



Scouting for Jewish Youth— Partnering with parents and Jewish organizations

 **Developing character, citizenship, personal fitness, and leadership skills to transform today's kids into tomorrow's leaders**

Background

- Judaism is one of the larger U.S. faith traditions outside of Christianity. Approximately 1.7 percent of the adult population practices non-Christian faith traditions. Approximately 1.9 percent of the population practices Judaism (Source: 2015 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, Pew Forum). Regionally, this population is distributed as follows:
 - Northeast: 43 percent
 - Midwest: 11 percent
 - South: 26 percent
 - West: 20 percent
- Jewish worship in the U.S. is generally divided into four major groups: Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist, with several smaller movements.
- Jewish participation in Scouting originated in 1916 with the formation of a national Jewish Scouting committee, and Jewish institutions have obtained charters for Jewish Scout units since then under the guidance of such leaders as Mortimer Schiff, Dr. Cyrus Adler, and Frank Weil.
- 2018 membership included:
 - 50 packs with 985 Cub Scouts
 - 61 troops with 889 Scouts
 - 7 crews with 45 Venturers

Religious Principles and Key Terms

- Judaism believes in a single, universal God, uniting all humanity as a single family.
- Judaism believes in the sanctity of human life and the ideal of a human society based on law.
- Judaism believes that all people of good moral character are pleasing in the sight of God.
- *Torah*: Jewish holy book that represents the first five books of the *Tanakh*, or the first five books of the Holy Bible known as the five books of Moses
- *Halakhah*: Represents the Jewish rituals and religious observances that are grounded in Jewish law
- *Mitzvot*: 613 individual commandments intended to keep the Jewish people holy. Of these:
 - 248 represent positive commandments, or what to do.
 - 365 represent negative commandments, or what not to do.
- *Rabbinic law*: A body of law interpreting and expanding *Halakhah* and *Mitzvot* which has developed over the centuries. Rabbinic law can be separated into three groups:
 - *Gezeirah*: A rule instituted by the rabbis to prevent inadvertent violation of a mitzvah
 - *Takkanah*: A law instituted by rabbis that does not derive from the Torah (e.g., lighting of the candles on Hanukkah)
 - *Minhag*: A custom that evolved for worthy religious reasons and has continued long enough to become a binding religious practice
- *Synagogue, temple, or Chabad house*: Jewish house of worship and learning. Length and content of the service depends on the sect and customs of the community in general:
 - Hebrew is used most in Orthodox services and least in Reform services.
 - Reform services tend to be shorter than Orthodox or Conservative services.



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- **Kashrut:** Jewish dietary laws that govern the practice of eating kosher foods. Many Jews do not eat pork products, shellfish, predatory fish, birds and animals, and certain other categories of food. Kosher food is prepared under rabbinic supervision. Observance by Jewish sects includes the following:
 - Most Reform Jews consider the laws to be outdated and do not follow them; others keep kosher laws at home but not when dining out or in someone else's home.
 - Orthodox Jews fully obey the laws of kashrut.
 - Conservative Jews tend to keep the laws consistently.
- **Shabbat:** The Jewish Sabbath is observed from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. Many Jews refrain from performing tasks which are considered to be work on Shabbat.
- **Jewish Holidays:** All Jewish holiday observances begin at sundown the night before and end on sundown the day of the holiday. Some holidays are observed for two or more days. Significant holidays include Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Purim, Passover, Shavuot, Tisha B'Av, and Hanukkah.
- **Worship:** Jewish worship services are conducted in both Hebrew and English. They vary in content and length based upon the specific branch of Judaism.

Role of Scouting in the Jewish Faith

The BSA delivers the Scouting program to Jewish institutions through an annual charter agreement with the local Scout council. The National Jewish Committee on Scouting (NJCOS) assists Scout councils, units, and chartered organizations by creating a Jewish focused Scouting program. The NJCOS promotes Scouting for Jewish Youth by

- Determining best practices for integrating Scouting into the Jewish community
- Assisting in the formation of new, sustainable Scout units at Jewish institutions
- Providing the tools to keep existing Scout units healthy
- Maintaining a Jewish religious emblems program to enhance the Jewish experience for Scouts
- Promoting Jewish religious observances at Scouting activities
- Creating programs with Jewish content to enhance the Scouting program for Jewish Youth
- Promoting and strengthening relationships with national Jewish organizations
- Connecting American Jewish units to Jewish units in other countries
- Recruiting spiritual leaders to officiate at international, national, and other Scouting events
- Providing support and advice to the Boy Scouts of America on matters of Jewish concern
- Providing the means to support all Jewish Scouts

Mission Statement: The mission of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting (NJCOS) is to prepare young Jews to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of Judaism as expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Vision Statement: Scouting for Jewish Youth will develop generations of caring, concerned, capable citizens and leaders who are guided by the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and Torah.



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Scouting Youth and Adult Recognitions

The following are the numbers of Jewish religious emblems and awards presented in 2017:

Youth Emblems

- Maccabee, 128
- Aleph, 158
- Ner Tamid, 39
- Etz Chaim, 17

Adult Awards

- Shofar, 14

Jewish Religious Emblem Program



Maccabee Emblem

Purpose

- Helps younger Cub Scouts learn basic concepts of Judaism
- Serves as a foundation for the Aleph, Ner Tamid, and Etz Chaim emblems
- Helps young Scouts begin their Jewish religious journey

Eligibility

- Registered Jewish Cub Scouts in first through third grade

Requirements

- Complete requirements in four categories:
 - Family Life (family names)
 - Jewish Life (holidays, Hebrew words and phrases, community leaders)
 - Jewish History (heroes)
 - Our Place in the World



Aleph Emblem

Purpose

- Helps older Cub Scouts to better understand the Jewish faith
- Assists Cub Scouts in getting to know their religious leaders and becoming more comfortable and self-assured Jews

Eligibility

- Registered Jewish Cub Scouts in third through fifth grade

Requirements

- Complete requirements in four categories:
 - Family Life (Jewish home)
 - Community (synagogue)



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- Jewish History (Bible heroes, famous American Jews)
- Our Place in the World (Israel)



Ner Tamid Emblem

Purpose

- Helps Scouts build themselves spiritually and morally by practicing their religion
- Assists in practicing duty to God to be reverent and faithful in their religious duties

Eligibility

- Registered Jewish Scouts or Venturers in sixth through ninth grade
- Scouts or Venturers who have completed the ninth grade and are concurrently completing the requirements for the Etz Chaim emblem

Requirements

- Complete requirements in five categories:
 - Family Life (home observance, calendar, Jewish history, kashrut)
 - Community (synagogue worship, prayer, active prayer)
 - Jewish Life (Jewish study)
 - Jewish History (American Jewish community, Jewish organizations, geography, historically important Jews, American Jews)
 - Our Place in the World (service, world Jewry, Israel, national organizations)
- Service projects are determined with the support of a counselor.



Etz Chaim Emblem

Purpose

- Encourages exploration of adult Jewish roles in the context of family, community, and Jewish people

Eligibility

- Registered Jewish youth in Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouting, or Exploring

Requirements

- Complete requirements in five categories:
 - Family Life (community and family)
 - Community (community institutions and agencies)
 - Jewish Life (synagogue worship and Torah study)
 - Jewish History (community and the Jewish world, community sharing)
 - Our Place in the World (community Jewish leaders, community and future, service)



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Youth Scholarship Program

Chester M. Vernon Memorial Scholarship

Purpose

- Award a four-year \$1,000 scholarship to a deserving Jewish Eagle Scout.

Eligibility

- Registered member of a Scout troop, Exploring post, Venturing crew, or Sea Scout ship
- Recipient of the Eagle Scout award (The only exception is for a Scout whose Eagle Scout board of review is held in the same year as the Scout's high school graduation; the Scout may apply in that calendar year.)
- Active member of a synagogue
- Recipient of the Ner Tamid or Etz Chaim religious emblem
- Demonstrated practical citizenship in synagogue, school, Scouting unit, and community
- Enrolled in an accredited high school program and in the final year at the time of selection

Requirements

- Must demonstrate financial need

Rick Arkans Scholarship

Purpose

- Established by Marvin and Florence Arkans to award a one-time \$1,000 scholarship to a deserving Jewish Eagle Scout.

Eligibility

- Registered member of a Boy Scout troop, Exploring post, Venturing crew, or Sea Scout ship
- Recipient of the Eagle Scout award (The only exception is for a Scout whose Eagle Scout board of review is held in the same year as the Scout's high school graduation; the Scout may apply in that calendar year.)
- Active member of a synagogue
- Recipient of the Ner Tamid or Etz Chaim religious emblem
- Demonstrated practical citizenship in synagogue, school, Scouting unit, and community
- Enrolled in an accredited high school program and in the final year at the time of selection

Requirements

- Must demonstrate financial need by submitting a copy of Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA).



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Frank L. Weil Memorial Scholarship

Purpose

- Established in memory of Frank Weil to award a one-time \$1,000 scholarship and two \$500 scholarships to deserving Jewish Eagle Scouts.

Eligibility

- Registered member of a Scout troop or Venturing crew
- Recipient of the Eagle Scout award (The only exception is for a Scout whose Eagle Scout board of review is held in the same year as the Scout's high school graduation; the Scout may apply in that calendar year.)
- Active member of a synagogue
- Recipient of the Ner Tamid or Etz Chaim religious emblem
- Demonstrated practical citizenship in synagogue, school, Scouting unit, and community
- Enrolled in an accredited high school program and in the final year at the time of selection

Adult Awards



Shofar Award

Purpose

- Recognizes outstanding service by adults in the promotion of Scouting among Jewish youth

Eligibility

- Promote the use of Scouting in synagogues, Jewish community centers, and other Jewish institutions.
- Encourage Jewish youth to join the Boy Scouts of America as Cub Scouts, Scouts, Venturers, Explorers, or Sea Scouts, or to participate in the Learning for Life program.
- Recruit Jewish leaders on unit, district, and council levels.
- Encourage and assist Scouts in earning the Maccabee, Aleph, and Ner Tamid emblems.
- Promote religious observance during camping trips and at Camporees, summer camp, Scout Sabbath, and other functions.
- Exemplify religious convictions by personal participation in the ideals of Jewish life.

Requirements

- Nominations may be made by a Scouting volunteer or professional
- Nominator must submit a letter of recommendation detailing the nominee's qualifications
- Application must be submitted to local Jewish committee and local council for approval



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Frank L. Weil Award for Jewish Units

Purpose

- Recognizes Jewish units that deliver quality programs for Jewish youth

Eligibility

- All Scout units chartered to Jewish institutions

Requirements

- Earn the JTE Gold award.
- Perform community service.
- Renew the unit charter on time.
- Increase membership.
- Participate in religious activities.
- Participate in the Friends of Scouting effort.
- Earn religious emblems.

Mortimer Schiff Award for Jewish Committees

Purpose

- Recognizes outstanding local council Jewish committees on Scouting

Eligibility

- All local council Jewish committees on Scouting

Requirements

- Jewish units in the council earn the JTE Gold award
- Jewish units in the council earn the Frank L. Weil Award
- Membership growth in the council's Jewish units
- Growth in earning Jewish religious emblems within the council
- Community service
- Increase in registered units, Friends of Scouting participation, or participation in religious activities



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Shalom Award



Purpose

- Recognizes Scouters who provide leadership and assistance to national Jewish Scout groups in developing unity and closer bonds with Jewish Scout groups in other countries

Eligibility

- Registered Scouting volunteer

Requirements

- Provide substantial efforts in international Jewish Scouting relationships over at least five years or complete a major international project.
- Act as an ambassador and representative of Jewish convictions and ideals in Scouting through personal example.
- Promote establishment and maintenance of Scout units in Jewish institutions.
- Encourage Jewish youth to join Scouting.
- Assist in promoting international dimensions of Scouting among Jewish Scout groups.
- Encourage Scouts to participate in international Scouting events.
- Promote Jewish religious observances at international Scouting events.
- Promote sensitivity and understanding toward all religious movements as they relate to Scouting.
- Nomination by a local or national Jewish committee on Scouting



Nachshon Fellowship

Purpose

- Recognizes substantial achievements on the national and international levels that provide impetus to Jewish Scouts and enhance the Scouting program's ability to achieve its overall goals

Eligibility

- Registered Scouter or professional
- A maximum of three inductions per year

Requirements

- Nomination by a national Scout organization and election by two additional national Scout organizations
- Substantial achievements on the national and international levels that provide impetus to Jewish Scouts and enhance the Scouting program's ability to achieve its overall goals
- Promote the development and maintenance of a national Jewish Scouts association in the nominee's country.
- Encourage Jewish Scouts to join Scouting.
- Promote Scouting to Jewish institutions nationally.
- Assist in developing international dimensions of Scouting for Jewish Scouts and Scouters.



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- Provide a personal example of Jewish convictions and ideals as they relate to international Scouting.
- Promote understanding and sensitivity toward all religious movements relating to Scouting.
- Promote religious observance by Jewish Scouts at international Scouting events.
- Become part of a cadre of experienced Jewish Scouters who provide advice and assistance in promoting national and international Scouting to Jewish Scouts.

Organization Information

To obtain information about unit formation, Jewish committees on Scouting, Jewish emblems and recognitions, recruiting, programming, and more:

Visit the website of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting at www.Jewishscouting.org, contact the committee at information@Jewishscouting.org, or send a request by mail to BSA National Office, Membership Growth, SUM284, Boy Scouts of America, 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079; Phone: 972-580-2000