



Living Your Religion

A Unitarian Universalist
Religious Award Program
for Boy Scouts and Venturers



Unitarian Universalist Scouts Organization, Inc.

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Second Edition

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Preface

This booklet was developed by the Unitarian Universalist Scouters Organization, Inc. (UUSO), an association of Scouters active in Unitarian Universalist churches and congregations nationwide.

The Unitarian Universalist Scouters Organization (“UUSO”) was incorporated on April 4, 2003 with the approval of Dr. John Beuhrens, the then existing President of the Unitarian Universalist Association (“UUA”). The mission of the UUSO is to provide support to UU scouts, scouters and congregations that want to participate in scouting programs, knowing that although scouting and UU values are very similar, there are material differences. The initial task of the UUA was to develop a Unitarian Universalist Award that would be approved by the National Boy Scouts of America Religious Relationship Committee and permit the scout earning the Award to wear the Award on his uniform. Previously, the Unitarian Universalist Award had been developed by staff members of the UUA. The vast majority of faith groups in the United States have model organizations very similar to the UUSO where the awards for the scout is developed by an independent non-profit organization which is separate from the national faith group. To prepare the booklet, we reviewed past and current editions of the Religion in Life booklet of the UUA that outlines a program of study for Unitarian Universalist young people.

Our purpose was to develop a religious study program specifically for Unitarian Universalist young people who are active in Scouting. The program is recognized by the Boy Scouts of America and was designed to be taught in parallel with the Religion in Life Program of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

We hope it will enhance your understanding of your duty to God. Successfully completing the program entitles you to receive the **Living Your Religion** Emblem and Religious Award knot to wear on your uniform.

UUSO Boy Scout Literature Committee members who contributed to the booklet include Howard Guthmann, CPA, Michael P. Healy, Esq., Nicholas Trierweiler, PhD, Steven L. Whitney, Harold A. Yocum, MD and David O’Brien, PhD.

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Introduction

We're glad you're reading this booklet about the **Living Your Religion** Award Program. As you'll see, it's a program of study, reflection and action for Boy Scouts and Venturers who belong to Unitarian Universalist congregations. The program leads to the **Living Your Religion Award**, and it's designed to:

- ✦ **help you learn** about your religious faith, the history of the Unitarian Universalist religion, our principles and purposes as a modern liberal religion, and how we live in the world.
- ✦ **help you develop** a fuller understanding of your duty to God as a Scout or Venturer.
- ✦ **help you integrate** your personal beliefs with the values and ideals of the Scouting program, the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.
- ✦ **recognize the achievements** of Scouts and Venturers in Unitarian Universalist congregations.
- ✦ **support you** as you live your religion as a Unitarian Universalist young person and a Scout or Venturer.

How the Program Works

The **Living Your Religion** program is set up as a collaboration involving you, an adult mentor and your Unitarian Universalist congregation. You'll work through the program with your mentor's support. And after you've completed all the requirements, you'll earn the **Living Your Religion** award from your congregation and the Unitarian Universalist Scouters Organization.

The program has three parts, and each part is divided into three sections. Each part involves reading, research, action and personal reflection. You should plan to meet with your mentor at least once for each of the nine sections in the program.

When you've met all the requirements, your mentor and religious educator or minister will certify that you've completed the program, authorize the award, and plan a celebration to present it. You should have a major role in planning the celebration.

The **Living Your Religion** program can be adapted to fit your needs and time schedule and those of your mentor. It should take you between 12 and 24 weeks to complete.

To receive the award you must have been registered for at least one year in a Boy Scout troop or Venture crew, and you must be an active participant in your Unitarian Universalist congregation, attending church school, worship services or a youth program. If there's no Unitarian Universalist congregation nearby, you must be a participating member of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, either individually or with your family.

There's no limit to how long you can take to complete the program, although if you're a Scout you must finish it before your eighteenth birthday. If you're a Venturer, you can work toward the award until your twenty-first birthday.

The Living Your Religion Emblem

When you complete the program, you'll receive the **Living Your Religion** Emblem and Religious Award knot to wear on your uniform. The **Living Your Religion** emblem conforms to the requirements of the Boy Scouts of America.

How to Get Started

1. **Ask your minister** or religious education director to help you find a caring, qualified member of your congregation to serve as your mentor
2. **With your minister** or religious education director, ask the person you've chosen to be your mentor to work with you.
3. **Introduce** your mentor to your parents.
4. **Meet with your mentor** and your religious educator or minister to discuss the program and decide who'll review your work.
5. **Order the materials** you'll need to complete the program from the list on page 6.
6. **Keep a journal** of your progress as you work through the requirements of the program.
7. **Meet with your mentor** at least once for each of the nine sections in the program.
8. **As you complete** each section, check it off on the **Living Your Religion** Covenant on page 16.
9. **When you've completed** all nine sections, meet with your mentor and your religious educator or minister to review the Covenant. They'll certify that you've completed the program, authorize the award, and work with you to plan a celebration to present the award.

What You'll Need

To complete the **Living Your Religion** Program, you'll need copies of these materials:

This material is available from the UUA, BSA or the UUSO website.

- ✚ This booklet.
- ✚ *The Boy Scout Handbook or Venturers Handbook.*
- ✚ *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*, 4th edition, 2004.
- ✚ *100 Questions That Non-Members Ask about Unitarian Universalism*, 6th edition, 2002.
- ✚ *When Others (or You) say "God,"* by Rev. John Buehrens.
- ✚ *Synapse*, the UUA youth publication.

You can find the UUA materials at your local congregation or order them through UUA headquarters at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, phone 1-800-215-9076 or www.uua.org.

The Award Ceremony

We encourage your congregation to recognize your achievement in a worship service or church function. The recognition ceremony usually takes place early in the service, before the sermon. Here’s a suggested order of service for the recognition:

- Posting of the Colors (Optional).....Other Scouts or Venturers
- The Scout Promise and Scout Law (Optional)Other Scouts or Venturers
- The **Living Your Religion** Requirements.....Church Board or Education Committee member
- Presentation of the Candidate Scout or Troop Leader
- Presentation and Pinning of AwardMinister or Worship Leader
- The Significance of the AwardMentor
- Personal CongratulationsMinister or Worship Leader
- Recessional (Optional).....

If your award isn’t presented in a congregational setting, you and your mentor can choose an appropriate alternative setting, like a unit Court of Honor.

Adapting the Program for the Church of the Larger Fellowship

If there are no Unitarian or Unitarian Universalist congregations near you, you can complete the **Living Your Religion** program through the Church of the Larger Fellowship.

You can follow the program outlined above with these changes:

- ✚ Your parents can serve as your mentors.
- ✚ You can fulfill the requirements to interview members of your church (Part 1 Section 3 and Part 3 Section 2) by interviewing people in your community about the effect their religious convictions have had on their lives.
- ✚ You can fulfill the requirement to learn about your church (Part 1, Section 3) by corresponding with the minister or other leaders in the Church of the Larger Fellowship. If you're in the Church of the Larger Fellowship religious education program, your committee member will be able to help you.
- ✚ With your parents' approval, you can carry out the service project (Part 2, Section 2) at a local social service agency, government office, library, hospital or other nonprofit or social service setting.
- ✚ You can submit your final papers to the UUSO, which will approve your award:



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A Note to Scouts and Venturers

Congratulations!

You're beginning a program that will lead you to a deeper understanding of your faith and your duty to God in the Scouting program. Through this program you'll have meaningful experiences and learn new and fascinating things. We hope you'll find meaning in the opportunity to meet new people and gain a better understanding of yourself, your faith and the faith of the people around you.

A Note to Mentors

Thank you for becoming a mentor!

You're embarking on work that will enhance the spiritual growth of a young person at an important time in his or her life. You'll have the opportunity to share your gifts in ways that may lead this young person to a deeper connection with Unitarian Universalism and with his or her duty to God as a Scout or Venturer who's also a Unitarian Universalist.

The most important qualities you can share are caring, commitment and consistency. The program calls for your support every step of the way through conversations and personal contact with the young person and with people inside and outside the congregation.

You don't need to be an expert in Unitarian Universalism or even a longtime Unitarian Universalist. Mentors often tell us they learn as much as the young people as they prepare for the conversations that follow each assignment or activity.

What's most important is that you be present, accessible and willing to both talk and listen.

For everyone's protection, an adult Mentor and a youth may not meet one-on-one in a private setting unless, of course, the Mentor is the parent.

"No one-on-one contact" is a fundamental principle of the BSA Youth Protection Program.

A Note to Unitarian Universalist Congregations

The congregation plays an important role in the **Living Your Religion** program. Scouts or Venturers in the program call on the congregation to provide information, share stories, and talk about important matters of faith and life. The program is a wonderful opportunity to enhance intergenerational bonding and trust.

We also encourage congregations to recognize the Scout or Venturer in a worship service or at a church function. The recognition ceremony often takes place early in the service, before the sermon.

Part One: Our History, Worship, and Congregational Life

Section 1. Introduction to the History of Unitarian Universalism and of the Boy Scouts of America

1. Read “Our Roots” and “Important Dates in Unitarian Universalist History” in *The UU Pocket Guide*. Keep notes on anything you find either inspiring or confusing.
2. With the help of your mentor, **choose a person** from pre-20th century Unitarian Universalist history and do a research project on that person. You can look for books on the person in the bibliography on the UUA web site (www.uua.org/re/scouts.html) or in *The UUA Pocket Guide*. Your mentor, religious educator or minister can also help you.
3. Your project can be an essay, play, work of art, film or video. Be sure to discuss the type of project in advance. Your project should explore the person’s life, the ways that s/he contributed to our denomination and the world at large, and the beliefs that were important to him or her.
4. **Share** your research project with your mentor.
5. **Read** the history of the Boy Scouts of America in the Boy Scout Handbook.
6. **Discuss** what you’ve read with your mentor.

Section 2. Introduction to Unitarian Universalist Worship and Celebrations

1. **Get an overview** of Unitarian Universalist history, organization, worship and congregational life by reading Sections 5 through 12 of *100 Questions that Non-Members Ask About Unitarian Universalism*.
2. **Attend** at least two Unitarian Universalist worship services at your congregation, a nearby congregation or a youth conference.
3. **Share in the service** as if you were a newcomer to Unitarian Universalism, and then ask yourself these questions:
 - ❁ What does the service tell me about what Unitarian Universalists believe?
 - ❁ Why do parts of the service happen the way they do and when they do?
 - ❁ If I didn’t know anything about Unitarian Universalists, what are the most important questions I’d have after the service?

4. **Read** the Preface and “Our Worship” in *The UU Pocket Guide*. Write down any words or phrases you don’t understand in your journal to talk about with your mentor.
5. **Meet with your mentor** to talk about Unitarian Universalist worship and celebrations. Talk about whether the services you attended make you feel comfortable calling yourself a Unitarian Universalist.

Section 3. Introduction to Your Congregation

1. **Read** “Our Ministry” in *The UU Pocket Guide* to find out about the roles ministers have in Unitarian Universalist communities.
2. If your congregation has a minister, **make an appointment** to talk with him or her. Ask him/her these questions and take notes on the responses:
 - ✚ What does a minister’s work entail?
 - ✚ What kind of education did your minister need to become ordained?
 - ✚ What salary and other compensation does a minister earn?
3. If your congregation has a minister of religious education, **talk with him or her** to find out the same kind of information. Take notes in your journal. If there’s no minister of religious education, talk with the director of religious education or the chair of the religious education committee about their jobs and how your church school functions.
4. **Look** at a recent UUA Directory (your congregation will have a copy) to learn how the Unitarian Universalist Association is organized.
5. **Do** one of the following:
 - ✚ **Meet with the treasurer** or finance chair of your congregation. Ask how the church pays its bills and its salaries. Get a copy of the church budget.
 - ✚ **Meet with the lay leader** – the president or parish committee chair – of your congregation. Find out how the congregation’s governing body works, how people are chosen to serve on it, and what issues will be considered at the next meeting.
6. **Ask** the people you interview:
 - ✚ How is money raised and used in the congregation?
 - ✚ What social justice and community outreach programs has the congregation undertaken?
 - ✚ How is the congregation connected with other Unitarian Universalist congregations and the Unitarian Universalist Association?

- ✚ What services are available from national and district Unitarian Universalist organizations?
 - ✚ What are the requirements for membership in your congregation?
 - ✚ What is the role of youth in your congregation?
 - ✚ What does your congregation make positions available to young people on its committees?
 - ✚ Can young people be delegates at the General Assembly?
 - ✚ Who are the active youth leaders in your congregation?
 - ✚ What is Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), and how does it work?
7. **Call** your district office or consult the UUA Directory to create a list of youth leaders in your district. **Interview** one person on the list. Find out what they do and how district youth programs are funded.
 8. **Read** a current issue of *Synapse* to learn what a Young Religious Unitarian Universalist (YRUU) conference is and what its purpose is.
 9. **Attend a YRUU conference** if possible or read the report of the most recent conference. Ask yourself how the worship makes you feel. Is it different from adult worship?
 10. **Read** the Citizenship section of the *Boy Scout Handbook*. Make a list of ways the BSA and UUA are similar.

Part Two: Your Duty to God—Living Unitarian Universalist Beliefs, Justice and Interconnectedness with Others as a Scout

Section 1. Living Unitarian Universalist Values

1. **Read** “Our Faith” in *The UU Pocket Guide* as well as the principles and purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association on the back cover of the guide. These readings explore the living values that Unitarian Universalists try to express in our daily lives and in the world through our denomination and congregations.
2. **Re-read** the Scout Oath and Law in the *Boy Scout Handbook*.
3. **Write** a three to five paragraph essay about one of the seven Unitarian Universalist principles explaining what this principle means to you as a Scout. Relate the principle to the Scout Oath and Law.
4. **Share** your essay with your mentor and discuss how the UU principles relate to the Scout Oath and Law.

Section 2. Social Service

1. **Read** sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 13 and 14 of *100 Questions* to learn more about Unitarian Universalism.
2. **Read** the Citizenship section of the *Boy Scout Handbook* and think about how it applies to you as a young person.
3. **Read** “Our Work for Social Justice and Diversity” in *The UU Pocket Guide*. Take notes in your journal, especially about concepts that either spark your interest or are difficult to understand.
4. **Discuss** the readings and the way social justice works in your congregation and in the Boy Scouts with your mentor.
5. **Choose** a volunteer service project either within or outside your congregation.
 - ✚ **Ask** your mentor, minister, religious educator or church president about possible projects. You can undertake an independent project or apprentice yourself to a church committee or leader you learned about in Part One. If you choose a project outside your congregation, it should further a social cause or community need that’s important to you because of your UU and Scouting values.
 - ✚ **Get** your mentor’s approval of your project before you begin it.

- ✿ **Carry out** your project. The project should take a **minimum** of six to eight hours of work.
- ✿ **Create** a written report, video, pictorial or photographic essay about your project.
- ✿ **Meet** with your mentor to share your report and discuss what you've learned.

Section 3. World Religions

All religions try to answer questions like these:

- ✿ **Why** were we created?
- ✿ **How** should people live?
- ✿ **Why** do evil, pain and suffering exist?
- ✿ **What happens** after we die?

1. **Think** about these questions and write down your own answers.
2. **Discuss** your answers with your mentor.
3. **Read** “When Others (or you) say ‘God’ ” by Reverend John Beuhrens.
4. **Read** a book about world religions. You’ll find several in the bibliography on the UUA web site.
5. **Read** a book or attend a worship service of one specific religion. Ask yourself how this religion answers the questions above. Write down your answers.
6. **Discuss** what you’ve learned with your mentor.
7. **Read** about the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) in the UUA Directory or on its website at <http://iarfreligiousfreedom.net>.
8. **Read** about Scouting’s World Friendship Funds and how its funds are collected and used to support Scouting around the world on the Scouting website at www.scouting.org.
9. **Discuss** the membership, purpose and activities of these two organizations with your mentor.

Part Three: Religion in Your Life, Your Congregation, and the World Around You

Section 1. Your Spiritual Autobiography and Religious Creed

1. **Read** “Our Religious Education” in *The UU Pocket Guide*. The author says that the role of liberal religious education is to encourage connections, compassion and creativity. Take notes in your journal, especially about parts that are interesting or aren’t clear to you.
2. **Read** Chapter 13, “Making the Most of Yourself” in the *Boy Scout Handbook*.
3. **Write or outline** a two page essay on **one** of the three topics below. As you write or outline your essay, **consider** whether any of your beliefs have changed as you’ve participated in the **Living Your Religion** Program.
 - ✚ **Compare** Unitarian Universalist and Scouting beliefs, including their similarities and differences.
 - ✚ **Write** your personal religious credo or belief statement as a Unitarian Universalist and a Scout or Venturer. You can find examples of these belief statements in the *Principles and Purposes* wallet card and the *What do UUs Believe* card. If you’re clear enough about your beliefs, you can simply sit down and write them out. You can also write your own personal Ten Commandments using the model of the Ten Commandments in the Hebrew Bible.
 - ✚ **Write** your spiritual autobiography using the guidelines below. Your religious life story is your own story. No one can tell you how to write it, but the guidelines can help you start. You don’t need to complete all the exercises or share your autobiography with your mentor, but you do need to show him/her that you’ve completed this requirement.
 - ✚ **Discuss** your essay with your mentor. Talk about how you feel about this exercise and the **Living Your Religion** Program.

Spiritual Autobiography Guidelines

1. ***All life is meeting others.*** Who are the three or four people who've had the greatest influence on you? Why?
2. ***Experience shapes religious faith.*** What are the two or three formative experiences of your life? Why are they important to you?
3. ***We live in community.*** What communities – religious or not – have had a lasting influence on you?
4. ***We are choosing creatures.*** What are the most important decisions of your life? How did you make them? What happened as a result?
5. ***We call some of our experiences religious.*** What are two or three of your religious experiences?
6. ***Life is made of joy and sorrow.*** What are a few of the happiest and saddest experiences of your life?
7. ***Theological values.*** Think about your journey through life. What religious values have guided you?
8. ***Scouting values.*** Think about your life as a Scout or Venturer? What values have guided you?

Section 2. Interview

1. **Develop** a list of questions to ask an adult Unitarian Universalist church member that will tell you about his or her spiritual history.
2. **Interview** an adult Unitarian Universalist church member of your choice. Take notes or tape your interview with the church member's permission.
3. **Discuss** this interview with your mentor.

Section 3. Real Life

1. **Consider** these questions and write your answers in your journal.
 - ✦ **How** does what you've just learned about Unitarian Universalism and Scouting serve you in the wider world?
 - ✦ **How** do you think it will serve you five years from now?
2. **Talk over** these questions and your answers with your mentor.

The Living Your Religion Covenant

This covenant will help you track your progress as you earn the **Living Your Religion** Award. First complete the form on page 17. Then, as you complete each requirement, put your initials in the spaces indicated on pages 18 through 20, and ask your mentor to do the same. When you've completed all the requirements, sign the covenant in the space indicated on page 21, and ask your mentor and minister to do the same.

Your Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Your Scout or Venturer Rank _____

Your Unit _____ Chartered to _____

Your Unit Leader _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Your Mentor _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Your Religious Educator or Minister _____

Church or Society Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Covenant Part One: Our History, Worship, and Congregational Life

Requirement	Date Completed	Your initials	Your Mentor's initials
Section 1: Introduction to the History of Unitarian Universalism and of the Boy Scouts of America			
1. Read “Our Roots” and “Important Dates in UU History” in The UU Pocket Guide.			
2. Complete your research project. Project title:			
3. Share your project with your mentor.			
4. Read the history of the Boy Scout of America in the Boy Scout Handbook.			
5. Discuss what you’ve learned with your mentor.			
Section 2: Introduction to Unitarian Universalist Worship and Celebrations			
1. Read Sections 5 through 12 of <i>100 Questions</i> .			
2. Attend two UU worship services.			
3. Consider the questions indicated.			
4. Read the preface and “Our Worship” in <i>The UU Pocket Guide</i> .			
5. Discuss what you’ve learned with your mentor.			
Section 3: Introduction to Your Congregation			
1. Read “Our Ministry” in <i>The UU Pocket Guide</i> .			
2. Meet with your minister.			
3. Meet with your minister of religious education.			
4. Consult the UUA Directory.			
5. Meet with your congregation’s treasurer or lay leader.			
6. Ask them the questions indicated.			
7. Interview a youth leader.			
8. Read an issue of <i>Synapse</i> .			
9. Attend a YRUU conference or read about one.			
10. Read the Citizenship section of the Boy Scout Handbook and list the ways the BSA and UUA are similar.			

Covenant Part Two: Your Duty to God: Living Unitarian Universalist Values, Justice, and Interconnectedness with Others as a Scout

Requirement	Date Completed	Your initials	Your Mentor's initials
Section 1: Living Unitarian Universalist Values			
1. Read "Our Faith" in <i>The UU Pocket Guide</i> .			
2. Re-read the Scout Oath and Law.			
3. Write an essay about one of the UU principles. Your chosen principle:			
4. Share your essay with your mentor.			
Section 2: Social Service			
1. Read Sections 1-4 and 13-14 of <i>100 Questions</i> .			
2. Read the Citizenship section of the <i>Boy Scout Handbook</i> .			
3. Read "Our Work for Social Justice and Diversity" in <i>The UU Pocket Guide</i> .			
4. Discuss what you've learned with your mentor.			
5. Carry out your volunteer service project.			
Section 3: World Religions			
1. Write your answers to the questions indicated.			
2. Discuss your answers with your mentor.			
3. Read "When Others (or you) say 'God' " by Beuhrens			
4. Read a book about world religions. Name of book:			
5. Look at another religion in depth. Chosen religion:			
6. Discuss what you've learned with your mentor.			
7. Read about IARF.			
8. Read about the World Friendship Fund.			
9. Discuss what you've learned with your mentor.			

Covenant Part Three: Religion in Your Life, in Your Congregation and in the World Around You

Requirement	Date Completed	Your initials	Your Mentor's initials
Section 1: Your Spiritual Autobiography and Religious Creed			
1. Read "Our Religious Education" in <i>The UU Pocket Guide</i> .			
2. Read "Making the Most of Yourself" in the <i>Scout Handbook</i> .			
3. Write or outline your essay.			
4. Discuss your essay with your mentor.			
Section 2: Interview			
1. Develop a list of questions for an adult UU member.			
2. Interview an adult member of your congregation.			
3. Discuss the interview with your mentor.			
Section 3: Real Life			
1. Write answers to the questions indicated.			
2. Discuss your answers with your mentor.			

Certifications

I certify that I have completed all the requirements for the Living Your Religion award.

Date _____

Your signature _____

Your mentor's signature _____

Your religious educator or minister's signature _____

How does a Scout obtain the Award?

The UUSO has selected a non-profit organization entitled "Programs of Religious Activity with Youth" (PRAY) to fulfill the delivery of the Award for the Scout that has completed the program. A large number of national faith groups use PRAY for fulfill their awards. Please visit the PRAY website for details (www.praypub.org) to determine the exact fee for the Award.

The application for UUSO Awards can be found as a separate file at www.uuscouters.org.

Please mail or fax the Application on the following page to PRAY at the following address along with the fee for the Award:

**Program for Religious Activities with Youth
8520 Mackenzie Road, Suite 3
St. Louis, MO 63123-3413**

**Telephone: 800-933-7729
Facsimile: 301-638-7250**