

EXPLORING OLD CEMETERIES - JUNIOR+ LEVEL

GSCSNJ PATCH PROGRAM

To earn this Patch:

Juniors must complete 4 activities

Cadettes must complete 5 activities

Seniors must complete 6 activities

Ambassadors must complete 7 activities

01.

Visit a historic graveyard in your community. Create gravestone rubbings or take photos to record inscriptions and decorative designs.

02.

During a troop meeting, discuss:
What can we learn from visiting graveyards?
Why are headstones important to our history?

03.

Learn about the following terms:
graveyard, memorial, headstone, plot, engraving,
inscription. Discuss the meanings and significance
with your troop.

04.

With permission, plan a clean-up day at a local graveyard. Collect trash, rake leaves, and dispose of all waste properly to honor those remembered there.

05.

Explore a local graveyard and locate:
The oldest headstone, The most recent burial, The
shortest life, The longest life (man and woman),
Metal markers, Veteran graves.

06.

Create a map of a local graveyard, marking the
locations found in Activity #5.

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07.

Discuss famous memorial designs; Draw and explain the meaning behind the symbols you would include in your memorial.

08.

With your troop, make a collage using the various gravestone rubbings you've collected. See if the local historical society would like to hang it somewhere.

09.

Visit two different cemeteries. Identify recurring or prominent family names and record them through notes or rubbings. See if these families have any local historical significance.

10.

Keep a list of occupations you find mentioned on gravestones or epitaphs. Look up any that are unfamiliar to you.

11.

Search the cemetery for a food recipe engraved on a headstone. Copy the ingredients and directions to recreate at home.

12.

Learn how gravestones were made in the past compared to today. Invite a local monument retailer to speak or visit their workshop to explore materials, quarrying, and engraving methods.

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Reflection: What did exploring local graveyards teach you about your community's history, the people who lived before you, and how we honor their lives today?

A Note to Leaders and Guardians

Graveyards are a valuable resource for learning about environments of the past. Early graveyards may be explored to give girls a sense of the richness of the past; modern cemeteries may be used for comparison purposes, and as an indicator of a source of history for the future.

Many old cemeteries dot the landscape in overgrown and forgotten locations. New Jersey offers many outstanding examples of graveyards with historical significance, and many local graveyards will pre-date the Revolutionary War. By checking with the local historical society, you can determine where the closest site is.

While it is important that the girls have fun, please make sure that they remain respectful of the grounds and the lives that are being remembered, and leave things better than they found them.



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