

Increasing Membership through Religious Awards

Although religious awards have been recognized in terms of “program,” they have been overlooked in terms of “membership”. The religious awards programs can be used by local councils to increase membership in the following ways:

Community Sponsorship

- The religious awards programs (the curriculum and recognition items) are created by the national religious organizations, not by the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. This allows councils to initiate dialogue with local congregations about one of their own resources designed to serve their youth.
- The religious awards programs can help a congregation embrace Girl Scouting not as an outside group that meets in its building, but as an integral part of their ministry with youth. Local congregations will not only be providing religious instruction through the religious awards programs, but they will also be strengthening the spiritual component of Girl Scouting.
- The religious recognitions programs can be presented not only as opportunities for religious education, but also for ministry and outreach. For example, a faith community that offers the God and Country Mentor program for parents is ministering to the whole family, not just to the child. And a faith community that offers a religious awards class and publicizes it through the council newsletter might be reaching out to girls of the same faith who do not have membership in a religious institution but are interested in earning their religious award.

Diverse Membership

- The religious awards programs can help councils reach diverse racial and ethnic groups and specific geographic areas or communities not being served by the Girl Scout program. The religious awards programs provide an instant and visible connection between Girl Scouting and a faith community.

Adult Leaders

- Adults active in a congregation may volunteer as counselors for the religious awards programs because they see that as a direct extension of their congregation’s ministry. The religious awards programs may be their first exposure to the Girl Scout program.
- The continuity and tenure of adult leaders in religious institutions is greater than those in other areas.

Resources to Promote Religious Awards

- To Serve God brochure – Available at www.praypub.org.
- “Religious Awards Presentation Script: A Presentation by Girl Scout leaders to Troops and Parents” – Available at www.praypub.org
- Religious Awards: What are they? Why Promote them? How to promote them?

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