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 Scout Reservation, while those questions marked with \( \mathbb{N} \) are recommended for the Naish Scout Reservation.

**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 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.

**THE SCOUT LAW**

A Scout is...
Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind,
Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent.
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 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
LOYALTY
1. Loyalty to the Scout Oath / Law (Loyalty to God, country, others)
2. Loyalty to God
3. Loyalty to country
4. Loyalty to others

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

THE BROWN LEATHER
SERVICE
1. Serve God (Service to Others)
2. Humility
3. Become more aware of the needs of others

THE GOLD LEATHER
BENEVOLENCE
1. Understanding others (Understanding Others)
2. Concern for others

THE RED LEATHER
SACRIFICE
1. Sacrifice of time (Leadership and Humility)
2. Sacrifice of talent
3. Sacrifice of personal will

THE PURPLE LEATHER
HIGH AND NOBLE LIVING
(Noble Life)

THE WHITE LEATHER
DEDICATION TO A LIFE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE
(Life Service)

5. God united Himself with humanity when He became incarnate (in-flesh) in the person of Jesus the Messiah (lines linking the symbol for God to the God-man, Jesus the Messiah; Jesus’ halo), John 1:1-14. Jesus lived the life humanity was meant to live, but cannot. He lived to serve His Father and others – full-time and without limit (arrows going from Jesus to His Father and others; see also frame 3). He did it for humanity, for each of us, and offers us His sinless life to possess in faith as though we ourselves had lived it, Philippians 2:5-11.

6. Jesus suffered the death we deserve to die (cross) as punishment for our sins, Romans 3:21-28. Jesus’ crucifixion was also His coronation (crown above cross), because when His opponents did their worst to Him, He did His best for them – as the Servant without limit. Jesus lived a sinless life for us, died to suffer our punishment, and rose again from the grave as King and Lord of creation, life, death and eternity, Ephesians 1:17-23; 2:4-10; Colossians 1:15-20.

7. Jesus remains among us through His Holy Spirit (John 14:25,26, dove), who through the Scriptures assures us that our sins are forgiven (cross on top of sin), and that death has been transformed from a fearsome event into a doorway leading to His Eternal Home (door with slats; we can see in faith what lies beyond death), I Corinthians 15:50-56. God now desires that we strive to live according to His original plan (arrows to God and – broken, because our obedience is far from perfect).

8. In the life to come (cloud symbolizing God’s presence), God will restore all things so that they conform to His original plan. In eternity we shall live to praise God and serve others (arrows going from each person to God and neighbor). While we wait for Jesus to welcome us into His Eternal Home, we are to heed His one commandment (John 13:34,35), and serve Jesus by serving others, Matthew 25:31-46.
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.

THE LEATHER IS:
1. A symbol.
3. A responsibility.
4. A "push" forward.
5. Measuring myself by God.
6. "I AM FIRST."
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.

THE DIVINE PLAN


The illustration uses a symbol for God consisting of a circle with protruding arrows. As the circle is one, so God is one. Like the circle, God has no beginning and no end. The arrows symbolize God’s love – which always flows out from God, I John 4:6.

2. “…created the heavens and the earth,” Genesis 1:1 (sun, moon and stars; surface of earth).


3. “…in our image, according to our likeness,” Genesis 1:26.

As God’s love flows out from God, so God’s plan was that people should live to serve God by serving others (arrows pointing to God and neighbor), Matthew 22:34-40, Luke 10:25-28.

4. Humanity sinned. As a result, people now live to serve themselves (circular arrows pointing back to self). With sin came death (tombstone and skull), Romans 5:12; 6:22,23. Though people changed, God did not (the symbol for God remains the same in all eight frames). Furthermore, God put into effect a plan to draw people back into fellowship with Himself and each other, Ephesians 1:3-12.
1. Introduction

Acceptance of the Silver Leather is a) a dedication to follow Jesus and b) to live a Christian way of life.

When you accepted your Blue Leather, you challenged yourself to grow in four areas of loyalty:
1. To be loyal to the Scout Oath and Law;
2. To be loyal to God;
3. To be loyal to your country;
4. To be a loyal friend to others.

Do you feel you measured up to your challenges? In what areas did you do well? In what way(s) was it most difficult? (Be specific.)

After you have thought about for a bit, use these two pages to write your answers.

☐ Are you prepared to accept that the Silver Leather is a symbol of the commitments that you made on page 12?

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Will you choose to not wear your Silver Leather if you are not living up to these commitments to spiritual growth?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have answered “Yes” to all five questions above, then you now qualify to wear the Silver Leather bead to remind you of your Silver Leather commitment. Please sign and date below to verify your decision. Congratulations!

__________________________

__________________________

Sign your name Date

You know, the Leathers Program is a good tool for setting faith goals while at camp. But consistent and serious spiritual growth will only happen if you are active in your faith throughout the year will.

The religious emblem of your faith is a great way to learn more about God and to grow spiritually. So in order to qualify for the next step in the Leather Program next summer – the Brown Leather – then you must have completed your religious emblem by the time you come to camp next summer. (Applies to youth only.)

☐ Initial here to show that you have read and understand the paragraph above.

Your camp chaplain can give you information about religious emblem classes offered in your area in during the coming school year. Go for it!
PERSONAL CHALLENGE

A Leather is the outward symbol of an inner challenge that 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.

- Are you prepared to commit to follow Jesus to your best of your ability in the coming year?
  
  __________ Yes  __________ No

- Are you prepared to strive toward the goals that you set on pages 10-11?
  
  __________ Yes  __________ No

- Are there any other spiritual goals to which you would like to commit for the coming year? If so, write them below.
  
  __________ Yes  __________ No
2. Decision to follow Jesus

- Read “The Divine Plan” on pages 14-15, and then answer the following questions.

- Is the story told there about Jesus and God’s plan of salvation told there new to you? What did you learn new from “The Divine Plan”?

- Talk with your Leather Group Leader what the Bible verse below means, and then re-write it in your words in the space provided. Be prepared to share what you wrote with your Leather Group Leader:

   “It is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV

B. Why is it important to read the Bible?

- Set a goal for the coming year for reading the Bible. Talk with your camp chaplain about good places to start. S/he will give you a New Testament if you do not own a Bible. Write your goal here.

C. Why is it important to spend time with other Christians?

- Set a goal for the coming year for spending time with other Christians. Your camp chaplain will help you find a church youth group or student ministry if you are not already part of one. Write your goal here.

D. Why is it important to God that we serve others?

- Set some goals for how you will serve others in the coming year. Write your goal here.
4. Decision to Live the Christian Disciplines

**Take Time to be Holy**

By William Dunn Longstaff, 1882

Take time to be holy,  
Speak oft with thy Lord;  
Abide in Him always,  
And feed on His Word.  
Make friends of God’s children,  
Help those who are weak,  
Forgetting in nothing  
His blessing to seek.  

Take time to be holy,  
The world rushes on;  
Spend much time in secret,  
With Jesus alone.  
By looking to Jesus,  
Like Him thou shalt be;  
Thy friends in thy conduct  
His likeness shall see.

*From the public domain.*

The old hymn of the faith “Take Time to be Holy” refers to several different disciplines – or behaviors – of the Christian faith.

- Write a “P” next to any lines that refer to prayer.
- Write a “B” next to any lines that refer to reading the Bible.
- Write a “T” next to any lines that refer to spending time with other Christians.
- Write an “S” that refers to service to others.

A. What is prayer?

- Set a goal for the coming year for spending regular time in prayer and time set aside to get to know God better. Write your goal here.

- “You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.”
  
  Ephesians 1:13 NIV

  The verse above says that the word of truth is “the gospel of your salvation.” The word “gospel” means good news. What is the “good news” of your salvation?

  How does this verse say that you are “included in Christ”?

  How have those in the verse above responded once they have heard the word of truth?

  In what way do you believe in “the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”? Be prepared to share your answer with your Leather Group Leader.
3. Decision to Live a Christian Way of Life

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.”

1st Corinthians 3:16-17 NIV

What does it mean for a Christian to fulfill the eleventh part of the Scout Law – to be clean – by having a clean body and mind? Why is it important?

“[A religion teacher] asked Jesus, ‘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.’” Mark 12:30-31 NIV

Write in your own words the things that Jesus says here are the most important.

How do these commandments of Jesus apply to you today?

“We know that we have come to know [the Father] if we obey his commands. The man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.” 1st John 2:3-6 NIV

What are some things that you know about Jesus that should also be true about you if you are to “walk as Jesus did”?