



AMERICAN
HERITAGE
GIRLS®
FAITH | SERVICE | FUN

American Heritage Girls
Troop IL1320
Charter Organization Name
Troop Orientation Packet
2023-2024

Table of Contents

Welcome to AHG!	3
About AHG	3
AHG Program and Girl Experience	6
Family Responsibilities	8
Finances	9
Health and Safety	10

Welcome to AHG!

We are grateful that your family has chosen to participate in AHG this Program Year! As a Ministry Team, we are praying that the Lord would use AHG to help your girl grow into a woman of integrity. This handbook is a resource for your family as we begin this Program Year together.

About AHG

Troop Vision Statement

To lead by example, by not just going through the motions, but by showing we are proud and excited to be God's children.

AHG Mission Statement

Building women of integrity through service to God, family, community and country.

AHG Oath

"I promise to love God,
Cherish my family,
Honor my country,
And Serve in my community."

AHG Creed

As an American Heritage Girl, I promise to be:

Compassionate	Understanding others in fellowship, empathy, kindness, and caring. Respect others' opinions and emotions.
Helpful	Willingly serve others.
Honest	Always tell the truth and keep my promises.
Loyal	True to God, family, friends, community and country.
Perseverant	Continuing to strive toward a goal despite obstacles.
Pure	Keep my mind and body pure.
Resourceful	Wisely use my time, materials and talents.
Respectful	Honor my country, be obedient to those in authority, and courteous to all.
Responsible	Accountable for my own actions. Reliable in all situations.
Reverent	Faithful and honoring to God. Respectful to the beliefs of others.

Statement of Faith

American Heritage Girls is a Christ-centered leadership and character development ministry. Within the local AHG Troop, the primary statement/profession of Christian beliefs, faith, and/or doctrine is that belonging to the chartering Church/Organization. As with any of its ministries, the Church/Organization should take steps to ensure the Troop appropriately reflects these beliefs. Furthermore, all American Heritage Girls' Charter Organizations, Adult Members and Adult Leaders, must concurrently adhere to the Christian principles stated in AHG's Statement of Faith:

We believe that there is one Triune God – Father; Jesus Christ, His one and only Son; and the Holy Spirit – Creator of the universe and eternally existent. We believe the Holy Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) to be the inspired and authoritative Word of God. We believe each person is created in His image for the purpose of communing with and worshipping God. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Who enables us to live Godly lives. We believe that each individual is called to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength; and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We believe God calls us to lives of purity, service, stewardship and integrity.

Clarity is further provided to the following terms:

Purity – God calls us to lives of holiness, being pure of heart, mind, word and deed. We are to reserve sexual activity to the sanctity of marriage; a lifelong commitment before God between a

man and a woman.

Service – God calls us to become responsible members of our community and the world through selfless acts that contribute to the welfare of others.

Stewardship – God calls to use our God-given time, talents and money wisely.

Integrity – God calls us to live moral lives that demonstrate an inward motivation to do what is right, regardless of the cost.

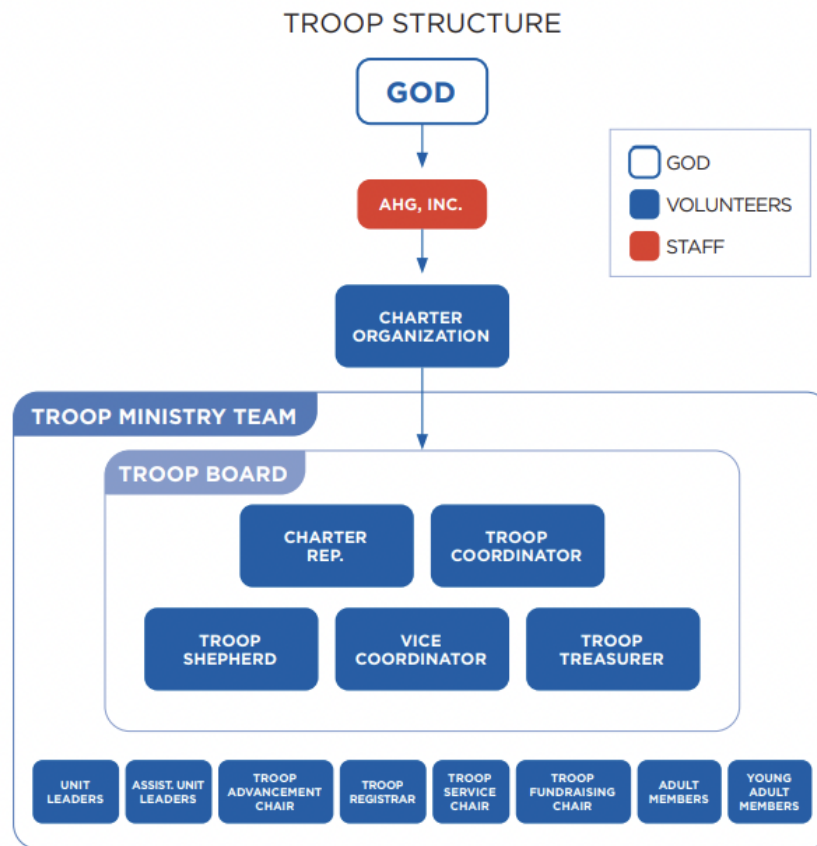
American Heritage Girls' Girl Membership Policy:

All biological girls of any color, race, national origin and socioeconomic status who agree to live according to the standards of the AHG Oath and the AHG Creed are invited to be a member of American Heritage Girls.

Role of the Charter Organization

An AHG Charter Organization is typically a church or Christian non-profit. They are the vehicle by which AHG is brought to a local community. Troop IL-1320 is Chartered by (Edgemont Bible Church). Though the Charter Organization owns the Troop, the relationship between a Charter Organization and its Troop is designed to be mutually beneficial. By linking arms, the AHG Troop serves as an extension of the Charter Organization's mission while providing a unique ministry opportunity. The Charter Organization Ministry Agreement (COMA) is signed each year by the Charter Organization and provides guidance in maintaining a healthy Charter-Troop relationship. The Charter Organization plays a vital role in the success of its AHG Ministry and invests in the following ways:

- The Head Decision Maker appoints a Charter Representative who is trusted and authorized to act on behalf of the Charter Organization, approving all Troop volunteers and signing necessary documents.
- Works alongside the Troop in planning and implementing the AHG Program and spiritual development for their members. The Charter Organization is the final decision maker regarding any Troop decision.
- Owns and stewards Troop budget and finances alongside the Troop Treasurer.
- Provides a meeting place.
- Serves as a voting member for AHG Board of Trustees business including electing National Board of Trustees of AHG, Inc.



Troop Ministry Team

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.” 1 Corinthians 12:12, NIV

Just as the scripture above demonstrates, the body of Christ requires each one to come together in the Kingdom of God, the same is true in the Troop structure. Volunteers are critical to the success of both the AHG Ministry and the local Troop. The Troop Ministry Team is comprised of the Troop Board and other key Troop positions.

The Charter Organization is responsible for selecting the Troop Board to effectively implement the AHG Program. The Troop Board works together as a team to provide vision, make decisions, and prayerfully lead the Troop. Troop Board Members shouldn't be related to one another. This helps to prevent bias and alliances from interfering with making difficult decisions. The Troop Board of our Troop is:

- Charter Representative – Pastor Doug White
- Troop Coordinator – Tawnya Herman
- Vice Coordinator – Erica Madden
- Troop Shepherd – Amy Carty
- Troop Treasurer – Erica Haak

Additional volunteers serve alongside the Troop Board to implement the program with the girls which make up the Troop Ministry Team. These volunteer roles are based on Troop-specific needs and may vary year to year based upon the needs of the Troop. These positions are crucial to implementing the AHG Program and ministering to girls in the Troop. Commonly utilized positions are listed in AHGfamily and include:

- Unit Leader
- Assistant Unit Leader
- Service Chair
- Fundraising Chair

AHG Program and Girl Experience

The AHG Program is built around six Program Emphases to achieve the mission of building women of integrity. These six key components create a Christ-centered, progressive, and balanced structure, providing girls with a holistic experience. AHG's goal for a girl who completes the AHG Program is that she has learned to be a Christ-following servant leader who is honoring, relational, anchored in Christ, and competent: a woman of integrity.



Faith

Girls are encouraged to grow in their faith and relationship with God through the AHG Faith Award Program, prayer, fellowship, and service, which are woven throughout each aspect of the AHG Program.

Outcome: A *Christ-follower* who submits to Christ and seeks God's will for her life.

Leadership

The AHG Program is rich in leadership opportunities for girls of all ages. Girls discover their passions, acquire project management skills, hold leadership positions, and participate in leadership training.

Outcome: A *servant leader* who follows Jesus' model of leadership by putting others first.

Citizenship

The AHG Program provides girls with a deeper understanding of their country and heritage. Girls cultivate honor for their country by participating in patriotic events, flag ceremonies, serving in their community, and through badge work. Serving others and being active citizens with their Troop, fosters a lifelong love for their country.

Outcome: An *honoring* girl who cares for her community as an active citizen through service and patriotism.

Social-Emotional Health

Girls will gain a better understanding of their identity in Christ through the AHG Program. AHG's multi-level Troop structure encourages girls to create friendships with girls of all ages. This unique [Troop structure](#) allows for mentorships and learning opportunities to occur naturally among girls. Girls learn to anchor their emotions in Christ in a caring and loving environment.

Outcome: A *relational* girl who invests in positive and loving relationships with others and clings to Christ when navigating emotions.

Life Skills

In the AHG Program, girls can step out of their comfort zone and try new experiences in a safe environment. Earning badges provides girls the opportunity to learn a wide array of life skills, inspiring them to become lifelong learners and doers. AHG's six Badge Frontiers include: Heritage, Family Living, Arts, Outdoor Skills, Personal Well-Being, and Science Technology.

Outcome: A *competent* girl who enjoys mastering new skills and applies them to her life.

Outdoors

Nature reveals to us God's beauty, glory, power, wisdom, presence, creativity, and, most of all, his loving care. Through the AHG Program, girls are encouraged to participate in outdoor activities such as hiking or camping several times a year. High Adventure activities are great times for team building, leadership, physical activity, and strengthening relationships with friends. The outdoors will educate girls about their natural world and the beauty God has bestowed upon them.

Outcome: A girl who *values creation* through outdoor experiences that display the glory of God's creation.

Awards and Recognition

AHG provides numerous opportunities for girls to grow by earning awards and recognitions. Although not the focus of the Program, they serve as a tool to recognize girls as they grow into women of integrity.

Awards and insignia that AHG offers is listed below:

- Joining Award
- Level Awards
- Faith Awards
- Stars & Stripes Award
- Service Stars
- Badges

- Patches
- Sports Pins

AHG also recognizes the immense value of volunteers by offering tenure pins and other recognitions for their investment in girls and the AHG Ministry.

Award Ceremonies

The Troop plans Award Ceremonies throughout the year so Girl and Adult Members may receive their Awards and Recognitions. Award Ceremonies are open to parents/legal guardians and families to attend. It is important to the girls that family attend the ceremony to celebrate their accomplishments. If a girl is unable to attend the ceremony, her recognition will be given to her at the next Troop meeting.

Family Responsibilities

Parents/legal guardians demonstrate commitment to the girls by encouraging them and supporting them throughout their years in AHG. Girls should arrive at meetings and events on time, in the appropriate uniform and with the necessary handbooks or supplies. Parents/legal guardians can obtain information at check-in for upcoming activities and should monitor Troop communication regularly.

Providing a quality program for Girl Members requires a commitment from all families. Each family should actively participate in the Troop to ensure the success of the Troop as a whole. At times, some families may be asked to serve outside of regular Troop meeting times, some may serve during Troop meetings, and others may experience a blend of both. Prayerfully consider how you might partner with the Troop Ministry Team to build women of integrity.

Volunteer Position Recruitment and Selection

AHG is a family-supported program that encourages both Girl and Adult Members involvement. The Troop will benefit most when utilizing the gifts and strengths from all families. An AHG Troop Board Member would like to connect with you to learn more about your gifts and strengths, and how you might use them within the Troop to grow God's Kingdom. As an Adult Member of AHG you can:

- Serve in the Troop impacting the lives of girls for Christ
- Connect with other like-minded volunteers
- Receive AHG's Heritage Headlines magazine and QuickTakes bi-weekly email that includes program information and opportunities for girls
- Attend AHG Leadership Conferences, Conventions, and other leadership trainings
- Access RightNow Media
- The Jump social media platform
- Gain access to:
 - Member-only resources in AHGresource
 - Special member-only discounts such as American Red Cross, Family Life/Passport to products, HSDLA, and many others

All AHG registered adults will walk through a selection process by the Troop to discern if and where someone might best fit within the Troop. If selected, the adult will complete registration including a completion of an application, registration fee, background check, and KEYS to Child Safety Training. Registered adults will complete training pertinent to their specific role. The chart below provides information about some of the opportunities to serve within the Troop and the Kingdom impact they have:

Role Type	Roles	Kingdom Impact
Administrative Roles: Establishing integrity in the ministry by demonstrating an inward motivation to do what is right regardless of the cost.	Troop Coordinator Vice Coordinator Registrar Advancement Chair AHGstore Troop Purchaser Troop Secretary	Bringing Girls and volunteers closer to God in their spiritual walk, taking a stand for biblical principles, and making their responsibility for the body of believers known.
Shepherding Roles: Serving the Members of the Troop by contributing to the welfare of others in order to show God's love and the value of each individual involved in the Troop.	Charter Representative Troop Shepherd Unit Leader Assistant Unit Leader Recruitment Coordinator Events Coordinator	
Stewardship Roles: Instilling good stewardship practices of wisely using time, talent and money within the Troop in order to biblically model stewardship of the resources we are given.	Troop Treasurer Troop Fundraising Chair	

To learn more about becoming a volunteer in the Troop, please contact a Troop Board Member.

Finances

Member Costs

The following is a breakdown of initial and annual costs. These costs are subject to change.

Troop Dues *Troops are not required to collect dues as this is a Charter Organization decision	\$50.00 – Covers local Troop activities
Program Support Fee *Charter responsibility per COMA	\$20.00 (annual) per Girl Member, to be covered with fundraising \$50 Sister cap (families with 3+ Girls Registering at Same Time)
Fundraising Obligation	All girls are expected to participate in the fundraising activities of the Troop
Girl Membership Fee	\$40 (annual), \$105 Sister cap for a minimum of 3 or more girls in a family
Adult Membership Fee	\$40 (annual)
Girl Handbook	Pathfinder: \$11.00 Tenderheart through Explorer: \$20.00 Pioneer through Patriot: \$20.00
Girl Uniform	Cost dependent on Girl Level and total items purchased
Adult Uniform	\$24+ (cost dependent on total items purchased)
NEW Volunteer Handbook	Visit the AHGstore for pricing
Special Events	Information will be shared through the Troop for special event opportunities for girls and what charges may apply.

Troop Fundraisers

Troop Note: We have a parent Night Out and Trivia Night

Example: Troop fundraisers are the primary way to offset Troop expenses and keep costs to a minimum. Our Troop will be participating in ...2..fundraisers this year.

Girl and Adult Member Uniforms

The AHG Uniform is a valuable piece of the AHG Program. It signifies belonging to a group that shares common beliefs and goals. A Girl Member or Adult Member in AHG Official Uniform symbolizes being a part of an organization dedicated to building women of integrity through service to God, family, community, and country. As representatives of Christ in the local community, the AHG Official Uniform identifies the Troop as a single group uplifting the Mission and values of AHG.

Girl and Adult Members will wear the AHG Official Class A Uniform to the majority of AHG activities. The AHG Official Class B Uniform is utilized for more casual activities. Uniforms, handbooks, and other AHG merchandise can be purchased through the AHGstore: store.americanheritagegirls.org

Contact the Troop Board for more information about uniforms.

Health and Safety

American Heritage Girls values the health and safety of its members and is fully committed to providing a safe and healthy environment. Physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health are integrated into everything a Troop does to ensure as safe a program as possible. The goal is always to provide opportunities for faith, service, and fun in a manner that no injuries occur beyond those that are readily treatable by simple first aid. Volunteers in American Heritage Girls are responsible for the health and safety of others when participating in Troop meetings, trips, events, and activities. AHG Adult Members are accountable for administering the AHG Program in a safe and responsible way by adhering to AHG policies. AHG seeks to equip Charter Organizations, Troops, and members with policies and guidelines which are designed to prevent incidents, reduce risk, protect members and the Charter Organization, and create boundaries. These policies and guidelines have been established because of the real need to protect members from known hazards which have been identified through knowledge, expertise and experience. Any restrictions or limitations on certain activities should not be viewed as being overly protective; rather, they should be viewed as facilitating safe and enjoyable experiences for the AHG Members of your Troop. Health and safety knowledge can be enhanced when this resource is paired with AHG Foundations training, the BEST Practices: Health and Safety Quick Guide, and AHG's Health and Safety Policies and Guidelines.

Two-Deep Leadership Policy: For the safety and protection of both girls and adults, there will be at least two Adult Members during all AHG Troop meetings, trips, activities and events. Note: A pair of Adult Members who are husband and wife is not adequate to establish two-deep leadership.

Upon completion of the registration process including the application, criminal background check, and KEYS to Child Safety Training, and membership fee payment, volunteers will receive a Member ID badge. AHG volunteers must wear their Member ID badge and lanyard so they are easily identifiable as Adult Members. In addition, two-deep leadership and appropriate girl/adult ratios are always maintained when girls and adults are present together at a Troop/Unit activity, meeting, or event.

For more information about AHG's Health and Safety Policies and Guidelines surrounding the following topics, please go to <https://www.ahgfamily.org/help/health-and-safety-guide>.

Emergency Preparedness

In case of emergency we will send out a text message to all parents.

Sign-in and Sign-out process

All Adult and Girl Members, as well as visitors must sign in and sign out during all AHG meetings, trips, activities and events.

Troop Communication

- How the Troop will communicate (email, AHGfamily announcements, Facebook.)

Communication with Girl Members

Text messages, emails and phone calls should always include two-deep leadership for the safety and protection of both Girl and Adult Members. Adult Members can be included or copied on an email, text, or present on a phone call to ensure two-deep leadership.

Troop's Electronics Policy: No electronics at meetings.

Addressing Inappropriate Behavior

Should a need to address inappropriate behavior arise, the Troop will utilize *Living a Life of Virtue*. This resource will walk the Troop through specific steps to address the behavior with the girl and the parent/legal. AHG strives to be a place of grace and truth for girls. Below are the steps of *Living a Life of Virtue*.

Living a Life of Virtue

It is the expectation of AHG, Inc. that Girl Members not only subscribe to but strive to live according to the values represented in the AHG Oath and Creed, as they have agreed to when becoming a Girl Member. With this expectation, it is also understood that, just like adults, girls face temptation and are not without sin. Because we all fall short from time to time it is important the AHG Troop remain a place of grace and truth. Girls, especially during their adolescent years, are trying to determine who they are and how their faith and the culture play into their identity. AHG can serve a critical role in guiding girls toward their identity in Christ. AHG is meant to be a ministry of transformation—a ministry which surrounds girls with Godly adults who will offer them sound Biblical advice, encouragement, grace, and truth. AHG should be a safe place for girls to navigate the confusion of today's moral landscape.

The relationship between a Charter Organization and its Troop is designed to be a partnership. AHG values the role of the Charter Organization and Charter Representative as ministry partners and Troops are encouraged to collaborate with them in supporting the Troop and its members in both joyous and challenging seasons. As part of the partnership between the Charter Organization and Troop, the Charter Organization will provide direction in walking through the following steps and addressing a Girl Member's behavioral concerns.

When a girl falls short of living up to the AHG Oath and Creed, it is not a time for her immediate dismissal from the Troop. It is a time when a girl needs the Christ-centered program of AHG, her family, her church and the faith-filled adults of her Troop the most. When a girl engages in behavior which contradicts the AHG Oath or Creed, it is important she understands her error and is given an opportunity to change. These behaviors might include, but are not limited to: gossip, bullying, stealing, sexual activity outside the context of marriage (opposite-sex or same-sex), illegal use of drugs or alcohol, etc. When a Troop becomes aware that a girl is engaging in such behavior, there are a number of steps which must precede dismissal from the program.

Step 1:

Depending on the level of severity of the behavior, the parents/legal guardians of the girl are notified and included in the process. If the Charter Organization has policies regarding the behaviors being addressed, please refer to the Charter Organization for input, if agreeable to the parents/legal guardians. With parent/legal guardian approval, the trusted Unit Leader and/or Troop Shepherd plus one other AHG Adult Member (maintaining two-deep-leadership) discuss

their concerns with the girl in a loving manner. “Here is why we are concerned. Here is why this behavior contradicts the AHG Oath/Creed.” Share Scriptural references regarding these behaviors. Girls are given an opportunity to show remorse, repent, and determine a plan for changed behavior. Accountability for the plan is established in a manner which preserves confidentiality and promotes youth safety as described in AHG’s KEYS to Child Safety Training through measures such as, but not limited to, two-deep leadership in all types of communication (written, verbal, in person, electronic). In addition, AHG offers the Girl Behavior Agreement available on AHGresource to set healthy behavior expectations for girls.

Step 2:

If the Girl Member does *not* show remorse, does *not* agree to a plan of action, or repeats the behavior of concern, the Troop:

Meets with the girl’s parents/legal guardians as soon as possible, no matter how small the infraction. The Troop explains in a loving manner why the behavior is of concern, why it contradicts the AHG Oath/Creed, and what steps have been taken to assist the girl in addressing the issue. Following this meeting, girls are given another opportunity to show remorse, repent, and determine a plan for changed behavior. Accountability is established in a manner which preserves confidentiality and promotes youth safety as described in AHG’s KEYS to Child Safety Training.

If the Girl Member denies the behavior while the evidence of the behavior is overwhelming, the Troop:

Stands for truth and encourages the girl to be truthful. The Troop explains that grace is available to all, however, where truth cannot be found, grace will not be applied. If the girl refuses to be truthful, then the Troop meets with her parents/legal guardians to explain their observations and concerns, to describe the potential consequences of a girl’s willingness/unwillingness to be truthful, and to request the parents/legal guardians counsel the girl. The Troop offers the parents/legal guardians and the girl 2-3 days to respond and commit to behavior change.

Step 3:

If the Girl Member continues to not accept responsibility for the behavior, does not show remorse, does not agree to a plan of action, or repeats the behavior of concern, the Troop again meets with the girl and her parents/legal guardians. At this meeting, discussions are had around engaging a pastor, priest, or other church leader within the girl’s preferred denomination. Outside ministries who specialize in the issue at hand may also be engaged at this time. The objective of this meeting is to again work on a plan of action in order to assist the girl in understanding her behavior, the consequences or impact of her behavior, and work to overcome it. If the parents/legal guardians and girl understand the concern around the behavior and are willing to implement a plan for change, then the girl will be allowed to remain in the Troop. The Troop volunteers are not expected to provide counsel, which is the role of the parents/legal guardians, but rather show support and acknowledgement of the worth of the girl.

Step 4:

If the above avenues have all been exhausted and the girl continues her behavior, refuses to recognize the behavior as contradictory to the AHG Oath/Creed, and/or poses a threat to other Girl or Adult Members in the Troop, she may be asked to terminate her membership in American Heritage Girls by the Charter Organization. The goal for every Troop should be to keep the girl in the Troop. The decision to ask a Girl Member to leave a Troop is one made with prayer and discernment and in which counsel of the Charter Representative and the Hometown Mentor or AHG Troop Support Specialist is sought.

AHG Whistleblower and Grievance Policy

American Heritage Girls is committed to the highest standards of ethical, moral, and legal conduct. Therefore, AHG has a codified grievance and whistle blower policies to address concerns. These policies provide an avenue to raise concerns. To view AHG's complete Whistle Blower Policy, please login to AHGfamily and search keyword *Whistleblower Policy* on AHGresource.

AHG Grievance Procedure

If a volunteer has a grievance issue or disagrees with an AHG policy, they are to put the issue in writing and discuss the issue with the Troop Coordinator or Charter Representative for resolution. If not resolved, they can follow the list below in order until resolution is attained.

1. Troop Support Specialist Manager
2. Director of Volunteer Services
3. Chief Strategy Officer
4. Executive Director
5. Board of Trustees

Troop Feedback

The Troop Board desires your feedback! So that the Troop can best serve your family, please share your feedback about your girl's experience and suggestions on how we can continue to grow. The Troop will provide an end of year survey annually, but if you have ideas on how the Troop can continue to grow, contact Tawnya Herman: mommyteacher@gmail.com

Conflict

Conflict is a normal and common part of working with one another, and ministry is no exception. If you find yourself in a conflict or struggling with how to begin a difficult conversation, consider utilizing AHG's conflict resolution resources found on AHGfamily, keyword search *conflict*. The resources provided will guide you as you work to resolve challenges with one another while honoring one another and God through the process.