Religious Emblems

Religious Emblems are a collaboration between faith-based organizations and Scouting America.

The various faith-based organizations write the workbooks and control the emblems (you cannot buy the emblems at the Scout Shop.) Scouting America allows the emblems to be worn on the uniform and sells SOME of the workbooks.

The purple religious emblem square knot (purple background with a silver square knot) is one of the few square knots

- Earned as a youth
- Worn as a youth (only wear one knot, even if earned multiple emblems)
- Continued to be worn as an adult

Scout leaders/advancement chairs **may** need the certificate from the religious emblem in order to purchase the square knot.

The first religious emblem was awarded in 1926 in Los Angeles, the Catholic Ad Altare Dei.

Many faiths have multiple different awards: one, two, or even three for the Cub Scout/Webelos/AOL Scouts; and one or two awards at the Scouts BSA and Venturing levels. Many faiths also have awards for adults. Again, the requirements are set by the faith-based organization. Some adult awards are by nomination only. The adult religious emblem knot is silver background, with a purple knot.

How can a unit encourage Scouts to earn their Religious emblems? Especially when the unit is made up of Scouts of many different faith traditions?

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1. For Cub Scouts, don't just "assign" the Duty to God achievements to the parents. Come up with at least one activity that all Scouts can do.
2. Scoutmasters, do you ask Scout how they are doing their "Duty to God"?

Troop Chaplain Aide – this leadership position is often left unfilled.

The purpose of this program is to

- Make the 12th point of the Scout Law more meaningful in life
- Promote a greater understanding of and appreciation for all religions
- Provide Scouts with the opportunity to work with an ordained member of the clergy, thereby gaining insight into the religious professional life

Chaplain aide is an approved youth leadership position for Scouts. The responsibilities are to encourage spiritual awareness and growth in the lives of troop members and to assist the chaplain.
The Scout seeking the position of chaplain aide should have earned or be in the process of completing his religious emblems study program. It is recommended that the Scout selected be at least a First Class Scout. The chaplain aide should be mature and sensitive, a Scout who has earned the trust of his fellow Scouts.

Duties of the Chaplain Aide

- Maintain the troop's religious emblems award progress chart.
- Present an overview of the various religious emblems programs to the troop at least annually, instructing members to contact their own clergyperson or religious counselor to guide them in the appropriate study programs.

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- Compile and keep an up-to-date list of local clergy who have agreed to be counselors for the religious emblems programs.
- Present an overview of the religious emblems programs to Cub Scout dens and packs on request.
- Serve as the youth coordinator for the observance of the annual Scout Sabbath or Sunday in February.
- Working with the troop chaplain, usually a member of the clergy, compose a Sabbath service appropriate for all troop members during weekend campouts. Invite the troop chaplain to visit a campout, eat with the troop, and conduct a worship service.
- Prepare a troop prayer.
- Assist the troop chaplain, or other appropriate adult, to plan and conduct a religious emblem recognition ceremony. Presentation of a religious emblem is the responsibility of the local religious institution in which it is earned, though it is appropriate for the troop to recognize boys who have received religious emblems at courts of honor.
- Encourage troop members to strengthen their own relationship with God through personal prayer and devotions and participation in religious activities.
- Participate in patrol leader's council planning sessions, ensuring that a spiritual emphasis is included, e.g., vespers, prayer before meals, religious observances, etc.
- Working with the troop chaplain, compose an appropriate prayer for before and after meals. When composing these prayers, the chaplain and chaplain aide should be sensitive to the various theological and religious positions embraced by the faiths represented in the group.
- Work with the troop chaplain to plan appropriate religious services for all members during weekend troop campouts. Troops may conduct their own religious services, invite the

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troop chaplain or an exemplary layperson to participate in the service, or they may visit a nearby church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or other religious institution.

NOTE:

1. The troop chaplain is not required to have a chaplain aide
2. Iin some units sponsored by faith-based organizations, the faith-based organization may impose additional requirements for a Scouter to be a chaplain.

Unit Religious Emblem Coordinator

The Unit Religious Emblem Coordinator is a ***registered, uniformed*** position.

The duties are to promote religious emblems, and be a resource for Scouts and their parents. The Unit Religious Emblem Coordinator helps connect Scouts and parents with resources to assist with the program of their faith.

Who would make a good Religious Emblems Coordinator? Someone who is active in their own faith, but respects other faiths. If the unit is sponsored by a faith-based organization, perhaps someone from the unit active in that organization.

Doesn't have to like camping!

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Scout Sunday / Scout Shabbat / Scout Jumuah

If the unit is sponsored by a Faith-based Organization, plan to attend a service on Scout Sunday/Shabbat/Jumuah. Speak to leadership about having Scouts involved:

- Help with the collection
- Read scripture
- Usher
- Altar server
- Greeter, pass out bulletins

Cub Scout Religious Emblems can be awarded then. For Scouts belonging to other faith traditions, I always told them it was our chance to "be present" to our sponsoring organization.
This planning should be done in the Fall, November or December.

For units NOT sponsored by a faith-based organization:
Ask adults in unit if they have a regular place of worship, that they would feel comfortable speaking to the leadership about the unit visiting.

Have the parent who belongs to that faith-based organization speak to Scouts and parents on what to expect.

Hopefully, the units can visit different houses of worship each year.

Ten Commandment /12 point hikes/bike rides

- Visit different houses of worship
- Long Beach Area Council does a Ten Commandment Hike the day after Thanksgiving
- Western Los Angeles County Council and Ventura County Council usually have events.

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Things to be aware of:

1) Many of the religious emblem workbooks require a clergy signature (or their representative). A lot of families will say they are Christian, but do they attend a church? Sometimes a sponsoring organization MAY be able to help with this.
2) Religious emblems are not cheap!

   Books, emblems parent miniatures, etc.

   Unit committee should discuss and develop a policy, who will pay (each family, unit). Perhaps the unit just buys the knot.
3) Once again, religious emblems are awards from the Faith-based Organization. There is no record in Scoutbook, Scouting America, or at your council. There is a place in Scoutbook to record a religious emblem, but only space for one (nowhere to note if Scout earned multiple emblems at different levels.) To purchase the purple square knot, you MAY need a certificate or documentation.