



CATHOLICFAQ

American Heritage Girls (AHG), founded in 1995, is a Christ-centered character development program for girls ages 5 to 18, dedicated to its mission of building **women of integrity** through service to God, family, community, and country.

There are Catholic AHG Troops in over 50% of all US Dioceses. To learn more about AHG in the Catholic Church, please visit:

www.americanheritagegirls.org/catholiccommittee



The AHG Program focuses on six Program Emphases: Faith, Leadership, Citizenship, Social, Emotional, and Life Skills.

AHG and its Christ Centered Focus

1. How does AHG maintain its Christ-centered focus?

AHG's Christ-centered focus is protected by the AHG Code of Regulations with regard to the AHG Statement of Faith, Oath and Creed. Spiritual Development is foundational to the AHG Program and included as one of the six Program Emphases. In addition, Christ's messages are woven throughout the AHG Program and religious recognition opportunities are provided. Each Troop is required to have a Troop Shepherd who cares for the flock, keeping Christ central to the Troop.

2. Why does AHG have a Statement of Faith?

Since 1998, AHG has required AHG Adult Members to sign the AHG Statement of Faith. Just as Jesus carefully selected His disciples, AHG considers the selection of Adult Volunteers and Charter Organizations to be very important. As a result of the desire for these positions of leadership to be Christ-centered, AHG has adopted an ecumenical Statement of Faith. The Statement of Faith helps to ensure the parents of AHG Girls that the AHG experience will align with their faith.

AHG and the Catholic Church

4. How has AHG been received in the Catholic Church?

There have been seven Dioceses that have formally endorsed AHG: Diocese of Rockford, Diocese of Birmingham, Diocese of Fort Worth, Archdiocese of St. Louis, Archdiocese of Kansas City, KS, Archdiocese of Omaha, Diocese of Colorado Springs, and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Several other Dioceses have approved AHG within their Dioceses. To date, there are Catholic AHG Troops in over 50% of all US Dioceses. To learn more about AHG in the Catholic Church, please refer to:

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5. Can girls earn the Marian Award and other Religious Recognitions from NFCYM?

Yes, the Marian and NFCYM Religious Recognitions are open to all youth to learn more about their Catholic faith and earn their Religious Recognition Award. Catholic girls earning their Patriot Level Award are required to earn their Catholic Religious Recognition.

6. Does AHG offer Badges to help the Catholic AHG Girls grow in their faith?

AHG has 276 Badges. Churches are encouraged to weave their faith into the badges, but a few specific badges that focus on spiritual development include: Daughter of the King and Bible Basics. AHG also offers the, Respect Life Activity Patch that is earned by a girl fulfilling a service project that demonstrates a reverence for life from conception to natural death. In AHG, faith is not an "add-on," it is foundational. AHG's tagline says it all: Faith, Service and Fun.

7. Does the AHG National Catholic Committee offer a program for Catholic AHG Girl Members to grow in their faith?

The AHG NCC offers support for all of the Catholic Troops and members in the American Heritage Girls. They serve as a liaison with the Troop and the Diocese. A US Bishop serves as the Episcopal Moderator of the Committee insuring its work is true to the Magisterium. The AHG NCC has created

activity patches for the Jubilee Year of Mercy and the 100th Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima. The committee is in process of developing additional activity patches and will continue to develop new patches to support initiatives in the Catholic Church.

AHG and the Charter Relationship

8. What denomination is AHG?

AHG is not a church or denomination. AHG supports the Charter Organizations (churches and religious schools) and encourages each Charter Organization to teach its own faith traditions.

9. What is the relationship between the AHG Troop and the Charter Organization (church or school where it meets)?

An AHG Troop is Chartered by a church or school. The Troop operates under the auspices and authority of its Charter Organization, molding the ministry according to the faith teachings of its Charter Organization and in alignment with the AHG Statement of Faith.

10. Why does the Troop need a Charter Organization?

AHG partners with the Charter Organization to accomplish their mutual goals for youth. The Charter Organization is much more than a meeting location. The Charter Organization offers oversight and guidance while supporting the Troop with Volunteer candidate selection, risk management, spiritual growth and overall well-being of the Troop. The Troop provides service to its Charter Organization, aligns with the AHG Charter Ministry Agreement, and promotes the Charter Organization to the community.

The AHG Experience

11. What does an AHG Troop Meeting look like?

All Program Levels (ages 5-18) begin together with an opening Flag Ceremony, announcements and prayer. Girls break into their individual Units by Program Level for Unit time. Unit time typically consists of Badge work, service projects, fun activities, and/or special guests. AHG's unique program design allows for mentoring between girls of varied ages. Over the years, this "family friendly" Troop structure has resulted in high retention and family commitment. Troop Meetings typically occur bi-monthly but frequency of meetings is ultimately determined by the Charter Organization and its Troop's Board. For more information visit:

www.americanheritagegirls.org/program/emphases/

12. Does my daughter need to join in Kindergarten to gain the full benefits of the AHG Program?

A girl may join at any level and still be able to gain the full benefits of the AHG Program. There are five Program Levels in American Heritage Girls. A girl has the opportunity to earn a Level Award in the last year of each Program Level. Patriot Level girls may go above and beyond to earn the highest award for American Heritage Girls, The Stars & Stripes Award. This is the most presti-

gious of Awards, and it requires a great deal of time, sacrifice and devotion to achieve. Stars & Stripes Recipients have completed a variety of projects helping their community.

13. Do AHG girls go to summer camp?

Troops across the nation offer wonderful summer resident camps and day camps for girls. Girls gather at many different summer camps throughout the summer to learn new skills and make lasting friendships. Outdoor opportunities are integral to a well-rounded AHG Program. Troops and Members from across the nation have a choice of thousands of camps available for their use such as local/state/national parks and Christian camps. A listing of camps utilized by AHG Troops is available through AHG's Member website: AHGsource.

14. What are registration costs for girls and adults?

AHG registration for a girl or adult is \$26. The registration cost covers Member record processing, liability insurance for all Registered Members, KEYS Youth Protection Training and background checks for all Registered Adult Members. If a family needs financial assistance for registration or uniform, AHG recommends that they seek assistance within the local Troop, Charter Organization or local community organizations such as the Knights of Columbus or Council of Catholic Women.

15. How much does it cost to start an AHG Troop?

The initial Charter Fee is \$325. The subsequent years are \$195. Charter Fees cover the annual cost for Start Up and Welcome Back Boxes that are filled with Trainings, new Initiatives, Member Lanyards and other useful tools for Volunteers. In addition AHG provides free Badge Helps, Program Resources, online Library, continued Trainings, online registration and event capabilities, etc. AHG Troops are assessed a \$20 a year Program Support Fee per Girl Member (\$50 sister family cap). This fee is not assessed during the first year of a Troop's existence in order for the Troop to discover successful fundraising opportunities that best fit the Troop and its families. Once established the Troop can finance this fee through Troop fundraising or directly from the family. To date, most Troops pay these fees through the profits made from their fundraisers.

16. How does an AHG Troop fundraise?

An AHG Troop is not required to fundraise, but may have up to three fundraisers per year. Each AHG Troop may select its own type of fundraiser. Troops retain all profits from their fundraising efforts. AHG has established various fundraising partners who offer turnkey, cobranded programs of fundraising specific to AHG. These fundraising partners are available to Troops if they so choose, but their use is not mandated.

For additional information on AHG and the Catholic Church, please contact Julie Goodwin, Catholic Relations Specialist at goodwinj@ahgonline.org or by phone at 513-771-2025.