



National Catholic Committee on Scouting

Date: August 29, 2018

To: Institution Heads (IH)
Chartered Organization Representatives (COR)

From: George Sparks, National Chairman
Fr. Kevin Smith, National Chaplain

Subject: Boy Scouts of America – Family Scouting Program

In recent years a number of changes have occurred in the programs of the Boy Scouts of America. With the information in this packet we hope to clarify one of the most recent modifications: Family Scouting.

Your bishop has received the enclosed two letters from Bishop Daniel Conlon, Episcopal Liaison from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS). This communication is not an attempt to undercut or bypass the local Ordinary.

In the letter from Bishop Conlon dated May 7, 2018, the bishop gave an overview of the Family Scouting Program. We want to emphasize that neither the Cub Scout program nor the Boy Scout program is co-ed; boys and girls will belong to separate dens or packs in Cub Scouts and separate troops in Boy Scouts, each of which will have their own leaders.

In the letter dated July 23, 2018, Bishop Conlon clarified some of the questions which had been raised by both clergy and laity. There is a resource contained as a web link in this letter.

There are additional resources listed on the Resources page contained in the package.

Bishop Conlon advised the bishops that they should consider providing some guidance in the implementation of Family Scouting. We, the leadership of the NCCS, are attempting to facilitate this process. Please, defer to your bishop for his guidance.

Enclosures:

BSA Chief Scout Executive's Memo
Bishop Conlon's letter of May 7, 2018
Bishop Conlon's letter of July 23, 2018
Resources Sheet

A MESSAGE FROM

The Chief Scout Executive



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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Dear Institution Head and Chartered Organization Representative:

Scouting has been the center of many conversations over the past few months, and I know you have received many questions about the direction of Scouting. In an effort to help understand some of these changes, Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon, Bishop of Joliet and Episcopal Liaison to the NCCS (National Catholic Committee on Scouting), sent the attached letters to the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) to clarify certain aspects of Family Scouting and updates of the Boy Scouts of America.

In addition to the letters, I would like to share with you some resources that explain in more detail the changes and the benefits of serving the entire family in your parish.

I look forward to continuing our strong relationship with the Catholic Church and I am excited about Scouting's future.

Yours in Scouting,

Mike

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael B. Surbaugh".

Michael B. Surbaugh
CHIEF SCOUT EXECUTIVE





May 7, 2018

Dear Brothers,

Since last fall I have been serving as the official USCCB liaison to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. It has been an interesting first few months in that role.

As you are undoubtedly aware, last October, the Boy Scouts of America announced its adoption of “Family Scouting”. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify a few aspects of this significant change in the BSA program. Two issues are of particular importance to us as pastoral leaders.

First, on the surface, “Family Scouting” may seem to be a cover for making Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts co-ed. But the Boy Scouts of America makes it very clear that the impetus for family Scouting came from parents who were looking for a way to engage both their sons and daughters in the same program, thus strengthening family unity, especially in an era when so many mothers are in the work force. Just as important, boys and girls can (and in some cases must) be separated within the individual Cub Scout packs and Boy Scout troops (Scouts BSA – as of 2019).

Second, each organization which is chartered to conduct the Scouting program (such as a parish) is free to have family Scouting or not. While it is assumed that most chartered organizations will adopt the change, the matter should be given careful consideration.

In some respects, Family Scouting is not as large a change as it may seem. The BSA has had young women involved in its Exploring and Venturing programs for years. Most of our programs for young people in the Church, including schools, incorporate both boys and girls. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting has taken the stance of supporting Family Scouting and does not consider any such changes as diminishing Scouting as an excellent instrument for ministry with young people.

I take this opportunity to thank you for the leadership that you exercise with regard to Scouting. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting and Scouting-BSA rely on the engagement of the leaders of chartered partners to assure the effectiveness of Scouting in helping to form young people in the image of Christ. If you have questions or concerns regarding Scouting, please, let me know.

May the Lord bless you and all whom you serve in his Name.

Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
Bishop of Joliet

(slightly modified version of the original letter)

Diocese of Joliet

Office of the Bishop



Blanchette Catholic Center
16555 Weber Rd.
Crest Hill, Illinois 60403

July 23, 2018

Dear Brothers,

Recently I had the opportunity to serve on the faculty of a training program at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. The program was arranged by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, and most of the participants were members of diocesan committees on Scouting. The primary purpose of the training program was to assist the participants in making Scouting more effective as a means of youth ministry.

Although the program covered many topics, the Boy Scouts of America's introduction of "Family Scouting", permitting girls into the Cub Scout and what will be called the "Scouts BSA" program for youth eleven and older, received considerable attention. I wrote to you about this innovation a few weeks ago.

As I mentioned at that time, it will be up to each chartered partner, such as a parish, to decide whether to adopt the change. However, participants at the training program thought that it would be helpful for Catholic chartered partners to receive some guidance from their diocese. Although there does not need to be uniformity throughout a diocese, a bishop may decide that there should be. You may simply want to provide some guidance.

My suggestion is that you consult with your own diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting (if you have one) and your youth ministry staff. You may also wish to consult with your diocesan Pastoral Council and Presbyteral Council.

To assist you and your advisors, I have attached a rather thorough "question and answer" provided by the Boy Scouts of America <https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FAQ-Family-Program-061218-FINAL.pdf>. If you have further questions, please, feel free to contact me or your local Scout office.

May the Lord bless you and your ministry.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Daniel Conlon". To the left of the signature is a small blue cross.

Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
USCCB Liaison to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting
Bishop of Joliet

Resources

Chartered Organizations Toolkit

<https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Chartered-Organizations-Toolkit.pdf>

Family Scouting Infographic – Chartered Organizations

https://scoutingwire.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Family-Scouting_Infographic_Chartered-Org_11x17_v2.pdf

The organization name is NOT changing

<https://41zfam1pstr03my3b22ztkze-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Family-Scouting-Program-Update-New.jpg>