For more information on earning the religious emblem for your faith, contact the Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y.) at www.praypub.org.
This study guide has been written for use across the Heart of America Council camps.

The entire guide is recommended for use at the Bartle Reservation, while those questions marked with _Null_ are recommended for the Naish Reservation.
THE STORY OF THE LEATHER

It was many years ago in 1914 when a young disabled boy sat on the sidelines at summer camp. He cheered his friends on, always wearing a smile and sharing all he had to give – his Christ-like ideals and happy way of looking at everything – with everyone.

On the last night of camp, a bandanna was tied around his neck as a humble symbol from the other campers to recognize his Christ-like way of living. From this small beginning comes the tradition of campers wearing an outward symbol that represents the desire of its wearer to follow the examples that Jesus set for us all. Later, this little “rag” of cloth was replaced with a colored Leather for a Scout to wear on his hip.

What does the Leather signify? It is an outward symbol of an inner challenge that you choose to accept. It reminds you of the challenge you accept at camp and continue to carry out while you are away from camp. The Leather is a personal and voluntary way of challenging yourself to improve your way of life. Your promise of improvement is between you and God. The responsibility to live up to this challenge is yours. God will see your success in fulfilling this desire to live a better life; your family, friends, and anyone you meet should see it, too.

Now you may share in the experience of coming close to God through dedicating yourself to becoming more like Jesus in your thinking and behavior.

Come and enjoy the chance to learn and grow in your relationship with God.
THE LEATHER

The Leather is an outward symbol of accepting an inner challenge to grow. Its symbolism is Christ-centered, sacred, and personal. The decision to continue the journey rests with you.

Each color has a specific meaning. Linked to the meaning of a particular Leather is your personal challenge for growth.

THE BLUE LEATHER
1. Loyalty to the Scout Oath / Law
2. Loyalty to God
3. Loyalty to country
4. Loyalty to others

LOYALTY
(Loyalty to God, country, others)

THE SILVER LEATHER
1. Decision to follow Jesus
2. Decision to live the Christian way of life
3. Decision to live the Christian disciplines

DECISION
(Christian Decision)

THE BROWN LEATHER
1. Serve God
2. Humility
3. Become more aware of the needs of others

SERVICE
(Service to Others)

THE GOLD LEATHER
1. Understanding others
2. Concern for others

BENEVOLENCE
(Understanding Others)

THE RED LEATHER
1. Sacrifice of time
2. Sacrifice of talent
3. Sacrifice of personal will

SACRIFICE
(Leadership and Humility)

THE PURPLE LEATHER

HIGH AND NOBLE LIVING
(Noble Life)

THE WHITE LEATHER

DEDICATION TO A LIFE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE
(Life Service)

“Your experience, Noah, is a good example of what God has done for us,” his Dad remarked, after thinking about it for a moment. “He made us, so in a sense, everyone belongs to Him. But just like your knife got lost, we are all ‘lost’ – lost because of sin. And just like your knife had to be bought back, we also need to be ‘bought back’ so we can belong to God.”

“That’s right,” agreed his Mom, “but the required payment was not money, but a perfect sacrifice – God’s only Son. Jesus left the glory of heaven and gave Himself to die on the cross.”

“I guess that’s where the comparison ends,” continued his Dad. “Your knife didn’t have a choice – it had to come home with you whether it wanted to or not. But we have a choice. We can refuse God’s offer of forgiveness and be eternally separated from Him, or we can trust that Jesus died for us, buying us back with His own life, and have eternal life with Him. It’s up to us to decide whether or not we will follow Jesus.”

I Peter 1:18-19
“You were redeemed (bought back) ... with the precious blood of Christ.”

Adapted from “You Were Bought With a Price!,” CBH Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI.
THE MEANING OF THE LEATHER

Your Leather is a piece of the Creation. You couldn’t sell your Leather; it isn’t worth much money. Your Leather has only the meaning that YOU give it.

THE LEATHER IS NOT:  
1. A decoration.  
2. An award for achievement.  
3. A reward.  
4. A "pat" on the back.  
5. Measuring myself by others.  
6. "I AM FIRST."  
7. Self-centered.  
8. I am good, or being good.  
9. Knowing about God, talking about God.  
10. Sight (seeing things as they are).  
11. A status symbol.

THE LEATHER IS:  
1. A symbol.  
3. A responsibility.  
4. A "push" forward.  
5. Measuring myself by God.  
6. "I AM THIRD."  
7. Christ-centered.  
8. I want to be better.  
9. Knowing God, talking to God.  
10. Vision (seeing things as they ought to be).  
11. A personal calling to humility.

LOST AND FOUND

“Mom, can I have some money for the lost-and-found auction tonight at Scout meeting?” asked Noah as he ate his dinner. His Mom nodded, and Noah grinned.

“All right!” he exclaimed. “I might be able to get some good stuff!” The week before, the Scouts in Noah’s troop had been given one last opportunity to claim any lost-and-found items belonging to them. The things that remained unclaimed were going to be auctioned off – and this was the night that that would happen.

Later, Noah watched as Scouts were bidding on different items. When the Senior Patrol Leader held up a pocketknife and opened the bidding, Noah suddenly sat up straight. He realized it was the knife that he thought he had left at his grandparents’ house! Noah decided to buy it back, so he quickly made a bid. Some other Scouts wanted it too, and back and forth the bidding went. “I hope I have enough money to get my knife back,” thought Noah. After bidding his last cent, he held his breath; no other bid was made, and the knife was his!

But back home, Noah grumbled, “The knife is mine again – even though it cost all the money I had. It doesn’t seem fair that I had to buy it back!”
THE BLUE LEATHER – LOYALTY

1. Introduction

The Blue Leather symbolizes loyalty. Accepting the Blue Leather is accepting a renewed loyalty to your Scout's duty to God, duty to America, and duty to others, and to living by the Scout Oath and Law.

THE SCOUT LAW
A Scout is...
Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent.

THE LEATHERS' CREED
I would be true, for there are those who trust me,
I would be pure, for there are those who care,
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer,
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
I would be friend to all, the foe, the friendless,
I would be giving and forget the gift,
I would be humble, for I know my weakness,
I would look up and laugh, and love and lift.

The Leathers' Creed as an important set of life guidelines. What are some important similarities between the Scout Law and the Leathers' Creed?

MY LEATHER WAS PRESENTED BY:

_____________________________________________
ADDRESS: _____________________________________________
_____________________________________________
_____________________________________________
HOME PHONE: ________________

DATE: ____________________________

MY LEATHER INSTRUCTOR, SCOUT LEADER, OR CAMP CHAPLAIN (IF DIFFERENT FROM YOUR PRESENTER):

_____________________________________________
ADDRESS: _____________________________________________
_____________________________________________
_____________________________________________
HOME PHONE: ____________________________
A LEATHER IS THE OUTWARD SYMBOL OF AN INNER CHALLENGE YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT. YOUR LEATHER CHALLENGE SHOULD AFFECT YOUR LIFE TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT YOU CAN RECOGNIZE A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE WITHIN YOURSELF. YOU WILL KNOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN HONEST WITH YOURSELF WHEN OTHERS SEE THIS CHANGE.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

To what personal goal do I want to strive by wearing a Blue Leather?

How do I plan to do this? Be as specific as possible.

SCOUT OATH

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
And to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
Mentally awake, and morally straight.

What are ways that you can improve your loyalty to living out the Scout Oath? What are areas that you need to do better?

Use the space below to write specific ways that you will dedicate yourself to living out the Scout Oath and Law in the next year. You might include examples of how you will change your behavior to demonstrate greater loyalty toward your family, toward your school and your schoolmates (or your workplace and your fellow workers), toward your Scout troop, toward your friends, toward God, and toward your church. What things do you do now that you need to stop doing? What do you need to start doing? What do you need to do more of?
2. Loyalty to God:

Mark 12:28-31 NIV®

"One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?'

"'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: 
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these.'"

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

Each Leather represents a special character trait. The Blue Leather symbolizes loyalty. How can you be more loyal to God? To your church?

"I do want to point out is that you should never let your chance go by, else you may regret it, as it might not occur again. Your motto should be – 'Do it now.'” How do you rate yourself on being a Scout who “does it now” when it comes to serving other with good turns?

“Make a list of people whom you will regularly have the opportunity to make happy this year (e.g., parents, siblings, grandparents, schoolmates, teachers, neighbors, spouse, co-workers, boss).

“You may have some trouble in finding a job that will be helpful to other people; but, if you stick to it, and force yourself to do it day by day, it very soon grows into a habit with you, and you then find how many little things you can do which all count as good turns although small in themselves.” Write a prayer – or a letter to God – asking Him to live through you to bring happiness this year to the people whose names you wrote above.
4. Loyalty to Others

From Young Knights of the Empire, by Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts:

"A SCOUT’S DUTY IS TO BE USEFUL AND TO HELP OTHERS. And he is to do his duty before anything else, even though he gives up his own pleasure or comfort or safety to do it. When in difficulty to know which of two things to do, he must ask himself, 'Which is my duty?' that is, 'Which is best for other people?' and do that one. He must try his best to do a good turn to somebody every day.

"Once when driving in my car I passed a man on a sunny, dusty road, and I thought after I had passed him whether I might not have offered to give him a lift. Then I thought probably he would be only going a short distance to some house a little farther along the road. As I sped farther and farther upon my way, I saw no house and no turning, and therefore I argued that the poor man would have to be walking all this dusty way when I might have given him a lift. But while I sat all this time thinking, my car was rushing me miles away from the spot. Eventually I made up my mind that I ought to go back and do my good turn to the man. But I had gone so far that when I got back again to where I expected to find him, he was not to be seen. He had evidently taken some short cut across the fields, and I never saw him again.

"But the memory of it lingered in my mind for a long time, and ever since that, when driving along, I have been quick to make up my mind and use the opportunity when it has presented itself, of giving a lift to any weary wayfarer. I don’t want to make out myself as being so very good for doing this kind of good turn, for that is easy enough with a motor-car; but what I do want to point out is that you should never let your chance go by, else you may regret it, as it might not occur again. Your motto should be — ‘Do it now.’

"GOOD TURNS. Always remember that in going through this world we only pass this way once, and if we miss our chance it never comes again. The shortest and most certain way to happiness is to make other people happy. Even if we cannot make them happy, we can at least be helpful to them. But so often we forget to do this, or, as I did in the motor-car, leave it till too late, and let the chance slip by. In order to be continually happy, the thing is to be continually doing good turns.

"To get a habit you must at first carry out a great deal of practice. At first it may come a little difficult to remember each day that you have this duty to do, and you may have some trouble in finding a job that will be helpful to other people; but, if you stick to it, and force yourself to do it day by day, it very soon grows into a habit with you, and you then find how many little things you can do which all count as good turns although small in themselves."

How can and should your faith in God affect your life? Others' lives?

― “Love your neighbor as yourself.” The Blue Leather is a symbol of growth. How can you grow more like Jesus in all your relationships in the coming year?
3. Loyalty to Country

"America"

My country, ’tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims’ pride,
From every mountainside
Let freedom ring!

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free, thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills,
Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake;
Let all that breathe partake;
Let rocks their silence break,
The sound prolong.

Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty, to thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King.

Note: A "rill" is a very small channel of water, caused mainly by runoff water that eroded the soil.

What are some ways that God has blessed our nation?

What are some ways that God has blessed you that are a result of you being an American?

The Blue Leather symbolizes loyalty. How can you be a better American and be more loyal to your country in the coming year?