

DECEMBER – RELIGIOUS EMBLEMS

Music Full then Under

AMY: Welcome everyone to December CubCast. I'm International Scouting Program Specialist and Webelos Den Leader, Amy Hutcherson, along with Senior Writer for *Boys Life* magazine, Aaron Derr. Wow, we've covered a lot of ground this year, haven't we, Aaron?

AARON: We sure have, Amy. We've talked about retention, Wood Badge, advancement, day camp, and my personal favorite: temper tantrums.

AMY: I think we've got a pretty good one to end the year on. It's religious emblems.

AARON: Oh, that does sound good.

AMY: Yeah, so let's go ahead and get this discussion started.

Music Fades

AMY: Jason Noland has been the CEO of PRAY for about a year now. PRAY is the institution that delivers Duty to God content and religious emblems for all Protestant faiths as well as national distribution partner for the National Jewish and Eastern Orthodox Committees on Scouting. He also currently serves as the National Religious Relationships Support Committee. Jason, welcome to CubCast.

JASON: Thanks, Amy.

AMY: Let's just go ahead and get started with why are religious emblems important?

JASON: The religious emblem programs are the recognitions that are developed and created by the different denominations connected to Scouting that encourage youth to grow stronger in their faith as part of their Scouting experience. The emblems are important for two reasons. One, the philosophy is intentional because Duty to God appears as part of the Scout Oath, and in the twelfth point of the Scout Law, in reverent, and so not only should Scouts be faithful in their own religious duties but they should also respect the customs and the convictions of other faiths. And two, studies by the BSA have shown that Scouts who earn their religious emblem will stay registered longer in Scouting's programs. When you consider that more than just over 70% of all the units in the BSA are chartered to faith-based institutions, this connection is vital to sustaining and continuing those relationships.

AMY: Okay.

AARON: Now, Jason, how does the religious emblem program differ from regular Cub Scout advancement?

JASON: Aaron, in some sense, they're not that different at all. The Scout has to take the initiative to start the process and to earn and complete the requirements for the award and the emblem, but those requirements are established and administered by each religious denomination that partner with the BSA and not the BSA. The BSA approves these programs and allows the emblems to be worn as a part of the official uniform.

AMY: I'm going on a little over 11 years now as a Den Leader and I've had parents ask me like how many different faiths have a religious emblem? And also, too, if you don't find an emblem for your faith then what do you do?

JASON: That's a really good question. The BSA has several pieces. There's a Duty to God brochure that talks about all of the different religious emblems and has connections to the faiths that they partner with, and within the Duty to God brochure will be the contact information. For those Scouts who don't find something that fits their particular faith, at PRAY we have a general Protestant religious emblem for the God and Me, God and Family, God and Church and God and Life Series.

AARON: And what role do Cub Scout leaders have with regards to religious emblems?

JASON: They play an important role regarding religious emblems. Den Leaders and parents connect Duty to God through the Core Adventures of each rank and there is an Adventure in each rank that includes the option for earning the appropriate religious emblem for their age. In addition, there are different positions. The Unit Religious Emblem Coordinator position that is designed to help encourage all youth to earn the emblem of their faith, to promote the usage and to track the emblems that are earned as well.

AMY: Yeah. That's a great position and I know that most packs would feel great about having someone serve in that role. So, Jason, what resources and promotional materials are available to leaders? I know you mentioned the

brochure. Are there other items that they can get to help assist them in this?

JASON: The Internet is a great resource. Not only are the religious emblems in that program highlighted on Scouting.org; many of the faith organizations have their own page such as JewishScouting.org, the [National Catholic Committee on Scouting](http://NationalCatholicCommitteeonScouting.org), and our website, praypub.org which can help connect all faiths to their organizations. In addition to the promotions and the handbooks there is that Duty to God poster and the information to contact the agency that administers each emblem program.

AARON: So, if a Cub Scout decides that he wants to pursue a religious emblem how does that work or how is the recognition earned? What does he have to do?

JASON: Very similar to a lot of the work that a Scout is going to do. It starts with the handbook or the specific booklet for their faith. Each Scout's going to need their own booklet to use. Some of them are free online and others are going to be available through the local Scout Shop or Scoutstuff.org. A parent should help the Scout contact the clergy first so that can share the booklet and the requirements with the clergy and to determine how their church or congregation may want to handle those emblems. Sometimes the clergy will handle the emblem program themselves and work directly with the youth or they may have a youth minister or a lay person they wish to delegate it to. But some faiths, especially because of the distance from the congregation, they may allow for parents and guardians to serve as that counselor. And age and grade requirements are going to vary from program to program and between the different faiths.

AMY: I'm thinking of all of our packs that are chartered by a religious institution and they can get their chartered partner even more involved in their pack if they don't already have them participating in different things that they do. So, once they have gone through the requirements and they earn it, how do they obtain their medal and where is this medal presented to that Scout?

JASON: Unlike other advancement, these emblems are not purchased through the local Scout Shop or Trading Post or Scout online at Scoutstuff.org, but they are purchased directly through the faith organization that may administer their emblem program. And in all of the booklets that they get, that source or that location for getting the emblems is highlighted generally at the conclusion of that booklet with the instructions on how to do it. The emblem should be presented in a meaningful ceremony similar to any of other award in Scouting; Scout Sunday or Blue and Gold Banquets are going to be very appropriate, but depending upon the grade and the emblem, they may take anywhere from 6 to 12 weeks to complete. So, if they're planning to receive it at a particular date they need to make sure that they know when they want to start to complete the emblem.

AARON: Jason, let's talk about adult awards. What are those all about and how are they different from the youth awards?

JASON: Yeah, certainly. Unlike the youth religious emblems, adult awards are based on service to Scouting and the particular faith. Most of them require a nomination form, letters of reference, and the signature of the clergy, and then their approval will also have to go through the appropriate faith organization. Most of the adult religious awards have a term of service that are part of it. Some are five or seven years that are part of it, but because

most Scouting units are interfaith and multid denominational, it's not uncommon for adults to receive the emblem of other faiths in recognition of their service to ensuring that Cub Scouts receive the religious emblem of their own faith.

AARON: Cool.

AMY: I'm learning so much during this CubCast. Is there anything else that our listeners should know about the religious emblems program that you can share with us?

JASON: Sure. So, the emblems or the medals should be worn as part of the official uniform and are appropriate for those events. It's really important to note that the BSA recognizes that Duty to God is an important part of the Scouting experience and, in turn, part of the uniform. And so, those emblems, while the medals should be worn for appropriate events, for regular wear and use of the uniform, adults have a knot that they can earn and wear which is the purple knot on the silver cloth, and the youth can wear the silver knot on the purple cloth as part of their faith emblem experience. And regardless of when they earned it throughout their Scouting tenure, so even as a Cub Scout if they earn the religious emblems of their faith, they can wear the silver knot on the purple background and that will also carry up through adulthood regardless of when it was earned or presented.

AMY: This was such a lovely way to end CubCast this year. Jason, thank you so much for joining us.

JASON: Absolutely. Thank you both for the time.

AARON: After this brief Safety Moment, we'll be back with Reminders and Tips.

Safety Moment – Winter Sports

AARON: Okay, everybody, time for a pop quiz! Do you know who your local Scouting professional is, also known as your District Executive or Youth Serving Executive? If not, call your council to find out.

AMY: If you don't know your council name, browse to Scouting.org and type "local council locator" in the search field. Your local professional is a great resource in helping deliver a quality program. It might also help to download the October 2013 ScoutCast entitled "Who's Who in the Zoo."

AARON: And even though you're probably thinking more about the holidays than next summer, now is the time to start planning for summer camp which includes Cub Scout Day Camp, Resident Camp and Family Camp. Since you already planned for camp and put in your budget at the end of this past summer, it's now time for signups. The April 2013 CubCast on the Cub Scout Outdoor Program will help you with planning and promotion.

AMY: And finally, the Blue and Gold Banquet is right around the corner. February will be here before you know it, so be sure the details are coming together.

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AMY: Thanks for listening, everyone. We hope you've had a great year and we hope that you will spread the word about CubCast to your fellow volunteers.

AARON: A special thanks goes to our guest, Jason Noland. Hope you'll be listening in 2018 as we've got some really interesting topics coming up. Until then, I'm Aaron Derr.

AMY: And I'm Amy Hutcherson. Happy holidays, everyone!

Music Full to Finish