

Way of the Wolf & Raven Religious Award



Sponsored by Awaken the North
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**For Young People of the Norse Heathen
Faith or Other Earth Religions**

Ages 7-11

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For Young People Age 7-11

of the Norse Heathen Faith or Other Earth Religions

ADULT INTRODUCTION

What is the Way of the Wolf & Raven Religious Award?

This award is designed for elementary school-aged-children who are active in Heathenry or other pagan or Earth-based religions. It has been designed to be appropriate as a religious award for Scouts, but can also be earned by any other child who is interested in the program.

A child using this program will need an adult helper. A Goði or Gyðja (or other religious leader of the appropriate faith), chosen by the youth's parent or guardian, is ideal. If your family works apart from any recognized clergy, then parents and guardians themselves can serve as helpers. A helper helps the youth plan and complete activities, is available to answer any questions the child might have, and when the work is finished, sends the form at the back of the book to Awaken the North along with the fee. The award is then sent back to the helper to be presented to the youth, typically in a Court of Honor. If you are not a member of a Cub pack, please design a special ceremony of your own to present the award to the youth, as they worked hard to earn it!. The youth may work toward the award either alone or in a group.

If the youth and helper are not Norse Heathen, you may find that parts of the program need to be adjusted to better fit your needs. You will find suggestions throughout the booklet to help you tailor the program to your path. Such adjustments will need to be reported to Awaken the North for approval.

Youth of age 11 or above should work toward the Way of the Hawk & Boar Award, also available through Awaken the North.

YOUTH INTRODUCTION

The Way of the Wolf & Raven Religious Award is for you if you are ages 7 to 11, and are active in Norse Heathenry or another Pagan or Earth-based religion. It can be used as a Scouting award, but you don't have to be a Scout to earn it.

In this booklet you will find a list of projects for you to do. They will help you have fun and learn more about your religion. This award has three parts, part 1 is about the world we live in, and how we relate to animals, plants and people. Part 2 looks at your faith in more detail, and lets you explore different parts of your faith. Part 3 looks at how we relate to others. Once you have complete all points in all three parts, and your adult helper has signed off your book, they can claim the award for you. You can read through each part first and decide which you'd like to do first. You might talk it through with your adult helper and decide together which order you are going to do things in. You will need an adult to help you finish your projects and to fill out the form in the back of the booklet. Your Goðar (or other faith leader) can help you, or you can work with your parents.

PART I. THE WORLD

Heathenry and many other Earth-based religions believe that the Earth is sacred. *Sacred* means something very special, something we need to respect. We need to respect Jorð, the Norse Heathen personification of the Earth, as she is our Mother and our home. All the wonderful things you see in nature are a part of her.

1. Rocks! Start a rock collection. Learn about the three kinds of rocks, and see if you can find out which types are local to where you live.

The solid part of the Earth is made of rocks. Some people think that rocks, especially crystals, have a lot of energy. Most rocks have been around much, much longer than humans have!

Sedimentary rocks form slowly. Research if sedimentary rocks are native to your area, and if so, find one for your collection!

Igneous rocks form quickly. Research if igneous rocks are native to your area, and if so, find one for your collection!

Metamorphic rock is a rock that has changed. Research if metamorphic rocks are native to your area, then find one for your collection!

Some rocks are plain-looking, and some are very beautiful. See how many kinds of rocks you can find in your neighborhood. Look for ways that people use rocks around you. See if an adult will take you to a rock show or a shop, where you can see many different kinds of rocks. Pick a favorite rock, and add it to your collection! But remember, "A Scout Is Thrifty!"

2. Plants! Plant a tree, or start a garden.

Plants are beautiful and helpful. A lot of our food comes from plants. Did you know that they help us breathe? Plants breathe in carbon dioxide, which is what we breathe out, and they breathe out oxygen, which is what we breathe in!

If you have a yard, you can plant a tree or garden right there. You can grow flowers, or herbs, or vegetables. Your adult helper can tell you what kinds of plants will be happiest growing where you live. If you don't have a yard, there are lots of plants that will grow in a pot. You could also ask at a park if they will let you help them plant a tree.

Make sure your plants get the right amount of water and sunlight. Your adult helper will help you learn how much your plants need.

You might want to go with your family to a forest, park, or garden to see all the different kinds of plants that live there. What animals are eating them? Do any animals live in them? How do the plants change over the seasons? How else are plants helping?

3. Animals! Make a poster showing your favorite animal.

Animals are a lot like us. They move around, they eat and breathe like we do. Learning about animals can be a lot of fun. You can learn from books and television. You can play with pets, or go to the zoo, aquarium, or wildlife preserve to watch them up close. If you live near a wild place, you might even be able to see animals there. But ALWAYS be careful with strange animals! Most animals get frightened very easily, and they might hurt you by mistake if they think you are dangerous. Don't go too close, and stay near an adult.

After you've picked your favorite animal, learn more about it. Go to see it in its natural habitat if you can. Then make a poster showing what you've learned. You can draw pictures or cut them out of nature magazines. Write something about the animal. You can write about what your chosen animal eats, where it lives, how big it grows, or what its behavior is like.

4. People! Do something that helps another person.

People are part of the Earth too! We are all different, and we are all special.

Find a way to do something kind for someone else. If you do well in school, maybe you can help someone in your class study for a test. You can collect food or toys to give to people who need them. You can help a neighbor with their yard-work. Your adult helper can help you think of more ideas.

5. Put It All Together! Earth Challenge: do something that helps Jorð (Mother Earth) for one week!

All of us - plants, animals, and people - have to live together. We need to learn to work together so that we have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink, and room for everything to live.

Does that sound like too much work for you to do alone? Don't worry! There are plenty of things that one person can do that will help, and this is your chance to learn about some of them. There are books that will give you some ideas, like *Fifty Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth* by the Earthworks Group.

You can pick up trash around your neighborhood (with adult supervision). You can start recycling your trash at home, or collect things to recycle from your neighbors. You can learn how to use less water or electricity in your house. Your adult helper can help you find more ideas. Start with just one! Write about your Earth Challenge and what you did, or talk about it with your adult helper.

PART II. LEARNING THE WAYS

6a. Learn some of the old stories (mythology).

6b. Make something creative about your favorite story or myth.

Mythology means stories about the Gods. Heathenry and many other Pagan religions still use these stories to help us understand who the Gods and Goddesses are. You might belong to a family or group that tries to practice religion just like some of your ancestors did long ago. If you do, there will be one group of myths that is the most important for you to learn. For example, if you are Norse Heathen, then you will learn the most from reading Norse mythology. Other groups and families are more eclectic, which means that they honor Gods and stories from many different places. If this sounds more like you, then you can choose your favorite.

Find a book of mythology at your library and read the stories. If you belong to a strong community - if you are Norse Heathen, for example - you may be able to find a skald (a storyteller) who knows the stories by heart and can tell them to you. If no one near you is available, www.storynory.com is an excellent resource as well!

When you have read or heard some of the stories, pick one and make something that will show other people why you like it. You can put on a play or a puppet show, or make a diorama, or write a story in your own words with drawings, or write a song or a poem, or make a statue of one of the characters. Get creative!

7a. Make a family tree showing at least three generations, and learn about the people on it.

Where we come from is important. If this is not available to you, do this for your adult helper's family! Or, pick someone famous. There are several websites out there available for free to research family trees.

7b. Learn a craft, song, game or food that one of your ancestors would have known.

Some people's religion comes from their ancestors, people who were part of their family long ago. Some pagan religions believe that we can still talk to our ancestors in the spirit world, and that they still help us. In any case, our ancestors are part of where we came from and who we are, so it's good to learn about them.

Look for shows at natural history museums or on TV and (with an adult's help) YouTube to learn about old cultures. Go to other events that have activities you can learn from - a Native American pow-wow or a Renaissance fair, for example. Dover Books makes lots of books about old cultures and their clothes, games, crafts, and more, and they don't cost much. Show your adult helper your new craft, skill, or make a food item and try it, or learn how to play the game, sing or perform the song, perform a dance... choose which is most fun for you, and be able to show understanding of what it is and where it comes from.

8. Go to a religious celebration.

Unlike some religions, most Heathens and pagans don't meet every week. In Paganism in general, there are several kinds of religious celebrations, including Blots & Sumbels performed on the Sabbats and Esbats. If you are not Heathen, ask your adult helper to tell you what the important celebrations are in your religion. Sabbats are seasonal festivals - there are two each in the spring, summer, fall, and winter. Esbats are moon festivals; they are usually held on Full Moon nights, but sometimes also on New Moon nights.

Start doing something at home to celebrate these days. This could be as simple as having a special dinner on Sabbats with seasonal decorations - maybe flowers in spring, or cut-out snowflakes in winter - or going outside with your family to look at the Full Moon before bed on the Esbat. Of course you can do more if you want to! Talk to your adult helper to get more ideas.

If you can, go to a bigger celebration with other people from your religion. Open circles and festivals are happening all over the world!

9. Learn about the Runes. Make a project showing your favorite.

Runes are woven into Norse religion and are closely associated with Norse magic and skaldic poetry. The old poem *Hávamál* explains that Odin discovered the runes when he suffered greatly on the world tree Yggdrasil in order to gain wisdom. He hung on the wind-blown tree for nine nights and days. Just as he was about to die, he found the runes, grabbed them up and earned his life. Thankfully, through the journeys of Heimdallr, the runes were given to us, and YOU do not have to do this yourself! Runes were carved on weapons, tools, jewelry, amulets, bones, pieces of wood, memorial stones, church walls etc. The two main types of runic alphabet are called the elder Futhark and the younger Futhark after the sequence of the first six runic letters. In addition, there are a number of local variants. Runic script existed simultaneously with the Latin alphabet and was in use up to the 1500s. Each runic character represents a letter, such that they can be set together to form a word. The runes are also magical symbols, and each runic character has its own name and symbolic meaning.

Learn more about the runes. Look at them in nature. Read about them. Learn to write your own name in runes. Talk to your adult helper about the runes spiritual meanings. Then, choose your favorite rune and make a creative project for it. It can be a poster, a poem, a painting, or anything you like, as long as it shows something about your chosen rune and its meaning.

10a. Show that you can center or meditate for a couple of minutes.

Centering or meditating is one way that we can calm ourselves down when we are upset, and it is one way we communicate with the Gods.

Find a quiet spot where you will not be disturbed, sit quietly with your eyes closed, and take a few deep breaths. Try to not think about anything else

except your breathing. If this is too hard, you can choose one thing to think about: a word like "Love", or a beautiful picture. Soon you should feel yourself calming down. You will feel like you are more in control of yourself.

Meditating and conversing with the Gods may sound hard. It is not. It may take some practice. Do not be too hard on yourself if you are not able to get it the first time! Keep at it, and it will come.

10b. Choose a God, Goddess, or Vættir that you feel close to.

During your meditation, you might feel led to communicate with a specific God, Goddess, or vættir (gnomes, elves, sprites, etc). Pick one and make something that will show other people why you chose that one. You can put on a play or a puppet show, or make a diorama, or write a story in your own words with drawings, or write a song or a poem, or make a statue! Get creative!

With the help of an adult, research different gods, goddesses, and vættir from the Norse beliefs. If you are Norse Heathen, AwakenTheNorth.org is a good resource for different stories. Norhalla.com also has several age-appropriate books and stories available! StoryNory.com is a great source for other beliefs across the globe.

10c. Start a journal and record your meditations for 30 days.

This journal is for you, with your own experiences and thoughts. No one else has to read it other than your adult helper! It is important to keep track of your experiences, thoughts, ideas, feelings.. using a journal will help with that!

PART III. DEALING WITH OTHERS

11. Explain the difference between secret and private. Why is our religion private?

Something that can be challenging about being young in a Pagan faith is keeping things private. Since people in some other religions talk about what they do all the time, it can be hard to understand why we usually don't.

A lot of people don't understand why everyone isn't in the same religion. They think that their religion is the only one that is right. This is different from most Pagan religions, where we think that different ways are right for different people.

Some people get very scared when they hear about other religions, even though what we do is okay and very normal to us. At your age, you shouldn't have to deal with that. So it's usually best to keep quiet about religion, except with people you know will understand.

There's no reason to be ashamed. Our ways are very beautiful, and you shouldn't feel that you are keeping a them secret. This is private and only for YOU - healthy and good, but not for everybody to see. This is one reason why you seldom hear the adults talking about our religion with those who are not Pagan. Many people fear what they do not understand.

12. Learn about one other religion. (Optional)

It's good to learn what other people believe so we can understand them better. If it's okay with your parents or guardians, you might try going to a church, temple, synagogue, or other place of worship, to see what they do. Look at some of their stories. Think about what is the same and what is different.

When boiled down to the basics, most of the major world religions are the same, with a few name changes. They all teach the same basic principles: Love one another. Be kind. Care for those less fortunate. Be a good human being. Our differences are not as vast as some people like to think!

Some people think that doing this is a very good idea, but others don't. Your parents might want to keep you safe and worry that seeing too many different ways might be confusing for you. So you can do this part if your parents say it's okay, but you don't have to do it to get the award.



REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

ADULT INIT.

PART I. THE WORLD

- _____ 1. Rocks! Start a rock collection. Learn about the three kinds of rocks, and see if you can find out which kinds you have.
- _____ 2. Plants! Plant a tree, or start a garden.
- _____ 3. Animals! Make a poster showing your favorite animal.
- _____ 4. People! Do something that helps another person.
- _____ 5. Put It All Together! Earth Challenge: do something that helps Jorð (Mother Earth) for one week!

PART II. LEARNING THE WAYS

- _____ 6a. Learn some of the old stories (mythology)
- _____ b. Make something creative about your favorite story or myth.
- _____ 7a. Make a family tree showing at least four generations, and learn about the people on it.
- _____ b. Learn a craft, song, game, or food that one of your ancestors would have known.
- _____ 8. Go to a religious celebration.
- _____ 9. Learn about the Five Elements. Make a project showing your favorite.
- _____ 10a. Show that you can center or meditate for a couple of minutes.
- _____ b. Choose a God, Goddess, or Vætrr that you feel drawn to. Create a project for it.
- _____ c. Start a journal and record your meditations for 30 days.

PART III. DEALING WITH OTHERS

- _____ 11. Explain the difference between secret and private.
Why is our religion private?
- _____ 12. Learn about one other religion. (Optional).

APPLICATION FOR WAY OF THE WOLF & RAVEN AWARD (Youth)

Candidate's Name: _____

I hereby certify that they have completed all requirements,* and is entitled to receive the Way of the Wolf & Raven Award.

Counselor's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Relationship to Candidate (Goði/Gyðja, parent, Kindred elder, etc.: _____

Cub Scout Pack #, City, State (if applicable): _____

Name & address where the award should be sent: _____

Please submit payment of \$15 for the award. Payment may be made via PayPal to Donations@awakenthenorth.org, or via postal mail to:

Awaken the North
5043 State Highway 248
Branson, Missouri 65616

Make check or money order payable to Awaken the North

* A NOTE TO COUNSELORS: Although this award was originally designed for Norse Heathen youth in the Scouting programs, it may be earned by those youth not enrolled in Scouting, or adapted for youth of other Nature-oriented spiritual paths as well. Reasonable accommodations are available for those who are unable to complete various aspects of the program due to extenuating circumstances. Please contact Awaken the North to discuss available accommodations.