

Parent Handout - Promoting Duty To God - First Steps

Dear Parent,

We encourage all Scouts, as part of their Duty to God, to earn their religious emblems. You, as the parent or guardian, will decide whether or not your child will participate in these programs. Each Scout will earn the religious emblem for his specific faith. **Parents and religious leaders are the teachers, not the unit leader.** Most religious emblems programs have more than one level. A young person who has earned a religious emblem as a younger Scout, may progress to the next level and earn another emblem. The 4-Star Award is the ultimate achievement, completing all 4 levels. There are four steps to get started on these programs:

1. Youth members must obtain the specific booklet for their religion. There are typically 3 booklets to order for each student: Counselor Manual, Adult Mentor, Student. If one person is serving as Counselor for several scouts, only 1 Counselor booklet is needed. We recommend that each Student should have an Adult Mentor, who also completes a booklet. The booklet contains 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. 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 listed in the Duty to God Brochure #5-879B) found on the PRAY website (praypub.org).

The God & Country Program covers 4 Levels. The program includes at least 18 denominations in the Circle Ten Council. Some may have somewhat different titles for each level, but they are basically the same levels. There are specific booklets for each denomination and are approved by members of that denomination.

1. God & Me (1-3 grade), 2. God & Family (4-5 grade), 3. God & Church (6-8 grade), 4. God & Life (9-12 grade)

For booklets, information, forms, help with contacting religious leaders, etc., please contact your Unit Leaders or Circle Ten Council God & Country Program Chairman, Paul J. Verheyden at 214-971-7407 (cell), pjverheyden@sbcglobal.net, All of these are available 24hrs/day, 7 days/week. Call or e-mail any time.

You may also contact the Circle Ten Council Executive, Steve Sawyer at 214-351-1010 or ssawyer@bsamail.org.

For Catholic Program, contact Pat Tidwell at 214-763-6970 or texasscouter@aol.com.

You can also go to the P.R.A.Y. (Parents in Religious Activities with Youth) website at praypub.org or call 1-800-933-7729. Booklets and awards, patches, presentation materials for more information, etc. can be ordered directly from them and sent to you overnight.

2. Parents must review the specific guidelines for their particular program: These guidelines are printed in each of the booklets that you get to start the 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; and each program determines who may serve as counselor (clergy, parents or other family members).

3. 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.

4. The young person needs to complete the requirements, obtain the proper signatures, and follow the instructions to order the emblem/award. You may set your own schedule for completing the requirements. There are several sections and projects to complete. We encourage you to work as a team of Counselor, Adult Mentor, Student. However, group classes can be set up for accountability, or working through each section. The emblems are not available in your local Council. You must order these directly from P.R.A.Y. Some denominations require you to order from them. The emblem can be presented at anytime of the year and should be presented in a meaningful ceremony, preferably in the member's religious institution. Scout Sunday (1st Sunday in February) is a great time to present the awards.

We would be very proud if our Scouts earned their religious emblems. Please talk with your child about these programs. **You should start the program by no later than end of October.** Thank you!