

**The American Unitarian Conference Supplement
To
Living Your Religion
A Unitarian Universalist Award Program
For
Boy Scouts and Venturers
By
The Unitarian Universalist Scouters Organization (UUSO)**

What is the American Unitarian Conference?

The American Unitarian Conference (AUC) was formed in September 2000 and is an independent organization with individual and congregations members. Its purposes are to honor, promote and live the American Unitarian tradition. The American Unitarian faith is a God-centered faith, which emphasizes the requirement that we love God, and love our neighbors and which regards reason, tolerance and freedom as central to our religious journey. The American Unitarian Conference is composed of Unitarian Christians and other Unitarians with a faith in God. The American Unitarian conference supports the separation of Church and State. American Unitarians do not therefore generally engage in politics in the name of the American Unitarian faith or in their worship services.

Some members of the AUC worship at congregations that are members of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA); others do not. Congregational members of the AUC may be members of other religious organizations, including the UUA. Among its many activities, the AUC publishes a quarterly journal, the *American Unitarian*, and maintains a website (www.americanunitarian.org) that is the best source of material on the web for classical American Unitarian materials.

Using This Supplement

This supplement is meant to aid scouts and mentors who are American Unitarians to use the booklet *Living Your Religion: A Unitarian Universalist Award Program for Boy Scouts and Venturers* provided by the Unitarian Universalist Scouters Organization. All of the materials referenced are available on the American Unitarian Conference website (www.americanunitarian.org) and specific URLs are provided to make it easy to find the document. This supplement should be used in conjunction with the primary booklet. The mentor should feel free to substitute an American Unitarian activity for a UU activity that poses difficulties. For example, if the mentor cannot obtain or chooses not to use a copy of the UU publication *Synapse*, then the mentor may use a copy of the *American Unitarian*, other publications of the AUC or the *Herald* published by the British Unitarian Christian Association (links provided on the AUC website). If this mentor is someone other than a parent or his minister, we recommend that the scout discuss these materials with his parents and his minister to gain their perspective in addition to his mentor.

Part I Section 1. History of American Unitarianism

In addition to reading *the UU Pocket Guide*, read the following materials and discuss them with your mentor:

Timeline of Classical American Unitarianism (1740-1900)

<http://www.americanunitarian.org/AUCHistory.htm>

Unitarian Christianity (1819)

By William Ellery Channing

<http://www.americanunitarian.org/unitarianchristianity.htm>

Introductory Remarks (1841)

To the works of William Ellery Channing

<http://www.americanunitarian.org/classicwritings.htm>

Divinity School Address (1838)

Ralph Waldo Emerson

<http://www.americanunitarian.org/divinityschool.htm>

Manual of Unitarian Belief (1884)

James Freeman Clarke

<http://www.americanunitarian.org/manual.htm>

and the following two covenants:

The American Unitarian Covenant

“We believe in
The Fatherhood of God;
The Brotherhood of Man;
The Leadership of Jesus;
Salvation by Character;
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and upward forever.”

This was a common formulation of Unitarian faith from roughly 1870 until the late 1920s.

The “Ames Covenant” – Charles Gordon Ames – 1880

“In the freedom of truth,
And in the spirit of Jesus Christ,
We unit for the worship of God
And the service of man”

Part II: Section 1.

In addition to reading the UU Pocket Guide read the following materials and discuss them with your mentor:

An Explanation of Unitarian Christianity (2003) by David R. Miano
<http://www.americanunitarian.org/explanation.htm>

Why God is Necessary to Our Humanity (2003) by David R. Burton
<http://www.americanunitarian.org/burtonnecessary.htm>

Food for Thought
<http://www.americanunitarian.org/FFT.htm>

Write a short essay (2 to 4 pages) explaining what parts of the American Unitarian Conference Religious Principles mean the most to you and what aspects of them, if any, with which you may disagree or that you may find to be unclear.

American Unitarian Conference Religious Principles

1. God's presence is made known in a myriad of ways. Religion should promote a free and responsible search for truth, meaning, communion and love.
2. Reason is a gift from God. Religion should embrace reason and its progeny, including the scientific enterprise which explores God's creation.
3. Free will is a gift from God. Religion should assist in the effort to find a path that exercise that gift in a responsible, constructive and ethical manner.
4. Conscious of the complexity of creation, of the limits of human understanding and or humanity's capacity for evil in the name of religion, we hold that humility, religious tolerance and freedom of conscience should be a central part of any religious experience.
5. Religious experience is most fulfilling in the context of a tradition. Our religious tradition is the Unitarian tradition, which emphasizes the importance of reason in religion, tolerance and the unity of God.
6. Revelation is ongoing. Religion should draw inspiration not only for its own tradition but from other religious traditions, philosophy and the arts. Although paying due regard for the hard lessons learned in the past and to the importance of religious tradition, religion should not be stagnant but should employ reason and religious experience to evolve in a constructive, enlightened and fulfilling way.
7. Conscious of the spiritual and material needs of our fellow men and women, the evil they may be subject to and the tragedies they may endure, works of mercy and compassion should be a part of any religious experience.

Part II: Section 2.

In addition to reading the *UU Pocket Guide* read the following materials and discuss them with your mentor:

AUC religious principle #7

The AUC and Politics

David R. Burton

<http://www.americanunitarian.org/politics.htm>

Part III: Section 3.

Using the AUC materials read above, write a three to six page essay on one of the following subjects:

- Compare American Unitarian Principles and Scouting Principles
- Write your own statement of faith and compare it to either the AUC statement of religious principles or to one of the historical American Unitarian covenants
- Discuss the similarities and differences between two American Unitarians you have read

The AUC expresses its appreciation to the Unitarian Universalist Scouters Organization for putting this program together for the benefit of Unitarian Universalist and American Unitarian scouts.

This document has been prepared by David R. Burton and approved by the Unitarian Universalist Scouters Organization

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