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.

Produced by the Protestant Committee on Scouting (www.scoutchaplains.org).

Approved by the Council Relationships Committee.

Heart of America Council
Boy Scouts of America

Brown Leather Study Guide
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 ❖ 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

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

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

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

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

THE PURPLE LEATHER

THE WHITE LEATHER

• In the next year, complete 10 hours of service in any area and write a brief essay about what you did, whom you served, how it made you feel to serve.
4. Serving in the World

• When do you have opportunities to serve others?

• Can you serve in your Scout troop? Your church? Your family? Your school? Your neighborhood?

• Why is it important to grow in faithful service?

• While you are in camp this session, participate in a simple service project. If you need ideas, you may ask your troop leaders or a camp chaplain. Describe your act of service below.

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: THE LEATHER IS:

3. A reward. 3. A responsibility.
4. A "pat" on the back. 4. A "push" forward.
5. Measuring myself by others. 5. Measuring myself by God.
7. Self-centered. 7. Christ-centered.
8. I am good, or being good. 8. I want to be better.
9. Knowing about God, talking about God. 9. Knowing God, talking to God.
10. Sight (seeing things as they are). 10. Vision (seeing things as they ought to be).
11. A status symbol. 11. A personal calling to humility.
THE BROWN LEATHER
Service to Others

Acceptance of the Brown Leather is an acceptance to serve God and others.

When you accepted your Silver Leather, you were challenged to grow in your faith:

1. In your decision to follow Jesus.
2. In the way you lived your life.
3. To live with Christian disciplines.

Do you feel you measured up to your challenge? In what way(s) was it most difficult? When did you receive your religious award? What did you learn?

Use this page to write how you have done in the past year in living in a new understanding of being a Christian disciple....

• उ About what does this lesson teach us?

• Being humble: Who was humble in the story?

• Serving God and others: Who was served? By whom? Is there more than one person serving?

• Becoming more aware of others: Which lives were changed because of serving?

• उ What can you do to serve others?

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind;’ and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

“But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”

Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

1. Become Humble

NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO
by Maltbie D. Babcock (1858-1901)

O Lord, I pray
That for this day
I may not swerve
By foot or hand
From thy command,
Not to be served, but to serve.

This, too, I pray,
That for this day
No love of ease
Nor pride prevent
My good intent,
Not to be pleased, but to please.

And if I may
I’d have this day
Strength from above
To set my heart
In heavenly art,
Not to be loved, but to love.

• ☐ What does it mean to be humble?

• How are other people better for having known you?

• ☐ How can you serve God through others?
Philippians 4:8 NIV®

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.”

- How can you more fully develop a heart for service?

- What are some specific services that you can do?

- How can you impact your community?

I Corinthians 13:4-8a NIV®

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

- What do these verses tell us about how we are to act?

2. A Heart to Serve God

“Four Things”
by Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933)

Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true;
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his fellow-man sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and Heaven securely.

- What four things does the poem mention?

- Why are these four things important to keep in mind?

- Name some ways that you can live with these things in mind.