

CUB SCOUTS OF AMERICA

The 2012 Bismillah Award Program

Pack – 758 Carrollton, Texas



A Scout is Reverent & Does His Duty to God

Eligible Cub Scouts Are Webelos OR Arrow of Light Rank ONLY

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Cub Scouts of America Pack 758



Carrollton, Texas 75007

Dear Cub Scout & Parents/Guardians,

It is with great pleasure to see that you are reading this letter today! You have decided or are considering embarking on an *optional* Islamic religious emblem through Shia Imami Ismaili Cub Scouting. This emblem is the first of three religious awards across the entire Boy Scout of America program. Therefore, it is a stepping-stone for the ones to come as the scout progresses in scouting. This award is for **Cub Scouts of Webelos or Arrow of Light rank only.**

The Bismillah Award is an initiative of the BSA-affiliated National Islamic Center on Scouting and is brought to you locally by Cub Scout Pack 758, more specifically the Religious Emblem Committee. In order to earn this award, you, along with your parents/guardians offering assistance when needed, must complete this award by the deadline. At the *preliminary submission*, the Religious Emblem Committee will offer feedback and guidance so that you can review and edit your portfolio before the final submission deadline.

On a final note, remember the phrase "A Scout is Reverent". This award provides you an opportunity to venture out, research, and learn more about your faith, Islam. The Bismillah Award continues to serve as a tool to helping you maintain an essential part of the boy scouting experience, which is to be reverent. This award gives you an opportunity to learn more about what reverence means to you. I look forward to seeing your Bismillah Award in the near future. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. As a friendly reminder, there are seven requirements that you are required to complete before you can submit your portfolio.

Yours in Scouting,

Faizan Kabani

Faizan Kabani
Nationally Accredited Eagle Scout
Pack 758 Religious Emblem Chairman
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"All major religious traditions carry basically the same message that is love, compassion and forgiveness the important thing is they should be part of our daily lives." - His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Bismillah Award Program: An Overview

Mission Statement

The Bismillah Award Program strives to broaden historical, contemporary, social, religious, and political perspectives on Islam for Cub Scouts of the Webelos and Arrow of Light rank.

Program Objectives

The Cub Scout, at the successful completion of the Bismillah Award Program, should be able to:

- ✓ Identify Ismaili tariqah within the Islamic context.
- ✓ Discuss the similarities between the Islamic faith and ideology to other faiths.
- ✓ Articulate the structure of at least one Imamat Institution.
- ✓ Provide written and oral communication relevant to Islamic ambassadorship.
- ✓ Assess, plan, implement, and evaluate short-term and long-term goals towards personal development as an American Muslim.
- ✓ Apply the principles and methodology of academic integrity in scholarship and intellectual research.

A Call to Action

“We have much to build with. A common Abrahamic, monotheistic tradition. Common ethical principles, founded on shared human values. Common problems of yesterday, resolved together. Common challenges of tomorrow that we can best face together. These and all that much more that I cannot enumerate, but are fact, are the materials with which to build a bridge. Enlightened by sound intellect, I see its structure strongly built from the realities of our world. But any structure requires bonding, and of all the bonds that can link societies, America epitomizes the strongest. It is called hope. The right to hope is the most powerful human motivation I know. Its importance has been paramount in the history of this nation. It is a reasonable expectation that the next generation will be better equipped to address the challenges of life than the present one. How beautiful that bridge of hope would be between the West and the Islamic world.”

**-His Highness the Aga Khan IV, 49th Hereditary Imam of Shia Ismaili Muslims
Baccalaureate Address at Brown University
May 26, 1996 Providence, Rhode Island, USA**



Bismillah Award Program Official Timeline*

Month	Details
April – May	Orientation & Kick-off!
December 15 December 31	<u>**Preliminary Submission**</u> <u>**Final Submission**</u>
January – February	Oral Examination Phase (successful candidates notified in Feb)
March – April	Bismillah Award Revision Cycle
May	Cub Scout Award Ceremony (successful candidates awarded)

*Time line is subject to change; modifications informed to Pack 758 via email.

**Note that preliminary submission and final submission dates are firmly enforced.



Bismillah Award Program 2012 Requirements

(Please attach ALL work for final submission)

1. ASSESSMENT OF INTENT & CHARACTER:

- Type a one-page letter of intent and statement of purpose, detailing why you have chosen to pursue a rigorous religious emblem. Include what you hope to gain from this experience.
- Provide a character reference form (page 12 of this packet) from your REC (Religious Education Center) teacher/principal, past or present, attesting to your strengths and abilities in scouting and beyond.

2. ISLAMIC FOUNDATIONS:

The 5 pillars of Islam and the 10 commandments of the Old Testament have some key similarities and differences. Research the 5 pillars of Islam and the 10 commandments.

- Using your creativity, create a diagram that identifies the 5 pillars of Islam and the 10 commandments of the Old Testament.
- In addition to this, discuss the historical context in which they were created/revealed (e.g. include any Prophets involved in the creation/revelation and how the society was at the time of the creation/revelation).
- Finally, in no more than 500 words, choose 2 out of the following 4 questions:
 - i. How do both the 5 pillars and the 10 commandments convey similar ethics and values of how to live?
 - ii. What are the key differences in focus that you notice between them and how might that impact the followers of each tradition?
 - iii. Which of the 5 pillars and the 10 commandments are the most important to you and why?
 - iv. If you had to create your own 5 pillars or 10 commandments to live by, what would they be? Feel free to display this creatively on your diagram created above.

3. HISTORICAL ISLAM:

Calligraphy is frequently an integral part to the construction of many faith-based centers. Learn about the purpose behind calligraphy in Islam.

- Select 1 calligraphic work that you found either from the Internet, magazines, books, through art exhibitions, or other sources. Write up a commentary that does the following:

- i. Discuss what you notice and like about the piece. Talk about how the piece affects you and any religious or spiritual connection you find in the artwork.
 - ii. Research the history of the artwork and include the following (skip any aspects that you cannot find in your research): background of the artist, inspiration for the work, geographical origin, if it is not in English, what is the translation of the text.
 - iii. Please submit your brief commentary (i and ii above) along with a print/photograph the art piece (if you are in a gallery that does not allow photography, feel free to visit the piece in person and then search for an image on the internet later).
- Select a few verses of a Sura (that is, a few Ayats) from the Qur'an. Read and write a reflecting on what this passage means to you. How does this revelation of the Qur'an impact your life as a Muslim?
 - i. If you are having trouble getting started, below are some examples: Sura Nur (24), Sura Iqraa (96), Sura Fatiha (1). But, feel free to pick your own.
- As you may have discovered in the first activity of this section, calligraphy need not be in Arabic, and artistic have a lot of freedom in how they depict the meaning they want to convey. As a personal project, create an art piece of your chosen verses with the utilization of your own form of calligraphy (select any medium that you would like – painting, drawing, sculpting in dough or clay, made of blocks, computer graphics, etc.). Think about how words/text, color, images, texture, shapes and patterns, ordering, spacing, and other features can help capture these verses in art form. At the bottom of the art, type an approximately 200 word synopsis of your inspiration for this artwork.

4. UNIVERSAL TIMELINE & ISLAMIC HOLIDAYS:

- Many cultures have their own calendar format. What is the difference between “BC/BCE”, “CE/AD”, and “AH” when referring to calendar years? In a diagram format, discuss how the events that begin each calendar differ.
- Outline the differences between the lunar calendar and the Gregorian calendar. Which religious traditions utilize each one? Select one religious tradition that uses a lunar calendar and list the months of the year.
- The Arabic word ‘Eid is often attached to many of our Muslim holidays.
 - i. Define what ‘eid means in Arabic. How does it get used in Arabic? What about in English?
 - ii. Then, explain in approximately 100 words each, the historical origins and current celebrations of each of the following Eid celebrations: Eid-al-Adha, Eid-al-Fitr, and Eid-al-Milad-Nabi. Explain each thoroughly.

5. A CONTEXTUAL ISLAMIC IDENTITY:

Muslim Heroes: Muslims throughout the years have made a significant contribution to the societies in which they live, as well as our global society. They have made lasting impacts in science, politics, social reform, sports and entertainment, and any other field you can think of.

- Identify a deceased Muslim Figure (Excluding our Imams or Prophets– *Think about the scientists, politicians, and social reformers who helped our culture and tradition*)
 - i. Discuss, in approximately one page, details concerning the reasoning behind why you have chosen this Muslim as a hero. Outline particular qualities and characteristics that inspire you in how you live your life.
- Muslim Hero of the Present: *Athletes, musicians, and comedians have made a great contribution to the face of Islam. But, do not forget the scientists, politicians, and social reformers who contributed to the positive understanding of Islam.*
 - i. Identify a current living American Muslim
 - ii. Discuss, in approximately a page length, details relating to why this person inspires you in today's society. Why is this person outstanding in his/her particular field? How does this person motivate you or relate to your life? What can you learn from his or her life about how to live the values of Islam? You can be creative and write this up as if you had an interview with this person. What kinds of questions would you ask and how do you think they would answer?
- Muslim Hero of the Future
 - i. Visualize yourself *three, 5, or 10* years from now.
 - ii. Identify six life goals or objectives you wish to accomplish. (Example goals include those around the following topics: school/education; career; friendship and family; sports/arts/music; accomplishments/awards; hobbies and activities like travel).
 - iii. Additionally, discuss in approximately 150 words, how you plan to accomplish those goals through measurable checkpoints in life.

6. MODERN ISLAMIC CENTERS:

Take a tour of an Islamic center or Mosque in your area (a Shia or Sunni mosque that is not a Nizari Ismaili Jamat Khana). If there is no mosque in your area, or you are having trouble getting access, you may select a mosque anywhere in the world and conduct your research on the internet. Please complete the following:

- Take pictures of a Mosque in your area [or print out pictures from the internet] and insert it in your final portfolio. Identify the name of the Mosque, date in which it opened, the types of services that take place there, the practice of the people who attend the Mosque, and any other religious or social events that may be occurring in that Mosque around the time of your visit (for example, religious education classes, any celebratory events, etc).
- Take notes on the various elements in the Mosque – both objectively (using your 5 senses – how did it look, feel, smell, sound, and taste (if relevant)) and subjectively (how did you feel in the various areas of the mosque)
- Finally write at least a 300 word essay on the similarities between the mosque you visited (or the mosque(s) you researched) and the Jamat Khana that you attend. Use your notes in the activity above to help you draw connections and parallels between the 2 spaces, your feelings about being there, and how the people attending them act in and use those spaces.

7. **CONTEMPORARY ISLAM:**

Charity is one of the 5 pillars of Islam and encompasses an act of giving out of love, compassion, friendship, fraternity, and generosity. *Sadaqah* is usually the term used for voluntary charity, and continuous and long-lasting acts of charity that provide long-term sustenance are encouraged. As per the AKDN mandate, the AKDN “is a contemporary endeavor of the Ismaili Imamate to realize the social conscience of Islam through institutional action.”

- Identify & select a particular branch of AKDN (AKFED, AKES, AKTFC, etc.). Research about this particular branch using www.akdn.org as a possible primary source. What is the function and goals of this institution? How does it contribute to the overall mission of the AKDN? What areas of the world can you find this branch and why is it focused there?
- Interview a current or past President, Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Jamati Mukhi-Kamadia or Board Member of any of the institutions (e.g. Local Council Member, Board Members on board such as AKYSB, AKEB, or ITREB), or individual who has worked in some capacity with AKDN In the interview, remember to take notes. Make sure you are well prepared for the interview – write out questions you want to ask about the person’s background, the work that they do, and how their work benefits the Ismaili community and the broader community as well. Also add questions about your own interests, how to get involved, and questions you had during your preparation research. **Please be respectful of their time commitments. Record the interview, if possible, so you may refer back to the recording when writing your report.**

Here are some questions to help you, but you will need to **add your own** as well.

- i. What institution/branch do/did you represent? What is/was your position?
 - ii. What are the objectives, goals, and responsibilities of this institution? How are the goals and objectives measured?
 - iii. How does the institution accomplish those objectives? (i.e. – what programs does it have?)
 - iv. If a Jamati member wants to reach out and seek help from this particular institution, how do they go about seeking help?
- Type up the responses to the questions and submit them. Describe your experience in the interview, outlining key points learned during/after the interview.



Statement of Scout Integrity & Plagiarism Release Form

I _____ claim, **on my Scout's Honor**, that I have successfully completed all of the requirements set forth for the Bismillah Award in Cub Scouting. **I also acknowledge that I, as the Cub Scout, led the initiative and DID NOT plagiarize information from any electronic or print sources.**

I _____ claim, **that as a parent**, I assisted and supervised as necessary in the scout's progression towards completion of the Bismillah Award. **I also acknowledge and understand that I did not do the requirements on behalf of the scout and that all work submitted is scout-led. I further acknowledge that work submitted is NOT plagiarized.**

X _____
(Cub Scout)

X _____
(Cub Scout Parent/Guardian)

*Note – Plagiarism is a **serious offense** and the Pack 758 Religious Emblem Committee holds highly to its Zero Tolerance Policy. It **WILL NOT** accept any portfolio, which has clear evidence of such unacceptable behavior.*

Please visit for plagiarism tutorials & resources:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/03/>



Bismillah Award Program: Character Reference Form

To be filled out by Cub Scout:

Cub Scout Name: _____ Scout Rank: _____

To be filled out by evaluating individual:

Approximately how long have you known the Cub Scout? _____ Year(s) _____ Month(s)

I know the applicant: Very Well Fairly Well Not Very Well

	Superior	Above Average	Average	Below Average	N/A
Demonstration of creativity					
Ability to express himself orally					
Demonstrating Writing Ability					
Self-reliance & independence					
Ability to work with others in a group setting					
Ability to master a task at hand					

In summary, I would give a Very Strong Strong Average No recommendation for the applicant.

Evaluator Information:

Name: _____ Title/Position: _____

Contact Information: Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Oral Examination

The oral examination of the Bismillah Award Program is an objective-driven approach to gauge the scout’s comprehension, retention, and articulation level of the content the scout attests to while completing the extensive written section. In turn, the oral examination discusses the “process”, while the written section is the “product” of the research and scholarship. **The oral examination pass/fail is a summative evaluation of the scout’s ability to display successful competence in the objectives outlined in the Bismillah Award Program.**

Though not comprehensive, the oral examination can include the following points of discussion:

- Historical & contemporary Islamic & Ismaili identity
- Understanding the Office of Imamate & Imamate Institutions
- Articulation of lessons learned throughout the Bismillah Award Program
- Academic honesty/plagiarism & Its relevance to educational scholarship

***The Cub Master and Religious Emblem Committee will communicate directly with the cub scouts approved written section. The first phase of the Bismillah Award Program is the acceptance of the written portion and **APPROVAL IS REQUIRED** prior to the scheduling of the oral examination.

Approval Certification for Cub Scout to Progress to Oral Examination

The undersigned representatives of Pack 758, in consultation & coordination with the religious emblem committee, agree that the Cub Scout has successfully demonstrated written knowledge through the submitted professional portfolio and can sit for the next, oral examination, phase of the Bismillah Award Program.

X _____
(Cub Scout Master)

X _____
(Religious Emblem Chairman)



Authorization Form

After review of your individual binder, the Pack 758 Religious Emblem Committee has concluded that your comprehensive professional portfolio, inclusive of oral and written sections, will be:

- Accepted**
- Revision Necessary for Reapplication**

The undersigned representatives of the Cub Scout Pack 758, in consultation with the religious emblem committee, of Carrollton, Texas agree to the above-mentioned Cub Scout's successful completion and demonstration of competency of the Bismillah Award Program objectives, and request that the National Headquarters of the Islamic Center for Scouting approve this Cub Scout for the Islamic Religious Emblem.

X _____ X _____ X _____
(Cub Scout Master) (Religious Emblem Chairman) (AKYSB Representative)

Note – If awarded, please note that the award cost is \$25.00 (Check Payable to Pack 758).
Please place scout name in the memo section.



“Do’s and Don’ts”

Do Remember to:

- ✓ **DO** ask for help if you need it
- ✓ **DO** start early
- ✓ **DO** send your paperwork in for preliminary submission
- ✓ **DO** use your local or JamatKhana library to conduct research
- ✓ **DO** have fun!

Do Not:

- ✘ **DO NOT** plagiarize (use your own words to share your thoughts and perspectives)
- ✘ **DO NOT** procrastinate (start early and pace yourself, so that you have sufficient time to learn and complete all of the tasks)
- ✘ **DO NOT** use internet without Parent/Guardian permission



Helpful Hints

The religious emblem committee recommends the following sources for the scout to utilize in their research for the award questions.

Locations

- Government Center Public Library
- Ismaili Jamatkhana Library

Online Websites:

- www.akdn.org
- www.iis.ac.uk
- www.theismaili.org
- www.owl.english.purdue.edu
- www.1001inventions.com
- www.saudiaramcoworld.com

Books

- Holy Scriptures (Torah, Bible, Quran, Bhagavad Gita, etc.)
- REC Talim Books
- Publications by Institute of Ismaili Studies
- Specific Books:
 - *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions* by Huston Smith.
 - *Islam: An Introduction* by Dr. Annemarie Schimmel
 - *The Ismailis: An Illustrated History* by Dr Farhad Daftary and Dr Zulfikar Hirji
 - *Word of God, Art of Man* by Dr. Fahmida Suleman
 - *Muhammad* by Karen Armstrong
 - *Islamic Arts* by Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair
 - *Ayat Jamilah* by Sarah Conover
 - *Muhammad* by Demi
 - *Islamic Art* by Janey Levy
 - *Stories from the Silk Road* by Cherry Gilchrist
 - *The Wise Fool* by Shahrukh Husain
 - *One City, Two Brothers* by Chris Smith
 - *Guide to Sufism* by Carl Ernst
 - *Mosque* by Carl Ernst
 - *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West* by Franklin Lewis
 - *Conference of the Birds* by Farid al-Din Attar
 - *Bilal* by H.A.L. Craig
 - *Tales of the Dervishes* by Idries Shah
 - *Rabi'a: The Life and Work of Rabi'a and Other Women Mystics in Islam* by Margaret Smith



Bismillah Award Checklist:

1. Portfolio Presentation & Organization

- a. Each requirement needs to be on a new page
- b. Be inclusive of ***frequent*** realistic pictures (No clipart!)
- c. Presentation of the portfolio must be organized into a folder or binder with necessary attachments/posters/projects

2. Professionalism

- a. All portfolios must be typed in a professional font (ex – Times New Roman, Arial)
- b. Font size for content should be 12-point

3. Forms Submission

- a. Academic honesty & plagiarism release form – must be signed by ***BOTH*** parent and Cub Scout
- b. Feedback forms – ***BOTH*** parent and cub scout are required to fill out individual evaluation forms (***must be typed***)
- c. Remember to have your character reference form ***completed*** by your recommender.

4. Portfolio Submission

- a. **Preliminary submission is required.** Missing the deadline for preliminary submission can result in the candidate becoming ***ineligible*** to submit the portfolio for the final submission.
- b. ***BOTH***, an online submission (via email) ***AND*** hardcopy bound portfolio with all projects that cannot be emailed, are required for the portfolio to be identified as complete.

5. Miscellaneous

- a. Cover page – must include title and cub scout in uniform
- b. Table of contents – must label with corresponding page numbers. Please clearly label objects that may not be done on the computer, such as posters and artwork.
- c. Review Bismillah Award “Do’s & Don’ts” page
- d. Review Helpful Hints page

Questions or Concerns?

Contact Religious Emblem Chairman:

Mr. Faizan Kabani

Fkabani5@gmail.com

******Please allow 24-48 hours for response******

