

AD ALTARE DEI

"To the Altar of God"



Overview

[Scouting America](#)

[National Catholic Committee on Scouting](#)

[Diocese of Cincinnati](#)

[Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Committee on Scouting](#)

Growing in Faith. Growing in Character. Growing in Leadership.

The **Ad Altare Dei** (Latin for "*To the Altar of God*") religious emblem invites Catholic Scouts to discover how their faith and Scouting journey strengthen one another.

Through prayer, Scripture, service, discussion, and fellowship, participants deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith while exploring how the Scout Oath and Scout Law call us to become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

This program is more than another advancement opportunity. It is an invitation to grow closer to God, build lasting friendships, and develop the habits of leadership and service that will guide a lifetime of faith.

Whether you are working toward Eagle Scout, participating in Venturing, or simply looking to grow spiritually, Ad Altare Dei offers a meaningful journey that challenges both the heart and the mind.

Eligibility

The Ad Altare Dei emblem is for Catholic young people who are registered in a Scouts BSA troop, Venturing crew, or Sea Scout ship.

To begin the program, the Scout must:

- Be Catholic
- Be registered in Scouts BSA, Venturing, or Sea Scouts
- Be an active member of their unit for at least six months
- Have completed the sixth grade before starting the program
- Registered Venturers and Sea Scouts may participate before their 21st birthday.

Registered Scouts BSA members may participate before their 18th birthday.

What You'll Learn

A Journey of Faith Through Scouting

The Ad Altare Dei program invites Scouts to explore the Catholic faith through discussion, reflection, prayer, service, and the Sacraments. Along the way, participants discover how the Scout Oath and Scout Law can become a guide for living as faithful disciples of Christ. The program is organized around the Seven Sacraments as the primary means of spiritual growth.



1. CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Who am I as a Catholic?

Discover what it means to live your faith every day at home, at school, in your parish, and in your community.



2. THE SACRAMENTS

Encounter Christ

Explore how each of the Seven Sacraments strengthens our relationship with God and helps us grow in holiness.



3. PRAYER

Building a Relationship with God

Experience different forms of prayer and develop habits that deepen your personal relationship with Christ.



4. SCRIPTURE

God Speaks Through His Word

Learn how Scripture guides our lives and reveals God's plan through the life and teachings of Jesus.



5. SERVICE

Faith in Action

Live the Gospel by serving others and recognizing Christ in those around you.



6. VOCATIONS

God Has a Plan for You

Reflect on your unique gifts and begin discerning how God calls you to serve the Church and the world.



7. MORAL DECISION MAKING

Choosing What Is Right

Strengthen your conscience by applying Catholic teaching to everyday decisions with courage and integrity.



8. LIVING THE SCOUT OATH THROUGH FAITH

Scouting as Discipleship

See how the Scout Oath and Scout Law reinforce the values of the Gospel, helping you become a faithful leader, servant, and disciple.

Your Journey

What to Expect Throughout the Program

The Ad Altare Dei program is designed to help Scouts grow in faith through discussion, reflection, prayer, and service. Throughout the program, participants will work with an adult counselor, complete activities from the official workbook, and share in the faith and fellowship of other Catholic Scouts.

Participants can expect to:

- ✓ Attend regular program meetings
- ✓ Complete guided workbook discussions
- ✓ Read and reflect on Sacred Scripture
- ✓ Develop a habit of personal prayer and reflection
- ✓ Participate in meaningful service opportunities
- ✓ Meet with an approved counselor or counselor team
- ✓ Attend the Catholic Camporee or another approved retreat experience
- ✓ Complete a final review with program leaders
- ✓ Receive approval from the counselor and clergy before earning the emblem

Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to Common Questions

Whether you're new to Catholic Scouting or have participated in religious emblem programs before, here are answers to some of the questions we hear most often.

What should I bring to meetings?

- Official **Ad Altare Dei Youth Manual** (available for purchase at the first meeting)
 - **Catholic Bible** (NLT Catholic Edition recommended)
 - Pen or pencil and a notebook
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Who can earn the Ad Altare Dei emblem?

The program is open to **Catholic Scouts BSA, Venturers, and Sea Scouts** who have reached the appropriate age or grade level and are committed to actively participating throughout the program.

How long does the program take?

The schedule is published separately, but 10 in-person meetings, a weekend retreat, and a spring Board of Review are required.

Is the Catholic Camporee required?

An approved weekend retreat is required, our local Catholic Coalition on Scouting puts on the Catholic Camporee to support this effort. The Catholic Camporee is a highlight of the program and is **strongly encouraged**. It provides opportunities for prayer, fellowship, outdoor adventure, and completing portions of the emblem program together.

Do I need to purchase a workbook?

We will have workbooks available for purchase at the first meeting, if you would like to purchase one prior, you may do so at the [Scout Shop](#) or directly from the [National Catholic Coalition on Scouting](#).

Can Scouts from any parish participate?

Yes! Catholic Scouts from **any parish or troop** are welcome. If required by your local committee, your pastor will be asked to support your participation and final approval.

Are parents involved?

Absolutely. Parents are encouraged to support their Scout by discussing faith topics at home, helping with reflections and service opportunities, and encouraging regular attendance throughout the program.

Parents are always welcome at meetings. In keeping with Scouting's commitment to transparency, nothing in the Ad Altare Dei program is secret, and we encourage families to participate in their Scout's journey whenever possible.

When is the emblem presented?

After successfully completing all program expectations and receiving final approval, Scouts are typically recognized during a **special Catholic Scout Mass or diocesan recognition ceremony that is held in the spring of next year**, where they receive the Ad Altare Dei medal. Alternately, the emblem can be awarded at your troop court of honor.