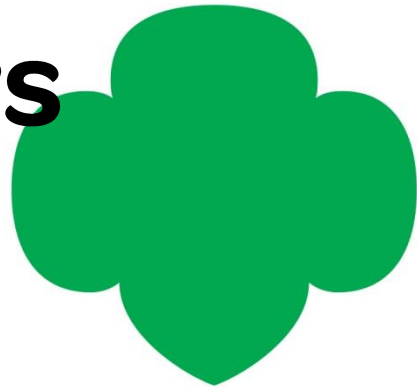


# Working with Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors



## **The Girl Scout Mission**

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

## **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.

## **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.

## **Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma gseok.org**

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Muskogee Girl Scout Office  
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McAlester Girl Scout Service Center  
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Ponca City Girl Scout Program Center  
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Ponca City, OK 74601

### **The Girl Scout Store at the Tulsa Hardesty Leadership Center**

Phone: 918-745-5252 or 800-707-9914

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Hours of operation:

Tuesday – Friday: 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Sunday & Monday: Closed

### **Telephone for all locations:**

**918-749-2551**

**800-707-9914**

If you need to see a staff person, please  
call customer care at 918-749-2551 (or  
email [customer care@gseok.org](mailto:customer care@gseok.org)) to make  
an appointment. Outlying service centers  
and offices are not always open due to staff  
out working in their communities.



# Who Are Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors?

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A **Girl Scout Cadette** troop is comprised of girls who are in grades 6, 7, and 8. A **Girl Scout Senior** troop includes girls who are in grades 9 and 10, and a **Girl Scout Ambassador** troop consists of girls who are in grades 11 and 12. Girls with developmental challenges should be registered as closely as possible with girls of their chronological age. Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors participate in Girl Scouting in many ways. Under the guidance of a trained adult advisor, girls mix and match activities and resources to suit their needs while giving back to their communities. They connect with each other and build self-esteem and confidence in their skills as they work on a range of projects and gain life experiences.

## Characteristics of Girl Scout Cadettes/Seniors/Ambassadors

This is a very busy stage in their life; a time when they are continuing to learn about themselves, adventuring out into the world around them and facing new changes and challenges, academically, emotionally and in relationships with others. Because all girls develop and mature at their own pace, it is important that you, as a leader, are able to recognize each individual girl's needs and interests and help her to develop those interests. While all girls are unique, there are many characteristics that older Girl Scouts share. Look at "Understanding Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Age Girls" in your Journey Adult Guides (*How to Guide Girl Scout Cadettes Through aMaze!* Page 14; *How to Partner with Girl Scout Seniors on GIRLtopia* page 18; *How to Partner with Girl Scout Ambassadors on Your Voice Your World* on pages 18 and 19) and in the "Understanding Healthy Development in Girls" section of *Volunteer Essentials* and review these characteristics. Think about your own daughter, or the girls in your troop/group. How do you think these characteristics will affect the kinds of activities the girls will enjoy doing in their troop?

### *Don't be fooled!*

It is true that girls in our society are faced with decisions, pressures, and situations about four years earlier than their parents were.

But our youth are not any more emotionally mature than you were at their age.

"What used to happen in high school is now happening in middle school, and what you worried about in 10th grade, she's worrying about in 6th or 7th grade."

- Judy Mann,  
Author of *The Difference: Growing up Female in America*

"Youth cannot know how age thinks and feels. But old men are guilty if they forget what it was to be young."

- J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix*, 2003

## Changes in Girls

Although each girl is an individual and will develop at her own pace, the following chart can offer you some guidance as to the developmental pattern of girls ages 11 - 17. Remember that the activities the girls plan should be age-appropriate, and based on their needs, interests and abilities.

Developmental Issues	Girls Grades 6-8	Girls Grades 9-10	Girls Grades 11-12
Physical Changes	Onset of menstruation Begin secondary growth development	Growth in height Voice lowering	Features developing adult characteristics
Social Changes	Accepting changing bodies Seek influences outside family	Greater body and hormonal changes Gaining peer support Explore independent values	Self-expression Greater autonomy/less parental support
Defining Moments	Transition to junior high/middle school	Rite of passage- becoming a teenager	New independence- now can drive
Self-Image	Desire to belong	"Me" focused	Pressure to achieve success
Worries	Grades Fitting in Appearance	Grades Will boys like me? Appearance/eating disorders Too much to do!	Grades Success Too much to do!
Pressures	Peer pressures for testing boundaries include dating and smoking issues	Pressure to act a certain way	Worried about getting into the right college
Activity Interest	Improving the world Outdoor activities Hang out with friends Improving self-confidence Playing sports	Personalize their own space; taking trips; music to express myself; developing image through clothes/fashion; dating	Career opportunities; self-defense; managing time; Dealing with emotions Leadership events
You Can Help By...	Creating a safe supportive environment, give them opportunities and connections	Model how to explore and affirm emotions and reactions to new experiences	Empower them encourage their individual interest

# Developmental Characteristics of Girls in Middle and High School

## Cadettes

### Girls in sixth, seventh and eighth grades:

- Feel unique, like no one else has ever felt the way they do
- Display excellent planning skills, long attention spans, and total absorption in their passions (though they may discover a new passion frequently)
- Are *extremely* concerned with and put a lot of energy and interest into their friends and peer relationships (they may develop self-consciousness in front of peers)
- Are interested in boys and have crushes
- Are into “What’s Hot” and “What’s Not” in fashion, music, celebrities, and style
- Are committed to communicating with and getting along with parents/guardians
- Feel a lot of pressure from the social scene at school, and think that adults don’t understand how complicated and stressful their social lives are
- Typically have good communication skills and, with guidance, can present issues effectively in public forums
- Like to be with and serve people directly—it’s their social nature!

## Seniors

### Girls in ninth and tenth grades:

- Like to be included in setting rules
- Are beginning to clarify their own values
- Are developing their own individuality; thrive with acknowledgment of strengths, skills, and talents
- Can sometimes be in a “know-it-all phase”
- Are gaining stronger logic and problem-solving skills

## Ambassadors

### Girls in eleventh and twelfth grades:

- Are striving for a strong sense of self as they move out into the world
- Are working toward independence and freedom, seeking to make their own decisions
- Crave friends to turn to and trust; eager to belong to trusted groups of friends where they feel emotionally safe and connected
- Are exploring risk taking as a rite of passage and managing the responsibilities of new privileges (i.e., driving)
- Are juggling life decisions and pressures (college, job, intimate relationships)

## Self-Esteem Develops in Four Basic Ways:

**Achievement/Competence** - Does she feel she does things well? Is she learning new skills and becoming more confident?

**Success at Influencing Others** - Do others listen to her? Does she have an impact on others? Does she have your full attention when she speaks to you?

**Moral Worth** - Does she feel good about her loyalty to ethical standards? Do you look for opportunities to give her positive feedback?

**Social Acceptance** - Is she liked? Does she feel she fits in? Do you praise girls for whom compliments don't come easily?

## Girl Scouts with Special Needs

Girl Scouting is for Every Girl, Everywhere! This includes girls with all kinds of abilities and disabilities.

*Focus on Ability: Serving Girls with Special Needs* gives information on abilities and tips for working with and including all girls.

## Your Relationship with the Girls

As a troop leader, your relationship with the girls will be unique—you're not their parent or their teacher. You'll be a special friend and role model, and will have a profound impact on their lives. Your girls are likely to remember you always! Your role as a Girl Scout leader is to partner with the girls to make their dreams a reality. The girls should feel that their ideas are important and are heard, and they should feel that the troop is their own. The more work you put into achieving a partnership with your girls, the bigger the payoffs will be—you are going to love seeing your girls accomplish tasks and reach goals they never dreamed they'd be able to achieve.

## Dealing with Feelings

The LUTE (Listen, Understand, Tolerance, and Empathy) Model is a method of communication that can help you relate to the girls, coach them in mood mastery, and model respectful compassion.

When girls worry, it is often not the situation, but their feelings about the situation that is their real problem. Girls are dealing with changes in their bodies and changes in the way they perceive the world around them. Teenagers tend to react much more strongly and with less self-control at this age than when they were younger, for many physical and psychological reasons: hormones, a growing awareness of justice, a desire for greater independence, pressure to conform to norms, etc. Also, they are trying to begin to see themselves as adults, separate from the support structures on which they once depended.

It can be difficult to know how to approach a girl when she is upset. Generally speaking, the adults around her need to help her to deal with her feelings. Learning how to handle her feelings - a skill we call mood mastery, is one of the most important skills a girl learns at this time. When girls are stressed, they need an adult who can accept their feelings and who can help them learn to process and express them constructively.

Many of us are problem solvers by nature, and we want to help girls to feel good. Unfortunately, while this strategy may have worked when the girls were younger, it is generally not helpful with older girls. After all, if the real problem is how a girl feels - and not the situation itself - then fixing the situation doesn't fix the problem. Often what girls want and need from us is guidance in critical thinking, and a little empathy. They want to know that they have been heard and understood. The moral: Listen, then help her find options in possessing the situation.

As a troop leader, it is important that you take some time out occasionally to assess your feelings about your role, and encourage the girls to share in the self-reflection. You can model self-examination and reflection for them, as they are just learning to analyze and apply their own feelings and make constructive changes based on that evaluation.

### LUTE Model

One method of mood mastery for girls is for you, the advisor/leader, to use LUTE when working through a situation with a girl. Following LUTE will help you talk with the girl in your troop or group, and model for her how to think through her situation. Think of the acronym LUTE to remind you how to respond.

**Remember:**  
*It's not about you.  
It's about her.*

Key Point: Keep your own feelings in check so that you can help her to deal with her feelings. You can discuss her effect on your feelings later, if necessary. Ground rules like no name-calling and no yelling are good, but trying to encourage empathy when she's upset is counterproductive.

<b>L = Listen</b>	<b>U = Understand</b>	<b>T = Tolerance</b>	<b>E = Empathy</b>
<p>Hear her out, ask for details and reflect back to her what you hear.</p> <p><i>“What happened next?”</i></p> <p><i>“What did she say?”</i></p>	<p>Try to be understanding of the girl and her feelings.</p> <p><i>“So what I hear you saying is...”</i></p> <p><i>“I’m sure that upset you.”</i></p> <p><i>“You seem frustrated.”</i></p> <p><i>“I understand why you’re unhappy.”</i></p> <p><i>“Your feelings are hurt; mine would be too.”</i></p>	<p>You can tolerate the feelings that she just can’t handle right now on her own. This does not mean that you necessarily agree with her ideas. It just signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation.</p> <p><i>“Try talking to me about it - I’ll listen.”</i></p> <p><i>“I know you’re mad - talking it out helps.”</i></p> <p><i>“I can handle it - say whatever you want to.”</i></p>	<p>Let her know that you can imagine feeling what she is feeling.</p> <p><i>“I’m sure that really hurts.”</i></p> <p><i>“I can imagine how painful this is for you.”</i></p>

### The LUTE Model Exercise

I can’t believe our troop decided to go camping again. Sometimes it makes me mad that all we do is camp. Why can’t we stay in a motel for a change? Camping is so much work; I hate bugs, the latrines, and feeling dirty all weekend. Nobody listens to



Imagine that this girl is in your troop and is angry. Use the LUTE Model to deal with the situation. Remember that the tendency for most advisors/leaders is to try to solve the problem or to try to distract the girl from her feelings or minimize them.

#### Give it a try

How could you apply each letter of the LUTE acronym to deal with this girl’s feelings? What sorts of things might you want to avoid saying and why?

#### Try to avoid these mistakes

- Interrupting the girl as she talks
- Assuming that you know what the problem is
- Judging or belittling her feelings
- Trying to solve her problem for her

In the spaces below each word, write what you might do and say:

<b>L = Listen</b>	<b>U = Understand</b>	<b>T = Tolerance</b>	<b>E = Empathy</b>



## LUTE Model Exercise Sample Answers

<b>Listening</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Tolerating</b>	<b>Empathizing</b>
<p>Let her talk until she winds down.</p> <p>Rephrase what she says by using statements like, “So you’re saying…” and “You seem frustrated (or angry, or whatever emotion she seems to be exhibiting).”</p> <p>Encourage her to correct you if you misunderstand her feelings.</p> <p>Ask open-ended questions until you are sure she has fully expressed her position.</p>	<p>Accept her feelings, perhaps by agreeing that camping isn’t like being at home with inside bathroom facilities.</p> <p>Recognize that her real problem may not be what she thinks it is, and listen for what’s not being said, or what is implied. Is she angrier about not being heard?</p> <p>Don’t try to solve her problem by focusing solely on the camping trip.</p> <p>Instead, ask questions and let her talk until you completely understand why she is upset.</p>	<p>Accept her anger, without taking it personally.</p> <p>Control your own emotional response.</p> <p>Let her blow off steam and calm down.</p> <p>Remember that the situation isn’t about you; it’s about what she is feeling. You are an adult, and you can handle strong emotions. She is still learning that important skill, and it is up to you to help her.</p>	<p>Put yourself in her place, letting her know that it is okay not to like camping, and that you understand that feeling like no one is listening is frustrating.</p> <p>Perhaps you can share with her a similar experience that you had at her age.</p> <p>Once she has fully expressed the situation and the emotion, ask her “what would you like to do about it?” or “What would make you feel better about the situation?”</p>

- Keep your focus on the girl and her needs. Be aware that she may be dealing with problems at home or at school that have nothing to do with the troop or with you, so her feelings may be unrelated to the situation at hand.
- It’s not about you. Your job is to keep your own feelings in check and help her to deal with her feelings. Ground rules to encourage an acceptable level of politeness are fine, but trying to reason with her or helping her to empathize with others will be more successful when she has calmed down.

# Troop and Behavior Management

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Pre-teens and teenagers are facing all new challenges and opportunities. Your role as their troop leader, especially if you have been their leader as Daisies, Brownies and Juniors will need some thought and planning. There are new dynamics and demands on your part and you will have the chance to mold your relationship of leader with these girls into one of an advisor with young ladies.

## Group Dynamics

The process of getting to know each other is one of the first stages that groups experience. It happens in new groups, when new members join a group, and even when a group starts a new goal or project and the girls take on new roles. You may notice that the girls are checking each other out. Their energy level might be high with excitement and a bit of anxiety about what will happen.

**What's an advisor to do?** You can help the girls by:

- Doing some icebreaker or "getting to know you" activities
- Bringing all girls together to create ground rules, expectations and agreements prior to undertaking big projects or trips
- Encouraging girls to expand their small cliques and to get to know and work with others
- Establishing a comfortable and accepting environment where girls can express their expectations and ideas
- Calling for a time-out when problems arise and allowing girls to express themselves and clear the air
- Working with the other adults involved to adopt an "our girls" approach that includes all of the girls involved and consistent messages about helping the large group resolve problems

## Problem Solving

In younger troops, the planning of activities was primarily driven by the National Program Portfolio and the girls generally shared common interests at many levels. As girls get older, their interests and personalities diverge even more from each other, but this can introduce new challenges for planning a troop's year. Consider each of the scenarios in the activity on the following page.

### *It's Okay*

Girls will have various ideas about what they would like to do in the troop. What would you do in each of these scenarios? *\*Remember this is a training exercise. In real life, your planning will always start with girls!*

#### **Scenarios:**

1. A group of eighth graders show no interest in working on Journeys or awards. They do however, want to whitewater raft or ski.

Is this okay? Who decides what the group will do? Who decides how it will be funded? What role can the advisor play in the process?

2. In a troop of 14 girls, five would like to work on the Journeys, three are very motivated to earn badges and most would like to sit and chat.

Is this okay? How can you help make it work for each group of girls?

3. The girls in your troop are mostly 14 years old and have been friends forever. This year a few new girls join the group. The group decides they want to explore their old and new friendships for the next month.

Is this okay? How can you mentor the group? What would you do if they do an activity and the new girls are left out?

4. Your troop has just been matched up with "big sisters" from a local college sorority.

Is this okay? How would you help the girls get everyone acquainted? What could you do to help prepare the college students to get started?

5. You have a Girl Scout Senior troop. Some girls in this group like to write. Others hate it! Some girls like to run. Others hate it! Some girls like to talk. Others want to do! The group comes to you frustrated.

Is this okay? How can you help these girls to work together as a troop?

6. You have a Girl Scout Cadette troop. They are concerned about how they fit in and exploring their new "teenage world".

Is this okay? How can they incorporate the "Three Leadership Keys" into their lives? What resources can you find that will help?

## Differences and Inclusion

Girl Scouts embraces girls of all abilities, backgrounds and heritage with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl – without regard to socioeconomic status, race, physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, language or religion – is an equal and valued member of the group. Make a commitment to inclusion and diversity in your troop. When new girls want to join, invite them with open arms, even if you feel they are different from others in your troop. “Inclusion” is an approach and attitude, rather than a set of guidelines.

If a girl who is differently-abled joins your troop, probably the most important thing you can do is ask the girl or her parent what she needs to have a successful Girl Scout experience. You may need to change a few rules or approach an activity in a more creative way. For example, you might invite a girl to perform an activity after watching others doing it first; ask the girls to come up with their own ideas to modify some activities. Often what counts the most is staying flexible and having a diverse troop is a great learning experience for everyone.

## Learning about Each Other

Another phase that you will notice is the time when the girls discover the things that make them unique. This is when the group sets its rules and boundaries. This is when the girls will agree on the direction they will take and set their group goals. This phase reappears as the girls mature and as they develop new skills and interests or make a major shift in their group plans.

**What’s an advisor to do?** You can help the girls by:

- Setting a positive and accepting tone for group discussions
- Actively listening to the girls and showing respect for the girls’ opinions
- Observing the group interactions, keeping an eye out for trouble spots such as individuals pairing off from the group
- Helping girls agree to disagree and create ways for each to get her own needs met within the group
- Avoiding assumptions that the group will want to continue doing the same activities that they have been doing in the past or making commitments on behalf of the group

It can be challenging to help girls at this age understand the richness of the diversity each of them possesses in their different interests.

The following are some ways to help you get them to understand the beauty of their differences. An additional plus in doing these activities with the girls is you learn about each of their interests, too.

### *Brainstorm*

Encourage girls to share what they all like to do. Provide chart paper so the girls can see the diversity of interests. (Take advantage of any situation to learn more about the individual tastes of the girls.)

### *Website Construction*

Ask girls: “If you were making your own web page, what theme would you have?” “What information about yourself would you include?” (Some girls may already have web pages. Find out and visit; you will learn more about their hopes, dreams, and preferences.)

### ***Facebook and/or Other Internet Sites***

Ask girls: "What information about yourself would you want to share with others on Facebook?"

(Remind the girls of internet safety – see *Volunteer Essentials*.)

### ***Music Preferences***

Ask them: "If we were planning a party what music would you want to play?" (If you don't know anything about their music ask if they would like to do a concert for the advisors.)

### ***Girls' Curiosity***

Take advantage of the girls' curiosity about themselves by using personality assessments. You can find many free, online quizzes, such as an abbreviated version of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp>. (Here is an opportunity to bring in a resource volunteer to work with the girls on interpreting the results.)

### **Promoting Harmony and "Sisterliness"**

Girls this age will often establish cliques within the troop that can lead to exclusion of some girls and hurt feelings. Here are some ways to build 'sisterliness' in your troop:

- ☞ Hold an open discussion on how a girl might feel if everyone else is paired up for an activity and she hasn't been selected and what other girls can do to prevent this from happening.
- ☞ Talk about how Girl Scout principles (such as being a sister to every other Girl Scout) apply to their own troop interactions.
- ☞ One-to-one discussion with individual girls and their parents/guardians (if situations can't be resolved within the troop or between leaders and girls).
- ☞ Rotating patrol members or work group members.
- ☞ Changing buddies frequently on outings or overnights ("Now buddy up with someone new!")
- ☞ Using various methods to group girls for carpools, small group activities, buddies, etc. Choose by using splitter activities, such as alphabetical first names or last names, birth dates, shoe size, drawing straws, etc. so that different girls end up together.
- ☞ Choosing secret sisters or secret pals. Draw names at the beginning of the year. Ask the girls to be a special friend to that person by complimenting her, sitting by her, choosing her as their helper, etc. Have the girls brainstorm other ways to make their Girl Scout sister feel special. Possibly, have a small gift exchange with inexpensive, preferably handmade gifts exchanged on Girl Scout holidays such as Founder's Day (Juliette Low's October 31 birthday) or the Girl Scout birthday on March 12 to reveal secret sisters - or you could extend through the entire year.
- ☞ Specific reinforcement by leaders of desired behavior ("I'm glad to see that Susan and Maria have teamed up today!"; "Shawna, thanks for helping Sam with her bracelet!")
- ☞ Inviting two high school aged Girl Scouts to come and talk to girls about their lasting friendships within GS even though their GS friends may go to different schools or they may not be best friends at school (this is especially effective if the visiting girls have been together since Daisies or Brownies.)

## Building Your Relationship with the Girls

One goal of Girl Scouts is to provide girls with a safe space in which they feel comfortable being themselves. Be sure to recognize and support each girl, promote fairness, build their trust in you and each other, and inspire open communication.

### Characteristics of a Teen Savvy Volunteer (according to girls in grades 6-12)

- ⌘ Encourages girls to be independent
- ⌘ Welcomes all girls in the troop/group
- ⌘ Is skilled at something
- ⌘ Understands the issues that face teens today
- ⌘ Is in shape; can do physical activities
- ⌘ Volunteers to help others
- ⌘ Understands when girls make mistakes
- ⌘ Encourages girls to grow up
- ⌘ Listens to what girls are really saying
- ⌘ Doesn't nag
- ⌘ Doesn't pressure girls (for example, to earn awards)
- ⌘ Acts as an advisor, not a leader
- ⌘ Can step back

### Ways to Become Teen Savvy

- ⌘ Read girls' and young women's magazines
- ⌘ Read a novel geared to girls in grades 6th through 12th
- ⌘ Ask for their advice about surfing the web and check out some of their favorite sites
- ⌘ Ask teen girls about a TV program or movie they like and watch it
- ⌘ Listen to popular teen radio stations
- ⌘ Ask them about music and movies and then spend time watching and listening
- ⌘ Talk to girls in and out of Girl Scouts
- ⌘ Shop in stores popular with teens
- ⌘ Find out what's in your community. Are there programs that target teens? See if your group would be interested in tapping into them.
- ⌘ Girls want to be asked about:
  - a day in their lives
  - how they describe ourselves
  - what they like to do

- the movies/tv/music they like and why
- their hopes and dreams, fears and worries

## Talking to Girls

Girls are looking for a safe environment where they can talk about all sorts of things, one with confidentiality, trust, and respect. How you talk to girls is an important key to developing a group environment that girls want to be a part of.

- **Listen:** Girls want to be heard. Ask them what they think then really listen, give them time to talk.
- **Be honest:** You may need to tell the girls things they don't want to hear (i.e., budget won't cover their activities; you are uncomfortable with a topic). Get their feedback on other alternate activities.
- **Discuss real issues:** Give girls the space they need to discuss issues that concern them (relationships, school, peer pressure, etc.). Bring in subject matter experts if necessary.
- **Show respect:** Don't talk down to them. Girls like it when they are treated as equal partners.
- **Encourage girls to advocate for themselves:** Help them develop assertiveness skills.
- **Offer options:** Talk to them about what they want and be flexible in meeting their needs. Ask them about the balance they want between doing and talking, how often they want to meet.
- **Think about your feelings:** Dress and talk like yourself, not like the girls. Explore your feelings about volunteering with teens. Don't **pretend** to be teen savvy. Explore their world.
- **Ask the girls:** Let them know you don't know everything.

## Self-Assessment for Advisors

Think about and respond to each of the following questions. Add any other thoughts you have about how you deal with life events.

- Can you listen to what teens are saying without interjecting your own opinions and values?
- Could you help a girl come to a decision based on her values even though they were not your own?
- Could you be part of a discussion with girls in which they were talking about things happening among their peers that shocked you, without over-reacting?
- Could you have empathy with a girl experiencing something that you had never experienced?
- Could you admit in a group of teenage girls some mistakes you made when you were their age and explain how you feel about it?
- Are you having personal problems in your own home at the present time that impact on how you relate to teens?
- Can you accept appearing to be vulnerable with a group of teenage girls?
- What do you think will be most challenging for you as a teen advisor?

## How do I deal with things like Facebook or Twitter?

Facebook, Twitter, email and other online resources are a great way for girls to connect with others and with you. Be sure you keep in mind that if you connect with the girls in your troop on your personal Facebook page or Twitter account you must continue to follow the same guidelines of behavior that exist in your regular troop meetings. It is advisable to seek out ways to connect with the girls that is most secure and limits their access to your personal information, such as forming a group on Facebook instead of “friending” each of the girls or creating a private Yahoo! Group that limits access to only those you invite to join.

To minimize distractions during your meetings and on activities, agree to turn off electronics at specified times and have internet/text breaks if necessary.

Before girls go online, check out <http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/internet-safety/>, a GSUSA website that deals with web safety. There is also a computer safety activity checkpoint you will want to review.

## Managing Changes in the Behavior of Early Adolescents

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical, cognitive, social, and emotional change. Girls will exhibit behaviors that can be challenging and bewildering not only to you, their families, and their friends, but even to the girls themselves. These changes do not necessarily constitute behavior problems; very often they are a normal part of development. Being aware of these changes can make your troop run more smoothly and prevent unnecessary power struggles.

- ☞ Adolescents are often very authoritarian. As they are able to consider ideals like justice and broad social issues, they begin to understand that there is such a thing as a social contract, and that rules and laws are necessary for the greater social good. However, they are just learning to see the gray areas between right and wrong.
- ☞ When adolescents begin to show signs of physical growth, adults tend to expect both mature social and emotional behavior, and the rebelliousness and emotional unpredictability that our society has come to associate with adolescence.
- ☞ Although news media reports, public opinion, and popular songs, movies, and books give the impression that adolescence is a period of stress and rebellion, research shows that the social and emotional problems associated with adolescence have been overemphasized, and are misleading.
- ☞ In deciding whether a young person needs professional help, it is critical for adults to distinguish between behavior that is annoying (loud music, messy rooms) and behavior that is disturbed and harmful (substance abuse, depression).
- ☞ It is through the peer group that young people begin to learn how to develop and maintain close, supportive relationships with others their own age. Friendships are labs for learning appropriate adolescent and adult behavior.
- ☞ Adults who work with young people can have an influence on peer groups through the expectations they set, the relationships they build, and the options they provide for adolescent peer groups to function in a constructive, healthy way.



## Terrific Tips and Techniques for Effective Behavior Management

The key to behavior management is prevention. If we understand the changes that girls face as they go through adolescence, and if we try to be preventive in our reactions to their behaviors, we will be successful in leading Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors.

**It is not normal for a child to behave all of the time.**

There is positive discipline and negative discipline. Positive discipline is a productive form of correction that supports the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, while negative discipline undermines a girl's sense of security and well-being. The goal of discipline in a Girl Scout group is to help the advisor and the girls to manage behavior in a way that facilitates the accomplishment of the goals of the group and the goals of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Approaching behavioral problems with an understanding of positive discipline and negative discipline will help you make better decisions and will help you to work with the girls, rather than against them.

In positive discipline...	In negative discipline...
The outlook is <i>for</i> the girl: to help her to learn to control herself.	The outlook is <i>to</i> the girl: an eye for an eye.
The purpose is the correction, maturity, and growth of the girl.	The purpose is inflicting a penalty for offenses committed.
The focus is to the future and correction of behavior.	The focus is on past misdeeds.
The attitude is love and concern.	The attitude is hostility and frustration.
The resulting emotion for the girl is a sense of security.	The resulting emotions for the girl are fear and guilt.

There are many reasons why a girl misbehaves. Remember that she brings a lot with her to group meetings and Girl Scout activities (family situation, worries about school, feelings and emotions, etc.).

### Preventing Problem Behaviors

The following are six tips that will help to prevent problem behaviors in girls.

**1. Be prepared.**

**2. Reinforce positive behavior.** Praise your girls for a job well done.

**3. Establish guidelines/ground rules.**

- Involve the girls. When they make the rules, they're much less likely to break them. If they feel ownership of the rules, they'll even take it upon themselves to enforce the rules with one another, so you'll spend less time serving as troop disciplinarian.
- Communicate consequences for breaking the ground rules. Follow through.
- Follow the rules yourself.
- Be fair.

**4. Be a role model.**

**5. Be patient.** If kids were perfect, they would not need us.

**6. Be consistent.** It's important for girls to know what to expect.

## Managing Troop Conflict

Sometimes there are periods when there is a lot of conflict. The danger is that the girls can get stuck here and never move on. It is a time when the girls are struggling with power and leadership creating a lot of tension in the group. It is a time when girls start to drop out because their needs are not being met.

**What's an advisor to do?** You can help the girls by:

- Taking time to step back and make some objective observations
- Confronting the conflict in a direct way to ease some of the problems
- Focusing on the real issues and preventing the group's frustration landing on one girl as a scapegoat
- Helping the group to work together to solve the problems
- Realizing that the group may focus their anger or hurt feelings at you
- Doing a variety of problem-solving activities or games to lessen the tension
- Demonstrating your enthusiasm and encouragement for girls to "expand their wings" and pursue new interests outside the group that they can report back to the group on
- Encouraging girls to be flexible about what it means to belong to the group as they grow
- Resolving to remain a neutral adult

## Help Girls Develop Healthy Relationships

Adolescent girls often struggle with the balance of learning to assert themselves as individuals and still "fitting in" with friends. As they learn to balance these interests, risk-taking behavior is common, but research shows us that these same girls desire good role models and constructive relationships, with adult and young adult women.

As a Girl Scout Cadette/Senior/Ambassador leader, you can help girls learn to make responsible decisions, and establish healthy relationships. Consider the connection to the council goals as you read about helping girls to develop the following skills.

There are five areas that will be presented in the next few pages to help girls establish healthy relationships.

They are:

1. Establish Healthy Boundaries
2. Learn Assertiveness Skills
3. Develop Listening Skills
4. Learn Negotiation Skills
5. Develop Group Smarts

### 1. Establish Healthy Boundaries

A boundary is a limit that defines us as separate from others. Healthy boundaries help girls to:

- Choose relationships that they want to be in their lives, as well as those they do not want in their lives.
- Bring order to their lives.
- Define limits and the extent of how far others can go, and not go, in their relationship with them.

## 2. Learn Assertiveness Skills

An assertive response can be one in which a girl says what she wants, or what she means, in a way that doesn't attack or insult another person. The following will help you teach girls to assert themselves in a positive way:

A	S	S	E	R	T
Attention	Specific Behaviors	Stand Firm	Effects on Me	Response	Time
Teach girls to pay attention to their reactions and responses to others. Pay attention to what they feel, what they like, what they dislike, what they don't want.	Teach girls to give feedback. When they do, encourage them to address factual specific behaviors and concerns not generalities.	Teach girls to respectfully stand their ground. This may mean that they must repeatedly represent their concerns. Help them learn to remember their key points so that they may have the confidence to stand firm.	Teach girls to communicate to the person what kind of effect their behavior has on them. For example, "I get angry when you..."	Help girls learn how to describe the type of behavior or circumstance that would be more acceptable to them: "Instead of calling me names, I'd rather that you tell me what I did to make you angry."	Teach girls to address concerns as soon as possible. Don't let too much time pass between conflict and resolution.

## 3. Develop Listening Skills

Help girls to develop good listening skills by modeling good listening skills with them. Here are a few tips for becoming a good listener:

- When a girl is talking to you, you should generally stop other tasks and look at her. (Though be sensitive to her needs: looking at her when discussing a subject that embarrasses her might shut her down.) Be quiet and let her talk while you listen. Don't immediately jump in with a response or solution. Let her say everything she needs to say, and then respond.
- Ask her questions to learn more about what happened and how she feels about it. Assure her of your support. For example, you may ask, "How did you feel when ...?"
- Repeat back in her own words what you think she is saying and what you think she feels. Think of yourself like a mirror that reflects her thoughts and feelings. For example, you might say, "You sound disappointed that you were cut from the soccer team."

Most of the time she will come to solutions on her own. If not, ask, "Would you like some help in coming up with ideas to...?" or "Would you like to know what I think...?"

## 4. Learn Negotiation Skills

It is important to teach members of your troop/group to negotiate with others. The point is not for the girl to get her way all of the time, but for her to learn how to state what she wants, listen to what others want, and find creative solutions that are acceptable to the group. The girls can learn to define the problem. Help them understand the importance of viewing the conflict from each side. Teach the girls to reflect back on the root concerns of each party, and to identify the needs of everyone involved.

## 5. Develop Group Smarts

How girls interact as a group greatly affects each individual girl's self-esteem. Help girls learn "group smarts" so they become a supportive and positive group.

- Encourage girls to trust their feelings about their peers, and to take stock of why they feel the way they do. (Was that girl too bossy, critical, etc.?)
- Teach girls that after trying different ways to improve relationships (assertiveness, listening, etc.), it is okay to walk away from any friendships that are not healthy or beneficial.
- Remind girls that sometimes groups will instinctively reject new entities. Teach them to look beyond this instinct when dealing with new members, and to be patient if they are the new kid on the block.

## When Necessary, Mediate

As a mediator you will guide the girls through the steps to finding a solution to the conflict. One great thing about this method is that it encourages the girls to solve their own problems. It also gives them ownership of the solution and makes them more likely to follow through and work to prevent the same conflict in the future.

Here are the five simple steps in being a mediator with your girls:

### 1. Mediator opens session explaining process and rules

- Be willing to work to solve the problem
- Agree to listen without interrupting
- Agree to show respect for one another

### 2. All parties tell their side of the story

- Mediators practice "active listening"
- All those involved tell their side of the story
- Mediators paraphrase to ensure understanding

### 3. Brainstorming Solutions

- All solutions presented - no evaluation or judgment during brainstorming

### 4. Choosing Solutions

- Solution should work for both sides

### 5. Closing the Mediation

- Summarize the agreement
- Write out the agreement and both sides sign

If you use this model enough, the girls may begin to work through the steps on their own.

Adapted from *Solutions through Peer Mediation* By Leah Davies, M.Ed.

<http://www.kellybear.com/TeacherArticles/TeacherTip13.html>

## Group Decision-Making and Clique Management

Getting a group of Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and/or Ambassadors to agree can be difficult. At this age, cliques can form and can influence girls' choices in ways that aren't always positive. Popularity becomes more important to girls than ever before, and decisions can be made for the wrong reasons. How can an advisor/leader help the girls in the troop to make good decisions without becoming the clique police?

- ❖ **Help girls to recognize and correct their own unkind behavior.** Encourage girls to follow the Promise and the Law, which should help them to be kind and considerate of one another. To redirect negative behavior, try asking them privately if they are living up to the Promise rather than telling them what they're doing wrong. Suggest that they try imagining how they would feel if they were the one being hurt. Not only can this tactic help improve hurtful behavior, but it can also teach empathy, an important ability for girls to master.
- ❖ **Sit in a circle.** It seems simple, but sitting in a circle encourages fairness and discourages sarcastic comments, since everyone can see one another face to face.
- ❖ **Give girls a chance to talk to each other.** Advisors frequently complain that they can't get anything done at meetings because the girls just want to socialize, but building social skills is often just as important for girls this age as exploring career options, or serving the community. If you allow some time at meetings for the girls to "hang out," they have a chance to learn about one another, disband cliques, and become friends. You can be a catalyst in starting such interactions. If the social discussions are slow in forming, you can try asking a question to generate energy: "What's your favorite movie and why?" "Who is your hero and why?" "What three things would you want to have with you on a deserted island?" Such questions can get the girls talking about things they would otherwise never discuss, and may open doors to friendships.
- ❖ **Give everyone a job.** Giving every member of the group a responsibility helps to build teamwork. Not everyone may have the skills needed to be a great president, but being in charge of troop education, or serving as troop historian, may bolster a girl's self-confidence and help her to fit in with the other girls. Rotating jobs can help to prevent a hierarchy from forming. Give everyone a chance to run a meeting. If consistency is required for a position (for treasurer, for example), make sure that all the girls understand what is required of the person filling that position, so that anyone in the group could do the job if they had to. Try rotating positions that require consistency every semester or every year, so that you maintain stability, but also give other girls a chance to try that position.
- ❖ **Try varied group discussion techniques.**
  - **Co-leaders in Group Discussions** – use a team of two or more girls to lead a discussion (they will need guidance to prepare questions and discuss group dynamics).
  - **Huddle Groups or Buzz Sessions** – have a smaller group discuss the issue and report it to the larger group.
  - **Leadership Team** – use a group of four girls to conduct a discussion with the following responsibilities: discussion leader, process observer, recorder, and resource person.
  - **Listening Teams** – use two – four girls to listen, evaluate, and then pose questions to the girls who are presenting the ideas or presentation.

- **Role Playing** – use a girl to act out a situation in order to promote additional insights or emotions.
  - **Brainstorming** – use free expression for creative thinking without the influence of judicial reasoning.
  - **Dyads** – use pairs of girls to interview each other or clarify their ideas.
  - **Round Robin Sharing** – each girl in turn shares her ideas, opinions, suggestions, and concerns in response to the question or topic. (Give girls advance notice on the topic to allow introverted girls to compile a response before being asked to speak publicly.)
- ❖ **When making decisions, be sure that a decision is really required.** Why ask the girls to choose between two options if they can do both? Naturally, the group’s resources are limited, but sometimes it makes more sense to do more rather than less. Perhaps this strategy will require developing more money-earning activities and a two- or three-year group plan, but such long term planning is an excellent learning experience for the girls. As an added benefit, the troop will probably stay together longer, since the girls will be looking forward to upcoming activities. Just be sure to revisit the plan regularly. What sounded good to them during their first year of Girl Scout Cadettes might no longer appeal to the same girls by the time they are Girl Scout Seniors or Ambassadors.
- ❖ **Require a “pros and cons” session before troop decisions are made.** In this session, girls must list the positive and negative aspects of a possible choice, and do this for each option under consideration. Listing the pros and cons on a chalkboard or large piece of paper so that everyone can see them will help to make the best choices clear to the girls without the clouding factors of personalities and cliques.
- ❖ **Be sure that democracy doesn’t become a battle of wills.** Be aware that a straight “one girl, one vote” structure is not always the best way to make decisions at this age. It can encourage the formation of factions, and the process of lobbying for support can be divisive for a troop. The “losing” girls might be angry and resentful, particularly if the vote is close. These can be teachable moments for inclusion, negotiation, being gracious in competition, and in compromise. Consider using consensus votes or require some decisions to be unanimous.

## One Last Word

Don't worry! Every once in a while you *will* notice that the girls are working well together as a group. This is the time for you to observe and enjoy, realizing that this is not a permanent phase and that as new projects develop, new girls join the group and individual girls continue to grow and develop the group may experience new problems. Remember to enjoy the moments when the group members are working well together, share your observations of the girls’ positive behaviors and growth and recognize that the entire group development process is a normal part of working with girls in grades 6 - 12.

## **Your Relationship with Parents**

Hold a parent meeting at the beginning of the year and be very clear about your expectations. Many troop leaders have parents sign a parent contract stating they will offer help in some other way or only attend meetings if they are specifically helping out in some way. There are suggestions for your parent meeting in GSEOK Troop Leadership Training including a parent handbook and a sample parent meeting agenda.

### **Working with Over-Involved Parents**

The best way to educate these parents is at the beginning of the year with parent contracts. Explain that Girl Scouting is about creating leaders and that girls should be making the decisions as much as possible. You may also encourage parents to take training so they can help in a constructive way. If the problem arises later in the year, talk to parents again, on an individual basis as needed. Feel empowered to be firm and ask parents to leave a troop meeting if they are detracting instead of contributing. Talk to your service unit manager and/or your mentor if you need further help.

### **Working with Under-Involved Parents**

The best way to engage these parents is at the beginning of the year with parent contracts. Survey parents to find out what resources or knowledge they can provide. Be sure to ask people for specific things (coordinating transportation for a trip, helping with a particular program or serving as a first aider on a camping trip). If the problem arises later in the year, talk to parents again, on an individual basis as needed, to remind them that you need their support to keep the troop going. Keep in mind that some parents cannot or should not be expected to volunteer with the troop and these may be parents of girls who need Girl Scouting the most. Give everyone opportunities, but don't expect every parent to be equally involved.

### **Fielding Questions or Topics from Parents That I Haven't Learned Yet**

Don't be afraid to say you don't know! Being a Girl Scout volunteer is a continual learning process. Let the parents know you will try to find the answer to their question; Use it as an opportunity to get your parents involved!

## Sensitive Issues

In such a safe and supportive environment, girls may feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues such as human sexuality, dating, eating disorders or drug and alcohol abuse. Let parents know that you will ask parent permission for any planned activities around sensitive issues by using the parent permission form (#505F), but they should be aware that these conversations may occur spontaneously among the girls.

Part of handling situations like this well is anticipating them ahead of time. When this happens, remember that listening is important. If girls want more information, your role is to provide information in a responsible manner, not giving opinions. Check out the *Sensitive Issues Guidelines* in *Volunteer Essentials* for more information.

## Where Do I Stand?

Take a few minutes and think of why you agree or disagree with the statements below. Be aware that these are issues that girls are dealing with today.

Put an A in front of each statement you agree with and a D in front of each statement you disagree with.

- \_\_\_ 15-year-olds having an 11 o'clock curfew?
- \_\_\_ Teens dating someone who is three years older?
- \_\_\_ 14-year-old girls and boys falling asleep while watching videos and spending the night?
- \_\_\_ 11-year-olds having unsupervised internet access?
- \_\_\_ 13-year-olds "showing their flesh" in the latest fashion tops?
- \_\_\_ 16-year-olds with body piercing and tattoos?

If some of your TEEN girls started discussing these subjects how would you react?

## Sensitive Issues Activity

Here are a few more in-depth scenarios that deal with sensitive issues. How would you handle these situations? What resources could you rely on to help you with these situations?

- ⌘ Your Cadettes are obsessed with boys. While they are working in small groups, you hear one group go off on a tangent and start talking about who they like, who their boyfriend is, etc. Carrie asks Susan who her boyfriend is and she says she does not have one and that she does not really like anyone right now – Carrie replies: "What are you, gay?"  
What do you do?
- ⌘ Your Seniors are very focused on their physical appearance. It seems as if they are all on diets and constantly talk about how fat or thin people are. You notice that Laura is especially focused on her weight. She has always been very athletic and fit, but you have noticed that she has lost weight over the last three months. She still calls herself fat and reads the labels before eating anything, even though she weighs less than all of the other girls in her troop.  
What do you do?



⌘ A few of the girls in your Ambassador troop have had the same boyfriend for a few months. On your camping trip you overhear some of the girls talking about their boyfriends and how Tricia's boyfriend is pressuring her to have sex with him. She says that she is considering it and does not know what to do. The other girls are giving her different opinions that range from telling her to wait, to go ahead and have sex with him if she loves him, and to make sure that she uses birth control.

What do you do?

⌘ Lisa, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader, comes to you and asks if she can talk to you after the meeting. She tells you that she is worried about Maureen, a 12<sup>th</sup> grader in your troop. She tells you that the last three Saturday nights, Lisa and Maureen have gone to parties where alcohol is present. Lisa says that she did not drink, but that Maureen did on all three occasions. She said that two weeks ago Maureen had a lot to drink and threw up after the party. This week, Maureen drank just as much, and got mad at Lisa when she tried to get Maureen to stop drinking. Maureen told Lisa that she could take care of herself and did not need her help, and has not spoken to her since. Lisa is afraid that something bad is going to happen to Maureen as a result of her drinking.

What do you do?

## When to Involve Others

In a supportive environment, girls may feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues, either as a group or individually with an advisor. There may be situations where the advisor must take action to protect the safety of a child. These include, but are not limited to:

- Bullying
- Child abuse
- Dating
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders
- Human sexuality
- Neglect
- Suicide

## When to Obtain Help

Though some behaviors are a normal part of growing up, others are more serious and call for more serious action. You don't have to handle every problem behavior by yourself. The next few pages of this packet will outline steps for you to follow when you feel that you need help in dealing with girls. Guidelines may also be found in the *Creating a Safe Space* section of your *Volunteer Essentials*.

You need to seek additional help when your efforts to handle a problem situation have been unsuccessful, when you don't know how to handle a situation, or when an emergency or potentially serious situation arises.

Get help as early as you identify that you can use it. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that you should be able to handle everything yourself. For less serious problems, use your co-leaders/advisors as support and offer your support to them. When a problem is more serious, make sure to involve the parents and/or the authorities and follow established notification procedures.

Your first responsibility is always to protect the health and welfare of the girls in your troop. You must act upon any potential threat to their safety (individually or as a group) immediately.

Understand that abuse can take many forms. Physical abuse is bodily injury to the child. Neglect involves the failure to adequately provide the essentials of life - food, clothing, shelter, care, and supervision. Sexual abuse is the exploitation of a child for the gratification of an adult. Emotional maltreatment often involves emotional neglect and the failure to provide the love, care, support, and guidance that are necessary for healthy development.

## Where to Go for Help

Where you go for help depends on what type of issues you are addressing. For input on handling garden-variety problems, you can go to your co-leader/advisor, the girls' parents, or other service unit volunteers. Your response depends on the level of seriousness of the situation. Below are some sample situations, and the type of responses that might be chosen. This list is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to indicate the level of response needed for each type of situation.

Behavioral Problems		Crisis Situations	
<u>Normal Adjustment Problems</u> (Problem-solving with co-leader/advisor and/or parents)	<u>Problem Behaviors</u> (Discuss with parents)	<u>Immediate Parental Notification Required</u>	<u>Immediate Notification of Authorities and Parents</u>
Cliques	Apathy/depression	Suicidal threats	Neglect
Disregard for the group rules/norms	Suspected behavioral or learning disability	Knowledge of serious illness or injury	Suspected abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional)
Disruptive behavior	Abrupt changes in behavior	Suspected anorexia or other eating disorder	Possession of weapons
Very shy/withdrawn	Aggressive behavior	Knowledge of high risk, non-troop behavior (drug use, sexual activity)	Violent behavior or serious threats of violence

Remember: If you are ever in doubt about what you should do, you may always contact your local Children's Services agency, or your council representative to discuss the situation. Review the guidelines for reporting abuse and neglect from GSEOK Troop Leadership Training. Asking a question does not necessarily constitute a report.

## Response Options to Behavioral Issues

### Problem Solving with the Girl

- A. If you believe that there may be an underlying issue, find a private time to let the girl know that you are available to listen, if she wants to talk. You might use a phrase like, "I've noticed that you seem \_\_\_\_\_. How are you doing? Is something bothering you?" **Never promise confidentiality**, as you may be required to report the problem.
- B. If the girl discloses an issue that falls into an area in which her parents or the authorities must be notified, let her know that you have to tell her parents/the authorities, to make sure that she will be okay. You may ask her how she would like to be involved in notifying her parents, if appropriate for her situation, age, etc.

### Problem-Solving with Co-Leader/Advisor(s) or Other Volunteer Staff

- A. Consult this group for assistance and ideas on developing a positive environment and managing normal behavioral problems. Do not discuss serious problems with a girl with this group if doing so could compromise any reasonable confidentiality available to the girl.
- B. Maintain confidentiality about the identity of the girl to the greatest degree possible. The focus of the discussion should be on creative ways of re-directing specific behaviors and not on the individual girl.

### Parental Notification and Problem Solving

- A. Consult with parents or guardians for assistance, ideas, and additional information that may help you to manage normal adjustment problems. Use phrases like, "I am concerned that (girl's name) seems to have difficulty with \_\_\_\_\_. I want to make sure that she can fully participate in all troop activities. Do you have any suggestions for me?"
- B. If the situation is more serious, contact the parents or guardians right away. Let them know that you are concerned about their daughter and you would like to discuss the situation with them as soon as possible.
- C. If you are simultaneously contacting the authorities (e.g. the police or the Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Abuse Hotline), let the parents or guardians know who has been contacted.
- D. If you have reason to suspect that the parents or guardians could be the cause of the crisis situation, (i.e. parental abuse or neglect), you are only required to notify the appropriate authorities, and NOT the parent. Do not discuss such a situation with anyone-not even your co-leader/advisor. This protects your confidentiality as well as that of the child and her parents or guardians.

## Notification of the Authorities

- A. The DHS Child Abuse Hotline or the police must be notified if you have reason to believe that the child's life is in danger, or the child is endangering the lives of others.
- B. Please note: You are required to immediately report any suspicion or disclosure of abuse or neglect of any child less than 18 years of age. Do not try to investigate or sort out the facts. Even if you are uncertain, report the situation, and allow the Children's Services agency to determine the appropriate course of action. Advisors have neither the responsibility nor the expertise necessary for investigating such a situation. Review the guidelines for reporting suspected abuse from your GSEOK Troop Leadership Training and *Volunteer Essentials*.
- C. If you notify the authorities, do not discuss the situation with anyone - not even your co-leader/advisor. Again, this protects your confidentiality as well as that of the child and her parents or guardians.

## Problem-Solving and Notification of Girl Scout Paid Staff

- A. If you are uncertain about how to handle a situation, you can always contact Customer Care at the Tulsa Girl Scout Service Center Headquarters for issues related to normal adjustment problems, or to determine the appropriate person/agency to contact for more serious problems.
- B. Notify the council staff any time the authorities are notified.

# Planning Meetings

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## Planning the Girl Scout Year

### Start with a Troop Calendar

Try using one or more large pieces of chart paper. This belongs to the troop, and helps the girls plan. Use the space at the top to hold ideas of the things that they need to do and the things that they would like to do.

### Make note of important dates during the year

Be sure to include both secular and religious holidays that represent all members of your troop. Incorporate school dates, breaks and events that could conflict with activities.

### Add in Important Girl Scout Dates

- **The Girl Scout membership year** runs from October 1 – September 30.
- **Fall Product Program:** Held in October and November, the exact dates of the sale changes from year to year. Be sure to get the current dates from your service unit manager.
- **Founder’s Day:** October 31 is Juliette Low’s birthday (our founder). Girl Scout troops can celebrate this day with a birthday celebration or service project.
- **Cookie Program:** Generally held in January through March, the exact dates of the sale changes from year to year. Be sure to get the current dates from your service unit manager.
- **Thinking Day:** February 22 is the shared birthday of both Lord and Lady Baden-Powell. It is the day when we think about Girl Guides and Girl Scouts all over the world. Many service units have Thinking Day celebrations, and it’s always a memorable event for girls to take part in, or your troop could have a special celebration by playing games from other countries, tasting international foods, etc. or doing activities to learn about the culture of one specific country. Some troops wait until Thinking Day to give girls their World Trefoil Pin in a special ceremony, although this pin can also be given at Investiture.
- **Girl Scout Birthday:** Girl Scouting was started on March 12, 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low. Each year we celebrate the Girl Scout birthday by having a birthday celebration or doing a special service project. The week in which March 12 falls is Girl Scout Week and traditionally each day has special activities. Check with your service unit volunteers or on the internet for more information.
- **Girl Scout Week:** Week of March 12 (Girl Scout Sunday to Girl Scout Sabbath)
- **Girl Scout Leader’s Day:** April 22
- **Volunteer Appreciation Week:** A week in April

### Add in Important Girl Scout Events

#### Investiture

This is the ceremony where members are formally welcomed into Girl Scouting. There are three basic parts of any investiture ceremony. 1) Girls make the Girl Scout Promise. 2) Girls are formally welcomed into Girl Scouting. 3) Girls receive their membership pins.

## Rededication

This is the ceremony where members celebrate returning to Girl Scouting. It is often combined with an investiture ceremony.

## Court of Awards Ceremony

These are a special event when girls are given the awards, patches, recognitions and badges they have earned. It may be a separate ceremony or combined with another, or even comprise the last few minutes of a regular troop meeting.

## Bridging Ceremony

Bridging ceremonies commemorate when a girl moves from one grade level to the next in Girl Scouting. Girls may earn the bridging patch (requirements found in the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*). The steps required for the bridging patch help acquaint girls with the next older program. Whether or not the girls earn the patch, they bridge, and should plan a ceremony.

## Plan Upcoming Activities

Look at the calendar as a group; and with the girls decide what your troop will do this year and where things go.

## Girls Select Activities

When the girls suggest activities for the fall or the spring put them up in the 'ideas' area. Then, look at the activities and the calendar and schedule things in. No room for some things? That's okay. Leave them up in the 'ideas' area. Maybe they will need some ideas later. Review the Program Guide and online calendar for any council activities that the girls want to attend.

### *What if the girls in my troop want to do different things?*

Let them follow their own interests. This is the best way to keep girls motivated. They can work in smaller groups or individually and report back to the whole group periodically. You can bring in someone to help a girl or group of girls with a particular interest if you find different activities difficult to manage.

### *How do I help my girls make informed decisions?*

Provide them with options and encourage them to do research. Let them know that it is okay to fail so that they are not afraid to try new things. After they have tried something new, be sure to evaluate or debrief. This reflection process is an important part of learning and will help with their future decisions.

### *What if my girls don't want to do something (encampment, Gold Award, etc.)?*

Remember that teen girls need to make their own decisions. Be sure you don't volunteer them for something without their input. If they are informed and make a choice, you should respect that choice.

## Next Step

A few months later, maybe before winter break, review the calendar – how does it look? Do they want to add anything? Change anything? The calendar is FLEXIBLE, and the GIRLS decide what they do and when.

## Dealing with Girls Who Have Busy Schedules/Are Overcommitted

First, lower your expectations. They don't need to do everything. Encourage girls who missed earning an award at a meeting to earn it at home by doing the same or a similar activity. Try to plan dates for major events (field trips and ceremonies) with parents to ensure maximum participation. Remember Girl Scouting is also an individual unique experience for each girl and a girl who still wants to be a part of a troop, even though she can't be there as often as she used to be, should be welcomed.

## When Running the Meetings...It's All about Flexibility

### 1. Go with the flow.

- Expecting a Girl Scout Cadette/Senior/Ambassador group to meet weekly for an hour is usually unrealistic, given girls' schedules and opportunities.
- Meeting with girls once a month is not only acceptable, it may be the only way to get all the girls together.
- Be open to possibilities that make meetings feasible for everyone.
- Priorities shift as girls get older. Girls who choose a babysitting job or a sports tournament over a Girl Scout activity are not necessarily telling you that the troop is not important to them. Girls are learning to prioritize among several options during their adolescent years. Be accepting and positive when they are unable to attend a troop event. They'll be back.
- Have a meeting plan and agenda.
- Allow girls time to socialize.
- Have an opening, a symbolic gesture that the meeting has started.
- Help the girls conduct and record the business of the meeting.
- Have a meeting closing; again, a symbolic gesture that the meeting is over.

### 2. Get the word out.

- Be sure that girls and parents know when and where your meetings will be held.
- Keep the lines of communication moving between meetings. Reminder cards, email, text messages, newsletters, or a phone chain are all effective ways to communicate with girls and their families. Try using a social networking site, such as Facebook, to set up a private group where your girls can communicate with each other.

### 3. Be aware.

- Get copies of schedules from your girls' schools and plan around the girls' sports events, exam schedules, etc. Try to attend some of their games and/or performances. The girls will appreciate your involvement, and anything that helps a girl to grow is supported by Girl Scouts.
- Know which of your girls have extracurricular activities, jobs, etc. Plan around those calendars, too.
- Talk with girls' parents and find out their plans for family vacations, church meetings, etc. that the girls might forget to mention.

### 4. Be pro-active.

- Plan your troop activities well in advance. Your girls and their families will know what's happening and can make plans accordingly.
- Get your troop reservations in early for scheduled events. You increase the likelihood of the girls being able to participate, and girls have time to put them on their calendars and work other schedules into troop activities.

## Providing a Well-Rounded Experience

The P.A.C.E. award (#274F) is a planning tool, along with the appropriate *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma websites and other age-appropriate program materials, designed to insure all girls are achieving or exceeding program and activity goals that will provide for a well-balanced, exciting and quality experience. Troops of all program levels (Daisy through Ambassador) may earn this patch. Troops must complete every requirement to qualify as a P.A.C.E. troop. Be sure to review this award with the girls early in the year so you can incorporate all of the requirements on your calendar.

## Involve girls in using their Journey books and other resources to complete activities about themselves, others, safety and skill.

- Include service projects
- Plan field trips that enhance program activities
- Help the girls plan bridging activities
- Hold inter-troop activities, both with older girls and with younger girls
- Participate in service unit activities
- Include some activities at a council camp
- Participate in council activities – see latest Program Guide or check out the online Program calendar
- Participate in a summer activity

## Going Beyond the Meeting

Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors enjoy their regular troop meetings, but they like to plan and look forward to field trips and opportunities to go 'Beyond the Meeting'. **Before you take your girls on an outing you will need to complete the Beyond the Meeting Training.** That session will cover how to get your girls involved in the planning process as well as what forms and policies you will need for your particular activity.

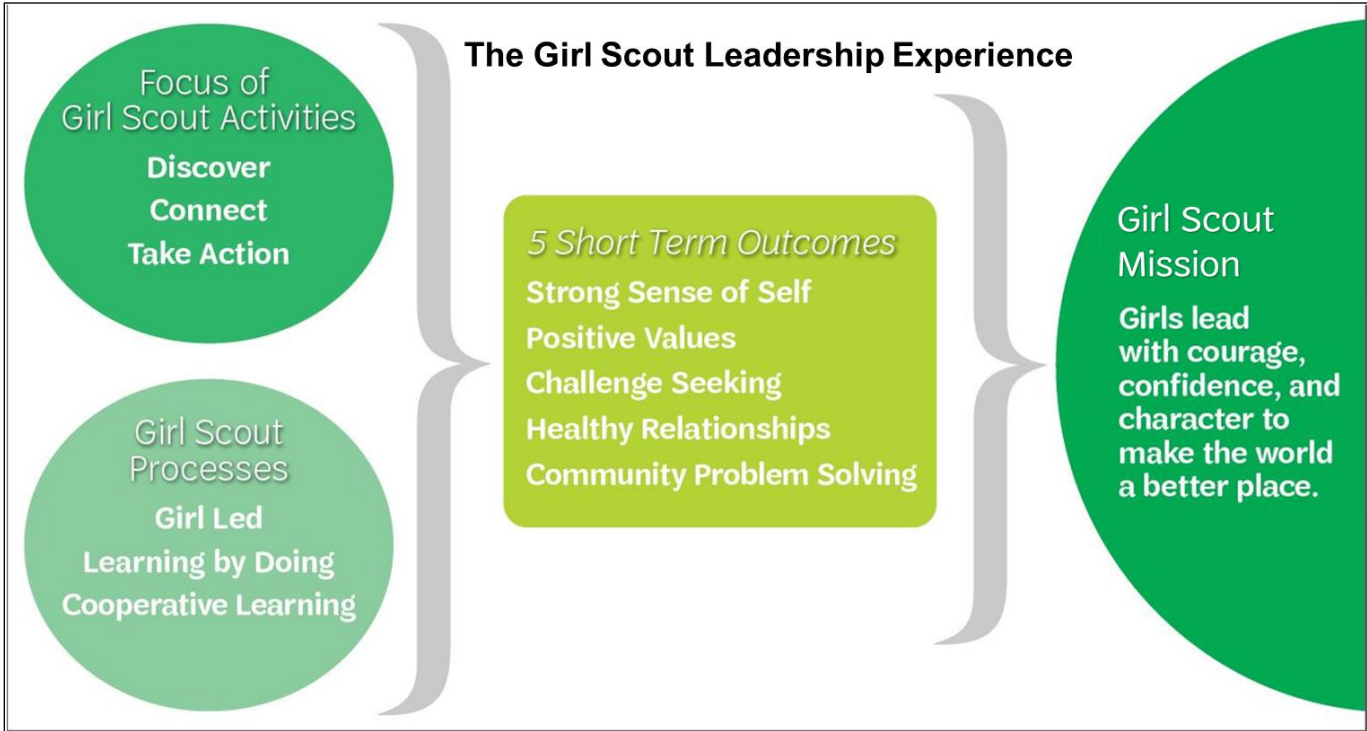
Although your girls may be older, if your girls have not taken trips/gone camping before, you will want to start out slowly, exploring the outdoors, holding a cookout, and eventually having a sleepover. Once your girls are comfortable with the outdoors and/or overnights, feel free to go camping or take longer trips. Just remember that you want to progress at an appropriate pace, giving them things to look forward to as they get more experienced.



# Girl Planning

## The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

During your time as a volunteer, you will play an important role in building girl leaders by guiding girls through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). The GSLE is the foundation of all Girl Scout program activities, describing *what* girls do in Girl Scouts, *how* they do it, and how they will *benefit* from their participation.



Through our national curriculum, girls learn about themselves and their values, and stretch to seek and meet challenges beyond what they might in other settings. They also learn to connect with friends, family, and community to create positive relationships and band together on issues of importance to them. Girls are challenged to look and think critically at the world around them and consider how they can best address significant problems they are passionate about solving. When girls participate in the GSLE, they experience 5 measurable leadership benefits or “outcomes” – ultimately resulting in Girl Scouting achieving its mission. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, as Girl Scouts they are part of a powerful, national experience.

## The Planning Process

A girl and an adult are in partnership when they work together to complete a task, resolving issues, or plan an activity. There are three processes that should be considered when planning. Under each, give an example of how you might use that in your troop meeting:

**Girl Led** – This is just what it sounds like – girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how, and why of their activities. They lead the planning and decision-making as much as possible as they prepare to become active participants in their local and global communities.

**Learning by Doing** – A hands-on learning process that engages girls in continuous cycles of action and reflection that result in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills. As they participate in meaningful activities and then reflect on them, girls get to explore their own questions, discover answers, gain new skills, and share ideas and observations with others.

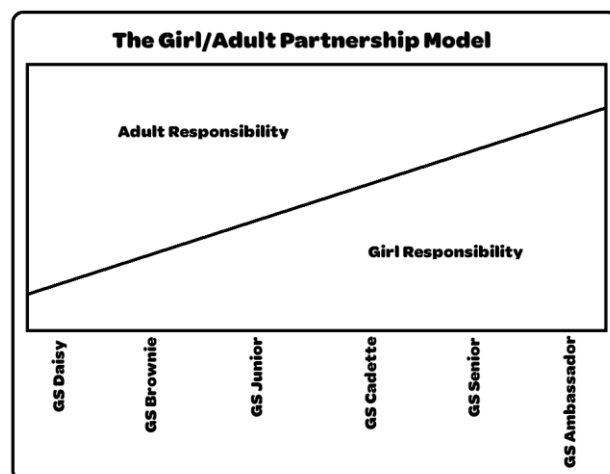
**Cooperative Learning** – Through cooperative learning, girls work together toward shared goals in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration that encourages the sharing of skills, knowledge, and learning. Working together in all-girl environments also encourages girls to feel powerful and emotionally and physically safe, and it allows them to experience a sense of belonging even in the most diverse groups.

Let's look a little deeper into the first process. There are lots of terms you might hear describing this: Progression, Girl Ownership, the Girl/Adult Partnership, and Girl Led. What it really means is that girls of every grade level should take an active role in determining what, where, when, why and how they will structure activities; the overall intent is to work together to accomplish troop goals. Your role is to provide grade-level appropriate guidance while ensuring that girls lead as much as possible. By the time Girl Scouts have reached the Cadette level, they should be taking on a great deal of the responsibility for planning the activities they do.

By the time Girl Scouts have finished the Senior level, the leader should really have evolved into a troop advisor, who basically only steps in to ensure that safety and other such important considerations are factored into the planning process. The Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors themselves should be doing all of the planning.

### Adults foster girl/adult planning by:

- Asking questions, rather than providing answers.
- Guiding, rather than leading.
- Advising, rather than judging.
- Helping a girl to think through a decision, rather than deciding for her.



## Hours of Planning in Advance?

### Not for the Girl Scout Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Advisor!

Your time spent planning should be minimal. You can think about opportunities of which your girls might not be aware, analyze what their needs and interests are, and what kinds of experiences might suit those needs. Think of your role in girl/adult planning as being one of questioning rather than telling. Ask questions to push the girls to come up with solutions and ideas, rather than offering them yourself.

When communicating with parents, it is most effective to be in direct communication with the girls' families so that schedules don't conflict and information gets communicated accurately.

### But Won't the Girls Make Mistakes?

Be aware that mistakes are a part of the learning process. As long as the safety of the girls is not compromised, there is nothing wrong with letting the girls create problems for themselves. Girl Scouting is one of the only opportunities girls have to make mistakes without any serious or lasting consequences. If girls take risks in school, their grades will suffer. If they fail in their social lives, they risk ridicule. If they make mistakes in judgment at home, they may be grounded.

In Girl Scouts, failure might mean that the girls have buns but no hot dogs for dinner, or they don't get a project done on time. So what? Such mistakes are wonderful opportunities for learning (use the questioning discussed with the Experiential Learning Cycle) to help girls think about what they learned. In fact, taking a risk that produces an unsuccessful result is usually a much more memorable and useful activity than one that goes completely according to plan. Remember: If you are doing it all for your troop, you are doing them no favors. Sometimes it's okay to fail!

Of course, even if they make mistakes, they will need to make sure that commitment to outside groups are always met; Girl Scouts live up to commitments they have made.

## Girl/Adult Planning Partnerships

### A girl-driven program:

- Is Girl Centric: Girls should be doing things based on their interests and needs. Girl Scouts should be involved in every aspect of their troop – decision-making, planning, and participation in activities.
- Includes Girl/Adult Partnerships: Girls have a unique opportunity in Girl Scouting to partner with adults to work together and learn skills. In an effective Girl/Adult partnership, adults empower girls to reach and challenge themselves, taking on an increasing level of responsibility. Adults teach girls by partnering with them, not by doing things for them.

## Planning Ideas:

- **Yearly approach:** In the spring the girls make lists of ideas for activities the following year. A “draft” calendar is then created for the last meeting and parents sign up to help with activities. Over the summer a tentative yearly calendar is put together and folders with the meeting information and schedule along with the roster and calendar. Girls receive their folder at the first meeting and then they can lead the meetings following the calendar that they set up.
- **Month-to-Month approach:** After the girls make some decisions about what they’d like to do, make a general calendar for the year with the big things they’ve planned, and then prepare a calendar each month with the regular meeting activities which are scheduled. That way, the girls can be planning as they go, and have more flexibility to plan in additional activities doing something they are enjoying. As well, there is less “pressure” to finish projects since they can just keep going with them at the next meeting if they want to.

## Gathering Ideas from Girls

It is important in the planning process to get input from all of the girls, so no one’s interests are left out. Here are some creative ways to get each girl to share her thoughts and ideas.

**Ball of Yarn:** This is a technique to ensure that everyone gets a turn to talk without interruption. Girls sit in a circle, with one girl holding a ball of yarn. This is the signal that she can talk. When she is finished, she hands the ball of yarn to a second person while still holding on to her end piece of the yarn. Only the person holding the ball of yarn can talk.

**Brainstorming:** This technique works for gathering lots of diverse ideas. Girls think of as many ideas as they can, and these ideas are written down on a large sheet of paper. All ideas are acceptable, whether or not they are possible, practical, usable, or absurd. No “put-downs” of people or ideas are allowed. The ideas can then be sorted into categories, such as: use now, use later, use with modification, combine with other ideas, etc.

**Checklists or Surveys:** Provide a list of possible activities that could be done. Let each girl check the things that appeal to her. Leave space at the bottom of the sheet for them to write in suggestions you didn’t think of.

**Circular Response:** Girls sit in a circle. Each girl makes a short comment on a topic, even if her comment is similar to someone else’s. If a girl does not want to talk, she can say “Pass.”

**Clothesline:** Girls write ideas for activities on small pieces of paper (one idea per paper) and hang each paper on a clothesline with a clothespin. Then the girls write down all the places they can do these things and hang those papers. Finally, the girls make another set of papers naming who they can do those things with and hang those papers. The girls then walk around the clothesline and talk about how to combine suggestions until something sounds really good to them. This technique also works using sticky notes on a wall.

**Collage:** Girls make a group or individual collage of words, drawings, or pictures cut from magazines to show activities they would like to do.

**Consensus:** Consensus is a technique where decisions are made following group discussion, without voting formally. The girls discuss ideas and weigh the pros and cons. The group then makes a decision acceptable to everyone, even if the decision is not the first choice for all.

**Fives:** Everyone gives five ideas in each of the categories they agree on: crafts, outings, outdoor activities, service projects, awards, etc.

**Graffiti Sheets:** Hang a large sheet of paper on the wall at each meeting. Let girls write ideas or draw pictures and add to other ones already written. This is a variation on brainstorming.

**Idea/Dream Box:** Girls put pictures, drawings, or names of things they would like to do in a special box. They continue to add ideas to the box throughout the year.

**Make a Stand:** Choose places in the room, with each place representing an idea or topic. Label the places with signs like “Agree” or “Disagree,” or with the choices being discussed. Girls show their opinions by physically moving to the station they choose. Encourage discussion and moving around to change minds.

**Resource Hunt:** The girls search through their *Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting*, Journey books, *Connections* and other print resources for ideas.

**Sticky Notes:** Have girls draw or write things they like to do on separate sticky notes to post on a large piece of paper for all to see.

**Unfinished Statements:** The leader asks or writes down open-ended questions that girls can complete with their own ideas or thoughts. For example: “When I go outside, I like to . . .” “When I play, I like to . . .” “The best part of my day is when . . .”

## Narrowing Choices

Before narrowing choices, the girls should be allowed to advocate for some of their choices. Here are some ways to find out the girls’ feelings about the ideas.

**Now, Soon, Later:** Three corners of the room are designated “Now, Soon, or Later.” As each idea is said, have girls run to the area that corresponds with how they feel.

**Pep ‘N Flash:** As many ideas as possible are written down on separate index cards. Cards are passed out evenly to the girls. In turn, each girl reads a card and girls say Yea or Boo. If there are any Boos, the card is put in the center of the circle. Keep going around until the only cards left are the ones without any Boos. Narrow choices from there by having everyone only vote three times, etc.

**Spectrum:** Have a line with one end for “I want to do this activity right now!” and the other as “I don’t think I am too interested in this activity” For each idea, have the girls arrange themselves on the line according to their feelings.

**Stickers:** Write the ideas on a large piece of paper (or place sticky notes, etc.) Have each girl place a sticker (star?) next to the ones she likes. Or, give each girl a specific number of stickers—e.g. “you can only vote five times.”

## Making Decisions:

It's often best to try to gain consensus for ideas rather than a straight voting, which creates winners and losers. Allow the girls to discuss and weigh the pros and cons of ideas. If consensus cannot be reached, you might consider splitting into groups for two or more activities according to the girls' interests (not every activity needs to be done by the whole troop), or reach some compromises. For example, this month we'll do the first place choice, and next month we'll do the second one.

## Coaching Leadership

Here are some more tips to help your girls learn to be successful in their planning.

- Take time for girls to reflect
- Give them room to talk, hang out and have fun
- Raise awareness – expose them to a variety of ideas, issues
- Assist girls as they organize things, offer logistical guidance
- Help them analyze issues
- Acknowledge their progress along the way
- Be flexible – things may not always go as planned
- Ask questions to guide them through issues, projects, etc.
- Encourage them to stretch into uncharted territory – do something they've never done before like go backpacking
- Encourage girls to think about all the ways they could act on a chosen issue
- Encourage girls to envision the end result of whatever they are working on
- Let them know it's okay to scale back an idea, or change direction
- Encourage them to build a network of friends, family members, and organizations and use it to their benefit
- Encourage girls to think about taking on roles that will help them stretch and gain new skills and confidence like volunteering to run a meeting or plan an event
- Keep their momentum going by letting them alter their plans if they are struggling to complete something and be a cheerleader by reminding them of their visions/goals
- Encourage girls to evaluate their activities and to capture what it has meant to her
- Encourage girls to share successes with each other as this will inspire others
- Find ways to make sure girls get a chance to be part of the planning
- Make sure everyone shares at least one planning idea
- Use lots of different ways of getting the girls' ideas
- Concentrate on adding little bits of responsibility at a time
- Each time you do an activity, involve them a little more
- Recognize that delegating, especially to girls, may be an area of personal growth for you
- Recognize the amount of time needed for planning—it takes longer for girls to do it than adults. Work to keep things from getting tedious, though.

- *Remember the process is more important than the actual activity*
- Help other adults plan *with girls*, not for them
- This may mean giving adults separate tasks or topics to be conducted in another room. Often times when adults leave the room the girls feel more at ease
- Help girls connect with other adult volunteers by providing opportunities for young adult women (18-24), community members, and “experts” in skill areas of interest to be part of the girls’ activities
- *Step back and let go – “fading facilitation” a process in which your role decreases as the girls move deeper into their projects*
- Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador Program is more about options and choices for girls. What happens next is up to the girls in your group. Go where the girls go. See where it takes your group
- Continue to encourage the girls to set the direction of their group
- Your success is measured by how much you let go

## **In Girl Scouting, it’s not what we do, it’s how we do it!**

The leadership skills that are developed and the self esteem that grows when girls play a key role in decision-making are more important than the trip or activity they take part in, or the award they earn.

### **Consider the following scenario:**

We held a leadership day for teens, it was great. Girls planned it all. First, we gave the girls a definition of leadership and the qualities of a good leader. Then we invited someone that one of the volunteers knows to speak to the group. Then we called the girls together to staple the programs and rehearse the introductory remarks we had written for them.

### **What is wrong with this?**

### Here is what is wrong with this scenario.

- Leaders gave the girls a definition of leadership and qualities of a good leader.
- Leaders invited someone that they knew to speak to the group.
- Leaders let the girls only staple the programs.
- Leaders wrote the girls introductory remarks.

### How do you know if Girl-Led and Cooperative Learning are happening in a Girl Scout troop or group?

- Activities do not always run smoothly, or turn out successfully. If girls are choosing most of the activities, they will occasionally make mistakes as a part of their learning process. Maybe they will pick an activity that is too time-consuming to complete within their troop/group meeting time. Maybe an idea that sounds great in a discussion will turn out to be more work than fun. Advisors can help girls to see what things they can do differently the next time to get the outcome they want.
- Girls are enthusiastic about their meetings, attendance is high, and girls are eager to be involved in different activities.
- As the Girl Scout year progresses, the advisor/leader is spending less time planning and setting up activities and more time facilitating the flow of activities and problem-solving.
- Girls are familiar with the range of Girl Scout program resources available for their grade level and choose activities from more than one source.
- Girls work on activities in a variety of ways. They work individually, in pairs, in small groups, as a whole group, or with other troops/groups, depending upon the activity and their own needs and interests.
- As the Girl Scout year progresses, girls are able to make decisions more smoothly and effectively. As they continue to practice active decision-making, they complete a larger number of activities or choose more sophisticated and complex ones to do.
- Girls show more respect for each other. Individual strengths and talents are more visible when girls are active, and girls learn to value these in one another.
- Girls show pride in being members of Girl Scouting. They tell girls outside of Girl Scouting about their experiences, and are eager to share their accomplishments with friends and family members.



## Still Not Sure If Your Troop Is Girl-Led?

Read each question below and circle A or B as your answer. Add up the number of As and Bs you circled.

1. As a leader, if you gave your ideas for things for the troop to do:
  - A. The girls would put them on the list with all the other ideas.
  - B. The girls would be paying attention because it's time for announcements.
2. If girls gave their ideas, you would:
  - A. Explore the ideas with the girls to see how they could work.
  - B. Explain why your idea is more workable.
3. If your troop was asked to share something at an event with other troops:
  - A. The girls would do the talking.
  - B. Adults would do the talking.
4. If the girls were baking a cake but forgot to watch the time:
  - A. You would let them over-bake it – they could always eat the middle part!
  - B. You would take the cake out of the oven when it's done.
5. If the girls wanted to do something that you don't know how to do:
  - A. You would find another adult who could help the girls make it happen.
  - B. You would tell them the troop wouldn't be able to do it.
6. If two girls in your troop were not getting along, you would:
  - A. Ask them to share their feelings and ask how they think the issue should be resolved.
  - B. Have each girl describe the situation to you. You decide who should receive consequences.
7. After an activity, you would:
  - A. Ask the girls their opinions about their activities and what they might do differently.
  - B. De-brief the activity with the other adults.

# of As: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Bs: \_\_\_\_\_

If you marked mostly As, you know that even though it sometimes takes a little more effort and time (and might be little messier!) to accomplish tasks, it is worth it in the end to help the girls grow and learn skills by involving them in the process. Your partnership with your girls will result in empowering them to reach their fullest potential.

If you marked mostly Bs, you are working hard to provide a wonderful Girl Scout program for your girls, but probably should try to remember that *how* they do things is really more important than *what* they do. They really need a chance to “learn by doing.” Try involving them a little bit more – it gets easier as you go!

# Troop Government

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## Town Meeting

Town meetings are the older girl version of the Brownie ring. In this system, girls act as moderators and run the meetings. The job of moderator or chair can rotate with every meeting, every month, or longer. Adult leader(s) meet with the girl meeting moderator(s) before the meeting to set the meeting agenda. Town meetings usually also have a recorder (secretary) and a timer. A troop treasurer may also be needed. These jobs are usually appointed by the moderator or can be drawn from a hat and then rotated.

Try experimenting with different ways of sitting for town meetings such as in a circle, lecture style or presentation style. It's a good idea to have rules of order, such as not speaking out of turn, or not speaking too long. Let the girls talk about the rules they need and have them approved by vote. Phrase the rules in a positive manner: "only one person talking at a time" instead of "don't talk while someone else is talking."

Generally, the town meeting form of troop government works best with smaller troops, as there are fewer girl leadership positions available. As well, it's hard for everyone to have input in decisions with a larger troop using the town meeting system. The town meeting is also a great way to start out with a new troop if the girls have little experience with leadership positions. In this way, the whole troop can observe the role of the meeting moderators who are gently coached by the adults in their leadership roles. After a few meetings run this way, the girls might be ready to try the executive board or patrol system.

## Executive Board (Steering Committee)

A girl leadership team runs the meetings using the agenda they set with the adult leadership group. The elected executive board's main responsibility is to help make plans and assign jobs for the entire group, based on their interests and needs. Typically, committees are formed to perform certain tasks and girls from the troop volunteer to serve on these committees. Each committee can elect a chair and other officers who then report to the executive board on their progress. The girl leadership team meets separately with the adult leader(s) to set the agenda for meetings, make preliminary decisions, and decide who will do certain tasks. These meetings might happen before or after regular troop meetings, separately from regular meetings, or during the troop meetings if there is an appropriate time when the other girls are busy (and supervised). The girls should decide on job descriptions and duration of office—the leadership team should rotate periodically to give everyone a chance to have a leadership position. The girl leadership team needs to find some way to get input from the other troop members when making decisions. The board gathers ideas from all the members, then sorts, recommends, and coordinates activities.

The adult leader(s) act as advisor(s) to the executive board (steering committee). Generally, the executive board system works best with smaller troops. However, many large troops use the executive board system very successfully. Usually, the officer positions are president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. The responsibilities of each position should be agreed on by the troop members. Sometimes troops decide on other leadership positions such as activity leader, communications officer, meeting time keeper, events leader, outings leader, equipment officer, health and safety officer, etc.

The idea is to split up responsibilities so that everyone gets a chance to have a leadership position. Elections are usually held, although some troops randomly choose their officers and rotate them. Elections can be held by secret ballot or open vote. Once the positions and job descriptions are decided upon, there should be some sort of training to make sure that all girls in leadership positions understand their duties and are able to carry them out successfully.

Many people are familiar with this type of organization as many groups such as PTAs are run in this way. The executive board system allows the adults to supervise and coach the girls in their leadership roles perhaps more easily than in the patrol system, but on the other hand, it may be a little too easy for adults to intervene in the proceedings.

## **Patrol System**

### **Patrol Meetings + Court of Honor = Patrol System**

#### **Patrol Meetings**

Patrol meetings are run by the patrol leaders based on the agenda set at the court of honor meeting. Patrols also have additional officers, such as assistant patrol leader, patrol secretary, patrol treasurer, time keeper, etc. Patrols usually have patrol names and sometimes have a flag. Kapers can be done by patrols. It's helpful to have a plastic box with supplies for the patrols to complete their tasks. Patrol leaders can take turns presiding over full troop meetings.

#### **Court of Honor**

The adult leader(s) meet with the patrol leaders (and depending on the size of the troop, the troop treasurer and secretary) before the meeting to set the agenda and decide on patrol tasks. Patrol leaders can volunteer their patrols to act as committees for certain tasks, or kapers (jobs such as opening, closing, clean up, etc.) can be done by patrols. Recurring duties, such as planning regular troop meetings could also be rotated among the patrols. Decisions about how decisions will be made can be decided at the court of honor. For example, each patrol may be responsible for planning two specific meals for the camping trip. Or, instead, each patrol could come up with one choice for each meal, and the whole troop could vote on the choices.

The adults' role is to advise the girls as they make decisions and plan meetings and activities. When starting out with the patrol system, it's a good idea to hold an open court of honor meeting so the whole troop can see how it works, and then complete the cycle by seeing that decisions and assignments get back to the patrols. All of the girls need to understand that they share the responsibility with the patrol leader of seeing that the patrol gets its work done. Many troops hold elections for patrol leaders and then split the group into patrols, and others split into patrols first and have each patrol elect their leader. Sometimes troops choose to randomly select patrol leaders by drawing their names out of a hat and then rotate them periodically. Whatever method is used, all of the girls should eventually have the opportunity to have a leadership position.

The patrol system generally works best with larger troops—there are more opportunities for girl leadership roles, and the girls have a better chance to interact directly with each other to make decisions, rather than having adults facilitate the discussion. Many troop leaders provide the girls with a plastic bin for their patrol work. Inside, they keep their patrol attendance and dues records as well as a list of tasks to get done—come up with two field trip ideas, plan Saturday lunch for camporee, etc.

## Patrol System FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

<p>What is a patrol? How big should it be?</p>	<p>In the patrol form of troop government, the troop is divided into smaller units, known as patrols, to conduct business, tasks, activities, etc. Patrols should be small enough for each girl to actively participate, yet large enough to actually accomplish tasks. Five to eight is a good number. Patrols determine their own leadership. There is a patrol leader and, based upon the needs and desires of the troop, there could be an assistant patrol leader, secretary, treasurer, communications person, sergeant at arms (enforces quiet sign) supplies organizer, etc. so that all the girls in the patrol have a role.</p>
<p>How does the patrol system work?</p>	<p>The elected patrol leaders meet with the adult leadership team as the court of honor, which is the governing body of the troop. The court of honor might meet for a short period of time before the troop meeting (younger girls) or separately (older girls who have more responsibilities) to represent their constituents, make decisions on behalf of the troop, and determine the agenda and leadership for troop meetings. Girls in a leadership position should be trained in leadership concepts.</p>
<p>What happens in a patrol meeting?</p>	<p>Patrols are responsible for carrying out the work for which they were formed. Patrols can be formed for a variety of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ By interest: group girls according to expressed interest (beware of cliques) e.g. to earn particular awards; a "Camping" group, etc.</li> <li>❖ For the business of the troop: e.g. decision making, planning in the troop meeting setting</li> <li>❖ For special events: e.g. for a camping trip, large service project, etc.</li> </ul>
<p>How are patrols formed? Are there any dos and don'ts?</p>	<p>Patrols can be formed in a variety of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Brainstorm methods, then let the troop decide how to break into patrols.</li> <li>❖ Pick names out of a hat.</li> <li>❖ Play a splitter game. (This allows leaders to 'manipulate' to put girls together or split those who need a break from each other in a seemingly random way.)</li> <li>❖ Do not allow long standing patrols to be self-formed. This can foster cliques.</li> <li>❖ The adult leader may form the patrols, but this can be a dangerous proposition. The leader will most likely be suspected of bias, etc. Let the girls observe/do the random selection. The leader reserves the right to make adjustments if things do not work out.</li> </ul>
<p>Patrol system in action</p>	<p>There are many options for using the patrol system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Meet in patrols for a part of every meeting or as needed.</li> <li>❖ The younger the girls, the shorter the tenure of patrol leadership positions.</li> <li>❖ Patrol leaders (and all girls) need training in leadership as they begin to govern themselves. The adult leader may schedule a special training session or use a part of each meeting to focus on leadership skills.</li> <li>❖ Patrols meet as often as they wish (as long as there is correct adult supervision). For example, patrols formed for the purpose of earning badges schedule their meetings whenever it is appropriate for the activities.</li> <li>❖ Patrols may be re-formed during the year for various purposes. Business patrols should be reconfigured at least at the mid-year mark.</li> <li>❖ When changing any form of government, have the girls evaluate what went well, what needs improvement and why (without mentioning names!) Discuss what they liked and disliked about being both leader and member. Talk about ways to prevent the negatives next time!</li> </ul>

## Choosing a form of Troop Government

The girls should decide on the form of troop government they would like to use. Perhaps the troop might try out all three methods before they decide, or just try one to see how it works—if it doesn't work well, they should try a different method. It's also perfectly acceptable to combine methods and invent your own. The most important thing is to find some way where girls are making decisions and running their troop.

Whichever method is chosen, girls should be coached and taught to be successful in their leadership positions. There are many ways for the adults to meet with the meeting moderators, executive board or court of honor that don't involve a separate meeting. Many troops have these quick meetings while the rest of the troop is playing a game, singing songs, or doing some other activity. Other troops manage to communicate electronically between troop meetings.

## Reaching Consensus vs. Voting

**Consensus:** The process of synthesizing several diverse elements together.

There are several advantages for using consensus rather than voting: With consensus people can and should work through differences and reach a mutually satisfactory position. It is possible for one person's insights or strongly held beliefs to sway the whole group. No ideas are lost. Each member's input is valued as part of the solution.

**Voting:** A means by which a group chooses one alternative from several.

Voting is an important tool for and can be used in making decisions. However, there are several disadvantages: Voting is a win or lose model (which creates winners and losers). Voting does not take into account individual feelings or needs. In essence, voting is a quantitative, rather than qualitative, method of decision-making. Sometimes people are more often concerned with the numbers it takes to "win" than with the issue itself.

## **Building and reaching consensus is an important life skill, and can be taught in Girl Scouting. This skill will serve the girls well throughout their lives.**

### What Is Consensus?

Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible, or even that they are sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her/his position on the matter was misunderstood or that it wasn't given a proper hearing. Hopefully, everyone will think it is the best decision; this often happens because, when it works, collective intelligence does come up with better solutions than could individuals. Consensus takes more time and member skill, but uses lots of resources before a decision is made, creates commitment to the decision and often facilitates creative decision. It gives everyone some experience with the processes of interaction and conflict resolution, which is basic but important skill-building.

## How Does It Work?

1. The proposal is presented as clearly as possible.
2. Clarifying questions make sure everyone understands it before you discuss it.
3. The proposal is discussed and debated. Possible changes to the proposal are made at this time.
4. Take general feelings on the proposal straw poll, round robin or once-round all members signal such as thumbs up/middle/down. This can be used to further modify the original proposal, consider going forth with a vote, or scrapping it altogether.
5. Call for any major objection or strong concern (reality check). A single major objection blocks the proposal from passing. A major objection isn't an "I don't really like it" or an "I liked the other idea better." It is an "I cannot live with this proposal if it passes, and here's why..." A strong concern does not block the passing of a proposal, but it is a public statement of why you dislike it.
6. Does the proposal pass? If the feelings of the group are generally positive and there are no major objections, then the proposal passes. If general feelings are positive, but someone has a major objection to the proposal, the proposal doesn't pass. If the group feelings are generally negative, the proposal doesn't pass. If the group feelings are mixed, not generally positive or negative, discussion continues, or the proposal is tabled until the next meeting, or until more information is available.

At any time during the process, a group can:

- Decide to drop the proposal;
- Move on to approval voting of specific options within the proposal, or;
- Rework the proposal to work out the objections.

# Insignia and Awards





The official uniform for Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors is khaki pants or skirt with a white shirt. For ceremonies and events officially representing the Girl Scout Movement, Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors should wear a vest or sash with their insignia. Otherwise, girls can just wear their World Trefoil and Girl Scout membership pins over the heart on the left side. Girls may also purchase t-shirts and other fun Girl Scout pieces to be worn when a formal uniform is not needed.

**Girl Scout Cadette,  
Senior  
& Ambassador  
Scarf**



Older Girl Scouts have the option to wear a scarf relating their look with the sisterhood of Girl Scouts around the world.



## Insignia that can be earned and/or worn by Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors:

### Emblems that show you belong to the Girl Scout Movement

- American Flag Patch
- Brownie Wings
- Girl Scout Membership Pin
- Girl Scouts of the USA Identification Strip
- Girl Scout Council ID Strip
- Girl Scout 10 Year Pin
- Insignia Tab
- Membership Stars
- Cadette, Senior and Ambassador Discs for Membership Stars
- Numeral Guard
- Troop Crest
- Troop Numerals
- World Trefoil Pin

### Special Opportunity Awards

- Girl Scout Cookie Sale Activity pin (annual)
- Girl Scouts Global Action Award
- Religious Recognitions
- The President's Volunteer Service Award
- World Thinking Day Award
- Silver and Gold Awards

### Meritorious Service Awards

- Medal of Honor Lifesaving Award
- Bronze Cross Lifesaving Award

### Participation Patches and Pins

- Girl Scout Forever Green Patch
- Girl Scout Investiture Patch
- Girl Scout Rededication Patch
- International World Friendship Recognition pin
- And many, many more

<b>CADETTE AWARDS AND BADGES</b>						
<b>SKILL-BUILDING BADGES</b>						
<b>REQUIREMENT LOCATION:</b>	<b>Volunteer Tool Kit</b>	<b>Girl's Guide to GS (print)</b>	<b>Skill Building Set (print)</b>	<b>Pamphlet (print)</b>	<b>Journey Book (print)</b>	<b>Digital Download</b>
Animal Helpers			X			
Archery				X		X
Babysitter			X			
Book Artist			X			
Budgeting		X				

Business Plan		X					
Cadette First Aid		X					
Cadette Girl Scout Way		X					
Comic Artist		X					
Comparison Shopping		X					
Digital Movie Maker			X				
Eating for Beauty			X				
Eco Trekker	X			X		X	
Entrepreneur			X				
Field Day			X				
Financing My Dreams		X					
Finding Common Ground		X					
Good Sportsmanship		X					
Marketing		X					
Netiquette			X				
New Cuisines		X					
Night Owl	X		X				
Outdoor Art Apprentice				X		X	
Primitive Camper	X			X		X	
Public Speaker			X				
Science of Happiness			X				
Screenwriter			X				
Special Agent			X				
Think Big		X					
Trailblazing	X		X				
Trees		X					
Woodworker			X				
<b>ROBOTICS (PROGRESSIVE)</b>							
<b>REQUIREMENT LOCATION:</b>	Volunteer Tool Kit	Girl's Guide to GS (print)	Skill Building Set (print)	Pamphlet (print)	Journey Book (print)	Digital Download	
Programming Robots	X			X		X	
Designing Robots	X						
Showcasing Robots	X						
<b>JOURNEY AWARDS</b>							
<b>REQUIREMENT LOCATION:</b>	Volunteer Tool Kit	Girl's Guide to GS (print)	Skill Building Set (print)	Pamphlet (print)	Journey Book (print)	Digital Download	
aMaze					X		
Breathe					X		
Media					X		
Think Like an Engineer	X						
Think Like a Programmer	X						
Outdoor Journey (includes Night Owl, Trailblazing and Primitive Camper)	X		X	X		X	

<b>Volunteer Tool Kit:</b>	Go to <a href="http://www.girlscoutsofmaine.org">www.girlscoutsofmaine.org</a> ; click on "MYGS"
<b>Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting:</b>	Purchase in council shops or online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>
<b>Skill Building Set:</b>	Purchase in council shops or online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>
<b>Pamphlet:</b>	Purchase in council shops or online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>
<b>Digital Download:</b>	Purchase online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>

<b>SENIOR AWARDS AND BADGES</b>						
<b>SKILL-BUILDING BADGES</b>						
<b>REQUIREMENT LOCATION:</b>	<b>Volunteer Tool Kit</b>	<b>Girl's Guide to GS (print)</b>	<b>Skill Building Set (print)</b>	<b>Pamphlet (print)</b>	<b>Journey Book (print)</b>	<b>Digital Download</b>
Adventure Camper	X			X		X
Adventurer	X		X			
Behind the Ballot		X				
Business Etiquette			X			
Buying Power		X				
Car Care			X			
Collage Artist		X				
Cross-Training		X				
Customer Loyalty		X				
Eco Explorer	X			X		X
Financing My Future		X				
Game Visionary			X			
Locavore		X				
My Portfolio		X				
Novelist			X			
Outdoor Art Expert				X		X
Paddling				X		X
Room Makeover			X			
Science of Style			X			
Senior First Aid	X	X				
Senior Girl Scout Way		X				
Sky		X				
Social Innovator			X			
Textile Artist			X			
Traveler			X			
Troupe Performer			X			
Truth Seeker			X			
Voice for Animals			X			
Website Designer			X			
Women's Health			X			

ROBOTICS (PROGRESSIVE)						
REQUIREMENT LOCATION:	Volunteer Tool Kit	Girl's Guide to GS (print)	Skill Building Set (print)	Pamphlet (print)	Journey Book (print)	Digital Download
Programming Robots	X			X		X
Designing Robots	X					
Showcasing Robots	X					
JOURNEY AWARDS						
REQUIREMENT LOCATION:	Volunteer Tool Kit	Girl's Guide to GS (print)	Skill Building Set (print)	Pamphlet (print)	Journey Book (print)	Digital Download
GIRLtopia					X	
Sow What?					X	
Mission: Sisterhood!					X	
Think Like an Engineer	X					
Think Like a Programmer	X					
Outdoor Journey (includes Adventurer, Senior First Aid and Adventure Camper)	X	X		X		X
<b>Volunteer Tool Kit:</b>	Go to <a href="http://www.girlscoutsofmaine.org">www.girlscoutsofmaine.org</a> ; click on "MYGS"					
<b>Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting:</b>	Purchase in council shops or online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>					
<b>Skill Building Set:</b>	Purchase in council shops or online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>					
<b>Pamphlet:</b>	Purchase in council shops or online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>					
<b>Digital Download:</b>	Purchase online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>					

AMBASSADOR AWARDS AND BADGES					
SKILL-BUILDING BADGES					
REQUIREMENT LOCATION:	Volunteer Tool Kit	Girl's Guide to GS (print)	Pamphlet (print)	Journey Book (print)	Digital Download
Ambassador First Aid		X			
Ambassador Girl Scout Way		X			
Coaching		X			
College Knowledge	X		X		X
Dinner Party		X			
Eco Advocate	X		X		X
Good Credit		X			
On My Own		X			

Outdoor Art Master	X		X		X
Photographer		X			
P & L		X			
Public Policy		X			
Research & Development		X			
Survival Camper	X		X		X
Ultimate Recreation Challenge			X		X
Water	X	X			
<b>ROBOTICS (PROGRESSIVE)</b>					
<b>REQUIREMENT LOCATION:</b>	Volunteer Tool Kit	Girl's Guide to GS (print)	Pamphlet (print)	Journey Book (print)	Digital Download
Programming Robots	X		X		X
Designing Robots	X				
Showcasing Robots	X				
<b>JOURNEY AWARDS</b>					
<b>REQUIREMENT LOCATION:</b>	Volunteer Tool Kit	Girl's Guide to GS (print)	Pamphlet (print)	Journey Book (print)	Digital Download
Your Voice, Your World Advocate				X	
JusticE				X	
BLISS! Live It! Give It!				X	
Think Like an Engineer	X				
Think Like a Programmer	X				
Outdoor Journey (includes Outdoor Art Master, Water and Survival Camper)	X	X	X		X
<b>Volunteer Tool Kit:</b> Go to <a href="http://www.girlscoutsofmaine.org">www.girlscoutsofmaine.org</a> ; click on "MYGS"					
<b>Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting:</b> Purchase in council shops or online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>					
<b>Skill Building Set:</b> Purchase in council shops or online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>					
<b>Pamphlet:</b> Purchase in council shops or online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>					
<b>Digital Download:</b> Purchase online at <a href="http://girlscoutshop.com/maine-council">girlscoutshop.com/maine-council</a>					

## Insignia and Award FAQs

### How do girls earn badges?

Girls earn badges by completing the guidelines set forth in the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. Remember that they do not need to be earned in any particular order. Juliette Gordon Low is reported to have said "A badge is a symbol that you have done the thing it stands for often enough, thoroughly enough, and well enough to BE PREPARED to give service in it." This is why national badges are called "proficiency" badges.

### How do I work with Journeys?

Read through the Journey Adult Guide! They are much easier than they look at first glance. Just remember that Journeys are flexible. They can take as long as a year to complete, or you can do them in eight weeks. You can take a Journey training to learn more if you want more assistance.

### Do we have to do the badges/Journeys/etc.?

No, however, Journeys and badges are the core program resource and ensure that Girl Scouts is the premiere leadership development organization for girls. The Journeys and the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* contain easy to follow instructions for you and your girls. They both offer activities on a large variety of topics, providing girls with a consistent, meaningful and fun leadership experience. Your girls decide which badges to earn and which Journeys to use. And, within these resources you have lots of flexibility. Girls can pick which activities to complete when earning badges. You don't need to complete Journeys in any particular order; in fact, you can even just use the activities that you like, however completing a Journey Take Action project is required to earn the Journey as a prerequisite to the Silver and Gold Awards. All of those choices are up to you and your girls!

### How do girls earn the Silver or Gold Award?

To prepare yourself to work with girls who want to earn these highest awards, you will need to attend a Take Action training. Before starting work on their project, girls will need to complete a Journey which includes completing a Journey Take Action project. Completing a Journey Take Action project will ensure that girls develop the planning, problem solving and critical thinking skills that they will need in order to create and complete a successful Silver or Gold Award project. Refer to the online resources at [http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest\\_awards/silver\\_award.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest_awards/silver_award.asp) and [http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest\\_awards/gold\\_award.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest_awards/gold_award.asp). These resources include a detailed description of the guidelines, an adult guide and FAQs about earning this award. Each grade level of the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* also has a complete guide to earning the appropriate Silver or Gold Award.

### What are the requirements for bridging?

Helping girls through the transition from one grade level to the next is very important in retaining girls in Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Cadette, Senior and Ambassador programs include a recognition for girls to earn as they move from one program level to the next: To earn their bridging award, regardless of level, girls will need to "Pass It On!" by sharing with younger girls and "Look Ahead!" by finding out what older girls or adults do. To celebrate, they should plan a bridging ceremony. Remember that girls do not need to earn their bridging award to move to the next level.

## What are Troop Crests?

The troop crest is not an award, but a symbol of the troop selected by the girls. Troops should think carefully about the crest they choose. It should have a special meaning to them, one they can pass along to new members each year. Every member should know what their crest is and what it means. A new crest is not chosen every year. Once chosen, a crest is used for the life of the troop. If a girl enters an established troop then she takes the crest of that troop.

## Where can I learn more about other awards Girl Scout Cadettes, Senior and Ambassadors can earn?

[http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/for\\_volunteers/insignia/list/cadette.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/for_volunteers/insignia/list/cadette.asp)

[http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/for\\_volunteers/insignia/list/senior.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/for_volunteers/insignia/list/senior.asp)

[http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/for\\_volunteers/insignia/list/ambassador.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/for_volunteers/insignia/list/ambassador.asp)

## When should we present recognitions?

Although recognitions can be presented at any time, consider having the girls plan a special ceremony for presentation. This ceremony is called the Court of Awards. It is recommended that a Court of Awards be held more than once during the year to keep girls interested and motivated. Three suggested times are:

**October-November** often with the Rededication/Investiture Ceremony (when girls receive their Girl Scout Membership pins)

**February-March** in conjunction with Thinking Day and/or the Girl Scout Birthday Celebration. Girls may receive:

- any earned Journey awards or badges
- any participation patches

**May-June** paired with end of the year celebrations/Bridging. Girls may receive:

- any earned Journey awards or badges
- any participation patches
- Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards
- special awards

Additionally, Bridging girls may receive:

- Bridge to Seniors, Ambassadors, or Adults (if earned)

Girls should plan the ceremony, including decisions about songs or activities they might like to do to open or close the ceremony, as well as whether parents will be invited, when the ceremony will take place, and whether refreshments will be served.

## How important are the awards?

We've just spent a lot of time and a lot of paper to talk about the awards available to Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors. Awards offer some great program opportunities—and offer an easy way for girls and adults to gain leadership skills. Now, here's the big 'but':

## BUT!

The awards are NOT (or should not be) the program. The Girl Scout program offers opportunities to build leadership skills, and awards are ONE way to do that. If an activity offers a chance for girls to learn leadership skills then it is a good program activity (and sometimes the best ones are not awards). Every activity shouldn't necessarily end with earning an award! Just imagine if the girls are taught at this early age to expect "something" for every activity they do.

# Finances

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## Money Matters

It is the leader's job to help girls see there are price tags on ideas and that part of their job is to investigate the cost of proposed activities. By this age, the girls, with your guidance should be able to prepare the budget for the year. If your troop has elected a troop treasurer you may help her present the information to the rest of the girls for their approval.

## For Your Guidance

- Anything that costs more than one week's troop dues needs to be in a plan.
- As you discuss detailed short-term plans on a monthly basis, have monthly troop income figures available. Include the girls in updating the income as dues are collected or money is earned. As you put plans on your calendar, note each item that costs more than one week's dues with a \$ symbol. Point out you can't have \$ signs too close together and expect to have money available from dues.
- Special events or projects should be carefully discussed for budget implications. Decisions to undertake costly projects should be made with sufficient time to secure the necessary funds.
- The budget should be reviewed with the girls on a regular basis.
- The girls should have hands-on experience in:
  - Collecting and recording dues.
  - Making decisions on the use of available funds.
  - Accompanying the leader on trips to the bank.
  - Shopping for troop supplies and equipment.

**Please read "Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances" in *Volunteer Essentials*.**

### One leader's story:

*"Through the years, I sometimes had parents ask if they could just donate money to the troop instead of participating in the fall product or cookie sale. It was never mandatory that families participate in the sales, but when I explained what kinds of skills the girls would gain by participating in the sale, they always changed their minds. The girls would have a chance to set goals, handle money, make change (that's becoming a lost art!) and budget how much money they wanted to earn so that they could do their planned activities. When parents realized this, they understood that participating in the sales would build financial literacy skills at a younger age than they would ever otherwise have had the opportunity. The parents definitely saw, as I did, the true value of the product sales."*

## Financial Decisions

The girls in the troop should be responsible for making decisions about how the money will be spent, make priorities, and should always have some idea of how much money the troop has.



**BUDGETING:** Money should not be spent until the troop can afford to pay for their activities. Sometimes, having to wait a while before doing things really makes you appreciate them more! Another benefit of budgeting is that the girls will be forced to make choices, since troop accounts do not have unlimited funds.

### **Accounting**

Although the adult troop treasurer is ultimately responsible for the financial well-being of the troop, girls at this age are certainly mature enough to manage the week-to-week record keeping of the troop's finances. The girl troop treasurer should report regularly to the rest of the troop on how much money they have in their account. Keep in mind that although the girls can take over responsibility for keeping the checkbook, they cannot sign troop checks.

### **Awards**

There are several awards that teach financial skills, especially the Girl Scout Cookie Sale Activity pin, and the Financial Literacy and Cookie Business badges. There are numerous resources on the internet if you type in "financial literacy for kids" into your search engine.

# Program Ideas and Resources

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## The National Program Portfolio

The National Program Portfolio has two main parts – the National Leadership Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. Complemented by the Girl Scout Cookie Program, Girl Scout travel and Girl Scout awards, the National Program Portfolio is designed to help girls develop as leaders and build confidence by learning new skills. It also ensures that Girl Scouts at every level are sharing a powerful, national experience—girls together changing the world!

*The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* is where girls (and adults) can find exciting new badges, the 100th Anniversary handbook, information on bridging and other awards, Girl Scout history, tradition and much more!

Check out the Journey Maps on the GSUSA website and resources for everything you need to know to plan your Girl Scout year and tips on using the Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* together!

## National Leadership Journeys

National Leadership Journeys help Girl Scouts learn and practice the Three Keys, aid their communities, and earn leadership awards, progressing up Girl Scouting's [Ladder of Leadership](#) as they do so.

In July 2018, more new Journeys were rolled out in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). These new Journeys added on to the choices that girls and volunteers already have. **Every Journey (whether new or old) is topic-specific, includes hands-on activities, and incorporates Discover, Connect and a Take Action project.** Depending upon the content, some Journeys are shorter and some are longer, but they have been made simpler to use and easier to deliver.

**As of July 2018, the following Journeys are available for volunteers to choose from. They are:**

- It's Your Planet—Love It!
- It's Your Story—Tell It!
- It's Your World—Change It!
- Outdoor
- Think Like an Engineer
- Think Like a Programmer
- Think Like a Citizen Scientist

**It's Your World—Change It!:**

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie and Junior ONLY

**It's Your Planet—Love It:**

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior ONLY

**It's Your Story—Tell It!:**

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors

- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior ONLY

**Outdoor:**

- Available on the VTK for Brownie and Junior as nine sessions in total, which includes three outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings.
- Available on VTK for Daisies as seven sessions in total, which includes two outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings.
- Available for Multi-level for Daisies-Juniors on the VTK.
- Cadette, Senior, Ambassador, and Multi-level will be available for Back to Troop as PDFs on the VTK.

**Think Like an Engineer:**

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

**Think Like a Programmer:**

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

**Think Like a Citizen Scientist:**

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

Girl Scouts of the USA provides digital troop tools just for you! Be sure to check out the Volunteer Toolkit, available for troop leaders and parents of all troop levels with resources and activity plans for badges and Journeys, as well as troop management tools. Simply click on My GS, then Volunteer Toolkit on your council's website home page [www.gseok.org](http://www.gseok.org).



## Using The *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* with Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

### Help girls plan a fun and varied Girl Scout year that includes both leadership development and skill building.

- Start by checking out the Journey maps at [www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys) for more information about how Journeys and the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* work together. The maps will help girls plan a fun and varied Girl Scouting year that includes both leadership development and skill building.
- Keep “learning by doing” in mind. That’s good news for you, as the trusted adult— you don’t have to be an expert on every topic! There is no separate adult guide because you don’t need it. Enjoy the activities as you learn along with your girls. The Journey your girls have chosen does have an Adult Guide; you can apply what you’ve learned from it to help girls get the most out of their experience.
- Trust yourself! Use your judgment and feel free to make adjustments to activities as necessary. Mistakes are fine! If girls are not making mistakes, they are not doing the planning. (Only on health and safety issues are there no compromises.)
- Safety tips are listed in the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* at the front of each badge section. Please call this out to your girls, and have them sign the Internet Safety Pledge.

### Help girls take pride in skills they learn from badge activities.

- There is no set amount of time for completing a badge—you and your girls can take as much time as you’d like. The point is not to fill up sashes or vests with badges, but to accomplish the purpose outlined at the beginning of the badge and walk away with a sense of pride and accomplishment. (And to have lots of fun along the way, of course!) Use the Girl Scout Honor Code as a guideline. When a girl has earned her badge, no matter how old she is, she should be able to complete this sentence: “I’m so proud I know how to . . . ”
- Because each girl is different, we expect—and hope!—that each girl will have her own individual experience. Some girls will have more help outside of meetings (and more access to information) than others, so they may choose more challenging steps towards earning badges. Help each girl make the choices that will give her the most meaningful learning experience.
- Girl Scouting has an age-old bit of wisdom: No double dipping. This applies to girls using one learning experience to meet requirements for more than one Girl Scout award or badge. Each activity must be used toward only one Girl Scout badge or earned recognition. Activities may be doubly applied for outside activities however. For example, a Cadette completes a project in her school art class of drawing her own comic strip. In addition to getting school credit for her work, she may use this project to meet some or all of the requirements for the Comic Artist Badge, as they apply. She may not also count it toward her “Make Your Own” badge *Recycler* even though that is the topic discussed in her comic strip.
- Girls may choose to work on their badge activities outside of their regular Girl Scout meetings. Encourage them to pursue their interests and share what they’re learning with family members.

## Special tips for our older Girl Scouts:

- What may seem benign to one person could be a sensitive issue for another. When you or the girls wish to participate in anything that could be considered controversial in your region, be sure to get written parental permission on forms available from your council.
- If a girl's school has service learning requirements, some of the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* and Journey activities may fulfill them. Classroom activities may also fill badge requirements. Combining school and Girl Scout activities can help older Girl Scouts find time in their busy schedules for both.

## Service to Others

### Putting the Girl Scout Promise into Action

Service, that very important but often forgotten part of program, is increasingly valuable to the healthy development of girls in Girl Scouting. In today's world, adult Girl Scouts can play an important role in helping girls grow into happy and resourceful citizens by encouraging service and the caring attitudes it enhances. Leaders should do their best to have service become an ongoing part of troop program.

### The following guidelines should help you to plan service with your troop:

- Make sure girls understand the reason for the service. They should see the need and the end result.
- Girl planning does matter! The leader who commits her troop to a service without asking them is missing the boat.
- Let service be a natural part of the troop program.
- Think of your own contacts with schools, sponsors, churches, or agencies for areas needing help.

### Hints for a Successful Service Project:

- Check first with the organization or agency before starting on the project.
- Make sure the project is appropriate for the age level.
- Try to do a project where there will be a response (someone to thank them and let girls know they are appreciated).
- Consider relating a service project to a badge the girls are working on.
- Service projects are a good way to explore careers.

## Service vs. Take Action

Being of service to others means being helpful—doing the right and kind thing. Service makes the world better for some people “right now.” When you TAKE ACTION, you move beyond immediate service to understand the cause of the issue and you team up with others in an effort to get to the roots of the problem and keep the solutions going! Taking action means striving to make the world better for more people over a longer period of time.

### Whether you are doing service or taking action, keep the following in mind:

- Girl Scouts cannot be political, but they can help with elections and babysit at polls, or distribute non-partisan information about voter registration, etc.
- Remember, Girl Scouts CANNOT solicit money for any other organization, but they may provide service for that organization, or donate a moderate amount from the troop treasury.

- When planning service projects, involve the girls in the process. Ask them how they would like to help in the community or even better, how can they “Take Action” and engage the community in the project.

## **Girl Scout Silver Award (for Girl Scout Cadettes)**

The Girl Scout Silver Award is the highest honor a Girl Scout Cadette can achieve. Have you ever looked around your neighborhood or school and wondered how you could make a change for the better? Going for the Girl Scout Silver Award gives you the chance to show that you are a leader who is organized, determined, and dedicated to improving your community. Through this TAKE ACTION project, you can make your local neighborhood or community better. A girl may complete her Silver Award individually or with a small group of two – four girls. Projects are approved by the troop/group volunteer. All requirements for the Silver Award must be met before leaving the Girl Scout Cadette level. Once you have decided on your project, submit Form #532F to the council. After the project is complete, the leader submits Form #522F to purchase awards.

### **Required before beginning the steps:**

- Complete a Cadette Journey.

### **50 hours is the suggested minimum for the following Girl Scout Silver Award steps:**

1. Identify issues you care about.
2. Build a Girl Scout Silver Award team or decide to go solo.
3. Explore your community.
4. Pick your Take Action Project.
5. Develop your project.
6. Make a plan and put it into motion.
7. Reflect, share your story, and celebrate.

## **Girl Scout Gold Award (for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors)**

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest honor a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador can achieve. Since 1916, Girl Scouts’ highest award has stood for excellence and leadership for girls everywhere. As part of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a global movement of more than ten million girls worldwide, Girl Scouts are in an exceptional position to use their talents to positively impact their communities and reach people around the world. High school aged girls who are considering working towards the Girl Scout Gold Award can find information on the GSUSA website. Girls can begin the process by using the GoGold Online ([girlscouts.org/gogoldonline/](http://girlscouts.org/gogoldonline/)) to work towards filling out their application and keeping track of the various steps involved. The council also offers Go Gold Workshops throughout the year. The Girl Scout Gold Award is designed to be completed by an individual girl. The Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal must be submitted to the council for approval before beginning work on this TAKE ACTION project. Upon completion of the project, the Girl Scout Gold Award Final Report must be submitted to the council. All requirements for the Gold Award must be met by September 30 of the year a girl graduates from high school. Project Proposals may be submitted at any time of the year (minimum of 4 weeks before planning to begin project).

## Required before beginning the steps:

- Complete two Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador Journeys.  
OR
- Have earned the Girl Scout Silver Award and complete one Senior or Ambassador Journey.

## 80 hours is the suggested minimum for the following Girl Scout Gold Award steps:

1. Choose an issue.
2. Investigate.
3. Get help.
4. Create a plan.
5. Present your plan and get feedback.
6. Take action.
7. Educate and inspire.

Project Proposals that are received by the tenth of the month will be responded to by the end of the month. Responses will be sent to the email address provided on the application (with copy to the leader/advisor). Girls may then choose to continue communication through email or by conference calls. Girl Scouts who submit their Project Proposal, receive approval, complete their project, and submit their Final Report by February 28, will be eligible to attend the Council Gold Award Ceremony usually held the last Saturday of April. Earning the Girl Scout Gold Award is a great honor and a number of college scholarship opportunities await girls who have achieved the award. Did you know, a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in any of the U.S. military branches? A full list of scholarships available to Gold Award recipients is available at <http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gscentral/scholarships/default.asp>

## Destinations

Destinations travel adventures, which range from two days to three weeks and are for all Girl Scouts ages 11–17, whisk girls to the far corners of the earth. They'll meet remarkable girls, develop leadership skills, gain confidence, and enjoy valuable learning opportunities. This is their opportunity to have the most awesome, outrageous, unforgettable trips of their lives!

Factors that make each destination distinct:

- Length of trip
- Topic
- Dates
- Number of girl travelers
- Age of girl travelers

Most events are geared toward specific grade levels:

- Grades 6–8 (Girl Scout Cadette)
- Grades 9–10 (Girl Scout Senior)
- Grades 11–12 (Girl Scout Ambassador)

You can find the most current list of available Destinations, application procedures and more details here: <http://www.girlscouts.org/forgirls/travel/destinations/>. (click on Travel at the top.)

## Ceremonies

Girl Scouts of all ages enjoy planning ceremonies. You can find many reasons to plan a ceremony. The ones that are remembered the most often have a theme, like nature, heritage, friendship, or peace. You can express the themes in many ways: through music, songs, stories, poetry, dance or light. Some ceremonies use common symbols such as a bridge for crossing over, a dove and olive branch for peace, and green plants for nature. We have found that troops/groups who hold ceremonies to recognize girls' achievements have a greater girl retention rate.

### How do we plan a bridging (or other) ceremony?

Plan ahead! Every ceremony consists of three parts: the opening, main part, and closing. Talk to the girls about what they want to incorporate into the opening and closing parts. Do they want to recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law, do the friendship squeeze, sing a favorite song, or have you read a short poem or story? During the main part, consider what you will need – a bridge (which can be something symbolic, as simple as a paper version on the floor), candles, the awards girls have earned, etc. Have girls practice their parts ahead of time and help make invitations to give to their family members. You can find more information about ceremonies in the *Journeys*, *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, *Volunteer Essentials* and online. Additionally, your service unit is a great place to find information and may even offer a bridging ceremony for all levels.

### Other ideas

For other ceremony ideas, check out Girl Scout ceremony books from your local Girl Scout Service Center and speak to other members of your service unit.



## Evaluating Activities

Any effective planning process is cyclical. It actually begins with the evaluation of previous activities. Evaluation helps girls gain positive meaning from their experiences.

### Evaluation Questions to Ask

Below are some questions to ask girls when evaluating a troop event or activity. You may notice the questions have a flow to them, but remember: asking the questions is more important than the order in which you ask them. Listen to what the girls are saying. Build your questions based on what the girls say about their experience.

#### What the girls saw or noticed:

- What did you see?
- What did you hear?
- What did you notice?
- What questions were asked?
- What stories were told?
- What images do you remember?
- What were the main points?

#### What the girls felt or how they reacted:

- How are you feeling about X?
- What concerns you about X?
- What was the best part?
- What was the worst part about X?
- What was familiar? What was new?
- What did it remind you of?

#### What meaning the event had for the girls or the impact of the activity:

- What did you learn?
- What does this mean to you? for the troop?
- What is the value of doing X?
- Why is this important?

#### What the next steps are or what to do differently in the future:

- What can we change because of this activity?
- What will we keep doing because of this activity?
- What are the next steps?
- Where do we go from here?
- Do you agree with these steps?

Don't make it a formal process. When in the car on the way home from an activity, turn the radio off and listen to what the girls are saying about the experience. At a meeting, just begin the discussion. Be sure it is casual and fun. With practice you will improve on your ability to ask questions to girls through this evaluation process. The most important thing is to ask the questions, and get the girls talking about the experience. Keep in mind your final outcome, identifying and applying learning in the future. Just try it out. The more you do it, the more comfortable you will become. Practice does not make perfect, it makes permanent. It's okay if it's not perfect!

## Continuing the Journey with Girl Scouts

Moving up to Girl Scout Cadettes is a big transition for girls and leaders. The girls in your troop are changing which means that your troop is changing too. Girls at this age are faced with peer pressure, cliques, and overloaded schedules. Girl Scouts can be a place for girls to further explore their interests, participate in special opportunities and meet new friends. There are a variety of programs for the girls and gaining knowledge about programs offerings will help you assist the girls in making their Girl Scout experience truly unique. Council-sponsored program opportunities aren't the only option, you can refer to the following tips and tricks to create further interest in staying with Girl Scouts.

### 15 Retention Tips and Tricks for Older Girl Scout Troops

1. Invite someone from your service unit or the council to talk about council-wide opportunities.
2. Plan some "back to school week" events with a grown-up flavor: spa themes, dance routines, nighttime activities, a chance to hear from teens and university students, college counselors, or professional women.
3. Foster a sense of belonging among girls who aren't meeting often by sending them updates.
4. Build on girls' interests. Ask the girls about what interests them. Finding out the girls' interests will enable you to focus on them and provide them with a troop that meets their needs and interests.
5. Just be with the girls. Hold "Café Time." Girls can hang out, share, talk, and relax, without any pressure to perform, do, or accomplish anything.
6. Have a meal together, at which you plan and prepare healthful foods together.
7. Have a sleepover with a theme.
8. Avoid having girls sitting around in school-like settings. Keep them active, with plenty of choices and hands-on activities.
9. Plan "Funky Friday" events once a month with girls. Activities could include jazzercise, swimming, miniature golf, pottery, and roller-skating. Ask them about what they would like to do.
10. Utilize the fact that girls like to belong to more than just their own small groups and that they enjoy having someplace new to go. Facilitate ways they can spend time in new social structures and meeting new friends.
11. Suggest that they invent contest quizzes or weekly email-response games with prizes, to keep everyone connected in cyberspace.
12. Gain parent support in order to keep parents involved with Girl Scouting and continue to remind them of how important Girl Scouting is. Through parent support, girls will be encouraged at home to continue with Girl Scouting.
13. Give girls a choice by having them plan fun activities. The more excited they are about an activity the more likely they will continue on in Girl Scouting and want to participate.
14. Early communication with girls will allow girls to be informed and be able to attend more activities and events. Last minute notice of events will make it difficult for girls to be able to participate.

15. Incentives are a part of Girl Scouting. As girls continue with Girl Scouting many different opportunities such as leadership development, service projects, and scholarship opportunities will keep them motivated.

### **What other publications/books/resources do I need?**

*Volunteer Essentials* is necessary for every leader, as are the *Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Both can be found on the GSEOK website. Each girl will need her own copy of the Journeys you choose to work on and the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. You will want to have access to copies you can look at between meetings for planning purposes, but you might also want your own copies along with the Adult Guide to the Journey you choose. The council store offers lots of resources on ceremonies, songs and other Girl Scout topics. The resources you need can be purchased with troop funds if they will remain the property of the troop. Also, the GSUSA and GSEOK websites have information available to you 24 hours a day.

### **Who are my important staff/volunteer contacts?**

For all first year troop leaders, your mentor should be your first resource when you have questions or concerns. Beyond that, your service unit manager (SUM) and team are your most important contacts. They are the volunteers who are in place to help support you! Be sure to attend service unit meetings so you can get to know them as well as other leaders. If your SUM is unable to help you with a problem or answer a question you have, you may contact Customer Care at the Girl Scout Service Center by calling 918-749-2551 or 800-707-9914 or email [customer care@gseok.org](mailto:customer care@gseok.org).

### **Where I can translate some of this Girl Scout Jargon (What does \_\_mean)?**

Look in the back of your current *Volunteer Essentials* for the Glossary of Girl Scout Terms.