

Chapter 3: Troop Management

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll have the opportunity to guide girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills, and abilities. You'll help her develop leadership skills she can use now and as she grows—all in a safe and accepting environment. This chapter gives you tips for doing just that.

Arranging a Time and Place for Girl-Led Meetings

When and how often to meet is up to you, your co-volunteers, parents, and girls: It may just be one time for this particular group of girls. Or, if you meet regularly, what day and time work best for the girls, for you, for your co-volunteers, and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once per week, twice a month, once a month? Is after-school best? Can your co-volunteers meet at that time, or will meetings work better in the evenings or on the weekends?

Where to meet can be a bit trickier: A meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses of worship, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores, and other places girls enjoy spending time.

Here are a few points to keep in mind as you consider meeting locations:

- **Cost:** The space should be free to use.
- **Size:** Make sure the space is large enough to accommodate the whole group and all planned activities.
- **Availability:** Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire length of time you want to meet.
- **Resources:** Determine what types of furnishings (table? chairs?) come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort, where you can store supplies.
- **Safety:** Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure first aid equipment is on hand.
- **Facilities:** Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical.
- **Communication-friendly:** Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space.
- **Allergen-free:** Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won't bother susceptible girls during meetings.
- **Accessibility:** Be sure the space can accommodate girls with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.

If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started:

"I'm a Girl Scout volunteer, with a group of _____ girls. We're doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like _____ and _____. We're all about leadership—the kind that girls use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We'd love to hold our meetings here because _____."

Securing a Site

In looking for a troop meeting space, leaders may be required, by the site, to fill out school permits or facility use agreements and to provide proof of GSGLA insurance or obtain proof of insurance coverage *from* the venue. Please contact the Troop Support Specialist at your nearest service center or email COI@girlscoutsla.org for assistance with this process. Please allow a minimum of 10 business days for processing.

Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

Just being attentive to what girls are experiencing as they mature is a big help to girls. So take some time to understand the likes, needs, and abilities of girls at different ages. As you listen and learn along with girls, you may find it useful to review the highlights of their development. What follows are the developmental abilities and needs of girls at various grade levels. You'll also find these listed in the adult guide of each leadership Journey. Plus, the activities in the Journeys are set up with the following guidelines in mind! Of course, each girl is an individual, so these are only guidelines that help you get to know the girls.

The Girl Scout Research Institute reports in *More than S'mores* that participating in casual outdoor activities in Girl Scouts, like playing, walking, or taking field trips in the outdoors made girls stronger problem solvers and challenge seekers. These outdoor experiences often place girls in new physical, psychological, and social situations that motivate curiosity and foster a sense of discovery. These challenges “require girls to become more self-aware and to cooperate, communicate, and solve problems.”

Girl Scout Daisies	
At the Girl Scout Daisy level (grades K–1), girls . . .	This means . . .
Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	<i>They'll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.</i>
Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.	<i>Encouraging them to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need assistance holding scissors, cutting in a straight line, and so on.</i>
Love to move and dance.	<i>They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.</i>
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	<i>Showing instead of telling, for example, about how animals are cared for. Plan visits to animal shelters, farms, or zoos; meet care providers; or make a creative bird feeder.</i>
Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time, and money.	<i>You'll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar!</i>
Are just beginning to write and spell, and they don't always have the words for what they're thinking or feeling.	<i>That having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.</i>
Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so.	<i>Being specific and offering only one direction at a time. Acknowledge when girls have followed directions well to increase their motivation to listen and follow again.</i>



Girl Scout Brownies

At the Girl Scout Brownie level (grades 2–3), girls . . .	This means . . .
Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	<i>Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.</i>
Are social and enjoy working in groups.	<i>Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.</i>
Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.	<i>Letting girls lead, direct, and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a group to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.</i>
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	<i>Doing more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf's adventures. Ask girls questions to gauge their understanding and allow them to role play their own pretend visit to a new country.</i>
Need clear directions and structure, and like knowing what to expect.	<i>Offering only one direction at a time. Also, have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.</i>
Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money, and distance.	<i>Offering support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings or performances, count out money for a trip, and so on.</i>
Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, etc.	<i>Encouraging girls to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need some assistance, however, holding scissors, threading needles, and so on.</i>
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	<i>Girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girl to their school, or tell a story through dance or creative movement.</i>
Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job done well.	<i>Acknowledging when the girls have listened or followed the directions well, which will increase their motivation to listen and follow again!</i>



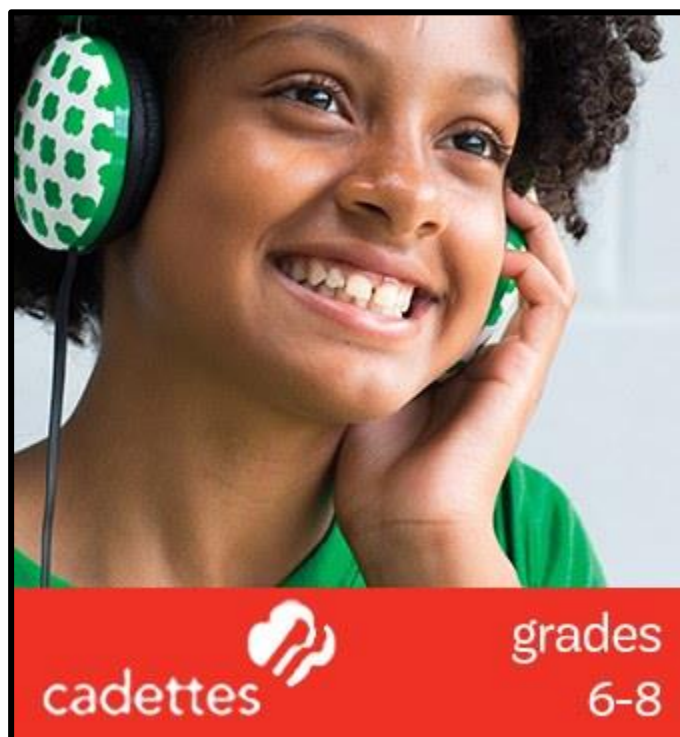
Girl Scout Juniors

At the Girl Scout Junior level (grades 4–5), girls . . .	This means . . .
Want to make decisions and express their opinions.	<i>Whenever possible, allowing girls to make decisions and express their opinions through guided discussion and active reflection activities. Also, have girls set rules for listening to others' opinions and offering assistance in decision making.</i>
Are social and enjoy doing things in groups.	<i>Allowing girls to team-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities.</i>
Are aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgments of others.	<i>Although it's okay to have expectations, the expectation is not perfection! Share your own mistakes and what you learned from them, and be sure to create an environment where girls can be comfortable sharing theirs.</i>
Are concerned about equity and fairness.	<i>Not shying away from discussing why rules are in place, and having girls develop their own rules for their group.</i>
Are beginning to think abstractly and critically, and are capable of flexible thought. Juniors can consider more than one perspective, as well as the feelings and attitudes of another.	<i>Asking girls to explain why they made a decision, share their visions of their roles in the future, and challenge their own and others' perspectives.</i>
Have strong fine and gross motor skills and coordination.	<i>Engaging girls in moving their minds and their bodies. Allow girls to express themselves through written word, choreography, and so on.</i>
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	<i>Girls might like to tell a story through playwriting, playing an instrument, or choreographing a dance.</i>
May be starting puberty, which means beginning breast development, skin changes, and weight changes. Some may be getting their periods.	<i>Being sensitive to girls' changing bodies, possible discomfort over these changes, and their desire for more information. Create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates this transition as healthy and normal for girls.</i>



Girl Scout Cadettes

At the Girl Scout Cadette level (grades 6–8), girls . . .	This means . . .
Are going through puberty, including changes in their skin, body-shape, and weight. They're also starting their menstrual cycles and have occasional shifts in mood.	<i>Being sensitive to the many changes Cadettes are undergoing and acknowledging that these changes are as normal as growing taller! Girls need time to adapt to their changing bodies, and their feelings about their bodies may not keep up. Reinforce that, as with everything else, people go through puberty in different ways and at different times.</i>
Are starting to spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>Girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities, as well as tackling relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects.</i>
Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else, but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.	<i>Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are comfortable. At this age, they may be more comfortable sharing a piece of artwork or a fictional story than their own words. Throughout the activities, highlight and discuss differences as positive, interesting, and beautiful.</i>
Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure:" girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>



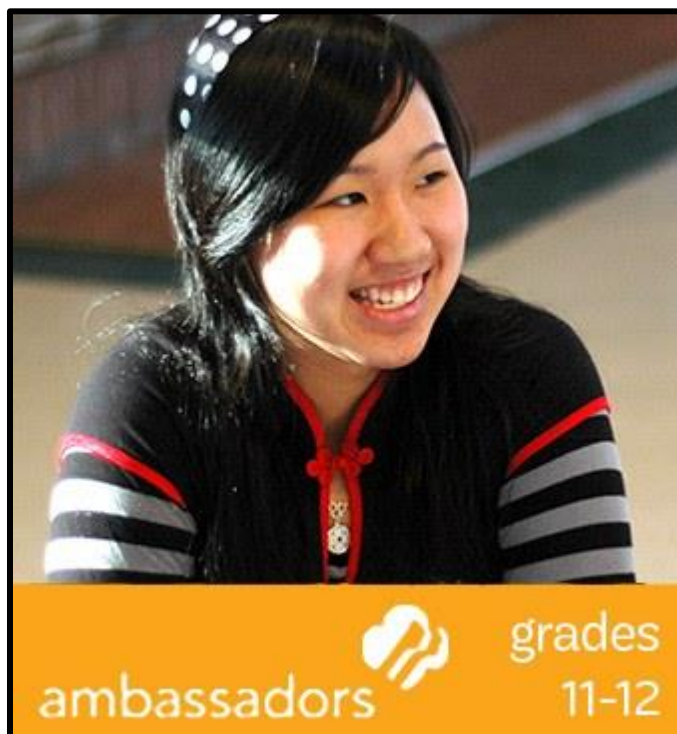
Girl Scout Seniors

At the Girl Scout Senior level (grades 9–10), girls . . .	This means . . .
Are beginning to clarify their own values, consider alternative points of view on controversial issues, and see multiple aspects of a situation.	<i>Asking girls to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. Engage girls in role-play and performances, where others can watch and offer alternative solutions.</i>
Have strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and are able to plan and reflect on their own learning experiences.	<i>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</i>
Spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>Girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They'll also want to tackle relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</i>
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.	<i>Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn't just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.</i>
Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, and so on.	<i>Acknowledging girls' pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.</i>
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure:" girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>



Girl Scout Ambassadors

At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (grades 11–12), girls . . .	This means . . .
Can see the complexity of situations and controversial issues—they understand that problems often have no clear solution and that varying points of view may each have merit.	<i>Inviting girls to develop stories as a group, and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.</i>
Have strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, and can adapt logical thinking to real-life situations. Ambassadors recognize and incorporate practical limitations to solutions.	<i>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</i>
Spend more time with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>Girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They'll also want to tackle relationship issues through artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</i>
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.	<i>Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn't just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.</i>
Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, etc.	<i>Acknowledging girls' pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.</i>
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home—and are looking to their futures.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure." Girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>



Creating a Safe Space for Girls

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

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

Girl-Adult Partnership

Girl Scouting is for the enjoyment and benefit of the girls, so meetings are built around girls' ideas. When you put the girls first, you're helping develop a team relationship, making space for the development of leadership skills, and allowing girls to benefit from the guidance, mentoring, and coaching of caring adults.

The three Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) are integral to the girl-adult partnership. Take time to read about the processes and think about how to incorporate them into your group's experiences. (See the "Girl Scouting as a National Experience" chapter of this handbook for more about using the Journey adult guides.)

Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl

Girls look up to their volunteers. They need to know that you consider each of them an important person. They can survive a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected. Recognize acts of trying as well as instances of clear success. Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique. Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke. Help girls find ways to show acceptance of and support for one another.

- Regular "circle times" (sharing circles) at your meetings to give girls a chance to talk about and role-play ways of showing acceptance and support.
- Team-building games and activities, including the processing or reflection (very important!).
- Turn self-esteem activities around so they focus on the other person. Look for resource materials in the Resource section of the GSGLA website.
- Activities from the It's Your Story-Tell It! Journey series.

Promoting Fairness

Girls are sensitive to injustice. They forgive mistakes if they are sure you are trying to be fair. They look for fairness in the ways responsibilities are shared, in handling of disagreements, and in responses to performance and accomplishment. When possible, consult girls as to what they think is fair before decisions are made. Explain your reasoning and show why you did something. Be willing to apologize if needed. Try to see that the responsibilities, as well as the chances for feeling important, are equally divided. Help girls explore and decide for themselves the fair ways of solving problems, carrying out activities, and responding to behavior and accomplishments.

Inclusion Statement

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles strives to provide resources to volunteers working with girls with developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or multiple disabilities. Adhere to the following inclusion statement, "As a Girl Scout of Greater Los Angeles member, I will do my best to think, speak, and act in ways that ensure everyone across GSGLA feels they belong and can meaningfully participate in all aspects of Girl Scouting regardless of ability, age, culture, education, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status." For more information on how to handle sensitive issues, please visit the website here

http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/For_the_Record_FAQs.pdf.

Building Trust

Girls need your belief in them and your support when they try new things. They must be sure you will not betray a confidence. Show girls you trust them to think for themselves and use their own judgment. Help them make the important decisions in the group. Help them correct their own mistakes. Help girls give and show trust toward one another. Help them see how trust can be built, lost, regained, and strengthened.

Managing Conflict

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively can actually enhance communication and relationships. At the very least, Girl Scouts are expected to practice self-control and diplomacy so that conflicts do not erupt into regrettable incidents. Shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.

When a conflict arises between girls or a girl and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk calmly and in a nonjudgmental manner. (Each party may need some time—a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this.) Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does lay the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, **do not** share your complaint with others—this causes the situation to escalate.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your Service Unit Manager. If the Service Unit Manager cannot help you resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the SUM), the issue can be taken to the next level of supervision and, ultimately, contact GSGLA staff if you need extra help. (See Dispute Resolution)

Inspiring Open Communication

Girls want someone who will listen to what they think, feel, and want to do. They like having someone they can talk to about important things, including things that might not seem important to adults. Listen to the girls. Respond with words and actions. Speak your mind openly when you are happy or concerned about something, and encourage girls to do this, too. Leave the door open for girls to seek advice, share ideas and feelings, and propose plans or improvements. Help girls see how open communication can result in action, discovery, better understanding of self and others, and a more comfortable climate for fun and accomplishment.

Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

- **Listen:** Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no “you should”) is the first step in helping them take ownership of their program.
- **Be honest:** If you’re not comfortable with a topic or activity, say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. (Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.)
- **Be open to real issues:** For girls, important topics are things like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious issues. (You’ll also have plenty of time to discuss less weighty subjects.) When you don’t know, listen. Also seek help from GSGLA staff if you need assistance or more information than you currently have.
- **Show respect:** Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as a young adult helps them grow.
- **Offer options:** Providing flexibility in changing needs and interests shows that you respect the girls and their busy lives. But whatever option is chosen, girls at every grade level also want guidance and parameters.
- **Stay current:** Be aware of the TV shows girls watch, movies they like, books and magazines they read, and music they listen to—not to pretend you have the same interests, but to show you’re interested in their world.

One way to communicate with girls is through the LUTE method—listen, understand, tolerate, and empathize. Here is a breakdown of the acronym LUTE to remind you of how to respond when a girl is upset, angry, or confused.

- **L = Listen:** Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear, such as, “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”
- **U = Understand:** Try to be understanding of her feelings, with comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is...” “I’m sure that upset you,” “I understand why you’re unhappy,” and “Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too.”
- **T = Tolerate:** You can tolerate the feelings that she just can’t handle right now on her own. It signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: “Try talking to me about it. I’ll listen,” “I know you’re mad—talking it out helps,” and “I can handle it—say whatever you want to.”
- **E = Empathize:** Let her know you can imagine feeling what she’s feeling, with comments such as, “I’m sure that really hurts” or “I can imagine how painful this is for you.”

Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

- Think of yourself as a partner, and as a coach or mentor, as needed (not a “leader”).
- Ask girls what rules they need for safety and what group agreements they need to be a good team.
- Understand that girls need time to talk, unwind, and have fun together.
- Ask what they think and what they want to do.
- Encourage girls to speak their minds.
- Provide structure, but don’t micromanage.
- Give everyone a voice in the group.
- Treat girls like partners.
- Don’t repeat what’s said in the group to anyone outside of it (unless necessary for a girl’s safety).

Girl Scout Research Institute

It’s amazing what you can learn when you listen to girls.

Since its founding in 2000, the Girl Scout Research Institute has become an internationally recognized center for research and public policy information on the development and well-being of girls. Not just Girl Scouts, but **all** girls.

In addition to research staff, the GSRI draws on experts in child development, education, business, government, and the not-for-profit sector. We provide the youth development field with definitive research reviews that consolidate existing studies. And, by most measures, we are now the leading source of original research on the issues that girls face and the social trends that affect their lives. Visit www.girlscouts.org/research.

In *More than ‘Smores: Success and Surprises in Girl Scouts Outdoor Experiences*, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) has described the role of adult volunteers: “Because everything girls do outdoors in Girl Scouts must be supported by an adult, these results speak indirectly to adult volunteers and their preparation. To get girls outdoors more regularly, Girl Scouts need adult volunteers who encourage and promote outdoor experiences. Communicating to volunteers and parents that casual outdoor experiences are effective ways of giving girls opportunities to build competencies and try new things may be the key to opening the gateway for all Girl Scouts to participate in the outdoors on a more regular basis.”

http://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/about-girl-scouts/research/GSRI_More_than_Smores-Outdoor_Experiences.pdf

When Sensitive Topics Come Up

We often think sensitive topics are unique to tweens and teens, but leaders of third-grade Brownies often have to deal with “periods,” growing up, cliques, bullies, and gossip. Any age group may have questions about racial and ethnic differences, disabilities, size/weight, climate change/global warming, and death or dying. In some communities, any or all of these may be sensitive topics.

According to *Feeling Safe: What Girls Say*, a 2003 Girl Scout Research Institute study, girls are looking for groups that allow connection and a sense of close friendship. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face, such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance, and more. Some of these issues may be considered “sensitive” by parents, and they may have opinions or input about how, and whether, Girl Scouts should cover these topics with their daughters.

Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from GSGLA staff. Follow this link to access the Parent Permission for Sensitive Topics Form http://www.girlscoutsla.org/documents/Parent_Permission_for_Sensitive_Issues.docx.

When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position.

You should know, GSUSA does not take a position or develop materials on issues relating to human sexuality, birth control, or abortion. We feel our role is to help girls develop self-confidence and good decision-making skills that will help them make wise choices in all areas of their lives. We believe parents and caregivers, along with schools and faith communities, are the primary sources of information on these topics.

Parents/caregivers make all decisions regarding their girl’s participation in Girl Scout program that may be of a sensitive nature. As a volunteer leader, you must get written parental permission for any locally-planned program offering that could be considered sensitive. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls will take when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. For activities not sponsored by Girl Scouts, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow our GSGLA’s guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Report concerns: There may be times when you worry about the health and well-being of girls in your group. Alcohol, drugs, sex, bullying, abuse, depression, and eating disorders are some of the issues girls may encounter. You are on the frontlines of girls’ lives, and you are in a unique position to identify a situation in which a girl may need help. If you believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, your role is to promptly bring that information to her parent/caregiver or GSGLA so she can get the expert assistance she needs. Your concern about a girl’s well-being and safety is taken seriously, and GSGLA will guide you in addressing these concerns.

- Contact a staff member at GSGLA and find out how to refer the girl and her parent/caregiver to experts at school or in the community.
- Share your concern with the girl’s family, if this is feasible.

Here are a few signs that could indicate a girl needs expert help:

- Marked changes in behavior or personality (for example, unusual moodiness, aggressiveness, or sensitivity)
- Declining academic performance and/or inability to concentrate
- Withdrawal from school, family activities, or friendships
- Fatigue, apathy, or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Sleep disturbances
- Increased secretiveness
- Deterioration in appearance and personal hygiene
- Eating extremes, unexplained weight loss, distorted body image
- Tendency toward perfectionism
- Giving away prized possessions; preoccupation with the subject of death
- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, burns, or fractures
- Avoidance of eye contact or physical contact
- Excessive fearfulness or distrust of adults
- Abusive behavior toward other children, especially younger ones

Working with Parents and Caregivers

Most parents and caregivers are helpful and supportive and sincerely appreciate your time and effort on behalf of their daughters. And you almost always have the same goal, which is to make Girl Scouting an enriching experience for their girls. Encourage them to check out www.girlscouts4girls.org to find out how to expand their roles as advocates for their daughters.

Advocating for Girls

The Girl Scouts Public Policy and Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., builds relationships with members of Congress, White House officials, and other federal departments and agencies, continuously informing and educating them about issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. The office also supports Girl Scout councils at the state and local levels, as they build capacity to be the voice for girls. These advocacy efforts help demonstrate to lawmakers that Girl Scouts is a resource and an authority on issues affecting girls. Visit the Advocacy office at www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy.

Using “I” Statements

Perhaps the most important tip for communicating with parents/caregivers is for you to use “I” statements instead of “you” statements. “I” statements, which are detailed in the *aMAZE* Journey for Girl Scout Cadettes, tell someone what you need from her or him, while “you” statements may make the person feel defensive.

Here are some examples of “you” statements:

- “Your daughter just isn’t responsible.”
- “You’re not doing your share.”

Now look at “I” statements:

- “I’d like to help your daughter learn to take more responsibility.”
- “I’d really appreciate your help with registration.”

If you need help with specific scenarios involving parents/caregivers, try the following:

If a Parent or Caregiver . . .	You Can Say . . .
Is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity,	“I do need your help. Here are some written guidelines on how to prepare for our camping trip.”
Constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,	“I need your leadership. Your project ideas you’d like to develop and lead can fit well in our plans. Let’s put your ideas in writing, and perhaps I can help you carry them out.”
Tells you things like, “Denise’s mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn’t belong in this group,”	“I need your sensitivity. Girl Scouting is for all girls, and by teaching your daughter to be sensitive to others’ feelings you help teach the whole group sensitivity.”
Shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help,	“I love volunteering for Girl Scouts and want to make a difference. If you could take a few moments from your busy schedule to let me know what you value about what we’re doing, I’d appreciate it. It would keep me going for another year.”

Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance 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, primary language, sexual orientation, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.

Inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all. You're accepting and inclusive when you:

- Welcome every girl and focus on building community.
- Emphasize cooperation instead of competition.
- Provide a safe and socially comfortable environment for girls.
- Teach respect for, understanding of, and dignity toward all girls and their families.
- Actively reach out to girls and families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized.
- Foster a sense of belonging to community as a respected and valued peer.
- Honor the intrinsic value of each person's life.

A Variety of Formats for Publications

The Hispanic population is the largest-growing in the United States, which is why Girl Scouts has translated many of its publications into Spanish. Over time, Girl Scouts will continue to identify members' needs and produce resources to support those needs, including translating publications into additional languages and formats. See the GSUSA website for more details www.girlscouts.org/espanol/.

Supporting Girls with Special Needs

Girl Scouts welcomes those whose learning or physical disabilities may limit their activities but not their hopes and achievements. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is flexible enough that most girls and adults of any ability can participate.

As a volunteer, your interactions with girls present an opportunity to improve the way society views girls (and their parents/caregivers) with disabilities. Historically, disabilities have been looked at from a deficit viewpoint with a focus on how people with disabilities could be fixed. Today, the focus is on a person's abilities—on what she can do rather than on what she cannot.

Girl Scouts can increase socialization skills that help them to interact with others appropriately. It can help build gross and fine motor skills, and it can increase tolerance to different textures, noises, and lights. It can be beneficial for typical girls as well as they can learn to accept differences and develop patience. They can learn how to understand others and move past first impressions and get to know someone as an individual.

Please respect the privacy of the medical diagnosis of the child unless the parent has given permission to discuss/inform others. Prior to sharing any information about the girl's needs or diagnoses, it is critical to attain the parent's written permission. A form is included in the AbilityGS Guide for Leaders.

Initially, communicating with the parents is important to discuss any necessary accommodations the girl may require. In some cases, it will be advisable to ask the parent to be present for the meetings initially. The eventual goal is for the girl to be independent. The gradual process can involve the parent being in the back of the room, then the room next door, and then in their car. If necessary, please develop a plan with the girl's parents about how to support her.

When talking to a girl with a disability, please speak directly to her, not through a parent/caregiver and treat her as you would any other girl in the troop to the extent it is possible. There may be an exception, however with girls with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Speaking directly to a girl with ASD might be uncomfortable for her when delegating duties, especially in front of the other girls. It may be helpful to email the parents ahead of time to let them know what will be taking place at the meeting.

Children with ASD prefer structure so it's a good idea to structure every meeting and activity. They prefer to know what they're going to be doing and what is expected of them. They don't like last-minute changes and might get upset with changes that couldn't be helped e.g. a co-leader not being there because she is sick. It's helpful to announce shifts e.g. 'in five minutes, we'll be switching to another activity'.

Please be aware it is offensive to call anyone a "retard". It is a hurtful and rude word, even when used about yourself. **In addition, note that people-first language puts the person before the disability.**

Say ...	Instead of ...
She has Autism Spectrum Disorder.	She is an Autistic girl.
She has an intellectual disability.	She is a mentally retarded girl.
She is a girl with a physical disability.	She is a physically-handicapped girl.

It is correct to refer to a person who cannot hear as Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HH). "Hearing Impaired" is considered by many to be politically incorrect because they are not disabled or impaired and are completely capable of doing anything except hear. When speaking to a girl who is deaf and using an interpreter, speak to the girl, not the interpreter.

If you have girls with mobility challenges, please call or check the website of the location prior to any meeting/event to make sure they can accommodate any needs your girls might have. Leaning on a girl's wheelchair is invading her space and is considered annoying and rude. When speaking for more than a few minutes to a girl who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at her eye level. It's okay to offer assistance to a girl with a disability but wait until your offer is accepted before you begin to help.

When greeting a girl with a visual impairment, always identify yourself and others. You might say, "Hi, it's Sheryl. Tara is on my right and Chris is on my left." If they would like you to guide them, touch your arm to their arm. This will allow them to find your elbow. Do not pet a seeing-eye dog or make eye contact with them. While they are working, their main responsibility is the safety of their owner.

If you have girls with food intolerances/allergies, please make sure there is an option they can select. Accommodations can be made e.g. if a girl has an intolerance/allergy to chocolate, s'mores can be served but hers will be with graham crackers and marshmallows only. The goal is to make her feel included without depriving the other girls.

Leaders are entitled to determine when a girl has completed the requirements for badges. Earning badges is very flexible and adaptive. The girl and her parents should be the leader's guides when adapting a badge.

Girls with intellectual disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages. They wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any adaptations for the girl to ongoing activities of the grade level to which the group belongs. Young women with intellectual disabilities may choose to retain their girl membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.

If a child is recognized by the family and school/community as a girl, and lives culturally as a girl, the Girl Scouts can serve her in a setting that is both emotionally and physically safe. The welfare and best interests of the child are the top priority. External experts have shared that troops will be most successful if they invite the family of the transgender girl to work with them as a team to ensure that she has a safe and supported experience as a Girl Scout.

There is a manual **AbilityGS Guide** for Leaders available upon request. Please email abilitygs@girlscoutsla.org if you are interested or for any issues regarding Girl Scouts with special needs. The Ability Girl Scouts Go Team offers regular Let's Chat live webinar sessions throughout the year. Check the Adult Education calendar for dates and to register for these great chat opportunities.

Girls with Cognitive Disabilities

Girls with cognitive disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages. They wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any adaptations for the girl to ongoing activities of the grade level to which the group belongs. Young women with cognitive disorders may choose to retain their girl membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.

Keeping Girls Engaged with Girl Scouts

The end of the troop year doesn't have to be the end of a girls' time with Girl Scouting, or the end of your time with girls. Some girls may no longer have time for a full-year commitment and will be unsure what's next for them. Others won't be able to imagine their lives without this same group of girls. Here's how you can best reengage your troop:

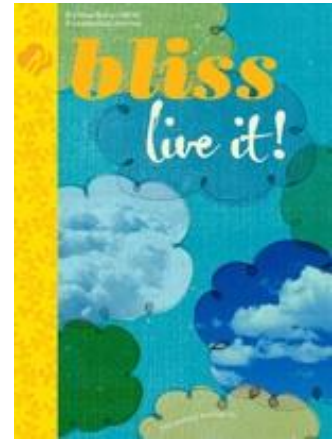
- Some girls may want other options besides troops. That's okay—Girl Scouts offers many ways to participate. Talk to girls about day and resident camp, travel opportunities, series offerings, and events GSGLA may offer. Older girls, especially, enjoy these shorter-term, flexible ways to be Girl Scouts.
- If big changes are happening in the troop (older girls bridging, leaders "retiring" or moving away) try to prepare the girls as far in advance as possible. Arrange for bridging girls to visit and do activities with their "new" troop*, and help them plan a special ceremony to celebrate advancing to the new level. Involve new troop volunteers (or potential volunteers) in troop meetings and activities so the girls get to know them and feel comfortable with them. If girls or adults are moving away, help the troop plan ways to stay in touch.
- If the whole troop is bridging, but you're not planning to continue as their leader, we hope you will find lots of exciting ways to be involved in Girl Scouts, even if leading a troop no longer fits your life! Be sure to capture the girls' excitement and work with them as they plan a meaningful bridging ceremony. Let your Service Unit Manager know as soon as possible that you won't be continuing, and offer to help find or recommend a replacement.
- Talk to girls about earning their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards, which are opportunities for them to make a dramatic difference in their communities—and to have plenty to brag about with college admissions officers, too.
- And what about you? If you want to stay with this troop, start working with them to plan their group activities next year. Are you ready to volunteer at camp? Help organize a series or event? Take a trip? The possibilities are endless.

**Talk to your service unit manager; find out if there are troops that will welcome bridging members, or if there is a plan to organize a new troop. If you find that a troop isn't available for these girls, work with your staff service unit support specialist to find other options—camp, series, event, and travel pathways for example!*

Getting Started with the National Leadership Program through Journeys

The Girl Scout program is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), in which girls Discover themselves, Connect with others, and Take Action to make the world a better place—all within the safety of an all-girl environment where girls take the lead, learn by doing, and learn cooperatively.

At the core of the GSLE are national leadership Journeys, fun and challenging experiences grouped around a theme and spread over a series of sessions. Each Journey has all the important components of the GSLE sewn right in. So, to guide girls on a great Journey, all you need is enthusiasm and a sense of adventure. Before you dive in, try these six simple tips:



1. **Check out the Journey maps** at www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/maps. These maps show you how all the fun and meaningful traditions of Girl Scouting fit right into any National Leadership Journey. There, you can also find information about the topics that each Journey covers, which you can share with girls. And you'll find even more fun traditions to complement your Journey in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, a resource for each grade level of Girl Scouting.
2. **Choose a Journey.** Because Girl Scouting is girl-led, it's important to give girls the chance to pick the Journey they want to do. Talk to them about what each Journey for their grade level is about and let them choose one.
3. **Get to know the Journey.** Pick up a girls' book and an adult guide. Read the adult guide first, and then browse the girl's book just to get an overview of the Journey's theme and content.
4. **Review the sample session plans in the adult guide.** These sample session plans give you ideas about bringing the Journey to life with girls while leaving plenty of room for creativity and customization. There is also a plethora of information available online that can be helpful.
5. **Invite girls (and their parents/caregivers) to use their imaginations** to make the Journey come to life in ways that excite them. Remember that you and the girls don't have to do everything exactly as laid out in the sample sessions.
6. Step back and watch how the girls, with your knowledge, support, and guidance, have enormous fun and a rewarding experience. Celebrate with them as they earn their national leadership Journey awards—and perhaps some Girl Scout badges, too!



Currently there are three Journey series offered to Girl Scouts:

1) It's Your World—Change It!

This Journey series invites girls to develop a deep understanding of themselves, understand how powerfully they can act when they team with others who share a vision, and make a difference in their communities by inspiring, educating, and advocating.

Program-level Journeys in this series are:

- *Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden*
- *Brownie Quest*
- *Agent of Change* (for Juniors)
- *aMAZE!* (for Cadettes)
- *GIRLtopia* (for Seniors)
- *Your Voice Your World—The Power of Advocacy* (for Ambassadors)



2) It's Your Planet—Love It!

This Journey series invites girls to make sense of the wealth of environmental information available so that they can act for the betterment of Earth and its inhabitants. In this series, girls tackle issues like conservation, pollution, and renewable and reusable resources—all while focusing on leadership development.

Program-level Journeys in this series are:

- *Between Earth and Sky* (for Daisies)
- *WOW! Wonders of Water* (for Brownies)
- *GET MOVING!* (for Juniors)
- *Breathe* (for Cadettes)
- *Sow What?* (for Seniors)
- *Justice* (for Ambassadors)

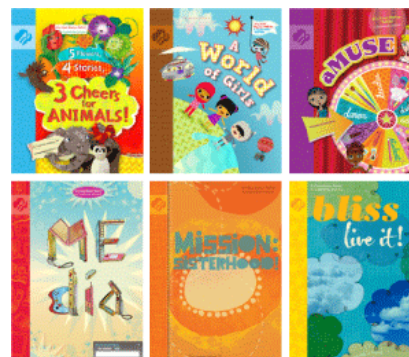


3) It's Your Story—Tell It!

This series of leadership Journeys, made possible in part by a generous grant from Dove, is designed to strengthen a girl's sense of herself and boost her capacity to seek and meet challenges in the world—all by giving her the opportunity to hear, create, and tell stories in a range of creative mediums.



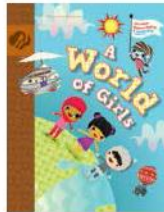
Program-level Journeys in this series are:

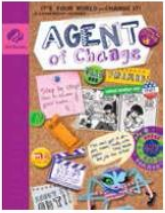

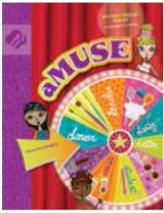
- *5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!* (for Daisies)
- *A World of Girls* (for Brownies)
- *aMUSe* (for Juniors)
- *MEdia* (for Cadettes)
- *MISSION: SISTERHOOD!* (for Seniors)
- *BLISS: Live It! Give It!* (for Ambassadors)



INSPIRATION

Daisies	Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden	Between Earth and Sky	5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!
	 <p>Daisies meet <i>Amazing Daisy and the Flower Friends</i> to explore the fun and curiosity of making things grow. The result is a storybook world of flowers and little girls who, together, do great things. Girl Scout Daisies especially enjoy meeting the colorful, global characters of the Flower Friends, who teach them to live the Girl Scout Law.</p>	 <p>On this Journey, Girl Scout Daisies join the Flower Friends for a cross-country trip in their special flower-powered car. As the Flower Friends travel the country living the values of the Girl Scout Law, Daisies join them in exploring the natural world, learning what's local and why that's important. Along the way, Daisies get to explore shapes in nature, learn the wisdom of women working to protect the planet, and gain an understanding of what it takes to protect the environment.</p>	 <p>As Daisies enjoy a fictional story about the Flower Friends, they learn just how much they can care for animals and for themselves—and just how confident that makes them feel.</p>

Brownies	Brownie Quest	WOW! Wonders of Water	A World of Girls
	 <p>What are the most important keys for a Girl Scout to own? This quest answers that question in a very special way. It has Girl Scout Brownies traveling along two colorful trails—one they can enjoy on their own and one they explore with their Girl Scout troop. Along the Quest, Brownies meet three new friends and a bright and shining elf—in a brand-new Brownie story meant to inspire their own Take Action projects.</p>	 <p>Girl Scout Brownies join the Brownie friends and Brownie Elf as they enjoy some wonder-filled adventures. As they dive in, the Brownies try out new ways of working as a team, learn about the water cycle, and enjoy making their own rainbows. As Brownies learn how precious water is, they can pledge to protect it and team up to advocate for water conservation.</p>	 <p>In <i>A World of Girls</i>, Brownies have fun learning that stories contain clues and that they can use those clues to make the world better. A flip book, <i>A World of Girls</i> devotes one side to fictional stories that take the Brownie girl characters to diverse places in the world. The other side has the real-life Brownies exploring themselves and their world closer to home. Through the Journey's many adventures, anecdotes, and activities, the Brownies follow through on clues and enjoy a fun and challenging Girl Scout experience that strengthens their confidence and gives them a chance to better the world.</p>

Juniors	Agent of Change	GET MOVING!	aMUSE
	 <p>A fashion-savvy spider named Dez shows Juniors how they can combine their own power into team power and use it to spark community power.</p> <p>When Juniors learn how the “power of one,” “power of team,” and “power of community,” work together they not only make their own communities better but have impact around the globe.</p>	 <p>This Journey invites Juniors to engage their minds and hearts as they explore the many forms, uses, and misuses of energy. From paper-making experiments to making beads from newspapers and magazines to forming a “perpetual human motion machine,” Juniors will find that <i>GET MOVING!</i> is crammed full of energizing stuff to make and do! <i>GET MOVING!</i> challenges girls to safeguard Earth’s precious energy resources by using their leadership skills—their ability to energize themselves and others, and their ability to investigate and innovate.</p>	 <p>In <i>aMUSE</i>, Juniors gain an understanding of just how limitless their potential can be as they fuse storytelling with the many roles—real and creative—that the world offers. They’ll have fun trying on roles and learning about people and the power of real-life action and leadership.</p>

Cadettes	aMAZE!	BREATHE	MEdia
	 <p>Life is a maze of relationships and this Journey has Girl Scout Cadettes maneuvering through all its twists and turns to find true friendships, plenty of confidence, and maybe even peace. Girls can make “peacemaker kits,” learn about bullying behavior, and complete a Take Action project that thrives on these relationship skills. A fashion-savvy spider named Dez shows Juniors how they can combine their own power into team power and use it to spark community power. When Juniors learn how the “power of one,” “power of team,” and “power of community,” work together they not only make their own communities better but have impact around the globe.</p>	 <p>Air is every-where in <i>BREATHE</i>. And as Cadettes explore the air they’ll learn to assess air quality inside and out as they gain an aerial view of everything from cigarette smoking to noise to deforestation. Along the way, they’ll try some scientific experiments and meet scientists, engineers, writers, and artists—all of them working for Earth’s air. Above all, <i>BREATHE</i> inspires Cadettes to create “breathing room” to be leaders who use their flair to make a difference in the world.</p>	 <p>Cadettes put the “me” in <i>MEdia</i> as this Journey encourages them to explore the great, big multi-media world around them and then remake media to better match the reality they know. During the Journey, Cadettes become aware of the value of media, its limitations and effect, and the power they have to lead and inspire others.</p>

Seniors	GIRLtopia		
	SOW WHAT?		
Seniors	MISSION: SISTERHOOD		



Girl Scout Seniors know the world is not ideal. This Journey is their chance to imagine a perfect world—for girls. Seniors are invited to

create their vision—in any medium they choose. Then they'll take action to make their vision a reality. Leaders, after all, are visionaries! As Seniors learn to define the ideal environment, they learn a lot about their own values, attitudes, actions, and leadership.



In *Sow What?*, Seniors get the opportunity to ponder land use around the world (corn's a big issue!) and get down to the science and roots

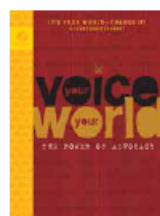
of complex and global food issues. Girls plan and conduct a local "food forage" to scope out their "food print" choices, and talk to scientists, local growers, and business owners—and even global hunger experts. Using what they learn, girls consider their "leader prints" as they decide who and what they can cultivate en route to a Take Action project that positively impacts their food network. Along the way, Seniors take time to enjoy a "truly happy meal" together, experiment with new recipes, and try out being "locavores" who know how to savor local bounty.



In *MISSION: SISTERHOOD*, Seniors harness the magic of stories to widen their networks and ignite the energy of sister-hood to

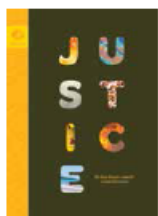
create real change in the world. As Seniors expand their friendship borders, they boost their own confidence and make the most of their leadership skills.

Ambassadors	Your Voice Your World—The Power of Advocacy		
	JUSTICE		
Ambassadors	BLISS: Live It! Give It!		



How often have you seen something that really needed to be changed and wondered, "Why isn't someone doing something

about that?" This Journey gives Girl Scout Ambassadors a way to be that someone—an advocate with the power to start the first flutter of real and lasting change. While creating their own "butterfly effect," they'll gain an array of skills—such as networking, planning, and learning to speak up for what they believe—that will benefit them as they prepare for life beyond high school.



Justice—for Earth and all its inhabitants—we all know what it is. Why is it so hard to achieve? Ambassadors realize that maybe

justice needs a brand-new equation—their equation. By "doing the math" with even the simplest of acts, deciphering how decisions get made, and exploring how to use scientific evidence, Ambassadors create and then present their own unique equation for what justice asks of us. Along the way, Ambassadors find they are also networking and gathering ideas for college and careers. When they conclude this Journey, Ambassadors may recognize them-selves as the wise and healing leaders Earth yearns for!



In *BLISS: Live It! Give It!*, Ambassadors dream big, now and for the future, and assist others in dreaming big, too. They explore their

values, strengths, and passions as a way to open doors to wonderful, new adventures. Designed as a flip book, *Bliss: Live It!* inspires girls to pursue their dreams while *BLISS: Give It!* encourages girls to assist others in pursuing theirs.

The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting and National Proficiency Badges

In addition to the Leadership Journeys, girls at each Girl Scout grade level have their own edition of *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*—a binder full of information about being a Girl Scout and how to earn certain badges, including ones about financial literacy and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Girls who want to earn more badges can add them from a Skill Building Badge Set tied to the theme of the Journey they've chosen.

When a Girl Scout earns a badge, it shows that she's learned a new skill, such as how to make a healthy snack or take great digital photos. It may even spark an interest at school or plant the seed for a future career. Please remember that we don't expect you to be an expert in the badge topics; just have fun learning by doing with the girls!

While you're having fun, keep in mind: Badges are for educating girls, not for decorating their sashes and vests. The quality of a girl's experience—and the skills and pride she gains from earning leadership awards and skill-building badges—far outweigh the quantity of badges she earns. If you're working with Girl Scout Daisies, please note that they earn Petals and Leaves (which form a flower) instead of badges. There are several ways to supplement the National Program Portfolio and enhance girls' time as Girl Scouts—and have fun while you're doing it! A few of them are outlined below.

Learning to Learn: Make Your Own Badge

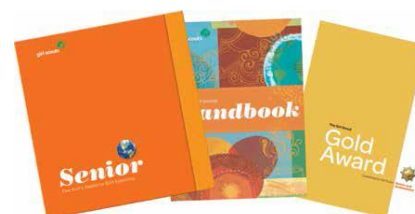
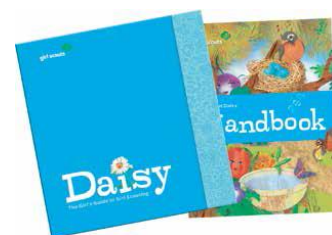
Once a year, individual Girl Scout Brownies through Ambassadors are welcome to develop and complete activities to make their own badge—a great way to learn a new skill while exploring a topic of personal interest. In addition, girls who make their own badge will learn how to learn, which is an important skill to have in school, on the job, and in life! Once a girl checks the Awards Log in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* to make sure there's not already a badge on the topic she wants to explore, she'll follow steps outlined in her handbook to complete the requirements for her very own badge. Even better, she can go online to design and purchase a badge that later arrives in the mail! For more information, check out the Make Your Own Badge website at www.gsmakeyourown.com.

My Promise, My Faith Pin

The Girl Scout Law includes many of the principles and values common to most faiths. Although Girl Scouts is a secular organization, we've always encouraged girls to explore spirituality via their own faiths. Girls of all grade levels can now earn the My Promise, My Faith pin. By carefully examining the Girl Scout Law and directly tying it to tenets of her faith, a girl can earn the pin once each year she participates in Girl Scouting. You can find more about the requirements for this pin in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*.

And More!

The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting also has the requirements for the Safety Award at each program level, the bridging award at each level, and requirements for the Girl Scout Bronze (*Junior*), Silver (*Cadette*), and Gold (*Senior, Ambassador*) awards.



to

Digital programming

The For Girls section <http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/> features a variety of videos, games, blogs, and other fun ways to enrich the GSLE. Girls will find opportunities to post their ideas for public service announcements on topics that matter to them and get inspired by watching short videos that tell the stories of women from all walks of life. If you work with Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies, you might like the site's print-and-play coloring and game pages—great for having on hand when energetic girls get together! Both girls and volunteers will have fun with Badge Explorer, an overview of all of the badges girls can earn. For Girls is updated frequently, so check back often—and invite girls to do the same!

The Girl Scout Cookie Program

In addition to giving girls an opportunity to earn money to fund their Girl Scouting goals, taking part in the Girl Scout Cookie Program teaches girls five important skills that serve them throughout their lives: goal setting, money management, people skills, decision making, and business ethics. For more on everything involved in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, flip to “Managing Group Finances” in Chapter 5 of this handbook

Visit GSUSA at <http://www.girlscouts.org/> and search Cookie Activity Pin, to find this year's requirements to earn the Cookie Activity Pin.



Outdoor Adventures

Being outside is a great way for girls to explore leadership, build skills, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. Whether they spend an afternoon exploring a local hiking trail or a week at camp, being outside gives girls an opportunity to grow, explore, and have fun in a whole new environment. For more information, visit www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/camping.

Spanish-Language Resources

Two of the Journey series—It's Your World—Change It! and It's Your Planet—Love It!—are available in Spanish, as are two new supporting books for Spanish-speaking volunteers to use with Spanish-speaking and bilingual Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors :¡Las Girl Scouts Brownies Cambian El Mundo! (Girl Scout Brownies Change the World!) and ¡Las Girl Scouts Juniors Apuntan a las Estrellas! (Girl Scout Juniors Reach for the Stars!). The books, which introduce the Girl Scout movement to the girls and their families, provide everything you need for a fun-filled year in Girl Scouting. For more information on these resources, contact GSGLA staff.

Putting It All Together

All of this may seem overwhelming, but don't worry. The next few pages give you an idea of what's involved when you use the National Program Portfolio with girls at each Girl Scout grade level.

NATIONAL PROGRAM

What Daisies Do*

KINDERGARTEN - 1ST GRADE

Choose a Journey

Use The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting



*Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girl's books.

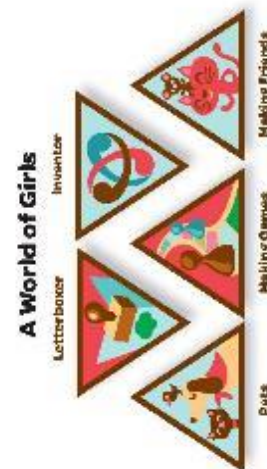
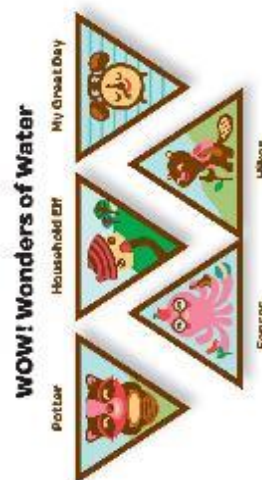


What Brownies Do*

2ND - 3RD GRADE

Choose a Journey
and earn the awards

Use them all with
The Girl's Guide to
Girl Scouting



*Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the
cookie sale and more! See these in The Girl's Pocket

What Juniors Do*

4TH - 5TH GRADE

Choose a Journey
and earn the awards



Want to earn
more Badges? Add
the Badge sets

Agent of Change

Digital Photographer

Staying Fit



Musician



Entertainment Technology



Scribe

GET MOVING!

Jeweler

Gardener



Detective



Camper



Independence

aMUSE

Geographer

Animal Habitats



Playing the Part



Product Designer



Social Butterfly

Use them all with
The Girl's Guide to
Girl Scouting



Simple Meals



Drawing



Practice with Purpose



Inside Government



Financial Literacy



Junior First Aid



GS WAY



Flowers



Savvy Shopper



Junior Girl Scout Way



Cookie Business



Cookie CEO



Customer Insights

* Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See below in all our girl's books.

What Cadettes Do*

Choose a Journey
and earn the awards

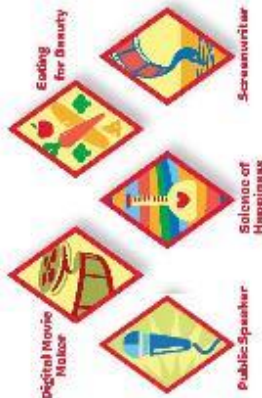


*For more details in tips, activities and awards, the cadettes and troop leaders can find them in all the girls' books.

6TH - 8TH GRADE

Want to earn
more Badges? Add
the Badge sets

amAZE!



Breathe



Media



Use them all with
The Girl's Guide to
Girl Scouting



What Seniors Do*

9TH - 10TH GRADE

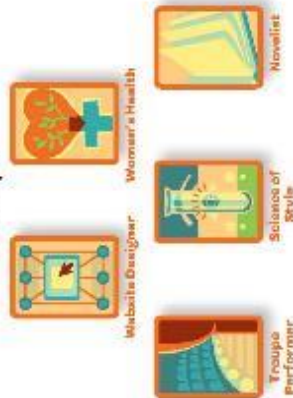
Choose a Journey
and earn the awards

Want to earn
more Badges? Add
the Badge sets

Use them all with
The Girl's Guide to
Girl Scouting



GIRLTAPIA



Sow What?



MISSION: SISTERHOOD!



*Four service units in Virginia selected mission awards this year to recognize and reward Seniors for all the great things they do.

What Ambassadors Do*

11TH - 12TH GRADE

Choose a Journey

Use The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting



* Remember to add in trips, outdoor adventures, the cookie sale and more! See ideas in all the girls books.



Photographer



Coaching



Public Policy



Dinner Party



Ambassador First Aid



Ambassador Girl Scout Way



Water

Financial Literacy



On My Own



Good Credit

Cookie Business



Research & Development



P&L

Emblems and Patches

In addition to the leadership awards tied to the Journeys and the National Proficiency badges, girls can show they belong by adding emblems to the front of their vests or sashes and participation patches on the back.

- **Emblems** show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout group. These can be worn on the front of a sash or vest. See the diagram in the handbook section of *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* to see where these are placed.
- **Participation patches** represent activities girls have tried and are fun ways for girls to remember special events they've attended. Since these patches and pins aren't tied to skill-building activities, they are worn on the back of a girl's sash or vest.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at GSGLA's Girl Scout shop or by visiting <http://shop.girlscoutsla.org>. There, you'll find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level and a link that shows you exactly **where** girls can place their emblems, awards, badges, pins, and patches on their vests and sashes.

Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting's highest awards. These awards offer girls relevant, grade-level-appropriate challenges related to teamwork, goal setting, and community networking and leadership. They also engage girls in building networks that not only support them in their award projects, but in new educational and career opportunities.

Like everything girls do in Girl Scouting, the steps to earning these awards are rooted in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). This is why, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level Journey (two Journeys for the Gold Award or a Silver Award and one Journey). With Journeys, girls experience the keys to leadership and learn to identify community needs, work in partnership with their communities, and carry out Take Action projects that make a lasting difference. They can then use the skills they developed during a Journey to develop and execute projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. Girl Scouts has just introduced a web app that takes girls step-by-step through the Gold Award requirements. Visit http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest_awards/gold_award.asp to take a peek. Be sure to reference our website for the prerequisites, workshop schedule and Final Report forms for each of the awards as they are specific to GSGLA.



Did you know that a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one enlisted rank in all four branches of the U.S. military?

A number of college-scholarship opportunities also await Gold Award designees. A girl does not, however, have to earn a Bronze or Silver Award before earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. She is eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which she is registered.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, encourage girls to go for it by earning these awards at the Junior through Ambassador levels. You'll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish as leaders—and by the confidence, values, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so. And imagine the impact girls have on their communities, country, and even the world as they identify problems they care about, team with others, and act to make change happen!

All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage girls to go after Girl Scouting's highest awards—information on the awards and guidelines for you to use when helping girls earn their awards are also available in the Girl Guide and on our GSGLA website.

Girl Scouting's Highest Award Turns 100 in 2016!

From the beginning of Girl Scouts, one prestigious award has recognized the girls who make a difference in their communities and in their own lives. The first of these awards, in 1916, was the Golden Eagle of Merit. In 1919, the name changed to The Golden Eaglet, and in 1920, the requirements for The Golden Eaglet were updated. The First Class Award existed for only two years, from 1938–1940, and was replaced in 1940 with The Curved Bar Award, the requirements for which were updated in 1947. In 1963, GSUSA re-introduced the First Class Award, for a girl who was an “all-around” person, with skills in many fields and a proficiency in one. Today’s highest award, the Girl Scout Gold Award, was introduced in 1980.

Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other exciting initiatives and opportunities exist to support the GSLE. In the past, these have covered topics like the environment, robotics, and space exploration. You can find out how to engage your group in opportunities like these by visiting the GSGLA Older Girl Opportunities Page http://www.girlscoutsla.org/pages/events/For_Older_Girls.html and the GSGLA Program Calendar <http://www.girlscoutsla.org/pages/events/calendar.html>.

Girl Scout Traditions and Celebrations

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important and are still practiced today. This section gives you an overview of annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions. Be sure to look in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* and leadership Journeys for more information on songs, outdoor activities, historical anecdotes, traditions, and ceremonies.

Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate several special days each year, which you’re encouraged to include in your group planning.

- **Feb. 22:** World Thinking Day (the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide).
- **March 12:** The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912. Note that Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sunday”) and extends through the Saturday following March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sabbath”).
- **April 22, 2017: GSGLA Annual Meeting/Volunteer Recognition (AMVR)**
- **April 2017:** GSGLA Feed Your Neighbor Food Drive & Service Saturday (GSGLA-wide month of service)
- **April:** Volunteer Appreciation Week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders’ Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop leaders to include all the volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.
- **May 3, 10, 17, 2017:** GSGLA Silver Award Ceremonies
 - May 3- Southwest
 - May 10- Southeast
 - May 17- North
- **June 3, 2017:** GSGLA Gold Award Ceremony
- **Oct. , 2017:** GSGLA Family Fit Fair 5K/2K Run & Walk
- **October 31:** Founder’s Day (Juliette Gordon Low’s birthday)



Building girls of
courage, confidence,
and character,
who make the world
a better place.

World Thinking Day: February 22

World Thinking Day, first created in 1926, offers a special day for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world to “think” of each other and give thanks and appreciation to their sister Girl Scouts. Feb. 22 is the mutual birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, and his wife, Olave, who served as World Chief Guide.

Today, girls honor World Thinking Day by earning the World Thinking Day award

(http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/global/world_thinking_day/), which focuses on an annual theme selected by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. They also show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day not only by extending warm wishes but also by contributing to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, (<https://donate.girlscouts.org/worldfriendshipfund>) which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.

Time-Honored Ceremonies

Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions, and reinforce the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with their fellow Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways. Many examples of ceremonies—for awards, meeting openings and closings, and so on—are sewn right into the Journeys, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create.

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons. Here’s a brief list, in alphabetical order, so that you can become familiar with the most common Girl Scout ceremonies:

- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl’s move from one grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. (Note that **Fly-Up** is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.) The Girl Scout nationwide progression model and GSUSA regulations state that K-1st grade girls are Daisies, and bridging of Daisies to Brownies is by grade level, after girls complete their first grade year. Girl Scouts is not based on what a girl can accomplish or ability, but reflects grade-based levels that are set so girls share experiences with other girls of the same grade. The idea is that girls of the same grade all have something unique to offer and that girls bond best when they have those shared experiences. The Girl Scout program and experiences grow as the girls do, introducing girls to new age-appropriate experiences along their K-12 continuum. The progression model is designed to be about a girl’s journey with other girls in the same level.
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something spectacular during the Girl Scout year.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Girl Scout Bronze (or Silver or Gold) Award** ceremonies honor Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award; Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award), and are usually held for a group and combined with council recognition.
- **Girl Scouts’ Own** is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic (such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from the Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.
- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.



Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

Over time, any organization is going to develop a few common signals that everyone understands. Such is the case with Girl Scouts, which has developed a few unique ways to greet, acknowledge, and communicate, some of which are listed here.

Girl Scout Sign



The idea of the sign came from the days of chivalry, when armed knights greeted friendly knights by raising the right hand, palm open, as a sign of friendship. To give the sign, raise the three middle fingers of the right hand palm forward and shoulder high (the three extended fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise). Girls give the sign when they:

- Say the Promise or Law.
- Are welcomed into Girl Scouts at an investiture ceremony that welcomes new members.
- Receive an award, patch, pin, or other recognition.
- Greet other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.

Girl Scout Handshake



The handshake is a more formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts, and is also an appropriate way to receive an award. Shake left hands and give the Girl Scout Sign with your right hand.

Quiet Sign



The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer, so teach it to girls during your first meeting. Raise your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the group see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

Girl Scout Slogan and Motto

The Girl Scout slogan is, “Do a good turn daily.” The Girl Scout motto is, “Be prepared.”

Songs

Whether singing around a campfire or joining a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship of music. In fact, the first *Girl Scout Song Book*, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For song-leading workshops, go to <http://gsuniversity.girlscouts.org/resource/song-leading-workshops/>. A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out the GSGLA online council shop <http://www.girlscoutshop.com/COUNCIL-OWN-MERCHANDISE/GREATER-LOS-ANGELES-COUNCIL> or visit the GSUSA online shop <http://www.girlscoutshop.com/>.