How Do I Get the Lutheran Religious Recognitions?

(for youth and adults)

National Lutheran Association on Scouting

https://www.nlas.org

This presentation is available at

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Purpose

You've heard about the Lutheran Religious Recognitions and now you or your child wants to get them.

How do you go about that?

- The first part of this presentation suggests how to find a course
- In case that fails, the second part suggests how an adult might plan and teach a course
  - And if you have gone to that effort, you would probably want to make the course available to others

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Contact Your Pastor

- Before starting, get your pastor's approval
  - The religious emblems are owned by the church
  - The spiritual instruction of Lutheran youth is a primary concern of your pastor and congregation
  - You will meet with the pastor and the pastor will sign off on your completed workbook
- Your pastor may establish a class or appoint a person to teach a class
- You may have to educate your pastor
  - Not every pastor knows about the religious emblems
  - Buy the student and counselor booklets for the Protestant and Independent Christian churches (from Council store or P.R.A.Y.) and review the program with him/her

Nothing supersedes the authority of the pastor, congregation and the parents regarding the spiritual welfare of Lutheran youth in scout-type programs[1]
[1]Letter from Chief Scout Executive Erbert K. Fretwell to the Lutheran Committee on Scouting, paraphrased

The Scouting in the Lutheran Church Manual claimed for pastors and congregations the sole, unrestricted right of the local Lutheran church committee (which includes the pastor) to control everything of a religious nature that is to be super-imposed upon the official scouting program[2]
[2]**"Scouting in the Lutheran Church"** A Manual of Policies and Procedures, prepared by the National Lutheran Commission on Scouting, 1937, distributed by Office of National Youth Agency Relationships, Lutheran Council in the U.S.A.

P.R.A.Y. Web Store https://store.praypub.org

Look for a Course

With your pastor's approval, you may have to look for an existing course

- Lutherans use the Religious Emblems Program used by many Protestant & Independent Churches, administered through the Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y.)
  - Use your pastor for discussions and sign-off
- Contact other congregations or units nearby for scheduled courses
- Contact your roundtable representative (Courses are often advertised at district roundtables)
- Contact your Unit or District Religious Emblems Coordinator (Scouting America) or Troop Leader (GSUSA) for possible counselors
- Take a virtual course
  - Conducted annually by the National Religious Relationships Committee (Scouting America)
    - Will provide a pastor if participant does not have one
  - Look for virtual religious emblems courses at https://dutytogodbsa.org

Religious Emblems Coordinator https://www.praypub.org/rec-info
2025 Virtual Religious Emblems courses
https://dutytogodbsa.org/portfolio/2025-virtual-religious-emblems-programs/
Look for virtual religious emblems courses at https://dutytogodbsa.org -> Blog

Recruiting a Counselor

- Ask a parent or other trusted individual
- Select a person of doctrinal maturity that the pastor may appoint to teach faith
  - Similar to commissioning a Sunday School or confirmation teacher
  - Lower age levels (God and Me, God & Family) are oriented toward being done with the family
- Obtain the counselor's manual (local Scout Shop or order from P.R.A.Y.)
- Study Counselor's manual and review online resources https://praypub.org/documents-resources

P.R.A.Y. Web Store https://store.praypub.org
Online resources from P.R.A.Y. https://praypub.org/documents-resources

Conducting a Course
(adult)

Plan

- Review Counselor's manual and online resources https://praypub.org/documents-resources
  - Obtain counselor's manual from local Scout Shop or order from P.R.A.Y.
- Select meeting times, dates, formats
  - Pick the teaching format (classroom, in home, virtual)
  - Decide how often to have classes (weekly, bi-weekly, weeknight or weekend)
  - Allow time for service projects, meetings with youth's pastor, Bible reading plans
- Coordinate with parents
- Reserve meeting space or set up/plan virtual meetings
- Advertise
  - Church bulletin and newsletter
    - Your own, other local congregations, charter/host congregation
  - Your Scout unit and other units nearby
  - Scouting roundtable
  - Unit & District Religious Emblems Coordinator

Online resources from P.R.A.Y. https://praypub.org/documents-resources
P.R.A.Y. Web Store https://store.praypub.org

Conducting a Course
(adult)

Organize

- Prepare welcome letter and schedule for each parent & participant
- Set course expectations (parent meeting or letter)
  - Dates & time
  - Parent attendance and involvement
    - Support & encourage youth in attendance, service projects, Bible reading
    - Invite parents to participate as Mentor
    - Meet youth protection requirements of the congregation and scouting program (protection for you, the youth, the church)
      - At least two adults present while youth are present/parent accompany youth for virtual class
      - Always copy parent when communicating electronically with youth
- Notify pastors to expect discussion and course signoff requests from youth
- Purchase or have students purchase student booklets (Council store or P.R.A.Y.)
- Prepare materials for object lessons and crafts (+2, for example & demonstration)
- Send email reminders prior to classes

P.R.A.Y. Web Store https://store.praypub.org

Conducting a Course
(adult)

Execute!

- Enjoy your interaction with the youth
- Assist them in selecting service projects as needed
- Ask them to talk about projects they selected
- Encourage them in doing the Bible readings
- Encourage them in speaking with their pastors and other Christian examples
- Be amazed at some insights you will discover with and about them!
- In the last class, go over the process for obtaining final sign-off, ordering the appropriate emblems and pins, and scheduling the presentation of their Religious Emblems
- Follow up with a congratulatory email and reiterate instructions

Conducting a Course
(adult)

Celebrate

- Collect the signed off sheets & money and order the medals (for in-person class) or encourage individual families to order the emblem for their faith (for virtual class)
  - Encourage purchasing denominational pins for God & Church
  - Have them notify their unit advancement chairpersons of their achievement
    - For Scouting America members, the advancement chairperson should order and present the Silver on Purple knot, No. 5007, during a troop meeting or court of honor
    - For GSUSA members, the advancement chairperson should order the MPMF national award if earned with the religious emblem
- Have them schedule a Religious Emblem presentation with their pastor, preferably during a worship service
  - Make effort to attend if you are invited
- Schedule an ice cream or pizza party to meet one last time and celebrate or send an uplifting congratulatory email

Resources

- PRAY Program description – https://www.praypub.org/pray
- P.R.A.Y. resources for Scouting America – https://www.praypub.org/scouting-america
- P.R.A.Y. resources for Girl Scouts – https://www.praypub.org/gsusa
- Online resources from P.R.A.Y. – https://praypub.org/documents-resources
- P.R.A.Y. Web Store – https://store.praypub.org
- P.R.A.Y. virtual Religious Emblems classes – https://www.praypub.org/virtual-resources
- Scouting America chart of Religious Emblems – https://dutytogodbsa.org/portfolio/religious-emblems-brochure/
- GS-USA chart of Religious Recognitions – https://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/about-girl-scouts/gs-and-faith/PRAY_Chart.pdf
- Lutheran Awards Brochure – https://www.praypub.org/Data/Sites/1/media/denomination-resources/lutheran/pray-lutheran-brochure.pdf
- Search by Faith for Religious Emblems of other faith groups – https://www.praypub.org/religious-emblems
- Religious Emblems Coordinator (Scouting America) - https://www.praypub.org/rec-info

Links checked and updated 03_15_2026

Who is NLAS?

NLAS was formed to assist the offices of youth ministry of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the churches that became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in relation to civic youth-serving agencies such as Scouting America, Girl Scouts of the USA, Campfire USA and 4-H.

NLAS is a national association of volunteer members that operates in partnership with the offices of youth ministry of the ELCA and LCMS to encourage Lutheran congregations, schools and other organizations to extend their ministry to children, youth, and families using the programs of these civic youth-serving agencies, and advocates emphasis on duty to God and encouraging growth of faith in youth in the programs of our youth-serving partners.

https://www.nlas.org