



# My First Year

## Daisy, Brownie, Junior

A complete guide for your first  
year of leading a Girl Scout troop

# Checklist for New Troop Leaders

## Starting a New Girl Scout Troop

### Week 1

- [Register](#) as a Girl Scout troop leader.
- Complete a **background check**. You will receive email invite from **applicantdirect@asurint.com**
- Meet your membership specialist and **set up your troop profile**.
- Find a co-leader and invite girls to join your troop.
- [Join the New Leader Academy Group on Facebook](#).
- Log into gsLearn and begin required training:  
**345 GSLPG Introduction to Troop Leadership**  
  
**GSUSA Grade Level Essentials**

### Week 2

- Complete new leader training.
- Discover the ins and outs of the [Volunteer Toolkit \(VTK\)](#).
- Find a bank for your troop account and submit the form to open a bank account  
[GSLPG Bank Account Process Request to Open a Bank Account](#).
- Meet with your co-leader and plan a parent meeting [see the Multilevel Troop Leader Blueprint](#) for a demonstration.
- Find your troop roster in MyGS. Email or call all new troop parents to introduce yourself.
- Hold the parent meeting. Engage adults to fill troop committee positions. [Use the Keep Girl Scouts Going-Troop Parent Guide](#) to engage families.

### Week 3

- Complete your bank account set up and make your first deposit
- Plan and hold your first troop meeting with the girls. Use [Volunteer Essentials](#) and the Volunteer Toolkit.

### Week 4

- Attend a leader meeting (in your service unit or council-led).
- Check out the [Event Calendar](#) for activities to add to your troop calendar.
- Find out about the [GSLPG Product Programs](#).



# Table of Contents

On average, troop co-leaders spend 6-11 hours per month (+ 8 during cookie season) volunteering. We want to help you enjoy as much of that time as possible!  
This guide takes the guesswork out of leading a troop.

<b>Checklist for New Troop Leaders</b> .....	2
<b>Welcome to Girl Scouts</b> .....	4
<b>Getting Started</b> .....	5
<b>Training</b> .....	6
<b>A New Leader’s Support System</b> .....	7
<b>Co-Leaders–Leading Together</b> .....	8
<b>Working with Parents/Caregivers</b> .....	9
<b>4Her</b> .....	10
<b>Pin and Badge Placement for Uniforms</b> .....	11-13
<b>Girl Scout Troop Finances</b> .....	14
<b>Girl Scout Traditions</b> .....	15
<b>Keeping Girls Safe and First-Aid Kit</b> .....	15
<b>Troop Communication</b> .....	16
<b>Forms, All Kinds of Forms</b> .....	16
<b>Your Year In Girl Scouts</b> .....	17
<b>Product Sales Program: 5 Skills + Financial Literacy</b> .....	18
<b>Ready, Set, Take Action</b> .....	19
<b>Girl Scout Camping</b> .....	20
<b>Higher Awards</b> .....	20
<b>The Volunteer Toolkit: Your Digital Troop Assistant</b> .....	21
<b>How Many Volunteers Do You Need?</b> .....	22
<b>Let’s Go! Your First Troop Meeting</b> .....	23
<b>Working with Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors</b> .....	24-26
<b>Meeting as a Troop</b> .....	27
<b>Planning Your Girl Scout Year</b> .....	28
<b>Your Year at a Glance</b> .....	29
<b>Girl Scout Glossary</b> .....	30

# Welcome to Girl Scouts!

## Our Mission

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

## Girl Scout Promise

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

## 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.

“Welcome to Girl Scouts and a great new adventure! Thanks to volunteers like you, a new generation of girls will get the courage, confidence and character they need to lead their lives and our world in the future. The Girl Scout team is here to support you, but YOU are enough – we couldn’t do this without YOU!”

Thank you!



## Troop Co-Leaders

**Help** girls reach their potential as creative, courageous leaders

**Create** a space where girls try new things without worrying about failing

**Teach** lessons girls will use for decades to come

**Try** new things along with their girls

**Develop** leaders’ own organizational and leadership skills

**Join** a global community of sisterhood

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

# Getting Started

New leaders often spend the first few weeks getting started and setting up their troop. Be sure to use your **CHECKLIST** on the inside of this handbook!



## Setting up your Troop

Your placement specialist will reach out to you to set up this information in the membership system.

### **The number of girls to expect in your troop**

As a new troop, you can expect to have 10-12 girls. Research has found this is the 'sweet spot' – small enough to encourage individual development and large enough to provide an interactive and cooperative learning environment. If your troop doesn't have enough girls assigned or you would like a larger group, GSLPG is here to help you!

### **Looking to grow your troop more?**

As a troop leader, you can make sure your troop is available in the opportunity catalog for new members to register at will, and you can also share a direct link for new families to register directly in your troop through your MY GS account. Adults and girls alike can join your troop this way. If you would like help growing your troop, contact your placement specialist at any time throughout the year.

### **Meeting Location and Times**

Remember, set meeting times that work with your schedule! You will need to choose a location for regular meetings – a local park, library, school, – the troop can meet anywhere that follows the GS safety guidelines. You will also need to decide what day of the week and how often the troop will meet. Most of our troops meet twice a month. So, think about what day, which weeks of the month and the time-frame (1, 1 1/2 or 2 hours) – right after school, weekday evening, or weekend.

### **Troop Interests/Goals/Personality**

Also, think about what your troop will want to accomplish this year. What are some goals? Will the troop focus on one theme for the year? We want to know what type of activities you will plan to do throughout your first year. Every troop has a unique 'personality.' Let us know anything that is special about your troop! Will the girls speak a different language? Include girls with disabilities or learning differences? Do all the girls enjoy a specific sport or activity?

## Building an Inclusive Troop

Establishing an inclusive environment that welcomes every girl, fosters a sense of belonging and provides a safe space for everyone should be a top priority. Girls have a better experience when they are warmly welcomed into a troop.

# New Leader Training

Required Training is Virtual, Free & in **gsLearn!**

(Located in your MY GS account) Plan to complete all three within 2 weeks.

1. **345 GSLPG Introduction to Troop Leadership(required)**
2. **GSUSA Grade Level Essentials (required)**
3. **345 GSLPG Badge Courses (strongly recommended)**

**Additional Training you need to know about:**

These courses include a fee and registration is in **gsEvents**

- When your troop is ready to go on outings/field trips outside the regular meeting place, at least one registered/background checked adult will need to take a qualifying **CPR/First Aid Training**. (Required for field trips & camping)
- Once your troop is ready for an outdoor overnight or camping trip, you will need to have a registered/background checked adult take **gsLearn 345 Outdoor Education** and **complete In-person Outdoor Education Training** (see [Event Calendar](#)). Training required for camping OR activities involving fire.



Check these out at [www.gslpg.org/forvolunteers](http://www.gslpg.org/forvolunteers).

# A New Leader's Support System

## Getting Connected, Socially

**New Leader Academy** is a special Facebook group just for GSLPG first year leaders! This cohesive community is a great forum to get questions answered in real time 24/7 and to get ideas for activities during meetings, planning ideas, and events of all kinds. A special group of volunteer mentors and staff members moderate the group. This is also a great place to reach out for help at any time.

Also on **Facebook**, you will find:

**Girl Scouts of LA Pines to the Gulf** – [facebook.com/gslpg](https://facebook.com/gslpg)

**Request to join:**

**GSLPG Product Program**

**GSLPG Girl Experience**

**Your Service Unit Page**

### Your Support System

Girl Scouts is all about sisterhood. As a leader, you are not alone! Your troop co-leader(s) and parents are your primary team. Get to know them and allow them to help!

Check out page 10, the 4Her resources for more ideas!

### Your Service Unit

What is a service unit? It is a geographically defined area that consists of Girl Scout troops that are in the same community or school district. These troops are supported by a service unit team.

Service unit teams consist of experienced Girl Scout volunteers who are there to support one another through the Girl Scout year. The team includes a manager, treasurer, product coordinator, and more.

These volunteers work together to support you by providing activities and event opportunities in your area throughout the year. And, they hold monthly meetings for leaders.

### Service Unit Meetings

These meetings are usually held monthly and can be in person or virtual.

- Meet and network with fellow volunteers
- Learn about upcoming events and trainings, etc
- Share resources and materials

**Your Membership Specialist can get you connected to the volunteers in your service unit.**

### Your GSLPG Council Staff

We are here for you! Your Membership Specialist will be here reaching out to you throughout your first year as a troop leader. If you have a private matter, a conflict to discuss, issues with registration or any other needs, GSLPG can help! Contact your Membership Specialist or Customer Care at 800-960-2093, email [info@gslpg.org](mailto:info@gslpg.org).

# Co-Leaders – Leading Together

Each troop needs two unrelated adults who are Girl Scout members and have completed a background check to be able to meet. A friend, neighbor, co-worker, another parent are all great people to lead a troop with. If you need assistance recruiting a co-leader, talk to your membership specialist.

Before meeting with parents or the girls, you will want to get together and make some decisions about your troop. Once you have your parent/caregiver meeting you will include them in these decisions.

- Meeting logistics: When, where, how frequently and how long will the troop meet?
- The troop: Will the troop have girls in one grade or many?
- What kind of help will the troop need from parents?
- How will you handle your own daughter during troop activities?
- What type of communication will you use with the troop families?
- Troop finances: Will you have regular troop dues, a troop start-up fee? Who will be on the troop bank account?
- What would you like the troop uniform components to include? Will the leaders purchase for everyone with troop funds or will parents need to get this on their own?
- Plan out the parent/caregiver meeting.





# Working with Parents/Caregivers

Unlike many other activities, a Girl Scout troop needs parent and caregiver support to thrive!

## Parent/Caregiver Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and introductions to one another and to the Girl Scouts. Ask about each girl and get to know her a little.
- Share how important each family will be to the troop.
- Discuss meeting location, day and times, uniforms and troop dues (you may want to collect at the meeting).
- Set expectations for communication and response times and how parents can get involved to help the troop (4Her program).
- Have parents complete health history forms, annual permission forms. Share contact info for all troop members.
- Discuss the types of activities the troop will participate this year (regular meetings, field trips, events, camping trips).
- Answer any questions the parents may have.

## Helpful Tips!

- Don't try to do this alone! Ask parents directly to help with the troop – list out specific needs (4HER program).
- Invite a member of your service unit team to attend if you need help with this meeting.
- Have a Get to Know my Girl info sheet so that parents can share helpful info for working with their daughter.
- If girls will attend this meeting, have a craft or simple activity to keep them engaged.



**Parents and other family members can take an active role in supporting your Girl Scout’s experience. Use this chart to engage parents at your parent meeting.**

The list below explains a number of roles your troop can use throughout the year.  
4Her – make a commitment to volunteer 4 hours 4 her this year!

Help Needed	Description
Co-Leader	Partner with leader to provide regular support for all troop activities. Must be a member, background check and training required. Select “Troop Leader” when registering.
Meeting Helper/ Drivers	Assist leaders at meetings with activities. Drivers help drive girls to meetings and activities. Membership and background check required. Select “Troop Volunteer” when registering.
Troop Treasurer	Help leaders with all money matters, budgets, deposits, etc. Membership and background check required. Select “Troop Treasurer or Troop Volunteer”.
Camping Adult	Coordinate and attend troop campouts. Membership, background check and training required. Select “Troop Volunteer”.
CPR/First Aider	Attend outings outside regular meeting place. Membership, background check and certified training required. Select “Troop Volunteer”.
Troop Cookie Manager	Promote and run the cookie program for troop members. Membership, background check and training required. Select “Troop Cookie Manager”.
Supplies or Snack Coordinator	Provide assistance by providing or selecting snacks for troop meetings as needed. Collect/purchase troop supplies to be paid for by the troop for activities.
Communications Support	Share troop news, be the go to person to communicate Troop news, upcoming activities, etc. for the troop leaders.

If you have a talent not represented on this list, speak up and offer to share with the troop. From song and skit leaders to photographers, hobby experts, firewood suppliers and more, there is a place for you to volunteer with your Girl Scout troop. The help and engagement of every parent is important to the growth of the troop!

# Pin and Badge Placement for Daisy Uniforms

## Girl Scout Daisy Tunic



## Girl Scout Days Vest



# Pin and Badge Placement for Brownie Uniforms

## Girl Scout Brownie Vest



## Girl Scout Brownie Sash



# Pin and Badge Placement for Junior Uniforms

## Girl Scout Junior Vest



Place your first Journey awards at the bottom of your vest. As you earn additional Journey awards, work your way up.

If your Journey awards and badges don't fit on the front of your vest or sash, you can wear them on the back.

## Girl Scout Junior Sash



Place your Journey awards above your badges.

# Girl Scout Troop Finances

## Bank Accounts

- Two volunteers must be on the bank account.
- Find a bank with free accounts for GS Troops.
- Complete and submit the [Request to Open a Bank Account form](#).
- Get approval and go to the bank together to complete the process.

## Suggested Banks that welcome Girl Scouts

Iberia	Hancock Whitney
Red River	Barksdale FCU



**Troop Budgets** – Keeping good financial records is a must! Keep receipts and track troop activity costs. Troops should share financial information with parents 2-3 times a year. When planning make sure to keep the troop budget in mind and to save money to help fund next year’s activities, too.

**Troop Dues** – Some troops have troop dues and/or troop start-up fees. Make sure to be flexible with families when collecting troop monies. Troop dues/fees should be just enough to cover the cost of supplies, activity fees and badges/patches. Dues average \$3-5/meeting. Start-up fees range between \$5 and \$30 depending on the troop needs.

**Tax Exempt Status** – Girl Scout purchases are not exempt from sales taxation in Louisiana.

**Fund Raising** – A troop’s primary money earning should come from the GSLPG fall product sale and Cookie Program. Once a troop has participated in the annual cookie program, they are able to participate in other troop money earning activities such as garage sales or car washes.

## Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance is made available to all members and is intended to ensure the cost of membership never keeps a girl from experiencing Girl Scouts. For more information see Financial Assistance [here](#).

For more information about finances check out

[Volunteer Essentials](#)

# Girl Scout Traditions

**Hand Sign** – Raise three fingers of the right hand with the thumb holding down the pinky. The 3 fingers represent the three parts of the Promise.

**Handshake** – Shaking hands with the left hand and make the GS sign with the right hand. The left hand is nearest to the heart and signifies friendship.

**Friendship circle** – The unbroken chain of friendship. Girl Scouts stand in a circle crossing their right arms over their left, and clasping hands with their friends on both sides Girl Scout Out – fun way to end a meeting, girls are in the friendship circle, each girl spells a letter until one

gets to O, the O is the out. That girl in turn raises her arms still clasping hands, turning to the right and out of the circle. The next girl begins again with the G until the last girl is left as the winner.

**SWAPS** – Small tokens of friendship that girls often make and take to events or while traveling to swap with other Girl Scouts – “Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere”.

**Kaper Charts** – A chart dividing up troop responsibilities. Indicates all the jobs available and who is responsible during a meeting or a camp-out.

## Keeping Girls Safe and First Aid Kits

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. Purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit.



Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms, and health histories may be included as well. Check the kit regularly. Make sure the flashlight batteries work. Check expiration dates and replace any used or out-of-date contents.

Items to include:

- Adhesive bandages
- Sterile gauze pads
- Antibiotic ointment packets
- Hydrocortisone ointment packets
- Antiseptic wipe packets
- Non latex gloves
- Instant cold compress

Always keep your kit and your emergency card with the troop at all times.

# Troop Communication

Good communication is essential to a well-run troop. It's a great idea to discuss how troop communications will be handled. Does everyone need to be in special troop Facebook group, an email group, etc. Will you make phone call reminders or text? Be sure to include response expectations in this conversation. A good idea is to always provide a deadline for communication responses. Do you have a parent who will be the designated communications person?

It's also important to keep an open and honest communication line with parents regarding behavior and/or special needs of girls and the troop.



## Forms, All Kinds of Forms

### GSLPG forms

As a troop leader, you will find that forms are a necessity! Some useful forms you will need include:

**Girl Health History Forms** – To be completed by care givers each year

**Permission Forms** – To be completed by care givers each year

**Activity Approval Forms** – The **P500 form** is required for Girl Scout events or activities that may require extra levels of safety, care or permission. The **Money Earning Activity** is required for any money-earning activity request.

beyond the Girl Scout cookie program or fall product sales.

**Opening or changing a Girl Scout bank account and ACH registration –. See finances section on page 12.**

Other Information and Applications Forms

**Troop Info Update Form** – Updating meeting information and troop description



# Your Year in Girl Scouts

AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
 National S'more Day  Recruit New Girls to Your Troop Back to Girl Scouts Plan Your Year	Hispanic History Month Back to Girl Scouts Investiture Ceremonies  Fall Product Begins Recruit New Girls to Your Troop	 Girl Scout Membership Year Begins  Juliette Gordon Low's Birthday	Thanksgiving
DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
	Happy New Year!  Cookie Sale	Black History Month  World Thinking Day Engineering Week	Women's History Month  Girl Scout Week Girl Scouts Celebrate Faith
APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
Earth Day National Volunteer Month  Girl Scout Leader Day Early Bird Renewal/Extended Year  Membership Begins Camp Registration Begins	Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month  National Bridging Week Mental Health Awareness Month	National Get Outdoors Day Day Camps Resident Camps	Independence Day Resident Camps Day Camps

Visit [gslpg.org/events](https://gslpg.org/events) to learn more about our events and find the most up-to-date information. All events are subject to change without notice.

# Product Sales Program

## 5 Skills + Financial Literacy

Each year, troops have two opportunities to participate in council sponsored money earning activities: the Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Each of these programs offer girls and troops the opportunity to earn funds to power their Girl Scout adventures, as well as rewards to keep girls engaged and motivated.

Through their participation in product sales programs, girls are able to launch their very own businesses while learning important life skills along the way:

---

### Goal Setting

---

### Decision Making

---

### Money Management

---

### People Skills

---

### Business Ethics

There are also Cookie Business Badges and curriculum that help troop volunteers guide girls on this journey to developing their confidence in having a voice to set their goals, decide what they want to do with the money earned and understanding how to successfully run their Cookie Program.

- With the support of a volunteer in your Service Unit and the council Product Sales team, you will be connected to resources and support to ensure that you and your troop have everything that you need to have a successful experience.
- It's important to remember that any funds earned through money earning activities become property of the troop as a whole to further the Girl Scout experience.
- It must also be a girl-led decision on how these funds should be spent. Troop funds can be used towards meeting supplies, badges, field trips and activities, camping, experiences and more.

### Fall Product Program | September – October

This is a great way to get girls and families comfortable with participating in council sponsored money earning activities.

- **What:** Girls sell nuts, candy and magazines online to family and friends.
- **How:** Customers can select to have their order delivered by the Girl Scout or shipped directly to them. Products to be delivered by girls will be shipped directly to the troop in November for distribution to girls and families.
- **Why:** Troops earn 15% of total sales that will be deposited into troop bank accounts in December.

### Cookie Program | December – February

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world! The bulk of the troop's funds are earned through girls' participation in the Cookie Program and it's where they truly get to put the 5 Skills they have learned into action.

- **What:** Girls sell cookies to customers near and far online, in-person, and at booth sales.
- **How:** Family and friends support their favorite Girl Scout by purchasing cookies to help her reach her goal. With the support of parents/ caregivers and troop volunteers, girls can also participate in booth sales at local grocery stores, restaurants and more.
- **Why:** Troops earn proceeds on each package of cookies sold and girls earn rewards based on the number of packages they sell.

# Ready, Set, Take Action

## Community Service and Take Action Projects

Make the world a better place. For over 100 years, Girl Scouts have been encouraged to do anything they set their sights on and as a result, Girl Scouts continue to make an impact locally and globally.

### Community Service Projects

Community service projects address an immediate need in the community and are appropriate for every Girl Scout – Daisy through Ambassador! A great definition of community service is, “Community service makes the world a better place for some people right now.”

### Take Action Projects

Take Action projects transform a community service project into a long-term, lasting impact for the community. With Take Action projects, girls are challenged and encouraged to research, plan, and lead projects that tackle the root of a local, national, or global problem. Girls think bigger and are encouraged to solve and address the problem in a way that will prohibit the problem from reoccurring. Take Action projects aim for long-term benefits that change the world in a meaningful, measurable, and sustainable way!

### What is Take Action?

Girls will create and carry out a Take Action project with every Journey they complete. The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards all require the completion of a Take Action project.

### Overview of Take Action

A Take Action project is a chance for girls to partner with others in their community to solve a problem. They learn about getting to the root causes of issues, mobilizing and engaging community members and volunteers, and striving toward creating a lasting change in their world. An important component is to understand and address the cause of a problem.

**Girls must also make sure each project is sustainable and that the impact is measurable.**

- **Sustainable:** Girls must make arrangements to ensure that the project creates lasting change and is not a one-time event. (Collaborate with community leaders and/or organization; creating relationships with mentors)
- **Measurable:** The success of the project can be determined based on the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved, any reduction in the community’s need, and other concrete numbers.

## Steps of a Good Take Action Project

1. Girls identify assets and needs in a community.
2. Girls reach out beyond their circle to meet others. Try to meet people affected by your issue and people who are trying to solve it.
3. Girls make a decision about what they will take action on.
4. Girls learn the steps needed to carry out an action plan.
5. Girls assist with project logistics.
6. Girls take action alongside community members.
7. Girls reflect on their action and assess what they gained from it. Girls celebrate their community accomplishments.

# Girl Scout Camping

When Girl Scouts get outside and connect with nature in a girl-led setting, they grown in self-confidence, develop their leadership skills, and foster a passion for environmental stewardship. Many Girl Scouts will tell you that camping trips and summer camp are some of the best things about their Girl Scout experience.

## Our Camp and Outdoor Program

With a troop camp-trained adult along, girls can go troop camping at one of our two beautiful camps throughout the school year. Summer brings day/twilight camps, sleep away camping, and fun summer day camps for our girls to enjoy. Summer opportunities are announced in February /March each year. For more information about out camps check our website: [gslplg.org/camp](http://gslplg.org/camp)

## Check out our Camp Properties



### Camp Bon Temps

Camp Bon Temps is located at 1123 Camp Bon Temps Rd., Breaux Bridge, La 70517. Camp Bon Temps was established in 1964 on 106 acres of land in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana. Our main lodge will sleep 20. It's also where the kitchen and first aid are located. We keep on hand basic first aid supplies, cleaning supplies, and kitchen supplies for our campers. The first aid room does have an A/C unit and we have a wood burning stove in the main part of the lodge. It has a ramp for handicap accessibility, and the back porch is used not only for eating, but arts & crafts as well. The camp maintains an ice machine, popcorn machine, snow ball machine, and slushy machine for campers' use.

Camp Bon Temps has 8 cabins located throughout the property, 2 pavilions, a canoe dock, a volleyball court, a swimming pool, and an archery area.

### Camp Wawbansee

Camp Wawbansee is located at 610 Girl Scout Rd.; Simsboro, La. 71275. The camp sits on 140 acres of land. The Troop House, 24 Cabins, Pool, Lake, Arts & Crafts Building, Archery Area, Dining Hall, and Infirmary/First Aid Building sit on 70 acres of beautiful bayou landscape.

The Troop House sleeps up to 25 people, and has a full kitchen and new A/C and heating units. A covered front porch houses several tables to use for craft projects. The 2 bathroom area's have a total of 4 showers and 3 toilets for the campers, and outside there is a fire pit and seating around it. The lodge is handicapped accessible.

The Infirmary/First Aid Building sits between the Lake and Dining Hall in the heart of the camp. This building has 2 toilets 1 shower and 6 beds with heat and air conditioning.

## Higher Awards

Once your troop becomes a Junior Girl Scout troop, they are able to complete the first level of our higher awards – **The Bronze Award**.

Girl Scout Juniors team up to make a difference in their community. They learn important leadership skills, discover new passions, and watch how seemingly small actions make a big difference. Girls may earn individually or as a troop. Earning the Bronze award includes the completing of a

GS Journey and a suggested 20+ hours of project planning, implementation and promotion. Learn more about the **Bronze award** at [gslplg.org](http://gslplg.org) under Programs and Highest Awards.

Cadette Girl Scouts may earn the **Silver Award**, our second-highest award and Seniors and Ambassadors may earn the highest award, **The Gold Award**. For more information about these awards, visit our website [gslplg.org](http://gslplg.org).

# The Volunteer Toolkit: Your Digital Troop Assistant

## The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

This web-based program allows you more time to focus on your girls. It makes managing your troop and planning your meetings smooth and easy all year long. Inside, you'll find meeting overviews, activity plans, badge and journey outlines, meeting aids, Girl Scout resources and more!

### Plan and Customize Your Year

At Girl Scouts, we know that when girls take part in shaping their Girl Scouts experience and adventures, they will be more engaged and will have more fun! The VTK makes it easy for troop co-leaders and girls explore meeting topics and ideas available for their grade level together and select what they want to include in their year. Co-leaders can take this information to plan and customize the troop's year using the VTK's pre-populated meeting plans, agendas, supply lists, and activity instructions.

### Manage Troop Rosters, Attendance, and Accomplishments

With the VTK you will be able to view your troop roster, update contact information, record attendance at meetings, track girls' badge and Journey achievements, and renew memberships.

### One-Click Communication

The VTK is not just for co-leaders, it's for parents, too! With its unique parent-view, parents can keep up with troop activities, meeting information, and what badges and Journeys their girls are working on. You can also email upcoming meeting agendas and troop plan to them with just one click.

## Learn more about the VTK

For more information about the Volunteer Toolkit, check our website:

**Volunteer Toolkit** or contact your **Membership Specialist**.

## Easy Navigation at your Fingertips!

**Here are just a few of the many features you'll find inside the VTK.** We strongly encourage troop co-leaders to utilize the VTK to streamline their troop management and planning. GSUSA continues to update and enhance the VTK with additional resources, features and functions.

### MY TROOP

- View, edit, download and print rosters.
- Edit contact info.
- View achievements and attendance.
- Email families.
- Renew memberships.

### YEAR PLANS

- Specify meeting dates and locations.
- Preview and choose pre-populated year plans.
- Add and/or combine meeting plans to customize your year.
- Add custom troop activities like celebrations, field trips, camping trips, etc.

### MEETING PLANS

- View, download, or print individual meeting summaries, activity plans and supply lists.
- Track attendance and achievements.
- Search and print meeting aids such as name tags, handouts, and more.

### RESOURCES

- Access award logs, badge charts, meeting plans, and more.
- Access council specific resources on troop leadership, safety, training, GS traditions and awards, trips and travel, GS product sale, and camp and outdoor programs.

### FINANCES

- Submit the annual troop finance report.

# How Many Volunteers Do You Need?

Troop co-leaders are responsible for arranging and maintaining proper adult supervision for meetings and activities. Each troop meeting or Girl Scout group must have at least two unrelated adult members and a background check on file present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and one adult in every group must be female.

Use the table to identify how many adults you need based on the number of girls participating:

	TROOP MEETING		FIELD TRIP	
	The adult-to-girl ratio is <b>two unrelated</b> volunteers, including one female, for up to this number of girls:	There should be one extra adult for every additional:	The adult-to-girl ratio is <b>two unrelated</b> volunteers, including one female, for up to this number of girls:	There should be one extra adult for every additional:
<b>Daisies</b> K-grade 1	<b>12 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-6 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>6 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-4 Girl Scouts</b>
<b>Brownies</b> grades 2-3	<b>20 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-8 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>12 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-6 Girl Scouts</b>
<b>Juniors</b> grades 4-5	<b>25 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-10 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>16 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-8 Girl Scouts</b>
<b>Cadettes</b> grades 6-8	<b>25 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-12 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>20 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-10 Girl Scouts</b>
<b>Seniors</b> grades 9-10	<b>30 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-15 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>24 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-12 Girl Scouts</b>
<b>Ambassadors</b> grades 11-12	<b>30 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-15 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>24 Girl Scouts</b>	<b>1-12 Girl Scouts</b>

## Safety Responsibilities for 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 safety 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.
- Practice the buddy method when participating in troop activities.

# Let's Go!

## Your First Troop Meeting

Your first troop meeting is a great chance to get to know the girls and brainstorm all the exciting things they want to do in the year to come. If you're feeling a little nervous about leading troop meetings and experiences with your girls, that's OK! Just remember that:

**It doesn't need to be perfect.** Did an activity run over time? Or, maybe a field trip didn't go according to plan? Take a deep breath, roll with the changes, and have fun! The girls aren't expecting perfection from you: your time, attention, and guidance are the best part of your leadership.

**Learn with your girls.** Keeping activities girl-led also means that at some point, the girls will want to earn a badge or complete a project in a subject unfamiliar to you. Don't let that hold you back. Be open with the girls and when you don't know something and that you will be learning together. You'll show them that learning is a lifelong process and that with an open mind, they can overcome any challenge that comes their way.

### Six Elements of a Great Troop Meeting

The only requirement for your troop meetings is that your girls are engaged and having fun! Many leaders use this basic structure for troop meetings:

- 1. Ramp Up** – plan an opening activity for girls upon arrival at the meeting so that have something to do before the meeting begins. Plan about five minutes for this, it could be snack, or creating a thank you card, coloring a page to donate, etc.
- 2. Opening** – Each troop decides what they will do regularly. Most begin with the reciting the Girl Scout Promise & Law, a song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. Plan 5-10 minutes for this.
- 3. Troop Business** – Collect dues, take attendance, make announcements or plan

upcoming activities while parents may be present.

- 4. Let the fun begin!** This is your activity for the meeting, work on a badge, journey, or complete other activities during this time plan 30 minutes to 1 hour according to your meeting time.
- 5. Clean Up** – Girls clean up all supplies and always leave a place cleaner than they found it. Plan about five minutes.
- 6. Closing** – As a troop, girls decide how they will end each meeting – a song, a game, a Girl Scout tradition. Plan 5-10 minutes for this.

### Got Snacks?

Snacks are optional, but if your troop has chosen to include snacks, guide families to consider healthy snacks and always share any food allergies the girls in your troop may have. Include snack time as part of your troop meeting.

### First Meeting Checklist

- Cover the basics. Review the details about when and where the meeting will take place and make sure parents/caregivers are aware.
- Get ready. Use the VTK to verify your troop roster and email parents. This might be a great time to remind parents to send health history forms, uniform orders, and troop dues to the meeting.
- Know the agenda. Refer to the Six Elements of a Troop Meeting list and your meeting agenda/plans
- Review and practice your agenda. You'll feel calmer during the actual meeting and ready to make adjustments as needed.
- Prepare for Fun! When the girls and parents see that you're prepared for the meeting and ready to have a great time, they'll follow your lead!

# Working with Daisies

As the leader of a Daisy troop, your goal should be to act as facilitator, enabling girls to experience planning, decision-making, leadership, and yes, even failure!



*Girl Scouts is girl-led!*

Daisies (K-1st-Grade Girls)	This means
Can make simple choices and enjoy sharing their opinion.	When making troop decisions, offer the girls limited choices, such as choosing between two field trips. Allow girls to share their thoughts and take a vote to choose.
Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	They'll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.
Are great builders and budding artists.	Encourage 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.
Love to move and dance.	They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.
Are concrete thinkers and are focused on the here and now.	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.
Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time and money.	You'll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and perhaps, the legs of a caterpillar! The Product Sales Program reinforces counting and math skills!
Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so	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 through.
Are just beginning to write and spell and they don't always have the words for what they're thinking or feeling.	Having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.

## Helpful Tips!

- Build on the strengths of each girl.
- Praise desirable behavior.
- Use simple words.
- Use quiet, pleasant tones.
- Be flexible. Attention spans can be short.
- Utilize the Girl Scout Promise & Law.
- Try to be at the girl's eye level.
- Encourage girls to solve problems.
- Develop a friendly relationship with each girl.
- Keep activities short and varied.



# Working with Brownies

Girls at this age have a variety of skills at different levels. Reading abilities, attention spans, and small motor coordination are still developing. As you get to know your troop, you'll better help them plan activities and adjust your own expectation levels. Be sensitive to their feelings about their differences and remember that each girl is an individual.



*Girl Scouts  
is girl-led!*

Brownies (2nd/3rd Grade Girls)	This means
Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.
Are social and enjoy working in groups.	Allow girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.
Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.	Let girls lead, direct, and help out whenever possible. Allow group decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	Do more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf's adventures. Ask questions to gauge understanding and allow them to role-play a pretend visit to a new country.
Need clear directions and structure, and like knowing what to expect.	Offer one direction at a time, and have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.
Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money, and distance.	Offer support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings, count out money for a trip, etc.
Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and tie shoes, use basic tools, beginning to sew, etc.	Encourage girls' creative expression by making things with their hands. They may still need some assistance with things like holding scissors or threading needles.
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	Girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girls to their school or telling a story through dance or creative movement.
Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job done well.	Acknowledge when the girls have listened or followed directions well, which will boost their motivation to listen and follow directions again.

## Letting Brownies take the lead:

- Encourage girls to be creative and add their own flair to projects and activities.
- Let the girls try new things and make mistakes in the attempt.
- Let the girls do the talking with meeting guests, their troop mates, other troops, or the service units.
- Ask thoughtful questions instead of just providing answers.
- Let girls make decisions between multiple options.
- Use the buddy system with Brownies at each meeting or outing.
- Brownies can lead meetings with a caregiver or as a small group with adult guidance!

# Working with Juniors

As a Junior leader, you will discover how fun the girls are as they begin to develop leadership skills, test boundaries, pursue new interests and become more independent. This is also a time girls will be learning how to build their relationship skills. Your job as the troop facilitator will be to ensure that activities are age-appropriate and based on their needs, interests and abilities.



*Girl Scouts  
is girl-led!*

Juniors (4th/5th Grade Girls)	This means
Are starting to change physically.	Girls are starting to have growth spurts and develop; some may begin to go through puberty and have questions about these changes. Be prepared for any situation.
Are experiencing social changes.	Girls are beginning to form cliques and developing new friendships. This is a great time to continue revisiting the GS Law and what each line represents.
Beginning to leave the child stage and become tweens.	Girls are more social, talkative and they are stretching boundaries. They may also experience fast emotional shifts.
Are discovering what they like.	This is a great time for the girls to try new things at meetings and outings. Support the interests of each girl and encourage the girls to go outside their comfort zone trying new things. Girls this age also like to plan and go on trips.
Are active and want to have fun together.	Girls want to be in action - this is a good time to really follow the 3 processes of Girl Scouts – girl led, learning by doing and cooperative learning.
More aware of the world around them.	The girls enjoy performing service and being involved in their community.
Like making decisions and leading.	The girls enjoy brainstorming & choosing the activities they participate in. Girls also want to be in charge, and letting girls lead the meeting is a great way to keep everyone's attention.

## Helpful Tips!

- Let the girls establish troop rules with you.
- Give girls the opportunity to express themselves.
- Give girls the responsibility for tasks.
- Vary troop activities.
- Use secret ballots to vote.
- Teach girls how to build consensus.
- Have girls take turns partnering with each troop member.
- Consider creating secret sister opportunities during the year.
- Allow the girls more independence while keeping them safe at the same time.

# Meeting as a Troop

## Your Troop Year at a Glance

We have found that troops who meet twice a month have the best experience! Make sure you mix it up and that meetings and outings capture the interests of the girls in your troop! In the rest of your handbook we have provided a simple set of meeting plans for you to use. More information on leading these badges can be found in your **Volunteer Toolkit**.

This is a great starting place for a troop to get started, but a troop isn't just about earning badges or Journeys, it really about making sure that the girls are making age appropriate decisions and having fun. To that end, you will want to weave a variety of activities into your Girl Scout year. Girls will enjoy getting outdoors, performing community service, going on field trips and just hanging out together having fun and having new experiences. Two pieces of advice: keep it girl-led and keep it fun!

To help you create a well-rounded year in Girl Scouting, set up your troop calendar in your **Volunteer Toolkit**. **See the *Pre-Selected Multi-level Tracks for easy set up*. Need help finding just the right balance, contact your Membership Specialist to set up a time to plan out your year together.**

## Resources For Planning Meetings

### Virtual Meetings

In today's world many troops are finding the need to offer virtual meetings. Some troops will continue to meet virtually and some are going to go with a hybrid model of in person meetings along with virtual meetings. It's a great idea to discuss this with your co-leader(s) and your troop families. You can find some great information and tools for virtual meetings on our website: **Troop Leader Blueprint** at [gslpg.org](http://gslpg.org).

**Virtual Meeting Playbook** – This is a great resource for leaders to learn how to adapt to a virtual meeting format. Check it out at: **Virtual Meetings** at [gslpg.org](http://gslpg.org)

**Troop Leader Blueprint** – Find even more badges, journeys and activities broken down to help you! Located on our website, the Blueprint has info on how to work with girls and their families to great ideas for icebreakers and games, meeting virtually and in person, and more. **Troop Leader Blueprint** at [gslpg.org](http://gslpg.org)

**Jumpstart** – Unsure how to lead badge meetings? Check out **gsLearn 345 GSLPG Badge Courses**. Short videos with tips, tricks, and alternative activities. Check out one, two, or all six for great ideas.

## Here's to a great year in Girl Scouting!

The rest of this handbook includes 8-10 meeting plans that have been simplified to help you get your year started! These meeting plans are meant to be used in conjunction with the Volunteer Toolkit. We hope this helps you gain confidence as you embark on your own Girl Scout journey.



# Planning your Girl Scout year

- Choose your dates – be sure to consider holidays and schedules.
- Decide how many Girl Scout meetings/activities a month the troop will do.
- We recommend you start with the badges included in a *VTK Multi-level Pre-Selected Track*. Let the girls vote on which one.
- Decide how the troop will choose meeting topics and activities. Remember to keep it girl-led.
- Have a list of ideas for the girls to vote on doing and when to do each, or have the girls bring ideas to your meeting for a vote.
- Alternate regular meetings with fun outings, field trips or events.
- Include a wide variety of activities for the girls to participate in throughout the year.
- Keep it age appropriate.
- Consider what the troop will do during inclement weather, illness, etc. Is virtual an option for your troop?
- Will the troop do one activity each month during the summer or be on a break?
- Remember to be flexible – be prepared for a meeting plan to run askew and adjust – keep it fun! If girls miss a meeting, it's okay. Making up a badge is voluntary.
- Take time to get to know the girls and their interests – make sure at least one meeting meets each girl's individual interests.
- As you plan your year, engage the parents with the girls – have each girl sign up to lead a meeting with her caregiver, she chooses the badge/activity and you serve as their mentor.

## 4 Girl Scout Pillars and The Girl Scout Promise & Law

- STEM
- Outdoors
- Life Skills
- Entrepreneurship

## Other ideas to include

- Field Trips
- Service Unit Events
- Community Service
- Council-led Events
- GSLPG Patch Programs

## Resources to help you plan

- Volunteer Toolkit
- GSLPG Volunteer Resources Page
- Service Unit leader meetings
- Get ideas from experienced Troop Leaders
- GSUSA Badge booklets & Journeys  
GSUSA & GSLPG Patch Programs

## Example of how to plan your calendar

For meeting 1 & 2 each month – rotate badges/activities based on the 4 pillars

<b>Month 1</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 2</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 3</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 4</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 5</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 6</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?
<b>Month 7</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 8</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 9</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 10</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 11</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	<b>Month 12</b> Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?

\*GSLPG – Girl Scouts of LA Pines to the Gulf

\*GSUSA – Girl Scouts of the United States of America

# Your Troop Year-at-a-Glance

## Troop Meetings

Your troop goal should be to host two meetings a month.

### Meeting 1: The Girl Scout Way

Complete fun activities to learn about the Girl Scout law.

## The Brownie Smile Song

**I've got something in my pocket, it belongs across my face.**

**I keep it very close at hand, in a most convenient place.**

**I'm sure you couldn't guess it if you guessed a long, long while.**

**So I'll take it out and put it on, it's a Great Big Brownie Smile!**

**(You can substitute "Girl Scout" for "Brownie")**

Here's to a great year in Girl Scouting! Use your [Multi-Level Troop Leader Blueprint](#) help you get your year started! These meeting plans are meant to be used in conjunction with the Volunteer Toolkit. We hope this helps you gain confidence as you embark on your own Girl Scout journey.

## The Girl Scout Secret Sauce

### WHAT:

Girl Scouts do activities in Four Pillars



Traditions | Troop Meetings | Field Trips  
Badges | Patches | Journeys | Camp  
Cookie Business | Take Action Projects

### HOW:

Girl Scouts experience our unique environment and three processes

**Environment** = all-girl safe space with supportive adult mentors (you!)

**Three processes** = girl-led, learn by doing, cooperative learning

The "**secret sauce**" is the vehicle that distinguishes Girl Scouts from other youth organizations and the driver of amazing leadership outcomes!

### WHY:

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

Outcomes, or benefits, of the Girl Scout experience include:

Sense of Self • Positive Values  
Healthy Relationships • Challenge Seeking  
Community Problem Solving

# Girl Scout Glossary

- **Badge:** Earned by completing official GSUSA curriculum; displayed on the front of the vest or sash
- **CIT:** Counselor in Training. An opportunity for High school girls at our summer camp locations.
- **DC:** Digital Cookie is an online platform that helps girls run and manage their Girl Scout Cookie business online.
- **eBudde:** The online cookie software system volunteers use to manage the Cookie Program
- **G.I.R.L.:** The spirit of Girl Scouts: Go-Getter, Innovator, Risk Taker, Leader
- **G.O.R.P.:** Good Old Raisins & Peanuts or Granola, Oats, Raisins & Peanuts; trail mix
- **gsEvents:** GSUSA Events & Activities Platform
- **GSLE:** Girl Scout Leadership Experience - The experience identifies all the elements that need to be in place for Girl Scouting to achieve its mission; Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. When Discover, Connect, and Take Action activities are combined with the Girl Scout Processes of Girl-Led, Learning by Doing, and Cooperative Learning, girls achieve the desired and expected short-term leadership outcomes, ultimately resulting in Girl Scouting achieving its mission.
- **gsLearn:** GSUSA Training Course Platform
- **GSLPG:** Girl Scouts of Louisiana Pines to the Gulf
- **GSRI:** Girl Scout Research Institute – delivers customer-centric, data-driven insights across the GS Movement
- **GSUSA:** Girl Scouts of the United States of America – Girl Scout movement in the United States
- **IO:** Initial Pre-Season Order-The number of cookie packages, broken out by flavor, that you want to begin the cookie season with.
- **JULIETTE/IRM:** Independently Registered Member; a member who participates without a troop
- **LIA:** Leader in Action. Cadette Girl Scouts show their leadership skills and assist Brownie sisters in completing their National Leadership Journey! They will actively assisting during Journey sessions, use organizational skills, help the Brownies complete their requirements, and—most importantly—helping them reflect on their experience.
- **LIT:** Leader in Training. The L.I.T. award is for Girl Scout Senior and Ambassadors who would like to mentor a Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie, Junior or Cadette group outside of the camp experience. A LIT project (working with a troop) needs to span a 3 to 6 month period.
- **LBB:** Little Brownie Bakers is the company that GSLPG partners with for the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
- **My GS:** Your Girl Scout Account Management System
- **NLA: New Leader Academy – interactive, informational & digital support group for new leaders**
- **OFR:** Outstanding Funds Report - form that is completed when a Girl Scout family has an unpaid cookie balance
- **PA:** Program Aide – Girl who has completed 6th grade, taken a specialized training to help troop leaders with activities for their girls
- **Patch:** Given to mark participation in programs or events; displayed on the back of the vest or sash
- **PGA:** Per Girl Average, is the total number of cookies assigned to the troop divided by the number of girls selling
- **PGL:** Program Grade Level. Daisies (K & 1st), Brownies (2nd & 3rd), Juniors (4th & 5th), Cadettes (6th-8th), Seniors (9th & 10th), and Ambassadors (11th & 12th)
- **PPF:** Parent Permission Form - allows participation in the Cookie Program.
- **Safety-Wise:** the number of adult Girl Scout members with a background check needed to safely supervise a troop
- **SUM:** Service Unit Manager – administrative volunteer for a specific geographical area
- **SU:** Service Units support troops in their local communities and is comprised of a team of volunteers who serve as the first point of contact for troops and volunteers in their area.
- **SUCM:** Service Unit Cookie Manager
- **SWAPS:** Some Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere; small tokens exchanged between Girl Scouts
- **TCM:** Troop Cookie Manager
- **TL:** Troop Leader
- **VTK:** Volunteer Toolkit – digital support for leaders – manage troop, communications & Girl Scout program materials
- **WAGGGS:** World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts – global association supporting female-only Guiding and Scouting Organizations in 150 countries.