



We hope you enjoy this monthly newsletter. Our goal is to nurture and build stronger faith partners. Everything in Girl Scouting is based on the Girl Scout Promise and Law, which includes many of the principles and values common across religions. So while we are a secular organization, Girl Scouts has always encouraged girls to take spiritual journeys via their faiths' religious recognitions.



## A Place for All Girls With All Types of Abilities

In today's environment, some girls may be experiencing certain pressures and anxieties; they may feel unsure, confused, or even threatened. Girl Scouts has truly been, and will always be, a movement for ALL girls—a place where girls can, must, and will feel safe to explore their potential, learn new skills, make lifelong friends, and tap into their potential to be leaders. This article for all volunteers discusses how you can ensure Girl Scouts is inclusive and welcoming for all girls.

In this article, we will focus on abilities—on what girls tagged as having disabilities can do rather than on what they cannot. If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs to make her successful, simply ask her or her parent/guardian. If you are frank and accessible, it's likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone. It's important for all girls to be rewarded based on their best efforts not on the completion of a task. Give any girl the opportunity to do her best and she will. Sometimes that means changing a few rules or approaching an activity in a more creative way. Here are some examples of ways to modify activities:

- Invite a girl to complete an activity after she has observed others doing it.
- If you are visiting a museum to view sculpture, find out if a girl who is blind might be given permission to touch the pieces.
- If an activity requires running, a girl who is unable to run could be asked to walk or do another physical movement.
- In addition, note that people-first language puts the person before the disability.

At Girl Scouts, a commitment to inclusivity is part of our DNA. Girl Scouts was founded by a daring and courageous woman—Juliette Gordon Low—who wasn't afraid to break the mold and who plainly stated that Girl Scouts was to be a movement "for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world." For 110 years, Girl Scouts has actively embraced all girls. Through turbulent and troubled times, through wars and economic depressions, and through periods of peace and prosperity, we have always served girls from every walk of life, regardless of their race, ethnicity, abilities, religious affiliation, economic standing, orientation, country of birth, or family history. Girl Scout volunteers and other adults supporting the mission have the responsibility to make all individuals feel welcome and able to fully participate in all Girl Scout activities, which means accommodating the differing needs of girls and their parents/guardians, and other members.

When you have an environment that is truly inclusive, individuals feel comfortable being themselves. They feel more comfortable sharing ideas, and it's through all these different perspectives that you come up with innovation.

**Within each Girl Scout troop or group is a world of diversity and a wide variety of talents and abilities.**



“Anesha has loved Girl Scouts from the moment she joined,” her mom Latoshia Wilson said. “Now, she’s just one of the girls. None of the girls treat Anesha any different from any other girl in the troop. This camping trip was special, she absolutely loved it.”

*Pictured: Girl Scout Junior Anesha Nixon canoeing with her mom, Latoshia Wilson. Girl Scouts have given Anesha wonderful experiences to help her grow in her abilities.*

## **Visit a GSCCC Property for Your Next Outdoor Adventure!**

GSCCC has many properties, camps, and facilities that be can rented for day and overnight use by faith groups, businesses, and individuals. Properties are handicap accessible. For more information visit the **[camps and facilities page](#)** at [gsccc.org](http://gsccc.org). For questions email **[customercare@gsccc.org](mailto:customercare@gsccc.org)**.

## **What is P.R.A.Y.?**

Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y.) is a not-for-profit organization whose national board of directors includes representatives from Protestant and Independent Christian Churches and the national youth agencies. Learn more [praypub.org](http://praypub.org).

## **My Promise, My Faith**

Girls of all grade levels in Girl Scouts can earn the My Promise, My Faith pin, which complements existing religious recognitions and allows girls to

further strengthen the connection between their faith and Girl Scouts. Once each year, a girl can earn the My Promise, My Faith pin by carefully examining the Girl Scout Law and tying it directly to tenets of her faith.

## **Religious Recognitions**

Created by national religious organizations to encourage the spiritual growth of youth members, religious recognition programs reinforce many of the values integral to Girl Scouting and help girls grow stronger in and learn more about their chosen faith.

Each religious organization develops and administers its own program. The brochure “To Serve God” (PDF) lists the religious recognitions created by various faith groups. You can find this brochure, a video explaining religious recognition programs, and other resources for collaborating with faith communities at P.R.A.Y. Publishing.

Contact us at [customercare@gscce.org](mailto:customercare@gscce.org) to set up time to meet with you virtually or in person. We’d like to share how your place of faith can be a Girl Scout partner and help strengthen the lives of girls in our community.

**Already a partner? Great!** We’d love to share a story you might have with others. Email your story and any photos to [marcomm@gscce.org](mailto:marcomm@gscce.org).

## **We'd love to hear from you!**

If you're interested in receiving more information about Girl Scouts, contact [customercare@gscce.org](mailto:customercare@gscce.org).