



Basic Leader Manual

Behind every Girl Scout... is a great Leader!

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Trainer(s) Name(s):

Contact Information:

Date of Training:

A Note to new Leaders:

Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world. Thank you so much for being part of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles!



Section One: Welcome to Girl Scouting

Now that you've volunteered to be a Girl Scout Leader, you may be wondering: just what have I gotten myself into? This manual is designed to answer that question and more. It is our intent to help you understand:

- The basics of the Girl Scout program and traditions
- Girl Scout safety basics
- Uniforms
- Ways to communicate with parents for delegation, help, and attendance
- Managing troop finances
- How to hold a family meeting and discuss your expectations for the troop
- Your support network as a Leader
- What the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is and how it applies to girls with whom you will be working
- Planning a basic troop meeting, sample meetings, and girl-led learning

Just like in the Basic Leader Training, the companion course to this manual, the overall expectation of this manual is for you to be able to apply the tools available to you to guide your girls through their Girl Scout experience successfully. Let's begin by taking a look at some important things you need to know to get started.

Introduction to Girl Scouts:

How much are Membership Dues?

Annual Girl Scout membership for girls and adults costs \$25.00 and covers the period of October 1st– September 30th of every year.

We will cover sources of funding, and other costs that your troop may incur throughout this manual.

Who Needs to Register?

Along with all girls in your troop, the following adult volunteers should register as members: Volunteers fulfilling the adult/girl ratio, volunteers attending overnight events, volunteers who drive girls, troop first-aiders, and volunteers who handle large amounts of money or product. (*Volunteer Essentials* (VE), Chapter 2)

Adult/Girl Ratios:

The Girl Scouts' adult-to-girl ratios in this chart show the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific amount of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls.

	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two unrelated adults, one of whom is female, for this number of girls:	Plus one additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:	Two unrelated adults, one of whom is female, for this number of girls:	Plus one additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)	12	1–6	6	1–4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)	20	1–8	12	1–6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)	25	1–10	16	1–8
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)	25	1–12	20	1–10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)	30	1–15	24	1–12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)	30	1–15	24	1–12

NOTE: If you are a multi-level troop (consisting of two or more levels e.g., Brownie and Junior) the ratio is based on the youngest member of the troop. (VE, Chapter 2)

Who to Contact?

- **Customer Care Department:** (213) 213-0123 or customercare@girlscoutsla.org
Contact customer care for common questions regarding registration, Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), navigating the MyGS community of online member resources, troop management, bank letters, or anytime you don't know who to contact. If you need help, our customer care team is available.
- **Support Department:** support@girlscoutsla.org
Working in conjunction with your local service unit team, your support specialist is available to help you navigate through your first year as a leader, and beyond. They can help with bank recommendations, how to host family meetings, finding a meeting location, conflict resolution, and the how-to's of: forms, policies, procedures, and trainings. They also act as a liaison between new leaders and council, and the service unit. All to ensure you have a successful Girl Scout year. Contact your support specialist directly, email the above support email, or meet with them in person at a service unit monthly leaders meeting.
- **Training Department:** training@girlscoutsla.org
Contact the training department for all things training. Questions regarding in-person or live webinar trainings, gsLearn and online training needs, and what trainings you need to take and when.

gsLearn

[gsLearn](#) is Girl Scouts' official online and on-demand training platform. With learning available based on your role, there are courses available for troop leaders, troop volunteers, and service unit volunteers. Courses cover topics from safety to badges to finances and much more! As part of the MyGS community of online member resources, gsLearn can be found in the My Account Menu and is available for all registered adult members.

Get started with your online learning:

- Log into MyGS/My Account and select the gsLearn tab on the left-hand side in the My Account menu.
- Start your learning with the "Welcome to gsLearn" course.
- Continue your learning by searching for "New Leader" in the Content Library.
- Click this learning path to begin.

As part of the Basic Leader course, we require our volunteers to complete one prerequisite module through gsLearn.

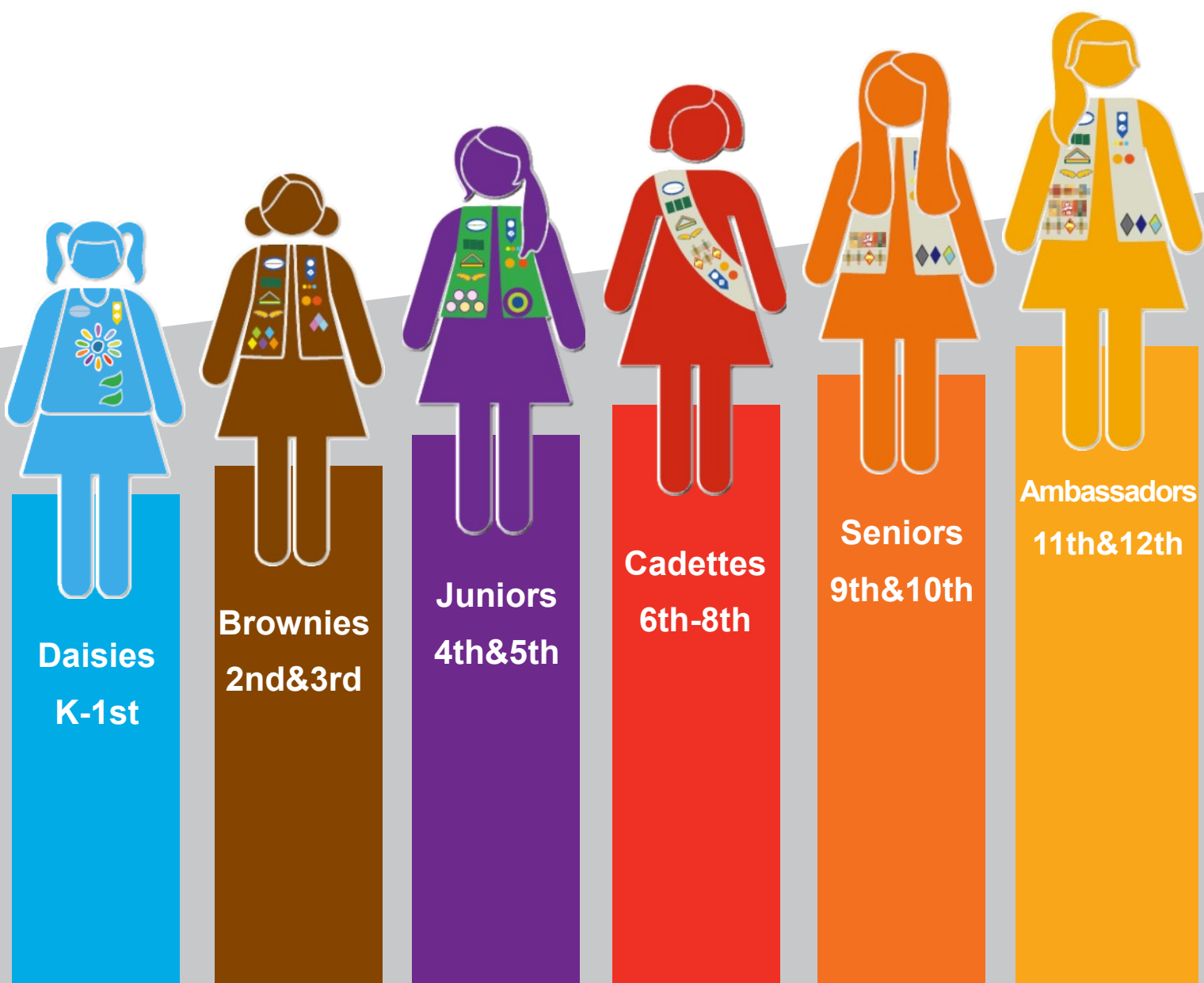
- Parent/Caregiver Permission
- Safety Wise

Ideally, this module should be viewed before attending the live webinar/face-to-face portion of BLT, but you may view it after completing the live course.

Who Can Join Girl Scouts?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and sisterhood. Any girl—from kindergarten through 12th grade—can join Girl Scouts. Girl Scout volunteers are also a diverse group—you may be a college volunteer working on a community-action project, a parent volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with your daughter's group, or any responsible adult (female or male, who has passed the necessary screening process) looking to help prepare girls for the day when they'll lead, however and wherever they choose.

Girl Scouts is not based on ability or what a girl can accomplish, but reflects grade-based levels that are set so girls share experiences with other girls. The Girl Scout program and experiences grow as the girls do, introducing girls to new age-appropriate experiences along their K-12 continuum. The progression model is designed to be about a girl's journey with other girls.



Section Two: Traditions/Basics

Values & Traditions are an essential part of Girl Scouts. As leaders, it is important to teach these to your girls so they can begin to connect with the legacy of Girl Scouts in a meaningful way. Our Mission, Promise, Law, Special Days, etc. are all shared by girls across the nation and connect Girl Scouts past and present through shared experiences. Let's take a look at a few of these in more detail.

The **Girl Scout Mission, Promise & Law** are a great way to open your troop meetings, and an easy tradition to add in at your next meeting, if you aren't already. Everything we do in Girl Scouts is based on the values presented in the Girl Scout Promise and Law and will be used throughout each girls tenure as a Girl Scout, so it's important to teach these to the girls early on.

Girl Scout Mission

Girl Scouting Builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
to help people at all times,
and to live by the Girl Scout Law

* Individuals may substitute a word or phrase other than "God," if it better expresses their beliefs.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout



Girl Scout Traditions:

The **Girl Scout Sign** is done with the 3 Fingers raised on the right hand. Typically you stand, raise the Girl Scout sign and recite the Promise and Law.

Inclusion is an important part of Girl Scouts. We encourage celebrating and learning from girls of different faiths, cultures, races, abilities, and beliefs. Additionally, Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA) strives to provide resources to volunteers working with girls with developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or multiple disabilities. For more information view our Creating an Inclusive Space module.

As an inclusive organization, we adhere to the following inclusion statement, “As a Girl Scout of Greater Los Angeles member, I will do my best to think, speak, and act in ways that ensure everyone across GSGLA feels they belong and can meaningfully participate in all aspects of Girl Scouting regardless of ability, age, culture, education, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.”

The **Girl Scout Handshake** is a form of greeting. It is done by shaking hands with the left hand while making the Girl Scout Sign with the right. The left hand is the one nearest the heart and therefore signifies friendship.

The **Quiet Sign** is used in meetings and other gatherings to quiet down your girls (and adults). It may be one of the most important tools you will use! The quiet sign is the full right hand raised above your head. Teach your girls that when they see your hand or the hand of another adult volunteer raised, they raise their hand and stop talking. As each girl raises their hand and ends their conversation, the room quiets down, so you can move on with a new activity or give a new instruction.

The **Friendship Circle** represents an unbroken chain of friendship. It is formed at a meeting, campsite, or during a ceremony where everyone stands in a circle facing inward. Each person crosses her right hand over her left, clasp hands with her friends on both sides. Choose one girl to start the friendship squeeze, and make sure everyone in the circle knows to squeeze with their right hand. Everyone is silent as a friendship squeeze is passed from hand to hand.

The **Girl Scout Slogan**, which has been used since 1912, is “Do a Good Turn Daily” a reminder of the many ways girls can contribute positively to the lives of others. And the Girl Scout Motto is “Be Prepared!”

Did you Notice?

There are three parts to the Girl Scout Promise and three fingers are raised in the Girl Scout Sign.

Take a look at your Girl Scout pin and the World Association pin; they too, each have three leaves, representing the three parts of the Promise. That is something we share in common with every Girl Scout and Girl Guide in the world – we each have three parts to our respective Promises!



Girl Scout Days to Celebrate:

There are several special Girl Scout days worth celebrating.

October 31 was **Juliette Low's Birthday** and is celebrated by troops and service units with a variety of celebrations and projects and, of course, birthday cake.

World Thinking Day (February 22) is the birthday of Lord Robert and his wife, Lady Baden-Powell. Our founder Juliette Gordon Low met Lord Baden-Powell, who founded Boy Scouts in England. That meeting laid the seed which Juliette nurtured into Girl Scouts in the United States. Girl Scouts often commemorate this day with a World Thinking Day event, exploring cultures and foods of the countries which have Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. And they also contribute to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, which has provided training in nutrition and hygiene and scholarships for U.S. girls to attend Girl Scout events abroad.

The **Girl Scout Birthday (March 12, 1912)** is the anniversary of the day when Juliette Low formed the first troop of Girl Scouts in Savannah, Georgia. The week in which March 12 falls is designated **Girl Scout Week**. Within that week fall **Girl Scout Sunday** and **Girl Scout Sabbath**; places of worship in many communities invite the Girl Scouts of that community to services where special recognition of their service is highlighted. If you have girls working on any religious awards, presentation during a religious service is ideal for both the girls and the community to recognize their accomplishments.

Leader Appreciation Day (April 22) is a time when the work and efforts of volunteers are acknowledged. Troops and Service Units may conduct special ceremonies or events to recognize their leaders and other volunteers. In GSGLA, our council-wide Volunteer Recognition Ceremony and Annual Meeting (AMVR) is generally held in April to coincide with Leader Appreciation Day. It's appropriate to let your families know there is a designated time to say thanks, and we'll talk a little more about appreciation in a bit.

Ceremonies:

Ceremonies are an integral part of the Girl Scout program. Whether the girls (or adults) are being invested into Girl Scouting for the first time, having a rededication ceremony, bridging to the next level, conducting a flag ceremony for the city council, or conducting a Court of Awards; each type of ceremony brings not only laughter and pride, but opportunities for growth and leadership for all the girls.

All of these ceremonies afford girls the opportunity to engage in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience with girl planning and girl-led activities. They can decide who to invite, choose what food to serve, make the invitations, and plan the program, including who will take what parts in it.

There are resources available to help you learn more about ceremonies, such as the [Ceremonies Manual](#). Or you can use the internet (just google "Investiture" and see what you get!) Here are a few important ceremonies of note:

Meeting Ceremonies – are used to mark the opening and closing of a meeting. The most common closing meeting ceremony being the Friendship Circle.

Investiture Ceremony – marks when new girls (and adults) are welcomed into Girl Scouting. New members will typically recite the Girl Scout Promise and receive their Daisy, Brownie, or Girl Scout pin.



Rededication Ceremony – an annual tradition when girls (and adults) rededicate themselves to the values of Girl Scouting and the troop. This can be combined with an Investiture Ceremony if the troop is also welcoming in new members.

Girl Scout's Own – a time of quiet reflection usually done at the close of an event. There are no “rules” for it, but it should reflect the theme of the event or something special which occurred during it.

Court of Awards – where you recognize achievements, award badges, and other awards the girls have earned. A Court of Awards can be scheduled after girls have earned a few journeys/badges. Younger girls sometimes need to receive awards more often, so you could hold a smaller court of awards ceremonies, if needed.

Flag Ceremonies – whether it is to start a meeting or event, or retire a flag which is too worn to proudly represent our country, learning to conduct a flag ceremony allows girls to learn the proper way to display and honor our flag. Knowing how to conduct a proper flag ceremony also allows girls to share what they have learned with their community.

Girl Scout Songs:

Girls of ALL ages love to sing. Singing has a long tradition in Girl Scouting, whether it is part of a closing Friendship Circle or sitting around the campfire. There are numerous resources for volunteers to help you learn these songs before you teach them to your girls, such as our Girl Scout Songs & Games Handbook. To learn the tune, you can find resources on the GSUSA website or search YouTube. Your Service Unit activities are another great place for girls to learn from other adults and girls.

Songs are typically classified into a number of categories:

- **Traditional Girl Scout songs:** i.e., “Make New Friends,” “Brownie Smile Song,” “Girl Scouts Together,” and “When ‘ere You Make a Promise”
- **Graces:** yes, even before a snack! Whether it is the Johnny Appleseed grace or one of a hundred versions of the “Addams Family” graces, it is a great GS tradition
- **Rounds:** this is where once the girls learn the song, everyone sings the same song/melody, but groups start at different times, which create lovely harmonies. The general rule is: if you have two groups, then you sing it through twice, three groups – three times, etc.
- **Action Songs:** these usually have hand or body movements – think Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes or the Hokey-Pokey
- **Repeat-After-Me Songs:** the song leader sings a line, and then the group repeats it.

When teaching the girls a new song, it is recommended by many that you sing or play it through once, and then sing it line-by-line, with the girls repeating each line after you.



Girl Scout Games:

Games are wonderful tools for teaching new concepts and helping girls learn to socialize. There are numerous resources for games for Girl Scouts. It is also important to remember, especially with younger girls, that attention spans are limited, so interspersing the activities portion of your meeting with going outside to play an active game will help keep the girls engaged and happy. Below you will find a small sampling of Girl Scout Games, for more ideas of games to play with your girls, download our [*Girl Scout Songs & Games Handbook*](#).

Games can be classified into a number of categories, here are a few examples:

Icebreakers- Icebreaker games are designed to help girls get to know each other and feel more comfortable around each other. These are great to play when the troop is first forming, or to revisit when cliques are forming or new girls join the troop. Examples are: Guess Who?, My Name Is, Spider Web

Low Energy- Low energy games are great to play when you want to calm the girls down, or when the space does not allow for a high energy game. These can be played inside or outside, depending on the time available and space at your meeting location. Examples are: Kim's Game, Knots, Promise Game

High Energy- High energy games are great for girls when they have lots of energy to get them up and moving around. These can be played inside or outside, depending on the time available and space at your meeting location. Consider the abilities of all girls in your troop when playing high energy games, and revise instructions if needed so all girls can participate. Examples are: Animal Tag, Daisy Says, People to People

Tips for teaching games:

- Choose games according to the ages, interests, and abilities of the group you are working with.
- Make sure you choose a game appropriate to the site you will be using.
- Know the game well, so you don't have to refer to notes while you are teaching.
- Make sure you collect all the supplies and equipment you will need for the game in advance.
- Explain the game briefly and get them playing it as soon as possible. Ask for questions before you begin.
- If the game is complicated, teach a portion at a time, letting the girls play each portion as you teach it.
- Let the girls have fun with the game but stop when necessary to clear up any confusion of the rules or to answer questions regarding the action of the game.
- Stop the game after a reasonable amount of time, even if some girls are begging to continue.
- Make sure you make any adaptations in the action or the rules of the game to accommodate girls with special needs in the group.
- Make sure you check the playing area for any safety hazards as well as evaluate the game for potential safety problems before you play the game with the girls.



What is important to know right now is that appropriate attire will depend on your activity. While

Crafts with a Purpose:

Girls of every age can experience the fun, and creativity crafts bring. Younger girls love crafts as easy as coloring pages, while older girls will look to crafts that play on their creativity and allow their talents to shine. For all grade levels, crafts should be serving a purpose, reinforcing or teaching an idea, or acting as a gift. Deciding what crafts to do and when to do them is a great opportunity to get girls involved. Look on Pinterest, ask other leaders what they have done, or see if the requirements for your Badge or Journey lend to a craft project.

There are many ways to acquire troop supplies. You can make a wish list, and have each girl bring in something to contribute for the troop to share, or you could have each girl bring in a baggie with crayons, scissors & glue sticks (these are just a few examples). Troop supplies will be kept with the leaders and brought out when needed.

Here are a few common Girl Scout craft ideas:

Promise & Law crafts are great for girls who are just learning the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law. Decorate Popsicle sticks, one for each part of the Girl Scout Law, and then let the girls take it home to memorize. Or have a coloring page that includes the Girl Scout Promise. There are many more ideas for both the Promise & the Law on Pinterest!

Sit Upons are versatile and great for Girl Scouts embarking on a camping trip, or for activities outside. The outside can be made with old vinyl tablecloths or wallpaper, plastic bags, or any other water-resistant materials while the inside can be anything from newspaper to foam to carpet padding. Girls learn skills such as cutting and sewing to make their sit upon, and then see how something they craft can be useful as well.

SWAPS are small craft items made by the girls, often from recycled materials, to take with them to events and activities with other Girl Scouts to trade and share. They generally have a safety pin attached and your troop number. Girls wear them on a hat, special tie with a Friendship Knot, or otherwise. SWAPS is an acronym of several sources, most commonly “Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere.”

Troop Shirts Girls can create troop shirts to wear when official uniforms are not required. This craft activity allows girls to put their own unique spin on something, while still uniting them as a group.

Uniforms: Yours and Hers:

There are official uniform pieces from which girls can select. Keep in mind the ability of the families to pay for them, unless the troop has earned the money to buy uniforms for everyone. (One more reason to participate in the Fall Product and Cookie Product Programs!)

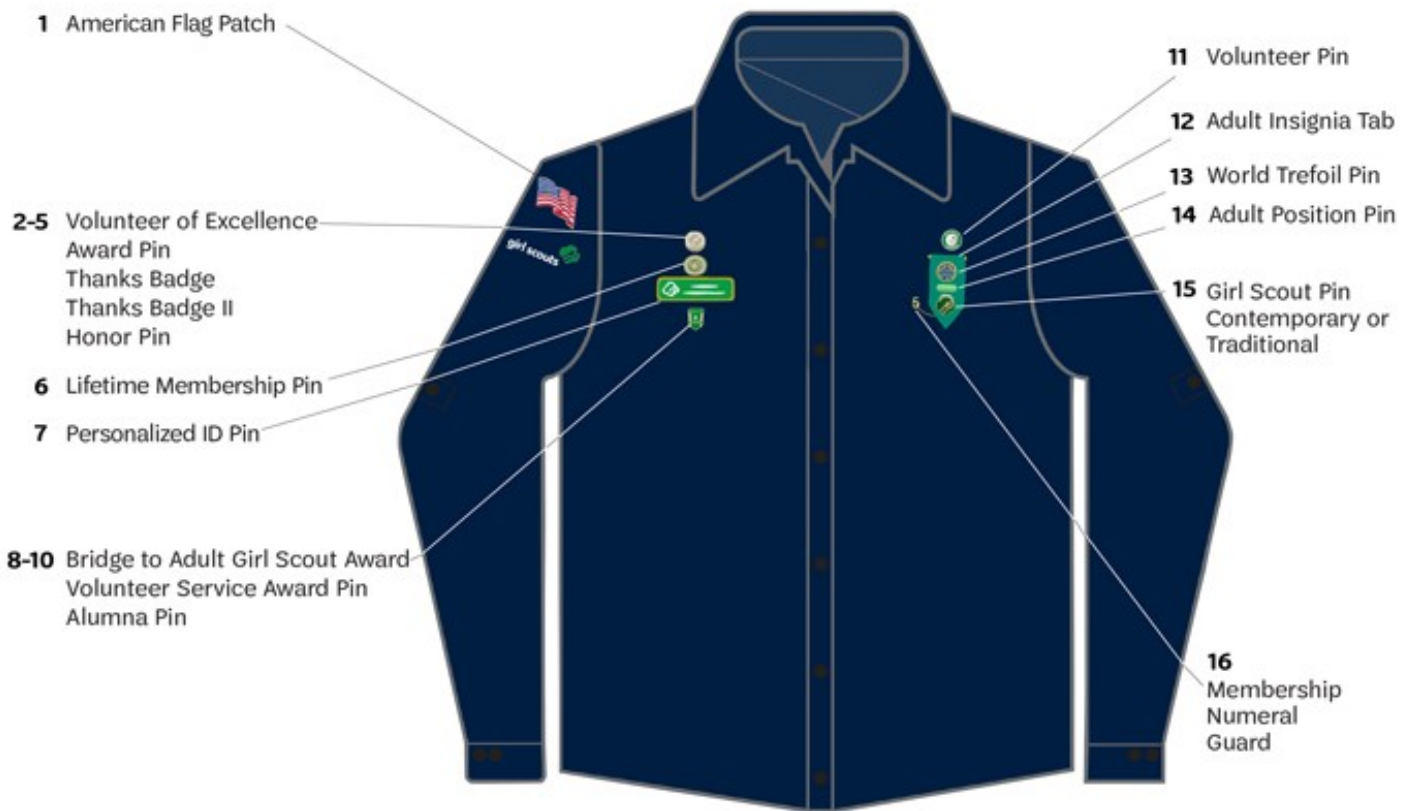
For girls, the unifying look includes wearing a choice of a tunic, vest, or sash for displaying official pins and awards, combined with their own solid white shirt and khaki pants or skirt. Girl Scouts at the Daisy and Brownie levels have a full uniform ensemble available if desired. For more information, please visit the online [Girl Scout Shop](#) or view the “Where to Place Badges & Insignia” videos for every level online.

For adults, you, too, have choices to make. The unifying look of the uniform is a Girl Scout official scarf, or tie for men, worn with official membership pins, combined with their own navy blue

business attire. Girl Scouts offer navy blue sweaters for women, along with other items for both men and women. This official business attire is worn on formal occasions like the Council Annual Meeting/Volunteer Recognition Event.

What is important to know right now is that appropriate attire will depend on your activity. While informal activities may not require the full uniform for the girls, or for you as an adult, there are some activities that will require it. Remember to model what is expected from the girls; if they are at an event where they should be in official uniform, you should be as well.

All uniform pieces, pins, and insignia can be found at any of our GSGLA Service Centers or ordered online through the GSGLA website.



Important items to note:

Insignia Tab: Worn on the upper left of your shirt or jacket.

World Trefoil Pin: Worn above the Membership Pin on the insignia tab.

Girl Scout Volunteer Pin: Worn on the upper left above the insignia tab.

Lifetime Member Pin: Signifies you are a lifetime member of Girl Scouts and is worn on the upper right side.

Position Pins: Designations of volunteer positions you hold. Are worn in between the World Trefoil and Membership pins on the insignia tab. Only two position pins should be worn at a time.



Celebrating Adult Volunteers:

Recognitions are an important part of Girl Scouting and are a great opportunity for you to be recognized for the hard work and dedication you put into your troop. Quite literally, Girl Scouting could not exist without the dedication, talents, and hours of time you give the girls.

At the troop level, recognitions can be given as desired to your troop volunteers. Consider a yearly recognition dinner, or giving out “Thanks” for volunteers and parents who help above and beyond! There are innumerable “thank you’s” you can extend to the families, check out the “Thank You Volunteers” Board on [Pinterest](#), or see “20 Ways to Thank Volunteers” in the Tips & Tools section. Help your girls thank adults too (parents, troop volunteers, SU volunteers, staff, and community) with thank you cards or small tokens. This includes you as the leader! Help them, or have another adult volunteer help them say Thank You. Girls can work together on a craft, or other item of recognition. Brainstorm with the girls on how they want to say Thank You.

As mentioned above, Leader Appreciation Day is April 22; which is a great time to recognize your troop volunteers as well. Official recognitions for outstanding service can be given at the SU, or council levels.



The **First Year Leader** award recognizes an adult volunteer who has completed their first year as leader or co-leader of a troop, taken the required trainings and an enrichment class, and committed to serving a second year as leader or co-leader.



The **Leader With a Heart** award is given to a leader or co-leader. Parents and girls in the troop nominate based on outstanding work in program delivery and troop leadership. Nominees must have completed all required trainings. This award is given at the service unit level.



Numeral Guards are awarded in 5-year increments recognizing a volunteer's combined years as a Girl Scout and as a Girl Scout adult member. It is attached to your Girl Scout pin. It's the responsibility of the Girl Scout member to keep track of their years of membership. Increments of 25 years and below are recognized at the service unit level. Increments of 30 years and above are recognized at the council level.



The **GSUSA Years of Service Pin**, also awarded in 5-year increments, marks the number of years one has served as an active adult Girl Scout volunteer. It's the responsibility of the Girl Scout member to keep track of their years of volunteer service. Increments of 20 years and below are recognized at the service unit level. Increments of 25 years and above are recognized at the council level.



The **Volunteer of Excellence** award recognizes those volunteers who have contributed outstanding service while partnering directly with girls in any pathway to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) or who have contributed outstanding service in support of the council's mission delivery to girl and adult members.

We profiled just a few of the awards here; information on all of the service unit, council, and national awards can be found on the [GSGLA website](#), under Volunteer Awards. The GSGLA Volunteer Recognition Event is held in April with The Annual Meeting for service the prior year. SU Recognitions are usually in May/June for efforts during that school year.

Section Three: Safety

Responsibilities of the Volunteer: 10 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

Review these safety guidelines in order to have an overall understanding of your responsibility regarding safety.

1. Follow *Safety Activity Checkpoints*
2. Common points to follow in *Safety Activity Checkpoints*: girl-planned activities, adult supervision, parent/caregiver permission, communication, preparing for emergencies, weather-readiness, and the buddy system.
3. Report abuse
4. Travel safely
5. Ensure safe overnight outings
6. Role model the right behavior
7. Create an emotionally safe space
8. Ensure equal treatment
9. Promote online safety
10. Safety during money-earning activities

Some of these topics will be covered more in-depth in this manual, but please continue to consult *Volunteer Essentials* for more information.

Approved Volunteers:

Troop leaders and troop chaperones attending troop meeting, activities, and/or overnight events need to be approved volunteers. Which means,

- They're a registered Girl Scout adult,
- Have completed LiveScan fingerprinting, and
- Have completed all required position related training, including mandated reporter training.

Safety Activity Checkpoints:

As a Girl Scout volunteer, it is your job to ensure that every activity is safe and appropriate. When planning activities with girls, adult volunteers, and girls are required to read the appropriate [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) (SAC) prior to participating in the activity. These checkpoints are formatted as checklists so the troop can check off each step that has been accomplished. Each Safety Activity Checkpoint contains information on where to do the activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare, what specific steps you need to follow on the day of the activity, and so on.

A few activities are allowed only with written pre-approval from GSGLA staff and only for girls of a certain age, while some are off-limits completely. The activities that are not permitted include: Bungee jumping; flying in privately owned planes, helicopters, or blimps; hang gliding; untethered hot-air ballooning; hunting; jet skiing or using waverunners; riding a motorbike and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs); outdoor trampolines; parachuting/skydiving; parasailing; paintball tagging; stunt

skiing; zorbing; taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher; transportation using 15-passenger vans and utilizing ridesharing companies (Uber, Lyft, Curb, etc.).

If the activity is not listed in the "off-limits" category, then each SAC denotes the following categories regarding council approval:

- **Required.** Required activities are considered high-risk activities. GSGLA has implemented a two-tier hierarchy for these activities.
 - **Tier 1** – Tier 1 high-risk activities can be approved by your Service Unit Manager (SUM) or Designee. If your SUM is not comfortable approving any tier 1 high-risk activity you will be asked to complete the [Extended Travel/High-Risk Application eform](#).
- **Tier 2** – Tier 2 high-risk activities are approved by your Service Unit Manager (SUM) AND the Council by use of the [Extended Travel/High-Risk Application eform](#).
- **Not Required.** You do not need to check in with your council for prior approval. Written notification to signee is still needed.

High-risk activities and their tier category are indicated in each SAC. Refer to the reference document *A Troop Leader's Guide to Permission Forms* for details on how to use permission forms. There is also a reference chart, called "Activities at a Glance," in *Safety Activity Checkpoints* which provides an easy reference grid with respect to grade-level specifications for activity participation, council approval requirements, and instructor credentialing (i.e., required certification/experience).

Make sure to ALWAYS consult the full SAC for appropriate grade levels, any restrictions, and detailed information.

Activities Not Listed in Safety Activity Checkpoints. In a challenging, learn-by-doing environment like Girl Scouts, it's only natural that girls will sometimes want to take part in activities that are not specifically addressed in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Remember to have a plan or process in place for addressing and handling requests for activities that that are not specifically listed in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

- First, investigate whether the activity is similar to another activity and if the safety checkpoints can easily translate and apply to a covered activity.
- Consider whether the proposed activity requires any additional expert supervision or special certification for the instructor.
- Consult your council for clarification when needed and for approval before taking girls.

Buddy System:

Girl Scouts practice the buddy system to help protect members while on activities. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help. The buddy system can also be useful with adults needing to step away when enough adults remain with the girls.



- All girls, whether in buddy groups or not, need to have adult supervision. We do recognize there is a difference between girls of any age being in a public environment and a closed Girl Scout environment. Any time girls are in public, whether attending an activity, event, or traveling, where the public has a high interaction opportunity, an adult needs to be with each buddy group.
- If the girls are in a closed Girl Scout environment, such as a service unit camporee, or event that is not open to the public, where attendance is limited and monitored, then depending on the age of the girls and circumstances, they may be allowed to explore the immediate area or use the restrooms in their buddy groups without an adult. Our main priority is the safety of girls at all times.

Troop First-Aider:

For activities outside of your regular troop meetings, you will need to secure an adult volunteer to take on the Troop First-Aider role and attend events/activities. A first-aider is an adult volunteer who has taken Girl Scout-approved CPR/AED & First Aid training that includes age-specific instructions for adults and children. That volunteer must also be a registered and approved volunteer. Keep in mind some medical professionals can meet the certification requirement as well: physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic, and emergency medical technician as long as they have current licensure and valid certifications in CPR/AED & First Aid.

If you complete First Aid/CPR/AED training outside of GSGLA, make sure to download and review the GSGLA First-Aider & Emergency Plan. This manual covers the expectations of the Girl Scout first-aider, lists all first aid related forms, and provides resources to ensure you are prepared for your role as a Girl Scout first-aider.

Caution: First Aid/CPR/AED training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts' requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you're taking a course that has online components, get approval from the GSGLA Training team by emailing training@girlscoutsla.org.

First Aid Kit:

A general first aid kit must be available at your group meeting place and accompany girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). The troop first-aider should have the first aid kit near them ready to respond (not in the car) during the activity or event. Your troop can purchase a preassembled first aid kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. See the First Aid Kit Checklist for recommendations on what to include. In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain Girl Scout Additional Activity Insurance forms, parent consent forms, health history forms, and council and emergency telephone numbers, such as the Emergency phone number 1-877-ICE-GSLA (1-877-423- 4752).

Making the Troop a "Safe" Place:

A safe space is one in which girls feel as though they can be themselves, without explanation, judgment, or ridicule. Girl Scout research shows that girls are looking for an emotionally safe

environment where confidentiality is respected, and they can express themselves without fear.

The environment you create is as important—maybe more—than the activities girls do; it's the key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of. The following sections share some tips on creating a warm, safe environment for girls.

Group Agreements:

The first step to creating a safe environment for the girls in your troop would be to have them brainstorm what should be included in their group agreement. More information on creating a troop agreement is covered in Girl Conduct below.

Tagalongs:

A tag-along is any unregistered adult or child who is present at a troop meeting, activity, or event. A tagalong can also be a registered member of a troop/group, but is not of the proper age for the activity and is not participating as a service project. For example, a registered Daisy tagging along with the parent who is leading a Cadette troop has no coverage for the event. Conversely, a Cadette assisting at a Daisy meeting does have coverage. Please note that:

- No child under the age of 5 years old may attend as a tag-along on a camping trip – children under the age of 5 require a level of care that would not permit the accompanying adult to be able to act in a leadership position with the girls.
- Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles does not allow boys over the age of 10 to participate in troop camping on GSGLA properties.

Remember, tag-alongs can be not only a distraction for the girls but also the adults. You cannot be a part of the adult-to-girl ratio if you are in charge of a tagalong, so keeping them to a minimum is important.

In the event of a tag-along, Additional Activity Insurance must be purchased. Please visit the [Forms section](#) on the GSGLA website for more info and the activity insurance application.

Sensitive Issues:

It comes as no surprise there are so many issues and problems girls face these days; likely more than any of us did. There is no definitive list of sensitive issues but possible examples include substance abuse, child abuse, puberty/human sexuality, violence, youth suicide and religion. A vital goal for any troop is to make every girl feel welcome and safe. Girls should be able to discuss issues and problems, evaluate their own values in relation to them, test approaches to dealing with them, and fortify their self-confidence to stay their own course.

Many topics are often brought up in a very casual manner while on the way to or at a Girl Scout activity. When signing the Annual Permission Form, parents/caregivers give permission for the leader/advisor to answer questions or facilitate conversations as they arise informally (only when a girl in the troop begins a discussion) Parents/caregivers also acknowledge responsibility for communicating to the leader about any needs their girl may have in regards to sensitive topics, and of her maturity and ability to participate. Make sure to check the Annual Permission forms for approval from parents/caregivers to discuss these general sensitive issues informally.

For all planned discussions/activities relating to sensitive issues within the troop, written approval by a parent/caregiver is required for each girl to participate. Use [The Parent/Caregiver Permission for Sensitive Issues Form](#) to obtain this permission. This form includes the topic of the activity, specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls will take when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. If a girl or her parent/caregiver wishes to opt-out of a discussion or activity, the leader/advisor will acknowledge the girl's right and be sensitive to her feelings. If the activity is being done to fulfill a recognition requirement, the leader/advisor and girl should discuss an alternate activity that can be done to allow the completion of the requirement.

In all cases, the leader/advisor will follow GSUSA and GSGLA procedures, standards, and practices. This guideline affirms the responsibility of all adults to foster an environment of trust, be sensitive to differing attitudes and strong emotions, ensure age-appropriateness of material, and be non-judgmental. Your role is that of a caring adult who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position.

One important factor is to know your personal limits. If there are particular issues which are "hot button" topics that you cannot – or choose not – to discuss, know where to find the resources for girls to receive impartial, factual, and caring information and support. Make an agreement with your girls – and share it with the parents – that what they share with you or share in the troop will go no further. The exception, of course, is if a girl is in a dangerous or life-threatening situation. Many girls find they cannot discuss difficult topics with parents or family members; they sometimes need that trusted advisor to be the intermediary.

Tips for Working with Girls on Sensitive Issues:

DO:

- Provide an atmosphere of openness, freedom, and trust so the girls will feel comfortable when expressing themselves and seeking advice from you.
- Listen seriously to what girls have to say.
- Be sensitive to the differences in girls' ethnic and cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, family traditions, and social customs.
- Be aware of your own attitudes and behaviors related to the sensitive issue.
- Help girls feel positive about themselves – their strengths, skills, and abilities.

DON'T:

- Impose your values and opinions on the girls.
- Promise to keep information confidential if it might affect the girl's safety.
- Leave the girl alone if the situation is immediately life-threatening.
- Act judgmental regardless of what you are told.
- Be afraid to seek help from others when you feel uncomfortable discussing certain topics.

Reporting Concerns:

If you suspect that a child is being abused (physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect), or believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, you are encouraged to report your concerns or

consult with your membership specialist. Your concern about a girl's well-being and safety is taken seriously, and GSGLA will guide you in addressing these concerns.

Troop Communication:

Open and safe communication with girls and adults is key to keeping your troop successful and safe. Not only should regular meetings with adults be scheduled, but you should be in constant contact with them since you will need to collect forms, schedule activities, manage cookies/fall product programs, and more. Email, phone calls, and texting are useful, but troops may want to create a website or use social media to communicate with their members regarding Girl Scout activities. Some examples that troops generally use are VTK, Facebook, Twitter, Shutterfly, Slack, etc. If you plan to use websites/social media for your troop, here are some tips to ensure safety:

- Review the Computer & Internet Use SAC with adults and girls.
- Keep your website private. Only invite the appropriate adults to participate. The leaders or designated adult volunteers in your troop should be responsible for managing the troop website/social media.
- Always verify your parents/caregivers allow their girls to be photographed and shared on social media. This permission is granted annually through the Annual Permission Form.
- On group websites, publish girls' first name only, do not tag or post the location, and never divulge other personal identifying information.

When using the internet, all Girl Scouts must keep these items in mind regarding code of conduct:

- Set the example as adults: treat others the way you want to be treated; use discretion and think twice before you post something.
- Girls must be 13+ and have parental permission to be using internet communication/social media. That means that both girls and adults should read and sign the [Internet Safety Pledge](#), found on the GSUSA website. This includes both girls and adults. This will ensure both are agreeing to follow the same rules. Girls and adults should both agree that "what happens in the troop meeting stays off the internet/cellphones."
- When utilizing the internet during troop meetings, girls should always be supervised by an adult.

Lastly, older girls (13+) can begin to be responsible for their own communication with the troop, and can even begin to take over the troop website and social media. Be sure to continue to loop in parents/caregivers, but you can start communicating with older girls, so they take on troop responsibilities. Ex. Meeting reminders, troop planning, etc.

Girl Conduct:

Girls will not always behave as expected, and situations may arise with the girls in your troop. Therefore it is important to use the prevention and intervention method when working with your troop to avoid or resolve these negative behavioral situations.

Prevention:

The best way to handle negative behavior is to prevent it from happening. Using the suggested

techniques below will help you avoid undesirable behavior and situations.

Troop/Group Agreement:

Ensure that your troop has a group agreement. The girls will be more invested in following something that they created when they set the standard of behavior. With the girls, decide on a set of troop rules that include guidelines for appropriate behavior as well as consequences for straying from these rules. Use the Girl Scout Promise and Law to frame a conversation with the girls about how they should act toward each other based on the principles of Girl Scouts: honest and fair, friendly and helpful, etc. Discussing how to enforce the troop agreement also gives the girls the power to choose, and they can make these enforcements as serious (or silly) as you think will be effective. Have the girls sign the agreement as a sign of their commitment to the troop agreement. You can even post the agreed-upon troop rules right next to the Girl Scout Promise and Law in your meeting space.

Use the [“Creating a Troop Agreement”](#) guide for additional tips and tools on creating your very own troop agreement. And if needed, don’t be afraid to create one for your parents as well.

Consider adding items such as “What we share within our group, stays within our group” or “Don’t use anyone’s name when discussing a problem to avoid hurt feelings” This will help the girls begin to understand the importance of trust in troop discussions.

Be Prepared:

Have everything you need for your activities and plan out your entire meeting agenda to fill up all available time. No downtime means less of an opportunity for the girls to lose interest and cause problems. Create a back-up plan just in case your activities end earlier than planned. This back-up plan could include songs, games, or other activities you have the resources for.

Stay Positive:

When things go wrong, stay as positive as possible – find something else to do, put a positive spin on it, and make the new activity fun. The girls will follow your lead, so be aware of your own behavior and reactions to each situation.

Keep the fun going when girls are having trouble:

Have the girls decide upon a semi-private space where they can go to regroup when they need a moment to calm down or until they’re ready to rejoin the others. If a girl needs to regroup, keep the fun going for the rest of the troop, and give her some space. Eventually, the girl will probably want to come back to join in on the fun. At the end of the troop meeting, check-in with the girl who took a moment to herself and make sure she is doing okay or if she has anything she would like to discuss with you.

Avoid Cliques:

When cliques start to form, it’s your responsibility to encourage girls to work with everyone, not just

girl scouts
greater los angeles

Sample Girl Troop Agreement

Troop _____

The Girl Scout Promise
On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

* Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.

The Girl Scout Law
I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

I understand my attitude and behavior are important to my success with as a Girl Scout. I also understand as a member of the Girl Scout community, it is my responsibility to do my best to adhere to the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and to abide by the following rules, decided upon by my troop:

I will:

- Work cooperatively
- Keep what happens at Girl Scouts private
- Be a friend, not a bully
- Treat adults and guests with respect
- Leave the space cleaner than you found it
- Be a good listener; don't interrupt

If I do not abide by these rules and the Girl Scout Promise and Law, troop leadership may:

- Ask me to review the Promise & Law
- Ask me to sit out of an activity
- Ask for me to be picked up from a meeting
- Request my Parent/Caregiver's assistance to resolve the issue

I have read, understand, and agree with the above responsibilities, decided upon by my troop.

(Girl Name) _____ (Girl Signature) _____ (Date) _____

I have read, understand, and agree with the above responsibilities of my daughter.

(Parent Name) _____ (Parent Signature) _____ (Date) _____

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with their best friends. Partner up girls during troop meetings in a variety of fun ways—by their favorite ways to celebrate their birthdays, their favorite movies, or even pick names out of a hat. Consider teambuilding games that have collaboration or get-to-know-you aspects as well. These are great ways for the girls to start to see similarities with others outside of their clique.

Create a Chain of Command:

The girls should be taught whom to go to if there is a problem or concern. This could be the leader, level leader, or other adult volunteer in charge depending on your troop structure. That is why it is important to establish a chain of command. For example, if you are in a multi-level troop, Junior girls would report a problem to their Junior leader first, who would then pass the information to the troop leader.

Conflicts regarding the leader's daughter can be tricky. So your daughter should go to your co-leader and vice versa; this allows you to set boundaries with your own daughter and create an atmosphere of fairness.

Troop Discussion:

Have regular check-ins with the girls to foster an atmosphere of open communication. Girls will begin to feel comfortable communicating with each other in a safe space making them feel welcome. Setting up time in your meetings for constructive discussions will position the troop to learn how to talk about problems and conflicts in a safe and manageable way.

By having these discussions regularly, girls are learning to feel comfortable talking through situations and will be better equipped to handle problems as they arise in the troop. In the heat of the moment, it's easy to forget the tools you have, so be sure to remind the girls to use I-Statements, and refer to the troop agreement as needed. Consider the following questions for your check-in discussions:

1. How are things going outside of Girl Scouts?
2. Are there any changes in your life you want to discuss?
3. Is there anything going on in school that you want to talk about?
4. What are some good things you want to celebrate?
5. How are things going in the troop?
6. What are some things in the troop that need to be improved?
7. Do we need to revisit the troop agreement?

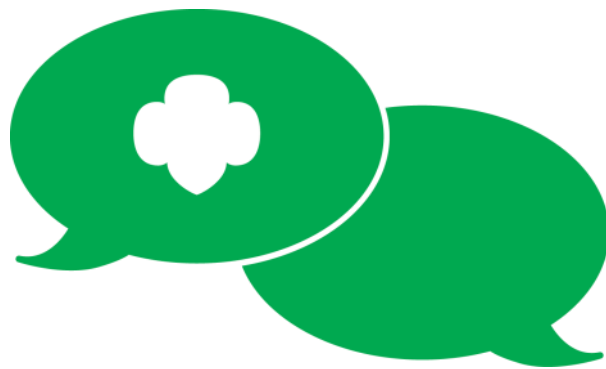
Intervention:

The next step would be to know how and when to intervene:

Reinforce the Troop Agreement, and Girl Scout Promise and Law:

When issues arise, stress the importance of upholding good behavior in troop meetings and everyday life. Follow through on the consequences the girls created in their group agreement. Some examples you could suggest or use when creating your troop agreement are:

- Three warnings before a consequence are placed.
- Have the girls review the promise and law, and how it relates to their behavior.
- Sit and watch where the girls don't participate in the activity.



- Have girls write a letter explaining and apologizing for their behavior.
- Call the parents/caregivers to pick the girl up from the meeting or activity.
- If things escalate, you can create a behavior contract with the girls which the parents/caregivers sign as well.

If girls are having problems with getting along, use these suggestions to call together a discussion with your troop.

- Discuss how people can have different perspectives; what seems funny to one girl can be embarrassing or annoying to another.
- Point out that no one wants to be told how to do something and that there's a difference between suggesting and demanding.
- Review the Girl Scout Law, especially "considerate and caring," "respect myself and others," and "be a sister to every Girl Scout."
- If bullying does occur, discuss the bullying policies that are at their schools and their experiences with them. Set very clear expectations and consequences for bullying behavior from the start.

Make sure to praise in public, but correct in private (never in a room by yourself). This prevents the girl from being embarrassed when you point out her mistakes in front of all the girls.

Be understanding during conflict:

Remember, leaders should mediate, rather than solve and should always listen to both sides. Recognize that many of these behaviors are merely ways to gain attention. After all, for some, negative attention is better than no attention at all. But, if you give girls an opportunity to lead and keep them involved in the conflict resolution process, they'll learn how to handle life's challenges all on their own.

In situations where the troop agreement or other expectations are not being followed, and action must be taken, remember to talk with the girl, not at her. Share with her what troop agreement or expectation was not being followed, and make sure she understands the reason for the discipline.

Encourage the girls to work things out on their own by using:

- **Compromise** – Make sure it is clear to the girls that the outcome of the resolution might be less than what they expect, but they must make some concessions in order to solve the conflict. Direct the conversation so the girls can mutually agree on an appropriate solution.
- **Peer mediation** (for older girls) – Girls should appoint one or two peer mediators to assist in the conflict resolution process. Those mediators should give those involved a chance to talk about each side of their story. The mediators must understand that it is their job to be an active listener, which means they should listen openly, pay attention to body language, ask questions, express empathy, and summarize each girl's facts and feelings. Once each side has had a chance to communicate their version of events and their feelings, the mediator(s) will then assist in the process of brainstorming possible solutions, evaluating the effectiveness of those solutions, and assist upon a final agreement that allows for a fair or win-win solution.¹
- **Role-Playing/Reverse roles** – This is a great teaching tool where girls can act out the conflict or another similar one to gain an understanding of the situation and see it from another perspective. In turn, the girls will have a greater understanding of the cause and

effect of the

¹ "Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Toolkit." IRX. January 01, 2013. Accessed January 24, 2019. <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/node/resource/conflict-resolution-and-peer-mediation-toolkit.pdf>.

conflict, and be able to solve the problem.

Use The I-Statement Method:

Managing conflict is a learned skill—no one naturally knows how to find a compromise or address a personal attack from birth. Teach girls to use the I-Statement method so they learn how to articulate both the problem and their feelings about the conflict. It's as simple as this:

When you _____ (describe a specific action that hurt you) I feel _____ (say how you're feeling) Because _____ (why the action made me feel this way).

Here's an example: "When you won't sit next to me in the friendship circle, I feel sad, because I want to be with you and be your friend."

This gives both parties some perspective into what the actual problem is, and a way to address the situation. Notice that the I-Statement does not contain name-calling or personal attacks, which makes it a great tool for girls to share their feelings without creating more conflict.

To get started on implementing the I-Statement method in your troop, use the one-hour planned activity [I-Statements: The Key to Resolving Conflicts](#), from GSUSA's Ban Bossy program, to walk your girls through how to use I-Statements. It's a great way to get familiar with the problem-solving method before an actual problem arises!

Ask for Help:

Do not be afraid to get parents/caregiver's help. After all, they may know better ways to handle their daughter. Parents can often offer helpful tips that work at home, or even what doesn't work. Keep conversations about girl behavior open, calm, honest, and respectful. If needed, describe incidents that have occurred in sequence and include steps that were taken to resolve the situation. Discuss how you can work cooperatively to ensure the girl has a positive experience in Girl Scouts. You can always ask your SUM or fellow leaders for advice too. Your monthly service unit leader meeting is a great time to ask for solutions to issues you may be facing.

Follow the Chain of Command:

The girls should know whom to go to if there is a problem or concern from when you created the chain of command. In the event a problem does arise, make sure all leaders know the pertinent details of the situation and how it was handled, so that if a parent asks, you can discuss the situation and you are not out of the loop.

Adult Conduct:

Adults have conflicts too! If a parent/caregiver/or other volunteer has an issue, make sure the chain of command is clear: first, the leader, then the service unit manager, and then contact your council support specialist. You may want to consider a parent group agreement that can be signed at the beginning of the year. Like the girl troop agreement, this would outline expectations for parents on behavior, pick up/drop off, paperwork, and other items that fit your troop and parents.



Section Four: Troop Finances

Financing a troop is a vital part of Girl Scouting. For the girl, it offers practice in decision making, communication, goal-setting and planning. For the leadership team, it offers an opportunity to teach girls important financial life skills. For parents, it means that their daughters can participate in Girl Scouting no matter what the family's financial situation. Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles, within the provisions of its charter, is responsible for **all** money collected, earned, and spent within its jurisdiction in the name of Girl Scouting. Therefore, every leadership team needs to know about troop financial standards, procedures and record keeping. Troop treasurers **MUST** take and troop leaders **SHOULD** take the Troop Treasurer Webinar, as well as the Money Matters Modules. For additional specific policies and procedures regarding troop finances, please carefully review *Volunteer Essentials* Chapter 5.

Source of Troop Funds

Each Girl Scout troop plans and finances its own activities with your guidance. Girl Scout troops are funded by a share of money from:

Troop Dues – Dues are monies girls contribute to help fund their troop activities and expenses. Girls take ownership of their troop when they earn the dues and bring them to each meeting. The amount of dues collected should be based upon anticipated troop expenses, other income from product programs, the age of the girls, and the ability of families to help their daughters earn the dues. Dues usually range from \$0.50 to \$2.00 per meeting and are separate from the annual registration fee each Girl Scout pays to GSUSA. Occasionally, other fees may be collected from parents for trips and events.

NOTE: For Daisy troops, parents provide dues and/or startup funds. Adults handle all money for the Daisy Troop.

Fall Product and Cookie Programs – The GSGLA-sponsored Fall Product and Cookie Programs are really the best way for girls and troops to earn money for their activities and expenses. The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led business in the country. The product programs are a basic part of Girl Scouting as the girls learn five important skills:

- Goal setting – Girls who set goals are more likely to reach or exceed those goals. Girls learn by setting Fall Product and Cookie Program goals, and will receive rewards for achieving their goals.
- Decision making – A girl who is participating with her troop is

“Can’t we just have every family write us a check at the beginning of the year? It is so much easier.”

Easier? Absolutely. But what does the girl learn from that? Mom and dad can just pay for something else and I don’t have to worry about it. If parents don’t want to be bothered giving Susie a dollar every week for dues, they can get 30 one-dollar bills, put them in an envelope and let Susie be responsible for taking a dollar each week when she has done a chore to earn it.



involved in the decision of how to use troop proceeds. She gains confidence to make decisions about spending babysitting money, being a leader, or resisting negative peer pressure.

- Money management – Girls who learn to handle orders, inventory, and customers' money grow to manage their own allowance, income for a part-time job while still in school, a checking account, or their own cell phone bill!
- People skills – Girls learn to listen and have confidence in speaking with others while asking for support for themselves and Girl Scouts with a purchase of cookies, nuts, chocolates, or magazines. She learns how to work well with others on school projects and team sports, and asks for directions from a teacher to achieve her best!
- Business ethics – A Girl Scout is honest and responsible for every step of the program and learns that being trustworthy and honest is a good personal attribute, earning the respect of others in school, in college, and in the workplace!

And most of all, girls gain a tremendous amount of confidence. It's not easy to ask people to buy something—you have to speak up, look them in the eye, and believe in what you're doing—all skills that help a girl succeed now and throughout the rest of her life.

Monetary Donation – A monetary donation is when individuals or organizations make a direct monetary gift to a specific troop, or the troop is asking for a donation. Donations may not benefit an individual girl or adult. Participating in your company's matching gift program is an example of a monetary troop donation.

If you plan to receive a donation, refer to *Volunteer Essentials*, Chapter 5 for more information.

Gift Amount Limits:

- Younger girls may receive a single gift from multiple sources during the Girl Scout year. Each donation cannot exceed \$250 and sponsors can only donate once a year.
- Older girls may receive a single gift from multiple sources during the Girl Scout year. Each donation cannot exceed \$1000 and sponsors can only donate once a year.

NOTE: Troops, groups, service units, and Juliettes are not permitted to send tax acknowledgement letters on behalf of GSGLA. For a donor to receive a tax acknowledgement letter, GSGLA must have a record of the gift. Refer to *Volunteer Essentials*, Chapter 5 for more information.

Gift-in-Kind Donation – A gift-in-kind donation is a non-monetary donation such as free meeting space, snacks, or supplies. Troops do not need council approval to request gift-in-kind donations, and gift limits do not apply to gift-in-kind donations. Refer to *Volunteer Essentials*, Chapter 5 for more information.

Additional Money Earning – Brownies and up can participate in approved additional money earning activities. If the budget goal for a specific activity/trip has not been met, girls may plan an additional money earning activity if they have participated in both council sponsored product programs. Special Events & Money Earning (SEME) training is required before any additional money earning can take place. The training will answer any questions that you have about the money earning process and should be taken 6-8 weeks before planning your event.

Whose Money is it?

Question: Whose money is it?

Answer: The money belongs to the girls in the troop equally.

All dues, donations, and money earned belong to the troop as a whole – it belongs to the girls and they have the right to determine how it gets spent and how to budget for their activities. Girls should be involved in troop finances including planning the budget, estimating costs of activities and materials, and management of the troop funds/bank account, when age-appropriate. Funds are to

be spent according to group planning and girl-led decision making, as much as their grade level, skills and abilities allow.

No girl has a “line item account” of “her” money. What that means is all the girls contribute to the troop together. Whether a girl sells 20 or 20,000 boxes of cookies, all girls share equally in determining how the troop funds will be spent and being eligible to participate in the activities in which the troop agrees to participate.

NOTE: Adults handle and manage the funds for younger girls; as the girls get older, they can begin to handle troop funds, with adult guidance.

Troop Checking Accounts

To safeguard troop funds, a checking account should be opened as soon as your troop forms and collects funds. Accounts must be held in the name of “Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Troop #___” and is opened under the GSGLA taxpayer ID number. Accounts are to be opened as non-profit business accounts with no monthly service fees. Please note that savings accounts or other interest-bearing accounts are not allowed. Bank statements are to be mailed to the troop leader or other designated volunteer at the volunteer’s home address.

If you are taking over an existing troop, you may inherit a checking account. Check with your service unit manager or service unit treasurer to see if you have inherited a checking account.

To open an account, you will need to identify three or more adults who will be responsible for the funds. Then once you have identified those three adults, you will need to request a bank letter from GSGLA allowing you to open an account. All signers must be unrelated adults, not living in the same household, and be currently registered adult members and approved volunteers. It is recommended that the service unit manager or service unit treasurer be the third signer on the account if a third adult from the troop is not available. Letters may be requested using the Bank Letter Request e-form. Once you have received the letter, all signers must go to the bank together to open the account.

All accounts must have the protection of two signatures on each check. Along with checks, troop leaders may also have a debit card issued in their name. Troop checks and debit cards are authorized for official Girl Scout business only.

NOTE: It is important there is no commingling of personal and troop funds. All money should be deposited in the troop account as it was received - whether cash or checks.

Financial Record Keeping

One critical task for each troop is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the troop leader, you’re in charge of making sure money is spent wisely, and detailed records are kept. A good practice is to have a troop treasurer, in addition to the leader, to balance monthly statements.

Knowing what financial information is needed for accurate record-keeping is important. The following is a brief overview:



- **Financial Categories** – All troop income and expenses fall under a specific category. It is important to know the categories so the entry can be recorded correctly. Below are the financial categories:

INCOME CATEGORIES	EXPENSE CATEGORIES
Membership	Membership
Juliette Low World Friendship Fund	Juliette Low World Friendship Fund
Troop/Group Dues	G.I.R.L. Fund
Cookies	Equipment
Fall Products	Program Activities
G.I.R.L. Fund	Service Projects
Additional Money Collected	Program Supplies
Other Money Earning	Other Expenses
Contributions & Donations	Cookies
	Fall Products

- **Detailed Ledgers**- It is necessary to enter and categorize all troop income and expenses monthly. You can use the GSGLA VTK Ledger or one created in Excel, QuickBooks, Quicken, or handwritten, that has a column for each income and expense category, and each column can be totaled.
- **Bank Statements** – It is important to check the bank statements against the recorded income and expenses on the ledger each month to identify missing entries.
- **Bank Information Form** – Use this form to record the troop bank account information and signers.

Knowing the financial guidelines for accurate record keeping is very important.

- Cash & checks should be deposited as soon as possible and recorded on your troop ledger.
- For security reasons, do not keep cash in your house or vehicle unless it is appropriately secured.
- Any time the troop spends or receives money, a receipt should be provided and kept on record.
- If reimbursement is needed, it should be done with a troop check by signers other than the payee.
- Cash withdrawals, including withdrawals made with your troop debit card should only be made if absolutely necessary i.e., cookie booth change, tips for taxi, or hotel service.
- Blank checks should never be pre-signed, and debit cards should not be used by anyone other than the person they are issued to.
- Leaders and troop treasurers should be in communication with each other before spending funds to prevent overdrafts.
- For checks and balances, whoever keeps the checkbook should be different than the one that gets the bank statements.

NOTE: At any time, parents/caregivers or GSGLA may request to see troop financial records.

Financial Requirements

Every troop is responsible for submitting a year-end finance report that covers the period from May 1 to April 30 of the current year and is due via the VTK Finance tab by the first Friday in June.

It is recommended troops use the VTK Ledger to record financial transactions, as it is a detailed income/expense record with the same categories as those on the VTK Finance tab.

- As income and expenses are entered into the VTK Ledger, the annual report tab will automatically create a summary, which is the information you will enter into the VTK Finance tab.
- Troops should reconcile their ledger, receipts, and bank statements monthly to ensure all transactions have been entered.
- Whether you use the VTK Ledger or your own detailed ledger, it will need to be uploaded when you submit your finances.
- Along with the ledger, you will need to upload your VTK Summary and cash receipts, if applicable.

NOTE: The document “[Everything You Wanted to Know About Year-End Financials](#)” has detailed information on keeping records and submitting your year-end finance report.

Section Five: Getting Started

Girl Scouts is the world’s largest organization of and for girls where girls can do and be, whatever they dream. The inclusive, all-female environment of a Girl Scout troop creates a safe space where girls can try new things, develop a range of skills, take on leadership roles, and just be themselves.

Girl Scouts’ mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. In partnership with committed adult volunteers, Girl Scouts prepares girls for a lifetime of leadership through access to experiences, skills, and connections.

Structure and Resources

TROOP LEADER-

As a troop leader, you are responsible for the safety and well-being of the girls in the troop as well as delivering the Girl Scout program. But don’t be overwhelmed, there are multiple layers of structure, support, program guidelines, inspiration, and more around you.

GIRL SCOUT TROOP –

Most Girl Scouts are members of a troop. Troops are organized by grade levels where the girls can choose, create, and engage in their activities with your guidance, mentoring, and coaching. Within the troop are parents/caregivers who have expressed an interest in working alongside you as part of the troop leadership team to provide assistance when needed.

SERVICE UNIT TEAM –

Troops are supported by a volunteer service unit team that is your key support entity and is the first line of information. Our council – Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA) – is divided into numerous geographical areas, and the troops in each area compose the Service Unit (SU). As a troop leader, you will have the most contact with your SU team. These experienced volunteers provide coaching, support, and ideas to assist you in the management of your troop. It is important to read **ALL** information distributed by your SU team.



Each SU team is made up of a:

- **Service Unit Manager** (SUM) who oversees all activities within a geographical area.
- **Service Unit Treasurer** who helps with bank accounts and financial matters
- **Troop Consultant** who is the go-to person to help leaders provide an amazing Girl Scout experience for girls.
- **Service Unit Recruiter** who speaks with families about joining Girl Scouts and recruits troop volunteers.
- **Product Program Chair** for Cookies and Fall Products who facilitate the product program so girls can have a successful sale.

Each service unit has frequent leader meetings where leaders get a chance to network with other leaders, hear about upcoming events, council updates, and important announcements. Attending leader meetings is considered a basic responsibility of being a leader and an important part of leader development. If you are unable to attend, a member of your troop leadership team should attend in your place.



GSGLA –

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, serves more than 40,000 girls in grades K–12 in partnership with more than 20,000 volunteers throughout the diverse communities of Los Angeles County and parts of Kern, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties (6,272 square miles!). Our administrative headquarters is located in Los Angeles with service centers and stores conveniently located within three geographical regions – North, Southwest, Southeast. GSGLA is chartered by our national organization, Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA), to coordinate the delivery of program to girls throughout the greater Los Angeles area. GSGLA is staffed by trained and committed women and men to provide support to troops.



GSUSA –

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), is located in New York City and provides a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers, including developing programming resources such as Journeys and Badges. When a girl or adult registers they become a member of GSUSA, the

largest girl-led organization in the world! And are officially covered under the Mutual of Omaha plan for approved activities. Additionally, GSUSA offers programs such as USA Girl Scouts Overseas, which eases the transition for American families relocating overseas.



World Association
of Girl Guides
and Girl Scouts

WAGGGS –

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) is the umbrella organization under which the Girl Guide and Girl Scout programs operate worldwide. They are the largest non-formal educational movement for girls and young women to develop the skills and confidence needed to make positive changes in their lives, in their communities, and in their countries. There are five WAGGGS World Centers located in Mexico (Our Cabana), UK (Pax Lodge), Switzerland (Our Chalet), Africa (Kusafiri), and India (Sangam).

Your new troop is a cornerstone linking your girls to the millions of girls around the planet who believe in and support values similar to those you express every time you recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

MYGS— My Account & Volunteer Toolkit

[MyGS](#) is the Girl Scout web portal with a renewal and volunteer resource tool built into one login.

As part of the **My GS** community of online member resources, **My Account** makes it easier than ever to manage your household's Girl Scout memberships and keep track of your Girl Scout experiences.

The screenshot shows the 'My Account' dashboard for Kristin Tierney. It includes a sidebar with navigation links, a main content area with a welcome message and household information, and a 'My Events Dashboard' on the right. Numbered callouts highlight specific features: 1 points to the household name, 2 points to the 'My Troops' section, and 3 points to the 'My Account' sidebar link.

3 My Account

Welcome, Kristin Tierney!

1 Kristin Tierney's household

Name	Troop(s)	Participation	Status
Kristin Tierney	STAFF VTK Troop01471	Leader/Advisor	• ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Manage my household members >

2 My Troops

STAFF VTK Troop01471

Meeting time	Program level	Role	Expiring members	Open spot(s)
Bi-weekly Friday 2:15 AM - 3:30 AM	multi-level	Leader/Advisor	0 girl 0 adult	12 girls 5 adults

Manage my Troops >

My Events Dashboard

View all Upcoming Events >

1. **The Household Summary View:** A scrollable list of all current and inactive Girl Scout members in your household along with troop affiliations and the status for all household memberships — renewing your girl has never been easier!
2. **The Troop Summary View:** There to provide you with a quick look at basic information on the troops that your household members are a part of!
3. **The My Account Menu:** Ready to take to your pages like **My Household, My Troop, My Profile, My Events, Volunteer Toolkit, and gsLearn**, where you will be able to find more details and information — beyond the summary views on your landing page—and where you'll go to update and edit your member account information!

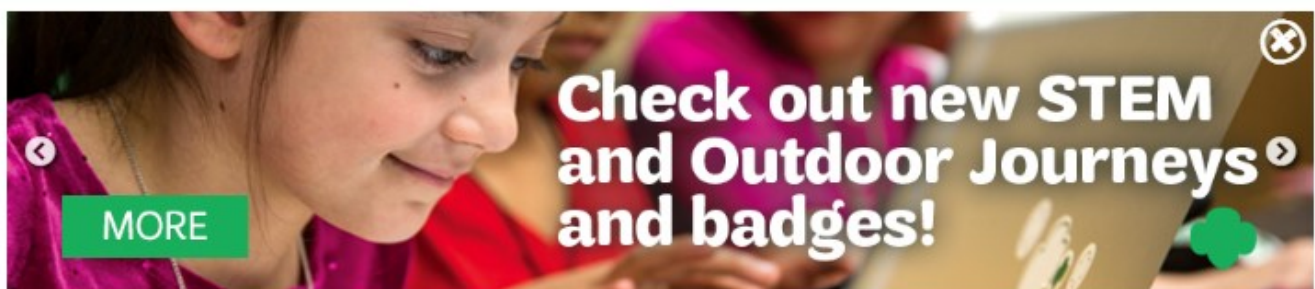
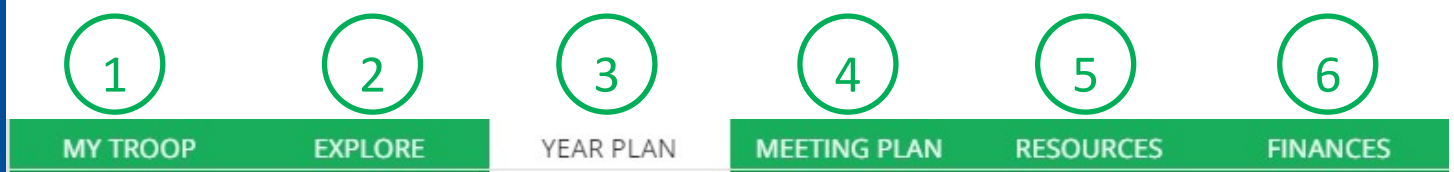
Please note: The **Event Tab** and **Event Dashboard** have not been activated. You can still view your list of event sign-ups via **e-biz**

Volunteer Toolkit

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is an awesome and easy-to-use resource you can access on your computer, smartphone, or tablet! This is a living resource with ongoing enhancements that allows you to spend more time doing the things you imagined when you stepped into your volunteer role—changing girls' lives through amazing experiences!

You can plan out your whole year, view your roster with all troop member information, and access tools to facilitate communication between you and your parents. Parents can view what the troop is doing (e.g., meeting information, badges, and Journeys), what achievements their daughter has completed, and the troop's finances. It was created to help improve the girl, parent, and volunteer experience.

There are 6 tabs that make up the VTK section:



1. My Troop –

This is where you will find a list of all registered troop members and their information, including

achievements and attendance. Emails can be sent, and contact information can be updated from this tab. Leaders can also add and change troop photos.

2. Explore –

This is where you can preview all the preloaded badges and journeys available for your girls. Select between the following year plans:

- In the **Select Your Own** plan, you can select badges and awards that fit the style of your troop. With this track, you will see ALL meeting plans, or you can filter to a specific area of interest. Meeting plans are selected individually and added to the year plan.
- With the **Pre-selected Track** plan, all meetings are organized around a specific badge or Journey and becomes the year plan.

Once you have decided on a year plan, click your choice. You will be asked if that's the plan you want, and if so, you will be able to preview the different meetings.

3. Year plan –

This is where you will see the year plan selected divided into meetings which can be moved, replaced, or deleted as needed. At the top of the year plan, in green, are links to Manage calendar, Add Badge/Journey, and Add Activity.

- In Manage Calendar, you can select dates for your meetings, and add in your meeting location.
- In Add Badge/Journey, you can search for and add a badge or journey to your selected Year Plan.
- In Add Activity, you can add a customized activity to your selected year plan, or add a GSGLA council activity that you have already registered for.

NOTE: If you have more meetings than the year plan, add a meeting; if you have fewer meetings, combine meetings. You can also replace meetings as needed.

4. Meeting plan –

After you have clicked on a meeting in the year plan, you will see the specifics for that meeting which include a brief description, requirements, and resources for the meeting. Resources include:

- Planning materials
 - The Meeting Overview gives a short description of the meeting agenda and what/how to prepare for the meeting.
 - The Activity Plan gives specifics for each part of the meeting.
 - On the Materials List, you will find all the supplies needed for the meeting.
- Manage Communications gives you the option to send a meeting reminder email and record attendance and achievements.
- Meeting Aids has templates and other items needed for the meeting. You can even add your own.
- Agenda for each part of the meeting which describes in detail what is going to happen and what to say. Parts of the meeting may be rearranged, lengthen or shorten, deleted, and you can add agenda item of your own.
- Meeting Notes allows you to add personal notes about that specific meeting.

5. Resources –

This is where you will find all the GSGLA resources available - forms, trainings, safety guidelines, and lots more in one central place.

6. Finances –

This is where you will enter your financial information. Parents do see limited troop financial information regarding troop income and expenses and the financial summary. Finances tab information is included in Section 4 - Troop Finances.

** As the VTK is a living resource with ongoing enhancements, some sections may have changed, been added, or removed since the publication of this document.*

Troop Organization

One important step to getting started is to organize the paperwork you will be collecting, troop records you will be keeping, and supplies needed for troop meetings. Everyone is going to get organized differently, so set up a system that works for you.

It's always a good idea to have all paperwork, handouts, and anything Girl Scout related in one place. This could be a closet, shelf, or another designated area. This is especially helpful so you are not running all over the place trying to find everything. You will need to plan for:

- A system for current year forms – This can be a folder or binder or other type of container that can be easily taken to troop meetings and any place you go with the girls. In the [Tips & Tools](#) section, you will find a document on putting together a troop binder.
- A container for meeting supplies – This can be a box, basket, bag or other type of container that can be easily taken to a troop meeting. Tips & Tools has a list of recommended supplies.
- Storage for old records - An electronic or paper version of ALL forms should be retained for five years – Consider a plastic hanging folder organizer or a filing cabinet to keep records safe.

Forms and other documents

Below is a list of important forms and documents and how they are used. This is not an exhaustive list, so refer to the GSGLA Forms page and *Volunteer Essentials* for all forms and documents you may need.

- [Additional Insurance Form](#) – Use this form to purchase additional activity insurance for every activity in which non-members participate or for any extended/international travel. Complete and submit the form at least two weeks in advance prior to the activity.
- [Adult Emergency Information and Authorization for Treatment Card](#) – This form authorizes first aid and emergency treatment for adult volunteers. It is important that each adult has the completed card carried on them at all times.
- [Annual Permission Form](#) - This form obtains parent/caregiver permission for all troop meetings and any other day activities for the Girl Scout year. With the use of this form, additional permission forms are not required for troop meetings and day events, or activities that are under 8 hours in duration. Written notification to the parents/caregivers and your SUM/designee is required for all activities.
- Award Records – Use these forms to track what recognitions the troop has earned. You may also choose to keep a sheet for each girl individually. If you are working on a VTK badge, you will have the option to record the girls' attendance and achievements. More information on this form will be included in the level training.
- [Bank Account Information form](#) – Use this form to document bank information. This form

includes confidential information. (Located in Tips & Tools)

- [Cash Receipt Form](#) – Use this form for every cash expenditure. This form is to be submitted with the ledger and VTK Ledger Summary, along with the cash expenditure receipts, to the VTK Finance tab.
- [Fall Product and Cookie Programs Parent/Guardian Permission & Responsibility Agreement](#) – This form gives permission for girls to participate in the fall product and cookie product programs. Ensures parents are accepting responsibility for product, money, supervising girls, and following rules. More information on this form will be given in your product program training.
- [Health Information and Release Form](#) (Health History Form) – This form documents health information and authorizes first aid and emergency treatment. Keep these forms with you at all times! A new form does not need to be completed each year, but parents should review it annually, put a current date next to their signature, and update whenever there are changes to a girl's medication information. It is important to keep the original in the troop permanent file, a copy in your troop First Aid Kit, and additional copies available for chaperones/carpool drivers during activities. This form is confidential and should be collected from chaperones/drivers at the end of each activity.
- [Internet Safety Pledge](#) – This form instructs girls on the importance of internet safety. Explain to the girls the importance of the pledge and have them commit to it.
- [Over the Counter Medication form \(OTC\)](#) – This form gives you written parent/caregiver permission to give OTC medication. As leaders, you cannot dispense any medicine without express parent permission. That includes Tylenol for a headache or even sunscreen on a hike. Customize your troop First Aid to fit the group.
- [Parent/Guardian Single-Use Permission Form](#) – This form gives written permission for activities that include extended-day trips (8+ hours), overnight stays, and/or high-risk activities as defined by *Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Make sure you have a signed form for each girl, as written permission is needed from the parents/guardian even if they will be coming along. Parents/guardians sign the bottom part and keep the top for reference. For insurance purposes, your service unit manager/designee must approve and sign the Approval Permission Form before you give it to your parents/guardians. Send to your service unit manager/designee at least 4 weeks prior to the activity.
- [Parent Volunteer Survey](#) – Use this form to let parents/caregivers know what help you need. Have parents/caregivers complete this form at your parent/caregiver meeting.
- [Parent/Caregiver Permission for Sensitive Issues](#) - This form gives permission for girls to participate in planned discussions and activities that include topics that are, or could be, considered to be of a sensitive or controversial nature.
- [Provided Prescription and/or Provided OTC Medication](#) – This form gives you written permission to assist or administer medication during the activity. All medication – prescription and OTC – provided must be in its original containers, with original label, dose and expiration date. Prescription labels must include the child's name, physician's name, and phone number.
- [Troop Attendance Record](#) – Use this form to record attendance at troop meetings and activities can also be recorded through the VTK.
- [Troop Driver Information Form](#) - This form collects driver information from any parent who will be driving girls other than their own during planned field trips in which the group will be transported in private vehicles. It also asks the parent to abide by the troop driver guidelines.

- [Troop Dues Record](#) – Use this form to record all dues, and additional money collected from parents. Label a column for each meeting and activity the funds are collected for.
- Troop Roster – This is a phone/e-mail list of the girls, including emergency contact information. This form is created by the leaders with the need information when the troop is formed or can be printed from VTK.
- [What I Need For My Girls To Attend A...](#) – Use this document as a resource to determine what paperwork, activity approval, and training is required for any activity in which your girls want to participate. This is a reference chart, and you should always refer to *Volunteer Essentials* for more detailed information.

MEETING WITH YOUR CO-LEADER

Keys to success in any troop are forming a great leader co-leader team and keeping the parents informed and involved. Your mantra from Day 1 should be:

I don't have to do it all myself!

You and your co-leader are going to be role models who plan and execute meetings, activities, and service projects. As you plan, remember:

- There must be at least two registered and approved, unrelated adults, one of which is female, present at every meeting and activity.
- Check the adult-to-girl ratio for meetings and activities.
- It's important to develop a troop leadership team to delegate tasks.

Before you meet with the girls, you will want to have a meeting with the adults who have volunteered to help lead the troop. As your team begins to work together, let your differences teach you how to use the tools and gifts you have. Be sure one of you is the type of person who will meet deadlines, complete forms, read the fine print, and follow up on paperwork. Respect each other for who you are and forgive each other for any “space cadet” moments. Your Girl Scouts will learn how to treat you and each other by watching their co-leaders interact.

During this meeting, review your strengths and decide how you want to work as a team. Determine who has what strengths (camping, craft artist, STEM experience, etc.), who wants to take on which responsibilities (treasurer, product programs, etc.), and availability. You will also want to discuss the following:

- General – decide on a date/time/place for parent and troop meetings, and review Girl Scout program content and uniform options.
- Troop Leadership Team (Troop Treasurer, Troop Product Program Chair, Troop First-Aider, Chaperone/Drivers) – decide between you and your co-leader which of these roles you will fulfill and which you will ask for parent help. See tips and tools for a listing of possible troop positions.
- Financial records – decide how records will be handled, who will work with the Troop Treasurer, if applicable, and who will be responsible for setting up a bank account.
- Parent Permission – decide who will be responsible for notifying parents/caregivers and the SUM/designee when the troop will be participating in activities away from your normal

meeting place and time, and when necessary, submitting Permission Forms for approval to the SUM/designee, and parents/caregivers.

- Record keeping – decide who will be responsible for putting the binder together and filing paperwork in the binder.
- Communication – decide on troop communication methods and who will be responsible for communicating with troop families.
- Family meeting – finalize the details on which part of the meeting each will lead. More information on family meetings can be found later in this manual.
- VTK — log on and view the different year plans, and decide which plans to discuss with the girls.
- Planning – decide how often you will meet to plan meetings, and who will be responsible for the kaper chart and the yearly calendar.
- Troop meetings – decide how you will trade off when working with the girls during the meeting, and creating the meeting agendas.
- Safety – decide who will review *Safety Activity Checkpoints* and *Volunteer Essentials* when planning activities, who will arrange for the Chaperones/Drivers/Emergency Contact for activities outside of the regular troop meeting, and who will ensure the First Aider is available to attend events/activities with the first aid kit.

Check [Tips and Tools](#) for an agenda check list that can be used when meeting with your co-leader.

TIPS FOR LEADER SUCCESS

Keep in mind the tips below as you and your co-leader navigate the world of Girl Scouting.

- **Be patient:** Becoming familiar with the Girl Scout way of doing things (forms, financial records, VTK, *Volunteer Essentials*, *Safety Activity Checkpoints*, etc.) seems daunting, but once you get past the basics, the world is yours. Girl Scouts gives troop leaders and girls the freedom to structure and lead the troop their own way. Please be patient with yourself, your co-leader, your parents, and your Girl Scouts as everyone is still learning.
- **Be forgiving:** There will be meetings that leave you floating on air. There will also be meetings that don't go the way you planned, and all you want to do is devour several s'mores. There will be parents who don't respond to your emails, texts, calls, and carrier pigeons; forgive them, they have a lot going on. There will be forms you forget to submit, deadlines you miss, and things that slip your mind – forgive yourself, fix it, and just keep swimming. Remember, you are learning how to be a Girl Scout leader. Learning to adjust to failure and moving on is part of the process.
- **Be flexible:** You may have planned until your face turned blue - but if it isn't working, don't force it. If the girls are too wired to focus on your activity, change it. You are the only one that will know that what you planned didn't work. If all else fails, Duck, Duck, Goose, and Red-Light Green-Light can save a meeting.
- **Focus on the girls:** Girl Scouts is girl-led because when girls are given the opportunity to lead, amazing things happen. And we all need a little amazing in our lives, right? So, get the girls involved in the planning from the beginning, and as they grow older and more capable, keep handing over more and more of the troop planning, finances, and organization to them! You'll be surprised at what they can accomplish when given opportunities by a leader who believes in them. They will let you know what they want to

do. Relax and enjoy the experience. You will get out what you put in.

- **Set your own pace:** Gather your resources, plan your first couple of meetings, regroup, and plan a few more. If you find you are trying to cram too much into your meeting, change something. If the Girl Scouts are restless, get them moving. You and your co-leaders are just that, “co-leaders,” so make this troop reflect what is in your heart and have fun. Set your own pace to ensure maximum fun and learning. Be kind, forgive, and expect to be amazed, and you will have a wonderful first year.
- **Meet the families:** Everything you do during your experience as a Girl Scout leader may revolve around the girls, but they come attached to families who have expectations and resources. So don’t forget about them when you’re just starting out. Schedule a family meeting where you can find out if the parents of your girls have a special skill, have connections for a field trip, and, of course, ask them to be part of the troop leadership team. Be sure to make your requests specific. Instead of “I need help,” say “I need help with snack at our next meeting” or “I need chaperones and drivers for our field trip to the fire station.” It’s much easier to get people to volunteer the first time if they know what they’re volunteering to do. And if they (and their daughter) have fun, they’ll be back for more! The better you get to know your parents, the more you will learn about resources available to the troop and the involvement level the family expects; it’ll help you better understand the girls!
- **Don’t compare:** There will always be another volunteer or troop who look like they have it together all the time. Don’t make the mistake of comparing your troop to theirs! Girl Scouts is not a competition, and each troop (and leader) has great moments, and epic fails. Even the perfect troop has a story about a day when they set their tents up in a low-lying area and an overnight rainstorm flooded the tents. Or the time the leader arrived at a meeting and realized she’d left crucial supplies at her house.
- **Use your resources:** Worried you don’t know enough about Girl Scouts? It’s okay! You aren’t expected to know everything right away. We have resources to help you learn what you need, such as the VTK, *Volunteer Essentials*, *Safety Activity Checkpoints*, GSGLA website, and the GSGLA Training website all at your fingertips. You are an active participant in your own Girl Scout experience. Ask for help from your service unit team or support specialist when you need it. This is something you are teaching your girls, and you can do it too. We all know it’s easier to complain about how you don’t understand



something – be vulnerable and ask for help. It will make someone's day to be able to help you, and you might make a friend in the process.

- **Meet your friend, the internet:** Use the internet to get ideas. There are hundreds of sites that will give ideas for songs, ceremonies, trips, etc. You don't have to come up with everything yourself. Use ideas that have already worked for other people – it will save your sanity!
- **Realize awards are important – but they aren't everything:** Badges are just a way to try new things. If the girls don't like it – you don't have to earn them. Fun or participation patches are just a way to remember the experiences that you have had. The important thing is that girls are learning and growing. They don't need a badge or patch for everything.
- **Take a field trip:** Don't be intimidated thinking that a field trip has to be some major thing. The fire station, ice cream shop, park – are all great field trips! Find out if your service unit has events – these are easy activities you don't have to plan – and they give your girls the chance to meet other Girl Scouts!

The most important thing to remember is that you are learning just as much as your girls are, and you will guide each other through this fantastic journey. Nobody is perfect, so embrace your imperfections, learn from mistakes, and keep moving forward (just as you'd tell the girls to do). The more enthusiasm and fun you have – the more enthusiastic and excited your girls will be. This is one of the only places that it will be OK for you to sing about underwear – so sing at the top of your lungs! Remember what it was like to be a kid! Have a great time – and remember every moment – you and your daughter will cherish these memories later.

Family MEETING

A family meeting is designed to give you the opportunity to connect directly with your troop families. The initial meeting is crucial to you as a troop leader. Ideally, you'll want to meet with your parents prior to meeting with girls. But if your girls are already meeting, you'll want to hold your first family meeting as soon as possible.

This meeting is where they learn about how Girl Scouting really works and their own role in the success of the troop. You cannot assume that parents/caregivers know or understand anything about Girl Scouting – even if they have been a girl member themselves.

Parents/caregivers can be great supporters! They undoubtedly share your goal of providing an enriching experience for girls. But will they offer to help?

- **Do Assume** parent involvement is essential to the success of the troop.
- **Do Not Assume** that any parent/caregiver knows what kind of help you need.
- **Do Assume** each parent/caregiver wants to help his or her daughter to have a good experience in Girl Scouting.
- There is no **Right Way** to get parent/caregiver help --- but one thing is for sure, it won't happen if you don't ASK!

Every troop is run differently, and it is only fair to let parents/caregivers know upfront what your needs and expectations are. A great way to ensure the understanding of expectations is to have an

agenda that covers all the topics parents/caregivers need to know. The [Family Meeting Agenda](#) and the customizable [Parent/Caregiver Responsibility Agreement](#) in Tips and Tools have been designed to do just that. With each parent having a copy of the agreement, they can take notes and when a point needs a decision, they can note it. Before leaving, each parent should sign and date their agreement and give it to you. Parents/Caregivers may want to take a picture of the signed agreement or you can send them a copy later.

The agenda also discusses the need for families to support the troop and asks the parents to complete a Parent Volunteer Survey. This lets families share their experiences, interests, and talents, and gives you an idea of who to recruit for the tasks that need delegating. Other agenda items include:

- Responsibilities to girls/troop
- Benefits of Girl Scouting
- Troop specifics
- Safe girl-led activities
- Family expenses
- Give for the Girl and how to donate
- Troop Supply list and Where the Money Goes
- Communicating
- Forms to get started
- Next steps



NOTE: There are many resources available to help you conduct a Family meeting. View our Meeting with Families module.

If you're feeling a little uncomfortable about this meeting, you may want to invite an experienced Girl Scout volunteer or staff member to be there with you. You can still facilitate the meeting, but they can help if questions come up that you cannot answer, or to assist in getting parents to volunteer for positions in the troop.

Section Six: Helping Girls Lead

What do Girl Scouts do? The answer is **almost anything** a girl would like to do! Girl Scouts includes engaging, challenging, and fun activities like earning badges, going on awesome trips, selling cookies, exploring science, getting outdoors, and doing community service projects that are designed to help girls develop into the leaders of tomorrow. In Girl Scouts, a "leader" is not someone who is simply in a position of authority or who likes to take charge. A leader works collaboratively with others to make things better for everyone.

In Girl Scouts, girls get to create their own adventure while teaming up with other girls in an all-girl

environment. Girls will gain important skills in four areas: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM); Outdoors; Life Skills; and Entrepreneurship through participation in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is a one-of-a-kind leadership development program for girls that was developed after extensive research. It is proven to help girls take the lead in their own lives and in the world. The GSLE is focused around the girl with three **Keys** to leadership and three **Processes** we can use to help girls achieve it.

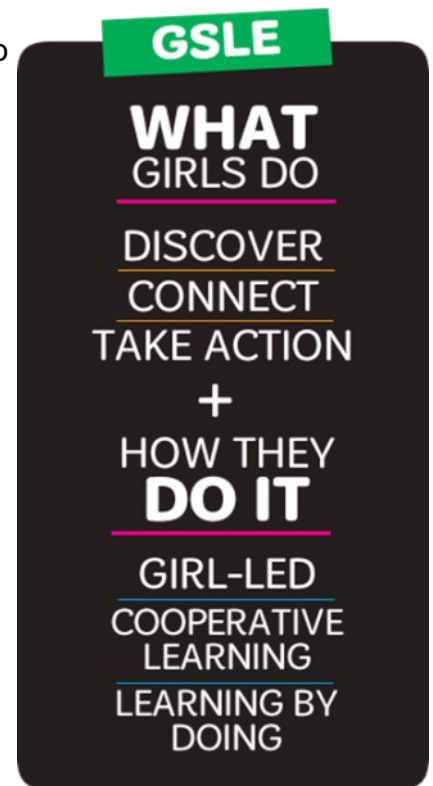
Guided by supportive adults and peers, girls develop their leadership potential through age-appropriate activities that enable them to:

- **Discover** their values, skills, and the world around them.
- **Connect** with others in a multicultural environment, by teaming with others locally and globally.
- **Take Action** to make a difference in their world.

These Keys are **what** girls do in Girl Scouting. All experiences in Girl Scouting incorporate the Discover, Connect, and Take Action keys to leadership.

Girl Scout experiences are also, as much as possible, girl-led and encourage learning by doing and cooperative learning. These three **processes** promote the fun and friendship that have always been so integral to Girl Scouting. The Three Processes are **how** girls participate.

- **Girl Led:** Girl-led simply means that girls are playing an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how, and why of their activities as part of the girl-adult partnership. This means girls are more engaged in playing a critical role as decision-makers in the planning and implementation of their activities. Encourage them to lead the planning, learning, and FUN as much as possible. This ensures the girls experience leadership opportunities as they prepare to become active participants in their communities.
- **Learning by Doing:** As they actively participate in meaningful activities and reflect on them to evaluate what they have learned, girls get to explore their own questions, discover answers, and gain new skills, share ideas and observations with others. It's important for girls to connect their experiences to their lives and apply what they have learned to future experiences in and outside Girl Scouting.
- **Cooperative Learning:** Cooperative Learning is designed to promote the sharing of knowledge, skills, and learning in an atmosphere of mutual respect and collaboration as girls work together on goals. This results in feeling powerful, emotionally and physically safe, and experiencing a sense of belonging even in the most diverse groups.



Participating in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience helps girls benefit in five ways:

- **Strong sense of self:** Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and form positive identities.
- **Positive values:** Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.
- **Challenge seeking:** Girls take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.
- **Healthy relationships:** Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.
- **Community problem solving:** Girls desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create “action plans” to solve them.



These Keys, Processes, and Outcomes are at the heart of all Girl Scout program materials. As leaders, you will be able to help develop leadership qualities in your girls by implementing the GSLE throughout the girls' experience.

Girl/Adult Partnership

One of the basic themes running through the Girl Scout program is that of girl/adult partnership, girls and adults working together to plan and carry out the Girl Scout experience. This includes everything from troop meetings to activities to overnights. To grow strong, girls need to be partners in decision-making from the very beginning – whether choosing from a list of activities as a Girl Scout Daisy or making sure the trip has enough adult supervision for Girl Scout Ambassadors. Your goal should be to act increasingly as a facilitator, enabling girls to experience more opportunities for planning, decision-making, leadership and, yes, even failure.

With the girl/adult partnership, girls feel involved and have more opportunities to become responsible and self-reliant. They learn how to plan and make decisions democratically and they develop leadership and interpersonal skills. They also experience a variety of leadership roles in a nonthreatening environment.

Remember!

When girls you work with are uncertain, **you provide structure**.
When they are partially uncertain, you **coach**.
When they become almost certain, you **reinforce**.
When they are capable, you **STEP BACK AND LET THEM GO!**



Girls need to make choices and plans to mature and develop their competence and self-esteem. When encouraged to be actively involved, develop leadership skills, and accept responsibility, girls are more likely to enjoy their Girl Scout activities and stay with them longer. The girl/adult partnership begins at the Girl Scout Daisy level and progresses as the girls grow older and gain experience in making and carrying out their own decisions.

Active listening is one of the most important skills the leader can use to foster an atmosphere in which the girl/adult partnership thrives. In most group meetings, girls should generate most of the conversation and ideas. However, the level of planning and authority assumed by the leader and the girls is not always constant. The leader takes on a stronger leadership role when safety is a concern or when the girls are trying an activity for the first time.

Here are a few examples of the girl/adult partnership at every level:

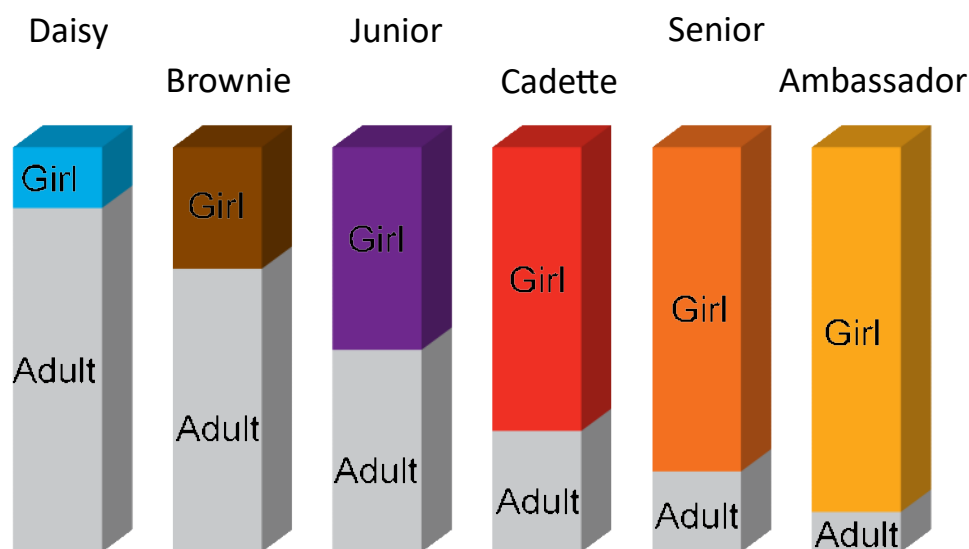
- **Daisy:** Girls participate in simple decisions. Adults give 2-3 choices to choose from when deciding on activities.
- **Brownie:** Girls participate in simple brainstorming. Adults provide reality checks and help provide concrete choices.
- **Junior:** Girls are starting to take over the conversation. Adults act as a guide for group decisions.
- **Cadette:** Girls complete all steps of the planning process from research to implementation. Adults act as a facilitator and provide guidance.
- **Senior/Ambassador:** Girls will do everything except sign the check and drive the car. Adults are on standby, ready to provide guidance if needed.

Adults who understand and make a conscious effort to facilitate the girl/adult partnership help build girls of courage, confidence and character. This partnership factors into many aspects of the Girl Scout program. You will see such topics as troop governance choices and progression in activities addressed when you take other training courses.

Signs the Girl/Adult Partnership is Working:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorming is an accepted way of generating ideas.• Everyone's ideas are respected.• Everyone has a chance to voice her opinion.• Girls are allowed to make mistakes (as long as they are non-life threatening).• Girls and adults are talking with each other.• Girls are participating in self-government.• Girls are making their own plans, and adults are encouraging them. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Girls tell the leader the agenda.• Girls are actively directing an event.• Girls are planning complete events.• Girls and adults say "our" project.• There is evidence of compromise.• Trust exists on both sides.• Adults are observing not doing.• Adults are close enough to answer questions when needed—and far enough away not to interfere. |
|---|---|

Girl/Adult Partnership Ratios by Level:



Elements of a Girl Scout Troop Meeting

A traditional Girl Scout troop meeting includes the following seven segments. What sorts of things might happen during each of these segments? That depends upon the activities planned and what awards or projects the girls are working on. The segments of a Girl Scout meeting don't always have to go in this exact order and may change depending on the age of the girls.

Start-Up Activity: Something for girls (especially younger ones) to do as they arrive and are waiting for the meeting to officially begin.

Opening: A formal beginning to the meeting that helps girls focus; it often includes the Promise and Law, flag ceremony, song or game, or other ceremony designed by the girls. Ceremonies, even when brief or humorous, make Girl Scout time special.

Business: This portion of your troop meeting will usually not take up much time, but this is a good opportunity for the girls to get the chance to lead. The Daisy Circle for Daisies and the Brownie Ring for Brownies are your first forms of troop government where the girls are given guidance to help them start making decisions for the troop. This is also the time where dues will be collected, and attendance will be taken. As the girls get older, and troop government becomes more advanced, the business section of your meeting might take more time.

Activities: The main focus of your troop



meetings will be the activities, which should be planned around the girls' interests. Whether these activities are based on a journey, badge or other awards, a service project, Girl Scout traditions, or just for fun and learning, you should plan to have activities that will fill up about half your meeting time. Keep in mind it is always better to "over-plan" and run out of time, then to have activities take less time than expected and run out of things to do. Your first few meetings should be centered on the girls getting to know each other and Girl Scout traditions, including the Promise and Law. If you have a larger troop, and enough adult support, you might want to consider breaking the group up into smaller groups known as patrols for completing activities. For younger girls, like Daisies and Brownies, you will need an adult with each patrol to monitor and assist the girls. As the girls get older, they may be able to work in small groups independently. Remember, busy girls are less likely to misbehave, so it's a good idea to have backup plans for all activities, just in case.

Snacks: Depending on when your troop meets, snack time can happen first, last, right in the middle, or not at all. If your troop meets right after school, it's better to have snack sooner rather than later. Whether the troop will be providing the snack or parents will be taking turns bringing the snack for the troop, you want to encourage snacks that are healthy for the girls and not just a bunch of junk food. Sometimes your snack might be related to an award activity, so plan accordingly. This is usually a very social time. The girls generally enjoy chatting while eating, so keep an eye on the clock. You don't want too much of the meeting time spent on having a snack.

Clean-up: A Girl Scout always leaves a place cleaner than she found it, so it is important for all the girls to be involved with clean-up at the end of the troop meeting. Girls may need to put away supplies, sweep floors, pick up trash, and other things. Consider using a kaper chart to divide up the clean-up tasks. It's important to ensure that clean-up has been completed before closing your troop meeting so that the leaders and their daughters do not get stuck finishing up.



Closing: Closing ceremonies can include an evaluation of the day, a comment by each girl about what she learned/enjoyed, a song, and/or the friendship circle and squeeze. Let the girls decide and make it whatever they want it to be. This ceremony signifies a formal end of the troop meeting and tells the parents that reminders have been given, paperwork has been handed out, and it is okay to pick up their daughter.

How to plan your troop meetings:

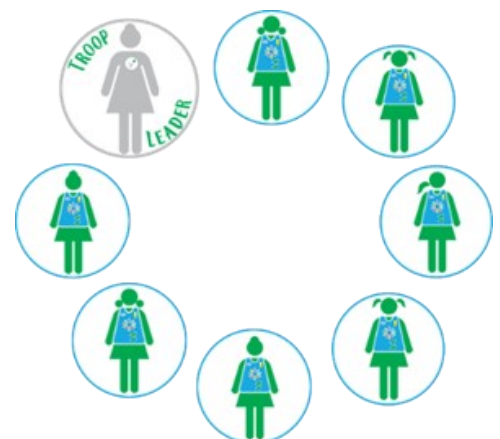
- You will find handy meeting planning tools linked in the [Tips and Tools](#) section of this Manual:
 - ⇒ **Troop Meeting Plan Template** – A resource available to help leaders outline troop meetings, including what to bring, who is responsible for what, etc. This resource will help you break down your meeting into sections and how long each should take.
 - ⇒ **First 6 Meetings** – Available for every level of Girl Scouts. These packets are basic outlines for your first 6 meetings at that level. They are designed to help girls form (or reestablish) bonds of friendship while introducing them to the journeys available at their new level.
- Use the Volunteer Toolkit, which has already been mentioned to be a wealth of troop planning resources.
- If you prefer non-digital resources, the Adult Journey Guides, level Handbooks, and badge pamphlets are available to help you plan your meeting activities.
- If all else fails, use Google for ideas. Leaders love to share with others.

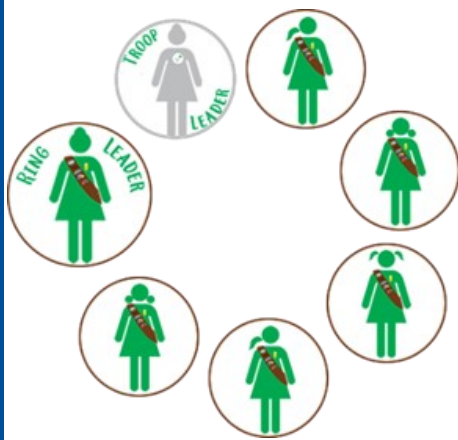
Troop Governance

Every grade level uses some form of troop government. Troop Government is a great way to learn skills like responsibility, independence, and leadership. It is also the best way to help girls learn how to manage their troop business. Like all things in Girl Scouts, troop government is progressive, with skills building upon each other as girls take on more responsibility of running their troop and eventually deciding which form of government they will use.

Let's take a look at the different types of troop government in more detail.

Daisy Circle: Girl Scout Daisies help make decisions about their troop in a Girl Scout Daisy circle. This business part of a Daisy meeting will only last 5 to 10 minutes, with the leader giving the girls two or three choices to pick from. Decisions could include things such as where to go on a field trip or what kind of service project the girls would like to participate in.



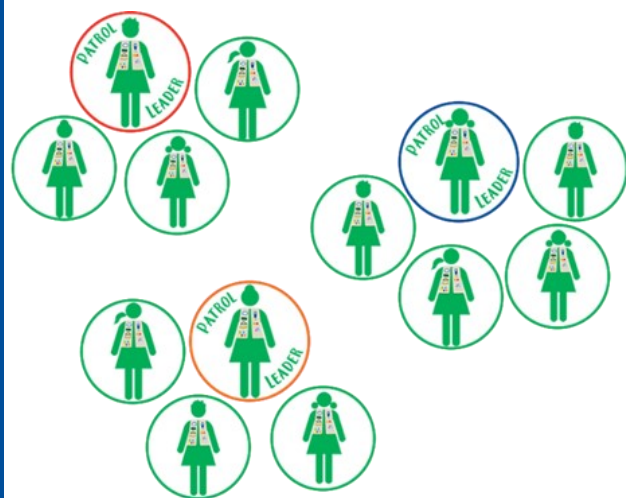


Brownie Ring: The Girl Scout Brownie ring is very similar to the Daisy circle but expands the abilities of these now somewhat "older" girls. Girls can begin to lead discussions and "brainstorm" ideas. A ring "leader" may be designated to lead discussions, but make sure that all girls are given this leadership opportunity. Consider having a "talking stick" where only the person holding the stick or other identified object is allowed to speak or using the Girl Scout talking sign (place hands out on the floor/table in front of them) to help the girls learn how to take turns in group discussion.

Hints for keeping things fair in the Daisy circle and Brownie ring:

- No putting down people or ideas.
- Make sure all people speak, and no one dominates. Leaders can model behavior for the ring by listening without criticism to girls and parents.
- At first, the girls will need a lot of help from the leader in order to get the hang of using the ring to make decisions. After they become familiar with it, the girls can take turns being the discussion leader.

Town Meeting: The town meeting consists of the troop making its decisions together, so everyone gets the chance to participate in decision-making and leadership. A moderator is generally needed to lead group discussions. Officers such as secretary and treasurer may be elected if the troop feels that there is a need. This type of governance often works well in small groups but can work in large groups if the girls can stay on task. This is the most similar to a Brownie ring and is a great way to transition older girls into a more advanced form of troop government.



Patrol System: The patrol system is the most versatile of the systems of government. The troop is divided into smaller units called patrols to make discussion and decision-making easier. Teams of four to eight girls are recommended so that each girl gets a chance to participate and express her opinions. Each patrol elects a patrol leader responsible for running their patrol meetings. An assistant patrol leader is also a good idea in the event that the patrol leader cannot make a meeting. All troop business can be handled in patrols as well as recording attendance and dues. For any given outing, kapers may be divided up with each patrol responsible for its own task.

In order for the troop to run smoothly and as a group, patrol leaders, officers, and adult volunteers should come together to discuss troop matters and make group decisions at a court of honor. Each patrol should give their input to the patrol leader prior to the meeting.

The court of honor meets on a regular basis for planning and discussion. Monthly meetings can be before a meeting, after a meeting or on an alternative day in order to plan for events the following month. A long meeting once or twice a year can be used for long-term planning of troop events and planning the troop yearly calendar. If you have a troop moderator or president, this person generally presides over the court of honor meetings.



Executive Board: The executive board consists of one leadership team of "officers" who make the decisions for the troop. The executive board generally includes a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, and holds its own meetings to discuss troop matters. The girls should decide what positions they need as well as the duration of office. It is a good idea to limit the length of time each girl serves on the executive board so all troop members can participate during the year. A method of input should be devised for the troop members to give input to the executive board, and could be as simple as a suggestion

box at a troop meeting. This system tends to work well with smaller troops.

If older girls have not experienced making group decisions on their own, consider starting out with the town meeting format with only one topic. Have the leader lead the first few discussions, then pass that role on to the girls, rotating discussion leaders. Once the girls are practiced, you can begin to branch out into trying new forms of government to see which one will work best for your troop and girls.

Whatever the level, it is important the girls feel invested in the decision-making of the troop. While it is certainly easier for the leaders to decide the what, when, and where, the girls will feel the troop is so much more "theirs" if they get to decide what badge they want to work on or choosing between going on a hike or visiting the animal shelter.

Kaper Charts

A **kaper** is a job or chore that must be done. In Girl Scouting, a kaper chart is prepared which indicates all the jobs available and who is responsible for each one. In other words, a kaper chart is a way of dividing the jobs so that each girl has a part. Why is this important? The reasons are endless. It gives each girl experience; it helps each girl understand what it takes to conduct a meeting; all girls get to take part in their troop; each girl learns responsibility; it is the GSLE in action; it assures that even more shy girls get to help take part; and perhaps most importantly, it helps you get through the meeting or the activity!

To make a kaper chart, the leaders (with brainstorming help from the girls) first decide:

1. Which kapers should be divided (e.g. there are different kapers for meetings vs. day trips vs. overnights)
2. Whether the kapers should be handled by groups or individuals
3. If groups, how many in each group
4. What your chart will look like
5. How to rotate the girls

Keep in mind that kaper groups allow leaders to mix the girls in different ways. Typically, groups would stay together for a few times and then are mixed up again. Sometimes girls are rotated more often to give them an opportunity to meet lots of different girls. Sometimes groups use a combination of kaper charts for different functions: e.g., one for groups splitting major jobs, one for flag ceremony jobs. Moreover, you can have kapers for adults too!

Who makes kaper charts? Think “girl-led!”

Even the youngest Daisies can be part of making of a kaper chart, from contributing kaper (job) ideas to printing their names on the chart or a “moveable part” that rotates the job, like a paper daisy or a clothespin.

What should be included? That varies according to the type of event underway. For your typical meeting, you may want one girl to take attendance, while another collects dues, and two set up snack, and two others are responsible for the closing. Are you planning a ceremony? Kapers can include making invitations, planning snacks or pot-luck, flag ceremony, decorations, set up and clean up, and more.

Examples of Kaper Charts:



Poster Board Chart: This poster board would contain a list, in any form, of the different kaper duties. Then each girl’s name would be listed on separate papers/labels that could be rotated for each meeting. Most of these charts are centered on a theme, and the names can be attached by Velcro or some other moveable format. If kapers are divided by groups, make sure there is enough room to place each girl’s name in those sections.

Kaper Can: Decorate a can in any girl chosen theme. After brainstorming kaper duties, each job should be written on a wooden craft stick. At the beginning of the meeting, have each girl take a turn choosing a stick from the can that will denote their duty for the meeting.



Kaper History!

Kaper Charts are a 60-year-plus Girl Scout tradition! The word kaper seems to have come into use in Girl Scouts shortly after World War II and is thought to be a corruption of “KP” – kitchen police – a term introduced by returning soldiers.

“Kapers” were originally used to describe the jobs needed to prepare meals at camp: fire-builder, water-carrier, cook, hostess, clean-up, and dishwashers. Now they refer to any and all jobs that Girl Scouts need to do at troop meetings, at camp, or for a ceremony, party, or other project.





Clothespins around a paper: On a piece of paper, write down each duty that the girls will need to complete. These duties should be around the edges of the paper so that the clothespin can easily signify the duty. It is recommended that the paper is either on cardstock or is laminated to protect your kaper chart. Label the clothespins with every girl's name. Pin a clothespin to each duty and rotate them around for each meeting to allow the girls the opportunity to complete different jobs.

“Do It” and “Did It” bags: Write each girl's name on a piece of paper and label two bags “Do it,” and “Did it.” All the girls' names would start out in the “Do It” bag, and anytime there is a task to be done, a name can be pulled to decide who will complete it. This can include things like who will be “it” during a game or who gets to share at the meeting today. After a girl's name has been pulled, it is moved to the “Did It” bag until all girls have gotten the opportunity to “Do It.”



Journeys

A Girl Scout Journey is an in-depth program piece on a topic that interests girls which culminates in a Take Action project to make the world a better place. Journeys are created specifically for leadership development and are the core of the GSLE. They help to ensure that every Girl Scout in every pathway receives a consistent, high-quality experience that engages girls in realizing specific leadership benefits.

Through each Journey, girls will learn:

- How does a leader identify a problem that needs to be solved?
- How does she dig deeper to find the root causes of that issue?
- How does a leader research solutions that go beyond the surface level of the problem?
- How does she team with others on this issue, multiplying efforts to make the world a better place?

At each level, girls can pick the Journey Series that interests them most by choosing one of three books, or digital Journeys available to troop leaders through the Volunteer Toolkit. Each Journey includes awards she can earn as she attains new, higher levels of knowledge and skills while focusing on themes that are important in young girls' lives. No matter which journey series a girl chooses, she'll earn awards to put on her uniform, letting others know about the awesome things she's done and taking pride in what she's accomplished and the amazing experiences she's had along the way.

The Journey series available are:

It's Your World—Change It! Whether it's planting a garden, painting a mural, or launching a letter-writing campaign, Girl Scouts at every level experience unique leadership and advocacy challenges, complete Take Action projects, and discover what it means to be a leader who makes a difference in the world.

It's Your Planet—Love It! Girls learn about environmental topics such as clean water and air, noise pollution, global warming, soil contamination, and agriculture. Each Journey is packed with environmental information and offers ways to improve life for everyone on the planet through a Take Action project.

It's Your Story—Tell It! Girls get the opportunity to tell their stories through a range of creative approaches. Exploring important themes such as developing a strong sense of self, navigating healthy relationships, and promoting well-being and confidence in themselves and others get girls involved in discussions about thinking critically and ready to complete a Take Action project.

Engineering: Think Like an Engineer Girls discover how to think like an engineer by participating in hands-on design challenges and completing a Take Action project.

Computer Science: Think Like a Programmer Girls learn how programmers solve problems by participating in computational-thinking activities and completing a Take Action project.

Outdoor STEM: Think Like a Citizen Scientist Girls learn how to make observations and collect data by doing a citizen science project through [Scistarter](#) and completing a Take Action project.

Outdoor Girls get outside to explore and enjoy nature while completing a sustainable Take Action project. Fun, safe activities ranging from backyard camping to high-adventure exploration build essential outdoor skills and inspire girls to become environmental stewards.

Once a Journey topic is chosen, girls will team up with friends to:

- Identify a problem they want to do something about
- Come up with a creative solution that will make a difference
- Create a team plan to make that solution a reality
- Put their plan into action
- Talk about what they learned and what they'll do next

That's what the Girl Scout Journeys are all about! Journeys help girls engage in all three keys to leadership and use the three Girl Scout processes to explore their own leadership skills while taking action to make the world a better place.

For more specific information about the journeys available at your troop's program level, you can view the appropriate online training module(s).



Handbooks, Badges, and other Awards

Girl Scouts now has a new Handbook for Daisy, Brownie and Junior levels. These handbooks contain information about the history of Girl Scouts, special ceremonies, badges, National Leadership Journeys, and awards. Additional badge requirements are sold separately or can be accessed on the VTK.

For Girl Scouts in Cadette, Senior and Ambassador levels, you can still purchase the Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting while supplies last or view badge requirements through the VTK.



Badges at Every Level

There are 4 different categories of national proficiency badges: Outdoor, STEM, Life Skills, and Entrepreneurship. The requirements for badges may be purchased separately in the Girl Scout Shop, downloaded digitally, or found in the Volunteer Tool Kit.

Every badge starts with a purpose that tells girls what they will know how to do when they complete the badge. Each badge also ends with ideas of how the girls can use their new skills to help others.

Badges are progressive through the years of Girl Scouts, but girls do not need to have completed a badge at a previous level to have the ability to earn it at their current level. Example: Juniors can earn the Junior Simple Meals badge even if they didn't earn the Brownie Snacks badge when they were Brownies.



Daisy Eco
Learner



Senior GS
Way



Junior Space
Science
Investigator



Brownie Money
Manager

Other Girl Scout Awards at Every Level

At each program level, there are also additional Girl Scout recognitions girls can earn. Among them are religious awards, bridging to the next program level, and more.

Safety Award: This award allows girls to learn about issues of safety appropriate for their Girl Scout level.

My Promise, My Faith: This award helps girls to understand the relationship between their faith and Girl Scouts.

Bridging Award: When girls move on to the next level of Girl Scouting, they will look back on what they've accomplished at their current level while looking to their future.

Journey Summit Award: When girls complete three National Leadership Journeys at their Girl Scout level, they earn this award. This means earning all awards or badges for each Journey and completing three separate take action projects. This is the highest award a Girl Scout Daisy or Brownie can earn.

Mentoring Awards: As girls get older, there are opportunities to earn mentoring awards such as Junior Aide, Leader-in-Action (LIA), and Counselor-in-Training. These give girls the chance to put leadership in action by sharing skills, passions, and experiences. Available for Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors.

Community Service Awards: These awards are earned by making a difference in the community and practicing Girl Scout values. Only available for Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors.

***Cookie Entrepreneur Family Pin:** This program engages the support of family members—whether immediate or extended—as they help girls to focus on their individual goals and skills in each year of selling cookies as a Girl Scout. Simple, age-specific guidelines have been tailored for each developing skill set, making success a snap.

***World Thinking Day Award:** This award is based on the yearly theme of World Thinking Day, and the requirements change from year to year.

***Global Action Award:** This award recognizes girls' commitment to improving the world as they discover, connect, and take action to address issues in their community and beyond. The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals are the focus.

Girl Scouts' Highest Awards

For Junior, Cadette, and the Senior/Ambassador levels, girls can earn the highest awards in Girl Scouting: the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards, respectively. There are prerequisites that must be fulfilled prior to undertaking the Take Action project, which represents the culmination of the leadership experience the girl(s) have embarked upon. Completion of any of these awards truly marks the growth and development of each girl as a leader. Earning the Gold Award is truly a distinction. Colleges recognize the skill and dedication a girl has invested to earn it, and it is a factor most admissions committees take seriously.

GSGLA offers required training sessions for the Silver and Gold Awards, which girls must attend after fulfilling the prerequisites and prior to undertaking their project. The most current requirements

and procedures for each award can be found on the GSGLA website, and those supersede any which you might find elsewhere.



**Bronze
Award**



**Silver
Award**



**Gold
Award**

Badges Versus Patches

Both badges and patches are commonly referred to in Girl Scouting, but there is a HUGE difference between them.

Badges are symbols that indicate an increase in knowledge or skill in a particular subject. They are official Girl Scout awards created by our national organization that can be earned at every level of Girl Scouting. They are to be worn on the front of the vest/sash/tunic to show that the girl has mastered a new skill or topic.

Patches are emblems signifying participation in a Girl Scout activity. Even though there are some patch programs that require girls to complete activities in order to “earn” them, they are not considered awards and therefore need to be worn on the back of the vest/sash/tunic or on a Girl Scout jacket, blanket, or tote bag. Girls love to receive and display patches, but try to remember they DO NOT need a patch for everything they do.



Junior Badge



Girl Scout Patch

Putting It All Together

Now that you've learned about all the program elements let's take a look at planning a badge with the girls.

1. Your girls will come together and choose the badge they want to work on. In this example, the Girls have chosen the Brownie Hiker badge.
2. Review the badge requirements with the girls. Each Brownie badge has 5 steps to complete and 3 choices of activities to complete each step, so the girls should pick an activity for each step, which sounds the most interesting but is also the most "do-able" for your troop.
3. Girls should make a list of supplies that will be necessary to complete all the activities.
4. Next, they should determine whether or not they will be able to complete the activities at their regular troop meetings, or an extra field trip will be required. Because a majority of this badge requires hiking, this will definitely require an activity outside your regular troop meeting.
5. Discuss with the girls to determine when/where/how long your hike will be. This will include reviewing Safety Activity Checkpoints for Hiking. We see that it is not considered a high-risk activity, so it is not necessary to submit any forms for high-risk approval. If the girls have picked a trail that will take you more than 30 minutes away from EMS, you will need to arrange to have a more advanced first aid trained person accompany the troop. If the trail is within 30 minutes of EMS, you will need to arrange to have a person trained in basic first aid/CPR accompany the troop on the hike.
6. Since this badge will require a field trip to complete, you need to consider what costs will be involved and how they will be covered. Will the money come from the product programs? From troop dues? Does the troop need to do an additional money earning activity which will require extra training? Since the only expenses likely to be accrued would be costs for the badge, snacks for the hike, a few simple supplies, and possibly parking and gas, the troop treasury will be able to cover it.
7. If the girls decide they would like to visit an outdoor store to complete step 3 (pick the right gear) of the badge, you may want to call the store ahead of time to see if they would be able to have someone on hand to answer the girls' questions and possibly demonstrate some of the gear. Or, if the girls decide to invite an older girl or outdoor expert to a meeting, you'll want to make sure to confirm the arrangements with the person to ensure he/she is still coming and can possibly bring some equipment with him/her to demonstrate. You might want to supply him/her with the questions the girls will be asking ahead of time, so he/she can make sure to have the answer when the girls ask.
8. Make arrangements for transportation/supervision of the girls for the hike. And confirm the first aider will be attending.
9. Since you have already received approval for day trips through the Annual Permission Form, only written notification should be sent to the parents and the SUM/Designee once the activity has been arranged. Make sure your notification includes all the necessary info:



date, start & end time, location address, what to wear/bring, emergency contact, etc.

10. Make sure your First Aider is carrying the first aid kit and all necessary paperwork, such as the Health Information and Release Form (Health History) for each girl. As the leader, you should be carrying the rest of the necessary paperwork.
11. Go on the event and have fun while staying safe!
12. After the outing, have the girls evaluate what went well and what could be better in the future.
13. Go back and review the badge requirements with the girls to make sure they were all completed, and show the girls what they did to earn the badge.
14. Plan a Court of Awards Ceremony for the girls to receive their new badge.

These steps may change depending on the badge or journey you are working on because each is different. The steps could require more planning, different permissions, further safety standards to follow, and increased planning time, among other things. Don't forget to consult all of your resources, like [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) and [Volunteer Essentials](#), to make sure everything is covered to ensure a safe and fun activity.

Working on badges and Journeys allows girls to engage in lots of activities along the way. When earning an award, get the girls outside, mix things up, add other information they will enjoy, and get them thinking more about what they are experiencing! One of the main points of Girl Scouts is to get girls out and about, and learning about the world around them, and feeling comfortable in it!

Remember, Girl Scouts is all about progression. As the girls progress, their responsibility for planning increases. Where a Brownie may not be able to call to make arrangements, an Ambassador should be able to make that phone call.



Section Seven: Tips & Tools

In this next section you will find tips and tools to help you as a new Girl Scout leader. Included are links to forms, information on topics such as brainstorming and Take Action projects, and much more. Use these tips and tools as you get started and throughout your Girl Scout year.

Links to important forms and resources:

Note: this is not an exhaustive list of forms and resources, but instead lists some of the important ones that have been mentioned throughout this document. For more forms and resources, visit the [forms page](#) on our website.

- [Additional Insurance Form](#)
- [Adult Emergency Information and Authorization for Treatment Card](#)
- [Annual Permission Form](#) (English) • [Annual Permission Form](#) (Español)
- [Cash Receipt Form](#)
- [First Six Meetings- Daisy](#) • [First Six Meetings- Brownie](#)
- [First Six Meetings- Junior](#) • [First Six Meetings- Cadette](#)
- [First Six Meetings- Senior](#) • [First Six Meetings- Ambassador](#)
- [Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge](#)
- [Girl Scouts Songs & Games Handbook](#)
- [Guide to Creating a Troop Agreement](#)
- [Health History Form](#) (English) • [Health History Form](#) (Español)
- [I-Statements: The Key to Resolving Conflicts](#)
- [Mutual of Omaha- Additional Insurance Provider](#)
- [Notification Form](#) (English) • [Notification Form](#) (Español)
- [On My Own Award Worksheet](#)
- [On My Own Daisy Award Worksheet](#)
- [Over the Counter \(OTC\) Form](#) (English) • [Over the Counter \(OTC\) Form](#) (Español)
- [Parent/Guardian Single-Use Permission Form](#) (English)
- [Parent/Guardian Single-Use Permission Form](#) (Español)
- [Parent/Caregiver Permission for Sensitive Issues](#)
- [Parent/Caregiver Responsibility Agreement](#)
- [Provided Prescription Form](#) (English) • [Provided Prescription Form](#) (Español)
- [Parent Volunteer Survey](#)
- [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)
- [Sample Girl Troop Agreement](#)
- [Troop Driver Information Form](#)
- [Troop Meeting Plan Template](#)
- [Volunteer Essentials](#)
- [VTK Ledger](#)
- [What I Need for my Girls to Attend a...](#)

Documents included here in Tips & Tools:

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Getting organized with a troop binder	<u>63</u>
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Brainstorming Tips: Think, Pair, Share

How to Run a Think, Pair, Share Activity:

Tell girls that they're going to brainstorm answers to your question using "Think, Pair, Share." Lead girls through the basic steps by telling them they will:

1. Break into small groups.

2. Listen to the question or prompt.

3. Think about their answers.

- Girls may want to write their answers down.
- Twenty seconds should be enough time, since girls will need to sit quietly.

4. Pair with other girls.

- Girls talk with one to three other girls (depending on group size), making sure everyone has a chance to share their answers. If there's time, it's OK for girls to ask questions about each other's answers.
- For pairs, 20 seconds should be enough time. If your troop enjoys discussion, consider extending this to 1 to 2 minutes.

5. Share with the group.

- Girls share their answers with the larger group.
- This can be completed in 20 – 30 seconds, but will run longer based on group size and how the group sharing is done.

There are two ways to set up group sharing:

- **Strongly Recommended:** One girl shares the best/most interesting/summary answer for the group. This approach is great if you're running short on time. It also helps develop conflict resolution and compromise skills.
- **Optional:** Each girl shares her partner's answer. This helps girls develop active listening skills, but will run longer because all girls are sharing.



Girl Scout Volunteer Take Action Guide

What's the difference between a community service project and a Take Action project?

Community Service makes the world better by addressing a problem “right now.” For example, collecting cans of food for a food pantry feeds people “right now.” Gathering toys for a homeless family shelter makes kids happy “right now.” Providing clothing and toiletries to people after a fire or flood helps them “right now.” These acts of kindness are important ways to help people—right now.

Take Action encourages girls to develop a project that is sustainable. That means that the problem continues to be addressed, even after the project is over. Sustainability simply means coming up with a solution that lasts.

For example, girls might want to do something about trash in a local park. If they go to the park and pick up trash, they've solved the problem for today—but there will be more trash to pick up tomorrow.

Instead, girls could explore why there's so much trash. Here's what they might discover:

- There aren't enough trash cans in the park.
- The trash cans are hard to find.
- People have to walk out of their way to throw away trash because of where the cans are placed.
- People don't realize the importance of putting trash in the trashcans.

Here's how girls might address these issues:

Issues 1–3: Make a presentation to the city council to report on their findings and make suggestions for improvement, such as adding more trash cans or moving them to more visible or convenient positions.

Issue 4: Create a public awareness campaign that encourages people to use the trash cans instead of littering.

What are the steps of a Take Action project?

- Girls team up to:
- Identify a problem
- Come up with a sustainable solution
- Develop a team plan
- Put the plan into action
- Reflect on what they learned



Keep it girl-led: Girls should actively participate in each step in order for this to be girl-led. Younger girls will need more guidance, but they can and should decide as a team what problem they want to address.

How do girls make their project sustainable? Here are three ways to create sustainable change:

1. Make your solution permanent.
2. Educate and inspire others to be part of the change.
3. Change a rule, regulation or law.

Here are some specific examples you can use to help girls understand what sustainable Take Action projects look like.

Keep it girl-led: These examples are intended to give a sense of what a Take Action project could look like at different grade levels. Please do not choose a project from this list for girls to do! If girls are told what to do, they won't learn key leadership skills, such as decision-making, compromise, conflict resolution, and teamwork.

Issue: We could conserve water if more people collected rainwater and used it to water plants.

Solution 1: Make it permanent.

Make rain collection devices for family or friends that can be installed in their yards.

Give them a list of different ways to use rainwater and how they're helping the Earth.

Solution 2: Educate and inspire others.

Create a handout, video tutorial, or show-and-tell presentation about how to make a rain collection device and how to use rainwater—and how that helps the Earth.

Issue: Parents often run their engines outside the school as they wait to pick up or drop off their children, which pollutes the air.

Solution: Change a rule, regulation or law.

Make a presentation to the school board or administrators about why this is a problem and suggest a new rule that makes the pick-up/drop-off area a "no idling" zone.

Issue: There's no sidewalk along a street near the elementary school, which makes it dangerous for children to walk home.

Solution: Make it permanent.

Make a presentation to the city council about the problem and suggest that they build a sidewalk.

Note: Even if the council doesn't vote to create a sidewalk, the girls have earned their Take Action award because they came up with a sustainable solution and took action through their presentation.

Extra Inspiration: Do an online search for "Girl Scout Brownies Convince City Hall to Build Sidewalk."



Issue: There have been several accidents at a busy intersection that doesn't have a stoplight.

Solution: Make it permanent.

Research the number of accidents and make a presentation to the city council, asking that they have a stoplight installed.

Issue: The local park doesn't have a swing for children with disabilities.

Solution: Make it permanent.

Make a presentation to the city council explaining the problem and offering to use troop money from the cookie sale to help pay for the swing.

Extra Inspiration: Do an online search for "How One Brownie Troop Became Social Entrepreneurs."

Issue: We should recognize women who have helped their communities and made the world a better place in all kinds of ways.

Solution: Educate and inspire others.

Research the "hidden figures" in your community (unsung women who've done great things). Create a display about their accomplishments for a library or community center.

Issue: The local shelter is having a hard time getting rescue animals adopted.

Solution: Educate and inspire others.

Use your photography skills to create pet portraits for the shelter's website. Use your writing skills to craft heart-warming bios for each portrait.

33 Ways to Take Action

1. Make and install something outside (benches, birdhouses, dog run, ropes course, sensory trail, Little Library, etc.)
2. Plant something (butterfly garden, tree, wind chime garden, etc.)
3. Make something inside (Maker Space, reading room, etc.)
4. Create a collection (children's books children's hospital or family shelter, oral histories for town museum, etc.)
5. Advocate for building a permanent community improvement (sidewalk, bridge, park, street-lights, stoplight, walking trail, etc.)
6. Do a show-and-tell
7. Create a poster campaign
8. Perform a skit
9. Make a "how to" handout
10. Draw a comic
11. Give a speech
12. Write and perform a song
13. Make an animated movie



14. Make a live-action movie
15. Make a presentation
16. Create a workshop (perhaps in partnership with a local business or organization) to teach a skill such as coding, camping, canoeing, robotics, sewing, car care, healthy eating, gardening, home repair, budgeting, etc.
17. Create a workshop to teach others about healthy living (exercise, nutrition, mental health, etc.)
18. Create a social media campaign
19. Make video tutorials to teach a skill
20. Organize an email campaign
21. Organize a petition
22. Organize an event (concert, play, poetry slam, art exhibit, sporting event, field day) to raise awareness about an issue
23. Make a “playbook” to help others follow your lead (how to mentor robotics teams, organize a workshop or event, advocate with city council, create an online petition, change a law, etc.)
24. Make an app that helps people take action on an issue
25. Create a website
26. Write an op-ed or letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine
27. Start a blog
28. Make a presentation to your school principal
29. Make a presentation to your school board
30. Make a presentation to your city council
31. Speak up at your representative’s town hall meeting
32. Create an online petition
33. Advocate for a law with your state government

Need other ideas?

Check out “Girls Changing the World” on the GSUSA website [<http://www.girlscouts.org/en/for-girls/girls-changing-the-world.html>]. Girls post their Take Action and Bronze/Silver/Gold Award projects on this site. You can search by project topic or grade level. (And after the troop has done their project, please post it so they can inspire other girls!)

GETTING ORGANIZED WITH A TROOP BINDER

A troop binder is a must-have for every meeting and outing. It is a one-stop-shop for everything you need at your fingertips. This is a rough list of the important paperwork needed to get started. As you receive forms, place them under the corresponding tab and if applicable in the sheet protector. As additional paperwork is collected, you may find you need additional dividers, need to change them, or even need an additional binder. It is recommended that you write each girls' name on a sheet protector and alphabetize by first name, last name, or whatever method works best for you. Whatever system you use, remember to include all important paperwork in one binder.

Supplies:

- 3-ring binder – If you have a large troop you will probably need a larger binder
- Notebook paper
- Divider tabs
- Sheet protectors
- 3-hole punch

Set up the divider tabs as follows:

Girl Forms – This section contains any forms signed by a parent/caregiver for each girl throughout the Girl Scout year. Make sure you have enough sheet protectors for each girl in this section.

- Annual Permission Form
- Health Information and Release Form (Health History Form)
- Over the Counter Medication Form (OTC)
- Internet Safety Pledge
- Parent/Guardian Single-Use Permission Form
- Provided Prescription and/or Provided OTC Medication
- Fall Product and Cookie Programs Parent/Guardian Permission & Responsibility Agreement
- Parent/Caregiver Permission for Sensitive Issues Form

Financial Records – This section contains income and expense records. Set up 3 sheet protectors – one for “Receipts,” one for “To Be Deposited,” and “Bank Deposit Slips/Statements.”

- Deposit Record Form
- Cash Receipt Form
- Troop Dues Record
- Troop Detailed Income Record
- General Detailed Ledger
- Bank Information Form
- Copy of last year's troop finance report, if applicable

Adult Records – This section contains information about each adult volunteer. Set up a sheet protector for each adult.

- Adult Background Screening
- Parent Volunteer Survey
- Troop Driver Information Form
- Certifications – i.e. first aid, lifeguard, troop camper, training cards, etc.

Troop Information & Meeting Notes – This section contains general troop information. Set up a blank troop calendar, Troop Attendance Record with the girls' first name in alphabetical order and insert notebook paper where needed. Additional forms may be added to this section based on your troop year.

- Troop roster
- Building/Facility Usage Information
- Troop Attendance Record
- Calendar
- Meeting Agendas, materials, and notes
- Girl's Decision Notes
- Award Record

GIRL SCOUT TROOP/GROUP
BANK ACCOUNT INFORMATION

This form includes confidential information. Omit information at your discretion.

Troop/Group Information

Troop/Group # _____ Service Unit # _____ Service Unit Name _____
Troop Leader _____ E-mail _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____
Co-Leader _____ E-mail _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____

Bank Information

Bank Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____
Account Last 4 # _____ Date Opened _____
Statement Address: _____ City/State/ZIP _____

Attach a copy of a troop voided check

Names of Authorized Signers

(must be unrelated to each other, registered Girl Scout members, and have a cleared background screening on file)

1. Name _____ E-mail _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____
Troop Debit Card Last 4 # _____ Exp Date _____
2. Name _____ E-mail _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____
Troop Debit Card Last 4 # _____ Exp Date _____
3. Name _____ E-mail _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____
Troop Debit Card Last 4 # _____ Exp Date _____
4. Name _____ E-mail _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____
Troop Debit Card Last 4 # _____ Exp Date _____

Troop Volunteer Positions

The following are just a few of the troop positions that your parents, caregivers, and other adults in your troop may want to fulfill as a part of your troop leadership team.

Troop Leaders(s) – The Troop Leaders have the main responsibility of organizing, planning, and running the Troop. With the help of other troop volunteers and the girls, Troop Leaders plan meetings and events, help with Journeys, submit financials, and much more!

Troop Treasurer – The Troop Treasurer is responsible for keeping troop financial records and keeps track of troop income and expenses. They also file the yearly financial report. Along with the Leader, they are the co-signer on the troop bank account. The treasurer is a year-long commitment, but with some busy times (product sales and the end of the year) and some less-busy times.

Troop Product Program Chair – Troop Product Program Chairs will work with the girls and parents on all aspects of the sale, including teaching the girls about the financial literacy program, distributing product, money collection, girl rewards, and booth sales. They also work with the troop treasurer to deposit money in the troop bank account. The Fall Program Chair will be busy from late September through early December, and the Cookie Program Chair will be busy between January and March.

Troop Camper or Travel Advisor – The Troop Camper or Travel Advisor assists girls in planning, budgeting, and organizing short outings, overnights, or longer trips. They help the girls make reservations, plan logistics, organize drivers, find a first-aider and chaperones when needed. They also file any necessary paperwork before the trip and accompany girls on the trips. This volunteer will have a varying time commitment but will be busy as needed before and during trips.

Troop Chaperone – A Troop Chaperone is a Girl Scout Volunteer who chaperones girls as a part of the adult-to-girl ratio, or otherwise helps the troop at Troop meetings, on field trips and events, or on overnights and trips. Troop Chaperones are often a parent, friend, or relative of a girl in the troop and help out the Troop Leaders. Troop Chaperones can work together and help share the time commitment.

Troop Driver – The Troop Driver drives girls and adults on planned troop outings and trips and ensures that the proper safety procedures are followed when transporting girls. This volunteer must have a valid drivers' license and have a registered, insured vehicle that is in good working condition. The Troop Driver can work with other screened drivers and help share the commitment. They'll just be busy occasionally for trips and outings.

Troop First-Aider – The Troop First-Aider provides first aid as needed during troop or group activities, and must have a current First Aid/CPR/AED certification. They'll attend any activity or event where a first-aider is required, as listed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints. The time commitment will be as needed, depending on the activities the troop participates in.

Other Roles – Depending on your Troop, you might want to have people volunteer for other roles – consider having a Snack Coordinator who organizes healthy snacks for the meetings, or a troop secretary or photographer who helps document your troop activities. You can recruit for whatever positions you feel would be most helpful and be the most rewarding for the adults who can help.

Don't forget! Any adults serving in a ratio or volunteer capacity for a troop must be an approved volunteer, e.g., troop leaders, drivers, chaperones, product sales volunteers, treasurers, first-aiders, etc. Approved volunteers are registered members who have successfully cleared GSGLA's background screening process within the last three years and have completed position related training.

MEETING WITH CO-LEADER AGENDA

Now that you've decided to form a troop and have your co-leaders, the following is a list of things you will need to do in the beginning to get your troop started. The order in which they are completed can vary, and you can customize to meet your needs.

General –

- ☐ Discuss First Family Meeting:
 - ☐ Decide on when, where, and time family meeting will be held. Will it be separate from your first troop meeting?
 - ☐ Decide who will be responsible for making arrangement for the location
 - ☐ Decide which leader will conduct the parent portion while the other leader meets with the girls. Many prefer to conduct this meeting as a separate event; it gives parents time to fill out paperwork, and perhaps an older troop can do activities with the girls.
 - ☐ Plan your parent/guardian meeting agenda.
 - ☐ Decide if you want an experienced Girl Scout volunteer or staff member to be at the meeting
- ☐ Discuss Additional Family Meetings:
 - ☐ Decide how often future meetings will be held, such as around Product Programs or before going on a trip.
 - ☐ See Family Meeting Agenda for more details
- ☐ Discuss Troop Meetings:
 - ☐ Discuss if you have enough girls to get started. If not, talk to your Support Specialist about how to recruit more girls to your troop.
 - ☐ Decide on when, where, and time troop meetings will be held
 - ☐ Set up a time to visit your troop meeting place. Check out what's available to you:
 - Tables and chairs
 - Flag
 - Open space for activities
 - Bathroom
 - Clean-up supplies
 - Storage space
 - ☐ If you meet in a home (highly discouraged for younger girls): What might need to be removed? Which rooms will be off limits?
 - ☐ Decide who will be responsible for making arrangement for the location
 - ☐ Decide if we will have snacks
- ☐ Discuss Program Materials and Uniforms:
 - ☐ Review Program materials available to you such as the Handbook, Journeys, and Badges. These materials are available through the Volunteer Toolkit, or can be purchased at your local council shop.
 - ☐ Discuss if the girls will have their own Handbook or just one copy for the troop
 - ☐ Discuss if troop will all wear the same uniform pieces or each girl will choose her own

Troop Leadership Team –

- ☐ Review all of the roles needed to fill your troop leadership team (Troop Treasurer, Troop Product Program Chair, Troop First-Aider, Chaperone/Drivers)
- ☐ Decide between you and your co-leader which of these roles you will fulfill and which you will ask for parent help.

Financial Records –

- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for setting up a bank account
- ☐ Decide who will complete the Troop/Group Bank Account Information form
- ☐ Decide who will be the 3 signers on the bank account
- ☐ Decide which signers will have a debit card
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for depositing troop funds
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for keeping the checkbook
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for completing the Detailed Income Record every time money is received

- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for reconciling the ledger, receipts, and bank statements monthly
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for entering income and expenses in the VTK and VTK Finance tab
- ☐ Decide who will work with the Troop Treasurer, if applicable
- ☐ Decide what the Troop Treasurer will be responsible for, if applicable

Paperwork –

- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for completing and submitting permission forms for notification and approval to service unit and parents/caregivers
- ☐ Decide who will follow up with parents with permission forms

Record Keeping –

- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for putting the binder together
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for filing paperwork in the binder

Communication –

- ☐ Decide how you will communicate with troop families
- ☐ Decide how you will notify parents about activities outside of the regular troop meeting

VTK –

- ☐ View the VTK and select several year plans
- ☐ Decide when you will share your choices with the girls
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for updating the VTK

Planning –

- ☐ Decide how often you will meet to plan meeting and other activities
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for creating and updating the yearly calendar
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for creating a kaper chart

Troop Meetings –

- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for creating meeting agendas
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for purchasing and preparing materials for each part of the meeting
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for each part of the meeting agenda
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for overseeing and helping girls take attendance
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for overseeing and helping girls collect dues

Safety –

- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for review *Safety Activity Checkpoints* and *Volunteer Essentials* when planning meetings and activities
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for arranging the Emergency Contact for activities outside of the regular troop meetings
- ☐ Decide who will be responsible for putting together the first aid kit and restocking as needed, and a First Aider when it is required by *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

Communicate with Girls/Families –

- ☐ Contact the girls and all their parents/caregivers and include the following information:
 - ☐ Let the parents/caregivers know the date, time and location of the first family meeting.
 - ☐ Give the parents/caregivers the leaders' names and phone numbers in case they have questions.
 - ☐ Share that they will need complete certain forms. Let them know they can handle this at the parent/caregiver meeting. If they have not already registered and paid the annual \$25.00 fee (financial assistance available), this can be handled also.
 - ☐ Let the family know the date, time, and location of the first troop meeting and their frequency.

NOTE: As other topics arise, be sure to coordinate and resolve them together

FAMILY MEETING AGENDA



WELCOME

1. **Welcome** – Greet everyone, ask them to sign in, and make a name tag; if girls are present, help them introduce themselves to one another
2. **Girl Activity** – If girls are attending the meeting, guide them to the activity you've planned so they can get settled in before you start
3. **Introductions** –
 - **Leaders** – Introduce themselves and share any Girl Scout experience they may have, give out contact information
 - **Parent introductions** – Ask them to introduce themselves and share any Girl Scout experience they may have
4. **Give a brief overview of items you will be talking about**
5. **Questions** – Explain you will try to answer questions as you go, but may need to move things along to get to all the important topics; encourage them to call or email with further questions.
6. **Responsibilities to girls/troop** – Discuss the responsibilities of the leader, parents, and girls to the troop; share that Girl Scouts is not a babysitting service.

Responsibilities to Girls/Troop	Leaders	Parents	Girls
Attend trainings	X	X*	
Plan & attend troop meetings	X	X**	X
Fulfill obligation of paperwork & troop funds	X		X
Respect girls and parents/caregivers	X	X	X
Maintain troop safety & Activity Checkpoints	X	X	X
Provide well-rounded Girl Scout Program	X	X	X
Attend meetings & trips	X	X**	X
Be on time & prepared for each meeting/activity	X	X**	X
Fulfill obligation of dues, uniforms			X
Return permission forms promptly			X
Complete any missed activities			X
Pass along important information to parents/caregivers	X		X
Honor troop agreement	X	X	X
Dress in an appropriate way for all Girl Scout activities including proper foot-wear	X	X	X
Have fun!	X	X	X
*Some troop positions require training			
**Adults who are needed to meet the adult-to-girl ratios			

WHY GIRL SCOUTS?

1. **Values** – Share the Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law so that parents/caregivers understand the core values of Girl Scouts; these values are interwoven within every aspect of the Girl Scout program.
2. **Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)** – Communicate that troops are girl-led, meaning the girls collectively decide, along with your guidance, what they'd like to do as a troop; as they get older, they'll take on more leadership roles; this is done through the GSLE process where girls Discover, Connect, and Take Action through girl-led activities, cooperative learning, and learning by doing.
3. Girls are stronger together. Girl experiences require that a girl (or girls) step up and be the leader—their voices are all welcome! In doing so, the girls realize that are able to have a seat at the table, or even or even at the head of the table and become more confident and self-assured.
4. **The 5 outcomes of the GSLE Leadership Outcomes. Research has shown Girl Scouts are more likely than non-Girl Scouts to:**
 - Have a strong sense of self (80% vs. 68%)
 - Have positive values (75% vs. 59%)
 - Seek challenges and learn from setbacks (62% vs. 42%)
 - Develop and maintain healthy relationships (60% vs. 43%)
 - Exhibit community problem-solving skills (57% vs. 28%)

Girl Scout Mission – Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Girl Scout Promise – On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law

Girl Scout Law – I will try my best to be

honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong,
and responsible for what I say and do
and to,
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

ABOUT GIRL SCOUTING

1. **Girl Scout Community** – Explain how their daughter fits into Girl Scouts.
2. **About your troop** –
 - Number/Level/SU/GSGLA – Share your troop number, program level, service unit name and number. Don't forget your council *Greater Los Angeles*.
 - Meeting information – Discuss and select a date, time, and location that will suit you and your families' needs
 - BE ON TIME! – Share the importance of being on time for the meeting and picking up
 - Snack – Discuss and decide if snack will be served; if yes, decided who will provide (*add decision to Group Agreement*)
 - Calendar – Share upcoming dates



ACTIVITIES

1. **Girl led troop** – Explain girls will decide on the activities and focus of each troop meeting, badges they will earn, trips they will take, etc.
2. **Awards girls can earn** – Show the following:
 - Handbook – Badges/Petals; other awards
 - Other badges
 - Possible Journeys
3. **Product Sales** – Share that GSGLA has two product program activities: the Fall Product Program of Nuts/Magazines and the Cookie Product Program in Winter/Spring; these programs don't just fund the troop; they also provide skills essential for success: goal making, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics. Additionally, girls earn incentives, the troop earns funds for activities, and the council is able to support girls and volunteers.
4. **Troop Safety** – Explain the following:
 - Safety guidelines – GSGLA uses [Volunteer Essentials](#) and [Safety Activity Check-points](#) as our safety guidelines
 - Volunteers – Adults who volunteer as a chaperone, driver, or first-aider, handle large amounts of money/product, or attend any overnight trips need to: register with Girl Scouts and complete a background check
 - Adult- to-girl ratio – All meetings and activities need to meet the adult-to-girl ratio (specific for level); males may volunteer along with at least 1 unrelated female
 - Cancelling – Meetings/activities/trips where there the adult-to-girl ratio is not met, will be cancelled
 - Sign-in and out procedures – Show Sign-in and out form; Parents will need to sign-in and out their daughter at each meeting; girls will only be released after the close of the meeting. Adjust requirements for your unique meeting location
 - Group Agreements – Explain that Girl Scouts use group agreements to provide a safe environment
 - ⇒ **GIRLS** – The girls will be creating a group agreement together that will include consequences; if there are behavior issues, families are expected to help their girls honor the Group Agreement; when it is completed, we will send a copy home for your review and signature
 - ⇒ **PARENTS/CAREGIVERS** – As adult members of the troop, we will be creating our own Group Agreement; decisions made at this meeting will be included in the Group Agreement; hand out sample Group Agreement; briefly review that sample agreement; add snack decision

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

1. **Family expenses** – Explain the following:
 - Membership Registration – There is an annual fee of \$25 per person; financial assistance is available
 - Background screening – Remind parents they may need to have a background screening
 - Give for the Girl – Share with parents that their support matters; building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place isn't accomplished alone; consider a gift of any amount, to Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles
 - Uniform – Clarify that while uniforms are not required, having a sash/vest/

- tunic is recommended to display badges/patches/awards
- Books – Share that books such as Handbooks and Journeys may need to be purchased
 - Troop Dues – Explain the following:
 - ⇒ **BROWNIES AND ABOVE** – Dues go directly to the troop to offset the cost of supplies, equipment, service projects, trips, etc.; dues should be minimal and may not necessarily be collected all year; dues are to be paid even if the girl isn't able to attend a meeting
 - ⇒ **DAISIES ONLY** – Daisies do not collect dues, the group adult volunteers handle money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting; parents/caregivers may decide to contribute to the cost of activities as needed
2. **Additional expenses** – Share that the troop will offset expenses that are not covered by dues; setting goals, budget planning and money earning is a big part of Girl Scouts; the girls decide what they want to do, make a budget, and then earn the money needed.
- Parents/caregivers – Explain that parents/caregivers should not be supplementing the troop budget
 - Product sales program – Share that the primary way troops earn money is through the product sales program
 - Money Earning – Clarify that any other money earning must be approved by council and cannot be done during cookie boothing
3. **More options** – Explain that there are other ways to fund the troop; share the following:
- Troop shower – Can hold a shower for troop supplies
 - In-Kind Donation – Ask for in-kind donations of goods or services from the community
 - Monitory Donation – Ask a company to give a donation to the troop; see Volunteer Essentials Chapter 5 for details
 - Start-up fee – New troops may collect a small start-up fee
4. **Discuss handouts** – Handout the following lists
- Girl Scout shopping list – Explain that is a shopping list of uniform pieces and books that you can take to the GS Shop; discuss and decide the following:
 - ⇒ **UNIFORMS** – The list shows the prices of the uniform pieces and insignia. We need to decide as a troop if each parent will purchase for their own daughter, one person will purchase for all, or another idea
 - ⇒ **ONLINE SHOPPING** – You can use the Where the Money Goes list to get started. Or see our [My Girl Scout Kits available in the Girl Scout Shop](#)
 - ⇒ **BOOKS** – This year we are going to start with the _____ Journey
 - Troop supply list – Share that we are a new troop and are in need of troop supplies; this list is what we need to get started; let's discuss how we can acquire them; suggestions are having a troop shower, collect a start-up fee or another idea

ASKING ADULTS TO HELP

1. **Parent/caregiver troop responsibilities** – Starred *positions require membership, completed background screening, and training (*online training for roles available on gsLearn*); share that the Troop Committee positions listed below are needed
- Troop Leader* – meets with the girls; in charge of the troop

- Troop Treasurer* – handles troop money; signor on troop account
 - Troop Cookie Chair* – handles troop Cookie Program
 - Troop Fall Product Chair* – handles troop Fall Product Program
 - Chaperone/Driver* – drives for troop trips; chaperone to help with girls; part of adult-to-girl ratio
 - Troop Helper – helps at meetings or activities, is not part of the adult-to-girl ratio; does not require background screening; not to be left alone with the girls
 - Other volunteer opportunities – Go over any additional troop jobs; be sure to clarify which roles require adults to register and complete a background screening
2. **Volunteer Survey** – Pass out the [Troop volunteer survey](#)
- Help – Share with the parents/caregivers the specific help you would like from them; remind them that the troop can only be successful if every parent/caregiver volunteers.
 - ASK – Have them complete the Parent Survey

COMMUNICATION

1. **Communicating with parents/caregivers** – Explain to them that it is important to decide the best way to communicate; share the ways to communicate (*phone calls/phone tree, texts, emails, troop newsletter, troop mailbox, GS Community, etc.*); discuss and decide how the troop will communicate; note decision on Group Agreement
- Cancelled/Rescheduled Meetings - Explain how the troop will communicate if a meeting needs to be cancelled or rescheduled
 - Emergency Contact person – Clarify that during field trips and other activities away from the meeting place, an emergency contact person will be identified; this person is to be available by phone/text during the activity; if an emergency situation should occur, they will be contacted who will, in turn, contact the parents
2. **Conflicts** – Share that there is a chain of command if a conflict that can't be resolved; contact:
- First – Troop Leaders
 - Second – Service Unit Manager (*first; name and contact information*)
 - Third – Support Specialist (*second; name and contact information*)

FORMS NEEDED TO GET STARTED

1. **Yearly forms** – Explain that there is paperwork that is required to be completed yearly; all information will be kept private and in a safe place; hand out the following; ask them to complete
- ☐ Annual Permission Form
 - ☐ Health Information & Release Form – [Health History](#)
 - ☐ Over the Counter (OTC) form – [Over the Counter \(OTC\) form](#)
 - ☐ Fall Product and Cookie Programs Parent/Guardian Permission & Responsibility Agreement – [Product Program Permission form](#)
 - ☐ Troop Driver Information
 - ☐ Internet Safety Pledge
2. **Activity forms** – Clarify that for activities taking place away from the troop meeting date/time require the following forms
- ☐ Parent/Guardian Single-Use Permission Form – [Parent Permission](#)

- Provided Prescription and/or Provided OTC Medication Form – [Provided RX form](#) (optional)

NEXT STEPS

1. **Collect forms** – Explain that all forms must be completed and turned in before leaving
2. **Membership forms** – Ask if everyone has registered their daughter and themselves
 - Yes – Thank those that have registered
 - No – Explain that we cannot start having troop meetings until all girls and necessary adults are registered
 - ⇒ **REGISTERING** – If internet is available, ask those who need to register to do so;
 - ⇒ New member(s) join from the [GSGLA website](#)
 - ⇒ Renewing member(s) use your [MyGS portal](#)
 - ⇒ **PAPER FORMS** (optional)– Girl and Adult Membership forms are available on the [GSGLA website](#)
3. **Group Agreement** – Review agreement and add relative topics that were decided on during the meeting; finalize agreement; have everyone sign; remind parents that this agreement will be on file and may be referenced throughout the year.

CLOSING

1. Thank parents/caregivers and girls for coming
2. Ask if there are any questions and answer them

Parent/Caregiver Responsibility Agreement

*(In the **red** sections you can include additional information to customize this Parent/Caregiver Responsibility Agreement to your needs. If you don't need any additional information added, be sure to delete these sections before you give to your parents. All sections in black are important, and should be kept as is.)*

**The Girl Scout mission builds girls of courage, confidence, and character
who make the world a better place.**

**With this in mind, it is important for the leaders, advisers, and parents/caregivers to work together to create a
rewarding experience for each girl in the troop.**

As a Girl Scout parent/caregiver I, _____ will gladly commit to the following:

Encouragement: I understand the importance of encouraging the Girl Scout Program, and supporting my daughter in Girl Scout Troop activities by:

- Being sure my daughter arrives on time to meetings/trips
 - Being sure my daughter is picked up on time, and that the leader knows who is picking her up
 - Being sure my daughter has all needed materials (permission forms, uniforms, books, etc.)
 - Helping my daughter fulfill troop responsibilities (dues, help them complete missing work, snack, etc.)
 - Being supportive of the troop agreement as well as the decisions the girls make throughout the year
- ⇒ **YOU COULD ALSO INCLUDE: Informing the leader if my daughter cannot attend a meeting/trip**

Communication: The troop adults will communicate regularly, check for important updates, and respond promptly by:

- ☐ Phone calls/phone tree
- ☐ Texts
- ☐ Emails
- ☐ Troop newsletter
- ☐ Social Media (i.e. Closed Facebook Group, Shutterfly)
- ☐ Other _____

Deadlines: I will adhere to all deadlines set by the troop leaders, turn in forms and money on time, on the designated date, and to the designated person.

Girl Scout Processes: Girl Scouts use girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning to facilitate leadership development of the girls. I will support my daughter, troop, and leaders by modeling these processes in my interactions with girls and adults.

Volunteer Guidelines:

- I understand that before I can volunteer as a chaperone, driver, or first-aider, handle large amounts of money/product, or attend any overnight trips I need to:
 - ⇒ Register with Girl Scouts
 - ⇒ Complete a background check
- I understand that when volunteering with any Girl Scout activity, I will follow all guidelines as outlined in Volunteer Essentials in regards to smoking, alcohol use, and substance use (both legal and illegal). See Volunteer Essentials Chapter 8 for additional information.
- I understand that when volunteering with the troop, I am there to serve the entire troop not just my daughter.
- I will also be a good role model by adhering to the Girl Scout Promise and Girl Scout Law.

- I will wear Girl Scout appropriate clothing/shoes for each activity.
- I will refrain from inappropriate conversations during all Girl Scout activities.

Inclusion: I will model inclusive and accepting behavior to my daughter and the other Girl Scouts and will adhere to GSGLA's inclusion statement as outlined in Volunteer Essentials. I will encourage my daughter to include all the girls in the troop when playing games, doing activities, working on projects, etc.

Troop Meetings: I understand that the leaders are responsible for activities and managing behavior of the girls and will respect and understand the leader's decision to limit parent/caregiver and sibling involvement.

- **Volunteering:** If attending a meeting as a volunteer, such as a chaperone, I will arrive on time, be available to assist as needed, and will let leaders know if I am unable to attend the meeting.
⇒ *YOU COULD ALSO INCLUDE: I will make other arrangements for siblings; I will bring pre-prepared materials related to my volunteer role; I will adhere by the troop volunteer hour requirements; add other statements as needed.*
- **Visiting:** If attending a meeting as an invited visitor, I will arrive on time, limit communication and interaction with the leaders, girls and other parents/caregivers which includes not participating in troop activities while visiting, unless the activity is open to everyone.
⇒ *YOU COULD ALSO INCLUDE: I will supervise siblings*
- **Siblings:** If siblings are invited to attend a meeting, I will supervise and ensure that they will not interrupt the meeting. If siblings are not invited to attend a meeting, I will make other arrangements for them.
⇒ *YOU COULD ALSO INCLUDE: If invited, siblings must also adhere by all troop rules.*

Activities: I understand that the leaders and girls have planned the activity and its details. I will respect and understand the troop's decision to limit parent/caregiver and sibling involvement.

- **Chaperoning/Driving:** If I am attending a troop activity as a chaperone/driver, I will be responsible for keeping track of the girls in my care and staying with the troop. I understand that during any activity (including driving to and from) I must refrain from making extra purchases for myself, my daughter, and girls under my care. Additionally, I will make other arrangements for siblings, and will bring all supplies and adhere by all rules/expectations just as the girls do.
⇒ *YOU COULD ALSO INCLUDE: I will cover the cost of my attendance; add other statements as needed.*
- **Visitors:** If I am attending a trip as an invited visitor, I will cover all of my own expenses, will adhere to all troop rules and expectations, and will follow the troop plan.
⇒ *YOU COULD ALSO INCLUDE: I will supervise siblings; add other statements as needed.*

Following GS Organizational Structure: I understand that if more information is needed, or if I need additional support, I will go:

- To my **Troop Leaders**
- If needed, to my **Service Unit Manager**.
- If further support is still needed, I understand I can then go to the **Support Specialist for my Service Unit**.

Fun and Friendship: I will do my best to have a wonderful time making memories with my daughter(s) and the other members in the troop.

Girl name _____ Troop Number _____

Parent/Caregiver name _____

Parent/ Caregiver signature _____ Date _____

RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES FOR A BRAND NEW TROOP



Troop supplies can be acquired through the donations of the troop members/parents. If the supplies needed cannot be acquired by donation, then troop monies can be used, often by collecting a small troop startup fee.

New troops could have a troop birthday party at the parent's meeting or one of the first few meetings. Each troop member could bring an item from the supply list below, either new or used and in good condition.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPLIES:

- ☐ 3-ring binder(s) for troop record storage, e.g. girl's health history, individual girl's records, troop attendance, troop dues records, financial records.
- ☐ First aid kit (See [First Aid Kit Checklist for Supply List](#) ideas)
- ☐ Container for troop monies, e.g. cardboard box, money pouch, envelopes or jar for "Dues"
- ☐ Large calendar to be used with girls while planning important dates
- ☐ 2 coffee cans with lids or cloth bags labeled "It" and "Other" for "Kapers"
- ☐ Plastic tote(s) or sturdy cardboard box(s) with cover and holes in sides/handles for "Troop Box"
- ☐ Plastic sealable bags (snack, quart, gallon)
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Basket/box for snacks (if needed)
- ☐ Cleaning Supplies (if needed)
- ☐ Other _____



PROGRAM SUPPLIES:

- ☐ Journey Leaders' guide and girls' book for program level (GSUSA publication) – *you may also want your own personal copy*
- ☐ Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting for program level (GSUSA publication) – *you may also want your own personal copy*
- ☐ United States flag (small size)
- ☐ Paper (white and colored construction)
- ☐ Markers, pencils and crayons
- ☐ Craft Sticks
- ☐ White glue or glue sticks
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tape (Masking, Duct, etc.)
- ☐ Other _____

OPTIONAL SUPPLIES

- ☐ Activity fillers (Balloons, Song Book, Game Book, Jump Rope, etc.)
- ☐ Troop scrapbook for photos of first meeting, investiture, trips, events
- ☐ Emergency snacks/juice boxes
- ☐ Other _____

I _____ agree to donate the items checked off above. I agree that items donated will be either new, or used but in good condition.

Parent/Caregiver Signature: _____ Date: _____

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles
2019 FALL PRODUCT AND 2020 COOKIE PROGRAMS
Parent/Guardian Permission & Responsibility Agreement

1150 S Olive Ave., Suite 600, Los Angeles CA 90015 T (213) 213-0123 www.girlscoutsLA.org

My Girl Scout _____, a member of Troop _____, has my permission to participate in the 2019 Fall Product Program and 2020 Cookie Program. I will see that she honors any and all rules and procedures as set by Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSLA) and that she has adult supervision and guidance. My signature below indicates agreement with all 14 items listed below.

- 1) My daughter must be officially registered with Girl Scouts of the USA in order to participate.
- 2) I accept personal financial responsibility for all product received and/or in my possession and all monies collected as payment from customers.
- 3) I understand that the 2019 Fall Product Program and 2020 Cookie Program proceeds are Troop & Council property and that "[t]he income from product sales does not become the property of individual girl members." (*Volunteer Essentials*, Chapter 5)
- 4) I will adhere to the principles set forth in the Girl Scout Promise and Law and act in accordance with the Girl Scout Mission.
- 5) I will "[u]se good judgment and common sense" and will not "...write or post anything that would embarrass or upset Girl Scout members and volunteers, or reflect badly on the organization." I will treat others as I would want to be treated; I will not use the internet to harass, attack, or abuse any individual, group, race, gender, religion, political group, etc. Further, I understand "[p]ropane language or derogatory remarks...individual or group used in any of the context posted will not be tolerated and could result in immediate dismissal." (*Volunteer Essentials*, Chapter 8)
- 6) I agree that all money collected must be given to my Girl Scout's Troop by _____ Troop _____ Council set dates and any earned recognition items/events will be withheld until GSLA receives the money. Money provided to the troop MUST be in the form it was received from the customer (e.g., cash or check).
- 7) If my account is delinquent and not brought current prior to expiration of tickets or other sensitive recognition items, GSLA will not be obligated to reissue, replace, or refund the value of said recognitions.
- 8) GSLA reserves the right to seek the services of a collection agency or pursue legal action for delinquent accounts.
- 9) GSLA reserves the right to revoke recognition items of equal or greater value with or without notice and that recognition items in the form of tickets are valid only on the date printed on the tickets. The recognition items are non-transferable and not redeemable for cash; GSLA will not be responsible for lost, stolen or damaged tickets, cards or items.
- 10) I understand that sales regulations must be adhered to by my Girl Scout and her family members and that the Girl Scout is not to be selling before the official start dates, or through prohibited methods, will not receive recognition items or credit for those orders.
- 11) Unsold product must be returned to council offices or any council cupboard. Exchanges of product to council/cupboard are permitted only during the designated days and locations, and done by or with the knowledge of the troop's product program chair or troop leader.
- 12) Adults serve in a supporting role for girls and should not assume sole responsibility for sales.
- 13) Girls or their families may not engage in selling on the Internet. Girls can use e-mail as a marketing tool to let family, friends and former customers know about the programs (*Volunteer Essentials*, Chapter 5) and can use the online tools provided by and through the council and the product vendors.
- 14) Digital Cookie/M2OS are the approved ways a Girl Scout can extend her cookie or fall sales to friends and family across the nation by sending to them her unique Digital Cookie/M2OS URL, all while learning the ins and outs of online selling, e-commerce management, and digital promotion. While the girl makes sales and oversees all aspects of the transaction, she does so with adult supervision. I will supervise my girl's use.

Parent/Guardian Name (print) _____

 Home Address _____

 Home Phone _____

 Signature _____

E-mail Address (print) _____

 City, Zip _____

 Cell Phone _____

 Date _____

*** Please turn this form in to your Troop Leader with your registration. ***

Rev. 4/26/19

20 Ways to Thank Troop Volunteers

1. Smile and just say thank you!
2. Make them feel NOTEworthy
 - a. Send a handmade card, or create a scroll with a thank you proclamation signed by your group.
 - b. Write a letter thanking your volunteers by name for their commitment to girls in the troop.
 - c. Display a thank you flyer on their lawn, mailbox, or front door and tie balloons to it.
 - d. Place a thank you flyer on their car at work and attach balloons to their car antenna.
 - e. Take a volunteer's picture and send it to the local newspaper along with a thank you note.
 - f. Give a festively wrapped Girl Scout Cookie box stuffed with thank you notes from the girls.
 - g. Help girls each write an appreciation note or favorite memory on a slip of paper and compile them in memory jars.
 - h. Send a fun e-card. Free websites like *Punchbowl*, *Blue Mountain*, *123 Greetings*, *JibJab*, and *Open Me* offer thank-you, holiday, and customizable e-cards you can send out anytime.
3. Give a bouquet of daisies.
4. Have the girls sing them a Thank You Song.
5. Present them with homemade gifts from the girls.
6. Honor them at your troop Court of Awards Ceremony. Mention the role each person has filled and how much their help means to the troop.
7. Hold a special troop volunteer recognitions ceremony.
8. Record girls thanking their leaders and post it online.
9. Host an appreciation dinner.
10. Present your volunteer with a heart-shaped pin or something special from the Girl Scout shop.
11. Give them a patch.
12. Organize a special outing for leaders to relax (i.e. movies, theatre, sporting event, spa, etc.).
13. Give a mug full of chocolate hugs and kisses as an appreciation gift.
14. Present your volunteers with appreciation certificates.
15. In appreciation for time given by volunteers, give the gift of thyme along with a recipe.
16. Thank volunteers for lending a "hand" by having girls trace their hands on a poster and decorate it.
17. Send a small token of appreciation and attach a famous quote or proverb.
18. Have the girls give them a troop photo in a homemade frame.
19. Nominate them for an Award.
20. Let the girls decide!!





S.W.A.P.S

("Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere" – "Share With A Pal" -"Something With A Pin")

A Girl Scout Tradition

S.W.A.P.S. are small crafts Girl Scouts give as gifts or trade with other Girl Scouts at events and national meetings. They are sometimes referred to as potlatch. Their origin is Native American.

S.W.A.P.S. are made and given to promote friendship and to make new friends. Swapping allows us to share our handiwork with other Girl Scouts and to bring back a memento of a special occasion.

The idea of S.W.A.P.S. started at the original National Roundup Conferences. At that time, S.W.A.P.S. were a little remembrance that one Girl Scout gave to another. Swapping is a good way of starting correspondence with Girl Scouts from other states and countries. For this reason you usually attach your first name or troop number and Service Unit for future reference.

S.W.A.P.S. can be simple or complex, cheap or expensive, whatever the maker desires. It is not necessary to spend a lot of money on S.W.A.P.S., many people make them out of scraps or natural materials. Most S.W.A.P.S. are made with pins attached so they can be pinned onto a camp shirt or hat.



Decide how many S.W.A.P.S. you want to trade. You may make them all the same, or make every one different. S.W.A.P.S. can be made during part of a troop meeting, during a special meeting called for the purpose of making S.W.A.P.S., or with examples shown at the meeting, with the S.W.A.P.S. to be made at home. You can use an assortment of ribbons, felt, pipe cleaners, etc. Let your imagination go wild!

S.W.A.P.S. usually tell something about the state or city where you live. They can also represent the theme of an activity or event. S.W.A.P.S. are usually only an inch or two in size. It is usually best to create some way for your S.W.A.P.S. to attach to a clothing item.

S.W.A.P.S. Étiquette

Swap "do's and don'ts" can vary from council to council, but there are basic rules that everyone should be aware of and follow so there are no hurt feelings.

- S.W.A.P.S. to be traded can be carried in a small bag. S.W.A.P.S. that are pinned to someone's hat are generally considered off-limits unless they are offered to you as a trade.
 - It is considered rude if you refuse to swap with someone who asks you.
 - If you don't like the item you have been given, or already have an identical S.W.A.P., accept it politely, and give them one of yours with a Girl Scout smile.
 - ALWAYS say thank you! A Girl Scout is always courteous.
 - Always have a few extra S.W.A.P.S. on hand for those people who don't have any. It is also nice if you give someone a S.W.A.P. who doesn't have one to give in return. That is what being a Girl Scout is all about.
 - Include the information such as your troop number, city and state on the S.W.A.P. You may also want to mark it with the date or the event name to help identify the S.W.A.P. later on.
- S.W.A.P.S. do not have to be pins. They can be bracelets, necklaces, council patches, event patches, or other small items. S.W.A.P.S. should NOT contain edible food. Food items cannot be kept as keepsakes and they attract bugs and critters when outdoors.



For additional ideas visit the GSUSA web site: <http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/traditions/swap>

Girl Scout Virtual Meetings

Decide How You'll Stay Connected:

Technology plays a large role in our lives today, and virtual Girl Scout meetings have become more common. Don't worry if your girls are already using a web or social platform you're not as familiar with, because you'll learn alongside them! And if connecting virtually is your only option, you can still show your girls what it means to be a sister to every Girl Scout by giving them this chance to meet virtually or even making a quick phone call to connect.

If your girls are younger or looking for guidance about how to stay in touch, check out companies offering free webinar services for groups. Try services from Google, GoToMeeting, or Zoom, among many others, and see what works best for your troop.

Tips for a Safe & Productive Meeting:

If your troop plans to meet virtually, make sure to follow some of these tips to stay safe and have a productive and fun meeting:

- The Annual Permission form will cover the virtual meetings. Make sure to send written notification along with a list of virtual meeting dates to your parents (and to your SUM and/or designee).
- Continue to adhere to the two unrelated adult volunteers, one of whom is female, rule when gathering with girls virtually. It's important that girls understand they are in the same safe Girl Scout space as they are with in-person meetings. They are cared for and they still have two dedicated unrelated adults who they can count on.
- Ensure your meeting is kept private: Many companies allow you to set your meeting to private or by invitation only. This will ensure that the public cannot attend your meeting and disrupt your activities. Also, many companies allow you to alter the settings so that you can limit screen sharing to specific attendees or the host, or limit who can transfer a file. Be sure to consult the company's website for helpful instructions on privatizing your meeting.
- Do not record troop meetings and ask that girls do not record troop meetings. The majority of girls are minors and are not of the age to legally consent, so recording of regular recurring troop meetings is not permitted. If girls want to prepare and record a special activity, make sure to obtain written parent permission from each girl's legal guardian **and** notify Support@girlscoutsla.org.
- Practice with your parents/caregivers first: ensure that they understand how to use the technology so that when the girls are ready to attend, you can start the meeting without any hiccups.
- Ensure that parents/caregivers will be assisting the girls to attend the meeting: make sure the parents/caregivers have the girls join the virtual meeting on time. They most likely need to assist the girls in responding to any chat messages or help with turning the computer mic on/off. Depending on activities that you plan, they may need to stay next to the girls during the entire meeting or check in periodically to ensure the technology is working correctly. To have even more help, ask your co-leader or another adult volunteer to co-host your meeting to help moderate the chat/mics and answer technical questions.
- Treat the first virtual meeting as you would with any first meeting: set up expectations and ground rules, such as not using the chat log for side conversations during the meeting, muting all upon entry to reduce noise and confusion, or create a virtual "talking stick" so girls understand when it is their turn to talk to avoid everyone talking over each other. And allow the girls to use this first meeting to get used to the technology as well; practice makes perfect!

- Ensure multiple ways to access the technology: Look for features that allow you to call in to the meeting using a phone only, which is important because not all girls have access to the internet. Be sure to send families the URL for the meeting as well as the directions for calling in.
- When to meet: the date and time are already on a family's calendar, so keep it easy by keeping the same meeting time as your in-person meetings. If that is not doable, offer some other dates and times to see if the majority of the troop can attend.
- Interacting with your participants:
 - Screensharing: A PowerPoint presentation or meeting agenda document should be created to help lead the meeting and keep the troop focused and willing to interact.
 - Whiteboard: This is an interactive space where the leader and girls can write and interact in real time using available tools.
 - Breakout Rooms: These are sub-rooms that can be created within a meeting. They are useful for splitting a large group into smaller groups that can talk or collaborate. This is a great tool to use if the girls work in patrols.
 - Raise Hand: Girls can use a virtual "hand" to denote they would like to be called on, or to answer the leader's or other girls' question.
 - Chat/Question Box: This allows the girls to ask questions and give answers, and feedback in real time. Depending on the platform the chat/question box may be open for all participants to see or for just the host to see and respond to.
 - Poll Questions: Allows the leader to ask multiple choice poll questions of the audience, and then track those answers afterwards. Most platforms will allow hosts to enter in questions ahead of time as well as during the meeting.
 - Question and Response: Pose questions and solicit responses from the girls. This is a way to brainstorm and to get the girls discussing agenda items or things coming up in your troop. Embrace the pause as well! Take a moment at the end of your comments and allow for the girls to engage before continuing.
- Keep it girl-led: Having your girls take the lead is more important than ever. When they're empowered to make troop decisions, they can gain a sense of control and learn leadership skills. Allow the girls to vote to make a decision on the next meeting activity or allow them to lead a section at your next meeting.
- Create a meeting environment: Be aware of your background, choose a simple space with minimal clutter. Find a place that will allow for minimal interruption by other family members. Make sure your lighting is adequate and noise interference can be limited.
- Check the [Virtual Troop Meetings](#) Safety Activity Checkpoint before your first virtual meeting and go over the checkpoint with the girls as well so everyone is familiar with safety guidelines.
- Consider having girls (and adults) sign the Girl Scouts [Internet Safety Pledge](#), before your first virtual meeting, signifying their commitment to staying safe online.



What Can You Do in a Virtual Meeting?

While you don't need to use meeting time for snack or clean up, you can still do some or all of the other parts of a traditional meeting. Remember, using a visual of your agenda will help you keep on track.

The Arrival Activity: Consider having a welcome question on the screen for the girls to answer either in the chat box or out loud. This is a great way to engage girls while you are waiting for everyone to arrive.

Opening Ceremony: Recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law, do the Pledge of Allegiance, or even sing a song together. Whatever you'd normally say or sing together -- do it!

Business: Share any news and agenda items here. If girls assist you with the business portion, let them know ahead of time that it is their turn to host this section. For example, if you assign a girl to do an attendance check, let her lead it during the webinar and provide her with the attendance list ahead of time.

Activity: This is a great time to work on badge or Journey activities! Think about what you can send the girls ahead of time. That helps you make the most of your meeting.

Here are some specific ideas to get started:

- Get silly: Play charades, Taboo, or Pictionary. Have a scavenger hunt for items that might be around the house.
- Get the wiggles out: Do yoga or have a dance party together.
- Quiet together time: Read stories aloud or do a group add-a-line story. This is the perfect time to read the Daisy petal stories.
- Explore the arts: Draw portraits of one another and share. Create a cookbook or have a cooking competition.
- Explore STEM: Create a race car from found materials. Share or complete a science experiment.
- Virtual Tours: organize a "field trip," and take them to places they might not see in person. Cultural institutions across the globe are now offering free virtual tours of their spaces or livestreaming performances, so you're likely to find something that will excite your entire troop.
- Learn more about each other: Share best and worst things that happened today.
- Learn about Girl Scouts across the globe: Learn the Promise and Law in American sign language or other languages. Check out WAGGGS resources for international ideas.
- For older girls: Watch a TED Talk and discuss. Create your own videos.

Closing: A modified Friendship Circle is possible! Instead of squeezing a hand, have each girl say the name of another person in your virtual circle after she makes her wish. Or, if everyone has a camera, how about a wink and then saying a name, or call a girl's name out and they high-five the picture of the person to the right? Sometimes audio can be delayed, so reciting the Girl Scout Promise or singing a song might be difficult, so have a YouTube video prepped with the song or Promise that you can play. The girls can remain muted and can participate with the video at the same time. Encourage the girls to be creative! Let them decide how to close the meeting.

Remember: Plan your time accordingly. Some virtual meeting platforms may have a time limit, so be sure to know that ahead of time so that you can have your agenda reflect that limit. And remember, even if you are meeting virtually, Daisies still have a short attention span, so try to keep your meeting the same amount of time or less than your usual in-person meetings.

And be sure to check www.girlscouts.org for Girl Scouts at Home activities and ideas. For more information regarding social media and computer safety, refer to the Girl Scout *Safety Activity Checkpoint* for "[Computer/Online Use](#)."

**This document adapted from GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts.*