

**THE
OPEN
WORD
AWARD**



**The General Church
of the
New Jerusalem**

INTRODUCTION

The OPEN WORD AWARD is given to a Boy Scout who regularly attends services in the New Church* and who satisfactorily completes all of the requirements for the award. He must be a First Class scout and be active in his troop.

PURPOSE

The NEW CHURCH approves of the religious emphasis in the program of the BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA and the encouragement of church sponsorship of Packs and Troops. The Church encourages boys to learn about and live the precepts of their religion and at the same time use the principles and skills of Scouting. If they then complete this program of study and service their efforts should be recognized accordingly. The Church will happily present the OPEN WORD AWARD to boys who demonstrate a knowledge of their religion in connection with their participation in Scouting.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants for the award must be active in a New Church. This means attending church services regularly or, if there is no New Church nearby, attending *all* services given a visiting minister. Taking General Church Religion lessons is also suitable.

Additionally, a boy must have been active in a Boy Scout Troop for at least several months and have attained at least the rank of First Class Scout.

AWARD CEREMONY

When you have completed the requirements for the OPEN WORD AWARD your pastor and Scoutmaster will present it to you at an appropriate ceremony. This should be in the presence of your fellow Scouts and your parents and relatives or friends. You should be

*The three most active organizations of the New Church are: The General Church of the New Jerusalem; The General Convention of the New Church; The General Conference of the New Church in Great Britain.

proud of your accomplishment and should wear this beautiful medal over your left pocket.

The General Church of the New Jerusalem will be proud of you, too, for learning more about your church and for demonstrating charity by performing your service project.

RECORDS

Records of all awards will be kept by the Boy Scout Relations committee of the GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM. Copies of this pamphlet, applications for the award, medals and certificates are available from this committee or through any General Church minister.

EXPLANATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for the award involve some study of the Word and the Writings of Swedenborg and it is best to first review them with a New Church minister. This will not be difficult if you attend a New Church school or have done General Church Religion Lessons. However, any New Church boy can begin the work and then request a New Church visiting minister to review the requirements formally. During his preparation a scout may also request help from the Boy Scout Relations Committee of the General Church of the New Jerusalem in Bryn Athyn.

You should first ask your parents and/or your pastor for suggestions on finding the material and organizing it. At the end of this booklet you will also find a list of pamphlets (free or very inexpensive) containing most of the information you'll need. You may also request a list of additional material from the Boy Scout Relations Committee.

Requirements 2, 7, and 8 are to be signed off by your Scoutmaster who must also review your project after you have submitted a plan which has been approved by your pastor. All of the other requirements are to be signed off by your pastor as you complete them. If you have a visiting minister only

and he is not available when you complete your work, you may send it in to the Boy Scout Relations Committee of the General Church of the New Jerusalem and a minister will review it and sign it off if complete.

Your medal will be presented by your pastor at a troop event or suitable occasion.

Now do your best and be sure to have your project approved *in writing* before you begin.

1. Be active in the faith of the New Church and regularly attend church services.

To earn the OPEN WORD AWARD you must belong to a branch of the New Church and *regularly* participate in the religious activities of your group or society. Even if your group is small (or if you are isolated) you can attend church services whenever they are held and perhaps take General Church Religion Lessons by mail. You will see a minister at least occasionally and can confer with him about your progress. Our Church teaches that we must be active in our religion in every way possible and learn about the Lord through his teachings or else we are not really "of" the church. The OPEN WORD medal is attractive and fun to wear, but we do not want Scouts to try to earn it just to decorate their uniforms; we want them to be active in both the New Church and in scouting and proud to be associated with both.

2. Be at least a First Class Scout and be active in your troop.

The second requirement is to be *active* in your Boy Scout troop for at least several months and have achieved at least First Class rank. During this time you should be showing above-average scout spirit. In earning this medal you are trying to show people you have a keen interest in your Church and in Scouting. You will want to be in Scouting long enough to know that you intend to stay active and that you can sincerely support its aims and activities.

Here again "active" means participating in all the Troop activities you reasonably can. Your Scoutmaster will have to sign off on this. You may have some legitimate reasons for missing an occasional meeting or trip, but not a lot of them.

3. Write a brief outline of how the Boy Scout oath and law agree with the Doctrine of Charity.

Read pages 26 through 41 in your handbook. What is the Scout Oath all about? Does it talk about *DUTY*? What's another word for duty — one used throughout the Writings.

Now think about all the things you've heard about *USE* in connection with the teachings of the Church. To whom do you perform *USE* or in other words "serve"? Is it the neighbor? Who is the neighbor according to the definition our Church uses and what are the degrees of the neighbor starting with the highest? Do you see a similarity between the order of the duties listed in the Scout Oath and the ranking of the neighbors to whom use is to be done as taught by the Church?

Now what about the Scout Law? What does the New Church teach about our conduct? Most of the Scout Law deals with how we are to treat other people but it also tells us to take care of ourselves. Are there teachings in our Church that tell us to take care of ourselves? Why?

How good conduct can be of use to the neighbor is something that the Church emphasizes greatly. If we are "trustworthy," "friendly," "kind," will this help anyone else? If we do live according to the Scout Law will we not automatically be obeying the Ten Commandments and vice versa? Many of the points of the Scout Law correspond closely to the Lord's teachings we are striving to follow in our daily lives. How will "obeying the Scout Law" help us?

Our Church teaches that if we live according to its Doctrines, or truths, we will be happier and more useful in this life than if we don't. Will following

the Scout Oath and Law make us happier and more useful citizens as well?

4. Perform a Church or community service project (other than a normal troop community service event) requiring at least eight to ten hours of work which has been approved by a New Church pastor; submit a brief report.

Our Church teaches that charity is "use." We are first to learn, then to "do" that which is right. This requirement will give you a chance to help others—which is the very basis of charity toward the neighbor.

There are many ways to perform this service. You must decide what needs to be done, what you are capable of and then outline your plan for your pastor before you begin.

Here are some suggestions:

a) Does your church or school building need repairs, painting, cleanup or some new facilities? You could, although it's best to perform the work yourself, even earn some money at a (special) job to purchase a needed item and donate it. Be sure to get approval for this first.

b) A neighborhood project might involve only one person or a small group. Are there elderly or handicapped neighbors (family members not living in your own house are ok) in your area who need help? You could clean a house, perform some repairs, or run errands on a regular basis (but don't start a service which needs to be continued and then stop as soon as your hours are up).

c) A community project might be harder to organize but would benefit the most people. Whom can you see about this? Your scoutmaster or your pastor may be able to help if you live in a small community. If you live in a larger area your chamber of commerce or

the police chief in your district may know of various charitable organizations or community improvement groups which might have a list of projects. Many scouts working on their eagle projects have found worthwhile community service projects to be the most rewarding and interesting — in many cases innovative projects the scouts have come up with entirely on their own.

Whatever you decide to do, this project should be your own personal contribution. You may need help in finding the information for some of the other requirements, but the work project is your chance to use your own time and effort to perform a charitable service to others.

5. Write a brief history of the New Church (about 300 words).

Emanuel Swedenborg did not "start the New Church as we know the organization today. Rather men who studied his theological Writings came to the conclusion that a distinctively "different" church from the existing Christian churches would be needed if these new teachings were to be followed by people who believed they were part of God's laws. Of course we know that whenever men organize a church they may begin to have differences about how to do things which can lead to the separation of one group from another.

Over the 200 plus years since the Writings were given there have been several New Church organizations in several countries of the world, some of which still exist while others have changed or died out. What are the three largest New Church organizations active today (that is, they operate a number of churches and perhaps schools and have a theological seminary for training their own ministers), when and where did each begin, and who first organized each church?

Is there any difference in the actual beliefs of these churches? Why do we believe that the New Church

will continue to grow? What important activity does the General Church of the New Jerusalem support that the others do not?

If you cannot get these answers from your parents, New Church teachers or pastor, there is a booklet called *What Is the General Church of the New Jerusalem* which will be very useful. It is listed at the end of this pamphlet.

6. Write a brief biography of Emanuel Swedenborg. List and describe his theological Writings (at least 400 words).

You can get basic information about Swedenborg from encyclopedias and reference books but many articles will refer to him as becoming a "mystic" and having dreams or visions about the spiritual world toward the end of his life. To get the true picture of his preparation for and devotion to the writing of what we refer to as "Divine Revelation" you will need to read an article published by a New Church writer. Of course you can also read a complete biography of his life. Two are listed at the end of this pamphlet.

We all know, of course, that Swedenborg was a brilliant scientist and inventor who eventually became interested in studying the human soul and finally devoted himself entirely to theology. In the New Church we believe that he was actually "commissioned" by the Lord to write down what he saw and was told about in the Spiritual World in a series of books which we call "Divine Revelation." You must list these Writings and tell a little about what each one teaches or explains (usually about the internal sense of the Word). Your essay should cover the important events and dates in Swedenborg's life and list *all* his theological Writings as recognized by the New Church. This will take a few pages of writing, so don't skimp on this very important part of your efforts to earn the OPEN WORD AWARD.

7. Select and memorize a passage from the Word that is appropriate for the opening or closing of a formal troop ceremony. Recite it at a suitable ceremony.

If your troop is not sponsored by a New Church you will have to be careful to choose a passage that is acceptable to other scouts. Since all Protestant and Catholic groups accept the Bible as religious authority and the Jewish religion uses the Old Testament, you should not have much trouble finding such a passage. Check with your scoutmaster if you have any question about this.

The passage should be short and "fit" the ceremony, which should be one of the more formal ones. A benediction is probably most appropriate. It should be recognizable as applying to scouting.

8. Organize and lead a worship service at a camp or other troop activity.

A weekend camp over a Sunday morning is an excellent opportunity for you to complete this requirement. Another appropriate time might be at a charter renewal ceremony or at the awarding of a religious medal to another scout.

Here again you will need to plan an "Interdenominational" service if the troop has boys of differing religious backgrounds. A New Church minister can help you with this plan. An opening scriptural passage, a short prayer (the Lord's Prayer is almost always appropriate) and a short moral talk based on a teaching from the Word is all that is necessary. A suitable benediction should follow, of course. Under some circumstances a well-known Christian hymn might be sung.

If your troop is not accustomed to having religious services on campouts, don't worry. The Boy Scout program fully supports such services and you may find that most boys are comfortable with a short worship. You might even start a trend.

APPLICATION FOR THE OPEN WORD AWARD

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Troop _____

Council _____

Requirements:

(Signature) _____ P or S Date _____

1. Active member of the Church?

2. First Class rank/active service

3. Oath and Law

4. Service Project

5. Church History

6. Swedenborg Biography

7. Opening/closing passage

8. Worship Service

Name and address of New Church Pastor:

Send this signed application to:
BOY SCOUT RELATIONS COMMITTEE, General Church of
the New Jerusalem, P.O. Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

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