted areas (neighborhoods isolated by highways, interstates, commercial developments, etc.); aged, homebound, hungry, and illiterate people; ethnic minority groups needing help; and persons with handicapping conditions.

Chaplain Aide's Duties and Responsibilities

The chaplain aide is an approved youth leadership position in Boy Scout troops. The responsibilities of this position include encouraging the spiritual growth and awareness of each member of the troop and assisting the troop chaplain (and adult committee members).

The purpose of this program is to

- Make the 12th point of the Scout Law more meaningful in life
- Promote a greater understanding of and appreciation for all religions
- Provide Boy Scouts with the opportunity to work with an ordained member of the clergy, thereby gaining insight into the religious professional life

The chaplain aide should

- Work with the troop chaplain (usually an adult member of the clergy) to plan appropriate interfaith religious services during troop outings. Invite the troop chaplain to visit a campout, eat with the troop, and conduct a worship service. Troops may conduct their own religious services, invite the troop chaplain or an exemplary layperson to participate in the service, or they may visit a nearby church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or other religious institution.
- Encourage troop members to strengthen their own relationships with God through personal prayer and devotion and participation in religious activities appropriate to their faith
- Participate in patrol leaders council planning sessions to ensure that spiritual emphasis is included in troop activities, e.g., vespers, prayer before meals, religious observances, etc
- Help the troop chaplain (or other designated adult) plan and conduct an annual Scout-oriented religious observance, preferably during Scout Week in February

- Present an overview of the religious emblems program at troop meetings at least once per year, instructing members to contact their own clergyperson or religious counselor to guide them in the appropriate study programs
- Compile and keep an up-to-date list of local clergy who have agreed to be counselors for the religious emblems programs
- Maintain the troop's religious emblems award progress chart
- Assist the troop chaplain (or other designated adult) recognize troop members who receive their religious emblems, perhaps during a troop court of honor (note: most religious emblems are conferred during a service at the Scout's place of worship, but the achievement should also be recognized at a significant troop event.)
- Present an overview of the religious emblems programs to Cub Scout dens and packs on request.
- Prepare a troop prayer.
- Working with the troop chaplain, compose an appropriate prayer for before and after meals. When composing these prayers, the chaplain and chaplain aide should be sensitive to the various theological and religious positions embraced by the faiths represented in the group.

Qualifications

- The chaplain aide must be mature and sensitive and have earned the respect and trust of his fellow Scouts.
- The chaplain aide is recommended to be at least a First Class Scout.
- The chaplain aide should have received or be working on the requirements leading to the age-appropriate religious emblem for his faith.

Scouts' Own Service

For an open Troop, or for Troops in camp, I think the Scouts' Own should be open to all denominations, and carried on in such manner as to offend none. There should not be any special form, but it should abound in the right spirit, and should be conducted not from any ecclesiastical point of view, but from that of the boy. Everything likely to make an artificial atmosphere should be avoided. We do not want a kind of imposed Church Parade, but a voluntary uplifting of their hearts by the boys in thanksgiving for the joys of life, and a desire on their part to seek inspiration and strength for greater love and service for others.

A Scouts' Own should have as big an effect on the boys as any service in Church, if in conducting the Scouts' Own we remember that boys are not grown men, and if we go by the pace of the youngest and most uneducated of those present. Boredom is not reverence, nor will it breed religion.

To interest the boys, the Scouts' Own must be a cheery and varied function. Short hymns (three verses are as a rule quite enough-never more than four); understandable prayers; a good address from a man who really understands boys (a homely "talk" rather than an address), which grips the boys, and in which they may laugh or applaud as the spirit moves them, so that they take a real interest in what is said. If a man cannot make

his point to keen boys in ten minutes he ought to be shot! If he has not got them keen, it would be better not to hold a Scouts' Own at all.

By Baden Powell
Printed in "The Scouter"
November 1928

“The scout, in his promise, undertakes to do his duty to his king and country only in the second place; his first duty is to God. It is with this idea before us and reckoning that God is the one Father of us all, that we scouts count ourselves a brotherhood despite the differences among us of country, creed, or class. We realize that in addition to the interest of our particular country, there is a higher mission before us - namely, the promotion of the kingdom of God; that is, the rule of peace and goodwill on earth. In the Scouts, each form of religion is respected and its active practice encouraged, and through the spread of brotherhood in all countries, we have the opportunity of developing the spirit of mutual goodwill and understanding.

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

“Let us, therefore, in training our Scouts, keep the higher aims in the forefront, not let themselves get too absorbed in the steps. Don't let the technical outweigh the moral, Field efficiency, backwoodsmanship, camping, hiking, good turns, jamboree, and comradeship are, by all means not the end. The end is character with a purpose.

“And that purpose, that the next generation may be sane in a insane world, and develop the higher realization of service, active service of love, and duty to God and neighbor.

“Our objective in the scout movement is to give such help as we can in bringing about God's kingdom on earth by inoculating among the youth the spirit and the daily practice in their lives of selfish goodwill and cooperation.”

-- Baden-Powell

The founder of Scouting, Robert Baden-Powell, believed that Reverence and Duty to God should be an important part of the Scout Movement and of every Scout and Scouter. He originated the notion of Scout's Own ... "a gathering the Scouts for the worship of God and to promote fuller realization of the Scout Law and Promise, but supplementary to, and not in substitution for, regular religious observances." (Aids to Scoutmastership, p.38)

Let us first consider what Scouts' Owns are not.

- They are not Church Services, nor are they meant to be a substitute for them.
- They are not a structured liturgy like the Book of Common Order, etc.
- They are not a good opportunity for the Leader to bang home some truths with a little bit of God added for effect.
- They are not necessarily the Chaplains or Leaders' department or duty.

Given those guidelines, let's define what Scouts' Owns are. This is not what they ought to be - this is what they are; and if they do not fulfill one or more of these categories, they are not Scouts' Owns.

- They are an acknowledgment of God and his creation and ourselves as part of it, expressed in a way that all the faiths that Scouting embraces can share together.
- They are a pause in our activity to discover something deeper and more permanent in the things we are trying to achieve or learn or enjoy.
- They are a response to the Creator for the gift of life.

Which means, of course, they can be almost everything from a time of silence through a single sentence right up to a kind of service of worship that might include music and singing and stories and readings and prayers. In other words, although the next few paragraphs and pages suggest some material that could be useful for a Scouts' Own and end with a couple of outlines that might be useful for a colony/pack/troop/unit evening or in camp, there really is no "proper form."

For example, a group of Venture Scouts [older Scouts or high adventure group] may get to the summit of a mountain after a difficult or challenging rock climb and as they stand or sit down to recover and enjoy the view, one of them says, with feeling, "Thank God we made it!" and the others respond "Too right" (in context, another word for "Amen"), conscious or not, they have experienced a Scouts' Own, because they have recognized both their achievement and their growing because of it. The glory of a sunset and the breaking of the dawn; the sky at night, the hills by day and the flickering friendship round a camp-fire are absolutely natural settings for thinking -- sometimes silently, sometimes aloud -- about the power that is the beginning and end of everything and our human place in the complex order of the universe. And that's a Scouts' Own, without the need, even, for a mention of God by name -- only by implication. You see the point? A Scout's Own is really a spiritual experience that happens.

But sometimes, especially at the younger ages, it has to be underlined. So a game or an activity that has demanded effort in body or mind or in tolerance and team-work can, on the spot, be turned into a Scouts' Own with a thought and a "thank-you" for God -- no necessity for hymns or uniforms or readings. Of course, there is a place for a Scouts' Own with songs and readings -- when a time is set aside for God. Then it can be good to tell a story of adventure or challenge, where the people have relied on their faith -- whatever their faith -- in the Creator God to achieve their goal; and sing a campfire song or two about sharing and caring and serving. The song "Al lelu, alleluia, praise ye the Lord" can be fun, because, divided into two groups, one does the 'Alleluias' and the other the 'Praise ye the Lord' and whenever they are singing they stand and when not they sit. This is praise that is ordered chaos and fun. Maybe that's a good description of a true Scouts' Own.

And prayers. A lot of young folk today find prayer difficult, yet the best prayers come from them. The young Cub Scout who prays "Thank you God for making me" has hit the nail on the head that's a Scouts' Own in a sentence. So it is far better to let the young people make up their own prayers - maybe creating a Group book of prayers and use it, updating it year by year. As a Leader you will never quite match, for them, the depth of their own thinking.

Finally, having, hopefully, done away with the mystique surrounding and the necessity of formality or a formal structure for Scouts' Owns, we suggest you go and get on with them - and enjoy them!

A Scouts' Own Service was explained by Baden-Powell in *The Scouter*, 1928:

"It should be open to all denominations and carried on in such a manner as to offend none."

"It should be conducted from the point of view of the boy."

"We want a voluntary uplifting of their hearts in thanksgiving for the joys of life, and a desire on their part to seek inspiration and strength for greater love and service to others."

"To interest the boys, the Scouts' Own must be a cheery and varied function. Boredom is not reverence, nor will it breed religion."

Basic Planning Concepts:

1. Choose a setting that promotes reverence.
2. Plan, time and rehearse the service – 30 minutes is maximum.
3. All who attend should be courteous, kind and reverent.
4. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate.

One planning guide developed by a minister suggests each service should consist of a beginning, a middle, and an end:

The beginning explains the theme or why we are gathered. Open with a reading or hymn of praise.

The middle should include a proclamation of the word of God and the meditation. Try to be aware of your audience, even to the extent of personal things you know are happening in peoples' lives. Try to think of some sort of physical thing that you can use as a prop during the discussion. After the meditation should be a prayer. Remember that prayers include thanks as well as requests.

The closing hymn and dismissal should cement the theme and conclude things on a high note.

Items that can be included:

1. Call to Worship
2. Invocation
3. Hymn(s) or Song(s)
4. Scripture(s) or Reading(s) from a variety of religious or inspirational sources
5. Responsive Reading
6. Personal Prayer
7. Group Prayer
8. Inspirational Reading or Message
9. Offering (with an explanation of the World Friendship Fund)
10. An Act of Friendship
11. Benediction or Closing

Recognizing Diversity in a Scouts' Own Service:

Scouts practice many faiths. Ask the Scouts to suggest materials, participate in the planning and assist in the leading of the service.

It is important to accurately describe and promote the service. Nothing is more offensive than anticipating a service for everyone and then attending one that espouses beliefs of one particular faith or religion.

Descriptive Terminology:

Nonsectarian means not affiliated with any specific religion.

Nondenominational refers to a Protestant service.

Ecumenical refers to a service suitable for the entire Christian faith.

Sample Interfaith Prayers and Benedictions

- For health, strength, and daily food, we give you thanks, o Lord.
- For this and all your mercies, Lord, make us truly grateful.
- For food, health, and friendship, we give you thanks, o Lord.
- For food, for raiment, for life, for opportunity, for friendship and fellowship, we thank you, o Lord. (Philmont grace)
- Come, o Lord, be our guest and bless what you have bestowed on us.
- Gracious giver of all good, we thank you for food and rest. Grant all we say or do pleases you.
- Lord, bless our Scouting leaders who spend so much of their time and energy to help us grow up well. Guide them in their work, give them patience and wisdom, and reward them in this life and the next. Amen.
- As our campfire fades, we thank you for the joys and blessings of this day. We lift our minds and hearts to you in gratitude for life, happiness, and the Scouting movement. Lord, protect our camp this night. May we rise refreshed and ready to serve you. Amen.
- May the great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again.

At Camp

Since troops often camp on weekends, Scouts and leaders may not be able to attend their regular worship services. A troop worship service should be conducted and all encouraged to attend. The troop chaplain aide and the troop chaplain (or other designated adult) should conduct these services.

Scout Funeral Services

On occasion, a troop may experience the loss of a Scout or leader. It is a difficult time for everyone. At the request of the family or with the permission of the family and religious leader, Scouts may participate in the funeral and memorial service to celebrate the life of the Scout or leader. Some things that may be appropriate include:

- Attending in uniform
- Sitting together as a unit
- Serving as honorary pallbearers or ushers.
- Serving during the service by doing such things as reciting the Scout Oath or Law.

The primary concern is for the family and its preferences. The involvement of the troop or Scouts in the troop is at the discretion of the family and its religious leaders.

Funeral Service for Scout or Scouter

This outline is merely a guide. The wishes of the Family and spiritual advisor take precedent.

1. Processional
 - o Color Guard brings in US flag and Troop flag
 - o Pallbearers follow
 - o Scouts and Scouters in Uniform follow
2. Opening Prayer

Almighty Father, as we grieve the loss of (Name of Deceased), help us to remember his involvement with Scouting. Show us how he lived the Scout oath and law. We ask that you comfort us as we will miss his friendship and fellowship.

3. Pastoral Comments

(Highlights of the Deceased's life and Scouting accomplishments)

4. Song: "On My Honor"
5. Readings: (Listed below are some suggestions.)
 - o Psalms 23:1-6
 - o Psalms 37:5
 - o Jeremiah 29:11
 - o I Corinthians 15:54-57
6. Comments from friends.
7. "Scout Vespers"
8. Closing Benediction

"May the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again, and may our footsteps lead unto Him."

9. Taps
10. Recessional

Exercise:

Using the above guidelines and the resources, plan a Scouts Own Service.

Religious Emblems Programs

The religious emblems programs are programs created by the various religious groups to encourage youth to grow stronger in their faith. The religious groups—not the Boy Scouts of America—have created the religious emblems programs themselves. The Boy Scouts of America has approved of these programs and allows the recognition to be worn on the official uniform, but each religious organization develops and administers its own program. This is a list all Religious Emblems Programs available to members of the Boy Scouts of America.

African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Armenian Apostolic Church of America (Western Prelacy)
Armenian Church of America (Eastern Diocese)
Baha'i
Baptist
Buddhist
Catholic, Eastern
Catholic, Roman
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church of Christ, Scientist
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)
Churches of Christ
Community of Christ
Eastern Orthodox
Episcopal
General Church of the New Jerusalem (The New Church)
Hindu
Islamic
Jewish
Lutheran
Meher Baba
Moravian
Polish National Catholic Church
Presbyterian Church in America
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Protestant and Independent Christian Churches
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
The Salvation Army
United Church of Christ
United Methodist
United Pentecostal Church International
Unity Churches
Zoroastrian

How Do We Get Started on These Programs?

The religious emblems programs should be presented to youth members and their families as an optional program for them to complete through their religious organization. Religious instruction should always come from the religious organization, not from the unit leader. Parents need to be informed of these programs and told where to get the information for their particular faith. Interested in making a presentation on the religious awards? Find sample scripts at www.praypub.org.

First, youth members must obtain the specific booklet for their religion. This booklet will contain information on all the lessons and service projects that they will need to

complete. Each member needs to have his or her own booklet to document progress. Some religions also provide adult manuals for counselors and mentors. Check with your local council to see if it stocks these booklets in its store, or contact the religious organization directly (addresses and phone numbers are provided on <http://www.scouting.org/awards/religious/awards/index.html>). The most common booklets are: God and Me (Cub Scout), God and Family (Webelos), God and Church (Boy Scout and Varsity Scout), God and Life (Ventures, older Boy Scout, and Varsity Scout), and God and Service Nomination (Adult Recognition). An adult religious recognition award is presented by nomination only. The recognition is presented to worthy adults for their outstanding service to youth both through their religious institution and one of the national youth agencies. Recipients of these awards are unaware that they are being nominated. They are nominated to receive an award by submitting the required application, letters of recommendation, and resume. Please check eligibility requirements for specific awards.

Second, parents must review the specific guidelines for their particular program; age/grade requirements vary from program to program. Some programs require that the youth be an official "member" of the local religious institution, others may not. Each program determines who may serve as counselor (some require clergy; others allow parents or other family members). Be sure to look at specific eligibility guidelines!

Third, families should talk to their religious leaders and show them the booklet before beginning any program. Most of the religious emblems programs require that they be completed under the auspices of that religious organization, and many require the signature of the local religious leader. Again, check the specific eligibility requirements for your religious program.

Fourth, the member needs to complete the requirements (Some programs may take three or four months, others longer.), obtain the proper signatures, and follow the instructions to order the emblem/award. (These emblems are not available in your local council.) The emblem can be presented at any time of the year and should be presented in a meaningful ceremony, preferably in the member's religious institution. The universal religious square knot (cloth, silver knot on purple, No. 05007, may be worn by youth or adult members who earned the knot as a youth. Cloth, purple on silver, No. 05014, may be worn by adult members presented with the recognition. Adults may wear both knots if they satisfy qualifying criteria.) is worn over the left shirt pocket of the Scout uniform. The medallion is pinned over the square knot for full uniform occasions. (See the *Insignia Guide*, No. 33066D.)

Handbook for Chaplains and Chaplain Aides in Boy Scout Troops and Venturing Crews



Foreword

The Religious Relationships Task Force of the Boy Scouts of America has developed and endorsed this handbook to guide religious leaders, unit leaders, and other volunteers in selecting and supporting chaplains and chaplain aides. Its provisions also guide those adults and young men and women who serve in these key leadership roles.

To serve as a chaplain or chaplain aide is a unique opportunity for ministry. While serving in these offices, you will have the opportunity to help Scouts as they grow, both physically and spiritually. Some techniques to be used are modeling, mentoring, and offering faith-based experiences. Use this handbook to help you become better oriented to the duties, responsibilities, and opportunities of chaplaincy service in Boy Scout troops and Venturing crews. It includes useful information and resources to help you better perform your duties.

Boy Scouts of America—Declaration of Religious Principle

The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God and, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home, in conjunction with the organization or group with which a member is connected, will give definite attention to religious life. Only persons willing to subscribe to this Declaration of Religious Principle and to the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America shall be entitled to certificates of membership.

Although nonsectarian, the Scouting program is an available resource for religious organizations, schools, and community and civic groups to use in their programs for young people. Scouting is an educational program based on “duty to God” and designed to enhance:

- A personal value system
- Leadership skills
- Citizenship responsibilities
- Career awareness
- Personal fitness

Unit Chaplain

The Scout troop or Venturing crew chaplain is an adult who may be the executive officer of a religious chartered organization; a member of the clergy or other called, ordained, or certified professional religious leader; or a layperson appointed by his or her religious leader or chartered organization. If the unit is operated by a religious organization, it is customary for the religious leader to serve as the chaplain. The religious leader may ask a member of the staff who is qualified to serve in that position. The chartered organization for a unit not operated by a religious organization is encouraged to select a unit chaplain from among religious leaders in the community.



As the unit chaplain, you have an opportunity to be a friend to the Scouts and leaders and thereby contribute to their spiritual welfare and growth. By virtue of your position and personality, you can encourage the young people in their Scouting roles and other aspects of their lives. The chaplain should:

1. Assure members and leaders of your interest in them and their activities.

2. Provide a spiritual tone for all unit meetings and camping experiences.
3. Provide spiritual counseling service when needed or requested.
4. Provide opportunities for all young people in the unit to grow in their relationship with God and their fellow Scouts or Venturers.
5. Encourage Scouts and Venturers to participate in the religious emblems program of their respective faith.
6. Be familiar with the "Chaplain Aide" section of this handbook.
7. Work with the unit's chaplain aide to plan and conduct an annual Scout-oriented religious observance, preferably during Scout Week in February.

Support and Observe Unit Leadership. Remember, volunteer Scouters who share their time and effort are what makes Scouting work.

- Support them. Recognize them for a job well done. Commend them personally for their ministry. Thank their family members, too, for their sacrifice makes Scouting possible.
- Observe them. Unit Scouters are charged with fulfilling the purpose of both the chartered organization and Scouting. The leadership should demonstrate awareness of and understanding of both facets. It should be evident that Scouting activities are fulfilling spiritual needs, in addition to developing Scouting skills.
- Coordinate with the chartered organization representative (COR). This person is the representative of the chartered organization to the unit, local Scouting district, and local council of the Boy Scouts of America. The chaplain should work closely with the COR in the interest of the chartered organization and its ministry, as well as for children, youth, and families.

Ministry Opportunities. After housing and schooling needs are met, one of the first contacts a new family often has in the community is with a Scouting unit. As new unit members are registered, you will learn of their religious preferences or interests and can extend an invitation to join your congregation in worship, or you may direct them to other opportunities for worship in the community. At no time should the chaplain proselytize.

Sensitivity to Needs. Interacting with Scouters and youth members offers you an opportunity to relate to them at a level where you will become sensitive to needs not yet expressed. Be alert for personal, family, or social situations that may require special care.

Accidents, Illnesses, and Other Concerns. It is appropriate for you, as chaplain, to request that unit leaders report to them any accidents, illnesses, or other concerns encountered by unit members. You should become aware of situations where a pastoral call would be appropriate and beneficial. Leaders who are in regular contact with their members often are the first to know of situations that may need pastoral attention.

If a member misses several meetings, it may be an indication that something is wrong. Ask that the names of absentees be shared with you. As chaplain, you have the opportunity to visit and discover the source of the problem. If the problem is with some aspect of the Scouting program or leadership, you should discuss this problem with the chartered organization representative, unit committee chairman, or other appropriate individual.

Religious Emblems Study Programs. The chaplain is in an ideal position to promote the religious emblems program and encourage Scouts to complete the requirements for the emblem of their faith. Many units include members of various faiths; therefore, it is helpful to have some knowledge of all emblems. Since procedures vary among different faiths, obtain a copy of the *Duty to God* brochure, No. 512-879, which lists all religious emblems programs and how to acquire study materials. In addition, call the local council service center or the council religious relationships committee for help in identifying ways to promote the religious emblems program and emblem recipient recognition ceremonies.

Note: Volunteers may obtain bin resources through their local council service centers. Limited quantities are free of charge.

Service Project Opportunities. Service projects for advancement are required of all Scouts. Helping others is a Scouting tradition. As chaplain, you have the advantage of being able to identify many possible service projects for individuals and families, for the chartered organization, for the community, and beyond the community. You will need to be on the lookout for service projects that are helpful and significant.

A particular emphasis in service projects is to focus on concerns and cares of the faith community, such as persons living in impacted areas (neighborhoods isolated by highways, interstates, commercial developments, etc.); aged, homebound, hungry, and illiterate people; ethnic minority groups needing help; and persons with handicapping conditions.

Badge of Office The chaplain patch, No. 440, may be ordered from the BSA National Distribution Center at 800-323-0732 or www.scoutstuff.org, or from any Scout shop, local council service center, or official Scouting distributor.

Chaplain Aide

The chaplain aide is an approved youth leadership position in Boy Scout troops and Venturing crews. The purposes for this leadership position are to:

- Make the 12th point of the Scout Law more meaningful in life.
- Promote a greater understanding of and appreciation for all religions.
- Provide Boy Scouts and Venturers with the opportunity to work with an ordained member of the clergy, thereby gaining insight into the religious professional life.



Qualifications. The responsibilities of the chaplain aide include encouraging the spiritual awareness and growth of each member of the unit and assisting the unit chaplain and other adults and unit leaders. Consequently, the candidate for chaplain aide must:

1. Be mature and sensitive and have earned the respect and trust of his or her fellow Scouts.
2. For a troop chaplain aide, be at least a First Class Scout; for Venturing, be an established member of a Venturing crew.
3. Have received—or be working toward completing the requirements leading to—the age-appropriate religious emblem for his or her faith.

Duties. The chaplain aide should:

1. Encourage unit members to strengthen their own relationships with God through personal prayer and devotion and participation in religious activities appropriate to their faith.
2. Participate in planning sessions with the troop's patrol leaders' council or crew's officers to ensure that spiritual emphasis is included in unit activities, e.g., vespers, prayer before meals, religious observances.
3. With the unit chaplain, plan appropriate religious services for all members during weekend campouts. Units may conduct their own religious services, invite the unit chaplain or an exemplary layperson to participate in the service, or visit a nearby church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or other religious institution. Invite the unit chaplain to visit a campout, eat with unit members, and conduct a worship service.
4. Help the unit chaplain (or other designated adult) plan and conduct an annual Scout-oriented religious observance, preferably during Scout Week in February.
5. Present an overview of the various religious emblems programs to the unit at least annually, instructing members to contact their own religious leader to guide them in the appropriate study programs.
6. Present an overview of the religious emblems programs to Cub Scout dens or packs and other Scouting units on request.
7. Maintain the unit's religious emblems award progress chart.
8. Assist the unit chaplain, or other appropriate adult, to plan and conduct a religious emblem recognition ceremony. Presentation of a religious emblem is the responsibility of the local religious institution in which it is earned, though it is appropriate for the unit to recognize members who have received religious emblems at courts of honor or other appropriate occasions.

Badge of Office. The chaplain aide patch, No. 443, may be ordered from the BSA National Distribution Center at 800-323-0732 or www.scoutstuff.org, or from any Scout shop, local council service center, or official Scouting distributor.

Unit Worship Opportunities

As a chaplain or chaplain aide, your principal duty is to plan for and/or conduct meaningful worship opportunities.

Group Prayers. When present, members of the clergy, other religious leaders, or the chaplain aide may be asked to lead the unit, or other Scouting units, in prayer at courts of honor and other gatherings. If the group consists of members with mixed beliefs, or if the beliefs of the group are unknown, then prayers should be of an interfaith content. However, if the group is of like belief or the unit is chartered to a religious organization, then it is entirely appropriate to offer belief-specific prayer. Invocations, benedictions, and devotions with interfaith content are available in the pamphlet *A Scout Is Reverent: A Resource for Interfaith, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Worship at Scouting Events*, No. 34248.

At Weekend Activities. Because Scouting units often camp on weekends, youth members and leaders may not be able to attend their regular worship services. Every unit going away for an overnight or weekend needs to plan to conduct or attend a worship service (either for the individual or for the unit) in keeping with the 12th point of the Scout Law. The chaplain should be invited to conduct the services or work out a program with the chaplain aide and other adult leaders. The chaplain may recommend scripture readings or devotional readings to be used at the close of the evening or as a morning meditation. The chaplain aide and unit chaplain (or other designated adult) should conduct these services with other youth members and adult participation.

Interfaith Considerations. Coming together to worship God with fellow Scouts and Scouters is an excellent opportunity to model the 12th point of the Scout Law—A Scout is reverent—and that part of the Scout Oath that addresses duty to God (also found in the Cub Scout and Venturing oaths). It is a Scouter's responsibility to help each youth member grow in his or her chosen religious teachings, not to suggest or dictate what faith group or beliefs to follow. Scouters should encourage youth members to develop in their own faith while guiding and encouraging them to do their duty to God in accordance with their religious dictates.

At many Scouting weekend activities (such as unit campouts, Order of the Arrow fellowships, or district camporees), the resources available and the numbers in attendance do not justify planning and offering services for various faith groups. It would seem ideal in these circumstances to plan and conduct a single interfaith religious service—and a single service would certainly ease the burden on planners and on facilities.

The name of the service should be clear—*interfaith service*, *all-faiths service*, or *Scout's Own service* (but interfaith is the preferred term). Be sure everyone understands that the service is nonsectarian and, thus, all are invited. The terms *nondenominational* and *interdenominational* are not the same as interfaith; rather, they are terms that typically denote forms of Christian worship.

Preparing an interfaith service requires a significant understanding of the youth members and Scouters who will be in attendance (or who are expected to be in attendance), along with a significant understanding of their varied faith traditions. Use of the term "interfaith service" means that everyone is welcome, and everyone should feel comfortable with what is spoken, sung, read, or otherwise imparted during the service.

Truth in advertising is extremely important. If a service is advertised as interfaith, then its content must be so. The worship experience must be consistent with Scouting's Declaration of Religious Principle, and the Scout planners must be sensitive—and deliver what they advertise!

Here are some basic guidelines for conducting weekend interfaith religious services:

- The word God generally is accepted by most faith groups and is the term used in all phases of Scouting. Note that this term represents the creator or divine spirit, as it is used in the Scout Oath and the Venturing Oath. It is not intended to be a limiting term—there are many names that individual religions use to represent God. If there is a reasonable likelihood that persons of the Jewish faith will be present and you are using printed materials, it would be considerate to use the term G-d instead, as many Jews do not write the name of God.
- Other than God, specific names should be avoided (such as Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, or Holy Spirit) since they are religion-specific. Likewise, male pronouns (such as Father God, Heavenly Father, or His) should be avoided if possible as they may be disrespectful in some religions.
- Remember that, while an interfaith service may be very spiritually uplifting, it might not fulfill the individual religious obligations of Scouters and youth members belonging to certain faith groups. It simply may not be possible to satisfy everyone's needs with a single service. Be sure people know that in advance so that they may plan accordingly.

- Choose a theme for the service that fits with the specific weekend or time of year. This helps focus the prayers, songs, and message in a meaningful way and ties the religious service into the weekend event rather than having it stand alone and appear to be a separate activity. Possible themes include God’s Creation, Thanksgiving, The Great Outdoors/Forest/Ocean, Doing One’s Best, or On the Trail of the Eagle.
- Songs (a term more appropriate than “hymns”) should be generic in nature, addressing God alone (not Jesus, Buddha, etc.). This may be a challenge as the list of usable and familiar worship songs is fairly short.
- Choose quotations and readings wisely—be sure they fit the theme or message of the service. If the verbiage is altered from the original, be sure to use the word adapted after the author’s name. (For instance, taking a quotation and turning it into a responsive reading is an adaptation of the original phrase.)
- An interfaith service should incorporate common elements in such a way that the entire service flows together to support the spiritual needs of those in attendance.
- The length of time required for an appropriate religious service is variable. It depends on the time of day, the age of the participants, and other factors. Don’t, however, short-change this experience by wedging it into a 15-minute spot—for instance, between a major activity and dinner. Make the religious service an intentional, important part of each Scouting weekend.
- When a “message” is delivered (and it is best to avoid use of the words sermon or homily, as those are religion-specific terms), be sure that the person presenting the message understands that this is an interfaith experience. Choose a topic that relates to all in attendance. Avoid injecting one’s personal religious beliefs into the message—for instance, a biblical theme. Remember to be sensitive to those in attendance.
- Pick a location for the interfaith service that fits with the theme of the service, one that is comfortable for the participants and will enhance the religious experience. Seek to avoid religious symbols (although this may be hard to do if you are using a chapel with affixed symbols), or be sure that all appropriate symbols are represented.
- Consider obtaining and using copies of *A Scout Is Reverent: A Resource for Interfaith, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Worship at Scouting Events*, which is available at www.scoutstuff.org. Other religious materials related to Scouting and the religious emblems programs also are available at this website.
- Make notes about what worked well and share them with others who may be asked to plan future interfaith services.

Funeral or Memorial Services for Scouts or Scouters. On occasion, a Scouting unit may experience the loss of a Scout or leader. It is a difficult time for everyone. At the request of the family or with the permission of the family and religious leader, Scouts may participate in the funeral and memorial service to celebrate the life of the Scout or leader. Some things that may be appropriate include:

- Attending in uniform
- Sitting together as a unit
- Serving as honorary pallbearers or ushers
- Serving during the service by doing such things as reciting the Scout Oath or Scout Law

The primary concern is for the family and its preferences. The involvement of the unit or members in the unit is at the discretion of the family and its religious leaders.

This handbook replaces the following BSA publications:

- “The Roles of the Troop Chaplain and the Chaplain Aide”
- Manual for Chaplain Aides and Chaplains, No. 05-216



Prepared. For Life.™



Conducting an Interfaith Service

Training Summary: The purpose of this one-hour course is to teach Boy Scout leaders and Boy Scouts how to conduct a simple interfaith worship service at camp, on the trail, or during other outings. When we conduct Scouting activities, it is important that we call attention to a Scout's "Duty to God" through prayer at meal times and at other appropriate occasions.

Training format:

- Lecture with easel pad and marker or lecture with PowerPoint presentation
- Hands-on work by students in small groups to develop an interfaith service
- Sharing of small group ideas with entire group
- Question and answer session, as time allows

Time Required: One hour for lecture, discussion, and hands-on work

Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will know what parts an interfaith worship service could contain, so that leaders and Scouts feel comfortable leading and participating in such an activity.

Required Materials: Copies of *Reverence: A Resource for Interfaith, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Worship at Scouting Events* (No. 34248), the BSA adult leader application form (No. 28-501), and the [Worship Service Planning Work Sheet](#) to distribute to each participant

Optional Equipment and Materials:

- Easel and large writing pad
- Computer with the above-referenced sources on it, printer and access to the Internet to download these references, or printouts of the files referenced below for the Scouts/leaders to use
- Computer projector and screen (if class is converted to PowerPoint presentation)
- Copies of scriptures for various faiths, as appropriate

References:

- *Reverence: A Resource for Interfaith, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Worship at Scouting Events* (No. 34248)
- BSA Web site (www.scouting.org)—link to "Fact Sheets" and select those related to faith groups and interfaith service (to be added in May 2008)

Course Syllabus

Introduction (15 minutes): An interfaith service is a brief worship or meditation, specifically designed for Scouting events where there may be members of more than one faith group. The intention of an interfaith service (formerly known as a Scouts' Own) is to provide a spiritual focus during a camping experience that does not reflect the views of a particular denomination or faith. An interfaith service can be defined as a gathering of Scouts held to contribute to the development of their spirituality and to promote a fuller understanding of the Scout Oath and Law, with emphasis on one's Duty to God. Let's take a look at what this definition means.

An interfaith service is a gathering of Scouts consistent with the 12th point of the Scout Law. This can be in groups as small as two or as large as a world Scout jamboree, though groups of a few patrols work best. In smaller groups, Scouts are able to get involved, share their experiences, and learn that spirituality is something that affects everyone.

An interfaith service is held for the development of the Scouts' spirituality. Spirituality is that which is beyond the material, that which gives meaning and direction to one's life. Scouting is primarily concerned with how people live out their beliefs in everyday life.

Hence, an interfaith service should connect in some way to the Scout Law, the ethical code of Scouting. Usually, mentioning the Scout Law, making allusions to it, and/or including a recitation of the Law as part of an interfaith service provides this connection. An interfaith service may simply include ethical content that the Scouts themselves can connect to the Scout Law.

Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scouting movement, believed that a person's religion is not in how he behaves; rather it is in what he believes. This is where the Scout Law intersects with spirituality. In developing character, Scouts may connect their spirituality to the Scout Law so that the living out of their religious faith is also an active expression of the Scout Law.

As explained herein, the goal is to provide an uplifting and positive experience for all attendees. It is not necessary to attempt to account for the sensitivities of every conceivable religion on Earth; rather, seek to account for those religions whose members reasonably might be expected to be present. As promoters of the religious emblems program, unit leaders should have a good sense of the religions of those unit members present on a campout. For larger camping activities, such as camporees, all unit leaders could be asked about members' religious preferences to ensure that reasonable care is given to inclusiveness.

In the event that an individual attendee becomes offended as an outcome of an interfaith service, an apology is in order in the spirit of "a Scout is friendly." Similarly, though, in the spirit of "a Scout is friendly," the individual offended should accept the apology graciously and explain how the service might have been conducted so as not to be offensive to him or her. The acts of seeking to make subtle theological distinctions or looking to be offended are grossly out of place at an interfaith service, particularly when the service is planned by youth members with adult mentoring and conducted by youth members.

Attendance at an Interfaith Service

Participation at an interfaith service should be a voluntary, uplifting experience for Scouts and leaders. It should be a friendly, welcoming experience for all. There should never be coercion or criticism concerning participation or nonparticipation in an interfaith service.

Some religions do not support the participation of their members in Interfaith Services. Some religions obligate their members to participation in a specific religious service; consequently, participation in an interfaith service may not meet this obligation. Some individuals may choose to participate in the interfaith service and also in a service of their own faith.

Location of the Service

Any location separate from the noise and activity area is fine—a clearing in the woods, an empty campsite, the chapel area at a camp, a scenic overlook, an unused room in a building, the far corner of a gym.

Content of the Service

Distribute copies of the BSA adult registration form; read and briefly discuss the BSA "Statement of Religious Principle" to which all adult leaders subscribe. Highlight particularly the phrase stating that "its policy is that the home and organization or group to which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life."

Explain that an interfaith service is an inspirational experience, usually built around a central theme, such as friendship, world peace, save the Earth, or appreciation of the world around us. Just about any topic is appropriate if it is consistent with the

Statement of Religious Principle and program goals of Boy Scouts of America. Scouts should be part of the planning process so that they learn and grow spiritually. Active adult coaching, consistent with the training provided herein, is critical for success.

The form of an interfaith service can range from lively to somber. While the content may take different forms, an interfaith service always should be conducted with reverence. Advance planning (and scripting) is critical because extemporaneous comments, while well-intentioned, may lead to discomfort on the part of members of some faith groups.

To help ensure that nothing in an interfaith service would offend any participant, invite representatives of all faith groups with members present to participate in developing the service. Care must be used so that one person's religious traditions are not imposed to offend another person. For example, one should not direct all attendees to remove their hats before prayer, as those of Jewish and Muslim faiths pray with heads covered. A more acceptable call to prayer would be: "Let us each prepare to pray according to his or her tradition." Similarly, stating, "This we ask in Jesus' name," while making the prayer personal to the person leading it, could be troubling to people of other religions.

Planning an Interfaith Service (15 to 20 minutes)

While the leader can be either a Scout or an adult, the content of an interfaith service needs to promote a meaningful and inclusive experience. Distribute copies of *Reverence: A Resource for Interfaith, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Worship at Scouting Events*. Open to Section I (Interfaith Section) and review the contents. They are endorsed by the BSA's National Religious Relationships Committee, which includes representatives from most major faith groups that charter Scouting units in the United States.

Songs (hymns) are best when accompanied by an instrument, like a guitar or harmonica, to help the singers with the melody. The simpler the song, the easier it will be for Scouts to sing along. Songs like "America the Beautiful," "God Bless America," or other well-known melodies are the easiest to sing if no accompaniment is available. The leader (or song leader) may choose to hum the opening note to help get everyone started, or have the accompanist give the first chord or note.

On the last page of this training syllabus is a planning sheet that you may copy for your use. This sheet is a basic outline that can be modified to include content from the model services contained in the *Reverence* booklet. The planning sheet is useful in assigning and documenting various roles to be performed during the interfaith service.

Leaders should ensure that youth members are included in the planning and conduct of the interfaith service. It is important that those chosen to conduct the service gather ahead of time to plan the service, together with all the needed papers and material needed. Assign who will read what and who will provide accompaniment (ensuring that the songs are known or that musical scores are available), and determine where the service will be held. If time permits, those conducting the interfaith service should rehearse their parts as a group.

Trainer: Allow 15 to 20 minutes for participants to work in small groups on the Planning Work Sheet, and then allow 5 to 6 minutes for them to share their ideas.

Conclusion: With this short lesson and planning session, unit leaders and members should feel sufficiently comfortable to plan and execute a simple but meaningful interfaith service, no matter where they are located. Attendance should not be mandatory at these services, but all should be made to feel comfortable while there. Choose your place to hold this service, be it a clearing in the woods, a wide spot on the trail, or a hill overlooking a nice scene or a quiet room. Remember, these are only guidelines for a generic service. If all members of the group are of the same religion, the canons of that religion may be followed. When present, participants from different religions should be considered and involved in the planning of these services.

Resources

<http://reverent-scout.net/reverent-scout/>

<http://usscouts.org/usscouts/reverent.asp>

<http://usscouts.org/scoutduty/>

[Big Book of Scout Worship Services](#)