

# **Young Cultivator Merit Badges**

# Cleaning Up

## 1. Trash Talk

### Beginner Level

- With the help of your mentoring Sister or an adult, talk with your local agencies to see what items your city will recycle, where the drop-off stations are, or if they offer curbside pick-up.
- In a journal or notebook, write down what you find.

### Intermediate Level

- Set up a recycling center in your home to help your family easily sort out their recyclables. Properly label each bin so that they are easy to identify. Labeling can be either words or pictures.

### Expert Level

- If you live in a county that pays for recycled bottles and cans, start a savings account from the money earned.
- Give a report to your family, a school or home-school club, a local Farmgirl Chapter, or a Young Cultivators group discussing the steps you have taken for this badge, and what you learned in the process, including whether your county pays for recycled materials or not.

# Cleaning Up

## 2. It's In The Bag

### Beginner Level

- Collect three reusable bags to use for shopping.

### Intermediate Level

- Be responsible for grabbing the bags before heading out for shopping.
- After you have, “grabbed the bags” for three separate shopping trips, give a report to your mentoring Sister, family, school or home-school club, local Farmgirl Chapter, or Young Cultivators group. Include any hints you may have on how to remember to grab the bags. Do not forget to show off your favorite bag.

### Expert Level

- Organize a reusable bag swap with friends or family; make a game out of the swap.

# Cleaning Up

## 3. It's Not Easy Being Green

### Beginner Level

- Talk with family members and choose two things that you (as a family), can do to go green.
- Host a “go green” family meeting.

### Intermediate Level

- Take those ideas and create a workable plan.

### Expert Level

- Work the plan for three weeks and then give a report to your family, a school or homeschool club, a local Farmgirl Chapter, or a Young Cultivators group.

# Cleaning Up

## 4. Energize Me

### Beginner Level

- Count the things in and around your house that rely on energy for use. Make a list of how your food is kept cold, how the car starts, and how you stay warm. Not only do cars and light bulbs need energy, you do too! What gives you energy and keeps you working?

### Intermediate Level

- Visit a dam or a wind farm with your mentoring Sister. Take a tour with a guide that can explain the way the power of water supplies electricity.

### Expert Level

- Conduct your own energy experiment at home. Some suggestions are: build a model of a dam, make a battery using lemons, or “bend” running water with static electricity. You can find instructions for many science projects at your local library or through the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency’s websites.

# Cleaning Up

## 5. Water Conservation

### Beginner Level

- Talk to your family and think of ways that you (as a family) can save water.
- Make a plan to lower your family's water usage.

### Intermediate Level

- Keep track of everything you do to save water for three weeks.

### Expert Level

- At the end of three weeks, give a report on water conservation to your family, a school or homeschool club, a local Farmgirl Chapter, or a Young Cultivators group.
- Continue to conserve water.

## Each Other

### 1. Let's Go To Town

#### Beginner Level

- Visit your local library to sign up for a library card of your own.
- Request a schedule of activities the library has for people your age.

#### Intermediate Level

- Research the history of your community or county. Is your community famous for anything? Is there anyone famous or notorious in its history? Where do the local names come from?
- Prepare a presentation of some of the most interesting facts, and share them with your family, a school or home-school club, a local Farmgirl Chapter, or a Young Cultivators group.

#### Expert Level

- Attend at least three separate events at the library, or through any other community programs or clubs, such as after-school programs, community enrichment, or other social clubs that your community offers. Open yourself up to new things and new friends.
- If you are an older student and no programs are available, ask one of these groups what you can do to help them. Then, donate a total of at least one hour helping out. You could even play a role in organizing a local event for kids your age!

## Each Other

### 2. Thank you!

#### Beginner Level

- Write or draw in a gratitude journal daily for two weeks.

#### Intermediate Level

- Express your gratitude in a letter or a drawing to the public servants of your town, such as the police, firefighters, your mail carrier, your dentist or a doctor, or someone else you know who's done things for you or your family. (If you are younger, a picture says a thousand words.) Instead of a letter or drawing, you could offer your mail carrier some lemonade on a hot day, or you and a group of friends could go to your local fire department and wash their fire truck. Be creative.

#### Expert Level

- Do something to show your appreciation for your family. Help your parents make dinner; have a day of helping with your younger siblings; give a special gift to your older siblings or your grandparents; or do other things that show how much you appreciate them.

## Each Other

### 3. Families Forever

#### Beginner Level

- Host a game night with your family. To qualify, the TV must be turned off. Bring out your favorite board games.

#### Intermediate Level

- Take turns reading to one another. Choose a classic like “Charlotte’s Web” or “The Hobbit.”

#### Expert Level

- Put on a family talent or skit night. You are the director. “Let ‘em roll.”

## Each Other

### 4. Big Kid Now

#### Beginner Level

- Research what you want to be when you grow up.
- Go to the library and pick out a book that explains what a day-in-the-life of that profession is like.

#### Intermediate Level

- Dress up as what you want to be when you grow up and give a presentation to your family on what you learned and why it is the best job. (You can keep your costume for Halloween.)

#### Expert Level

- Shadow a family member, friend, or person that works in the career path you want when you grow up. Hang out with them for a day or visit them with your mentoring Sister to see what they do. Can you see yourself doing their job? What is your favorite part about what they do?

## Each Other

### 5. Community Service

#### Beginner Level

- Spend time with your elders. Visit a retirement home, your local senior center, or a neighbor or family member.

#### Intermediate Level

- Visit your local food bank or meal center. Help organize or serve food.

#### Expert Level

- Help out at a fundraiser in your community. Or, host your own and donate the proceeds to charity.

# Farm Kitchen

## 1. Table Talk

### Beginner Level

- Set the table at least one night a week for one month. If your family is not accustomed to sitting together for dinner, this will be a great opportunity for you to bring them all together.

### Intermediate Level

- Working with an adult or sibling, wash, dry, or put dinner dishes away one night a week for a month. During this time, take the time to really visit with the family member you are working with. Take pride in a job well done.

### Expert Level

- Plan an entire meal and help prepare it. Be adventurous and try a food you have not tried yet.

# Farm Kitchen

## 2. Know Your Food

### Beginner Level

- Replace one dessert a week with an un-sweetened fruit or fruit dish.

### Intermediate Level

- Try at least one new fruit or veggie a week for four weeks.
- Report what you liked and what you disliked to your mentoring Sister, family, school or home-school club, local Farmgirl Chapter, or Young Cultivators group.

### Expert Level

- Become a sprout farmer. For further instructions, see “**MaryJane’s Idea book.**”

# Farm Kitchen

## 3. All Dried Up

### Beginner Level

- With the chef of your family, go into your kitchen cupboards to learn about the herbs he or she uses. Taste them to see which ones you like and dislike.

### Intermediate Level

- Ask your parents for permission to cut some fresh herbs from the garden or to buy some fresh herbs of your choosing. Try them. Do your likes and dislikes change when the herbs are fresh?

### Expert Level

- Hang your herbs up to dry.
- Assist the chef of the family in preparing a dish that uses your favorite herb.
- You can also package your dried herbs and give them away as gifts.

# Farm Kitchen

## 4. Make It Fruity

### Beginner Level

- With your mentoring Sister, go berry picking at a local farm or CSA.

### Intermediate Level

- Find out how to preserve whole fruit by drying it.
- Look up ways to store it in airtight containers, and make room in a cool, dark, dry place for storing.

### Expert Level

- Make your own fruit leather.

# Farm Kitchen

## 5. Icing on the Cake

### Beginner Level

- Think of fun ways to decorate a cake, like with nuts or dried fruit.

### Intermediate Level

- With your Sisterhood mentor or parent, bake a cake from scratch.

### Expert Level

- Decorate the cake. If you can, take a picture of the finished product before it's eaten.

# Garden Gate

## 1. Bloom Where You're Planted

### Beginner Level

- Collect five native flowers and press them.
- When dry, decoupage or in some way mount them onto a piece of paper. Next to the flower, write a brief description of their habitat or where you found them.

### Intermediate Level

- Show and tell. Share with your mentoring Sister, family, a school or home-school club, a local Farmgirl Chapter, or a Young Cultivators group what you have learned.
- Find the scientific names for the flowers and learn to pronounce them. If you are older, look up some more information about the plant and its habitat, and see if there's anything else of special interest. While sharing, include everything you learned.

### Expert Level

- Plant at least one native tree or shrub in your yard that will supply much needed habitat for your neighborhood insects and birds.

# Garden Gate

## 2. Gone To The Birds

### Beginner Level

- Keep a diary (of words or pictures) of the birds that visit your yard or park. Watch them for two weeks, keeping notes of which ones come and go.

### Intermediate Level

- Identify the birds you see. You can use the internet, ask your mentoring Sister or an adult, or look them up in a field guide or encyclopedia. In your journal, make sure to keep track of what you learn.

### Expert Level

- Find out what the birds that frequent your yard like to nibble on and supply them with a bird feeder and bath.

# Garden Gate

## 3. Horsing Around

### Beginner Level

- With the assistance of your mentoring Sister or your parents, drive or walk around your town, county, or neighborhood taking time to admire the horses in the area.
- Take photos of what you see (if you can). If you cannot, then draw pictures of what you saw.

### Intermediate Level

- Go to your local library and thumb through books about horses. Choose your favorite breed and write down the name of the breed and the reason you have chosen it.

### Expert Level

- Give yourself the opportunity to “meet” a horse. You might do so by asking for help from a neighbor, a farmgirl you know, a local 4-H, or a riding club.
- Then report to your family, school or home-school club, local Farmgirl Chapter, or Young Cultivators group about your experience.
- If you own a horse, offer to make your horse available to others who do not have one, and to tell them all about it.

# Garden Gate

## 4. Green Thumb Kids

### Beginner Level

- Try a fruit or vegetable that you would not normally eat. Talk with your mentoring Sister about why you do or don't like it.
- Identify your favorite fruit or vegetable.

### Intermediate Level

- Visit a local u-pick farm or a farmers' market. Look for your favorite fruit or vegetable. Discuss why it is or isn't there and why the organic version is better for you.

### Expert Level

- Plant your favorite fruit or vegetable in a garden or in a container (strawberries, peas, and spinach are all easy to grow).
- Learn how to take care of your plant organically. Your reward? Yummy, healthy vegetables!

# Garden Gate

## 5. Get Buggy

### Beginner Level

- There are way more insects doing good things for us than insects “bugging” us. Create an insect journal and make a list of some of the ways that insects help.

### Intermediate Level

- Go out to your yard or garden and observe all the insects you see. Look on flowers, under rocks, and on trees. Write down your observations in your journal.

### Expert Level

- Identify the insects you saw. You can use the Internet, ask your mentoring sister or an adult, or look them up in a field guide or encyclopedia. In your journal, make sure to keep track of what you learn.

# Make It Easy

## 1. Do Your Eyes Light Up?

### Beginner Level

- Working with your mentoring Sister or an adult, identify tools commonly used around the house and the yard.
- Learn what they're used for.
- Choose a tool and, with adult guidance, put it work! Make sure to use it safely and properly.

### Intermediate Level

- Help your mentoring Sister or an adult organize their tools in such a way that they will always know where they are. This will help you memorize their newly learned names. Plus, you'll know where to find them when helping on a project.

### Expert Level

- Using a nail and a hammer, pliers, and whatever other tools you need for the job, put your new-found knowledge to use. Create a luminary out of recycled materials such as tin cans, pop cans, or plastic bottles. You might create your unique luminary by pounding holes into the sides of a can, and then putting a candle inside. You could make the project more fun by making extras to give as gifts, and by thinking about creative designs for your luminary (like the person's name or initials) that would make use of the tools you learned about.

# Make It Easy

## 2. I Did It My Way

### Beginner Level

- Save tin cans to create an old-fashioned string telephone.
- When your phone is completed, find someone to have a phone conversation with you.

### Intermediate Level

- Follow the instructions in “**MaryJane’s Outpost**” book to create a wooden seat swing for your yard. Every yard needs a swing!

### Expert Level

- Working with your mentoring Sister or an adult, build a birdhouse to put up in your backyard. Younger Cultivators may need to have their wood pre-cut.
- Then, see if any of your neighborhood birds move in.

# Make It Easy

## 3. Rethink Your Space

### Beginner Level

- With your parents' permission, clean your room using the three-box system. The three boxes are:
  - 1) things to keep
  - 2) things to recycle
  - 3) things that need to be thrown out.

### Intermediate Level

- Keep your room cleaned and organized for 2 weeks, marking off on a calendar each day that you keep your room nice and neat.

### Expert Level

- Share your experience with your mentoring Sister, family, school or home-school club, local Farmgirl Chapter, or Young Cultivators group. How did it make you feel to walk into your space while it was clean and organized? Share what you did with the box you labeled "recycle."

# Make It Easy

## 4. Put Me In, Coach!

### Beginner Level

- Cut out TV time by joining a sports team for a season or taking lessons in baseball, soccer, horseback riding, karate, bowling, or tennis.

### Intermediate Level

- Go to a game of your favorite sport (high school, college, or professional) with a parent. Discuss the discipline and practice that it takes to get to that level in your sport.

### Expert Level

- Continue with your sports team or lessons for a second season and get a friend to join or participate with you.

# Make It Easy

## 5. Music

### Beginner Level

- Listen to three different songs. Try to identify the different instruments that you hear in each.
- If you are older, learn about three of the basic elements of music: rhythm, melody, and harmony. Try to identify each element in the songs you listen to.

### Intermediate Level

- Hand-make an instrument, like a guitar or tambourine, and learn to play it.
- Hold a concert for your family with your new instrument.

### Expert Level

- Go to a concert or recital with your Sisterhood mentor, parent, or other family member.
- Afterward, discuss the types of music you heard. What was your favorite song? Why?

# Out There Kids

## 1. I Am a Survivor

### Beginner Level

- Make your own survival pack to have ready when you and your friends want to take a hike.  
Your pack should consist of:
  - 1) matches in waterproof containers
  - 2) a pocketknife
  - 3) unbreakable mirror for signaling rescuers
  - 4) whistle
  - 5) high-energy bar or a few pieces of hard candy
  - 6) rainproof poncho
  - 7) space blanket
  - 8) reflective nylon cord
  - 9) first-aid supplies
- (Packs may need to be split up into two separate baggies to insure safety for younger Cultivators.)

### Intermediate Level

- With the help of your mentoring Sister, a school or home-school club, or local nature/outdoors group, take a hike.
- Make sure everyone in the group is clear on what to do and where to go if you are accidentally separated. Preparation is the key.
- To earn this badge, you must work as a student leader, working closely with the adult.

### Expert Level

- While on your hike, identify five native plants and their properties as food, medicine, or poison.
- Also, go over how to use each item in your pack in case of an emergency.

# Out There Kids

## 2. Whistle While You Work

### Beginner Level

- Follow the instructions for learning the “art of grass whistling” on page 70 of “**MaryJane’s Outpost.**”

### Intermediate Level

- Practice makes perfect – learn your favorite tune using your grass whistling skills.

### Expert Level

- Give a concert to your mentoring Sister, family, school or home-school club, local Farmgirl Chapter, or Young Cultivators group, whistling the tune you learned.

# Out There Kids

## 3. Lean On Me

### Beginner Level

- Using the examples on page 74 of “**MaryJane’s Outpost**,” design your own lean-to.

### Intermediate Level

- Build your lean-to. It can be created using any material that you like. Old blankets or bed sheets work well.

### Expert Level

- Invite your family, or Young Cultivators group to see your creation. Make it a party or even a sleepover.

# Out There Kids

## 4. Park Place

### Beginner Level

- Go to a local park and pick up a bag full of trash or weed any areas that need maintenance.

### Intermediate Level

- Identify 3–5 indigenous trees or plants in your park by both their common and Latin names.

### Expert Level

- Contact your local park service and ask where you could plant a tree in your area. (This would be great activity for Arbor Day or Earth Day.)

# Out There Kids

## 5. Rock Out

### Beginner Level

- Throughout your day, keep an eye out for the different ways that rocks and minerals are used in everyday life.
- Make a list of how they are used in your home.

### Intermediate Level

- Go on a rock hunt! Collect at least 5 different rocks.
- What makes each rock different?

### Expert Level

- Create a display for your new collection and invite family members or friends to view it.

# Stitching & Crafting

## 1. All Buttoned Up

### Beginner Level

- Start your own button collection (25 different buttons minimum).

### Intermediate Level

- Learn to sew a button onto your shirt or a scrap of material. This skill will carry you through life.

### Expert Level

- Make a button bracelet for yourself, your mom, a sister, or your mentoring Sister.

# Stitching & Crafting

## 2. Weaving In And Out

### Beginner Level

- Get three strands of yarn a bit longer than what you need to wrap around your wrist.
- Tape the three strands together on one end.
- Tape the taped end to a table.
- Braid the three strands together.
- Tie off the ends.
- You now have a friendship band.

### Intermediate Level

- Now, repeat the beginner's process creating a second friendship band. This time you are making it for someone that is special to you. Feel free to use different fibers as an experiment.

### Expert Level

- Wear the band for a week, sharing what it symbolizes with anyone who asks. Show off your creations to your family, a school or home-school club, a local Farmgirl Chapter, or a Young Cultivators group by sharing with them to whom you gave your friendship band and why.

# Stitching & Crafting

## 3. All Tied Up

### Beginner Level

- Ask your mentoring Sister or an adult to purchase, or to help you sew, a plainly colored artist smock.
- Decorate it using any medium you like — paint, buttons, or permanent markers — you decide.

### Intermediate Level

- Organize or participate in a style show to display your decorated smock, describing to the MC (Master of Ceremonies) what you did to create your look.

### Expert Level

- With the help of your mentoring Sister or an adult (if needed) sew a half apron or a tool belt-style apron.

# Stitching & Crafting

## 4. Little Scrappers

### Beginner Level

- Take pictures on a family vacation or a day trip with parents or grandparents and print them out to scrapbook later.

### Intermediate Level

- Gather the materials for putting together a scrapbook (minimum of three pages), including your photos, markers, and paper. Include the favorite things you did on your family vacation or day trip.

### Expert Level

- Share your scrapbook with the people you went on your trip with.
- Teach a friend how to scrapbook.

# Stitching & Crafting

## 5. Toys

### Beginner Level

- Talk to your parents or grandparents about what kinds of toys they played with when they were little. How were toys different then from toys now?

### Intermediate Level

- Make your own paper dolls or finger puppets.

### Expert Level

- Put on a show with your new toys for your family.