

**FRIENDS OF MANY FAITHS
AND CULTURES --
DUTY TO GOD ENCAMPMENT '09**



DISCUSSION LEADER GUIDE

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1.0 Introduction

Your job today is to encourage the Scouts to think. We also hope they will learn something, but we really want them to think.

So don't worry if you are not an "expert" on some of the topics. The fact that you have lived in the world long enough to achieve adulthood indicates that you know something about faith and life and getting along with other people.

Today you are asked to lead the Scouts in thinking about **three topics**: religious awards, "faith," and age-appropriate advancement. Here's an idea of how it might work (although how it actually works depends on you and the Scouts you are leading):

9:30 – 10:30 am – First session.

Present basic information about religious awards (maybe 10 to 15 minutes).

Then talk about "faith."

1:00 – 4:00 pm – Second session.

Advancement: Help the Cub Scouts earn a belt loop, or help Boy Scouts earn a partial on "American Cultures" merit badge, or help Venture Scouts complete part of the requirements for the Bronze or Trust Award.

✓ Spend some time talking about the requirements for the appropriate award.

✓ Spend some time visiting the "**cultural action centers.**"

✓ Spend some more time talking about getting along in a multi-cultural world.

2.0 Religious Awards

Your only “religious award task” today is to provide the Scouts with information about religious awards. **You are not giving religious instruction.**

Almost every religious group in the United States has one or more religious awards that Scouts can earn. The appropriate place to earn these awards is at the church or synagogue, or mosque, or temple, because **these awards are not, strictly speaking, Scout awards.** They are awards given by the religious group and recognized by BSA. These same awards are also recognized by Girl Scouts, Campfire, and 4-H and some other organizations.

BSA encourages Scouts to earn their religious award, but Scouts must talk to their minister, priest, rabbi, imam, or other religious leader about earning the award. If the religious leader does not know anything about these awards, the religious leader can call the BSA Council Office for information.

The Atlanta Area Council Scout Shop sells the books used for the Catholic awards and sells the books used by many Protestant denominations. Materials for other faith awards can be found on the internet or can be obtained by mail.

Leaders can also look at www.praypub.org for information. This is the web site for the “P.R.A. Y.” organization that coordinates many Protestant award programs, but also has information about other award programs.

2.1 The Catholic awards are:

“Light of Christ” for Tigers and Wolves

“Parvuli Dei” for Bears and Webelos

“Ad Altre Dei” for Roman Catholics who have completed 6th Grade

“Light is Life” for Eastern Rite Catholics who have completed 6th Grade

“Pope Pius XII” for Scouts who have started 9th grade and are not 21 years old.

2.2 The most common Protestant awards are:

“God and Me” for school grades 1, 2, and 3.

“God and Family” for school grades 4 and 5.

“God and Church” for school grades 6 through 8.

“God and Life” for school grades 9 through 12.

(These are the primary awards coordinated by the P.R.A.Y. organization. A few Protestant denominations have their own award programs.)

2.3 The Jewish awards are:

“Maccabee” for Tigers.

“Aleph” for Cub Scouts.

“Ner Tamid” (“Eternal Light”) for Scouts and Venturers.

“Etz Chaim” for high school students.

2.4 Latter Day Saint (Mormon):

“On My Honor” for all Scouts.

2.5 Islam:

“In the Name of God” for all Scouts.

3.0 Talking about “Faith”

Yes, you can lead this discussion. The most important thing to realize about the topic of faith is that **you can do this**. You don’t have to be a minister or priest, or even a Sunday school teacher.

Before we even think about “faith in God,” let’s ask ourselves what it means to have “faith” in other people? Doesn’t it simply mean that we “trust” them? If they say that they are going to do something, we trust that they will do it. In other words, we believe that they will do it, or we have “faith” that they will do it.

All of our Scouts (even Cub Scouts) know that the Scout Law begins with “Trustworthy.” Being trustworthy is the opposite side of the coin from having faith in other people. We are “trustworthy,” and they have “faith” in us. They are “trustworthy” and we have “faith” in them. If people are not trustworthy and if we cannot have “faith” in one another, then our civilization will come to an end.

Before you get the Scouts talking about “faith” in God, talk with them about the importance of being “trustworthy” and about how important it is that we are able to have “faith” in other people.

3.1 Faith is Active

Faith is more than belief. I may believe that you are a good carpenter, but before I hire you to do carpentry on my house, I will have made that belief active by checking on your skills. If I did not have “faith” in your skills as a carpenter, I would not hire you.

Likewise, a Scout has “faith” that his Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, or Crew Advisor has skills to respond properly to an emergency when they are in camp. Otherwise, they would not go to camp with this person.

There is an old story about a man named Tom who promised to walk a tight-rope stretched across Niagara Falls. Not only did Tom promise to walk the tight-rope, but he promised that he would do it pushing a wheel-barrow. A crowd gathered to watch him, and Tom asked another man in the crowd, named Jim, if he *believed* he could do it. Jim said, “Certainly I *believe* you can do it. No one would try a stunt like this unless they could do it.” Then Tom asked Jim if Jim had *faith* that he could do it. This question caused Jim to stop and think for a moment, and what he thought was that the words “*belief*” and “*faith*” mean about the same thing, so Jim said to Tom, “Since the words mean about the same thing, I guess I have *faith* that you can do it.” Then Tom said to Jim, “If you have *faith* that I can do it, get into the wheel-barrow.”

This old story makes an important point: Faith is not just in our heads. Faith is active. Faith is what helps us get through life from day to day.

3.2 Historical Leaders Who Showed Faith.

Think of some well known people from history who have changed the world because of their faith. Gandhi would be one such person. He led a non-violent revolution that helped India become an independent nation. Another historic person of faith would be Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist minister who learned from Gandhi. The Scouts in your group should know a lot about Dr. King from their school studies.

The founders of the great world religions are also examples. Buddha was raised to be a prince, but he gave up everything to seek the truth and teach his followers about what he learned. Buddha had “faith” that seeking wealth is not the most important thing in life. Mohammad talked with God and it was revealed to him that he should lead his people away from idol worship. Mohammad had “faith” that God is more powerful than idols (and he had to defend his faith against idol worshippers who physically threatened him).

Read a bit about such people, and be prepared to briefly discuss a couple of them with your Scouts. **Historical discussion of “faith” is a requirement for the Bear Cub Scout faith achievement.**

Ask the Scouts in your group if they know anyone who “gets along” from day to day, even though they have problems. There is a good chance that they know such a person, and that this person is an older person such as a grandparent or an aunt or uncle. Some of the Scouts may know someone their own age who is blind or deaf. Some of these folks will be good examples of “faith.” These folks will tell you that God helps them get along in spite of their troubles.

If you can get the conversation about how other people show us the meaning of “faith,” then you will not have to worry about what you are going to say. You will just have to referee the conversation to make sure everyone has a chance to speak.

3.3 Cub Scouts and “Faith”

Cub Scouts can earn a “Faith Achievement” as part of their rank advancement. The requirements for these achievements are in the back of this pamphlet. Here is a summary of how you can help Cub Scouts with their “Faith Achievement.”

Wolf: These Scouts need to talk with their family members about “Duty to God,” and since you are not their “family,” their conversation with you will not complete the achievement, but their conversation with you will get them ready for the conversation with their family. **Look at the Wolf requirements at the end of this pamphlet, and you can see how your conversation with them will prepare them to complete this achievement at home.**

Bear: The Bear requirement involves an adult, not necessarily a family member, so **these Scouts can complete the achievement in camp.** The requirements include knowing about some people in history who have “shown great faith,” as well as discussing how faith can help the Scout in his daily life.

Webelos: The requirements for these older Cub Scouts involve doing things for a month, but you can help them with this part of their requirements: *“Tell what you have learned about faith. . . . Tell how these faith experiences help you live your duty to God. Name one faith practice that you will continue to do in the future. . . . After doing these requirements, tell what you have learned about your beliefs.”*

Notice that the Webelos need to do the talking. Listen to them, and correct misunderstandings, but get them to talk.

The requirement mentions **“faith practice.”** A “faith practice” might be attending church, having a time of personal prayer each day, reading scripture, visiting elderly people, or any number of other things.

Before you break for games and lunch, make sure everyone in your group knows where to meet you in the afternoon.

4.0 Saturday Afternoon: Friends from Many Faiths and Cultures

Start by taking roll.

Then turn to a discussion of culture and religion. The direction of the discussion will depend on whether you lead a group of Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts or Venture Scouts.

4.1 Cub Scouts: Languages and Cultures Belt Loop

The Cub Scouts should be able to earn the “Languages and Cultures” belt loop by visiting the “cultural action centers.” The action centers are “activity oriented” and scouts visiting them can learn vocabulary, songs, stories, dances, etc. You should not plan to visit all of the action centers, but spend time at one or two action centers so that the Cub Scouts can really learn something about the faith or culture the action center represents.

Requirements to earn the “Languages and Cultures” belt loop:

1. Talk with someone who grew up in a different country than you did. Find out what it was like and how it is different from your experience.
2. Learn 10 words that are in a different language than your own.
3. Play two games that originated in another country or culture.

For requirement 1, if you grew up in another country, talk with the Cub Scouts about your experience. Maybe there are Cubs in your

group who have recently moved to the U.S. from another country. If so, get them to say something about life in that country. Most groups will find someone who grew up in another country at one of the action centers.

For requirement 2, if you know a language other than English, help the Cubs with this requirement. We will also have a few people who know non-English languages circulating through the camp. Also, people at the action centers will be able to help with this requirement.

For requirement 3, plan to visit the action centers.

4.2 Boy Scouts: American Cultures Merit Badge.

Boy Scouts will not be able to complete requirement 5 in your group, but they might be able to complete the other requirements. Don't rush to get them through the merit badge, but help them complete as many requirements as possible.

These are the requirements for the American Cultures merit badge:

Choose THREE groups that have different racial, cultural, national, or ethnic backgrounds, one of which comes from your own background. Use these groups to meet requirements 1, 2, and 3.

1. Do TWO of the following, choosing a different group for each:
 - a. Go to a festival, celebration, or other event identified with one of the groups. Report on what you see and learn.
 - b. Go to a place of worship, school, or other institution identified with one of the groups. Report on what you see and learn.
 - c. Talk with a person from one of the groups about the heritage and traditions of the group. Report on what you learn.
 - d. Learn a song, dance, poem, or story which is traditional to one group, and teach it to a group of your friends.
 - e. Go to a library or museum to see a program or exhibit featuring one group's traditions. Report on what you see and learn.

2. Imagine that one of the groups had always lived alone in a city or country to which no other groups ever came. Tell what you think the city or country might be like today. Now tell what you think it might be like if the three groups you chose lived there at the same time.
3. Tell about some differences between the religions and social customs of the three groups. Tell about some ideas, or ways of doing things that are similar in the three groups.
4. Tell about a contribution made to our country by three different people each from a different racial, ethnic, or religious background.
5. Give a talk to your Scout unit or class at school on how people from different groups have gotten along together. Lead a discussion on what can be done to help various groups understand one another better.

How to work on the merit badge in your group:

First, choose groups that have displays at this event.

Requirement 1: “c” and “d” will be covered at the action centers. Plan to visit two of the action centers and spend some time at them.

Requirement 2: This is probably the most difficult requirement. The Scout must really think to complete this imaginative requirement. Because the Scouts are working in a group, they have the advantage of being able to learn from each other’s thinking, and they might get into a really good discussion. If so, encourage it and keep the Scouts “on topic,” and let them learn from one another!

Requirement 3: The answers for this requirement might come from the discussion of requirement 2. If not, suggest some ideas to the Scouts to get them thinking.

Requirement 4: Scouts may know some people who would fit this requirement from their school studies. See what ideas they come up

with. You may also have some ideas, and they can get some ideas from the displays.

Requirement 5: We cannot complete this requirement in our discussion groups. Scouts must arrange to do this somewhere else.

How do I report on the work the Scouts in my discussion group have done?

You will have a simple “check-off” card for each Scout. Write the Scout’s name and troop number on the card, and check the requirements you have worked on. Turn the cards in at the DTGE registration desk. These cards will be given to the Scoutmaster for follow-up and possible future completion of the merit badge.

4.3 Venturing Scouts: The Bronze Award and the Trust Award

Venturing Scouts are mature enough to decide what they want to work on, but some of the things they might want to do include:

The **Venturing Bronze Award** has several options, one of which is “Religious Life.” For this award, requirement 2a is “*Learn about cultural diversity,*” and 2d is “*Participate in a discussion about cultural diversity with your crew, Sunday school class, or other group.*” The resources at this Duty to God Encampment are well suited to help Scouts complete these requirements. Venturers might also meet someone at this encampment who can help them fulfill 2c: “*Invite someone from a different cultural background from yours and the majority of your crew’s members to give a presentation on a subject of his or her choosing. Introduce your guest.*”

The **Trust Award** is a major award and requires a full year of work to complete, but Venturing Scouts can use their time at this Duty to God Encampment to work on some of the requirements.

Under the Trust Award heading, “Respecting the Beliefs of Others,” requirement 2 says, “*Find out what religious groups are worshipping in your community, and whether they have been there for generations or whether they are relatively new to the community. Talk to at least five adults in your community about the impact various religious groups have on your community. Report your findings to your crew.*” At this Duty to God Encampment there are excellent resources to at least give the Venturer a good start on this requirement.

Trust Award requirement 3a instructs the Venturer to learn and report about a religion other than their own. Once again, this encampment has excellent resources to help the Venturer with this requirement.

There are many other possibilities for ways that this encampment can enrich the Venturers experience, and Venturers can easily identify these possibilities for themselves.

Appendix: Cub Scout Religious Achievement requirements:

Wolf Achievement:

To earn the Wolf rank a Cub Scout must complete 58 tasks out of a possible 74 tasks that are offered in the book.

Note that these activities are primarily done at home and signed off by the parent after the boy has completed each task. The book is then shown to the Den Leader who records the progress and also signs the boy’s book.

- **DUTY TO GOD** (Page 94)

- a. Complete the **Character Connection for Faith**

- o **Know.** What is “faith”? With your family, discuss some people who have shown their faith - who have shown an inner strength based on their trust in a higher power or cause. Discuss the good qualities of these people.

- o **Commit.** Discuss these questions with your family: What problems did these faithful people overcome to follow or practice their beliefs? What challenges might you face in doing your duty to God? Who can help you with these challenges?
- o **Practice.** Practice your faith while doing the requirements for “Duty to God.”
- b. Talk with your family about what they believe is their duty to God.
- c. Give two ideas on how you can practice or demonstrate your religious beliefs. Choose one and do it.
- d. Find out how you can help your church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or religious fellowship.

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Bear Achievement:

To earn the Bear Badge, a Cub Scout must complete 12 achievements out of a possible 24 that are offered in the book. The achievements are grouped in 4 major areas, GOD, COUNTRY, FAMILY, and SELF. Within each group, a required number of achievements must be completed, as indicated below. Also, any achievements that they do **NOT** use to earn the Bear Badge may be used to earn Arrow Points.

(Note that these achievements, as were the Wolf activities, are primarily done at home and signed off by an adult family member after the boy has completed each one. The book is then shown to the Den Leader who records the progress and also signs the boy’s book.)

GOD (Do ONE of the following)

1. WAYS WE WORSHIP (Page 26)

Complete both requirements.

- a. Complete the **Character Connection for Faith**
 - **Know.** Name some people in history who have shown great faith. Discuss with an adult how faith has been important at a particular point in his or her life.

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- **Commit.** Discuss with an adult how having faith and hope will help you in your life, and also discuss some ways that you can strengthen your faith.
 - **Practice.** Practice your faith as you are taught in your home, church, synagogue, mosque, or religious fellowship.
- b. Make a list of things you can do this week to practice your religion as you are taught in your home, church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious community. Check them off your list as you complete them.

2. EMBLEMS OF FAITH (Page 30)

Complete the requirement.

Earn the religious emblem of your faith

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Webelos Requirements

Faith

After completing the rest of requirement 8, do these (a, b, and c):

- a. **Know:** Tell what you have learned about faith.
- b. **Commit:** Tell how these faith experiences help you live your duty to God. Name one faith practice that you will continue to do in the future.
- c. **Practice:** After doing these requirements, tell what you have learned about your beliefs.

And do one of these (**d OR e**):

- d. Earn the religious emblem of your faith*
- e. Do two of these:
 - Attend the mosque, church, synagogue, temple, or other religious organization of your choice, talk with your religious leader about your beliefs. Tell your family and your Webelos den leader what you learned.
 - Discuss with your family and Webelos den leader how your religious beliefs fit in with the

Scout Oath and Scout Law, and what character-building traits your religious beliefs have in common with the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

- With your religious leader, discuss and make a plan to do two things you think will help you draw nearer to God. Do these things for a month.
- For at least a month, pray or meditate reverently each day as taught by your family, and by your church, temple, mosque, synagogue, or religious group.
- Under the direction of your religious leader, do an act of service for someone else. Talk about your service with your family and Webelos den leader. Tell them how it made you feel.
- List at least two ways you believe you have lived according to your religious beliefs.

* If you earned your faith's religious emblem earlier in Cub Scouting, and your faith does not have a Webelos religious emblem, you must complete requirement 8e.

Completion of requirement 8e does not qualify a youth to receive the religious emblem of his faith.

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