

Joint Statement of the Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast, Girl Scouts of Manitou and Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Badgerland

Girl Scouting is proud of its long-standing relationship with the Catholic Church, dating back more than 100 years. The motivating force in Girl Scouting is spiritual and as a member of Girl Scouts, each girl is encouraged to become a stronger member of her own religious community.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee acknowledges the long history of mutual support with Girl Scouting. Girl Scout troops have been a consistent presence in many of our parishes and schools, working in close cooperation with pastors, principals and other leaders, for the benefit of young women and the broader community.

In recent years, questions have been raised concerning Catholic participation in Girl Scouting. To address these questions at the national level, staff of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) dialogued extensively with staff of the Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), and in April 2014, the USCCB produced a resource for Catholic leaders and parents.

We acknowledge the value of that conversation at the national level and we take this occasion to issue a companion statement regarding Girl Scouts and the Catholic Church in our local setting.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee:

- recognizes the positive impact that Girl Scouting has on girls, their development and their faith;
- strongly supports Catholic girls and leaders in Girl Scouting;
- approves of parishes and Catholic schools sponsoring troops, providing meeting space, and promoting involvement in Girl Scouts;
- continues to serve Catholic girls and adult volunteers through the religious recognition programs and other Catholic activities.

The Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast, Girl Scouts of Manitou, and Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Badgerland:

- respect the religious faith and practices of all girls, and the role of parents and church leaders in providing religious instruction;
- operate troops associated with Catholic schools or parishes in compliance with Catholic teaching and archdiocesan policies, including safe environment expectations;
- do not take a position on issues of human sexuality, abortion or birth control, believing these are matters best discussed within the family;
- have no official relationship with Planned Parenthood and will not partner with that organization in programs or advocacy;
- confirm that all proceeds from Girl Scout cookie activities remain with the council and troops;
- recognize that troops sponsored by Catholic institutions may express global solidarity and service by means other than use of the WAGGGS pin or activities.

Together, the Archdiocese and these Councils are committed to maintaining open communication regarding concerns or questions that may arise, and they will assist troops, leaders, and parents in providing a fruitful experience for their Girl Scouts.