



Volunteer Essentials



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Quick-Start Guide

Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

We know you're busy and need to be efficient with your time. For that reason, this Quick-Start Guide to *Volunteer Essentials* gives you the nitty-gritty . . . what you need to know now, as you plan for your first meeting with girls. We encourage you to read through these tips as soon as you can, and then feel free to put down this handbook for the time-being.

That's because the rest of *Volunteer Essentials* is a reference for you to use only as needed. When you have a question, simply look up the topic in the Table of Contents, and you'll find your answer. Think of *Volunteer Essentials* as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering. It's there when you need it but, rest assured, there's no need for you to read the entire book today.

Please contact any of the following locations or visit www.gsgms.org for more information:

Metro Jackson Service Center

1471 West County Line Road

Jackson, MS 39213

601.366.0607

800.898.4475

Hattiesburg Service Center

500 North Hutchinson Avenue

Hattiesburg, MS 39401

601.582.1455

888.524.9613

Gulfport Service Center

1610 25th Avenue

Gulfport, MS 39501

228.864.7218

866.764.7215

Meridian Service Center

307 24th Avenue

Meridian, MS 39301

601.693.2903

888.693.2904

We Are Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts was founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low. We are the largest girl-serving organization in the United States and the largest member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 145 countries.

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

Girl Scouts strives to be the premier leadership organization for girls and experts on their growth and development.

More than 3 Million Strong

We are urban, rural, and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes, and detention centers. We are in virtually every zip code and in 90 countries around the world.

- **2.3 million** girls 5 to 18 years of age
- **16,000** Girl Scouts overseas
- **880,000** adult volunteers
- **50** million alumnae
- **112 councils** throughout the United States

At any given point in time, approximately 10 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, and

- 80 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts.
- 69 percent of female U.S Senators were Girl Scouts.
- 67 percent of female members of the House of Representatives were Girl Scouts.
- Virtually every female astronaut who has flown in space was a Girl Scout.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

We have identified three keys to leadership: girls discover themselves and their values; connect with others; and take action to make the world a better place. At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl: activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.

100 Years Young

We are about to celebrate a century of trailblazing, of leadership, of fun and friendship—and we're just getting started. Find out more at www.girlscouts.org.

Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and power of girls and women together. Any girl—from kindergarten through 12th grade—can join Girl Scouts. Girl Scout volunteers are also a diverse group—you may be a college volunteer working on a community-action project, a parent volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with your daughter’s group, or any responsible adult (female or male, who has passed the necessary screening process) looking to make a difference in a girl’s life.

What all members share, whether girls or adults, are the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues of \$12 (or purchase a lifetime membership for \$300).

Girls at Every Grade Level

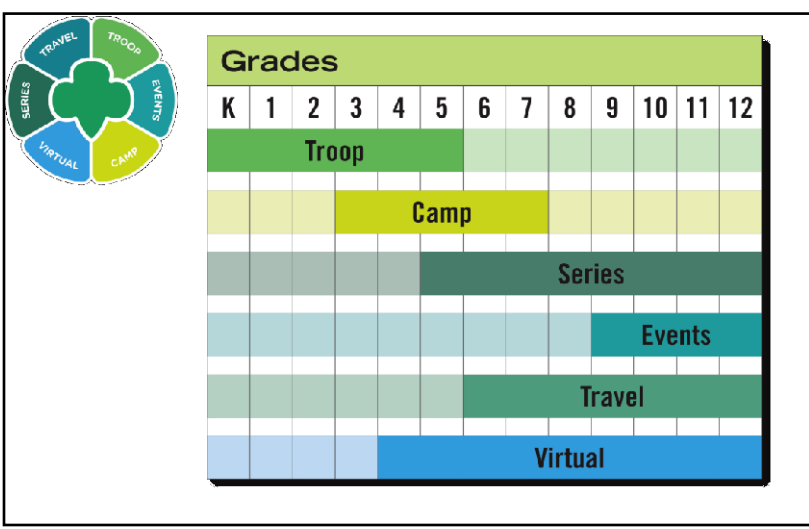
After girls join, they team up in the following grade levels:

- Girl Scout Daisy, grades K–1
- Girl Scout Brownie, grades 2–3
- Girl Scout Junior, grades 4–5
- Girl Scout Cadette, grades 6–8
- Girl Scout Senior, grades 9–10
- Girl Scout Ambassador, grades 11–12

Flexible Ways to Participate

Across the country, the Girl Scout community is hard at work on a whole new approach to make sure that everyone can participate in Girl Scouting in the ways they want to. As a volunteer, you can choose from flexible ways to participate that offer the freedom to tailor your level of involvement to fit your schedule and lifestyle. You can also volunteer behind the scenes, in your council office, instead of volunteering directly with girls.

Girls can choose any one, all, or some of the options—camp, events, series, troop, travel, and virtual*— within a single membership year. (*Note that virtual is still in development.) And, as a volunteer, you, too, have the option of partnering with girls throughout a membership year or committing to an opportunity for only a few weeks or months. Based on independent research and extensive surveys with thousands of council staff members from around the country, we have a good sense of which options will interest girls, based on their grade levels (see the chart at right).



Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure

Girl Scouts is the world's largest organization of and for girls, currently encompassing 2.3 million girl members and nearly one million volunteers! Three core structures support all these members: the national headquarters, your council, and your support team.

National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 400 employees. (Visit [GSUSA online](#), where you'll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers.) GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).

Global Girl Scouting ensures that girls have increased awareness about the world, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and education on relevant global issues that may inspire them to take action to make the world a better place. Visit [Global Girl Scouting online](#) for additional information.

Since 1925, USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO), a division of Global Girl Scouting, has helped ease the transition for American families relocating overseas by offering the familiar traditions and exciting opportunities of Girl Scouting to girls abroad. USAGSO now serves thousands of American girls living overseas, as well as girls attending American or international schools. Through Global Girl Scouting, members participate in World Thinking Day on February 22, visit the four WAGGGS world centers (see the "For Travel Volunteers" appendix), participate in international travel, promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, and take action on global issues.

Your Council

Girl Scout councils are chartered by the national office to establish local responsibility for leadership, administration, and supervision of Girl Scout program, and to develop, manage, and maintain Girl Scouting in a geographic area. The national office provides support materials to all councils to ensure that the Girl Scout experience is nationally consistent. For more information please call any of our offices or visit our Web site www.gsgms.org.

Your Support Team

A team of volunteers and staff provides you with local support, learning opportunities, and advice. As a volunteer, you will have the most contact with your Girl Scout support team, which may be called a service unit or another name. Never hesitate to contact them, because your support team is your expert in all things Girl Scouting. If you have questions about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, resources in the national program portfolio (leadership journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*), or selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products, go to your team for answers and ongoing support.

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 forthcoming *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 adult guide. Read the girls' book for the pleasure of it, 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 how to bring the journey to life with girls, but leave plenty of room for creativity and customization.
5. **Invite girls (and their parents/guardians) 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!

Planning in a Girl-Led Environment

To start planning your time with girls, first draw up a simple calendar for yourself, like the following:

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

If your group will be meeting for less than a year (such as at a resident camp or during a series), adjust the calendar to suit your needs. In the same way, if you're planning a multi-year event (such as a travel excursion), add one or two more years to the framework. Then consider the following questions:

- How many times will you gather each month? When do you plan to break for holidays?
- How many weeks do you need to allocate for the Girl Scout Cookie Program?
- Will you have time in your schedule for guest speakers and other visitors?
- If you've worked with this group before, what are their preferences: badge work? field trips? other activities? For specific ideas on how to incorporate badges, trips, and other traditions of Girl Scouting into a journey, check out the online [journey maps](#) for the grade level of the girls you're partnering with.

Include all of these considerations in your calendar as a starting point. Girls will fill in the details as they customize their journey. After you've drafted a loose framework, ask the girls what they think. Remember that you want girls to lead, but younger girls will need more guidance, while older girls will require far less. Seniors and Ambassadors may not even want you to draft a calendar in advance, so if they balk at what you've done, simply put your calendar away and let them take the reins. (Journeys for older girls include planning pages specifically designed to help them customize their journey.) Daisies and Brownies, on the other hand, may enjoy your calendar and just fill in a few ideas here and there, which will clue you in to their interests.

As your group starts its journey, get a discussion (or debate!) going on the journey's theme and what it means to the girls. Probe to find out what they're most interested in accomplishing during their time together, and then help them connect those interests to their journey. This will help them chart the course of their journey and their time together.

Meeting with Girls for the First Time

When you first get together with girls (and this meeting may also include parents/guardians, or you may decide to hold a separate meeting for the adults), you'll want to get to know the girls, and give them a chance to get to know one another.

Ice-breaker games that let girls share simple details about themselves are a great way to start off your first gathering. Journeys often start with such an icebreaker, so if you're digging in to a journey right away, you'll be all set. You can also check your council's resources or search the Internet for "ice-breakers for kids" to find more ideas.

If you already know which journey the girls want to do, you'll find it useful to accomplish some of the following during this meeting. (Note that all these points are detailed in the adult guide for each journey, too). If your girls haven't chosen a journey yet, you can spend time during the first meeting talking about the themes of the three journeys that are available for their grade level and find out which one the group would like to do. You can then discuss these points in the next meeting, if you run out of time.

1. **Introduce the journey, its theme, and its ties to leadership.** Each journey's adult guide gives you ideas for talking with girls and their parents/guardians about the journey's theme and the three keys to leadership.
2. **Find out what interests the group (and be sure to include the other adult volunteers), so that you and the girls can begin to customize the journey.** Do the girls want to dig deeper into a particular aspect of the journey? Without promising anything (yet!), ask the girls to talk about what they're passionate about, what they've always wanted to do, and how they would spend their time if money or other barriers were no object. Build off the ideas shared, but be sure to include opinions from all the girls. Ask direct questions of those who seem to be holding back or are unsure about answering, so that no one is left out.
3. **Get the girls talking about how they want to schedule their time together.** Use the planning pages from their journey (referring to the draft calendar you started only as needed, so that girls are allowed to lead). Consider questions like these:
 - Can girls organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular journey topic or theme?
 - Is there an event that meshes with this topic or area of interest?
 - Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via e-mail or social media?
 - Can they invite a guest speaker to answer questions or demonstrate particular skills?
 - Which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?
 - If they are Juniors or older, are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards?
 - Do they have ideas for activities that will involve younger or older girls?

Using the Safety Activity Checkpoints



When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find these on your council's web site, and/or your council will provide in some other electronic or printed form.

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers you information on where to do this activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare yourselves in advance of the activity, what specific steps to follow on the day of the activity, and so on.

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can e-mail or print them for co-volunteers, parents/guardians, and the girls themselves. The checkpoints are formatted as checklists, so that you, your co-volunteers, and the girls can check off each step that has been accomplished.

In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that

- **All activities are girl-led**, taking into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.
- **Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively**, by having girls teach each other new skills they may need for activities, rather than hearing all that from you.
- **Girls learn by doing**. If research or special equipment is needed, they'll learn better doing that research themselves than by having you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. And Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other, and plan every detail of their excursions.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with your council *before* making any definite plans with the girls. A few activities are allowed only with written council pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely:

- **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from your council for girls ages 12 and older who will operate motorized vehicles, such as go-carts and personal watercraft; use firearms; take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable; or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot-air balloons, and blimps.
- **Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, and trampolining); creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis, and wakeboards); hunting or shooting a projectile at another person; riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes; taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher; and simulated skydiving and zero-gravity rooms.

One additional note: What may seem benign to one person could be a sensitive issue for another, so when you or the girls wish to participate in anything that could be considered controversial (health or education in human sexuality, advocacy projects, work with religious groups, or anything that could yield a political/social debate), put the topic on hold until you've obtained written parental permission, on forms available from your council. 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 are to do when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep them on hand in case a problem arises. For non-Girl Scout activities, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow your council's guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scouts adult-to-girl ratios show the *minimum* number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Councils may also establish *maximums* due to size or cost restrictions.) These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you’ll find the chart extremely helpful.

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

Here are some examples: If you’re meeting with 17 Daisies, you’ll need three unrelated adults (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), at least one of whom is female. (If this isn’t making sense to you, follow the chart: you need two adults for 12 Daisies and one more adult for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three adults.) If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of which is female (because, on the chart, two adults can manage up to 25 Cadettes).

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 21 years old, the age of majority defined by the state.

Following the Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 21 years old and must be screened by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow your council's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.
5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls' families.
6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.
9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group web sites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may

appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout-approved product sales and efforts.

Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

No matter how you volunteer with Girl Scouts, your investment in time and energy will pay back tenfold. Little can compare to the satisfaction you'll feel as you help girls grow in self-confidence, discover their genuine selves, connect with the people and community around them, and take action to make a difference in the world.

Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

Your most important role as a Girl Scout volunteer is to be excited about everything this opportunity affords you: a chance to partner with girls, play a critical role in their lives, and watch them blossom! You also want to be someone who enjoys the activities you'll be embarking on with the girls—whether you're a camp volunteer, working with girls who are traveling, or partnering with girls on a short-term series on a topic that interests you.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll serve as a partner and role model to girls. You'll also work closely with a co-volunteer, because two adults must be present at all times when working with girls, and at least one of those volunteers must be female and *not* related to the other adult. This is an important distinction that bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to the other volunteer must be present at all times, and at no time is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer. Remember to also check the adult-to-girl ratios in the Quick-Start Guide and the "Safety-Wise" chapter of this handbook.

Your Responsibilities

Your other responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Understanding the three keys to leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: discover, connect, and take action.
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach
- Working in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you'll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls' interests and needs
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings with girls' parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including e-mail, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose
- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as permission slips
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the troop
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl



Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

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



Girl Scout Law

I will 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.

Your Support Team

In your role as a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll team up with co-volunteer(s), parents/guardians, members of the community, council staff, and others who have expressed interest in working alongside you. The adult guide of each journey gives you tips and guidance for creating a friends-and-family network to support you all along the way.

Your support team may help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Being responsible for communicating with girls and parents/guardians
- Locating adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized meeting
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Managing group records

If you have a large support team, the first thing you'll want to do is meet with this group and discuss what brought each of you to Girl Scouts, review your strengths and skills, and talk about how you would like to work together as a team. Also discuss:

- When important milestones will happen (Girl Scout Cookie sales, field trips, travel plans, events, dates for a series or camp) and how long the planning process will take
- When and where to meet as a group, if necessary
- Whether, when, where, and how often to hold parent/guardian meetings
- Whether an advance trip to a destination, event site, or camp needs to happen

Remember to call on your volunteer support team, which can help you observe a meeting, assign you a buddy, help with registration forms, assist you with opening a bank account, plan your first meeting, and so on. Also plan to attend support meetings—usually held several times throughout the year—that provide excellent opportunities to learn from other volunteers.

Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with the information to successfully manage your group of girls, and to let you know how and where you can get additional information on certain topics when you want to learn more. Volunteer learning is offered in a variety of ways to best meet your unique learning styles: written resources, face-to-face learning, interactive online learning—and additional methods are being developed and tested all the time. Please review our Program Guide for our volunteer trainings.

Knowing How Much You're Appreciated

Whatever your volunteer position, your hard work means the world to girls, to your council staff, and to Girl Scouts of the USA. Girls could never experience all the benefits of Girl Scouting without you, so thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Just as you'll receive support throughout your volunteering experience, when you reach the end of the term you signed up for, you'll talk with your support team about the positive parts of your experience, as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return in this position or try something new. The end of your troop year, camp season, overseas trip, or series/event session doesn't have to be the end of your time with Girl Scouting!

If you're ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let your support team know how you'd like to be a part of girls' lives in the future—whether in the same position or in other, flexible ways. Are you ready to organize a series or event? take a trip? work with girls at camp? work with a troop of girls as a year-long volunteer? share your skills at a council office, working behind the scenes? The possibilities are endless, and can be tailored to fit your skills and interests. Please contact your local council for more volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer Appreciation Weeks



Volunteer Appreciation Week—the third week in April—is set aside especially for you. Girl Scouts pay tribute to the volunteers who help girls make the world a better place. The 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 on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.

In addition, Girl Scouts also celebrates Volunteers Make a Difference Week, in conjunction with Make a Difference Day, which is the weekend in autumn that we set our clocks back.

Chapter 2: Girl Scouting as a National Experience

The Girl Scout program—what girls do in Girl Scouting—is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, a national model that helps girls become leaders in their own lives and as they grow. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, as Girl Scouts they are part of this powerful, national experience. As they build leadership skills, they also develop lifelong friendships and earn meaningful awards, two of many treasured traditions in the sisterhood of Girl Scouting.

Girls tell us that a leader is defined not only by her qualities and skills but also by how she makes a difference in the world. Girl Scouting engages girls in activities around three areas that Girl Scouting believes are essential to developing leadership:

- Discovering who they are and what they value
- Connecting with others
- Taking action to make the world a better place

These three areas are known as the three keys to leadership: discover, connect, and take action.

Girl Scout activities also ask adult volunteers to engage girls in three ways that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities:

- **Girl-led:** Girls of every grade level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why, and how they'll structure activities. As part of the adult-girl partnership fostered by Girl Scouts, you use this process to strengthen and support girls' empowerment and decision-making roles in activities. Your role is to provide grade-level-appropriate guidance while ensuring that girls lead as much as possible in the planning, organization, set-up, and evaluation of their activities.
- **Learning by doing:** Girls use hands-on learning to engage in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection, deepening their understanding of concepts and mastering practical skills. As girls take part in meaningful activities—instead of simply watching them—and then later evaluate what they have learned, learning is far more meaningful, memorable, and long-lasting. You assist girls in this process by facilitating grade-level-appropriate experiences through which girls can learn, and also by leading discussions that reflect on those experiences. When girls learn by doing, they can better connect their experiences to their own lives, both in and out of Girl Scouting.
- **Cooperative learning:** Girls share knowledge, skills, and experiences in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation, working together on a common goal that engages each individual girl's diverse talents. In cooperative learning environments, people learn faster, process information more efficiently, and are better able to retain the information learned. This idea, also known as "positive interdependence," engages girls in meaningful ways, encourages and appreciates differences in outlook and skills, and creates a sense of belonging. In your role as a volunteer, you want to structure cooperative-learning activities that will nurture healthy, diverse relationships, and also give continuous feedback to girls on those learning experiences.

When used together, these processes ensure the quality and promote the fun and friendship that's so integral to Girl Scouting. The adult guide of each journey contains full definitions of these processes and examples of how to support their use in all you and the girls do in Girl Scouting. And each girls' journey book has these processes built right into all its activities and discussions. So as you and the girls take part in a journey, you'll be using the processing without even knowing it—and you'll learn by doing, right along with the girls!

More details about the three Girl Scout Processes can also be found in *Transforming Leadership Continued*, available online at www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gscoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp.

Journeys!

The best way to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is through leadership journeys. These powerful, fun, and multidisciplinary experiences, each spread over a set of gatherings, are the core of the Girl Scout program. Journeys immerse Girl Scouts in specific themes, which are detailed in each journey's resources: the girls' book and the adult guide. The adult guide for each journey also features sample session plans with enriching activities, discussions, and reflections for a group of girls, along with corresponding coaching tips. You can customize these sample session plans to fit the needs of your group, whether you guide a troop, volunteer at a Girl Scout camp, mentor girls on a travel adventure, or engage with girls in a series or at an event.

Leadership journeys ensure that every Girl Scout in every pathway receives a consistent, high-quality experience that engages girls in realizing specific leadership benefits. Each journey also offers opportunities to enjoy the longstanding traditions of Girl Scouting, from ceremonies and song to earning awards and related skill badges. Here are a few tips for enjoying a great journey with your group of girls:

- **Customize!** Your journey's adult guide offers step-by-step activities, discussions, ceremonies, and reflections. But no journey is meant to provide hard-and-fast, unchangeable, lockstep sessions. Along with the girls, make the most of resources in your region to add trips, activities, guest speakers, and the other special items to the journey. You'll find plenty of tips for doing so in your adult guide, and the journey will be so much more fun and relevant as girls make it their own!
- **Take your time or speed things up.** Sample sessions in the journeys have been created to show how it is possible to have a Girl Scout Leadership Experience in a set number of gatherings. Many girls and adults quickly find there is more they want to do, which is why your adult guide is filled with tips for how to stretch out the experience. As their imaginations take hold, girls will have many more ideas about how to extend the journey. Conversely, you and the girls may decide you want to complete a journey in only four or five group gatherings. Do whatever works for you and the girls.
- **Harness the power of stories.** All Girl Scout leadership journeys engage girls in stories—real and fictional—of girls and women taking action in the world. Make use of these stories and expand upon them whenever you can—in any way that you and girls will enjoy. Stories, after all, capture the imagination and motivate. Ultimately, girls will create their own stories on the journey, meeting new people and taking action in the world. What other stories are going on in your region, and how can girls connect to them? What can girls find in stories—in art or life—that add to the feelings and ideas during this adventure?
- **Connect to the three keys.** As a volunteer in Girl Scouts, your experiences—and your view of leadership—will influence and inspire girls. Use the reflection exercises in the adult guide to think about the three keys to leadership (discover, connect, take action) and how you can best apply them as you team up with Girl Scouts on their leadership journey.

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. Grade-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)

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. Grade 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)

It's Your Story—Tell It!

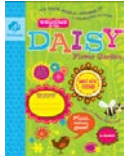
This series of leadership journeys, made possible in part by a generous grant from Dove, is designed to strengthen a girl's sense of herself and boost her capacity to seek and meet challenges in the world—all by giving her the opportunity to hear, create, and tell stories in a range of creative mediums.

- *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)

For a description of each book for each grade level, check out the six following tables.

Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden

Girl Scout Daisies meet Amazing Daisy and the Flower Friends 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.



Between Earth and Sky

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.



5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!

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.



Brownie Quest

WOW! Wonders of Water

A World of Girls

Brownies

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 group. 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.



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.



In *A World of Girls*, Brownies have fun learning that stories contain clues and that they can use those clues to make the world better. A *flip book*, *A World of Girls* 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.



Juniors

Agent of Change

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.



GET MOVING!

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 *GET MOVING!* is crammed full of energizing stuff to make and do! *GET MOVING!* 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.



aMUSE

In *aMUSE*, 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.



Cadettes

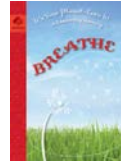
aMAZE!

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.



BREATHE

Air is everywhere in *BREATHE*. 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, *BREATHE* inspires Cadettes to create “breathing room” to be leaders who use their flair to make a difference in the world.



MEdia

Cadettes put the “me” in *MEdia* as this journey encourages them to explore the great, big multimedia world around them and then remake media to better match the reality they know. Along the way, Cadettes become aware of the value of media, its limitations and effect, and the power they have to lead and inspire others.



GIRLtopia

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.



SOW WHAT?

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.



MISSION: SISTERHOOD

In *MISSION: SISTERHOOD*, Seniors harness the magic of stories to widen their networks and ignite the energy of sisterhood 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.



Seniors

Your Voice Your World— The Power of Advocacy

JUSTICE

BLISS: Live It! Give It!

Ambassadors

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 themselves 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

In addition to the resources created for leadership journeys (the girl's book and the adult guide), girls at every grade-level have a *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. Through fun activities, girls can earn a variety of badges to build the skills and gain the confidence they'll use to change the world. They can even develop and complete activities to make their own badge—a great way to explore 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!)

Inside a *Girl's Guide*

The *Girl's Guide* is a binder that's designed to keep everything organized. Using a binder allows for maximum flexibility: outdated badges can be removed, while new badges based on girls' changing interests or funded opportunities can be added. All badges are called National Proficiency Badges and are grouped in following categories: Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business, Skill-Building, and Make Your Own. (Daisies continue to earn Petals, as well as four new Leaves.)

For Daisies, the *Girl's Guide* includes:

- **Handbook:** The handbook offers information about Girl Scout traditions and history, as well as the requirements for bridging to Brownies.
- **Awards:** Daisies earn ten Petals, one for each line of the Girl Scout Law, so this section includes ten short stories starring the Flower Friends, plus related activities that help girls learn the Law. This section also includes a chart of all Girl Scout earned awards for that grade level, and a chart showing all badges for all grade levels. Here, Daisies can also find

the requirements for four new awards that they can now earn in addition to their petals. These awards, called Leaves, focus on skills related to financial literacy and the cookie business.

- **My Girl Scouts:** Scrapbook and journal pages allow each girl to customize her binder and keep a record of her Girl Scout experiences. Daisies have coloring pages, stickers, and pages for photos, friends' autographs, and other mementos.

For Brownies through Ambassadors, the *Girl's Guide* includes:

- **Handbook:** The handbook includes Girl Scout history and traditions, a chart of all Girl Scout earned awards for that grade level, and a chart showing all badges for all grade levels. This section also includes a girl-friendly explanation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, requirements for bridging to the next grade level and, at the appropriate grade level, the requirements for earning the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.
- **Badges:** This section includes badge requirements for the Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business, Skill-Building, and Make Your Own badges. The requirements for Skill-Building Badges are sold separately, giving each girl the ability to customize her Girl's Guide by adding badges that interest her.
- **My Girl Scouts:** Scrapbook and journal pages allow each girl to customize her binder and keep a record of her Girl Scout experiences. In addition to pages for photos, friends' autographs, and other mementos at all levels, Brownies and Juniors also have sticker pages.

The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting is designed to complement the journeys at each grade level. This means that each Skill-Building Badge Set (there are currently three; each is sold separately from the *Girl's Guide*) is tied to one of the three journeys (as you can see in the following chart). You'll find that doing a journey and the related badge set at the same time will make it easy to offer the entire National Program Portfolio—journeys and badges—in a seamless way.

How the National Girl Scout Program Portfolio Works

The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

- ▶ Handbook Section
- ▶ My Girl Scouts Section
- ▶ Awards Section
- ▶ Legacy Badge: Topic Areas
 - Artist
 - The Girl Scout Way
 - Citizen
 - Cook
 - First Aid
 - Athlete
 - Naturalist
- ▶ Financial Literacy Badges
Girls can earn a different Financial Literacy Badge each year. (Daisies earn Financial Literacy "leaves.")
- ▶ Cookie Business Badges
Girls can earn a different Cookie Business Badge each year. (Daisies earn Cookie Business "leaves.")
- ▶ Make Your Own

PLUS

- ▶ My Promise, My Faith Pin
- ▶ Journey Summit Pin
For Designated Levels
 - P.A., CIT, VIT
 - Bronze, Silver, Gold Awards

February 23rd, 2011

National Leadership Journeys

"Leadership Awards" for Girls

It's Your World—Change It!

It's Your Planet—Love it!

It's Your Story—Tell It!

Skill Building Badge Sets

Girls choose a set to add into their Girl's Guide and enjoy along their Journey!

- ▶ Skill-Building Badge Set: Topic Areas
 - Performance
 - Healthy Living
 - Digital Arts
 - Storytelling
 - Science & Technology

- ▶ Skill-Building Badge Set: Topic Areas
 - Outdoors
 - Practical Life Skills
 - Do It Yourself
 - Craft
 - Investigation

- ▶ Skill-Building Badge Set: Topic Areas
 - Animals
 - Manners
 - Adventure
 - Creative Play
 - Innovation

- Brownies through Seniors will all have their own specific Badge in each of these topic areas.
- Initial Badge Sets — More can be added based on major funders or great ideas from girls or the field.

Anatomy of a Badge

Each badge begins by stating the badge's **purpose**; that is, the skill girls will have learned when they've completed the badge. This program-with-a-purpose approach was tested with girls—and they loved it! Girls complete **five steps** to earn each badge. There are three choices for completing each step (girls have to choose only one to complete the step).

As you begin exploring the journeys and the badges, you'll see that many steps to earn a badge can be worked naturally into activities that girls are doing on their journey. To help you and the girls see some of these connections, each badge also includes a tip for tying the badge into a specific journey.

Each badge ends with a few ideas about how girls can use their new skill to help others, plus a space for girls to jot down their own ideas. Although girls aren't required to help others to earn the badge; these ideas were offered to honor the standard that Juliette Gordon Low set for badge work 100 years ago: "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."

girl scouts

Anatomy of a Badge

Five Steps: Each badge has five steps. Girls complete all five to earn the badge.

Journey Tie-In: Each badge includes a tip for tying the badge activities into a journey.

Three Choices: There are three choices for completing each step. Girls only need to do ONE.

Giving Service: This closing statement offers three ideas about how a girl can use her new skill to give service, plus room for girls to write or draw their own ideas.

February 23rd, 2011

Emblems and Patches

In addition to journey awards and badges in the *Girl's Guide*, girls can commemorate their Girl Scout adventures with emblems and patches, which can be worn on their vests or sashes.

- **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** are developed at the national or council level with a focus on participation. Some come with companion activity booklets, while others are given out at events. These are worn on the back of the sash or vest, since they are not emblems or earned awards.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at your council's Girl

Scout shop or by visiting www.gsgms.org. There, you not only find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level but also can click on a link that shows you exactly *where* girls can place all 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. This is why, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level journey (two journeys for the Gold Award). 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 on a journey to develop and execute excellent projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, encourage girls to go for it by earning these awards at the Junior through Ambassador levels. Check out some of the award projects girls in your council are doing and talk to a few past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award. 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 is available [online](#). Adult guidelines for you to use when helping girls earn their awards are also available [online](#).

Did you know that a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one 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.

A Tradition of Honoring Girls



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. A few examples are listed here, and you can find out how to engage your group in opportunities like these by contacting your council or by visiting www.girlscouts.org/program/program_opportunities. Note that councils may offer different experiences,

based on availability of resources and partners in your area.

- **Elliott Wildlife Values Project (EWVP):** Launched more than 10 years ago, the EWVP provides girls with resources, collaborations, and opportunities that enable girls to explore nature, protect the environment, and develop a lifelong commitment to wildlife conservation.
- **First LEGO League (FLL):** FLL introduces girls to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) using LEGO MINDSTORMS, programmable robotics that test girls' technical skills and expose them to leadership skills.
- **NASA collaboration:** Girl Scouts and NASA first collaborated more than 15 years ago, with a shared goal of exposing girls to science careers, creating summer internships for girls, hosting field trips relating to Earth and solar exploration, creating community outreach programs, and providing adult volunteers with training opportunities. To date, more than 100,000 girls have engaged in this program.

Girl Scout Traditions: Pass it On!

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important, and are still practiced today. This section describes annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions.

Girl Scout Calendar

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

- **February 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").
- **Third week in 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.
- **October 31:** Founder's Day (Juliette Gordon Low's birthday).

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. February 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 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, 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 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 journey, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create.

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons: to open or close meetings, give out awards, welcome new members, renew memberships, and honor special Girl Scout accomplishments. A brief list, in alphabetical order, follows, 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.)
- **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** ceremony honors 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 is usually held for a group or combined with the 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 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.

For more about ceremonies, visit www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/ceremonies.

Hosting a Girl-Led Event



If you're working with girls who want to host an event—large or small—be sure girls are leading the event-planning, instead of sitting by passively while you or another adult plans the event. To get girls started, ask them to think about the following questions:

- What sort of event do we have in mind?
- Who is our intended audience?
- Does the audience have to be invited, or can anyone come?
- What's our main topic or focus?
- What's our objective—what do we hope to accomplish at the end of the day?
- Will one or more speakers need to be invited? If so, who? How do we find speakers?
- Where will the event take place?
- Is there a charge for this venue?
- Is the venue large enough to accommodate the audience?
- Do we have to obtain permission to use this venue? If so, from whom?
- Are there adequate facilities for the audience? If not, how much will extra portable toilets cost, and how many do we need?
- Is there adequate parking or a drop-off point for girls?
- Do we need tables? chairs? podiums? microphones? speakers?
- What sort of entertainment will we provide?
- Will we provide or sell refreshments? If so, what kinds?
- How many chaperones will we need? Who will we ask?
- What emergency care do we need to plan for? Is the event large enough that local police and fire departments need to be notified?
- Do we need to purchase additional insurance for non-Girl Scouts?
- How will we advertise the event?
- What decorations will we use?
- Will we give away any keepsakes?
- Will we charge for the event?
- Who will set up the event?
- Who will clean up after the event?
- How will we determine whether the event was a success?

Ideas for girl-led events with family, friends, and community experts are also available in the journey adult guides!

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 yourself, 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 in 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. To do the handshake, 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. The sign is made by raising 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 that music creates. In fact, the first *Girl Scout Song Book*, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925. Since then, the organization's love of music has grown along with the girls it has empowered.

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 tips on choosing and leading songs, go to http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp. A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out your council shop or visit the [GSUSA online shop](#).

Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll be working with girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills, and abilities. No matter what a girl's grade level or background, you have the opportunity to engage her in meaningful ways and 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 to meet is at your and your co-volunteers' discretion: It may just be one time for this particular group of girls. Or, if you meet regularly, what day and times work best for the girls, for you, for your co-volunteer(s), and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once per week, twice a month, or 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? If so, which day of the week? At what time?

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 or 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.

Perhaps the following tips go without saying, but in case you're looking for some guidance on choosing a space, consider the following:


- **Cost:** The space should be free to use.
- **Size:** Make sure the space is large enough to hold all the girls in the group while engaged in a variety of activities.
- **Availability:** Be sure the space is available at the time and day you want to meet, for the entire length of time you plan to use the space.
- **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 and that girls and adults with disabilities can safely enter and exit the space.
- **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 _____."

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 difference 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, along with tips for how to make the most of them as you guide and partner with girls. Of course, each girl is an individual, so these are only guidelines that help you get to know the girls.


Girl Scout Daisies 	
At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), 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 (second and third grade), 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>That 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 for listening and following again!</i>

Girl Scout Juniors 	
At the Girl Scout Junior level (fourth and fifth grades), 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>That 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>That 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 (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), 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>That 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 (ninth and tenth grades), 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>That 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>That 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 (eleventh and twelfth grades), 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>That 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>That 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, 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, therefore, is 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 processes and think about how to incorporate them into your group's experiences.

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.

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, 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 it is needed. Try to see that the chances for feeling important, as well as the responsibilities, 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.

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, don't spread your complaint around to others—that won't help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your volunteer support team. If the supervisor cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the supervisor), the issue can be taken to the next

level of supervision and, ultimately, contact your council if you need extra help.

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 shoulds”) 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 your council 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 easy way to check in with girls is to visit [Let Me Know](#), an interactive web site for girls from Microsoft Windows and Girl Scouts. You might also want to direct parents to this site, which includes information about online safety, cyber-bullying, and social networking, among other topics.

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 just signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Suggestions: “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 the 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 into the issues that girls face and the social trends that affect their lives. Visit

www.girlscouts.org/research.

Discussing 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 intimacy and closeness. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face, such as bullying and other conflicts (online and offline), peer pressure, dating, sexual harassment (online and offline), academic or athletic performance, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, and more. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of caring adult who can help girls acquire their own skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates any particular position. Check with your council about which sensitive issues may require additional council support to present and discuss, as well as whether parent/guardian permission is required.

Listen and ask: As the preceding sections suggest, you can help most just by being an empathetic listener. That’s right: Just by listening, you’re helping! Sometimes, you may also find that by asking questions, you can help girls figure out how to get more information and guidance at school or at home. You don’t have to

solve their issues, but you can put them on the trail toward solving them.

Arrange for education: If you observe that girls need or want more information on a topic that concerns them, check with your council about opportunities for arranging topical discussions with experts, on areas such as healthy eating, coping with bullies and cliques, and sex education. Every region of the country differs in terms of what families feel is okay for girls to discuss at various grade levels. So do be sure to check in with your Girl Scout council—many councils advise getting parental permission *before* any planned discussions!

What may seem benign to one person could be a sensitive issue for another, so when you or the girls wish to participate in anything that could be considered controversial (health or education in human sexuality, advocacy projects, work with religious groups, or anything that could yield a political/social debate), put the topic on hold until you've obtained written parental permission, on forms available from your council. 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 are to do when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep them on hand in case a problem arises. For non-Girl Scout activities, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow your council's guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Remember: Don't feel that you have to solve everything! Your role is helping girls get information from trained people who provide it. And if you're unsure who to ask to fill this role, count on your council, which has built relationships with community experts who can help.

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. If you believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, your role is to get her the expert assistance she needs:

- Contact a staff member at your Girl Scout council and find out how to refer the girl and her parent/guardian 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 Guardians

Most parents and guardians 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. 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](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy).

Using “I” Statements

Perhaps the most important tip for communicating with parents/guardians 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/guardians, try the following:

If a Parent or Guardian . . .	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. Project ideas you would like to develop and lead can fit in well with our plan. Please 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.”

Arranging Meetings with Parents/Guardians or a Friends-and-Family Network

A parent/guardian meeting, or a meeting of your friends-and-family network (as encouraged in many of the leadership journeys), is a chance for you to get to know the families of the girls in your group. Before the meeting, be sure you and/or your co-volunteers have done the following:

- For younger girls, arranged for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too).
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how the GSLE is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters’ Girl Scout experiences.
- Determined when product sales (including Girl Scout Cookie sales) will happen in your council; parents/guardians will absolutely want to know!
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting.
- Used the Friends and Family pages provided in the adults guides for many of the journeys, or created your own one-page information sheet (contact information for you and co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to bring with them, and information on how to get a journey’s resources (books, awards, and keepsakes) and other merchandise like sashes, vests, T-shirts, and so on).
- Gathered or created supplies, including a sign-in sheet, an information sheet, permission forms for parents/guardians (also available from your council), health history forms (as required by your council), and GSUSA registration forms.
- Prepared yourself to ask parents and guardians for help, being as specific as you can about the kind of help you will need (the journey’s Friends and Family pages will come in handy here)!

Registering Girls in Girl Scouting



Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). GSUSA membership dues are valid for one year. Membership dues (currently \$12) are sent by the council to GSUSA; no portion of the dues stays with the council. Membership dues may not be transferred to another member and is not refundable.

Pre-registration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. Girls are encouraged to register early to avoid the “all rush. Early registration helps ensure uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from the council, helps girls and councils plan ahead, and gets girls excited about all the great stuff they want to do as Girl Scouts next year. Girl Scout grade level is determined by the current membership year beginning October 1.

Lifetime membership is available at a reduced rate. A lifetime member must be at least 18 years old (or a 17-year-old high-school graduate) and agree to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

You’re free to structure the parent/guardian meeting in whatever way works for you, but the following structure works for many new volunteers:

- As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in. Hand out registration forms and any other paperwork, including a one-page information sheet.
- Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other co-volunteers or helpers. Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout, and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them. Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you’re new to Girl Scouting, don’t worry—just let everyone know you’ll be learning about Girl Scouting together!)
- Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion.
- Discuss the information you prepared for this meeting:
 - All the fun girls are going to have!
 - When and where the group will meet and some examples of activities the girls might choose to do
 - That a parent/guardian permission form is used for activities outside the group’s normal meeting time and place and the importance of completing and returning it
 - How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (e-mail, text messaging, a phone tree, fliers the girls take home, posting on an invitation-only group you create on Facebook are just some ideas)
 - The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law
 - The Girl Scout program, especially what the GSLE is and what the program does for their daughters
 - When Girl Scout Cookies (and other products) will go on sale and how participation in product sales teaches life skills and helps fund group activities
 - The cost of membership, which includes annual GSUSA dues, any group payments (ask your council), optional uniforms, and any resources parents/guardians will need to buy (such as a girl’s book for a journey)
 - The availability of financial assistance and how the Girl Scout Cookie Program and other product sales generate funds for the group treasury
 - That families can also make donations to the council—and why they might want to do that!
 - That you may be looking for additional volunteers, and in which areas you are looking (be as specific as possible!)
- Collect the completed registration forms.
- Remind the group of the next meeting (if you’ll have one) and thank everyone for attending. Hold the next meeting when it makes sense for you and your co-volunteers—that may be in

two months if face-to-face meetings are best, or not at all if you're diligent about keeping in touch with parents/guardians via e-mail, phone calls, or some other form of communication.

- After the meeting, follow up with any parents/guardians who did not attend, to connect them with the group, inform them of decisions, and discuss how they can best help the girls.

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, 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 being 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.

As you think about where, when, and how often to meet with your group, you will find yourself considering the needs, resources, safety, and beliefs of all members and potential members. As you do this, include the special needs of any members who have disabilities, or whose parents or guardians have disabilities. But please don't rely on visual cues to inform you of a disability: Approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has a disability—that's one in five people, of every socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and religion.

As a volunteer, your interactions with girls present an opportunity to improve the way society views girls (and their parents/guardians) 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.

If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful, simply ask her or her parent/guardian. If you are frank and accessible, it's likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.

It's important for all girls to be rewarded based on their best efforts—not on the completion of a task. Give any girl the opportunity to do her best and she will. Sometimes that means changing a few rules or

approaching an activity in a more creative way. Here are some examples of ways to modify activities:

- Invite a girl to complete an activity after she has observed others doing it.
- If you are visiting a museum to view sculpture, find out if a girl who is blind might be given permission to touch the pieces.
- If an activity requires running, a girl who is unable to run could be asked to walk or do another physical movement.

In addition, note that people-first language puts the person before the disability.

Say ...	Instead of ...
She has a learning disability.	She is learning disabled.
She has a developmental delay.	She is mentally retarded; she is slow.
She uses a wheelchair.	She is wheelchair-bound.

When interacting with a girl (or parent/guardian) with a disability, consider these final tips:

- When talking to a girl with a disability, speak directly to her, not through a parent/guardian or friend.
- It's okay to offer assistance to a girl with a disability, but wait until your offer is accepted before you begin to help. Listen closely to any instructions the person may have.
- Leaning on a girl's wheelchair is invading her space and is considered annoying and rude.
- When speaking to a girl who is deaf and using an interpreter, speak to the girl, not to her interpreter.
- When speaking for more than a few minutes to a girl who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at eye level.
- When greeting a girl with a visual disability, always identify yourself and others. You might say, "Hi, it's Sheryl. Tara is on my right, and Chris is on my left."

Registering 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.

Chapter 4: Safety-Wise

In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always a top priority. Here's what you need to know.

Knowing Your Responsibilities

You, the parents/guardians of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections flesh out who's responsible for what.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer: Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 21 years old (the age of majority defined by the state) and must be screened by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow your council's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.
5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls' families.
6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use

foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.

9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group web sites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout–approved product sales and efforts.

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

You want to engage each parent or guardian to help you work toward ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents and guardians that they are expected to:

- Provide permission for their daughters to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place, involve overnight travel, involve the use of special equipment, and/or cover sensitive issues.
- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner and inform you if someone other than the parent or guardian will drop off or pick up the child.
- Provide their daughters with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- Be aware of appropriate behavior expected of their daughters, as determined by the council and you.
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

Responsibilities of Girls

Girls who learn about and practice safe and healthy behaviors are likely to establish lifelong habits of safety

consciousness. For that reason, each Girl Scout is expected to:

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning.
- Listen to and follow your instructions and suggestions.
- Learn and practice safety skills.
- Learn to “think safety” at all times and to be prepared.
- Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation.
- Know how, when, and where to get help when needed.

Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scouts adult-to-girl ratios show the *minimum* number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Councils may also establish *maximums* due to size or cost restrictions.) These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you’ll find the chart extremely helpful.

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

Here are some examples: If you’re meeting with 17 Daisies, you’ll need three unrelated adults (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), at least one of whom is female. (If this isn’t making sense to you, follow the chart: you need two adults for 12 Daisies and one more adult for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three adults.) If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of which is female (because, on the chart, two adults can manage up to 25 Cadettes).

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 21 years old, the age of majority defined by the state.

Transporting Girls

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal time and place—in which a group will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an approved adult* volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

*“Adult” is defined by the age of majority in each state.

Approaching Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What's safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, call your council staff with full details and don't proceed without approval. Err on the side of caution and make the safety of girls your most important consideration. Prior to any activity, read the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints (available on your council's web site or from your support team in some other format) related to any activity you plan to do with girls.

When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls' individual skills—bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry, or under stress. Also use activities as opportunities for building teamwork, which is one of the outcomes for the connect key in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations)

Each council handles health histories differently. The staff at your council office may take care of obtaining and storing girls' health histories—which may include a physician's examination and a list of immunizations—as needed. Or, you may be asked to maintain these records for your group. Either way, keep in mind that information from a health examination is confidential and may be shared only with people who must know this information (such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian, and a health practitioner).

For various reasons, some parents/guardians may object to immunizations or medical examinations. Councils must attempt to make provisions for these girls to attend Girl Scout functions in a way that accommodates these concerns.

It is important for you to also be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have.

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or guardian. (Your council can provide this form.) Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen, or diabetes medication.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, and seafood. This means that, before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies, or chips), *ask* whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products, or wheat! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with their parents/guardians is always a good idea.

Girl Scout Activity Insurance

A portion of the individual annual membership dues pays for supplementary insurance for the member only. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, after the individual's primary insurance pays out. This is one reason that all adults and girls should be registered members. Non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are not covered by basic coverage.

This insurance coverage is *not* intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. And it does not duplicate medical-expense benefits collected under other programs, so after approximately \$100 in benefits have been paid under this plan, the family's medical insurance takes over. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available.

An optional plan of activity insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These plans are secondary insurance that individuals are entitled to receive while participating in any approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Optional insurance coverage is available for any Girl Scout activity that involves non-Girl Scouts or lasts longer than three days and two nights, or involves international travel. Contact your council representative to find out how to apply.

Providing Emergency Care

As you know, emergencies can happen. Girls need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to adults any accidents, illnesses, or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities. To this end, you can help girls:

- **Know what to report.** See the "Procedures for Accidents" section later in this chapter.
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Certain extreme-weather conditions may occur in your area. Please consult with your council for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons, and building-security responses.** Every girl and adult must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- **Assemble a well-stocked first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First-aid administered in the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911.

First-Aid/CPR

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be first-aid/CPR-certified. For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in council-approved first-aid/CPR, do it! You can take advantage of first-aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, American Heart Association, or other sponsoring organizations approved by your council. Try to take age-specific CPR training, too—that is, take child CPR if you're working with younger girls and adult CPR when working with older girls and adults.

Caution: First-aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts' requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you're taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or any course that has online components, get approval from your support team or council.

First-Aider

A first-aider is an adult volunteer who has taken Girl Scout–approved first-aid and CPR training that includes specific instructions for child CPR. If, through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, or American Heart Association, you have a chance to be fully trained in first-aid and CPR, doing so may make your activity-planning go a little more smoothly. The Safety Activity Checkpoints always tell you when a first-aider needs to be present.

There are two categories of first-aiders:

- **First-aider (level 1):** The presence of a first-aider (level 1) is required for many group activities. The course required to be a first-aider (level 1) is one that offers standard first-aid and CPR, preferably with a focus on children.
- **First-aider (level 2):** The presence of a first-aider (level 2) is required at resident camp, and at any camp activity with more than 200 participants. In addition, some activities require a first-aider (level 2); the Safety Activity Checkpoints state clearly whether a first-aider (level 2) is needed. First-aiders (level 2) pass the same course as first-aiders (level 1), and also have emergency response/first response, sports safety, wilderness first-aid, and/or advanced first-aid and CPR training. Each organization has a different name for its training, so be sure to ask before you take the course whether a training course fulfills the level-2 requirements.

Note: The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders (level 1 or 2): physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic, and emergency medical technician.

First-Aid Kit

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its [Anatomy of a First Aid Kit](#). (Note that the Red Cross's suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/guardian permission.) You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites, and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain your council and emergency telephone numbers (which you can get from your council contact). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms, and health histories may be included, as well.

Procedures for Accidents

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe council procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. Follow established council procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of council staff, parents/guardians, and emergency services such as the police, fire department, or hospital emergency technicians.

After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance, if needed, at the scene, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. Refer all media inquiries (press, radio, TV, etc.) to designated council staff.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, always notify the police. A responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings. Follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, your council, and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

Emergency Contacts During Working Hours:

Metro Jackson Service Center: 601.366.0607

Hattiesburg Service Center: 601.582.1455

Gulf Coast Service Center: 228.864.7215

Meridian Service Center: 601.693.2903

After Hours Emergency Contacts:

Lissa Frank, COO: 662.321.3101

Linda Lauderdale, PR: 601.918.3957

Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances

Helping girls earn and manage money is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Your Girl Scout group is responsible for planning and financing its own activities, with your guidance. This puts girls in charge, giving them the opportunity (with your oversight) to cooperatively set goals, manage a budget, spend responsibly; maintain records; earn social skills; and develop good marketing, entrepreneurial, math, and financial skills.

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through council-sponsored product sale activities (such as Girl Scout Cookie sales), group money-earning activities (council-approved, of course), and any dues your group may charge. (This is in addition to the \$12 annual membership dues that goes to the national organization.) This chapter gives you the ins and outs of establishing a group account, helping girls manage their group finances, practice successful product-sales techniques, review the safety requirements around product sales, and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes.

Establishing an Account

If your group is earning and spending money, the group needs to set up a bank account. If you're taking over an existing group, you may inherit a checking account, but with a new group, you'll want to open a new account. This usually happens when there is money to deposit, such as from group dues, product sales, or group money-earning activities.

Follow these guidelines when opening a troop checking account:

- Your troop bank account must be set up as "Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi Troop # _____"
- There must be two authorized signatures on the troop account.
- You will be requested to complete a bank form (W-9) for the troop account. Do not use your personal tax ID or Social Security number when opening the account. You will use the Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi tax identification number (64-0384222).
- All troops having Girl Scout bank accounts are required to complete a *Troop Bank Account Information* form and submit it to their council representative.
- Keep accurate financial records. Troops are required to submit an annual *Troop Financial Report* (due June 30).
-

Consider these tips when working with a group account:

- Keep group funds in the bank before an activity or trip, paying for as many items in advance of your departure.
- Use debit cards during the activity or trip.
- Make one person responsible for group funds and for keeping a daily account of expenditures.
- Have one or more back-up people who also have debit cards, in case the main card is lost.



Closing a Bank Account

Unused Girl Scout money left in accounts when groups disband become the property of the council. Prior to disbanding, the group may decide to donate any unused funds to a worthwhile organization, to another group, or for girl activities. As when closing a personal account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it, and realize that you may have to close the account in person. Turn remaining funds over to a council staff member.

Money-Earning Basics

Girls earn money in two distinct ways:

- “Council-sponsored product sales” are council-wide sales of Girl Scout–authorized products (such as Girl Scout Cookies, calendars, magazines, or nuts and candy), in which members participate as part of the Girl Scout program.
- “Group money-earning” refers to activities organized by the group (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with adults) and that earn money for the group. These activities must be approved by the council in writing.

Girls’ participation in both council-sponsored product sale activities and group money-earning projects is based upon the following:

- Voluntary participation
- Written permission of each girl’s parent or guardian
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money-earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its activities.
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities, as well as health and safety laws
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

In addition, consider the following reminders or cautions

- Groups are encouraged to participate in council product sales as their primary money-earning activity; any group money-earning shouldn’t compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other council product sales.
- Obtain written approval from your council before a group money-earning event; most councils ask that you submit a request for approval of a group money-earning event form.
- Girl Scouts forbids use of games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash, and product-demonstration parties.
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Money raised is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product sales.
- Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following council procedures.

The best way to earn money for your group is to start with Girl Scout Cookie sales and other council-sponsored product sales. From there, your group may decide to earn additional funds on its own.

Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals

One of your opportunities as a volunteer is to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps for the girls:

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities.** What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?
2. **Create a budget.** Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the group's account balance, projected Cookie sale proceeds, and so on).
3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.
4. **Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will cookie and other product sales—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group's goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group's financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.
5. **Write it out.** Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval from your council and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

Remember: It's great for girls to have opportunities, like the Girl Scout Cookie sale, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money. Take-action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money!

Reviewing Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level

As with other activities, girls progress in their financial and sales abilities as they get older. This section gives you some examples of the abilities of girls at each grade level.

Girl Scout Daisies

The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting.

Parents/guardians may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.

Girls can participate in Girl Scout Cookie sales and other council-sponsored product sales.

Daisies are always paired with an adult when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but adults handle the money and keep the girls secure.

Girl Scout Brownies



The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and shares some of the group-budgeting responsibilities.

Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on).

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls may decide to pay dues.

Girl Scout Juniors



The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record-keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer (selected by the girls).

Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group, on the basis of plans and income from the group dues.

Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.

Girls budget for take-action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.

Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors



Girls estimate costs based on plans.

Girls determine the amount of group dues (if any) and the scope of money-earning projects.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning projects.

Girls budget for extended travel, take-action projects, and leadership projects.

Girls may be involved in seeking donations for take-action projects, with council approval.

Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and group volunteers.

Girls budget for take-action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.

One critical task for each group, no matter what grade level, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the group's volunteer, you're in charge of making sure money is spent wisely and that excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and tracking all income, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as *they* learn to keep impeccable records.

Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program

Did you know that the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led business in the country, with sales of over seven-hundred million per year for girls and their communities nationwide?

That's right. The Girl Scout Cookie sale is the leading entrepreneurial program for girls: No university has produced as many female business owners as the Girl Scout Cookie Program has.

If you have a moment, watch the latest Girl Scout [What Can a Cookie Do?](#) video for an inspiring look into just how powerful those treats—and the girls who sell them—can be.

Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored products are an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. With every season of cookies, another generation of girls learn five important skills:

- Goal setting
- Decision making
- Money management
- People skills
- Business ethics

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

A Sweet Tradition



It has been more than 90 years since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand.

Two commercial bakers are currently licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies—Little Brownie Bakers and ABC/Interbake Foods—and each council selects the baker of its choice. Each baker gets to name its own cookies (which is why some cookies have two names) and gets to decide which flavors it will offer in a given year, besides the three mandatory flavors (Thin Mints, Do-Si-Dos[®]/Peanut Butter Sandwich, and Trefoils/Shortbread). For additional information on cookie varieties, including nutritional details, visit www.girlscoutscookies.org.

Product Sales: Financial Literacy and the Girl Scout Leadership

Experience

Selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products (which may include nuts, candies, and magazines) gives girls a chance to run a business and practice leadership skills they can use in their lives. Girls will enjoy all the benefits this important component of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience has to offer: They'll engage in planning and goal-setting (aiming to achieve their personal best), teamwork, marketing, money management (including the importance of saving for future needs), and the enduring skill of customer service. As girls grow, they will get to know their products (ingredients and calories, for example), and they design innovative and creative marketing strategies and tools. Girls will also be encouraged to share with customers how product sales help their council and their community. Volunteers can help girls develop leadership skills while they engage in Girl Scout Cookie activities by using the Girl Scout processes of girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning. And as they participate in product sales, girls will:

- **Discover** a strong sense of self and gain practical life skills when they create personal goals, deliver presentations, and find ways to customize a marketing plan, for example. A girl can discover a lot about herself and her values as she makes decisions about money-earning, customer-management, and so on.
- **Connect** with their group members as they set group goals and develop a list of positions related to cookie activities such as accounting manager, event planner, public relations specialist, and graphic designer. Girls can learn about their communities as they meet families, mentors, and business owners who have worked in these roles. Girls can also use the Girl Scout Cookie Program as an opportunity to talk to customers about ways to improve the community or to solicit ideas for a local take-action idea bank.
- **Take action** as they learn to map neighborhood business and other resources that can help them consider community service needs. Girls use product-sale money to make a difference in their communities, whether through a take-action project or a philanthropic donation. And don't forget: money that goes to the council from product sales allows councils to take action by serving all Girl Scouts.

Determining Who Can Participate

All girl members (including Daisies), who take part in any number of ways (travel, camp, series, events, or troop), are eligible to participate in council-sponsored product sales activities, under volunteer supervision. Your council provides learning opportunities on the procedures to follow during each sale. Your council also establishes guidelines and procedures for conducting the sale and determines how the proceeds and recognition system will be managed.

Knowing Where Proceeds Go

Your council will provide a breakdown of "how the cookie crumbles" in your council. Share this information with girls and their parents/guardians. Proceeds resulting from product sales support program activities—in fact, council-sponsored product sales are a primary way in which your council funds itself. The percentage of money to be allocated to participating groups (like yours) is determined by the council and explained to girls and adults as part of the product sale activity orientation.

The income from product sales does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for incentives and credits that they put toward Girl Scout activities, such as camp, travel, and Girl Scout membership dues for the next year.

Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate awards related to product sale activities, and each council may choose to provide items such as participation patches, incentives, and council credit for event fees, camp

fees, grants for travel and take-action projects, as well as materials and supplies for program activities. The council plan for recognition applies equally to all girls participating in the product sale activity. Whenever possible, councils try to involve girls in the selection of awards and administration of money given to girls from product sales.

Using Online Resources to Market Cookies and Other Products

Girls are texting, calling, e-mailing, Tweeting, and Facebooking—and those are all effective ways that girls 13 and older can promote cookie and other product sales. The following sections detail how girls can use electronic marketing, social networking, and group web sites to gather sale commitments from family, friends, and previous customers. But first, please keep in mind that girls:

- **Can market to and collect indications of interest from customers within their councils' zip codes.** Refer prospects that come from outside council jurisdiction to the council finder at www.girlscoutcookies.org. Family members are the exception to this rule.
- **Cannot have customers pay online** (such as through a shopping cart function on a web site the girls create). Girl Scout magazine sales are the exception to this rule.
- **Must sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge** (available at www.gsusa.org) before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be under the supervision of adults.
- **Cannot expose a girl's e-mail address, physical address, or phone number to the public.** When writing e-mail messages or online announcements, girls should sign with their first name only, along with their group number or name and their council name.

For girls in fifth grade and above, have your group visit [Let Me Know](#), a site addressing Internet safety for teens and tweens. Girls can even earn an online award for completing activities on this site!

Daisies: Stay Especially Safe!



Girl Scout Daisies are too young to be marketing online through their group, parent or guardian web sites, or social networking sites. For this reason, Girl Scout Daisies are allowed to send out e-mails only when working directly with an adult. Daisies and their adult volunteers use only blind e-mails or the online marketing tools provided by GSUSA product vendors on their web sites.

Contacting Prospects Electronically

Girls may use phone calls, text messages, IMs, and e-mails as online marketing tools to let family, friends, and former customers know about the sale and collect indications of interest. Product-related e-mail is not intended to be spam (unwanted texts or e-mails), however, so remind girls to be sure that their messages will be welcomed by the receiver.

When girls are marketing cookies online, remind them to always use a group e-mail address (such as troop457@yahoo.com), an adult's personal e-mail address, or a blind address (one that does not reveal the address to the recipient). In addition, be sure to discuss with girls the need to treat customer e-mail addresses from current and past years—as well as phone numbers, IM addresses, Facebook accounts, and mail addresses—with respect; they are private and must be kept so.

Using Social Networks

A girl (or group of girls) over the age of 13 may work in partnership with an adult to market cookies and other products online, using the social networking site (such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, or LinkedIn) of the adult. Social networking sites are fun, fast ways to get out an urgent message, such as, "It's Girl Scout Cookie time!" Posting or tweeting such a message will get the attention of friends and family.

Before girls use social networks as a marketing tool, keep the following in mind:

- Girls must have parental permission to use social networks.
- Girls must meet age limits set by the provider, which is 13 and above in most cases, as per the United States Child Online Privacy and Protection Act and the Child Online Protection Act.
- Any use of photos requires a photo-release form signed by parents/guardians of the girls pictured and the signature of any adults pictured.
- Any use of online video sharing sites (such as YouTube), where the video is representing Girl Scouts or Girl Scout products, must follow specific requirements for that site, as well as council guidelines. Girl Scout photo release forms must also be signed by parents/guardians and any adults pictured. (In other words, this is not an easy venture, but if you and the girls are willing, it's worth the investment.)

Setting Up a Group Web Site

Groups whose girls meet age criteria (13 years or older) and have parental permission may set up a group web site or social networking site. This site must be approved by the council, yes, but it can be a fantastic way for girls to share information, market Girl Scout products, and talk about their take-action projects.

Before you and the girls design a web site, remember that the web is an open forum for anyone, including potential predators. Documented instances of cyberstalkers make it imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults is not disclosed on a web site. To ensure the girls' safety:

- Use girls' first names only.
- Never post girls' addresses, phone numbers, or e-mail addresses.
- Never, ever, ever post addresses of group meeting places or dates and times of meetings, events, or trips. (An adult volunteer who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of girls should use e-mail instead of posting details on a web site, unless that site is password protected.)
- Always have a parent's or guardian's signature on a photo release form before using pictures of girls on a web site.
- Make yours a site that does not allow outsiders to post messages to the site, or make sure all postings (such as message boards or guest books) have adult oversight and are screened prior to posting live.
- Don't violate copyright law by using designs, text from magazines or books, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder (and, generally, this permission is pretty tough to get!). Girl Scout trademarks (such as the trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins, and badges and patches) can be used only in accordance with guidelines for their use. (The Girl Scout trefoil, for example, may not be animated or used as wallpaper for a web site.) Check with your council's web site for

complete graphics guidelines and approvals.

Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies and Other Products

A few other considerations will help keep girls safe:

- Volunteers and Girl Scout council staff do not sell cookies and other products; girls sell them.
- Parents and guardians must grant permission for girls to participate and are informed about the girls' whereabouts when they are engaged in product sale activities. Specific permission must be obtained when a girl intends to use the Internet for product marketing. A parent, guardian, or other adult must know each girl's whereabouts when she is engaged in product sales, and if and when she is involved on the Internet.
- Girl should be identifiable as Girl Scouts by wearing a Membership Pin, official uniform, tunic, sash or vest, or other Girl Scout clothing.
- Adult volunteers must monitor, supervise, and guide the sale activities of all age levels.
- Girl Scout Daisies (in kindergarten and first grade) may be involved in council-sponsored product sale activities, but they cannot collect money in any other way except through group dues or parental contributions.
- Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who participate in door-to-door sales must be supervised by (but do not need to be directly accompanied by) an adult. Girls of all grade levels must *always* use the buddy system.
- Money due for sold products is collected when the products are delivered to the customer (or as directed by your council). Girls will need to know whether they can accept checks and to whom customers should write checks—find out from your council staff.
- Personal customer information should remain private. Customer credit-card information should not be collected by girls and should not be asked for on any form collected by girls.
- Girls can participate in no more than two council-sponsored product sale activities each year, and only one of these may be a cookie sale.
- A girl's physical address, social networking page address, IM name, Skype name or number, or cell number should never be revealed to anyone outside her immediate circle of family and friends. You've heard it before, but it bears repeating.
- Girls can *market* cookies and other products by sending e-mails to friends, family members, and former customers, as long as they use a group e-mail address, the address of a parent/guardian or adult volunteer, a blind e-mail address (in which the recipients cannot see the sender's e-mail address), or the online e-mail tools provided by cookie vendors. Girls 13 and older can also use a parent's/guardian's or adult volunteer's social networking site (such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and LinkedIn) to do the same.
- Sales may not be *transacted* on the Internet (for example, through a site that has an electronic shopping cart), except for magazine sales. Girls can, however, receive order commitments for cookies sales via e-mail or the Internet. In other words, potential customers can relay (via e-mail or a Facebook post, for example) that, "Yes! I'd like four boxes of Thin Mints and three boxes of Shortbread cookies."
- Before beginning any cookies or other product sales with your group, refer to the cookies section of [Girl Scout Central](#) and www.girlscoutcookies.org.

Additional Group Money-Earning

Product sales are a great way to earn the funds necessary for girls to travel. If income from the product sale isn't enough, however, girls have more options available to them. Although you cannot resell products, you can offer services, such as the following:

Collections/Drives:

- Cell phones for refurbishment
- Used ink cartridges turned in for money
- Christmas-tree recycling

Food/Meal Events:

- Lunch box auction (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off)
- Themed meals, like high tea, Indian meal, Mexican dinner (depending on girls' destination)

Service(s):

- Service-a-thon (people sponsor a girl doing service; funds go to support trip)
- Babysitting for holiday (New Year's Eve) or council events
- Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, shoveling snow, walking pets
- Cooking class or other specialty class

Other:

- Donated frequent-flyer miles
- Silent auction (donations from local businesses or Girl Scout families auctioned off)

Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Sponsors help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. The sponsor's contribution can then be recognized by arranging for the girls to send thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a take-action project.

For information on working with a sponsor, consult your council, who can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting responsibility, and any council policies or practices that must be followed. Your council may already have relationships with certain organizations, or may know of some reasons *not* to collaborate with certain organizations.

Appendix: For Troop Volunteers

Girls and adults participating in troops usually stay together for an entire school year and meet once a week, once a month, or twice a month—how often is up to you and the girls. Troops can meet just about anywhere, as long as the location is safe, easily accessible to girls and adults, and within a reasonable commute (“reasonable” having different definitions in different areas: In rural areas, a two-hour drive may be acceptable; in an urban area, a 30-minute subway ride may be too long). In each meeting, girls participate in fun activities that engage them in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Troops provide a flexible way for girls to meet for nine to twelve months. Some ideas include:

- Fourteen Girl Scout Brownies who meet twice a month from November through March at a local community center
- Seven girls who are homeschooled and meet weekly as a Girl Scout Cadette troop
- Girls who meet together once a week at their juvenile detention center to participate in Girl Scout activities

Forming a Troop Committee

You’ll want to involve other adults in the troop—there’s no need to go it alone or depend on too few adults! Many hands make light work, and the role is more fun when it’s shared. Think about the people you know whom you admire, who connect with children (especially girls), who are dependable and responsible, and who realistically have time to spend volunteering. (Remember that these adults will need to register as Girl Scout members, fill out volunteer application forms, take online learning sessions, and review written resources.) Consider business associates, neighbors, former classmates, friends, and so on. If you have trouble finding reliable, quality volunteers to assist, talk to your volunteer support team for advice and support.

Remember: Be sure every chaperone reviews and follows the twelve Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available both in the Quick-Start Guide to this handbook and in the “Safety-Wise” chapter.

Your troop committee members might help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Locating adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized troop meeting
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Managing troop records

A troop committee may be made up of general members or may include specific positions, such as

- **Cookie Manager:** A volunteer who would manage all aspects of Girl Scout Cookie sales
- **Transportation Coordinator:** The volunteer you’d look to whenever you need to transport girls for any reason; this person would have volunteers available to drive and chaperone
- **Record Keeper:** A treasurer/secretary rolled into one person—someone to keep track of the money and keep the books

Set up positions that work for you, and draw on other volunteers who possess skill sets that you may lack. When you’re ready to invite parents, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and other respected adults to work with you, send them a letter and invite them to their first troop committee meeting. (**Note:** The adult guides for the Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie, and Junior leadership journeys include a sample welcome letter and a friends/family checklist to assist you in expanding your troop’s adult network.)

Holding Troop Meetings

To plan and hold successful troop meetings, follow the steps in each of the following sections. You'll feel confident and comfortable in no time!

Reviewing the Six Elements of a Troop Meeting

Troop meetings usually include the six following components. (Note that journey sample session plans are also arranged in a similar way!)

Start-up	Start-up activities are planned so that when girls arrive at the meeting they have something to do until the meeting starts. For younger girls, it could be coloring pages; teen girls might jot down a journal entry or just enjoy a little time to talk.
Opening	The opening focuses the meeting and allows girls to start the meeting. Each troop decides how to open their own meeting—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and then add a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other ceremony designed by the girls. Girl Scout Brownies, for example, might create a new tradition by skipping in a circle while singing a song. Ceremonies, even when brief or humorous, make Girl Scout time special.
Business	Troop business may include taking attendance, collecting dues, making announcements, and planning an upcoming event or trip. This is a good time for girls to lead, especially as they grow up! (Note that some troops move the business portion of the meeting to an earlier slot.)
Activities	<p>Activities will depend on what the girls want to do in their troop and how they want to spend their collective time. Outdoor time is important, so encourage the girls to an activity at a park or forest. If girls are interested in animals, encourage the girls to plan a visit to a zoo or animal shelter. As you engage in one of the two leadership journeys, review the “Sample Sessions at a Glance” in the adult guide for journey activity ideas.</p> <p>Treats are an option some troops decide to include in their meetings and range from a bottle of soap bubbles or a jump rope to or a food snack. If girls choose to include snacks, guide them to consider the health of a potential snack, as well as possible food allergies. Enlist the help of parents or guardians by asking them to sign up and bring a treat. You'll also find plenty of snack ideas and sign-up forms in the adult guide of most leadership journeys.</p>
Clean-up	Clean-up is a great habit for girls to get their meeting space back to the way it was when they arrived—maybe even cleaner! Girls can also take leadership of the cleaning themselves, deciding who does what. They might even enjoy the tradition of a kaper chart (a chore chart that lists all the chores and assigns girls' names to each), so that everyone takes turns at each responsibility.
Closing	The closing lets the girls know that the troop meeting is ending. Many girls close with the friendship circle, in which each girl stands in a circle, puts her right arm over her left, and holds the hand of the girl standing next to her. The friendship squeeze is started by one girl, and then passed around the circle until it comes back to the girl who started it. When the squeeze is finished, girls twist clockwise out of the circle lifting their arms and turning around and out of the circle.

You help each troop member do her part to ensure the meeting and activities are enriching and fun. Based on their grade levels and abilities, girls may decide and plan opening and closing activities, bring and prepare treats, teach songs or games, and clean up. As girls grow, they can show and teach younger members about Girl Scouting. They can also assist you in preparing materials for activities. For trips, campouts, parent

meetings, and multi-troop events, girls may be responsible for shopping, packing equipment, handing out programs, cleaning up, gathering wood, and so on. As long as you pay attention to grade level and maturity, what girls can do is endless!

Letting Girls Lead

Many troops employ a democratic system of governance so that all members have the opportunity to express their interests and feelings and share in the planning and coordination of activities. Girls partner with you and other adults, and you facilitate, act as a sounding board, and ask and answer questions. Girls from Daisies through Ambassadors will gain confidence and leadership skills when given the opportunity to lead their activities, learn cooperatively as a group, and learn by doing instead of by observing.

The following are some traditions troops have used for girl-led governance, but these are just examples. Journeys offer examples of team decision-making, too.

- **Daisy/Brownie Circle:** While sitting in a circle (sometimes called a ring), girls create a formal group decision-making body. The circle is an organized time for girls to express their ideas and talk about activities they enjoy, and you play an active role in facilitating discussion and helping them plan. Girls often vote to finalize decisions. If girls are talking over each other, consider passing an object, such as a talking stick, that entitles one girl to speak at a time.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Patrol or Team System:** In this system, large troops divide into small groups, with every member playing a role. Teams of four to six girls are recommended so that each girl gets a chance to participate and express her opinions. Patrols may be organized by interests or activities that feed into a take-action project, with each team taking responsibility for some part of the total project, and girls may even enjoy coming up with names for their teams.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Executive Board:** In the executive board system (also called a steering committee), one leadership team makes decisions for the entire troop. The board's responsibility is to plan activities and assign jobs based on interests and needs, and the rest of the troop decides how to pass their ideas and suggestions to the executive board throughout the year. The executive board usually has a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer and holds its own meetings to discuss troop matters. Limit the length of time each girl serves on the executive board so all troop members can participate during the year.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Town Meeting:** Under the town meeting system, business is discussed and decisions are made at meetings attended by all the girls in the troop. As in the patrol and executive board systems, everyone gets the chance to participate in decision-making and leadership. Your role is to act as a moderator, who makes sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that all ideas are considered.

Transporting Girls



How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal time and place—in which a group will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an approved adult* volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

*“Adult” is defined by the age of majority in each state. In Mississippi, the age of majority is 21.

Looking at a Sample Troop Year

Here is just one example of how you could set up your troop year.

- Hold a parent/guardian meeting.
- Open a checking account, if needed.
- Register all the girls in the troop.
- Meet together for the first time, allowing the girls to decide how they can learn each others' names and find out more about each other.
- Kick off a leadership journey with the opening ceremony recommended in the first sample session, or a trip or special event that fits the theme. Have the girls brainstorm and plan any trip or event.
- Enjoy the full journey, including its take-action project.
- Along the way, add in related badge activities that girls will enjoy and that will give them a well-rounded year.
- Have the girls plan, budget for, and work on their Girl Scout Cookie sale.
- Help girls plan a field trip or other travel opportunity.
- Encourage girls to plan a culminating ceremony for the journey, including awards presentations, using ideas in the journey girls' book and/or adult guide.
- Pre-register girls for next year.
- Camp out!
- Participate in a council-wide event with girls from around your region.
- Have the girls plan and hold a bridging ceremony for girls continuing on to the next Girl Scout grade level.

Reengaging Girls

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 residence camp, travel opportunities, series offerings, and events your council may offer. Older girls, especially, enjoy these shorter-term, flexible ways to be Girl Scouts.
- Some girls will be excited to bridge to the next grade-level in Girl Scouting, and will look to you for guidance on how to hold a bridging ceremony. Even if you're not sure of your continued participation with Girl Scouts (and we hope you will find lots of exciting ways to be involved, even if leading a troop no longer fits your life), be sure to capture their excitement and work with them as a plan a meaningful bridging ceremony.
- If you plan to stay with this troop, but some girls are bridging to the next grade level, talk to your council about which troop they might enter next. And if you find that a troop isn't available for these girls, work with your council to find other options—for example, series, events, and travel!
- 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. And if you're a little worn out but are interested in staying with Girl Scouts in other, flexible ways, be sure to let your council know how you'd like to be a part of girls' lives in the future. Are you ready to volunteer at camp? help organize a series or event? take a trip? The possibilities are endless.

Appendix: For Travel Volunteers

Not only do some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while taking trips, but travel also offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership skills. This appendix helps you prepare girls for local, regional, or international travel of any scope and duration.

Juliette Low World Friendship Fund

To honor Juliette Gordon Low's love of travel, of experiencing different cultures, and of making friends, Girl Scouts created the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund in 1927. Today, this fund supports girls' international travel, participation in adult learning, and attendance at other international events—any event that fosters global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 145 nations. Click [here](#) to find out more or to donate to the fund!

Traveling with Girls

Girls love trips. And Girl Scouts is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take exciting trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—that is, one activity leads to the next. Girl Scout Daisies, for example, can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and experience and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips in Girl Scouting's ladder of leadership:

- **Short trips to points of interest in the neighborhood (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.
- **Day trip (Brownies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home.
- **Overnight trips (Brownies and older):** One (or possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not so long as to generate homesickness.
- **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or a stay in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls' home region (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and so on). Planning a trip to a large museum—and many offer unique opportunities for girls to actually spend the night on museum grounds—makes for an exciting experience for girls.
- **National trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component—this often means no Disney and no cruises, but can incorporate some incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.
- **International trips (Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation; when girls show an interest in traveling abroad,

contact your council to get permission to plan the trip and download the [Global Travel Toolkit](#). Visiting one of the four World Centers is a great place to start, but also consider traveling with worldwide service organizations. Recently, girls have traveled to rural Costa Rica to volunteer at an elementary school, to Mexico to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and to India to witness the devastation of poverty in urban slums.

Although some girls who are in a group (for example, a troop of Cadettes) may decide to travel together, opportunities exist for girls who are not otherwise involved in Girl Scouts to get together specifically for the purpose of traveling locally, regionally, and even internationally. Girls can travel regardless of how else they are—or aren't—participating in Girl Scouting.

Using Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* in Their Travels

Girl Scout travel is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. Girls choose one of the three series of journeys throughout their travel-planning process, and the journey helps girls lead their trip-planning, work cooperatively to plan every aspect of the trip, and learn through their travels what works and what doesn't. As girls spend weeks, months, or even years group-planning a trip, the journey will help ensure that they include an extensive take-action component, and along the way they'll naturally engage in the three keys to leadership: discover, connect, and take action.

Tying your trip to the topic of the journey book should be a cinch. For example, if Cadette girls have chosen *MEdia*, they can read online newspapers from the area to which they're traveling before their trip—and evaluate when they arrive how well the media reflected the realities there. If Senior girls are using *SOW WHAT?*, they can plan to observe agricultural practices in other parts of the country or around the world. Ambassadors using *BLISS: Live It! Give It!* can build a trip around dreaming big—and empowering others in their community to dream big, too.

If girls also want to complete badge requirements as part of their trip, they can. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, which fits perfectly into planning a trip. In addition, girls can explore other badge topics, depending on the focus of their trip. For examples, Cadettes can explore the food in other regions or countries for their New Cuisines badge, Seniors can find out about international business customs as part of their Business Etiquette badge, and Ambassadors can work on their Photography badge while documenting their trip.

Be sure to visit the "Girl Scouting as a National Experience" chapter in this handbook to find out more about the three exciting series of journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*.

To ensure that any travel you do with girls infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the girls' brainstorming and planning—but never doing the work for them. Allow the girls to lead, learn collaboratively, and learn by doing (and by making mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

Travel Progression Checklist



If your group is thinking about travel, consider first whether the girls are mature enough to handle the trip. In determining a group's readiness for travel, assess the group's:

- Ability to be away from their parents and their home
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations
- Ability to make decisions well and easily
- Previous cross-cultural experiences
- Ability to get along with each other and handle challenges
- Ability to work well as a team
- Skills and interests
- Language skills (where applicable)

Seeking Council Permission

Before most trips, you and the girls will need to obtain council permission.

A *Troop Travel and/or Camping Approval Request* form is required if your trip is:

- A day trip 50 miles or more beyond council jurisdiction
- An overnight trip (not on council properties)
- A trip involving international travel

You will need to purchase additional insurance by filing an *Enrollment form for Additional Insurance* with council if your trip is:

- Overnight lasting three nights or more
- A trip involving international travel

Encourage the girls to submit much of the information themselves, including the following:

- Detailed itinerary, including specific activities involved, mode of travel, and all dates and times
- Location and type of premises to be used
- Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained)
- Names and contact information for the adults participating
- Any other groups, organizations, consultants, or resource people who will be involved
- Participants' skill levels, if applicable (language skills, backpacking or camping experience, and so on)
- Any specialized equipment that will be used, if applicable
- Required agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus, use of premises)



[The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace](#) in Savannah, Georgia, is a fantastic place for Girl Scout Juniors and older to visit. Reservations and council approval are required to take a group of girls to visit the birthplace, and most educational opportunities are booked at least a year in advance, so book early! Families and individuals, however, do not need to reserve a tour in advance.

In addition, four lodges are available in England, Mexico, Switzerland, and India for use by Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, each with hostel- or dormitory-style accommodations. These centers are operated by WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) and offer low-cost accommodations and special programs. They are also a great way to meet Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world. Visit www.wagggsworld.org for more information.

Closer to home, check with your council to see whether council-owned camps and other facilities can be rented out to the group of girls with which you're working.

Involving Chaperones

To determine how many volunteer chaperones the girls will need with them on the trip, see the adult-to-girl ratios. As you ask for chaperones, be sure to look for ones who are committed to:

- Being a positive role model
- Respecting all girls and adults equally, with no preferential treatment
- Creating a safe space for girls
- Prioritizing the safety of all girls
- Supporting and reinforcing a group agreement
- Handling pressure and stress by modeling flexibility and a sense of humor
- Creating an experience for and with girls
- Getting fit (appropriate to the trip)

Be sure every chaperone reviews and follows the twelve Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available both in the Quick-Start Guide to this handbook and in the "Safety-Wise" chapter.

Transporting Girls



How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal time and place—in which a group will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an approved adult* volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
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- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

*“Adult” is defined by the age of majority in each state. In Mississippi, the age of majority is 21.

Letting Girls Lead

Whether the trip is a day hike or a cross-country trek, the basic steps of trip planning are essentially the same. It's true that as the locale gets farther away, the itinerary more complex, and the trip of greater duration, the details become richer and more complex, but planning every trip—from a day-long event to an international trek—starts by asking the following:

- What do we hope to experience?
- Who will we want to talk to and meet? What will you ask?
- Where are we interested in going?
- When are we all available to go?
- Will everyone in our group be able to go?
- Are there physical barriers that cannot be accommodated?
- What are visiting hours and the need for advance reservations?
- What are our options for getting there?
- What's the least and most this trip could cost?
- What can we do now to get ourselves ready?
- How will we earn the money?
- What's the availability of drinking water, restrooms, and eating places?
- Where is emergency help available?
- What safety factors must we consider?
- What will we do as we travel?
- What will we do when we get there?
- How will we share the take-action story?

As girls answer these questions, they begin the trip-planning process. In time, girls can make specific arrangements, attend to a myriad of details, create a budget and handle money, and accept responsibility for their personal conduct and safety. And later, after they've returned from an event or trip, girls also have the

chance to evaluate their experiences and share them with others.

Tips for Girls Traveling Alone



If a Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador will be traveling alone during any part of a trip, use the opportunity to help her feel comfortable with and capable of being on her own. Always talk first with her parents to assess her maturity and ability to handle herself, and have them complete an emergency form. If she is flying, also discuss the possibility of booking a nonstop flight to make her trip that much less stressful, and ask parents to contact the airline, which will make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss hotel security and safety, and talk about avoiding excess communication with strangers, *not* wearing a nametag, and avoiding exposing money or other items (such as smartphones, iPads, and iPods) that are attractive to pickpockets.

Staying Safe During the Trip

Also be sure to discuss the following items with the girls and their parents before you leave on any trip (you may also want to put this information in writing and have girls sign it):

- Who her buddy is—and how the buddy system works
- What to do if she is separated from the group, whether by accident or because of a crime
- What to do if she loses something significant: money, passport, luggage
- How to report a crime
- What to do if emergency help is needed
- How to perform basic first-aid procedures
- How to deal with a large crowd (if applicable)
- What to do in the event of a crime
- What behaviors you expect—and what consequences exist for not living up to those behaviors

Travel Security and Safety Tips



Share these safety tips with girls before you leave on any trip that involves a stay at a hotel, motel, hostel, or dormitory:

- Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff claims to be at the door, call the front desk to confirm.
- Don't shout out or display your room number when in the presence of strangers.
- Never leave jewelry, cameras, electronics, cash, or credit cards in your room.
- Never leave luggage unattended in the hotel lobby (or in an airport or train or bus station).
- When arriving at the hotel, locate emergency exits.
- Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with a small bag with your room key, wallet, passport, and cell phone. Take the flashlight and bag with you if you have to leave the room in an emergency.
- If a fire alarm goes off, get out as quickly as possible. Don't stop to pack your suitcase.
- Before leaving your room, feel the door: If it is warm, do not open it. Stay in your room and stuff towels around the door. Call the hotel operator immediately. If the door is cool, proceed slowly out the door, looking for flames or smoke. Repeat these instructions for any door you encounter.
- Contact the front desk to make sure girls' rooms are cleared of any minibars or refrigerators in girls' rooms. Also be sure the hotel doesn't provide access to inappropriate movies on TVs and does not allow long-distance calls. Alert the hotel management that underage girls are staying in the hotel, and ask them to contact you if any girls are seen out of their rooms after bedtime.

Reengaging Girls

The end of this trip doesn't have to be the end of a girls' time with Girl Scouting. Some girls participate in Girl Scouting in all sorts of ways; others are excited only about travel. What lies ahead for them—and for you?

- Girls who have never been involved in any other way besides travel may be looking for longer-term opportunities closer at home. Younger Cadettes may want to participate in resident camp, while Seniors and Ambassadors—as well as older Cadettes—will want to hear all about upcoming series and events at your council.
- Girls who have traveled once tend to want to travel again. Be sure girls are aware that other travel opportunities, such as [destinations](#), will exist for them in the years ahead. The great experiences they had on this trip may have prepared them for longer and more global trips in the future.
- Girls may want to hear about the Girl Scout Silver and 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're ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let your council know how you'd like to be a part of girls' lives in the future. Are you ready for a year-long volunteer opportunity with a troop? help organize a series or event? take another trip? The possibilities are endless.