



Join the Great Rivers Council and our International Scouting Committee in spreading the message of world peace by sharing the Peace Light this holiday season.

What is [Peace Light North America?](#)

The Peace Light, symbolic of the Light of Christ especially evident at Christmas, is meant to promote peace, harmony and unity among all people of the world regardless of race, ethnicity or creed. Many churches, Scouting, and associated community organizations use the Peace Light in Advent worship services, parish tree lighting events, and other special ceremonies. Some groups even maintain the Peace Light year-round using the flame to ignite their Sanctuary Lights, Baptismal Candles, and Votive Lamps.

Each year in late November, a child from Austria lights a lantern from the continuously burning candle in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the site of Jesus birth. The light, known as the Peace Light, stored in special explosion-proof lanterns, is then flown with a safety adviser back to Vienna, Austria, where it is shared with delegations from across Europe who distribute it with a message of Peace to their own countries for use at ecumenical services. Scouting organizations then take the light to houses of worship, hospitals, homeless shelters, nursing homes, and places of public, cultural

and political importance - to anyone who appreciates the significance of the "gift".

In early December, Austrian Airlines representatives transport the Peace Light from Austria to New York City's John F. Kennedy International Airport. A distribution ceremony of about 150 adults and children gather at the airport's Our Lady of the Skies Chapel to welcome the light of peace and kindle their own flames.

The light's pilgrimage across the U.S. begins from New York City via volunteers, many of whom are Scouts and Scouters associated with the Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of the USA, transferring and sharing it in their communities. Many other dedicated volunteers meet, share, and move the Light across North America, person-to-person, coast-to-coast. The Peace Light is a sign of hope. It has expanded from a small flame to a sea of lights in a few years and shines with its message to millions of people worldwide.

Please visit the [History](#) page for more background on the Peace Light in North America.

Peace Light for Scouts

While the Peace Light isn't exclusive to Scouting, Scouts around the world have adopted the program as their own because it fits so beautifully with Scouting principles and activities. Indeed, Scouts are the primary carriers of the Peace Light.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Scouters in the United Kingdom wanted to deliver a message of peace and friendship to the United States. They did so by sharing the Peace Light with Scouters at Ground Zero in New York City. The Peace Light initiative in the US has grown by leaps and bounds since that gift, and we are grateful to those UK Scouters for sharing it with us.

The Peace Light bridges differences. It's message is important and relevant regardless of religion, geography, gender, age, language, socioeconomic status, academic accomplishment, political beliefs, heritage, or culture. The use of light is very prominent in nearly every worldwide religion to represent redemption, truth, justice, peace, and even life itself.

With each recitation of the Scout Oath, Scouts promise to do their duty to God; with each recitation of the Scout Law, Scouts are reminded to be reverent. The Peace Light offers numerous meaningful and concrete ways for Scouts to meet both those obligations.

How Can Scouts Spread the Peace Light?

The Peace Light is often used as a [Messengers of Peace](#) project. Administered by the World Scout Bureau, Messengers of Peace is a worldwide program aiming to inspire millions of Scouts to work toward peace. In order to earn the Messengers of Peace uniform ring to be worn around the world crest, Scouts must be actively involved in planning Peace Light activities and in sharing the flame in ways that are appropriate to the Scouts age and abilities. Cubs might welcome guests to a candlelight ceremony, hand out programs and candles, and/or be part of a procession bringing the Peace Light into the gathering. Older Scouts could help in planning and implementing the program, speak or lead a song during the ceremony, or perhaps create a display about the history of the Peace Light.

There are numerous ways to utilize the Peace Light in Scouting activities. These are just some suggestions and there are more ideas on our [resources page](#); use your imagination, and please let us know how you're incorporating the Peace Light!

- At the council and district level
 - Maintain the Peace Light in a lobby or other common area of the Council Service Center so that it's available for pickup during business hours. [Click here](#) to read an endorsement from retired Scout Executive Bob Hopper.
 - Coordinate with your religious relationships and/or international committees to hold an open candlelight ceremony.
 - Share the Peace Light with NYLT, Wood Badge, or PowderHorn courses, summer or winter camps, and other large events.
 - Use the Peace Light as the closing of a council or district recognition event.
 - Share the Peace Light at district roundtables.
 - Set up a display to teach about the Peace Light at University of Scouting or other large events.
 - Use the Peace Light to light a Spirit of Scouting candle at New Eagle Receptions.

- Cub Scouts
 - Incorporate the Peace Light into your Blue and Gold Banquet.
 - Have Cubs light a candle from the Peace Light at your holiday celebration.
 - Use the Peace Light at your bridging ceremony.
 - Cubs can serve as ushers or help hand out programs at candlelight ceremonies.

- Older Scout programs (Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouting)
 - Include the Peace Light at your Court of Honor.
 - Have new Eagles use the Peace Light to light a Spirit of Scouting candle at their Eagle Court of Honor.
 - The Peace Light offers numerous topics to cover during Scoutmaster's Minutes.
 - Bring the Peace Light to your unit's holiday celebration.
 - Older Scouts can help with candlelight ceremonies in numerous ways: help plan the event, lead the event or parts of it, organize the Cub Scouts who are participating, or create a display of the history of the Peace Light.

- Other opportunities
 - Use the Peace Light to start a campfire. Be sure to explain the history and significance of it. If you are distributing ashes, include the fact that it was lit from the Peace Light.
 - Incorporate the Peace Light into your Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath activities.
 - For units chartered by a religious organization, share the Peace Light with your chartered organization.
 - Share the Peace Light in your community with religious organizations, nursing homes, hospitals, government offices, and other community organizations.

Yearly Participation Patches

<https://www.peacelightnorthamerica.org/patches.php>

For additional information and to share the Peace Light, please follow our International

Scouting Facebook group and contact [Richard Moore, GRC International Representative](#)

