



Scouting in the United Methodist Church

Background

- In the United States, the United Methodist Church is the largest mainline denomination, the second largest Protestant church, and third largest Christian denomination.
 - According to the United Methodist Church, there are over 40,000 churches across the United States, Africa, Asia, and Europe with approximately 11.2 million members.
 - According to the 2010 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, there are 7.9 million U.S. members in 34,136 churches.
- The United Methodist Church is responsible for:
 - 10 pre-collegiate schools
 - 92 four-year and eight two-year colleges and universities
 - One professional school
 - 13 theological seminaries
- The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This is a four-fold task where the United Methodist Church:
 - Reaches out to people and welcomes them into the church
 - Relates people to God and helps them deepen their relationship with God
 - Nurtures people in Christian living
 - Supports people in their ministry
- The United Methodist Church has no central headquarters, but many of the church's biggest administrative offices are located in Nashville, Tennessee.
- The United Methodist Church is a decentralized church with the following branches:
 - General Conference, the church's highest legislative branch, is the official governing body that convenes every four years to make all decisions on doctrine and policy. The voting membership consists of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates elected by the annual conferences.
 - Council of Bishops, the executive branch of the church, represents the top leadership of the church. All active and retired bishops are members of the Council of Bishops.
 - Judicial Council, the church's judicial branch, rules on questions of constitutionality in church law and practice.
- At the end of 2010, the United Methodist Church's involvement with Scouting included:
 - 235,672 Cub Scouts from 5,136 packs
 - 127,419 Boy Scouts from 5,005 troops
 - 8,408 Venturers from 1,146 crews



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Religious Principles and Key Terms

- **Book of Discipline:** Fundamental book outlining the law, doctrine, administration, and organizational work and procedures of the United Methodist Church. Often referred to as *The Discipline*.
- **Annual Conference:** Basic unit of organization within the United Methodist Church, roughly equivalent to a diocese in the Roman Catholic Church or a synod in the Lutheran denomination. They may be part of a state, a whole state, or parts of two or more states. Currently there are 62 annual conferences that refer to the geographical area they cover as well as the frequency of meeting.
- **District:** One of 469 regional groups of churches or charges, supervised by a district superintendent.
- **Episcopal Area:** The annual conference or conferences to which a bishop is assigned by the Jurisdictional or Central Conference. The bishop lives within the bounds of the Episcopal area and presides over the work of one or more annual conferences. Currently there are 50 Episcopal Areas in the US.
- **Connectional Table:** Oversees the coordination of mission, ministries, and resources across the denomination. It is composed of 47 people and includes:
 - Equal numbers of lay persons and clergy
 - Equal numbers of males and females
 - At least 10 percent youth and young adults
 - At least 30 percent racial/ethnic minority groups
 - No less than seven members from churches in Europe, Africa, and Asia
- **Bishop:** An elder (ordained minister) who is elected to the office of bishop. A bishop serves as a general superintendent to the denomination.
- **Resident Bishop:** Bishop appointed to a specific Episcopal Area. This is the presiding bishop of any and all Annual Conferences of the church within the area.
- **District Superintendent:** An ordained minister appointed by a bishop to oversee the pastors and local churches in a district. Primary responsibilities relate to overseeing the work of the local church, including:
 - Presiding at charge conferences
 - Supervising the work of the pastors
 - Participating with the bishop in appointments of ordained ministers to serve the districts and churches
- **Elder:** A person ordained to a lifetime ministry of service, word, sacrament, and order. He or she is authorized to preach and teach God's word, to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the church for mission and ministry.
- **Commissioned Elder:** Recent seminary graduate who serves three years in a full-time appointment.
- **Deacon:** An ordained clergy person who is called to serve all people, particularly the poor, sick, and the oppressed, and to equip and lead the laity in ministries of compassion, justice, and service in the world.
- **Local Pastor:** A licensed pastor, approved annually by the district committee on ordained ministry, who is authorized to perform all duties of an ordained minister, including the sacraments, while assigned to a particular charge under the supervision of a district superintendent.
- **Local Church Lay Leaders:** The local church official, elected by the charge conference, who serves as the primary lay representative of the local church. The lay leader has specific responsibilities detailed in *The Book of Discipline*.



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- *Certified Lay Speakers:* Serve in their own or other church through district or conference projects and programs. They may lead worship when a minister is not available.
- *Baptized member:* A person who has received the sacrament of baptism in the United Methodist Church or has received Christian baptism in another denomination and later transferred to the United Methodist Church.
- *Professing member:* A baptized person who has taken vows declaring the Christian faith. Professing members include all people who have come into membership by profession of faith or by transfer from other churches.

National Association of United Methodist Scouters

The National Association of United Methodist Scouters (NAUMS) was formed in 1986 to provide resources for Scouting and Civic Youth-Serving Ministry. It is associated with the:

- General Commission on United Methodist Men
- National Association of Conference Presidents of United Methodist Men

Scouting Religious Emblems and Recognitions

P.R.A.Y's 2010 Religious Emblems Report highlights the United Methodist Church's use of the God and Country Series religious recognitions. In 2010, recognitions were earned by:

- 2,441 Cub Scouts
- 2,209 Webelos
- 829 Boy Scouts
- 356 Venturers
- 148 adults

Youth emblems

GOD AND ME



God and Country Series—God and Me

Purpose

- Encourages children to become best friends with Jesus and tell their story of "God and Me" together

Eligibility

- Youth in first through third grade

Requirements

- Designed to be completed in four to five sessions
- Youth completes sessions on God Created Me, Jesus Is God's Gift to Me, I Can Talk With God, Because God Cares for Me, I Can Care for Others



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GOD AND FAMILY



God and Country Series—God and Family

Purpose

- Help youth understand the importance of family and God's role in a healthy family

Eligibility

- Youth in fourth and fifth grade

Requirements

- Designed to be completed in six to seven sessions
- Sessions include:
 - We are God's Family
 - Family Heritage, Spiritual Heritage
 - Our Talents and Gifts Strengthen Our Families
 - In God's Family We're Loved No Matter What! Because We're Loved, We Follow Rules
 - Being in God's Family Helps Us When Things Are Tough
 - In God's Family, We Share as a Response to God's Love

GOD AND CHURCH



God and Country Series—God and Church

Purpose

- Gives youth an opportunity to understand the church's structure and objectives, and to participate in service projects that will give them a better understanding of the mission of the church

Eligibility

- Youth in sixth through eighth grade

Requirements

- Designed to take three to five months to complete
- Sessions include Meeting Christ, Worshipping God, and Witnessing and Ministering for Christ
- Must complete a video or photo album to share what they learned



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God and Country Series—God and Life

Purpose

- Teaches youth to study the lives of men and women in the Bible, discovering what their lives teach them about God, and challenging them to integrate the faith of those in the Bible into their daily lives

Eligibility

- Youth in ninth through twelfth grades who do not necessarily have to belong to a Boy Scout troop

Requirements

- Completion of five sections covering:
 - How God calls all kinds of people
 - God doesn't expect us to do it on our own
 - Each of us must make a personal response to the call of God
 - God gives strength to face adversities
 - God can accomplish great things through those who are willing to do God's will



The Good Samaritan award

Purpose

- Recognize an individual youth who demonstrates the attributes of the Good Samaritan described in Luke 10:25-37, ministry to others through outreach, humanitarian assistance, or advocacy

Eligibility

- Registered member of a Boy Scout troop or Venturing crew chartered to, sponsored by, or meeting in a United Methodist church
- Student in grades seven through 12 or between the ages of 12 and 20
- Participating in outreach ministry within the context of the local United Methodist church giving the award

Requirements

- Candidate should demonstrate "significant" personal and selfless contributions toward others or assistance to individuals in need
- Must be nominated by an adult familiar with the youth's outstanding service
- Required signatures include the local United Methodist pastor, the local United Methodist Men's President if church has a chartered fellowship, and either a unit leader, youth minister or coordinator, or adult member of the local United Methodist Church giving the award who is familiar with the youth's work (not a relative)



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Adult emblems



God and Church Mentor Program

Purpose

- Provides an adult with additional opportunities to model his or her Christian faith and to help a young child talk about his or her belief in God

Eligibility

- Parent or guardian of a youth in the God and Country program series

Requirements

- Completion of the God and Country curriculum working alongside youth parent or guardian is responsible for



God and Country Series – God and Service award

Purpose

- Acknowledge distinguished volunteer service by adults in ministry to young people by service through the church and the Boy Scouts of America

Eligibility

- Minimum of five years of service to the church
- Minimum of five years of service to Boy Scouts of America
- Encourage and assist young people in earning the God and Country award
- Promote religious observances at Boy Scouts of America functions at all levels
- Encourage youth to participate in community service projects
- Recruit volunteers to give leadership to Boy Scouts of America programs
- Promote the organization of Boy Scouts of America units among a church other than his or her own congregation
- Be a person whose Christian example is highly regarded by others in the church and whose lifestyle is a model for young people

Requirements

- Nomination application and letter of recommendation must be submitted to P.R.A.Y.



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Cross and Flame award

Purpose

- Recognizes adult leaders who have given exceptional service in the use and promotion of Scouting programs for young people or have served children and youth through the United Methodist Church

Eligibility

- Adult leader with at least five years of service using and supporting Scouting in the life of the church
- Active member of a recognized Christian church
- Given faithful service to the local church congregation by serving in church leadership positions
- Has served Scouting on the unit, district, council, or other level by active participation in the program
- Actively and effectively promoted the religious awards program
- Promoted the use of religious services when camping or other activities that take Scouting groups away from the church during regularly scheduled worship services

Requirements

- Recommended to the local church by the local church Scouting coordinator
- Application must be approved by the pastor and presented to the church administrative board, council on ministries, or administrative council along with application for approval
- If approved, application should be mailed to the Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies



Torch award

Purpose

- Recognizes adult leaders who are members of the United Methodist Church and have given exceptional service in the use and promotion of the Scouting program locally

Eligibility

- Active member of the United Methodist Church demonstrating exceptional Christian character
- Continuous record of using and supporting the Scouting program (minimum of 10 years) in the life of the church at the district and annual conference level
- Served Scouting on the unit (troop, club, etc.), district, council, or other level by active participation in the program
- Served effectively as a member of a denominational or interdenominational Church Committee on Scouting
- Served as a camp chaplain or has helped promote religious services within one of the Scouting programs



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Requirements

- Special committee appointed annually by Conference Committee on Scouting receives and reviews the nominations and names recipients
- Annual Conference may give one award each year, plus one for each 100,000 church members, and may confer an honorary award in recognition of meritorious service to persons not members of the Annual Conference
- Nominations may be made by an individual, by a local church, or by the Conference Committee on Scouting and forwarded to the special committee by April 1 each year



Silver Torch award

Purpose

- Recognizes adults who have given faithful service to the United Methodist Church at the regional, national, or international level through Boy Scouts of America

Eligibility

- Recipient must be Christian but not necessarily a member of the United Methodist Church
- Must be nominated (no self-nominations permitted)

Requirements

- Nominator must submit application and detail how nominee's service has impacted Scouting at the general church, jurisdictional, or central conference level, and describe offices nominee has held



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Church awards



Bishop's Award of Excellence

Purpose

- Recognize congregations and units/clubs with the United Methodist Church that extend their ministry to children and youth by creating a faith-based environment for children, youth, their families, and their leaders participating in Scouting

Eligibility

- Local congregation must designate a professing member of the congregation as the local church Scouting coordinator.
- In consultation with the pastor, Scouting coordinator shall implement a plan to promote, enroll, counsel, and mentor youth in the God and Country religious emblem programs.
- Scouting coordinator shall include the number of youth who are working towards and/or have completed the God and Country religious emblem programs with the application.
- In consultation with the pastor, Scouting coordinator shall arrange participation in the Scouting Ministry Sunday for Boy Scout units.
- Unit shall complete a service project with a missional connection to the congregation's ministry. The project shall be developed in consultation with the pastor or a designated staff or layperson.
- Unit is encouraged to participate in religious practices during activities while fostering respect and understanding for all faiths within the unit. Religious practices may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - The God and Country programs
 - Prayer at meal and/or meetings
 - Designation of an adult chaplain and a youth chaplain
 - Worship services or devotionals during extended activities
- Scouting coordinator and unit leader(s) shall meet annually to review the Scouting ministry of the local church with the pastor or designated staff or layperson. The meeting is to encourage an effective faith-based ministry that includes program standards set by civic youth-serving organizations along with appropriate leader training, implementation of youth protection standards, and review of the signed partnership agreement(s) either required and/or optional.

Requirements

- Scouting coordinator should submit application along with the documentation of the above eligibility to the annual conference Scouting coordinator after January 1 for the previous calendar year



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Shepherd Church

Purpose

- Annually recognizes churches that provide outstanding Scouting ministry to their communities through sponsorship of one or more Scouting units

Eligibility

- Sponsor one or more Scouting units to meet the needs of youth and children in the congregation and community.
- Offer and encourage participation in the God and Country series.
- Observe a Scouting Ministry Sunday.
- Encourage each troop or unit in the church to annually participate in at least one community service project. Service projects benefiting and in cooperation with the sponsoring church are encouraged.
- Elect or appoint a Scouting coordinator who reports regularly to the governing body of the local church.
- All leaders are required to be of a good character, to have faith in God that enables them to be a good example, and to have completed training for the position. Each group must have at least one person who is a member of the congregation serving as a leader or as an active member of the committee.
- Each group in the church has given significant service in at least two projects within the past 12 months. Service in cooperation with the local church and its members is encouraged.
- At least one member of the local congregation is a member of the National Association of United Methodist Scouters. Active membership in a NAUMS chapter is strongly encouraged.

Requirements

- All eligibility award requirements must be reviewed and evaluated by the pastor and the local church Scouting coordinator.
- Submit charter application.



Organization Information

- For more information and materials concerning the religious growth programs, contact P.R.A.Y. (Programs of Religious Activities With Youth):
 - Write to P.R.A.Y., 11123 S Town Square, Suite B, St. Louis, MO 63123-7816; toll-free phone: 1-800-933-7729; phone: 314-845-3318; fax: 314-845-0058
 - Website: www.praypub.org
- General Commission on United Methodist Men
 - P.O. Box 340006, Nashville, TN 37203-0006; toll-free phone: 1-866-297-4312; phone: 615-340-7145; fax: 615-340-1770
 - Website: www.gcumm.org
 - E-mail: gcumm@gcumm.org
- National Association of United Methodist Scouters
 - P.O. Box 23172, Nashville, TN 37202-3712
 - Website: <http://www.umcscouting.org>