

Online Merit Badge Syllabus Citizenship in the Community

Introduction:

Our day to day lives are highly impacted by the community we live in. For much of history local communities have been a primary way in which people would identify themselves. Citizenship in the Community merit badge allows Scouts an opportunity to reflect on the importance of their local community to their lives. While City Council may not have the same ring to it as the United States Senate, it also plays an important role in shaping how we interact with government services which we make use of. Our community is not limited to what the government can do for us. It also includes what conscientious and civic minded citizens (That's us as Scouts) do to help make our communities the best they can be. In addition to reflecting on the importance of our communities we will also learn about issues facing them and discover how we can make an impact.

Prerequisites:

Requirement 3: Attend a meeting of your city, town, or county council or school board; Or attend a municipal, county, or state court session. Choose one of the issues discussed at the meeting where a difference of opinions was expressed and explain to your counselor why you agree with one opinion more than you do another one.

Requirement 7:

Do the following:

- A. Identify three charitable organizations outside of Scouting that interest you and bring people in your community together to work for the good of your community.
- B. Pick ONE of the organizations you chose for requirement 7a. Using a variety of resources (including newspapers, fliers and other literature, the Internet, volunteers, and employees of the organization), find out more about this organization.
- C. With your counselor's and your parent's approval, contact the organization you chose for requirement 7b and find out what young people can do to help. While working on this merit badge, volunteer at least eight hours of your time for the organization. After your volunteer experience is over, discuss what you have learned with your counselor.

Program:

Day 1

Scouts will be welcomed to the class and we will start off with a discussion of what Citizenship in the community means and what it takes to be a good citizen of their community. As part of this conversation we will explore the rights, duties and obligations of citizenship and how to demonstrate good citizenship in our communities, Scouting units, places of worship and schools. (Requirement 1)

We will then foster a greater understanding of the importance of local government by brainstorming services in our communities which are funded by taxpayers. Once the

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group has generated a list of such services, we will reflect on why these services are important for our communities. (Requirement 6)

As part of fostering active citizenship, Scouts will be tasked with an independent research project where they will investigate an issue in their community which is important to them. The first choice Scouts will have an opportunity to make is choosing an issue which is important to their community and hopefully which is important to them personally. This will allow Scouts to learn about their local community through the lens of an issue which they find impactful or engaging. They will then determine which branch of the local government is responsible for the issue and set up an interview with a person from that branch. As part of the interview they will be tasked with learning how they can become involved as youth and be the change they want to see in their community. During this time the Scouts will be preparing to share what they have learned with the rest of the group on Thursday. Once they are done with this assignment Scouts will see the impact that they can have on their own communities. (Requirement 4) (Note: If Scouts cannot find an interview within the timeframe, we can postpone the due date on that portion to Friday.)

Scouts will also be tasked with creating their presentations on their communities. This will give Scouts an opportunity to express their creativity and to educate the group about their community. Scouts will reflect about what they believe to be important and unique aspects of their community and include them in their presentation on their community. In addition, these more individual aspects of the assignment Scouts will also present basic information about their community in their assignment such as history, cultures, and ethnic groups of your community; its best features and popular places where people gather. Finally, as part of being active citizens Scouts will be tasked with identifying and describing challenges which their community is facing. These presentations will be given to the class on Friday. (Requirement 8)

Day 2

Scouts will present their research projects on an issue in their community. This will be a great opportunity for us to see what issues our group finds important and to think about how we can get more involved in our communities. (Requirement 8)

Now that we know the importance of municipal government and how involved citizens can affect positive change at the local level, we will look at how local governments function. For this we will chart the organization of the government of our state. This will allow us to do this as a group in case some Scouts are not from the same county as the bulk of the group. It will also allow us to learn more about one of the most important levels of government in our system of governance. We will then use google earth to get a more physical sense of our local governments. We will locate important government and historic buildings in our communities which will allow us to see how our local government physically fits into our daily lives. (Requirement 2)

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After all of that hard work we will have a much more relaxed final task. As part of nurturing our understanding of the importance of Citizens to a community, Scouts will watch a film that shows how the actions of individuals can have a positive effect on a community. During the film Scouts will reflect on what they have learned about what it means to be a valuable and concerned member of the community. As a timeless classic about the ability of one member of a community to ensure that our institutions are as just as possible, the movie *Twelve Angry Men* is highly recommended for this requirement. That is not to say that Scouts must choose this option. They will have an opportunity to propose an alternative. If the alternative is approved it may be used instead. .

Day 3

We will end our class with the Scouts giving the presentations which they prepared on their communities. With these presentations we will finish the class through teaching and learning about our different communities. I look forward to seeing the great work they come up with!

Of course, there will be time at the end to answer questions and respond to concerns. One badge closer to Eagle!

REQUIREMENTS WHICH CAN BE CROSSCOUNTED WITH COMMUNICATIONS:

Requirement 8 can be cross counted with the five-minute presentation in communications. Please note that most weeks these presentations will be brief and under five minutes. However, if a Scout is also enrolled in the Communications class they can fulfill the requirement there and have it cross applied.

Requirement 3 can have the same meeting be cross applied to Communications requirement 5. It will still require slightly different bookwork.