



February 11, 2012

Updated National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) Position Statement on Girl Scouts USA (GSUSA)

Refer to January 2011 Position Statement for Additional Background

Preface

NFCYM “serves those who serve the young Catholic Church” and advocates for the teachings and values of the Catholic Church in all arenas, including and especially, the challenge of Pope John Paul II to evangelize culture. In light of the new evangelization, NFCYM’s policy and approach in relating to secular and public organizations and institutions is one of advocacy through engagement and dialogue. It is estimated that several hundred thousand Catholic girls and women are involved in Girl Scouting. As such, they are a significant constituency within Catholic youth ministry and the Catholic Church, deserving of our support and advocacy.

NFCYM Principles and Approach

These principles guide our work:

- *Advocacy:* NFCYM takes seriously its role as an advocate for the values and teachings of the Catholic Church in the secular arena. As such, we promote a comprehensive approach to youth ministry and for the involvement of young people in the Catholic faith community.
- *Engagement:* NFCYM believes that the evangelization of culture is only possible through direct and regular engagement with society, organizations, and institutions. Separation and isolation only widen the gap of ignorance, fear, and distrust, yielding little benefit for the church and young people we serve.
- *Dialogue:* NFCYM is committed to regular patterns of direct and respectful communication; building relationships of trust; and serious discussions where issues are identified and solutions and responses implemented.

Current Issues

Several issues have arisen in the past two years that have caused some leaders and organizations to question the relationship between GSUSA and the Catholic Church, and between the GSUSA and NFCYM, through our National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire (NCCGSCF).

In 2010, a fundamental accusation was raised that GSUSA had taken an intentional position contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage, abortion, contraception, and sexuality. In 2011 and 2012 the accusations continued.

Our practice as an organization is to investigate, understand, and then, if necessary, challenge such matters by going directly to the sources involved. As a result, NFCYM has been in direct contact with GSUSA leadership and has engaged in substantial conversation characterized by mutual respect and shared goals.

Also, with this matter, NFCYM has met with, and is in ongoing communication and consultation with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Results of Dialogue

NFCYM has met with GSUSA, including their new CEO, Anna Maria Chavez, who has committed to continued dialogue. This has resulted in:

- GSUSA’s commitment to strengthening their relationship with faith communities and honoring the religious principles in their program resource material. Therefore, changes have recently been made to GSUSA’s print and web program content as a result of the issues of concern raised by NFCYM and others. In addition, a thorough review of all GSUSA program resources is in process by GSUSA.
- The national staffs of both organizations having committed to promote positive intersections of our youth development programs and strongly encouraging relationship-building at the local level.
- Communication strategies that more quickly and successfully address accusations and communicate factual information.

Serving Those Who Serve the Young Catholic Church

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