

An Open Letter to all Jewish Scouters about the 2008 Scouting serves the Jewish
Committee Course at Philmont

We all came from different parts of the country: a unit commissioner from Virginia, a cubmaster from Texas, and a cubmaster from New York. However we all had a single goal: we wanted to learn how to give our boys not just a better Scouting experience, but a better Jewish Scouting experience.

Over the week-long course on Scouting Serves the Jewish Committee, Scott Shmikler and Rabbi Rachmiel (“Rock”) Tobesman taught us much about running a Jewish unit. We learned how to intertwine Jewish tradition and culture with the Scouting program through interactive discussions and hands-on experiences, such as building an Eruv which none of us had done before. Debate was often lively and always interesting. We found that given our varied backgrounds and experiences we had a lot to offer each other in the way of program helps and advice. We all walked away with many new ideas that before this conference would have never crossed our minds.

We also learned the importance of building a strong religious emblem program. These emblems are at the core of “A Scout is Reverent.” So a strong program does not just help strengthen the underlying fabric of scouting, but it can also be a conduit to bring Jewish Scouting to general public through publicly recognizing the Scouts that earn these awards.

Since we all had some role in our local Jewish Committees on Scouting, Scott and Rabbi Rock taught us the importance of and how to build a strong committee. They shared strategies and lessons learned from other successful committees. It was easy to see that in councils where there is a strong Jewish Committee on Scouting, there will be strong Jewish units.

By the end of the week, we felt that our single goal had evolved into a single sense of purpose. We each promised to take what we had learned back to not only our local councils, but to also spread the importance of this class to **ALL**—Jewish and non-Jewish leaders alike who want to build, strengthen, or grow Jewish or Jewish-friendly units across the country.

By now many of you are thinking “it could not have been all good—no conference is perfect” and you would be absolutely correct! Look below at the end of this letter. Is your name there? Probably not. That was the biggest problem with this conference: **YOU** were not there. It was disappointing to look around at the other courses and see 20, 30 or more attendees while we only had three. One could only imagine how much more could have been learned and shared if more Scouters had attended the conference. If you have not attended this conference in its current format **PLEASE DO SO NEXT YEAR**. Our boys deserve trained **JEWISH** Scout leaders. Will **YOU** be one of those leaders?

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