



# FACT SHEET

## Scouting for Catholic Youth

### **Record**

The Roman Catholic Church has used the Scouting program since the early days of the Boy Scouts of America. It is one of the most extensive users of the BSA program. There are more than 290,000 Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers in more than 9,400 packs, troops, and crews under Catholic auspices, and an equal number of youth members in other Scouting units. Scouting is used in about one-third of the parishes in the United States.

### **National Committee**

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting® has had the responsibility for more than 70 years to promote and guide cooperative contacts between the authorities of the Catholic Church and the Boy Scouts of America in the United States. The Scouting program is recognized as an integral part of the total youth ministry at the diocesan level. As such, Scouting becomes part of the parish youth ministry as units are operated by the parishes, parent-teacher organizations, Holy Name Societies, and schools. The Knights of Columbus and other church-related organizations also operate units.

The national committee carries out the official Plan of Organization, which was first approved in 1934 and was revised in 1989.

Each archdiocese and diocese has a Catholic committee on Scouting, and more than 300 BSA local councils have their own committees.

Every two years, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting holds a national conference for all members of the diocesan and local Catholic committees. At this conference, new programs are introduced, planned, and developed. Ultimate approval for the new programs comes from the vote of the membership. Thus, ideas, comments, and experience from every part of the country can be heard and shared.

In addition, the national committee sponsors a weeklong training course at the Philmont Training Center each year for those diocesan personnel entrusted with the responsibilities of operating the committee.

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting also promotes and coordinates Scouting in the Eastern Catholic Church, creating new programs or modifying current ones as needed.

### **National Membership Initiative**

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting and the BSA launched a membership initiative in January 2003. The goal of the initiative is to bring a quality Scouting program to more Catholic youth than ever before. Emphasis is being placed on organizing more units, holding membership roundups, ensuring quality training for existing units, and securing more volunteer leaders. Dioceses are encouraged to conduct a bishop's luncheon or dinner to promote Scouting. Promotional materials—including a brochure that features endorsements from the pope and nine United States cardinals—are available to support the initiative.

## Responsibilities

Through each level of organization, subcommittees carry out the responsibilities established in the Plan of Organization, No. 16-151. These include:

**Membership.** Create and promote national programs that diocesan Scouting committees can use to further membership and the relationship between the Catholic Church and the BSA.

**Training.** Provide training for laypeople of the Catholic faith, training for people who serve as religious emblems counselors, and assistance in recruiting for parishes.

**Religious Emblems.** Promote the spiritual phase of Scouting, provide for a religious emblems program, provide a board of review to examine all candidates for religious emblems, and develop ways and means to communicate with Scouts of the Catholic faith in units of other chartered organizations in order to help them qualify for Catholic religious emblems. These religious emblems are:

- **Light of Christ.** This emblem is available to registered Tiger or Wolf Cub Scouts of the Catholic faith. The focus is on advancement in spiritual growth and religious knowledge. It is the first of five religious emblems available to Catholic youth involved with Scouting. The Scout must complete the requirements before starting third grade.
- **Parvuli Dei.** This is a Christian family emblem to recognize Bear Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts, who have completed the second grade, for advancement in religious knowledge and spiritual formation. With the help of parents or guardians, the boy becomes more aware of God's presence in his daily life, especially within his home and community.
- **Ad Altare Dei.** The Scout must have completed sixth grade and be active in his troop for six months before starting the program. The content is designed for 13 and 14 year olds, but older Boy Scouts may also work on the program. The purpose of earning the Ad Altare Dei emblem is to equip the Scout to take his place in the world as a maturing Catholic and a maturing American. With a religious emblem counselor, the boy meets requirements in eight steps covering the sacraments of initiation and the sacraments of maturity.

**Light is Life.** This recognition has been developed by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting for Boy Scouts of the Eastern Catholic Churches. Light is Life respects the cultural and ritual differences among the various Eastern Catholic Churches. The overall goal of the Light is Life religious emblem program is to bring about in the Scout, through his Eastern Christian Scouting experience, a deeper awareness of his share in faith-life.

**Pope Pius XII.** The Pope Pius XII emblem, for registered youth in at least ninth grade, is for both Venturers (male and female) and Boy Scouts. The program deals with different life choices (single, married, religious, ordained), occupations and ministries in the church as calls from God. It includes youth-led discussions on current issues facing the church and/or society. Youth are assisted in this program by an approved adult facilitator.

- **Saint George.** This national recognition is presented to any adult who is working with the Scouting program under Catholic auspices, to Catholics in Scouting units not operated by the church, and to those who have made a significant contribution to Scouting in the field of Catholic relationships. It may be given to men, women, priests, and non-Catholics.

**Religious Activities.** Promote regular and meaningful Catholic religious activities and programs for youth at the unit and diocesan levels throughout the country.

**Communication.** Keep Scouters informed on Scouting activities, promote the program and activities of the Catholic committee, create a better understanding of the aims and ideals of Scouting by both clergy and laity, and make known the many advantages of Scouting under Catholic auspices to the parish as part of its Catholic youth program.

Web site: [www.nccs-bsa.org](http://www.nccs-bsa.org)

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