



Scouting Serves the Jewish Community

Background

- Judaism is one of the larger U.S. faith traditions outside of Christianity. Approximately 1.7 percent of the adult population practices Judaism. (Source: 2007 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, Pew Forum)
Regionally, this population is distributed as follows:
 - Northeast: 41 percent
 - Midwest: 12 percent
 - South: 26 percent
 - West: 21 percent
- Judaism can be classified in one of three categories: Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox.
- Jewish institutions have used the Scouting program since 1916, guided by Jewish leaders Dr. Cyrus Adler, Frank Weil, and Mortimer Schiff.
- 2010 membership included:
 - 2,156 Cub Scouts from 74 packs
 - 1,734 Boy Scouts from 82 troops
 - 170 Venturers from 18 crews

Religious Principles and Key Terms

- *Torah*: Jewish holy book that represents the first five books of the *Tanakh*, or the first five books of the Holy Bible known as the five books of Moses.
- *Halakhah*: Represents the Jewish rituals and religious observances that are grounded in Jewish law.
- *Mitzvot*: 613 individual commandments intended to keep the Jewish people holy. Of these:
 - 248 represent positive commandments, or what to do
 - 365 represent negative commandments, or what not to do
 - Only an estimated 270 are still applicable today
- *Rabbinic law*: Additional piece within the halakhah that along with the mitzvot is followed by Jewish people. Rabbinic law can be separated into three groups:
 - *Gezeirah*: A rule instituted by the rabbis to prevent inadvertent violation of a mitzvah
 - *Takkanah*: A law instituted by rabbis that does not derive from the Torah (e.g., lighting of the candles on Hanukkah)
 - *Minhag*: A custom that evolved for worthy religious reasons and has continued long enough to become a binding religious practice
- *Synagogue*: Jewish house of worship. Length and content of the service depends on the sect and customs of the community in general:
 - Hebrew is used most in Orthodox services and least in Reform services.
 - Reform services tend to be shorter than Orthodox or Conservative services.
- *Kashrut*: Jewish dietary laws that govern the practice of eating only “kosher” foods. Observance by Jewish sects includes the following:
 - Most Reform Jews consider the laws to be outdated and do not follow them; others keep kosher laws at home but not when dining out or in someone else’s home.
 - Orthodox Jews fully obey the laws of kashrut.
 - Conservative Jews tend to keep the laws consistently.



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Role of Scouting in the Jewish Faith

- The National Jewish Committee on Scouting (NJCS) promotes Scouting for Jewish youth by securing new Jewish chartered organizations.
- In cooperation with the Jewish Educational Services of North America, NJCS has developed supplemental Jewish program resources and literature to augment existing BSA program materials.
- The mission of the NJCS is to:
 - Promote and strengthen relationships with national Jewish organizations.
 - Develop literature and support materials.
 - Recruit rabbis for national and international events, as required.
 - Provide support to local council Jewish committees and to BSA council professional staff members who directly assist synagogues, day schools, Jewish community centers, and other Jewish institutions. This support includes:
 - Analyzing the needs of Jewish institutions and, in conjunction with BSA local council professionals, organizing Tiger Cub dens, Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, and Venturing crews.
 - Promoting and administering the Maccabee (first through third grades), Aleph (third through fifth grades), Ner Tamid (Boy Scouts), and Etz Chaim (older Boy Scouts and Venturers) religious emblems programs.
 - Promoting Scout Sabbath services.
 - Making arrangements for rabbis or laypeople to conduct religious services at Scout camps, Camporees, and other appropriate occasions.

Scouting Youth and Adult Recognitions

P.R.A.Y.'s 2010 Religious Emblems Report highlights the use of religious recognitions as:

- 188 Cub Scouts
- 186 Webelos
- 114 Boy Scouts
- 12 Venturers
- 60 adults

Youth Emblems

Maccabee Emblem



Purpose

- Helps young boys learn more about Judaism.
- Serves as a foundation for the Aleph, Ner Tamid, and Etz Chaim emblems.

Eligibility

- Registered Jewish Tiger Cubs and Cub Scouts in first through third grade

Requirements

- Completion of requirements in six categories: Jewish names, holidays, terms, symbols and objects, community helpers, and heroes
- Program is intended to last nine months and should be completed before the Cub Scout completes the third grade.



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Aleph Emblem

Purpose

- Helps to understand more about the Jewish faith and assists the youth in getting to know his rabbi or religious school teacher better.

Eligibility

- Registered Jewish Cub Scouts in third through fifth grade

Requirements

- Complete requirements in eight areas under the counseling of the youth's parents and rabbi or religious school teacher prior to completing the fifth grade.
- The eight areas are: Torah, prayer, religious holidays, bible heroes, famous American Jews, synagogue, the Jewish home, and the land of Israel.



Ner Tamid Emblem

Purpose

- Allows youth to build themselves spiritually and morally by practicing their religion.
- Aids youth in practicing duty to God, and being reverent and faithful in religious duties.

Eligibility

- Registered Jewish Boy Scout or male Venturer in sixth through ninth grade
- If the Boy Scout or male Venturer has completed the ninth grade, he may only earn the emblem if he is concurrently earning the Etz Chaim emblem.

Requirements

- Completion of requirements in five areas and three service projects
- The five areas are: home observance, synagogue worship, Jewish study, the American Jewish community, and world Jewry.



Etz Chaim Emblem

Purpose

- Encourages the young adult to explore adult Jewish roles in the context of family, community, and Jewish people.

Eligibility

- Registered Boy Scout in high school, ages 14 to 17, or registered Venturer, ages 14 to 20

Requirements

- With the assistance of a counselor, complete requirements in seven areas: community and family; history; community institutions and agencies; synagogue worship and Torah study; community Jewish leaders; your community and the future; and community sharing.



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Youth Scholarship Program

Chester M. Vernon Memorial Scholarship

Purpose

- Award a four-year \$1,000 scholarship to a deserving Jewish Eagle Scout.

Eligibility

- Registered member of a Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, or Venturing crew
- Recipient of the Eagle Scout award (The only exception is a Scout whose Eagle Scout boards of review are held the same year as his high school graduation; he may apply in that calendar year.)
- Active member of a synagogue
- Recipient of the Ner Tamid or Etz Chaim religious emblem
- Demonstrated practical citizenship in synagogue, school, Scouting unit, and community.
- Enrolled in an accredited high school and in his final year at the time of selection.

Requirements

- Must demonstrate financial need

Rick Arkans Scholarship

Purpose

- Established by Marvin and Florence Arkans to award a one-time \$1,000 scholarship to a deserving Jewish Eagle Scout.

Eligibility

- Registered member of a Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, or Venturing crew
- Recipient of the Eagle Scout award (The only exception is a Scout whose Eagle Scout boards of review are held the same year as his high school graduation; he may apply in that calendar year.)
- Active member of a synagogue
- Recipient of the Ner Tamid or Etz Chaim religious emblem
- Demonstrated practical citizenship in synagogue, school, Scouting unit, and community.
- Enrolled in an accredited high school and in his final year at the time of selection.

Requirements

- Must demonstrate financial need by submitting a copy of Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA).



Scouting Serves the Jewish Community

Frank L. Weil Memorial Scholarship

Purpose

- Established in memory of Frank Weil to award a one-time \$1,000 scholarship and two \$500 scholarships to deserving Jewish Eagle Scouts.

Eligibility

- Registered member of a Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, or Venturing crew
- Recipient of the Eagle Scout award (The only exception is a Scout whose Eagle Scout boards of review are held the same year as his high school graduation; he may apply in that calendar year.)
- Active member of a synagogue
- Recipient of the Ner Tamid or Etz Chaim religious emblem
- Demonstrated practical citizenship in synagogue, school, Scouting unit, and community.
- Enrolled in an accredited high school and in his final year at the time of selection.

Adult Emblem



Shofar Award

Purpose

- Recognizes outstanding service by adults in the promotion of Scouting among Jewish youth.

Eligibility

- Promote the use of Scouting in synagogues, Jewish community centers, and other Jewish institutions.
- Encourage Jewish youth to join the Boy Scouts of America as Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturers, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers.
- Recruit Jewish leaders on unit, district, and council levels.
- Encourage and assist Scouts in earning the Maccabee, Aleph, and Ner Tamid emblems.
- Promote religious observance during camping trips and at Camporees, summer camp, Scout Sabbath, and other functions.
- Exemplify religious convictions by personal participation in the ideals of Jewish life.

Requirements

- Nominations may be made by a Scouting volunteer or professional.
- Nominator must submit a letter of recommendation detailing the nominee's qualifications.
- Application must be submitted to local Jewish committee and local council for approval.



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Organization Information

- For information regarding unit formation, Jewish committees on Scouting, Jewish emblems and recognitions, and other materials contact:
 - The BSA local council service center or Community Alliances, S211, Boy Scouts of America, 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079; 972-580-2312; www.jewishscouting.org
- The following Jewish organizations have endorsed the Scouting program:
 - National Jewish Committee on Scouting: www.jewishscouting.org
 - Rabbinical Council of America: www.rabbis.org
 - Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America: www.ou.org
 - United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism: www.uscj.org