

Citizenship In Society Best Practices

October 30, 2024



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
PATHWAY TO ADVENTURE COUNCIL

Prepared. For Life.™



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®



Course Objectives

- Clarify reasons for this badge.
- Identify Essential and Best Practices
- Answer Questions

Prepared. For Life.™





Essential Practices

- Individual and small group only*
- Cannot rush process
- Frame as conversation
- Let the Scout(s) do the work

Prepared. For Life.™





Best Practices

- **Extension of Scout Oath and Law**
- **Involve parents**
- **Stress no easy “pat” answers that will change over time**

Prepared. For Life.™





Best Practices

- **Extension of Scout Oath and Law**
- **Involve parents**
- **Stress no easy “pat” answers that will change over time**

Prepared. For Life.™





Best Practices

First Meeting

- Get acquainted
- Get comfortable
- Elicit individual definitions of the concepts.
- Requirements #7 & 8 – Community Research

Prepared. For Life.™





Best Practices

- Identities are something everyone has many of, which include, but are not limited to:
 - Race-Ethnicity- Gender
 - Age– Financial background
 - Mental and/or physical health and abilities
 - Religious or ethical values system- National origin- Language group
 - ***Scouts, Family Dynamics, Life Experience***

Prepared. For Life.™





Best Practices

- **Upstander**—any person who does the right thing at the right time.
 - In Scouting, upstanders stop bullying when they see it, (this means speaking up and/or getting an adult to intervene; physical altercations are not condoned nor tolerated.
 - They support their fellow Scouts. Upstanders support equal rights and equity for all people regardless of their identities.
 - ***Doing right is not always easy. What if the person doing the bullying is a close friend? What happens if a friend asks you to cheat or help him or her cheat on a test?***

Prepared. For Life.™





The Role of Empathy

“A legacy of empathy and respect is already built into the DNA of the BSA as seen in the Scout Oath and Scout Law and other existing merit badges, such as the Citizenship in the Community, Disability Awareness and American Heritage merit badges, which require Scouts to not only learn and grow their understanding of diverse perspectives, but also to take positive action.”

Tell a story with empathy as central theme with a strong visual element. Empathy is a learned skill that should deepen with life experience. Help Scouts develop the empathy “habit” that changes into an instinct.

Prepared. For Life.™





Final Thoughts

- Citizenship in Society merit badge requires a different approach.
- No booklet, no finite set of facts to memorize, no physical “tasks” to learn like tying a knot or treating a wound.
- The scout teaches himself or herself, discovers the meaning of the concepts on their own, put them in their own words and into action.
- The counselor guides – never lectures.
- Rushing the process defeats the reason why the badge was added.

Prepared. For Life.™





Resources

PTAC APPROVED LETTER FOR APPROVED COUNSELORS OF THE CITIZENSHIP IN SOCIETY MERIT BADGE

Thank you for volunteering as a counselor for the new Citizenship in Society merit badge. All new badges require a degree of adjustment; however, this badge calls for extra “breaking in.” We respectfully ask for your help and cooperation as this badge differs from all others. Let me explain.

As an approved counselor for this badge, you should already have been YPT-certified and passed the online Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training (DEI). If you have not done so, please read through the counselor guide for this badge, which can be found at:

In addition to the badge requirements in the guide, please pay special attention to the sections on setting the ground rules for working with both the scout and his or her parents. Three points merit special attention. The first is to invite the parents to an introductory meeting to discuss the requirements and take questions. The second is not to rush the process and to counsel the Scout that it will take 2-3 hourlong sessions and some outside research to finish the requirements. Last, this badge should not be conducted in groups of more than six and preferably less.

The Council Advancement Committee held a 90-minute online discussion which addresses many elements of the badge. Following is the link to the recording on Zoom.

The fact is, the issues of diversity identity, equality and equity may elicit strong feelings and great care has been taken to lay out procedures to ensure a positive experience for you, parents, and Scouts. Please follow this guidance carefully.

In an age when so many are quick to judge others, rely on stereotypes and justify one’s actions accordingly, the Citizenship in Society merit badge affords a Scout the opportunity to develop a deeper, more nuanced perspective on people they meet, both in and out of Scouting. The badge requires much critical thinking about these issues in relation to the Scout Oath and Scout Law. While some believe the requirements could have been added/blended into the other three Citizenship badges, we support the decision to create this badge. Just adding more requirements to the other badges could complicate the process and dilute discussion of the issues involved. It is in this spirit that we ask you to approach your role as a merit badge counselor.

If you follow these guidelines, you should have Scouts tell you how satisfying and empowering this badge can be.

Yours in Scouting,

Prepared. For Life.™





Resources

- [https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/diversity equity and inclusion/Citizenship-in-Society-Merit-Badge-Counselor-Guide-2021.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/diversity_equity_and_inclusion/Citizenship-in-Society-Merit-Badge-Counselor-Guide-2021.pdf)
- https://ptacbsa.zoom.us/rec/share/T0r2YITyjDRCoCENv_5ig3nluSKkpfZc_MlpjjH9a-CH5XDAKKphNFnq0JnaIURHY.qDdfHamRIlt9eD9Z Passcode: sEO@4Pfi

Prepared. For Life.™





Open Discussion

QUESTIONS

Prepared. For Life.™

