

Guide for the Rank & Skill Badge program (in camps)

What Is a Skill Badge?



A Skill Badge is an award that is presented to a child when he completes the requirements for one of the Skill Badge subjects. The badge is only a small colored button, but its significance is as large as the interest and enthusiasm of the Skill Badge Instructor who helps a child earn it.

Skill Badge Instructors provide the means for children to explore many subjects that may not be available to them otherwise. The child who has earned a number of Skill Badges gains confidence, finds greater purpose in life, and becomes a better person from his experience. The sincerity of the instructor will have a tremendous effect on the children's Yiddishkeit, Chassidishkeit, Hiskashrus, performance of Mitzvos, etc. Every child should be able to walk away from the summer with these themes as the essence of his heart and soul. Let's remember, that one summer can last a lifetime.

Skill Badge Instructor



Skill Badge Instructors are the key to success in the Skill Badge program. They offer their time, experience, and knowledge to help guide child in one or more of the Skill Badge subjects.

What's My Responsibility?



Your task is to satisfy yourself that each child who comes to you meets all the requirements for the Skill Badge. On one hand you are an examiner, making sure the child knows what he must know. However, your larger opportunity lies in coaching and helping the child meet the challenge of the requirements and making him aware of the deeper aspects of the subject through your knowledge and experience.

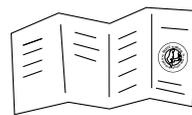
The key is to awaken in the child a greater fascination for Yiddishkeit, yet at the same time a sense of satisfaction that the child has reached a milestone and accomplished something important.

What Do I Agree to Do?

The instructor's responsibility is to:

1. Assist the child as he plans the assigned projects and activities to meet the Skill Badge requirements.
2. Be available (and enthusiastic) at appointed times to test children on the requirements. (For example, while on the bus, in line at the canteen, waiting to bat, rest period, before bedtime, rainy days etc.)
3. Coach children through interviews and demonstrations on how to do the required skills of the knowledge, craft, or activity.
4. Follow the requirements of the Skill Badge, ensuring that the advancement standards are clear and uniform for all children.
5. Certify the child's completion after determining that he is qualified for the Skill Badge.

Earning a Skill Badge



The requirements for each Skill Badge appear in the current Tzivos Hashem Skill Badge Record Card for that badge, available online at Jewishchildren.com. When a child

has decided on a Skill Badge he would like to earn, he must follow the following procedure.

- Obtain from his Counselor or Instructor a Record Card for that Skill Badge.
- Along with other campers, attend the classes given on that subject. The instructor will explain the requirements for the Badge and help the child plan ways to fulfill them so that he can get the most out of the experience.
- Complete the requirements, and meet with his Instructor whenever necessary until he has finished working on the Skill Badge.

The advancement program allows the child to move ahead in his own way and at his own speed. Rather than competing against others, he challenges himself to go as far as his ambition will carry him. The rate of advancement depends upon his interest, effort, and ability.

More or Less?

The child is expected to meet the requirements as stated-no more and no less. Furthermore, he is to do exactly what is stated. If it says, "show or demonstrate," that is what he must do. Just telling about it isn't enough. The same thing holds true for such words as "make," "list," "in the shul," and "sing, identify, and draw."

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On the other hand, you cannot require more of a child than stated. You must not, for example, say, "I want to be sure you really know your stuff, so instead of knowing 3 "Hayom Yoms" about Ahavas Yisroel, you must know 10 to get my signature." You can suggest, encourage, and help the child to know 10, but you must not require it.

You might wonder, then, if the requirements as stated are the limits, what there is for you to do other than help the child with the specifics of these requirements. Actually, you can go far beyond the requirements in your discussions with the child, especially by packaging the information in stories.

He probably will welcome your willingness to share your knowledge well beyond the requirements, and you will make a sincere contribution to him by doing so. But it isn't required. That's the key. The child does not have to show his knowledge of those things beyond the requirements. You might stress the fact that while knowledge is necessary, whether he can put his knowledge to work is the important thing in life.

New and Experienced Children

What if a child doesn't know anything yet? What if a child knows everything? Sometimes a child will easily complete a Skill Badge based on what he already knows, while others will have to learn about that subject starting from the very basics.

For this reason, each Skill Badge is divided into three Steps. For the novice, Step One is a starting point. It is not too challenging for the beginner, yet engaging for the expert. While it may suffice for a beginner to receive the Badge while only completing Step One, he could continue at a later point to progress to Steps Two and Three and be recognized with a red or gold ribbon to be added behind his Skill Badge.

Sometimes a child will easily earn his Skill Badge based on what he already knows including all three Steps. This is fine. This child also has the opportunity to glow in the satisfaction and newly discovered confidence that comes with the recognition of the Skill Badge.

Requirements from any of the Steps can be completed in any order, but each Step must be earned in order (i.e. Step One must be earned before Step Two, even if all Step Two requirements have been completed).

How Many at a Time?

In Camps most of the Skills will be taught to several campers at one time. This has a time advantage for you. However, completing the requirements must always be done on an individual basis. A camper may not qualify for Skill Badges by just being a member of a group that is instructed in skills.



Children must qualify by personally satisfying their Skill Badge instructor that they can meet all the requirements. This may be hard to do in a group. When one child in a group answers a question, that can't possibly prove all the other group members know the answer. Then, too, each child learns at his own pace. No child should be held back or pushed ahead by his association with a group.

So remember-you can coach more than one at a time, but only one child at a time can satisfy you that he has met the requirements.

Testing

We have already discussed several aspects of testing, there are however some points that are important.



- Some parts of the testing can be done during a class discussion, however as noted earlier, if one child answers a question and demonstrates a certain skill, that does not count for everyone in the group.
- When the knowledge of a song is required, then all the children can sing it together and complete that requirement. The same applies to group activities. Unless the requirement says to "lead" a group in a certain activity such as songs or games, the children can qualify together.
- When testing individual campers, set aside specific times for testing. (That way you won't have the children running up to you when ever they want and causing a tumult in the class or activity).
- During testing you should apply the rules mentioned in "more or less" (see above). If a child doesn't have the whole answer you can tell it to him/her, then assign the camper another day to learn what you had to teach him/her and get retested on that requirement.

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The Rank Badges

Tzivos Hashem is an advancement program, where children during the year go up in Rank by doing Torah and Mitzvos. This program can also be used in summer camps, which by learning and reciting various materials (from the Tzivos Hashem Handbook, or camp's Torah B'al Peh program), campers can accumulate points, earning ranks from Private to General.

Based on the age & academic level, campers are placed in a division. (There are four divisions in the Tzivos Hashem Handbook.) By studying and being able to repeat material from memory properly, the child earns points accordingly. Additionally there are other requirements such as earning skill badges and other things the camp may decide to include.

What do Ranks Mean?

Earning a rank is more than just accumulating points. The camper should have gained more experience as a 'Soldier in Tzivos Hashem'. The promotion is in acknowledgment of this achievement.

A well behaved camper who does what he is supposed to do, comes on time, and follows the rules, is not necessarily deserving of a higher rank. To prove that he is a 'dedicated soldier' he must accomplish tasks which are above the 'norm'.

Ranks should be considered a responsibility. The higher the child's rank the more we can expect from him.

How to Advance in Rank

For a camper to be promoted in rank he must follow the following procedure.

- Get tested on the information (MBP/TBH) that will earn him points.
- Earn the required amount of points for that rank. Every 100 points promotes the camper to the next rank besides from Private to Sergeant which is 50 points.
- Complete the Skill Badge/s required for that rank as explained below.

A camper starts off as a 'Private' – the first rank. In order to advance to 'Sergeant' he must earn 'step one' in any of the skill badges. The same is required for the next ranks, where he must earn a different skill badge each time.

Every 2 ranks are grouped by color (i.e. Private and Sergeant are grouped together as blue; Sergeant Major and Second Lieutenant are 'green'). Promotion from one color to another requires a camper to achieve Step 2 for

any one of his skill badges.

Upon reaching General Rank, campers can be promoted an additional 'star' by completing all the steps on any one of the badges.

Campers should be encouraged to participate in Cocoa Club & MBP/TBH programs. During these sessions – aside from the coupons and nosh – he will earn points, and go up in ranks.

Recognition

A large part of the success of this program is recognizing the child for what he has achieved. Usually, just by properly presenting and awarding these badges and showing their importance, the child will have enough motive to earn them. This is an 'intangible' reward. However, sometime you may need to offer more 'tangible' awards to attract the campers.

For example:

- The campers should be given opportunities to wear or display their achievements. The camp will have special award ceremonies when the children will be honored. Additionally during certain lineups the campers can display their badges by wearing them.
- Bunks (or learning classes) can receive special activities/trips for completing badges or by having the highest achievers.
- Exciting raffles or auctions will give those of a higher rank a bigger chance to win. (There could be a raffle where only the few generals can participate.)



Keep it Going

Many campers will find it difficult to attain a high rank within one summer of camp. It is important that the camper can advance where he left off, and not feel as he as wasted his effort of the previous summer. By knowing that he can remain at the rank he earned, the camper will be motivated to work his way up. He will know there is still a chance next summer.

This can only work if there is a standard set of rules which is followed by all. When a camper comes and claims he is a 'Captain' from a previous summer or a different camp, you can let him continue from where he is holding.

Of course you must verify what the camper is claiming by:

- The camper having proper documentation of ranks achieved.
- You may also find it necessary to spot check the camper's knowledge in certain requirements.