



Scouting Ministry in The United Methodist Church

Build Effective Scouting Ministry
in Your Church



G U I D E L I N E S

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Build Effective Scouting Ministries in Your Church

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The General Commission on United Methodist Men

SCOUTING MINISTRY IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Contents

“A Wreath for Your Excellent Leadership”	5
An Overview	6
Scouting Ministries Program Partners at a Glance	7
Three Reasons to Have Scouting Ministries at Your Church	8
1. We Don’t Have Any Youth	
2. We Have Youth	
3. Provide Opportunities to Grow in Faith	
Child and Youth Protection	10
Deeper Connections	11
Link with the Local Church—Local Scouting Coordinator	
Link within the District—District Coordinator	
Link within the Annual Conference—Conference Scouting Coordinator	
Link with the Worldwide Church	
Faith Modeling and Servant Leadership	14
A Good Leader	
You Are the Salt of the Earth	16
Positive Peer Pressure	
Events and Programs	17
Bishop’s Dinner for Scouting	
P.R.A.Y. Program	
P.R.A.Y. Mentor Program	
Digital Connection	
Recognitions and Awards	21
The Bishop’s Award of Excellence	
The Cross and Flame Award	
The Torch Award	
The Silver Torch Award	
The Good Samaritan Award	
The Shepherd Church Charter Recognition	

Supportive Organizations and Training24
 United Methodist Men Foundation
 Training at Scouting America High Adventure Centers
 Other Training Programs
Volunteer Opportunities25
 Scouting Ministry Specialists
 Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi Partnership
Resources.....27
 Resources from the Center for Scouting Ministries
 Brochures and Packets
 Resources from Cokesbury
 Resources from the General Commission on United Methodist Men
 Organization Addresses
 UMC Agencies & Helpful Links

“A Wreath for Your Excellent Leadership”

Thank you for assuming the important and awesome work of providing spiritual leadership to your congregation. The work of church leadership is shared and synergistic. Pastoral and laity leadership combine to provide the widest possible set of gifts, knowledge, abilities, skills, experience, and passions to fulfill our United Methodist mission to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (*The Book of Discipline*, ¶120). What you do as a gifted, spiritual leader is of vital importance.

Spiritual leadership differs from other forms of leadership in the foundational ways it allows us to live out the vows and promises we make when joining the church: to uphold The United Methodist Church through our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.

The first work of all church leaders is to pray for the ministry of the church: local, denominational, and global. Our work is always worshipful work. Our ministry of presence strengthens our church’s ministry and mission. By combining our gifts, knowledge, experience, and passion we can achieve wonderful things together through the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Together, we strengthen our congregation for service to those within the community of faith and beyond. Accepting the mantle of leadership provides a powerful witness to the world of what it means to be a faithful disciple.

Together, we fulfill our mission of making disciples and transforming the world by reaching out and receiving people in the name of Jesus the Christ, relating people to God in covenant community, nurturing and strengthening people in their faith, and equipping and supporting people to live their faith in the world.

The *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation* draw upon a wealth of experience and expertise to provide you with the basic resources you need to do effective, impactful ministry. Each Guideline focuses on a key area of ministry and church leadership, providing information and processes to help your working group—committee, council, board, or other configuration—excel and support all other working groups. See the accompanying Guide to the Guidelines for useful information on how the *Guidelines* and ministry areas work together.

We recommend that each group member read this Guideline and noted paragraphs from the *Discipline*. Take time at meetings to discuss ways to implement identified tasks and responsibilities, plan for the future, and assess and evaluate your work.

The apocryphal book of Sirach reminds leaders to be humble servant leaders, make sure the needs of others are cared for, and then receive “a wreath for your excellent leadership” (Sirach 32:2 NRSVue). We invite you to lead with humility, compassion, patience, and grace, that The United Methodist Church might be a witness to the light and love of Christ for all the world.

An Overview

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. For a century, scouting ministries has been part of our concern for the spiritual formation of children in the Christian faith.

Scouting has been part of our reach to children and youth within the church and community since 1920, according to *Scouting in Methodist Episcopal Sunday Schools*, published by The Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This publication states: “Scouting is presented to the church as a proved and approved week-day program for the boys of the Sunday school.” Throughout the years, scouting ministry grew to include other youth-serving agencies. The 1948 *Book of Discipline*, ¶182 states, “Boy Scouts [now Scouting America] and Girl Scouts and similar organizations and clubs may be included in the church school.”




In the 1980s, there was a strong indication that the denomination was going to reduce its support for scouting ministries. In response, United Methodist Men and concerned Methodist scouters created the United Methodist Men Foundation as a way of ensuring the denomination would continue its support for scouting ministries. With financial support from the foundation, United Methodist Men established an Office of Scouting Ministries with a full-time director.

Since its 1996 creation, the General Commission on United Methodist Men has continued the denomination’s goal “to win men and boys to Christ and the Church” (1948 *Book of Discipline*, ¶1514.3). Today, scouting ministries in The United Methodist Church include Scouting America, Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

An estimated 1.5 million participants and family members are impacted by these scouting ministries.

Scouting ministries provide local congregations with an opportunity to encourage the spiritual and character development of children and youth in their communities through work on service projects; participation in the religious emblem classes provided by Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y); and exploring new skills in science, technology engineering, and math. Scouting also connects children to nature, provides leadership opportunities and citizenship training, and builds healthy peer and intergenerational relationships.

Scouting Ministries Programs at a Glance

	Scouting America	Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.	Big Brothers Big Sisters
			
Target Audience	Boys and girls, ages 5–20, with multiple opportunities: Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing and Exploring	Girls, in grades kindergarten through 12th grade	Boys and girls, ages 6–18
Primary Emphasis	Development of character, citizenship, and self-reliance through small-group and outdoor activity	Girl leadership/character development through the Girl Scouts Leadership Experience	Promote positive youth development through one-on-one relationship with caring adult
Program Structure	Small-group structure, youth led youth interaction with adult role modeling	Small-group structure with girl/adult partnership (troops); activities include camping, events, series, travel, virtual	Volunteer supported in one-on-one mentoring relationship with child
Special Features	Extensive drug prevention, youth protection programs and high-adventure bases	Environmental stewardship; Financial entrepreneurship; Healthy living; Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math (STEAM); Take Action projects	Amachi focuses on church partnerships to serve children with an incarcerated parent / Individual matches for long-term support
National Office	Scouting America 1325 W. Walnut Hill Lane PO Box 152079 Irving, TX 75015-2079 Phone: (972) 580-2000 www.scouting.org	Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. 420 Fifth Ave. New York, NY 10018 Phone: (212) 852-8000 www.girlscouts.org	Big Brothers Big Sisters 2202 N. Rocky Point Drive Suite 550 Tampa, FL 33607 Phone: (813) 720-8778 www.BigBrothersBigSisters.org

Three Reasons to Have Scouting Ministries at Your Church

1. We Don't Have Any Youth

There is the old saying, "If you build it, they will come." If that is true, then why are beautiful churches everywhere going empty? It is not the building that today's youth are seeking. They want to be and do more now than ever. A scouting ministry (Scouting America, Girl Scouts of the USA, or Big Brothers Big Sisters) gives youth a place to belong. When the church reaches out into the community and provides that for youth, they become aware of adults of faith who care. They will seek to be engaged in the church life. The community sees the life of faith lived out in service. That is the kind of place they will want to call home.

2. We Have Youth

So, you have children but don't have a scouting ministry. Just having youth who come does not mean you are spending the time needed with them in order to build disciples. You need to provide a structured framework of character building. Scouting provides activities, goals, and direction. Young people learn to serve and to follow. Then they learn to lead. The church needs principled youth with character to lead as the generations pass on. If they are not given the opportunity to learn how to lead as youth, how can we expect them to serve as principled leaders as adults?

3. Provide Opportunities to Grow in Faith

Each of the scouting ministries offers a unique opportunity to connect with youth directly. Girl Scouts of the USA, Scouting America, and P.R.A.Y. offer programmatic opportunities to grow spiritually.

Everything in Girl Scouting is based on the Girl Scout Promise and Law, which includes many of the principles and values common across religions. While they are a secular organization, Girl Scouts has always encouraged girls to take spiritual journeys via their faiths' religious recognitions. Girls of all grade levels can earn the My Promise, My Faith pin, which complements existing religious recognitions and allows girls to further strengthen the connection between their faith and Girl Scouts. Once each year, a girl can earn the My Promise, My Faith pin by carefully examining the Girl Scout Law and tying it directly to tenets of her faith. Requirements for this pin are included in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* for all

levels. Other resources can be found at <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/girl-scouts-and-faith.html>.

The brochure “To Serve God” lists the religious recognitions created by various faith groups. You can find this brochure, a video explaining religious recognition programs, and other resources for collaborating with faith communities at P.R.A.Y. Publishing.

Scouting America recognizes a primary need to learn reverence and duty to God. These are fundamental to the Scout Oath and Scout Law. To encourage members to grow stronger in their faith, religious groups have developed the following religious emblems programs. Scouting America has approved of these programs and allows the emblems to be worn on the official uniform. The various religious groups administer the programs. Check with your local council service center or contact the religious organization directly to obtain the curriculum booklets.

For more information about Scouting America Religious Emblems Programs (www.scouting.org/awards/religious-awards/):

- Duty to God Program Information
- Review the Frequently Asked Questions about Religious Emblems Programs
- Learn How to Get Started on these programs
- See our chart of Religious Emblems Programs (www.scouting.org/awards/religious-awards/chart/)
- Watch the Religious Emblems Coordinator informational video
- Additional resources available for the Religious Emblems Coordinator
- Contact your local council service center or the appropriate religious organization (contact information is provided on the chart)

Each second Sunday in February is designated as Scout Sunday. It is a day to celebrate the ministry partnership of the church and the community through Scouting America. Scouts are encouraged to assume leadership roles at the worship service.

Each second Sunday in March is Girl Scout Sunday. This Sunday is the closest Sunday to the formation of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America. Participation by young women in this Sunday service opens doors for ministry and faith.

If only one Sunday is designated as Scout Sunday, it is typically the second Sunday of February.

Whether it is one or two Sundays, we encourage congregations to engage all the ministries they have with all the youth they have. Young people may serve as ushers, greeters, Scripture readers, and leaders of prayer and the litany. The youth may provide reports from scouting groups and even the sermon. Some of the best sermons come from young people. The day can also include the presentation of scouting awards to youth and leaders. Discipleship Ministries provides suggestions for Scout Sunday liturgy and hymns (<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/scouting-sunday>). The Office of Scouting Ministries also has suggestions for Scout Sunday (www.CampIsMyParish.org).

Child and Youth Protection

The United Methodist Church and our partners have the goal of keeping every child safe. This is the job of everyone involved in scouting ministries.

Worldwide child abuse impacts nearly a billion children every year (Child maltreatment (who.int)). The problem of child abuse has become one of the most significant social problems facing our world. The depth and breadth of this problem is great, but our churches can be proactive in the prevention of abuse and the upholding of the teachings of Jesus.

Child abuse is the injury of a child by an adult or another child. The abuse might not be intentional, but it is not accidental. Abuse can be physical, emotional, neglect, sexual, spiritual, and/or ritual.

Safe Sanctuaries® is the name commonly given by United Methodist annual conferences and local churches to their individual efforts to make conference, district, and local church programs welcoming and safe for children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Safe Sanctuaries® is more than implementing guidelines, policies, and procedures. Safe Sanctuaries® creates an environment with boundaries of safe space for children, youth, vulnerable adults, and the adults who work with them. United Methodist resources are available at www.umcdiscipleship.org/equipping-leaders/safe-sanctuaries.

Congregations should require not only training but also the practice of youth-protection policies. The youth-serving partners require all adults to complete their youth protection training. In addition to the required Scouting Ministries partner youth protection training, leaders involved in scouting ministries within your congregation should be familiar with the current Safe Sanctuaries® policy of your church. If these policies vary, the strictest policy takes precedence.

Report all suspected child abuse, neglect, or violation of youth-protection policies immediately to the appropriate legal authority and/or leader following the procedures prescribed by the Safe Sanctuaries®/Youth Protection policies governing the group and the congregation.

Safe Sanctuaries® provide churches and leaders accountability while providing a safe haven for ministry with children and youth.

The deepest key to keeping children and youth safe is the active awareness of behaviors, relationships, and people. Abuse happens when awareness diminishes. We must be aware and ready to help.



Deeper Connections

Link with the Local Church—Local Scouting Coordinator

For any of these programs or approaches to be effective within the ministry of the church, the congregation must be intentional in its use of the youth-serving programs. All too often youth-serving ministries simply exist within the physical facilities of the church; church leaders and members have little or nothing to do with the program or its leaders. The basic call of Christ to share the gospel is lost to some of those closest to the church for lack of attention to relationship.

The church should give the same prayerful and careful preparation to the planning of its youth-serving ministries as it gives to its church school or vacation Bible school. Properly used, these programs can provide an arena in which young people can have wholesome experiences with their peers. This seldom takes place without planning and preparation. In short, the church must plan and operate the programs intentionally.

As the scouting coordinator, you are the link between the church and the scouting group. You may be a scout or leader who relates to the church that sponsors your group, or you may be a representative from the church who relates to the troop. In this coordinating position, you will find that meeting regularly with the Church Council and the troop ensures that leaders of each group are aware of each other's concerns and needs. This Guideline will help you understand how you, as coordinator, relate to the church. Direction and instruction on relating to the unit or club will come from the Center for Scouting Ministries.

Your Ministry as a Local Scouting Coordinator

All local churches should elect or appoint a coordinator to see that young people involved in the agencies' programs are recognized.

An effective coordinator

- affirms Christian values by lifestyle,
- understands The United Methodist Church and is encouraged to be a member,
- understands faith role modeling,
- leads and works well with volunteer groups,
- desires to grow and improve in the position,
- delegates work to others with sensitivity and understanding,
- has planning skills,
- communicates well with others through writing and speaking,
- supports people and their need to grow and improve,
- believes in service to young people,

- is elected or appointed by the appropriate conference (charge, district, annual, and jurisdictional) within which the coordinator serves.

Responsibilities of the Local Church Coordinator

1. Interpret scouting ministry as an intentional ministry of the church, providing nurture, service, mission, and outreach.

2. Coordinate scouting ministries with other programs in the church and publicize those programs.

3. Encourage dialogue and understanding between the pastor or church leaders and adult leaders in the scouting ministry.

4. Serve as a member of the Church Council and report regularly to that body.

5. Ensure that there is a signed charter or partnership agreement with the agencies.

6. Promote the P.R.A.Y. program for all youth in the church and provide information about the programs available for those of other faiths who are in our United Methodist Church youth agencies.

7. Work with the pastor in planning and observing Scouting Ministries Sunday or separate special Sundays for each of the agencies that are represented in the churches.

8. See that leaders become fully trained by the agencies for their positions.

9. Ensure that recognitions are awarded as appropriate, including the Bishop's Award of Excellence for units, the Cross and Flame, and Torch Awards for leadership, the Good Samaritan for youth who have provided service to the church or community, and other recognitions as needed, including public gratitude and agency awards.

10. Cultivate resources to support the organization's programs, recruit and train leaders of all youth organizations, and assist in recruiting young people.

11. Assist the pastor in preparing a report of unit designation numbers, the number of young people registered, and the names and contact information of the leadership.

12. Represent the church on the district scouting committee.

13. Be willing to get trained on how to be effective in the local scouting ministries.

Relate to the Church Council

Your role as coordinator or scouting leader places you on the Church Council, where you will represent the issues of scouting and youth-serving ministries along with other church staff or laypersons who lead youth ministries. The following tips will help cultivate that relationship and help you develop your leadership skills and effectiveness as well.

Talk with the pastor, lay leader, or the Christian education leader about considering one or more civic youth-serving agency programs such as Scouting America, Girl Scouts, or Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Talk with the Church Council about community-based outreach ministries to children and youth in your community.

Work with the Committee on Nominations and Leader Development to nominate other adult leaders for a Scouting Ministry Task Group to be elected at a Church Council meeting. Provide support for a task-force budget. Ensure that the coordinator or committee positions continue through annual elections at charge conferences.

- Work with the Scouting Ministry Task Group to form a plan of action and timetable.
- Report the plan and timetables to the Church Council for input, approval, and implementation.
- Survey the church and community to assess interest as to what type(s) of unit or troops could or should be formed: Girl Scout or Scouting America groups. Consider starting a mentoring ministry such as Amachi, a program of Big Brothers Big Sisters.
- Seek professional help from local civic youth-serving agencies to form units, troops, clubs, or mentoring programs.
- Schedule a children and youth recruiting night. Draft an agenda, secure leaders, organize units and troops, and set meeting dates. Let this become a regularly scheduled night for Scouting Ministries.
- Form needed units and troops that will be supported by the church and community.
- Report success to the Church Council. Set a date for a Scouting Ministries Sunday worship celebration. Have a consecration service for leaders.

Link within the District—District Coordinator

The scouting ministries are organized to model the connectional structure of the church and the United Methodist Men. Local scouting coordinators serve as hands and feet at the local level. Church districts will be served by district scouting coordinators. They help coordinate activities and share information within the district. They are the spiritual commissioners of the church serving Scouting America and Girls Scouts. They serve as a voice for scouting ministries on the District Men's Ministry Team and on the Conference Scouting Committee.

Link within the Annual Conference—Conference Scouting Coordinator

The conference scouting coordinator builds the team of district scouting coordinators and specialists. The Scouting Conference Committee will typically include district scouting coordinators and individuals with specific programmatic emphasis (P.R.A.Y., Bishop's Dinners, Training Coordinator, Awards and Recognitions, and so on). The conference scouting coordinator sits on the Conference Board of Laity and coordinates activities that support youth, church service, and scouting ministries within the conference.

Link with the Worldwide Church

As United Methodists, we are tied together in ministry. We are a connectional church in terms of our structure, history, and theology. We have a common mission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" (§120, *Discipline*). Scouting ministries are supported worldwide within United Methodist churches. The Center for Scouting Ministries, located in the General Commission on United Methodist Men, works to connect youth and leaders with our common values and faith. We have a global presence through the World Organization of the Scouting Movement and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. Big Brothers Big Sisters International is present in twelve countries as well. We seek to build scouting, faith, and communities worldwide.

Faith Modeling and Servant Leadership

There is a difference between faith *modeling* and faith *teaching*. Faith teaching is instruction about a particular faith (for example, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and so forth) or a specific doctrinal stance (such as one's beliefs about God or Holy Scriptures). The Center for Scouting Ministries emphasizes faith modeling, while clearly stating that faith teaching is the responsibility of the home or the religious institution or organization.

Jesus constantly provided a faith model for his followers. When the disciples asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus, the ultimate servant leader, called a child into their midst and talked about becoming like children. Then he said, "As for whoever causes these little ones who believe in me to trip and fall into sin, it would be better for them to have a huge stone hung around their necks and be drowned in the bottom of the lake" (Matt 18:1-6). This passage conveys the high calling of those who inspire youth by modeling their faith.

As a servant leader and scouting leader, you are entrusted with the precious gift of young lives. Parents, who have experienced the miracle of a new life, share that miracle with you. They expect you to model your faith and to help their children grow. Civic youth-serving agency programs stress citizenship, character development, and physical fitness. These programs encourage you as a servant leader and are designed to promote these values.

Young people learn a great deal about lifestyle by observing others and by practicing the behaviors they witness. Most parents can tell stories of how and when their children imitated them. Just as you have learned that personal skills are better taught by demonstration, followed by a chance to practice the skills, so faith development is encouraged by demonstration, with encouragement and opportunities to practice faith skills. As a servant leader, you are expected to abide by the policy that specific religious instruction is the responsibility of the home or the religious institution. However, you can let young people know that God is important in your life by the way you live in their midst. You can live a faith-oriented lifestyle.

If you are a scouting leader in The United Methodist Church, you have committed yourself to a principle that says, "No person can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing his or her obligation to God." You have committed yourself to teaching young people both the words and meaning of the Girl Scout Promise or the Scouting America Oath. The best way to teach the words and meaning is to make them real in your life! If you are a member of and representative from the hosting church to the troop or club, you have

also declared in your membership vows to uphold your beliefs through prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

What is faith modeling? It is doing, thinking, and talking out of a faith-strengthened stance. It is letting faith determine your lifestyle. One aspect of faith modeling is respect for one's physical body. Inasmuch as civic youth-serving agencies do not allow alcoholic beverages on outdoor trips (teenage alcohol abuse is on the increase), a good leader will observe the practice of no alcoholic beverages, without exception. The same is true regarding other drugs and health-damaging substances. Listed below are several other characteristics of a good leader.

A Good Leader

A good leader will demonstrate love and concern for the young people in the unit, troop, or club. You will find opportunities to listen to them as individuals. You will learn to share their excitement, their joy, their sorrow, and their concerns. You will recognize that they have one foot in childhood and the other in adulthood, hopping back and forth; and you will accept them for who they are.

A good leader will demonstrate the importance of his or her faith through active participation in the church, including personal study and devotions. You may be the best model many young people will ever observe. Your faith life may well serve to encourage them to live their own faith commitments with integrity.

A good leader will foster spiritual growth by encouraging young people to plan and participate in religious observances in meetings, campouts, and more. You will want to plan activities to allow youth to participate in their own communities of faith and to schedule programs and travel that do not conflict with such participation.

A good leader will encourage faith development by urging young people to enroll in appropriate religious study programs. Just as young people need encouragement to work on advancement, so they need encouragement to grow spiritually.

You Are the Salt of the Earth

Consider salt. Salt is inconspicuous and ordinary. Salt does not deteriorate, though it can lose its saltiness through adulteration. Salt is a preservative—remember that salted ham! Salt is an astringent that stings. Salt will stop bleeding! Salt gives zest to food and makes you thirsty! Remember that a pinch of salt has a great effect on its surroundings. When Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth” (Matt 5:13), he was saying that you are important. As a leader, you can live a faith-oriented lifestyle that encourages faith development in the young people with whom you work.

One of our bishops stated that he is a United Methodist today largely because of the efforts of his scoutmaster. When he was a young boy, his family was not active in the church. He attended one of two different Sunday schools, depending upon which of his friends came by for him on Sunday morning. One Sunday, the class teacher announced that he was starting a new program on the following Monday night and invited all of the boys to come back to the church. The new program was a Scouting America troop. In a few short months, this young man had advanced through the ranks of Scouting America and had also become a member of The Methodist Church. In the bishop’s words, “I joined that church because it provided me the opportunity to do the things I enjoyed doing.” The scoutmaster provided the *salt* necessary to season the life of a future bishop!

United Methodist pastors report that they have reached many families through the *salty* scouting ministry of their churches. One deacon related the story of how a family reunited with the church because of their son’s participation in a P.R.A.Y. class. The family had become inactive, and their name had been removed from the church rolls by action of the charge conference. The scout became so involved in the P.R.A.Y. program that he professed his faith and expressed his desire to unite with the church. As a result, his entire family reunited with the church.

Positive Peer Pressure

Traditional youth organizations bring young people together for regularly scheduled meetings and activities that help to develop a sense of identity and a feeling of belonging. Scouting programs offer the opportunity for youth to learn and grow by planning their own program of activity, electing officers, and practicing leadership. Leadership development happens unobtrusively and naturally.

While youth members of civic youth-serving agency ministries learn by doing in small groups, they are also exposed to the virtues of peer leadership and constructive fellowship. Young people feel the effects of peer pressure today more than ever before; it is the duty of the church to provide an atmosphere in which that pressure can become a positive force. Civic youth-serving agency ministries can provide such an atmosphere.

Events and Programs

Bishop's Dinner for Scouting

One of the most successful methods of helping local congregations understand the potential of civic youth-serving ministry is the Bishop's Dinner for Scouting. These dinners have been held at both the conference and district levels.

The initiation of a Bishop's Dinner can come from the Conference Scouting Committee or the local office of one of the youth-serving agencies. In all cases, it is mandatory that the program be developed through the conference scouting coordinator, the conference president of United Methodist Men, and in cooperation with the conference director of connectional ministries.

These dinners begin with invitations from the bishop to leaders of all churches in a district or the conference. All four youth-serving agencies should be invited to make presentations.

The dinner provides an excellent forum to showcase the programs offered by the four youth-serving agencies and encourages local congregations to incorporate one or more of them into their local ministry.

To ensure success, at least three months of lead time should be provided for the proper planning and organization of the program. "Guidelines for Organizing a United Methodist Bishop's Dinner for Scouting" is available from the Center for Scouting Ministries in Nashville to assist you in your planning efforts (see Resources, p. 28).

P.R.A.Y. Program

Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y.) is a discipleship and outreach resource. It is also the religious recognition program designed for use by Scouting America and Girl Scouts of the USA.

Congregations have used the P.R.A.Y. curriculum in their Sunday school classes, vacation Bible schools, confirmation classes, and other small-group settings in addition to using it as an outreach program to scouting groups in the community.

To earn a P.R.A.Y. award, youth need to complete the requirements in the student workbook under the supervision of a counselor (either the pastor or someone appointed by the pastor). There are four programs. Each program has its own student workbook, counselor manual, and adult mentor workbook (see <http://www.praypub.org/>).

God and Me (Grades 1–3)

The God and Me curriculum is designed to help children become best friends with Jesus and tell their story of “God and Me” together. Children will make a game in each lesson and keep their games in a GAME Box (God and Me Exploring Box). These games will reinforce the Bible lessons and provide opportunities for families to explore God’s love together. There are four lessons:

1. God Created Me
2. Jesus Is God’s Gift to Me
3. I Can Talk with God
4. Because God Cares for Me, I Can Care for Others

God and Family (Grades 4–5)

The God and Family curriculum is designed to help children understand the importance of family and God’s role in a healthy family. Families are compared to pizza: the layers of a pizza illustrate God’s plan for strengthening families. Students will make a pizza as they study how families can grow together in God’s love, and they will choose “family projects” to be done with their families at home.

1. Crust-Foundation—We are God’s Family
2. Sauce—Family Heritage, Spiritual Heritage
3. Toppings—Our Talents and Gifts Strengthen Our Families
4. Cheese—In God’s Family We’re Loved No Matter What! Because We’re Loved, We Follow Rules
5. Bake—Being in God’s Family Helps Us When Things Are Tough
6. Eat, Share, Enjoy!—In God’s Family, We Share as a Response to God’s Love

God and Church (Grades 6–8)

The God and Church program will lead young people on a three-part faith journey: meeting Jesus, worshiping God, and witnessing and ministering for Christ. Participants will create either a video or a photo album to share what they have learned on their faith journeys. Young people will have the opportunity to work with their pastor or other Christian adult as they study the church’s structures and objectives and participate in service projects that will give them a better understanding of the mission of the church.

My Journey: Meeting Christ

1. Meeting Jesus, the Person
2. Meeting Jesus, the Son of God
3. Meeting Jesus, the Head of the Church

Project: Daily Bible Reading

My Journey: Worshiping God

1. Learning How Christ Worshiped God

2. Exploring How My Congregation Worships God

Project: Discovering How I Can Worship God

My Journey: Witnessing and Ministering for Christ

1. Learning How Christ Witnessed and Ministered to Others
2. Exploring How My Congregation Witnesses and Ministers to Others

Project: Discovering How I Can Witness and Minister to Others

God and Life (Grades 9–12)

The God and Life program will help students understand their call to discipleship. The curriculum focuses on the life of the apostle Paul as recorded in Acts 9:1-31. This brief account describes how Paul encountered Christ and was changed forever. Five chronological “events” from this story will be highlighted and used as the focus for the five different sections in this program. Each section will illustrate a key element in learning how to live one’s life for Christ:

1. God Calls All Kinds of People
2. God Doesn’t Expect Us to Do It on Our Own
3. Each of Us Must Make a Personal Response to the Call of God
4. God Gives Strength to Face Adversities
5. God Can Accomplish Great Things Through Those Who Are Willing to Do God’s Will

Bible Patch Series

“Bible Basics RP3” is a patch series from P.R.A.Y. designed to help families, Sunday school classes, and scouting groups get into the Bible. Bible Basics RP3 will guide participants to:

1. **R**ead the Bible,
2. **V**isualize or **P**icture the passage,
3. **P**onder its meaning, and
4. **P**ut it into action.

The series consists of three patches: “The Good Book,” “Out of the Water,” and “Birds of the Air.” “The Good Book” is generally first. It focuses on getting to know the Bible and why it is important to read. All patches feature three Bible stories. Requirements are posted on the P.R.A.Y. website and are available at no cost. The patches may be earned by people of all ages. Each patch includes questions for younger children, older youth, and adults. They are designed to be done in a family or group setting with all participants earning the patch. New patches will be added to the series each year.

These patches do not have the same strict guidelines as other P.R.A.Y. awards, so the studies are perfect for campouts and retreats. See www.praypub.org for details.

P.R.A.Y. Mentor Program

The P.R.A.Y. Mentor Program for adults is designed for parents to work side-by-side with their children sharing in the work of the P.R.A.Y. Program. As the child examines his or her faith, the parent will be there, learning about God's love, sharing new experiences, and making discoveries with the child. To participate in this program, parents need a copy of the mentor workbook, and they need to work under the supervision of the pastor (or someone appointed by the pastor). Please note that the adult mentor does not take the place of the counselor.

Visit the P.R.A.Y. website (www.praypub.org) to view the P.R.A.Y. Start-Up Kit, PowerPoint presentations, sample lessons, and other important resources. You can also sign up to receive the P.R.A.Y. News Bulletin.

Digital Connection

The Scouting Ministries has developed a suite of digital resources housed under a single program. The "Camp Is My Parish" program specifically supports pastors, local leaders, and servants in the scouting ministries. There is an opportunity to grow spiritually, learn more and connect. This key resource opens doors across the whole worldwide connection. It provides for learning to disciple in the context of the specific ministries.

Youth need a place to not only learn of a spiritual life but live one. Connect and grow with them. Make the camp your parish too (see www.CampIsMyParish.org).

Recognitions and Awards

It is important that we recognize those who make the civic youth-serving agency ministry possible. Volunteer leadership is vital, just as it is in any other branch of the church's ministry. Several awards and recognition programs have been developed to recognize levels of performance that surpass the ordinary. Complete information relating to all of these awards is available through the Center for Scouting Ministries at the General Commission on United Methodist Men in Nashville, Tennessee. The brochures, applications, and reference materials can be found at Scouting Ministry-United Methodist Men (www.ummen.org)

The Bishop's Award of Excellence

The Bishop's Award of Excellence (BAE) recognizes congregations and units within The United Methodist Church that extend their ministries to children and youth by creating a faith-based environment for children, youth, families, and leaders to participate in Scouting America and Girl Scouts of the USA.



The award requires the election of a local scouting coordinator by the local church, the promotion and use of the P.R.A.Y. religious emblem programs, celebration of the ministry, and encourages the use of signed partnership agreements (the *Discipline*, ¶256.4a). See the application for the complete criteria. The Bishop's Award of Excellence is authorized for the purpose of recognizing outstanding United Methodist church troops, units, or clubs that have met the established criteria.

Upon nomination by the local scouting coordinator and approval by a proper committee or representative of the annual conference, the Bishop's Award of Excellence is presented by the presiding bishop to the pastor, the unit leader, and at least one member of the unit at the next regular session of the annual conference. The award application should be forwarded from the local congregation at least six to eight weeks before the annual conference session. The award recognizes activity of one year and may be earned again.

The Cross and Flame Award



The Cross and Flame Award gives recognition to adult leaders who have given exceptional service in the use and promotion of scouting ministries for young people.

The Cross and Flame Award is awarded by the local congregation. The award is authorized for recognizing leaders with outstanding service to youth at the local church level. In order to qualify, a person must have

provided three years of service with a youth-serving agency (Scouting America, Girl Scouts, Big Brothers Big Sisters, or other youth-serving organizations). The candidate must also be an active member of a recognized Christian church.

The Torch Award



The Torch Award recognizes adult leaders who have given exceptional service in the use and promotion of scouting ministries beyond the local church. Presented by the annual conference, the award recognizes adult leaders with outstanding service to youth at the annual conference level.

In order to qualify, a person must be an active member of a recognized Christian church who has given four years of outstanding leadership to children and youth through one of the following youth-serving agency programs: Scouting America, Girl Scouts, or Big Brothers Big Sisters). The person must be nominated for the award.

The Silver Torch Award



The Silver Torch may be awarded to an adult for exemplary service to scouting and/or youth ministry beyond the annual conference. The award may be presented to an individual who has served at the central conference (international), general church (national) or jurisdictional (regional) levels.

Unlike the Cross and Flame and Torch awards, the Silver Torch has no tenure requirement. Recipients must be Christian but not necessarily a member of The United Methodist Church.

Examples of service include the following: (1) Candidates may be leaders of the Scouting America National Jamboree or International Jamboree; (2) Candidates may have provided leadership for mission trips to a central conference, or perhaps they directed efforts to raise funds to support central conference evangelistic initiatives for youth and/or scouting; (3) Nominees may have performed significant acts of mission and/or ministry in response to the Connectional Table areas of collaboration supported and advocated by the general agencies: (a) leadership development, (b) new church development, (c) global health, and (d) ministry with the poor.

The Good Samaritan Award



The Good Samaritan Award is based on the attributes of the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37, and our responsibility as Christians to reach out to people in need of a “helping hand” as exemplified by the good Samaritan and related to us in various passages in the Gospels.

The purpose of this award is to recognize individual youth who demonstrate the attributes of servant leadership to others through outreach, humanitarian assistance, or advocacy.

The youth candidate must be a registered member of a civic youth-serving agency unit (Scouting America troop, Girl Scout troop, or Venture crew) meeting in a United Methodist church or chartered/sponsored by the church; or an active member of a United Methodist youth group, or an active youth member of a United Methodist congregation. Candidates must be between the ages of 6 and 30 (not yet reached 31st birthday). Recipients may be participants in an outreach ministry of a local United Methodist church giving the award. It is not necessary for them to be members of the denomination.

The Shepherd Church Charter Recognition

The Shepherd Church Charter Recognition is given annually to recognize churches that provide outstanding ministry to their communities through sponsorship of one or more of the following civic youth-serving agencies: Scouting America, Girl Scouts of the USA, and/or Big Brothers Big Sisters. These churches welcome all youth and children, nurture them as they grow to become good citizens with a deeper relationship with God, and work with them in service to others.



“Train children in the way they should go;
when they grow old, they won’t depart
from it.” —Proverbs 22:6

Supportive Organizations and Training

United Methodist Men Foundation

The National Association of Conference Presidents founded the United Methodist Men Foundation in 1981. The foundation was organized to:

- operate exclusively for charitable and religious purposes;
- provide support funds for program development and maintenance for the purpose and objectives of United Methodist Men.

The foundation has created endowments to fund a variety of United Methodist Men ministries. Endowment gifts help create financial security for Christian programs. Endowment gifts are a testimony by donors to the quality and worthiness of the charitable organization receiving gifts. Endowment gifts are our way of providing for those who will follow in years to come.

More than thirty-five years ago, the foundation raised funds for a full-time staff person in scouting ministries. In addition, gifts have funded the Center for Men's Ministries, The Upper Room Living Prayer Center, and numerous national and international mission projects.

Gifts may be dedicated in honor or memory of a family member, friend, or loved one. Endowment fund gifts may be announced, or they may be given anonymously at the donor's discretion.

Training at Scouting America High Adventure Bases

Each year the Center for Scouting Ministries conducts a week-long training session for United Methodist leaders at one of the Scouting America high adventure bases: the Philmont Training Center, the Summit Bechtel Reserve, or the Florida Sea Base.

Each site provides a relaxed atmosphere in which the scouting program of the church may be studied. Attendees are expected to return to their annual conferences, districts, and local churches and conduct similar sessions for United Methodist leaders.

Other Training Programs

Other training in civic youth-serving/scouting ministry may be held in conjunction with United Methodist Men's rallies and workshops. These may be national or international (National Gathering of United Methodist Men, a quadrennial event); jurisdictional (regional) conferences; or conference and district events and meetings.

Volunteer Opportunities

Scouting Ministry Specialists

A Scouting Ministry Specialist helps neighboring churches understand how scouting expands their ministry to youth in their communities. The need for this position is based on statistics indicating that only 6,700 of the 34,000 United Methodist churches have scouting units. The specialists help churches understand the value of scouting and provide information related to training, awards, and recognitions.

Specialists provide information to neighboring churches with the support of the Office of Scouting Ministry of the General Commission on United Methodist Men and annual and district scouting coordinators. Specialists are recruited and registered with the Office of Scouting Ministry and they are responsible for up to three churches. They are not necessarily liaisons to youth agencies or councils as are local church scouting coordinators. Since Scouting Ministry Specialists are volunteers, the amount of time they give to this ministry is self-determined. Two hours a week is recommended.

Qualifications

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must present proof of having completed the Scouting America Youth Protection Training or an online course at www.umscouting.org
- Must provide an annual registration fee (multiyear registrations are available) to receive ongoing information and training
- Must read this Scouting Guideline
- Must complete an application that authorizes a criminal background check

Roles and responsibilities of Scouting Ministry Specialists

- Visit and communicate with up to three United Methodist churches
- Assist the annual and district scouting coordinators
- Promote scouting ministry training events such as Philmont, Sea Base, and UM Scouter Workshops
- Promote scouting recognition awards
- Promote P.R.A.Y. awards
- Enroll each church as a “Shepherd Church”
- Promote Scout Sunday
- Support pastors

- Consider serving on Council Relationships/Religious Committees for the various scouting agencies
- Recruit one additional Scouting Ministry Specialist

To become a Scouting Ministry Specialist, visit www.umsouting.org and complete the “interest form” or call (866)) 297-4312. Application is not a guarantee of approval.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi Partnership

America faces the growing crisis of multigenerational incarceration. We have already witnessed grandfathers, fathers, and sons waiting together in prison for the arrival of the great-grandson. There is a specific way that we, as United Methodists, can help break this intergenerational cycle of incarceration.

Research confirms the common-sense notion that the more caring adults engaged in a child’s life, the more likely that child is to succeed. Big Brothers Big Sisters is the youth-serving agency partnering with United Methodist Men to increase the number of men mentoring children with an incarcerated parent. Participation in the United Methodist Men/Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi partnership requires the following:

1. Commitment from the United Methodist Men conference president
2. Support and commitment from the bishop and the district superintendent
3. Orientation to Big Brothers Big Sisters and Amachi
4. Partnership agreement with local Big Brothers Big Sisters agency
5. Selection and development of United Methodist congregations to participate in the partnership
6. Setting, meeting, reporting progress toward, and reevaluating goal of number of children matched to a member of the partnering congregations
7. Sharing successful practices and lessons learned with other congregations, conferences, and Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies

Resources

Resources from the Center for Scouting Ministries

To access resources and training material and/ events, visit the resource (scouting) section of <http://www.gcumm.org/> for current information.

Brochures and Packets

“Bishop’s Award of Excellence” (brochure)

“The Cross and Flame Award” (brochure)

“The Good Samaritan Award” (brochure)

“Impact the Lives of Children and Youth in Our Communities” (brochure)

“The Torch Award” (brochure)

“The Silver Torch Award” (brochure)

“The Shepherd Church Charter Recognition” (brochure)

The Center for Scouting Ministries (information packet)

Resources from Cokesbury

Guidelines: Scouting and Civic Youth-Serving Ministry (2021–2024).

P.R.A.Y. studies and awards (<https://www.cokesbury.com>).

Resources from the General Commission on United Methodist Men

Visit GCUMM.org for a score of resources from the Center for Scouting Ministries.

Or visit UMScouting.org.

Organization Addresses

Scouting America

1325 Walnut Hill Lane
P.O. Box 152079

Irving, TX 75015-2079
phone (972) 580-2000
www.scouting.org

Girl Scouts of the USA

420 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018
phone (212) 852-8000
www.girlscouts.org

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

2502 N. Rocky Point Drive, Suite 550
Tampa, FL 33607
Phone: (813) 720-8778
www.BigBrothersBigSisters.org

The Center for Scouting Ministries

810 12th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37203
phone (615) 620-7261
fax (615) 340-1770
SScheid@gcumm.org
www.umscouting.org

P.R.A.Y.

11123 S. Towne Square, Suite B
St. Louis, MO 63123-7816
phone (800) 933 PRAY (7729)
fax (314) 845-0038
info@praypub.org
www.praypub.org

UMC Agencies & Helpful Links

The United Methodist Church, www.umc.org

General Commission on Archives and History, www.gcuh.org, Madison, NJ,
973-408-3189

General Board of Church and Society, www.umcjustice.org, Washington, DC,
202-488-5600

United Methodist Communications, www.resourceumc.org/communications,
www.umns.org, Nashville, TN, 615-742-5400; InfoServ 1-800-251-8140

General Board of Discipleship, www.umcdiscipleship.org, Nashville, TN, 877-899-2780

General Board of Finance and Administration, www.gcfa.org, Nashville, TN

General Board of Global Ministries, www.umcmmission.org, Atlanta, GA, 800-862-4246

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, www.gbhem.org, Nashville, TN,
615-340-7413

General Commission on Religion and Race, www.gcorr.org, Washington, DC,
202-495-2949

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, www.gcsrw.org, Chicago, IL,
1-800-523-8390

General Commission on United Methodist Men, www.gcumm.org, Nashville, TN,
615-340-7145; Scouting Ministries, <https://CampIsMyParish.org>, 615-620-7261

The United Methodist Publishing House, www.umph.org, www.abingdonpress.com,
www.cokesbury.com, www.ministrymatters, Nashville, TN, 615-749-6000

United Women in Faith, www.uwfaith.org, New York, NY, 212-682-3633

Wespath (retirement/benefits), www.wespath.org, Glenview, IL, 800-851-2201

**For additional resources, contact your annual
conference office.**

