



Scouting for Episcopal Youth



FACT SHEET

The Record

Episcopal congregations have used the Scouting program in conjunction with other phases of their youth ministry for many years. The Rev. John F. Mitchell, an Episcopal minister from England, organized the first Boy Scout troop in the United States. It was started in May 1909 in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, at St. Thomas Episcopal Church under the Boy Scouts of England.

Since those earliest beginnings, the Scouting program has served as a catalyst for strengthening relationships among youth, family, community, and congregations in the Episcopal Church. Today, more than 42,000 youth members are served in more than 1,300 Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, Sea Scouting ships, and Venturing crews chartered to Episcopal congregations.

National Committee and Objectives

The National Episcopal Scouters Association and the Boy Scouts of America work together within the rules and regulations of the BSA to establish Scout units as an expression of the mission of the Association. This includes administering the BSA's religious emblems program for Episcopal youth and adults. The heart of the program focuses on character development, citizenship responsibility, and personal fitness so that individuals can achieve their greatest potential.

The Association was formed in 2004 with the following objectives.

1. Support local Episcopal Churches in their outreach and ministry to youth and families.
2. Encourage Episcopal congregations to become chartered organizations of the Boy Scouts of America by using one or more Scouting programs as an integral part of the local church's ministry.
3. Recognize, strengthen, and help sustain existing Scouting units in Episcopal Churches.
4. Encourage Episcopal Churches to include the entire Scouting program.
5. Encourage the spiritual growth of youths through involvement in the God and Country religious emblems program.
6. Support the chaplaincy ministry in individual Scouting units as well as at the district and council levels, particularly at summer camp.
7. Help BSA local councils promote the "duty to God" concept and establish and support Scouting units in Episcopal Churches.
8. Serve as an advisory group to the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America in matters relative to Scouting in the Episcopal Church.
9. Facilitate use of the Saint George Award as a recognition for adults involved with ministry to youth through Scouting under Episcopal auspices.
10. Provide training opportunities for Episcopal Scouters and other Episcopal leaders involved in Scouting activities.
11. Where appropriate, encourage the organization of Episcopal committees on Scouting.

Religious Emblems Program

The religious emblems program for Episcopal youth includes the following.

God and Me. For youth in grades one through three, this program encourages children to tell the story of their own lives, think about the life and teachings of Jesus, and to see how God is present in their lives today.

God and Family. For youth in grades four and five, this program fosters growth in relationship to self and God, and God's role in building a healthy family.

God and Church. For youth in grades six through eight, this program provides young persons with an opportunity to strengthen their relationship with Christ, learn about the ministry and worship of the Episcopal Church, and to experience the joy of serving others through community service.

God and Life. For youth in grades nine through 12, this program helps young people grow as Christians by fostering in them a closer relationship with and commitment to Christ through a heightened awareness of their worship experiences, of how God gives them strength during adversity, and how God helps everyone accomplish great things when they are open to His calling.

For adult recognition, the religious emblems program has two options.

God and Country mentor. A mentor is someone who serves as a living example for another person. The God and Country mentor program helps adults understand what it means to have a positive Christian influence on a youth who is enrolled in the God and Country program, and how to make the program a more enriching experience.

Saint George Award, Episcopal Church. A national recognition to acknowledge distinguished service by adults in the spiritual, physical, mental, and moral development of youth through service to the Episcopal Church and through national youth agency programs. Any adult who has made an exemplary contribution to the national youth agency ministry in the Episcopal Church may receive this recognition. The award seeks the individual; the individual does not seek the award, and it cannot be earned.

The religious emblems program is administrated under the auspices of P.R.A.Y. (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth). Visit <http://www.praypub.org>.

Resources

Rapp, Robert W. *Episcopal Scouting*, 1997 ed. Austell, Georgia, 1997.

The Episcopal Church. *Episcopal Church Supplement to the God and Country Study Series*.

For information about these resources, or for more information about the National Episcopal Scouters Association, visit <http://www.nationalepiscopalscouting.com>, or write to Amo Kearns, P.O. Box 6574, High Point, NC 27262; or Lyn Reavis, P.O. Box 294, Round Top, TX 78954.

