

Short & Snappy

Bridging

What's a Short & Snappy?

- A short training/information segment provided at a Service Unit meeting or for leaders to use at troop meetings.
- Any interested volunteer may lead a Short and Snappy.
- Short & Snappies are usually 10-45 minutes in length.

Things to Remember

- Stay within the allotted time (you're taking up a piece of their agenda time).
- If you don't know the answer, seek the correct answer from the appropriate person.
- Bring the necessary supplies for your short & snappy.

What you'll need

- Short & Snappy Guide.
- Leaders.
- Moderator.
- Copies of the handout Bridging Resource.

Lecture/Discussion

10 minutes

Group Sharing-Ask: Raise your hand if you have girls in your troop that are in 1st, 3rd, 5th, 8th, or 10th grade?

Thank you. If you raised your hand, those Girl Scouts will be bridging to the next level of Girl Scouts at the end of the year.

Lecture: Bridging is an important transition in a Girl Scout's life. It's a defining moment when a Girl Scout becomes aware of her achievements and is ready for new adventures and responsibilities. It is called "bridging" as it crosses a gap and gives access to new and exciting opportunities on the other side. As a girl crosses over the bridge, she celebrates moving from one age level to the next. This is often celebrated with a bridging ceremony.

Girl Scout program age levels are based on the girls' year in school. Therefore, girls will bridge from:

- Daisies to Brownies after 1st grade.
- Brownies to Juniors after 3rd grade.
- Juniors to Cadettes after 5th grade.
- Cadette to Seniors after 8th grade.
- Senior to Ambassador after 10th grade.
- Ambassador to adult after high school graduation.

While everyone bridges, Girl Scout Brownies are unique in that they call their bridging a "fly up". The tradition of flying up relates back to the roots of the Brownie program. The Brownie level was first organized in England in 1914 as a way for younger girls to join the movement. A Brownie is a clever fairy in English folklore. The Brownies entered human homes and did a good turn by helping humans clean their house.

The Brownie story tells of the transformation a little girl undergoes to become a helpful Brownie. She is helped in this transformation by a wise old owl and following that story, leaders in England and other British Commonwealth countries are referred to as a brown owl. When girls leave the nest of the Brownie level, they fly up to Juniors. At their bridging ceremony, they earn their Brownie Wings which can be worn on their Junior uniform and beyond, right up to Ambassadors.



Girl Scouts have the opportunity to earn the bridging award for their level, which can be given out at a bridging ceremony. These awards can be worn on the Brownie uniform and beyond. Earning the bridging award gives Girl Scouts the opportunity to look forward to the level they are bridging into and give back to the level they are bridging out of. More information on this optional award can be found in the Volunteer Toolkit or the Girl Scout Handbook.

You might wonder if you must have a bridging ceremony. The answer is no, it's not required. But why not have one? It is such a memorable Girl Scout milestone and it something Girl Scouts look back on fondly. You can have it during your regular meeting time, create a special time for friends and family to participate, or if you are lucky, your entire Service Unit plans everything and bridges all the girls who will be moving up a level. The Bridging Ceremony should be fun, personalized, and memorable for everyone involved. Most of all, it should be designed by the girls in true partnership with adults. More information can be found in the "Bridging Resource".

You can choose to hold a bridging ceremony to mark the change of age level at any time. Troops can hold their ceremony in the spring as one school year ends, over the summer as family schedules permit, or to kick off the new Girl Scout year in the fall. The timing is up to the troop.

Group sharing–Ask: Who has had a bridging ceremony in the past and would like to share?

Thank you. The Bridging Resource included in this Short & Snappy has more information to help you plan a bridging ceremony. Take a look and ask any questions you have about bridging or bridging ceremonies.

BRIDGING AWARDS

Bridge to Brownie Award

Bridge to Junior Award

Bridge to Cadette Award

Bridge to Senior Award

Bridge to Ambassador Award

Bridge to Adult



Bridging Ceremonies Resource

This resource has more information on bridging ceremonies including when one happens, planning a bridging ceremony, creative ideas for bridges, bridging awards and how to earn them and some bonus tips to keep in mind.

Bridging Ceremonies:

Bridging ceremonies often utilize a bridge as girls take literal steps toward the future. The bridge and crossing over into new age level can be symbolized in many different ways, with crossing the bridge being the main section. This involves inviting the bridging girls to one side of the bridge where they say goodbye to their current age level before crossing the bridge. When they reach the other side, they are welcomed by their new age level with a Girl Scout handshake.

You can celebrate privately with just your troop, with all the troops at your school, or with a big service unit wide ceremony. It can take place during a meeting, at a family picnic or at another convenient time. There are a few types of ceremonies based on destinations that are fun but are not that common. Marking the change of age level is really the only requirement for a bridging ceremony. The rest is up to you.

You can incorporate other types ceremonies with your bridging, like recognizing girls' achievements with the Court of Awards or celebrating earning the troop's Bronze or Silver award. You can start and end your bridging with a flag ceremony or include a reading or a candlelight ceremony to heighten the occasion and food, be it a cake and punch reception or family potluck, this also helps to turn a ceremony into a party. Let your Girl Scouts provide their input and use their imagination to create a ceremony that is meaningful to them.

Planning a Bridging Ceremony:

Regardless of whether you celebrate on a large or small scale every ceremony should have;

- An opening where guests are welcomed, and the tone is set.
- The main section where the ceremony is explained, and girls celebrate moving from one level to the next.
- A closing where guests are thanked and the ceremony is wrapped up, typically with a song, or a friendship circle.

Let the Girl Scouts guide the planning in an age-appropriate manner. Have them give their input. They could write a wish for their future in Girl Scouting, decide on a guest list, invite a speaker or prepare the food. It's their party so let them celebrate their accomplishments in their own unique way. Once the plans are set, call on your troop families for support in making the celebration come to life and recognizing their Girl Scouts achievements.

Bridges:

Crossing the bridge to the next level can be figurative or literal. You can hold your ceremony in a park with a real bridge, make your own actual bridge, create the idea of a bridge, or not have bridge at all. Use your imagination and take into account the space that you are using.

- Without a bridge, girls can create a makeshift one using balloons, flowers, ribbons etc. Let them get creative and make this their own. They'll enjoy it, even if they don't have an actual bridge.
- Girls can cross over a stage area with a movable bridge. Temporary bridges can be made from an upturned card table, a wooden pallet or some PVC set in concrete or plaster.
- You can also have each girl make a concrete stepping stone that they all can cross that each girl takes home after the event.

- Bridges don't have to be crossed over; they can also be something girls walk under. A balloon arch or tented hands indoors or an archway outdoors make great bridge substitutes.
- Some local Service Centers have bridges to rent. Call Customer Care at (213) 213-0123 to inquire about availability near you (Upland, Long Beach, and Santa Clarita).

Bridging Awards:

Most Girl Scouts choose to earn the bridging award for their level. At every level, the award requires passing it on and looking ahead. For Girl Scout Juniors for example, girls will pass on their talents and skills to younger Girl Scouts by teaching them something they learned as a Junior. This can be done visiting a Brownie meeting, helping plan an event for Brownies or talking to non-Girl Scouts about the fun things Juniors get to do. To look ahead Juniors will find out about fun adventures that await them as Girl Scout Cadettes by talking to a Cadette troop, completing an activity with a Cadette troop, or learning about the Girl Scout Silver Award from a girl who has earned it. Once girls have earned the award it goes on their next level uniform sash or vest. The requirements for which can be found the level handbooks, Girl Scout Bridging Guide and the Volunteer Toolkit.

Bonus Tips:

- Allow sufficient time for planning the ceremony and give girls a chance to practice. Remember girls need longer time to plan than an adult.
- Keep it simple, encourage the girls to plan a ceremony that is simple and meaningful instead of one that is over the top and stressful.
- Keep your ceremony symbolic but make it fun.
- When incorporating a candlelight ceremony as part of your bridging, keep safety in mind. Know ahead of time if candles are allowed in your location. Also know where the fire extinguishers are located and how to use them.
- Add personal elements to traditional ceremonies by incorporating favorite songs, poems, stories or sayings, or have the girls write something new.
- Ceremonies, while often sentimental, don't have to be stiff and boring. Follow the girls lead on what they think is fun and want to celebrate.
- Give thanks and take a few minutes in the ceremony for the girls and leaders to give thanks to their parents and any other community members who have helped them through the year, be it the custodian who lets them into their meeting space, or an older girl scout who helped earn a badge.
- Pinterest is a great place but don't let it overwhelm you.
- Look at videos from other ceremonies on social media or YouTube to get an idea.
- Think about purchasing bridging awards from the council shop or consider buying starter kits for the girls so they are ready to go at the next level.
- Remember, bridging ceremonies and awards are fun and meaningful but are not required. If your troop decides not to do these activities, consider how you can still celebrate or acknowledge your Girl Scouts as they move up to the next level.

Additional Bridging Resources:

- GSUSA Bridging Guide: https://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/misc/19_MV_BridgingGuide_flyer_v2.pdf
- Bridging Kits: <https://www.girlscoutshop.com/girls/girl-scout-kits/bridging-kits>