

Ad Altare Dei

About the Emblem

The purpose of the Ad Altare Dei (to the altar of God) emblem program is to help Scouts of the Roman Catholic Rite develop a fully Christian way of life in the faith community. The program is organized in chapters based on the seven sacraments. The seven Sacraments are a primary means toward spiritual growth.

In 2026, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Ad Altare Dei Religious Emblem. It was first awarded to Scouts on February 7, 1926 by the Diocese of Los Angeles-San Diego. The Ad Altare Dei program was created to support spiritual development among Scouts and it quickly became very popular. On December 14, 1939, the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America approved the wearing of the Ad Altare Dei Emblem on the Scout uniform, the first award of its kind in Scouting.

Program Objectives

- The most important aspect of the program is that the Scout grows in his/her spiritual experience of his/her relationship to God and the church.

Eligibility

- Any young person who is Roman Catholic and who is registered in a BSA Troop, Venturing Crew or Sea Scouts Ship
- Designed for 13 or 14-year-old Scouts, but older youth may also use this program
- Active member of a unit for at least six months
- Completed 6th grade before starting the program

Requirements

- Each Scout must have his/her own *Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual* (Publication Date: 2014) or *Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual Electronic Version*, depending on the class structure chosen by the counselor. The manual is designed for the youth to work on with the guidance of a counselor.
- The program is designed to be completed in six to eight months.
- The use of a Catholic Bible is required for this program.
- Regular participation in Sunday Mass is also required for this program.
- Diocesan safe environment and BSA Youth Protection policies must be followed.
- Each Scout must complete the requirements in the Ad Altare Dei Scout Manual to be eligible for this Religious Emblem.
- Each Scout must successfully complete an Ad Altare Dei Board of Review to be eligible for this Religious Emblem.

Getting Started

- The *Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual* may be obtained from your local BSA Council Service Center Scout Shops, from the [BSA Scout Shop](#), or from the [NCCS Online Store](#). The *Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual Electronic Version* is only available in the [NCCS Online Store](#).
- Identify a counselor. Ask your Scoutmaster/Advisor, pastor, parish administrator, Director of Religious Education, any member of the troop committee, or [Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting](#) if there is an emblem counselor in your parish or area. A trained Religious Emblems coordinator/counselor/moderator is required to work with young people pursuing this Religious Emblem. If you know of someone interested in becoming a trained Religious Emblems coordinator/counselor/moderator, ask them to contact your Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting to become trained.
- After you have selected your counselor, you must complete the application to begin working on this Religious Emblem program. The application is in the *Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual*. The approval application must be signed by the applicant, parent, counselor, Troop leader, and pastor.
- Attend all meetings. Actively work on the activities.
- All journal entries, reports, and written work should be legible and neat.
- Work through the *Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual* with your counselor using a Bible where appropriate.
- There are three parts to each step. When all parts of a step are completed, review the *Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual* with the counselor.
- Be prepared to share experiences with the Board of Review.
- Attend a retreat or Day of Recollection while working on the Ad Altare Dei program.
- Keep the Religious Emblems Coordinator informed of your progress.

Counselor's Role

- The counselor has the option of using either the printed youth manual or the electronic version.
- For an explanation of the new electronic Ad Altare Dei (e-AAD), [download this PowerPoint presentation](#).
- Counselors for the Ad Altare Dei emblem should be approved in advance by their pastors and the Scout Chaplain or Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting.
- The *Ad Altare Dei Counselor's Guide* (Publication Date: 2019) is an integral part of this program. It can be found in the [NCCS Online Store](#).
- All Religious Emblem Counselors and Facilitators must have current BSA Youth Protection and meet diocesan safe environment requirements.
- Utilize the [Religious Emblem Reference Manual](#).

- Share the [Ad Altare Dei Youth Guide](#) with young people planning to earn the Ad Altare Dei Religious Emblem.
- Counsel the participants when required, and in general facilitate (keep moving and on track) the general discussion.
- Hold all scheduled meetings.
- Virtual meetings need to follow the two deep leadership rules of safe Scouting. Counselors, please read this [article from Virtus on Virtual Boundaries: Appropriate Online Safety Measures](#).
- The *Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual* is to be examined as the Scout proceeds through each step of the program. The counselor will sign and date the certification of completion for the step. **Spiritual growth should be evident when progressing from step to step.**
- Keep the Religious Emblems Coordinator informed of the youth's progress.

Program Completion

- After all sections of the *Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual* have been completed, the counselor will contact your Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting to find out the schedule for the Ad Altare Dei Board of Review.
- The Scout will sit before the Board of Review.
- After Board of Review has been successfully completed, the counselor should contact your Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting for further direction concerning presentation instructions.
- Scouts who earn this Religious Emblem are also entitled to wear a BSA Religious Knot over their left pocket. Please consult with your Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting to determine how knots are presented in your area. If they are not presented with the Religious Emblems, then they can be purchased at your local BSA Council Service Center Scout Shop with proof that the scout received the emblem.
- Earning the Ad Altare Dei Award completes one of the requirements needed to apply for the [annual NCCS College Scholarship program](#).

Ordering of Emblems

- Each diocese has one or two individuals who are designated to purchase Religious Emblems. Only these NCCS authorized submitters are allowed to order Religious Emblems for their diocese.

Light of Christ

About the Emblem

The purpose of the Light of Christ emblem program is to help the Cub Scout develop a personal relationship with Jesus. With the parents' active assistance and participation in this program, it is hoped that the Cub will come to see Jesus as a real person and friend.

Program Objectives

- To support the role of the parents as the primary catechists of their children
- To have the Scout identify Jesus as a real person and as a friend
- To foster early family religious involvement
- To be a stepping stone toward Parvuli Dei and the other Religious Emblems, when the parents are involved
- To serve as a catalyst to draw the parents into a deeper involvement with the Church, through the child

Eligibility

Registered 6 or 7-year-old (Tiger or Wolf) Cub Scout who is Catholic

Requirements

- Each Cub should have his/her own *Light of Christ Activity Book* (Publication Date 2003)
- The book is designed for the Cub and his/her parent or guardian to work on together
- Diocesan/eparchial safe environment and BSA Youth Protection policies must be followed

Getting Started

- The *Light of Christ Activity Book*, which contains activities in both English and Spanish, may be obtained from the [BSA Scout Shop](#) or from the [NCCS Online Store](#).
- Although the book could be completed in four to six hours, the goal of earning the Light of Christ Religious Emblem is to help the Cub develop a personal relationship with Jesus, so it is suggested that steps be spread over several weeks. This will help the Cub understand that this is a long-term commitment, not a one-time project.

Scout's Role

- Actively work on the activities in the *Light of Christ Activity Book* with his/her parents or guardians

Parent's Role

- Actively work on the activities in the *Light of Christ Activity Book* with their Cub
- Help their Cub with Bible readings and researching information

- Keep the Religious Emblems Coordinator informed of the Cub's progress
- Utilize the [Parent Guide](#)

Program Completion

- When the Cub completes all steps, he/she is to present the *Light of Christ Activity Book* to his/her pastor or the pastor's representative and the book is reviewed with the Cub.
- After the pastor or his representative signs the *Light of Christ Activity Book* and the application form included in the *Light of Christ Activity Book*, the application form only is sent to your [Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting Chaplain](#) for final approval.
- Contact your Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting Chaplain for further instructions on how to obtain the Religious Emblem. The Chaplain will order the Religious Emblem and let you know the details about its presentation.
- Scouts who earn this Religious Emblem are also entitled to wear a BSA Religious Knot over their left pocket. Please consult with your Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting to determine how knots are presented in your area. If the BSA Religious Knot is not presented with the Religious Emblems, then they can be purchased at your local BSA Council Service Center Scout Shop with proof that the Scout received the emblem.

Ordering of Emblems

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Parvuli Dei

About the Emblem

The purpose of the Parvuli Dei (Children of God) emblem program is to help Cub Scouts explore a wide range of activities in order to discover the presence of God in their daily lives as members of their families and parishes, and also to develop a good, positive self-image through the contributions they can make to their family, pack and community.

Program Objectives

- To help the Scout develop an awareness of God's love for each one of His special, unique created beings
- To help the Scout become aware and understand his/her identity as an important member of his/her family, his/her community, and as a member of the Family of God
- To continue to develop an awareness as members of the parish and the Body of Christ
- To aid the Scout in his awareness of the responsibilities that grow out of God's love for us

Eligibility

- Registered 8 to 10 year old (Bear or Webelos) who are Catholic

Requirements

- Each Cub should have his/her own *Parvuli Dei Activity Book* (Publication Date 2003)
- The book is designed for the Cub and his/her parent or guardian to work on together
- The Cub will make a banner as part of the Religious Emblem requirements
- Diocesan/eparchial safe environment and BSA Youth Protection policies must be followed

Getting Started

- The *Parvuli Dei Activity Book*, which contains activities in both English and Spanish, may be obtained from the [BSA Scout Shop](#) or from the [NCCS Online Store](#).
- Although the book could be completed in four to six hours, the goal of earning the Parvuli Dei Religious Emblem is to help the Cub develop a personal relationship with Jesus, so it is suggested that steps be spread over several weeks. This will help the Cub understand that this is a long-term commitment, not a one-time project.

Scout's Role

- Actively work on the activities in the *Parvuli Dei Activity Book* with his/her parents or guardians

Parent's Role

- Actively work on the activities in the *Parvuli Dei Activity Book* with their Cub

- Help their Cub with Bible readings and researching information
- Keep the Religious Emblems Coordinator informed of the Cub's progress
- Utilize the [Parent Guide](#)

Program Completion

- When the Cub completes all steps in the *Parvuli Dei Activity Book*, he/she is to present the book to his/her pastor's or the pastor's representative and the book is reviewed with the Cub.
- After the pastor or his representative signs the book and the application form included in the *Parvuli Dei Activity Book*, the application form only is sent to your [Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting Chaplain](#) for final approval.
- Contact your Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting Chaplain for further instructions on how to obtain the Religious Emblem. The Chaplain will order the Religious Emblem and let you know the details about its presentation.
- Scouts who earn this Religious Emblem are also entitled to wear a BSA Religious Knot over their left pocket. Please consult with your Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting to determine how knots are presented in your area. If the BSA Religious Knot is not presented with the Religious Emblems, then they can be purchased at your local BSA Council Service Center Scout Shop with proof that the Scout received the emblem.

Ordering of Emblems

Each diocese has one or two individuals who are designated to purchase Religious Emblems. Only these NCCS authorized submitters are allowed to order Religious Emblems for their diocese.

Pope Pius XII

About the Emblem

The purpose of the Pope Pius XII emblem program is to help Scouts explore vocations (single, married, religious, ordained) and ministries in the Church as calls from God. It includes youth led discussions on current issues facing the Church and society, which are normally included as part of a Pope Pius XII retreat or day of recollection.

Eligibility

- Registered Scouts BSA, Venturers, Sea Scouts who are Catholic
- Designed for young people who are 15 or 16-years-old, but all registered Venturers and Sea Scouts before their 21st birthday and all registered Scouts BSA in high school before their 18th birthday may participate.

Requirements

- Each Scout, Venture Crew Member or Sea Scouts Ship member must have his/her own *Pope Pius XII Participant Manual* (Publication Date: 2017). These manuals are available only from the [NCCS Online Store](#). The program should be run by the candidates themselves; the Religious Emblems Counselor serves as a moderator.
- A trained Religious Emblems coordinator/counselor/moderator is required to work with young people pursuing this Religious Emblem.
- Diocesan/eparchial safe environment and BSA Youth Protection policies must be followed.
- Ideal group size is four to 12 young people, but the course may be run with smaller groups.
- A number of interviews and an investigation of a controversial issue facing the Church or society are integral to the program.
- A retreat experience, ideally centered on the Pius XII program itself, and a ministries service project are required.
- The program is designed to be completed in nine to 12 sessions. Two-hour sessions seem to work well with this age group. In addition, flexibility is often required in scheduling sessions and interview feed back with this age group.
- Successfully complete a Pope Pius XII Board of Review.

Getting Started

- Identify a counselor. Ask your Scoutmaster, pastor, parish administrator, director if religious education, any member of the troop committee, or [Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting](#) if there is a emblem counselor in your parish or area. A trained Religious Emblems coordinator/counselor/moderator is required to work with young people pursuing this Religious Emblem. If you know of someone interested in becoming a trained Religious Emblems

coordinator/counselor/moderator, encourage that person to contact your Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting to become trained.

- After you have selected your counselor, you must complete the application to begin working on this Religious Emblem program. The application is included in the *Pope Pius XII Participant Manual*. The application must be signed by the applicant, parent, counselor, Unit leader, and pastor.

Scout's Role

- Attend the sessions and as a Venturer/Sea Scout/Scout, the candidate is expected to actively share in group discussions and complete all interviews and activities.
- Actively work on the activities in the *Pope Pius XII Participant Manual*. All journal entries, reports, and written work should be legible and neat.
- Be prepared to share experiences at the Board of Review.
- Keep the Religious Emblems Coordinator informed of your progress.

Facilitator's Role

- Counselors for the Pope Pius XII Religious Emblem should be approved in advance by their pastors and Scout Chaplain or Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee in Scouting.
- The *Pope Pius XII Facilitator Manual* (Publication Date: 2017) is an integral part of this program. Facilitator Manuals may be obtained only from the [NCCS Online Store](#).
- All Religious Emblem Counselors must have current BSA Youth Protection Training and meet diocesan/eparchial safe environment requirements.
- Form the group.
- Act as Facilitator, not group leader.
- Help each candidate focus on essential elements and important issues.
- Keep the Religious Emblems Coordinator informed of each candidate's progress.

Program Completion

- After all sections of the *Pope Pius XII Participant Manual* have been completed, the counselor will contact the Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting to find out the schedule for the Pope Pius XII Board of Review.
- The Scout will sit before the Board of Review.
- After Board of Review has been successfully completed, the counselor should contact the Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting for further direction concerning presentation instructions.

- Scouts who earn this Religious Emblem are also entitled to wear a BSA Religious Knot over their left pocket. Please consult with your local Diocesan/Eparchial Catholic Committee on Scouting to determine how knots are presented in your area. If they are not presented with the Religious Emblems, then they can be purchased at your local BSA Council Service Center Scout Shop with proof that the scout received the emblem.
- Candidates and moderator are asked to complete the paper or on-line survey to give us feedback about the program.

Ordering of Emblems

- Each diocese has one or two individuals who are designated to purchase Religious Emblems. Only these NCCS authorized submitters are allowed to order Religious Emblems for their diocese.