



Ohio archbishop ends long-standing Girl Scouts partnerships because of 'gender ideology'





Archbishop Dennis Schnurr celebrates Mass at the tomb of St. Peter along with other bishops from the United States. | Credit: David Kerr/CNA



By **Kate Quiñones**

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The archbishop of Cincinnati is ending a 110-year relationship with Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) due to the group promoting gender ideology “contrary” to Catholic teaching.

Archbishop Dennis Schnurr **announced** that pastors in the archdiocese must discontinue any partnerships with GSUSA **by December 2025**.

“The Archdiocese of Cincinnati cannot partner with an organization that, from its highest level, advocates ideas which the Church considers false and harmful,” Schnurr wrote in the Oct. 28 **letter to the faithful**.



Schnurr noted that GSUSA “has embraced and promoted an impoverished worldview regarding gender and sexuality” through some activities, badges, and resources. GSUSA and its local chapter in Ohio “has contributed to normalizing a sexual and gender ideology contrary to the Catholic understanding of the human person made male and female in the image and likeness of God,” he noted.

“Our greatest responsibility as the Catholic Church is fidelity to the Gospel and sharing the saving mission of Christ,” Schnurr said. “It is therefore essential that all youth programs at our parishes and schools affirm virtues and values consistent with the teaching of Jesus Christ.”

Schnurr noted that the decision to pull away from GSUSA “has not been made lightly” and that the Church has been in conversation with leaders of the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio (GSWO).



“Despite mutually respectful discussions and communication with the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio over the past two years, we have been unable to agree on an acceptable path forward,” he wrote.

In recent years, the archdiocese has been in conversation with GSWO over a “memorandum of understanding” over what practices

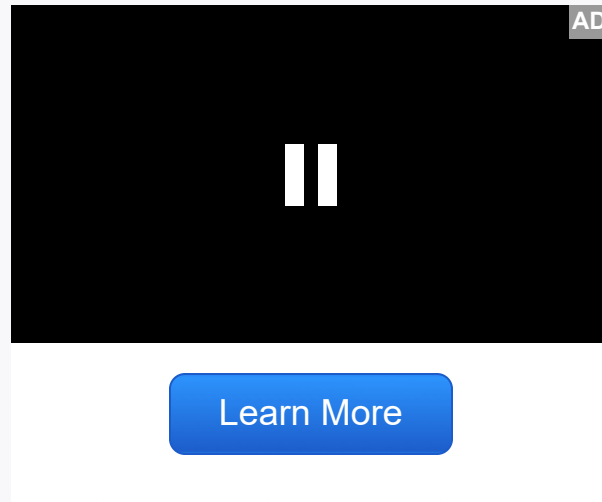
are permissible for Girl Scout troops in the archdiocese. In 2023, the archdiocese requested that GSWO “cease promotion of activities, resources, badges, and awards repugnant to Catholic teaching,” but the two groups reached an “impasse” in April of this year over phrasing in the memorandum, **according to** the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Schnurr noted that scouting “is fundamentally good” as it “builds virtue, discipline, and community” and “helps form responsible, well-rounded citizens.” The archbishop shared his gratitude to those who served as scout leaders for “faithfully helping young people incorporate the values and lessons traditionally associated with scouting into their lives.”

“While this development is difficult to share, it does not diminish my profound respect and appreciation for the many Girl Scout leaders in our archdiocese who have faithfully served our youth,” Schnurr said.

GSWO said in a **statement** that it was “deeply disappointed” by the archbishop’s decision, according to a **report** by WLWT5.

Objectionable Girl Scout materials, practices



In a list of objectionable Girl Scout materials, the archdiocese highlighted the “Inclusive Together” patch, which features a “Social Identity Wheel” encouraging girls to identify their sexual orientation and gender identity in group conversations.

The archdiocese also highlighted the “LGBTQ+ Pride Month Fun” patch, which promotes the idea that gender can be rejected and encourages girls to watch LGBTQ+ movies including rated R and TV-MA materials.

Several controversies have peppered the GSUSA in the past decade, such as the national group’s decision to implement **LGBTQ+ Pride Month patches** as well as a controversy about “gender inclusive” **overnight camps**.

The national group says it leaves placement decisions for transgender youth on a case-by-case basis but notes that GSUSA “can serve” biological boys who identify as girls, “if the child is recognized by the family and school/community as a girl and lives culturally as a girl,” according to its [website](#).

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The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) released the results of a **two-year investigation** into GSUSA in 2014. The inquiry followed reports that the GSUSA contributed to the World Association of Girl Guides and Scouts, which is tied to Planned Parenthood and abortion and contraception advocacy, the USCCB **found**. Following the investigation, the USCCB advised dioceses to work with local Girl Scout chapters on acceptable materials for Catholic troops.

GSUSA **denies** any partnership with Planned Parenthood on its website and states that it does not take a stance on abortion, birth control, or sexuality.

American Heritage Girls are favored

Schnurr recently endorsed a **faith-based scouting group**, American Heritage Girls (**AHG**), encouraging parishes to partner with the group. AHG has a committee designed to support Catholic girls in their faith, which has Bishop James Conley of the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, as its episcopal moderator.

“Scouting can be an efficacious part of Catholic youth ministry, espousing a way of life congruent with the Gospel, as it has in our own archdiocese for decades,” Schnurr stated.

Other Catholic leaders have endorsed AHG, including Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, who, in 2017, authorized an archdiocesan transition from Girl Scouts to American Heritage Girls. Other Catholic dioceses and archdioceses including Birmingham, Alabama; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Fort Worth, Texas; Milwaukee; Omaha, Nebraska; and Rockford, Illinois, have endorsed AHG in recent years.

GSWO did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Tags: **Catholic News, Archdiocese of Singapore, Archbishop Schnurr, American Heritage Girls, Girl Scouts**



Kate Quiñones is a staff writer for Catholic News Agency and a fellow of the College Fix. She has been published by the Wall Street Journal, the Denver Catholic Register, and CatholicVote, and she graduated from Hillsdale College. She lives in Colorado with her husband.



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