

Boy Scouts of America
Troop 23, Mt. Prospect, IL
Chaplain's Aide Guide

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Description and Duties

Description

Within the Boy Scout code of ethics is a reverence towards God. This is found within the scout law (“a scout is reverent”) and within the Scout Oath (“do my duty to God and my country”, “obey the scout law” and indirectly as “keep myself morally straight”). Faith, religion and reverence toward God are an essential part of the Boy Scout program.

This makes the position of Chaplain's Aide an important part of the troop leadership. It is the Chaplain's Aide that leads the scouts of the troop in their religious activities. They do this by leading prayers, coordinating religious services and encouraging scouts to pursue their own religious emblems.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Assists the Troop Chaplain with religious services at Troop campouts
2. Says a prayer or gives an inspirational reading at appropriate times for troop activities
3. Informs Scouts about the religious emblem programs for their faiths
4. Keeps up-to-date records of the church/religious affiliation of Troop members
5. Makes sure religious holidays are considered during Troop program planning
6. Helps plan religious observances in Troop activities
7. Sets a good example
8. Attends the Patrol Leader's Council (PLC) meetings
9. Takes pride in wearing the Scout Uniform correctly
10. Lives by the Scout Oath and Law
11. Shows Scout Spirit

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Duty / Responsibility Details

Assisting the Troop Chaplain with Religious Services at Troop Campouts

The Boy Scouts of America recognizes that there are a large number of faiths represented in our communities and in our troops. Religious observances are an important part of the lives of the scouts in our troop.

As part of the Boy Scout program, there is a religious observance called a "Scout's Own" service. This is a short interdenominational religious service that includes inspirational readings and songs, prayers and an inspirational message.

While the Chaplain's Aide is responsible for leading these services, he does not need to do the entire job by himself. He should recruit scouts within the troop to present individual portions, like a prayer or an inspirational reading. These may be drawn from various materials, including the troop Interdenominational Worship Book.

Saying Prayers or Inspirational Reading for Troop Activities

During the course of troop activities, there arise times when it is appropriate to show reverence toward God. These times would include saying a table grace when eating a meal or having a reading during a religious holiday. The troop Interdenominational Worship Book has a variety of prayers and readings. These activities may be recruited within the troop under the leadership of the Chaplain's Aide.

Informing Scouts About the Religious Emblem Programs for their Faiths

The Boy Scout program includes religious emblem awards that are issued by the scout's religious organization. The specific requirements of each emblem depends upon the individual organization. It is similar to a merit badge, except the reading material is specific to the organization and the counselor is a member of the clergy.

By encouraging the boys in the troop to participate in this program, they get a better understanding of their faith and how it relates to their lives.

Current List of Religious Emblems

Faith	Emblems
African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E)	God and Church God and Life God and Service (Adult)
African Methodist Episcopal Zion	God and Church God and Life God and Service (Adult)
Armenian Apostolic Church of America	Saint Mesrob

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Faith	Emblems
(Western)	
Armenian Church of America (Eastern Diocese)	Ararat
Baha'I	Unity of Mankind
Baptist	God and Church God and Life Good Shepherd (Adult)
Buddhist	Sangha
Catholic, Eastern	Light is Life Pope Pius XII Saint George Catholic (Adult)
Catholic, Roman	Ad Altare Dei Pope Pius XII Saint George Roman Catholic (Adult)
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	God and Church God and Life God and Service (Adult)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	God and Church God and Life God and Service (Adult)
Church of Christ Scientist	God and Country God and Service (Adult)
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	On my Honor On my Honor (Adult)
Churches of Christ	Good Servant Faithful Servant (Adult)
Community of Christ	Liahona Life and World International Youth Service (Adult)
Eastern Orthodox	Alpha Omega Prophet Elias (Adult)
Episcopal	God and Church God and Life Saint George Episcopal (Adult)
General Church of the New Jerusalem	Open Word Open Word (Adult)
Hindu	Dharma Karma Dharma Saathi (Adult)
Islamic	In the Name of God Allaho Akber (Adult)
Jewish	Ner Tamid Etz Chaim Shofar (Adult)

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Faith	Emblems
Lutheran	God and Church God and Life Lamb (Adult)
Meher Baba	Compassionate Father The Ancient One (Adult)
Moravian	God and Country The order of David Zeisberger (Adult)
Polish National Catholic Church	God and Country Bishop Thaddeus F. Zielinski (Adult)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)	God and Church God and Life God and Service (Adult)
Protestant and Independent Christian Churches	God and Church God and Life God and Service (Adult)
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)	Spirit of Truth Friends (Adult)
Salvation Army	God and Church God and Life Scouter's Award (Adult)
United Church of Christ	God and Church God and Life God and Service (Adult)
United Methodist	God and Church God and Life God and Service (Adult)
Unity Churches	Light of God Award Distinguished Youth Service (Adult)
Zoroastrian	Good Life

Keeping records of the Church / Religious Affiliation of Troop Members

As scouts enter the troop, it is important to obtain their religious preference or affiliation. This way, various faith aspects (religious emblems, holidays, rituals, prayers, dietary restrictions, etc.) may be considered during troop activities.

The church / religious affiliation for the members may be kept with the official record that is maintained by the Advancement Chair. It is the responsibility of the Chaplain's Aide to regularly check this data and to follow up with Advancement for any required changes.

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Making Sure Religious Holidays are Considered During Troop Planning

Throughout the year, most religions recognize certain days as being important. This may be the birth of their leader, a time of festival, a remembrance of deliverance, a time of fasting and prayer or some other date of significance. These dates will be important to the scouts that observe them.

When troop activities are planned during the PLC (outings, projects, etc) they should not be on days where scouts may be observing a religious holiday. To ensure this, the Chaplain's Aide needs to maintain a calendar containing the various religious holidays that are observed throughout the year. Some holidays occur on the same day every year. An example of this is Christmas, which occurs on December 25 of every year. Other holidays may be part of a lunar calendar and change from year to year. An example of this is Passover, which is observed during the first full moon following the Vernal Equinox. These holidays may be obtained from the various institutions that observe them, either directly or on the internet. A web site that contains a number of religious calendars is www.calendarzone.com/Religious.

Helping Plan Religious Observances in Troop Activities

A certain number of religious actions are to be included in regular scout activities. This can include announcing various holidays throughout the year. Scouts, parents or local clergy may be able to make a short presentation about their faith or about a special holiday. This will help the scouts to be aware of and have a better perspective of the different religions within our troop.

Setting a good example

Every religion includes a moral code of ethics and behaviors. Since actions always speak louder than words, everybody expects religious leaders to adhere to the moral practices taught by their faith. This is why there is such a large scandal in the news whenever a religious leader does something immoral. A non-leader within the same religion could do the exact same thing, if not worse, and hardly get any notice.

The scouts in the troop are no different. They will be looking to the Chaplain's Aides for moral direction and guidance. This is why it is important for the Chaplain's Aide to set the example with their actions. This includes avoiding crude or inappropriate behavior and speech, being mindful of others and attending religious services regularly.

Attending the Patrol Leader's Council (PLC) Meetings

The Chaplain's Aide position is a leadership position. Troop activities and outings are discussed and planned at the PLC meetings. This is where religious considerations may be entered into the discussion and included in the planning. This way these observations are part of the entire Boy Scout program instead of just being an afterthought.

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Taking Pride in Wearing the Scout Uniform Correctly

The Boy Scout uniform is a badge of honor. It identifies the person wearing it with the honorable and wholesome Boy Scout organization. This is an organization that is recognized in most parts of the world and has a very good reputation. The term "being a Boy Scout" is synonymous with being a person with honor and good character.

The uniform, therefore, should be worn with respect and pride. The neckerchief is to be worn with an appropriate slider. The shirt is to be clean and properly tucked in to the pants. The pants are to be clean and worn at the correct height. The belt should be a scout-approved belt that is worn correctly. A web belt should not show any fabric between the buckle and the end-cap brass.

Living by the Scout Oath and Scout Law

The Scout Oath and Scout Law are the foundation for everything in scouting. The Scout Law lists a code of ethics for life. The Scout Oath is a solemn promise to obey the Scout Law and to hold oneself to the highest code of ethics.

A scout that lives by the Scout Oath and Scout Law will strive to do so every day. While this sounds good on paper, it is the actions of the Scout when he interacts with other people that will make the difference. The Scout will look for opportunities to help others and he will commit to a lifestyle that is consistent with the 12 points of the Scout Law.

Showing Scout Spirit

Scouting is fun! We have more fun when we participate in the various outings, activities and meetings. This is also how scouts learn from each other and teach each other. Scout Spirit is an integral part of the Boy Scout program. While Scout Spirit is measured using attendance rules, it really goes beyond the simple numbers. Scout Spirit is an overall enthusiasm for life, the outdoors, other people and the Scouting program.