



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 3, 2012

## Christ-Centered Girl Scouts Alternative Group Gaining Popularity

For some, the Girl Scouts of the USA has not been adhering to the principles that originally served as the foundation of the organization, and has even gone as far as to revise its pledge, reflecting a major transition in the organization's function. Likewise, the organization continues to come under fire for a number of items, including its recent decision to allow a little boy to become a member. For this reason, an alternative organization has become increasingly popular and hopes to siphon off some would-be Girl Scouts, touting as its selling point that its agenda is Christ-centered: the American Heritage Girls (AHG).



The American Heritage Girls describes itself as "a nonprofit organization dedicated to the mission of building women of integrity through service to God, family, community and country." It was founded in 1995 by a group of parents who were interested in seeking a Christ-centered alternative to organizations that they viewed as becoming increasingly secular, such as the Girl Scouts.

The quest for a Judeo-Christian organization turned up few results, prompting the parents to simply launch a group of their own, and in the 16 years since its inception, it has grown dramatically.

"We are a Christ-center character development program for girls ages five to 18," said Patti Garibay, executive director of AHG and one of the founding members of the organization.

According to Garibay, a mother of four, she felt compelled to create AHG, not because she had time to spare, but because she recognized that there was a need.

"I just thought that we were creating a little club for my third daughter. I had led my older girls through Girl Scouting," she explains. "In 1993, when the Girl Scouts allowed for flexibility of the word 'God,' I began to have a moral dilemma."

It was that year, 1993, that the Girl Scouts chose to change its pledge. *The Blaze* reports:

The Girl Scouts, having trouble attracting individuals who did not necessarily embrace a Judeo-Christian view of God, voted 1,560 to 375 to alter its pledge. While the Scout's promise would retain its official wording, individuals were allowed to substitute "God" with words they deemed more fitting. While the original reference to a higher power was never definitively said to be Christian in nature, this change was a major milestone in many families' decision to separate from the group.

It was at that time that Garibay decided to leave the Girl Scouts, even though it was part of her personal ministry. She no longer wanted to be part of an organization which would not define God as a



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central figure in its pledge.

That decision prompted her to call a meeting with several other parents around a kitchen table, and from that, the American Heritage Girls was born.

"We started a little club," she said. "Before we knew it, people from California were calling us."

Parents became interested in the new organization, whose tagline is "faith, service, and fun," particularly those who were interested in discovering a program for their children that was driven by Christ.

The organization has expanded to 44 states and four countries, and has grown to include nearly 20,000 young girls. And even as the group is Christian by nature, it includes girls from all faiths.

And as the Girl Scouts of the USA becomes more secularized, the American Heritage Girls grows.

"Over 90 percent of the people who come to us have left the Girl Scouts — we're like the best kept secret," Garibay says.

According to Garibay, the difference between AHG and the Girl Scouts is simple: "it's basically a secular worldview versus a Biblical worldview. I wish the Girl Scouts would be honest and open about what they really stand for."

The Girl Scouts has come under some fire, particularly in recent weeks after it made the [decision](#) to allow a gender-confused seven-year old boy to join their organization. Bobby Montoya, though a boy, identifies himself as a girl, and like his older sister, wanted to join the Girl Scouts. The troop leader of the Girl Scouts of Colorado initially denied Montoya membership, asserting that as a boy, there was no place for him in the organization. But the Girl Scouts of Colorado then issued a statement to a local TV station asserting they are an all-inclusive organization and will accept Bobby.

"If a child identifies as a girl and the child's family presents her as a girl, Girl Scouts of Colorado welcomes her as a Girl Scout," the statement said. "In this case, an associate delivering our program was not aware of our approach. She contacted her supervisor, who immediately began working with the family to get the child involved and supported in Girl Scouts."

Likewise, the troop leader who initially rejected Bobby was forced to take "sensitivity classes."

In 2010, the Girl Scouts of the USA published a book called *Media*, which was designed for girls in grades six through eight. The book sought to help young girls understand the media messages surrounding them. Unfortunately, the book [directs](#) young girls to the George Soros-funded website Media Matters for America as a prime source for understanding current events and for debunking myths:

The Internet is a breeding ground for "urban legends," that are false stories told as if true. Next time you receive a text or e-mail about something that seems unbelievable, confirm it before you spread it.

The fact-checking site [snopes.com](http://snopes.com) investigates everything from urban legends to "news" articles and posts its findings. Media Matters for America (<http://mediamatters.org/>) gets the word out about media misinformation.

Evidently, the reference to Media Matters received a great deal of negative responses because the Girl Scouts announced it would be reprinting the book.



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Additionally, Sydney Volanski, a former Girl Scout, co-edits a website entitled “Speak Now: Girl Scouts Website” which cites a number of examples of liberal bias within the organization.

The AHG is designed in much the same way as the Girl Scouts, having over 200 badges to hand out, and engaging in service projects, which is a requirement in order for girls to advance in the group.

According to the AHG website, an average AHG troop might look something like this:

- meet during the day, in the evening or even on the weekends. Most Troops meet during the school year but some meet year-round.
- meet once a week, every other week or twice a month. Those details are determined by the Troop Leadership with input from the interested families.
- vary in size. Some Troops have as few as 10-12 girls and some are as large as 150 girls. The average number of girls per Troop is about 35-40.
- be chartered through a church, private school or other non-profit organization that abides by the [AHG Statement of Faith](#).

Interestingly, even as the American Heritage Girls seeks to distinguish itself from the Girl Scouts, it works very closely with the Boy Scouts, which is an entirely different organization from the Girl Scouts and has managed to retain its faith-based initiative. In 2009, the Boy Scouts announced its partnership with the AHG, and presented the group with a Memorandum of Mutual Support at the 2009 National Leadership Conference in Cincinnati.

Most impressively, the American Heritage Girls operates solely on donations from families and does not accept government funding.

“The blessings we’re seeing are incredible,” Garibay says. “God had all those fruits in mind.”

*Photo: An American Heritage Girls Explorer uniform.*



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