

Girl Scout Earns P.R.A.Y. Four Star Award Avery Grows in Faith and Friendship / Mother Shares her Reflections

Avery B. attended the National G.I.R.L. event in October and recognized P.R.A.Y. in the Hall of Experiences and stopped to chat and take a picture for her Mom. Avery has earned God and Me, God and Family, God and Church, and God and Life and is the recipient of P.R.A.Y.'s Four Star Award. We asked Avery to reflect on her Four Star experience and share what she has learned. Here's what she had to say:



As someone who earned the Four Star religious award, I am an example of the positive outcomes of the P.R.A.Y. program and the good characteristics that are nurtured in girls through the program.

I must say, when I first started the program back in elementary school, I had no idea what my mom had signed me up to do. Sure, I went to church and participated in different activities in Children's Ministries, but I was still not fully aware what it meant to take ownership of my faith. The title "God and Me" really was appropriate for me at that time. As I have completed each of the four aspects to the award throughout the years, I have learned how to do just that - to take ownership of my faith, to deepen my relationship with God, and to offer my own gifts and talents in service to the church.

One of the most amazing things that I have experienced through this program is the deepening of my friendship with two of my Girl Scout sisters, Emma and Genevieve. I have known these two girls since elementary school, have been with them in the same troop since fourth grade, and have completed parts of the P.R.A.Y. program together since fifth grade. They are amazing examples of God's love and have such hearts for reaching out to those around them. As we have gone through the various P.R.A.Y. programs, due to the varying ages of the other girls we completed them with,



L-R: Avery, Pastor Kelly Brumbeloe, Emma and Genevieve

Emma, Genevieve and I earned the "God and Life" award just the three of us. This award truly helped us to foster deep discussions about where God fit into our lives, and we were able to open up and encourage one another in our own struggles. I am so lucky to be able to say that I earned my Four Star award side by side with these two incredible girls.

When you are a young girl completing these programs through the years, it is very easy to feel like it is simply another thing to tell your family you completed, to tell your grandparents about when they ask you what you've doing lately. However, after getting to stand in front of our church congregation and celebrate the culmination of years of hard work, it truly is something special. I have even had people ask me about the award afterwards, wanting me to share with younger students what I accomplished and be a source of inspiration.

The Four Star award is definitely something I wear upon my vest with pride!

P.R.A.Y. Four Star Award: A Parent's Reflections

P.R.A.Y. reached out to Avery's mother and asked her to share what she values about the P.R.A.Y. Program and the impact that it had on her daughter and family:

As the parent of a Four Star Award recipient, I am very thankful for the P.R.A.Y. program. Both of my daughters are Girl Scouts, and while we appreciate all of the opportunities and experiences scouting has provided, we found it really didn't involve their faith. The P.R.A.Y. program gave us a way to incorporate that aspect of their lives into the scouting experience.

I was fortunate to be involved as a Counselor for the program with my daughters. As a result, we have had many conversations about our faith. I was able to share my experiences and also learn a lot from them. In addition to helping our family, the program has served as an outreach to some of the girls in my daughters' troops. All were invited to participate with us, most chose not to, but some of the ones who did do not regularly attend church. It was wonderful to have the chance to help them build their faith through the P.R.A.Y. program.

While earning her Four Star Award, I saw Avery apply the leadership skills she was developing in scouting to her spiritual walk. She and the other girls in the program encouraged each other, shared their spiritual gifts and helped each other grow through the process. They put their faith into action, and I have no doubt that they will shine His light throughout their lives.

I look forward to Avery's younger sister carrying on the tradition by earning her God and Life and Four Star Awards later this year.