**Scouting is Youth Ministry**

From the earliest days of Scouting in the United States, the Catholic Church has found it to be a useful tool for youth ministry. And therefore today, Scouting is Youth Ministry in the Catholic Church.

The United States Confraternity of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) states:

*Ministering to young people is a vital aspect of the Catholic Church’s life and mission. In their*[*pastoral framework*](http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/young-adults/renewing-the-vision.cfm)*on youth ministry, “Renewing the Vision” (RTV) the U.S. Bishops state: “Ministry with adolescents (is) a concern for the entire church community, especially for leaders in parishes, schools, and dioceses."*

*The Church endeavors to minister to young people in a variety of ways, among which are: Catholic education and religious formation, youth ministry, and boys’ and girls’ scouting programs. All of these are excellent opportunities for the Church to pass on the Gospel of Jesus Christ to children and youth through her life and rich tradition of faith, morals, leadership development, pastoral care, prayer and worship, and service. Over the years, the Catholic youth ministry community and scouting programs have enjoyed a shared mission and a collaborative relationship, one that continues to this day.*

Catholic Youth ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of all young people and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community.” The essential goals of youth ministry are:

1. Empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today;
2. Draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the faith community; and
3. Foster the personal growth of each young person.

These goals of youth ministry match Scouting’s three aims:

1. Character,
2. Citizenship and
3. Physical and Mental Fitness.

A comparison of the BSA Mission Statement with the RTV’s definition of youth ministry and the three essential goals stated in the Vision Document will show their complementarity.

One way to approach youth ministry and Scouting is to ask a few questions:

* What do you do in Scouting? (Program)
* What do you do for Scouting? (How can we make the program better)

But for us Catholics, the larger question is

* What do we do with Scouting? (How do we use Scouting to fulfill our role as Youth Ministers?)

Since its formation in 1934, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) has worked to ensure that Catholic chartered Scout units and Catholic Scouts would have appropriate resources to integrate their faith experience with their Scouting experience – A Scout is reverent. A Scout promises to do his duty to God. Scouting allows the youth and adults to put their Faith in actions.

As such, our Catholic Units have the duty and responsibility as part of the Church Youth Ministry, to incorporate our Catholic Faith in our Unit’s program. Our Scout Leaders have the obligation as Catholic Youth Ministers, to provide a program that to enriches all our Scouts and Scouters in their Faith Development as well Character, Citizenship, and Physical and Mental Fitness. Our works and actions should make our Units as easily identified as distinctly Catholic. This commitment should be reviewed with the Organization Executive annually when the Unit is re-chartered.

In an effort to have Scout Units chartered by Catholic Organizations recognize their duties for Youth Ministry and be identifiable as distinctly Catholic, the following are several practices that are recommended and should be considered and encouraged.

**Recommended Practices for Scout Units Chartered by Catholic Organizations**

**The Twelve Aspects of a Catholic Chartered Unit**

1. Understand the “Duty to God” in the Scout Oath and “A Scout is reverent” in the Scout Law.
2. Participate in a Scout Sunday Mass.
3. Attend Annual Scout/Venturer Retreat or attend Cub Scout Faith Day.
4. Encourage Scouts to work on their Religious Emblems.
5. Encourage Adult Leaders to participate in Scouter Spiritual Development.
6. Have a Unit Chaplain or Religious Coordinator and promote a Chaplain’s Aide Program.
7. Attend Sunday Mass and prayer (morning, meal & evening) as part of weekend campout and Summer Camp activities.
8. Pray at meetings. (Opening and Closing prayer.)
9. Work on Pope Paul VI Catholic Unit Quality Award.
10. Work on American Saint, Rosary, Marian Patch Programs.
11. Nominate Adult Leaders for Adult Religious Recognitions.
12. Perform service to sponsoring organization and earn Helping Hands Award.

**Additional Considerations**

1. Focus Scoutmaster’s Minute on Spiritual themes periodically.
2. Discuss and promote vocations in the Church with the Scouts.
3. Promote Chaplain and COR training (including Catholic Religion module).
4. Promote participation by Scouts/Venturers in Diocesan youth programs as well as Lay Associations such as Teens Encounter Christ and Source & Summit.
5. Promote older Scouts/Venturers to participate in the Order of St. Dominic Savio.
6. Encourage Scouts/Venturers to engage in ministries at Mass. (Server, Greeter, Usher, Lector and for older youth; Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist)
7. Ask “How do you fulfill the 12th Point of the Scout Law” at Advancement Board of Reviews.
8. Encourage Adult Leaders witnessing their faith to youth.
9. Encourage Youth witnessing their faith to one another.

Website for the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting (DCCS):

 [www.evdccs.com](http://www.evdccs.com)

Website for the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS):

 [www.nccs-bsa.org](http://www.nccs-bsa.org)