

Greetings Scouting Ministry Specialist,

Congratulations, you are now officially a 21st Century Circuit Rider for Scouting Ministry! To assist you in communicating and ministering to local churches and scout units, we have prepared this toolkit.

The toolkit is designed for you to take immediate steps to communicate information to units in your local church as well as additional churches that you may choose to contact. (Please provide us with a list; please limit your list of churches to between 1-3).

It is a primary role of the Scouting Ministry Specialist to communicate the availability of these awards and recognition, some by nomination and some by achievement (see job description document). Please do so with excitement and a spirit of servant leadership.

Impact the Lives of Children and Youth brochure* is an all-encompassing brochure that outlines each youth agency, recognition and awards and contact information for our staff. It is a good place to start. Please distribute at pack and troop committee meetings, Scout Sunday observances and at other church events and programs.

Local Church Awards and Recognitions - all administered by the Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting, General Commission on United Methodist Men. Recognition is through nomination or achievement.

Shepherd Church Charter Recognition - To annually charter and recognize churches that provide outstanding scouting/youth mentoring ministry. Every United Methodist church that sponsors a Scout unit should be chartered and recognized as a Shepherd Church. Please sit down with the local church scouting coordinator and/or chartered organizational representative (COR, a BSA position) to discuss.

Good Samaritan Award - Highest award for youth in the United Methodist Church. Must be between the ages of 12-21. Every church has outstanding youth that perform extraordinary acts of mission and ministry. Formal recognition at a worship service or other appropriate setting is an effective way to honor them for specific acts of ministry. Star, Life and Eagle projects through Boy Scouts as well as Silver and Gold Award projects through Girl Scouts are just a few examples to consider. United Methodist youth (UMYF) are also eligible to receive the Good Samaritan so please share this brochure with youth ministers as well as Scout leaders.

Cross & Flame* - The award for Scout leaders at the local church level. Keep in mind that surveys demonstrate that **25%** of Scout leaders in the UMC are members of other faith groups. You can be an advocate for these leaders' recognition as well as the ones who are members of the UMC. They provide valuable volunteer service that touches the youth and leaders of the church and the community it serves.

Bishop's Award of Excellence - This BAE may be earned each year by Scout units in your church. It is challenging yet achievable. Excite leaders about working toward the requirements. It is the UMC's 'spiritual version' of the Quality Unit Award (BSA).

Please visit the Award and Recognition section at <http://www.gcumm.org/scoutingawards> for articles highlighting youth, leaders, churches and units that have achieved and received these recognitions.

P.R.A.Y. Awards (formerly the God & Country series) - administered by Programs of Religious Activities with Youth, St. Louis, Missouri. P.R.A.Y.'s mission statement is to "foster the Christian growth of children, youth, and families through churches and youth serving agencies."

Over 7,000 United Methodists have received one of four awards offered by P.R.A.Y. during 2008. That total leads all denominations in usage. The P.R.A.Y. program is divided into four age-appropriate sections: God and Me (grades 1-3), God and Family (grades 4-5), God and Church (grades 6-8) and God and Life (grades 9-12).

The God and Country Award Program uses Bible lessons paired with service projects to help young people grow in their Christian faith and to express that faith by serving others. Some pastors combine the awards program with the confirmation classes.

For more information, visit www.praypub.org or call 1-800-933-7729.

Please consult with Scout leaders as well as Christian Educators in your church to inform them about this wonderful study series.

Scout Sunday (second Sunday in February for BSA, second Sunday in March for Girl Scouts; many churches combine into one) - or any Sunday - is an appropriate time to present these awards.

Please consult the Scouting Ministry web site for periodic training opportunities. Please pass these dates along to scoutmasters, committee members, pastors, youth ministers, and other potential candidates who are interested in scouting as an evangelistic and outreach opportunity.

Please contact LaNisha Sayles, lsayles@gcumm.org, Volunteer Coordinator or Marc Stowe, Scouting Assistant, mstowe@gcumm.org, with questions or comments.

*Currently being revised.