
Parish Recognition of Religious Award Recipients

Catholic Committee on Scouting
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

INTRODUCTION

The first rule in preparing recognition ceremonies is to keep them simple but impressive. The second is to remember that the ceremony is for the youth. The following resources contain information on planning and conducting recognition ceremonies:

- *Scoutmaster Handbook* (#33009B)
- *Boy Scout Troop Program Resources with CD-ROM* (#33588A)
- *Cub Scout Ceremonies for Dens and Packs* (#33212C)
- *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*

The basic ideas presented in these resources can be applied to presentations for religious awards.

Awards can be given at a Court of Honor/Award, Blue and Gold Banquet, Scout Sunday celebration or another suitable event in the parish. As one of the high points in a Scout's career, Scouts should be in their full uniform. Since these celebrations are faith-based, Arrow-men and Arrow-women do not wear their Order of the Arrow sash.

PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Preparation

- Schedule a date and location in conjunction with your pastor
- Order awards through the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting: <http://scouts.dio.org>
- Have the aspersorium and aspergillum (holy water pot and sprinkler) ready for blessing awards
- Provide a podium for the Scripture reading
- Prepare a Color Guard for posting and retrieving the Colors, including bases for all flags used in the procession
- Reserve a seating area for parents and Scouts receiving awards
- Arrange seating for participants and guests
- If there are many recipients, the awards can be pinned to a ribbon which the presenter can place around the Scout's neck
- Prepare a script for the announcer and celebrant to read during the ceremony
- Provide light snacks and drinks for celebrating after the ceremony

Entrance Procession

An entrance procession can be used to bring the group's attention to a solemn ceremony that is about to take place. A procession may include:

- Processional Cross
- Flags (American and Vatican City, followed by Unit Flags)
- Award recipients and their parents
- Other Scouts
- Adult leaders
- Celebrant - Pastor/Parochial Vicar/Chaplain

Opening Prayer & Pledge

The celebrant begins the celebration with this or other appropriate opening prayer.

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen! We thank you, Lord, for this opportunity to gather in Your name to recognize the achievements of these young disciples. We ask that you bless these Scouts and their families and inspire them to continue growing closer to You through a Scout’s Duty to God. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen!”

After the Opening Prayer, the Senior Patrol Leader or other designated Scout invites everyone to join him/her in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction

The celebrant welcomes everyone to the ceremony, inserting opening remarks as appropriate.

“Today, we honor Scouts who have progressed well in his or her training, young disciples who took the time to say, ‘I want to know more about life and God.’ Today, we pin them with a medal that says, ‘Well done my good and faithful servant! Go on now to greater knowledge as the mysteries of life unfold before you.’ We pray that you hold on to what is good and keep a Christian Spirit with you always. We congratulate each of you sincerely and hope your days as Scouts will be happy days of growth. May you always be a credit to your Church, your family, and your community, and may God continue to bless you and keep you always.”

“Before we present these awards, let us be attentive to a passage from Scripture.”

Reading

Having readings from Scripture will help remind everyone that this ceremony is as much a prayer service as it is a celebration of each Scout’s accomplishments. Some suggested Scripture passages include:

- 1 Samuel 3:2-10 (Samuel’s calling)
- Jeremiah 1:4-8 (God appoints the young Jeremiah)
- Romans 12:9-21 (Fraternal Charity)
- Ephesians 4:1-6 (Unity in the Body of Christ)
- Ephesians 6:10-17 (The Whole Armor of God)
- Philippians 3:12-14 (Pressing Toward the Goal)
- Colossians 2:6-7 (Fullness of Life in Christ)
- 1 Timothy 6:12-14 (The Good Fight of Faith)

Reflection

The celebrant adds his comments here, pointing out that the teachings of our faith must be in our minds and in our hearts, not just in the Scriptures, our projects, or our workbooks.

Religious Emblems and Recognitions

“All Scouts recognize that they have a duty to God and that Scouts are called to be reverent. We are here to recognize the hard work and dedication it takes for a Scout to honor their Duty to God by earning a religious emblem or recognition. These Scouts have made a serious effort in growing in their faith, knowledge, and service of God through one of these faith activities.”

A Scout should explain the various religious emblems and recognitions that are being presented. See “Background on Emblems and Recognitions” below. Members of Scouts BSA units earn a religious emblem by completing either the Light of Christ, Parvuli Dei, Ad Altare Dei or Pope Pius XII programs. Members of Girl Scouts USA and other kindred groups earn a religious recognition by completing either the God is Love, Family of God, I Live My Faith, Mary the First Disciple, Spirit Alive or Missio programs.

The background can include all religious awards or only those being presented at that ceremony. Other religious awards from the Catholic Committee on Scouting may be included as well.

Blessing of Awards

Omit if no clergy are present.

See “Suggested Blessings” below or the *Book of Blessings* for a suitable blessing.

Presentation

Scouts along with their parents can be called up individually or in groups (e.g. everyone receiving the same award). If the Celebrant is calling up groups, he may say these or similar words:

“At this time, I would like to recognize Scouts who have earned the _____ emblem/recognition.” All Scouts earning that award should come forward with their parents.

The Celebrant congratulates the Scout and presents the emblem/recognition to the Scout’s parent to pin on the Scout’s uniform shirt or the celebrant may pin the emblem on the Scout himself.

If there is a parent’s miniature pin to be presented, the celebrant may add:

“Acknowledging the role parents play in their child’s religious formation, I am happy to recognize you with this miniature pin.” Invite the Scout to pin the mother or father.

Once all awards have been presented, everyone should return to their seats.

Closing

Close with a blessing for everyone present and a reminder that our faith journeys do not end when one receives an award. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is a lifelong journey and earning religious awards such as these are only milestones along the way, not a completion of our formation in the faith.

The Color Guard retrieves the Colors and processes out.

BACKGROUND ON EMBLEMS AND RECOGNITIONS

Light of Christ

The Light of Christ emblem is for Tiger and Wolf Scouts. Christ said, "I am the light of the world: whoever follows me will not walk in darkness" (John 8:12). In baptism, we are instructed to keep the flame of faith alive and burning brightly in our hearts. The purpose of the Light of Christ program is to help Scouts grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. With the help of parents, Scouts learn more about how we see Jesus as a real person and a friend.

Scouts learn about the Holy Family and how we become part of God's family through Baptism. Just as Mary and Joseph wanted Jesus to grow up learning about his faith, we, too, come to know our faith primarily in our families. To keep our light of Christ burning brightly, we also have to learn how to reconcile with each other and with God. As a family, we also sometimes share a special meal, such as celebrating a birthday or holiday. We celebrate a special meal when we gather as God's family, too. And these special meals, the Eucharist, are celebrated in a church.

The Light of Christ emblem is a medal depicting the Paschal Candle being observed by a Scout along with a bar that bears the inscription, "Light of Christ".

Parvuli Dei

The Parvuli Dei emblem, which is Latin for "Children of God," is for Bear and Webelos Scouts. As children of God, we need to be mindful that God is always present. The purpose of the emblem study program is to help Scouts explore a wide range of activities in order to discover the presence of God in our daily lives as members of our families and parishes and to develop a positive self-image through the contributions we make to the community.

Scouts begin by studying the story of Creation in the Book of Genesis and that each of us are created by God with unique gifts and talents that we can use to serve Him and others through the Church. Our Church community is also a special place where we serve others. When we share of ourselves, we all become more Christlike and share God's love just as Jesus asks us to do.

The Parvuli Dei emblem is a medal depicting the Holy Family with a dove and is suspended from a bar that bears the inscription "Parvuli Dei."

Ad Altare Dei

The Ad Altare Dei is for Scouts BSA and Venturing Scouts who have completed the sixth grade and are prepared to make a serious commitment toward exploring how faith and Scout membership mirror and support each other. The purpose of the program is to help Scouts develop a fully Christian way of life within my faith community. The curriculum is based on the Seven Sacraments. These sacraments are our primary means toward spiritual growth.

I had to ask myself: 'Is my reverence for God something I save for Sundays?' This program helped me to see Jesus Christ as a part of my day-to-day life. Only by knowing Christ and the meaning of being Christian can we live the divine life.

Spiritual growth was an underlying goal in the Ad Altare Dei program. Spiritual growth and Scouting go hand in hand. The Ad Altare Dei program helped me to advance spiritually in Scouting and to live fully the Scout Oath and Law.

The Ad Altare Dei emblem is a bronzed cross, suspended from a ribbon of papal colors with red, white and blue stripes down the center of the ribbon. A bronze bar and pin at the top of the ribbon is inscribed with the phrase Ad Altare Dei. This Latin phrase means 'To the altar of God.'

Light is Life

The Light is Life is a program developed for Scouts BSA and Venturers of the Eastern-rite Catholic Churches. Light is Life respects the cultural and ritual differences among the various Eastern Catholic Churches by bringing about in the Scout, through his Eastern Catholic 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.

The Light is Life emblem is a cross pattée inscribed with Greek letters suspended on a blue ribbon that is hung on a bar with the inscription, "Light is Life" across the top.

Pope Pius XII

Scouts BSA and Venturing Crew members high school age and older in the Pope Pius XII emblem program learn to explore where they are going in their lives and to engage in a process of discerning God's will for how they will live their lives by exploring a variety of vocations. A vocation is a call from God on how to use their gifts and talents in service to humanity and to God. Throughout the Pope Pius XII emblem program, participants examine a variety of career choices and different Church ministries that they might pursue in the future.

The goals of the Pope Pius XII Emblem program are:

- To examine how being a Christian affects daily life in a real world,

- To evaluate personal talents and abilities in light of a possible choice of life state, occupation and ministry,
- To discover how these life states, occupations and ministries help them to become more active in the Catholic Christian faith community,
- To share faith and the practice of religion among peers while they are receiving guidance and feedback attuned to the ideals of Scouting.

The emblem is a bronze shield of the coats of arms of the Holy See and Vatican City suspended from a ribbon of the yellow and white papal colors. The shield is emblazoned with the words “Dignity,” “Respect,” and “Humility” and is hung from a pin inscribed with “Pius XII” across the top.

God Is Love

The purpose of the God is Love program is to help Scouts in Kindergarten or first grade explore a wide range of activities to discover the presence of God in our daily lives as members of a family, a parish and the Catholic Church.

With a parent, Scouts learn about God’s love for His creation by reading the Creation Story in the Book of Genesis. Scouts then go on to learn about God’s love for them and that, through God’s love for creation and His love for us, we are called to love others.

The recognition award is a round pin with hands reaching towards a heart with the phrase, “God Is Love” inscribed around the top perimeter.

Family of God

The purpose of the Family of God program is to help children in second and third grades explore a wide range of activities to discover their uniqueness in God and in our families.

Scouts select from a variety of activities to learn how they are special to their families and with God, how they belong in a family and in God’s family, and how to better help their own family and with God’s family.

The recognition award is a round, bronze pin with Jesus greeting two children and the phrase, “Family of God” raised across the bottom.

I Live My Faith

The purpose of the I Live My Faith program is to help Scouts in fourth through sixth grades learn more about our faith and how to live it out. The program is designed around the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* – belief, sacraments, Christian living and prayer.

Each pillar provides a variety of opportunities for Scouts to explore the Catholic faith, choosing activities that range from art to technology and from research to drama.

The recognition award is a round, gold pin shaped like the sun with a cross surrounded by ray of light with the phrase, "I Live My Faith" around the perimeter.

Mary, the First Disciple

The Mary, the First Disciple program is designed for Scouts in grades 6-8 and helps Scouts learn more about Mary and themselves. Scouts will meet Mary in Scripture as a young teenager, follow her journeys, and watch her grow into the woman known as the Mother of God. Through interviews, role-plays, service projects, reflection questions, and prayer, Scouts become better disciples of Jesus Christ in imitation of His mother, Mary.

Mary lived in a very different time from today, so participants explore what things were like two thousand years ago. Scouts also learn about Mary as a model of holiness and how we are called to be holy, too, and how Mary is venerated as the Mother of God.

The recognition award is an oval, pewter pin with a relief of Mary holding the baby Jesus with the phrase "Marian Medal" inscribed on the bottom.

Spirit Alive

The Spirit Alive program is designed for Scouts in grades 9-10 to help us discover how the Holy Spirit moves in our lives, calling us to greater participation in the church's ministry.

As young Catholics, Scouts in this program will grow in awareness of the Holy Spirit, examine revelation of the Holy Spirit in Sacred Scriptures, how the Holy Spirit has manifested itself in Salvation History, and ways the Holy Spirit enlivens our spirituality.

The recognition award is a cross-shaped pin with a dove overlaying the cross.

Missio

The Missio program is designed in partnership with the Pontifical Missions Societies in the United States for Scouts in grades 11-12 who want to explore missionary discipleship and our own spiritual identity.

The readings and activities in the Missio program deepen our understanding of mission and its central role in Christian life. Scouts encounter core theological themes that form the missionary nature of the Church, examine missionary history and tradition in Scripture, and the patron saints of missions, St. Francis Xavier and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Scouts will also encounter Pauline Jaricot and follow her journey to found the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

The recognition is a round medal with Missio printed across the front and a modern art depiction of a human fingerprint.

SUGGESTED BLESSINGS

Blessing #1

Almighty God and Father, look on us in love and mercy as we gather in Your name. Bless these religious awards and help those who wear them to wear them proudly as a sign of Your goodness and of their love and devotion to You. Keep these Scouts always in Your care as they continue growing in wisdom, age, and grace. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing #2

O Lord bless these emblems in Your name. May those who wear them keep faith with You and live long lives of love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing #3

Almighty Father, we ask Your blessing on these medals made by human hands. We see these medals as a sign of our Scout's interest in our faith. We see these medals as signs of their growth in the knowledge of our faith and by their practice of our faith. This interest, growth, and practice are shown by the work they did in acquiring this emblem. We ask Your continued strength and guidance in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessing #4 (Parvuli Dei)

Almighty Gather, Who has given us the Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as an example for all families, bless these emblems bearing an image of the Holy Family of Nazareth, so that those who wear them may be loving and obedient children of their parents and obtain with them Your grace in this life and everlasting glory in the life to come. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing #5 (Parvuli Dei)

Enrich the lives of Your servants, O Lord, by the wearing of these emblems. May the Holy Family protect them during their years of growth. We ask all this through the giving of Your Spirit to each of those who wear these emblems. Amen.

Blessing #6 (Light of Christ)

Father, we share in the light of Your glory through Christ, Your Son, the Light of the world. Bless these emblems bearing an image of the Easter candle, so that those who wear them shall always follow the light of Christ. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing #7

Priest: Our help is in the name of the Lord

All: Who made heaven and earth

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Priest: Let us pray. God, Whose word suffices to make all things holy, pour out Your blessings on these emblems. Grant that anyone who use them with a grateful heart and in keeping with Your will may receive from You, their Maker, health in body and protection of soul by calling on Your holy name, through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Blessing #8 (Light Is Life)

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord, our God, You did not despise the youthfulness of Your servant, David, but commanded the prophet, Samuel, to anoint him as king over Your holy people Israel.

Through the words of the holy Apostle, Paul, You spoke to Your servant, the holy Bishop Timothy, saying, "Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith, and purity."

Now send down Your blessings upon these, Your youthful servants, and grant that they may be worthy leaders in faith, not hesitating on account of their youthfulness, but witnessing to Your holy gospel in the whole of their lives.

Bless, also, these emblems which they will wear as a sign of their faith and commitment to the proclamation of the gospel and grant that they may continue to grow in the divine likeness that they may come to full union with You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

All: Amen.

Priest: These emblems are blessed and sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit through the sprinkling of this holy water, in the name of the +Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (The priest sprinkles the emblems with holy water.)

All: Amen.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting, c/o Office for Catholic Education at:

<http://scouts.dio.org>

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