



# FACT SHEET

## Scouting for Presbyterian Youth

### The Record

Presbyterian congregations have used the Scouting program in conjunction with the other phases of the youth ministry for nearly 80 years. The program has served as a catalyst for strengthening relationships among youth, family, and the congregation. More than 140,000 youth members are involved in more than 3,800 Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, and Venturing crews.

### National Liaison

Since 1920, Presbyterian congregations have recognized that the Scouting program not only renders a service to the youth but also is extremely beneficial to the congregations that act as chartered organizations. The National Association of Presbyterian Scouters (NAPS) was formed in 1986 to assist and encourage congregations in becoming chartered organizations, in presenting the entire Scouting program, and in promoting the religious growth programs as well as to serve as a liaison between Scouting and the church.

In 1988, NAPS became officially linked through a covenant with the Congregational Ministries Division of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). NAPS has a regional structure that coincides with the boundaries of the Synods of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It represents its membership on the Religious Relationships Committee of the Boy Scouts of America. Additionally, NAPS has representation on the P.R.A.Y. (Programs of Religious Activities With Youth) board in St. Louis, Missouri.

### Church Functions

Presbyterian Church bodies work with the Boy Scouts of America to

- Develop and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with the BSA
- Foster among Presbyterian congregations a regard for Scouting as a resource for ministry and assist congregations that operate Scouting units to use them as effective ministry tools
- Help provide literature related to Scouting and the church's ministry with children, youth, and families
- Provide and administer religious growth programs for Presbyterian youth in Scouting
- Emphasize the religious aspect of the Scouting program
- Promote religious worship at outdoor Scouting functions and a chaplaincy program at Scout summer camps
- Help Presbyterian adults in Scouting understand and carry out their ministry roles and give recognition to those who faithfully serve children and youth through the Scouting program



## **NAPS Functions**

The National Association of Presbyterian Scouters was formed to encourage and support Presbyterian congregations and their ministries with youth in using the program of the Boy Scouts of America by

- Encouraging Presbyterian congregations to become chartered organizations, incorporating Tiger Cub dens, Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, and Venturing crews into their ministries with youth, thereby extending their programs of leadership training and community outreach
- Assisting BSA local councils in the promotion, chartering, establishing, and supporting of Scouting units in Presbyterian congregations
- Fostering young people's individual religious growth through the God and Country program, with recognition given by P.R.A.Y. (God and Me, God and Family, God and Church, and God and Life emblems), and use of the chaplain's aide position in the BSA
- Promoting and encouraging training opportunities to improve individual skills, awareness of the Scouting ministry, and spiritual growth
- Advocating a chaplaincy program as a mission issue in Scouting activities
- Cooperating with other denominations and faiths through the BSA Religious Relationships Committee and through establishment of local council and district relationships committees

## **Religious Growth**

The God and Country religious growth program is provided for Presbyterian youth in Scouting and includes the following recognitions through P.R.A.Y.:

**God and Me.** For youth in first through third grades: Earning this emblem encourages children to tell the story of their lives, think about the life and teachings of Jesus, and see how God is present in their lives today.

**God and Family.** For youth in fourth and fifth grades: This emblem recognizes growth in relation to self, God, family, friends, neighbors, community, and the future.

**God and Church.** For youth in sixth through eighth grades: Earning the God and Church emblem encourages individuals to know their pastor and counselor more intimately, to understand the church's structure and objectives, and to participate in services and projects that will give them a better understanding of the mission of the church.

**God and Life.** For youth in ninth through 12th grades: The God and Life emblem is earned for completing a series of self-guidance and developmental exercises for students seeking to strengthen faith, make responsible choices, and find identity in family, church, and country. A counselor or minister is designated by the church and works with this age level.

**Spiritual Growth Certificate.** A certificate developed to recognize a youth that has completed three of the four God and Country religious growth programs. The certificate was developed by NAPS and can be ordered through P.R.A.Y. for NAPS distribution.

**Presbyterian Unit Award of Excellence.** The purpose of the Presbyterian Unit Award of Excellence is to recognize outstanding Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, Venturing crews, and Sea Scout ships chartered to Presbyterian congregations that have met the criteria established by the National Association of Presbyterian Scouters. There are distinctive patches available for one, two, and three years of continuous qualification. Applications are available through P.R.A.Y.

## **Adult Recognitions**

**God and Service Award.** This recognition is presented to Presbyterian adults by P.R.A.Y. upon nomination by the church and the related youth agency. The God and Service Award may be given to any adult who is an active member of his or her church and who has rendered a minimum of five years of distinguished service to young people through the church and a minimum of five years of distinguished service to young people through a national youth agency.

**Celtic Cross Award.** This award is presented to adults who are working with Presbyterian-sponsored youth activities and may or may not be members of a Presbyterian church. The recipient must have a continuous record of using and supporting youth ministry with a minimum tenure of two years and at a level where he or she works directly with youth. These ministries may include Sunday school, youth fellowship, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., and other youth-serving agencies. This recognition is presented to leaders of children in Christian education programs who have given countless hours to prepare and teach values to acknowledge their service to God and the church, and to affirm how much they mean to us and to our children. The award was developed by NAPS and is distributed by P.R.A.Y. after approval of the appropriate church committee or chartered organization representative and the minister and session.

**Adult Mentor Program.** This program is designed for an adult to work with a young person enrolled in the God and Country program. It prepares adults to be positive Christian influences and to share their faith with youth as they work together on the God and Country emblem. The mentor program is not to be confused with the God and Service Award. An adult who completes the mentor studies will receive a certificate and a lapel pin for wear on nonuniform clothing.

## **Resources**

The National Association of Presbyterian Scouters and the BSA have developed several resources to show how Presbyterian Scouting works in local congregations: the brochure *Presbyterians and Scouting, Building Values Together*, No. 5-975, and the New Unit Organization Kit, No. 5-976. In addition, a short videotape, *Presbyterians and Scouting, Building Values Together*, offers specific examples of how local congregations use Scouting as part of their youth ministry program. All resources are available through both the local Scout councils and the Presbytery Resource centers, or contact the Relationships Division at 972-580-2191.

P.R.A.Y. has developed the following literature: *Duty to God Medals and Duty to God* descriptive brochure. Additional videos have been developed that are excellent resource materials: *Promoting Duty to God and Bringing Youth to Christ*.

## **Additional Information**

Information and materials concerning the religious growth programs or the God and Service nomination may be obtained from P.R.A.Y., 8520 Mackenzie Road, St. Louis, MO 63123-3433; telephone 800-933-PRAY, Web site [www.presbyterianscouters.org](http://www.presbyterianscouters.org).

For additional information about the National Association of Presbyterian Scouters, contact NAPS president, in care of P.R.A.Y., 8520 Mackenzie Road, St. Louis, MO 63123-3433.