

Boy Scout of America Religious Emblem Program

The Boy Scouts of America produces programs for youth based on the principle that parish youth activities are called youth ministry. When a parish or organization decides to use the Scouting programs, they OWN the youth programs for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, or Venturing that they charter. Scouting provides a unified vision of youth ministry as a ministry to youth, with youth, by youth, and for youth. These programs of Scouting are a very valuable resource to the parish. Thus, Scouting is no longer considered an outside group using the parish facilities but the Parish Youth Group.

The affirmation of a Scout's **Duty to God** is necessary for the best type of citizenship. This recognition of God as the sovereign power in the universe and the grateful acknowledgment of His favors and blessings are wholesome precepts in the education of youth. No matter what religious faith the Scout may be, this fundamental need of good citizenship should be kept before the Scout. The BSA recognizes this in religious training given by the family and/or religious organizations. Its policy is: "The home and the organization or group with which the youth is connected shall give definite attention to religious life."

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) operates under the auspices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

One of the unique developments that has emerged from the partnership of Scouting with religious organizations is the Religious Emblems Program. The idea to recognize those who demonstrated faith, observed creeds and principles and gave service originated in 1926 with the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles. After a program was developed by the NCCS and approved by the USCCB, a medal was created for presentation. It was called *Ad Altare Dei*. This program provided a pattern and guide to other religious bodies as they created their own versions in accordance with their concepts of spiritual education.

The various programs have some general characteristics:

- a. Each religious organization develops requirements and emblems of recognition for its own constituents who are in Scouting.
- b. No matter where a candidate gets their Scouting, they enroll in the emblems program of their own faith and are instructed according to the guidelines of that faith.
- c. Presentation of the emblems should be made in the context of a religious service whenever possible.
- d. The BSA does not control the religious emblems--the religious organization controls them.

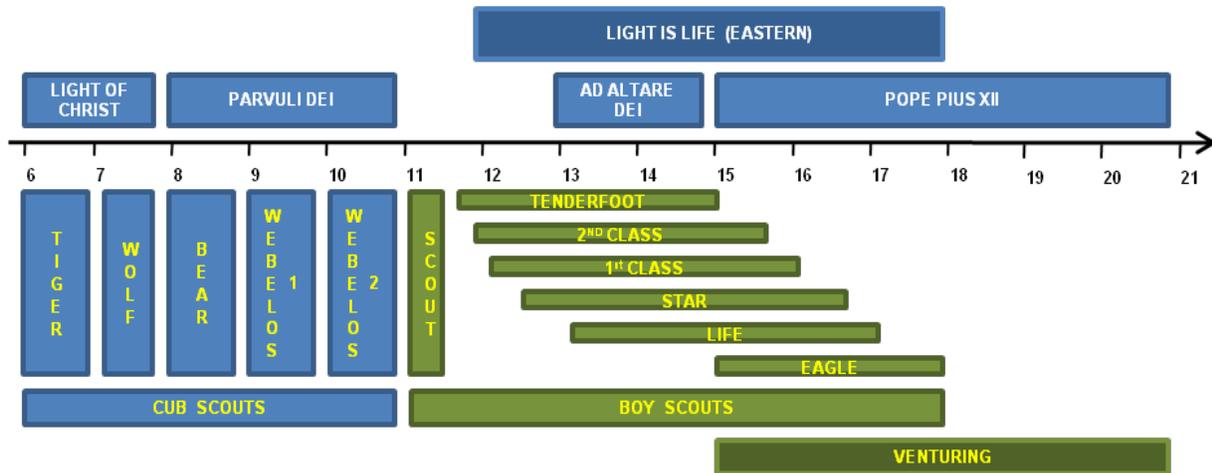
The BSA recognizes the youth's achievement permitting them to wear the religious emblems on their uniform.

Religious Emblems

There are 4 Religious Emblem programs available for Scouts to earn. Two that can be earned by Cub Scouts, two that can be earned by Boy Scouts and one that can be earned by Boy Scouts and Venturing crew members. By completing any of the Religious Emblems, the scout is also entitled to wear the BSA Religious Knot.

Scouts are encourage to earn all 4 emblems while they are on their Scouting and faith journeys

The Journey



Light of Christ: Designed for 6-7 years old Cub Scouts

Parvuli Dei: Designed for 8-10 years old Cub Scouts.

Ad Altare Dei: Designed for 13-14 years old Boy Scouts.

Pope Pius XII: Designed for Venturing Crew Members and Boy Scouts 15 years old and older.

Light is Life: Designed for Boy Scouts, 12 -13 years old of the Eastern-rite Catholic Churches. Scouts in the Eastern Catholic Churches work on Light is Life rather than the Ad Altare Dei emblem

Cub Scouts

The parents of the Scouts lead the programs of this level. A **Pack Coordinator** works as the Counselor to the parents. The Pack Coordinator does not work with the young Scouts. Only parents or legal guardians work directly with the youth.

Light of Christ

This program helps the Tiger and Wolf develop a personal relationship with Jesus. With the parents' active participation, the young Cub will see Jesus as a real person and friend. The Light of Christ Emblem is awarded to those youth in Scouting who have begun the early stages of faith development. These young boys, through their interaction and works of good deeds, both in family and parish life, have witnessed to Christ, our Light.

Age level: Designed for Tiger and Wolf Cubs.

Parvuli Dei

This program helps young boys explore a wide range of activities in order to discover the presence of God in their daily lives as members of their family and parish. The Parvuli Dei

(Children of God) Emblem is awarded in special recognition by the Catholic Church to a Cub or Webelos Scout for advancement in religious knowledge and spiritual growth. The purpose of the emblem is to help young boys explore and discover the presence of God in their daily lives as members of their family. It also helps them to develop a positive self-image through the contributions they make to their faith community.

Age level: Designed for Bear and Webelos Scouts.

Boy Scouts

A trained **religious emblems coordinator/counselor/moderator/facilitator** is required to work on religious emblems. The Counselor and Facilitator is to help the youth in going beyond the surface answers of childhood as part of their experience of growing as a Christian and to deal calmly and reasonably with the occasional challenge to authority. The Counselor and Facilitator could use that challenge to show how necessary it is for people to act responsibly in the Church today.

Ad Altare Dei

In a series of steps, the Scout grows spiritually as a young Catholic to help him understand the meaning of the Sacraments. The program involves an intense study of the seven sacraments, the Scriptures, and the Boy Scout oath and law. The study is combined with service to community in order to enrich the Scout as he shoulders greater responsibility in his roles as a family member, parishioner, and citizen. The Scout's encounter with Christ, then, leads to greater appreciation of faith in the Church and greater desire to come to the Altar of God, hence the name, Ad Altare Dei.

Age level: Designed for Boy Scouts, seventh grade and above.

Pope Pius XII

In this program, high school age youths in small groups study and discuss their role as young Catholics in today's society. Guided by the Holy Spirit, this formation can make youth more aware of their potential of being future Christian leaders. This program in Catholic Scouting underscores the development of individuals in the Christian faith through information, formation and transformation. It challenges the high school age Scout or Venturer to recognize their membership in the community of faith so as to foster a leadership role through example and responsible action, thus helping to usher in the Kingdom of God.

Age level: Designed for high school-age Sr. Scouts and Venturers.

Light is Life

The "Light is Life" is a program developed by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) for Boy Scouts of the Eastern Catholic churches. Light is Life respects the cultural and ritual differences among the various Eastern Catholic Churches.

The overall goal of the Light is Life religious emblem program is to bring about in the Scout, through his Eastern Christian Scouting experience, a deeper awareness of his share in faith-life. Then going forth, he will witness this life through maturity in communal worship and in Christian formation of his world.

Age level: Designed for Boy Scouts, seventh grade and above (should be earned in place of Ad Altare Dei)

Training and Youth Protection

The BSA emphasizes that the emblem programs are NOT BSA programs. They are church programs, developed, published and administered by the churches. Therefore, Counselors are the sole responsibility of the churches. In the church structure this responsibility resides on the diocesan level that usually gives policy statements that are to be followed.

The BSA's Adult Registration Policy requires all registered Scouters to provide personal references to the Chartering Organization and completion of its "Youth Protection Training" program. As such, it is wise for the Diocese to mirror this policy when registering Counselors with the Diocesan Committee. As for BSA, its position is that while individuals who are working as Counselors can be registered with BSA, they cannot be registered with the BSA as Religious Emblems Counselors.

The NCCS Executive Board has recommended to Diocesan/Eparchy Committees that Counselors be registered in some capacity with the BSA. This provides another level of review on an individual's background. The Counselor can be registered as a District Member-at-Large, etc., if he or she is not associated with a unit. This requirement may also provide additional liability insurance coverage to the Diocese while the Counselor is working with Scouts. Many dioceses have developed their own Youth Protection Program for parish priests, staff and volunteers who work with youth. If this is the case in the Diocese, then make sure that the Certification Program is in compliance. All adult Scouters must meet the qualifications of both the BSA and Diocesan Youth Protection Programs.

Catholic Committee on Scouting Archdiocese of Los Angeles (CCSALA)

Counselor/Facilitator Requirements:

You must be a Catholic in good standing

You must be VIRTUS trained through the Archdiocese of Los Angeles

You must be Livescan fingerprinted through the Archdiocese of Los Angeles

You must have a current BSA Youth Protection Training certificate

You must be a registered member of a BSA unit

You must attend a Counselor Training Session sponsored by the Catholic Scouting Committee, Archdiocese of Los Angeles

You must have a formal application for "Religious Emblems Counselors and Facilitators" on file with CCSALA

You must have a "Yearly Intent to Teach" application signed by your pastor on file with CCSALA for each emblem you intend to teach