



My First Year **Junior**

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



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!

As volunteers, you play a vital role in shaping the experiences of our girls and helping them develop the courage, confidence, and character they need to thrive in today's world. Your dedication and commitment to guiding them is truly commendable, and I cannot thank you enough for stepping up to make a difference in their lives.

I encourage you to embrace this opportunity with passion and enthusiasm, and to always lead by example, showing our Juniors what it means to be a strong, compassionate, and empowered leader. Your leadership will have a lasting impact on these young ladies, helping to shape them into future change-makers.

Together we will build a sisterhood where every girl feels valued, supported, and inspired to reach her full potential. I look forward to seeing the incredible impact you will make in the lives of our Junior Girl Scouts.

Wendy Dordel, CEO

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



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 This guide takes the guesswork out of leading a troop.

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Checklist for New Troop Co-Leaders

Starting a New Girl Scout Troop

Week 1

- Register as a Girl Scout via mygs.girlscouts.org
- Complete a background check— You will receive email invite from theadvocates@sterlingvolunteers.com
- Connect with the Membership Growth team to find a troop in your area or create your own!
- Find a co-leader and invite girls to join your troop.
- Keep an eye out for a Welcome email from our Volunteer Experience Team.
- Head to gsLearn to start the GSUSA New Leader Onboarding Series!

Week 2

- Complete New Leader Orientation (complete within first 45 days).
- Discover the ins and outs of the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK).
- Set up the troop's bank account with Truist by submitting a Troop Bank Account Request Form.
- Meet with your co-leader and plan a caregiver meeting.
- Find your Troop Roster in VTK. Reach out to your new troop parents to introduce yourself!

Week 3

- Hold the caregiver meeting (don't forget to use your caregiver meeting agenda).
- Complete your bank account set up and make your first deposit.
- Follow up with parents and caregivers who expressed interest in supporting the troop.
- Plan and hold your first troop meeting with the girls. Use your New Leader Binder and the meeting plans found in the Volunteer Toolkit.

Week 4

- Attend a Leader Meeting with your Community Leadership Team.
- Explore the Events page for council led opportunities to get your troop into the community!
- Finish up New Leader Onboarding trainings.
- Learn more about the Fall Product or Cookie Program.





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

Once placed in a Troop Co-Leader role, our Membership Growth team will work with your troop to set this information up in our opportunity catalog, where families can find and join your troop.

Your Troop Size

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, GSGC is here to help you!

Where will you need help?

As a Troop Co-Leader, you may be tempted to wear many hats, but a great troop experience means everyone pitches in! Talk with your troop parents about your expectations for assistance. Think about your strengths, and where you may need help, and make specific asks when talking to parents.

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.

Meeting Location and Times

You will need to choose a location for regular meetings – a local park, library, school– the troop can meet anywhere that follows the Girl Scout safety guidelines. You will also need to decide what day of the week and how often the troop will meet. Most troops meet twice a month, so think about what day, what timeframe, and the length of time for each meeting. Remember, set meeting times that work with your schedule!

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? Take on new challenges as a high adventure troop? Do all the girls enjoy a specific sport or activity?



Working with Juniors

As a Junior leader, you will discover how fun it is to lead girls 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 leader will be to ensure that activities are age-appropriate and based on their needs, interests, and abilities.

| Juniors (4th-5th Grade) | This means |
|---|---|
| Are starting to change physically. | Girls are starting to have growth spurts, and 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 Promise and 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 sudden emotional shifts. |
| Are discovering what they like. | 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 and try new things. |
| Are active and want to have fun together. | Girls want to be in action, this is a good time to really follow the three 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 and choosing the activities they want to participate in. Girls also want to lead, and letting girls lead troop activities and plan trips is a great way to keep it girl-led! |

- Success with Juniors:**
- Let the girls establish troop rules with you.
 - Create opportunities for girls to express themselves.
 - Give girls the responsibility for tasks.

- Vary troop activities.
- Have girls take turns partnering with each troop member.
- Allow the girls to be more independent while keeping them safe at the same time.



New Leader Support System

Girl Scouts is all about sisterhood. As a leader, you are not alone! Your troop leadership team and your community leadership team are a great support system. Get to know them and allow them to help!





Training

You'll find many helpful and interesting training courses offered in gsLearn located in your MY GS account.

New Leader Onboarding

New Co-Troop Leaders are required to complete the GSUSA New Leader Onboarding series through gsLearn and attend a New Leader Orientation. Both of these items should be completed within the first 45 days of being added to their new role, and before the first troop meeting.

Troop First Aider

If your troop plans to go on field trips or other outings, at least one registered/background checked adult will need to be registered in the troop as a 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 adult and pediatric CPR, first aid, and AED (Automated External Defibrillator) training that, minimally,

includes a face-to-face, hands-on skill check portion. Any adult with general first aid certification and additional health, safety, or emergency response expertise (for example, a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic; wilderness training, certified lifeguard, or emergency medical technician) can also serve as the troop's First Aider.

Troop Camp-Trained Adult

Additionally, once your troop is ready to plan a camp out, you will need to have an adult take Gateway Council Camp Training, an overnight training that takes place at one of our two camp properties.





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 Troop Support Team.

Before meeting with parents or the girls, you will want to get together with your co-leader and make some decisions about your troop. These items are important to determine before your first meeting with your troop parents and caregivers:

- Meeting logistics: When, where, how frequently and how long will the troop meet?
- What kind of help will the troop need from caregivers?
- What will the behavioral expectations be during troop activities?
- What type of communication platforms or channels will you use with the troop families?
- Troop finances: Will you have regular troop dues or 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 caregiver meeting.



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 caregivers each year.

Permission Forms - To be completed by caregivers each year.

Troop Bank Authorization Form - Use this form to open, close, or change your troop bank account

You can find more forms on the Forms and Documents webpage:

<https://www.gsgateway.org/en/members/resources/forms-and-documents.html>



Working with Caregivers

A Girl Scout troop needs caregiver support to thrive!

Caregiver Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and introductions to one another and to the Girl Scouts. Ask about each girl and get to know her and her caregivers.
- 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 support the troop.
- Have parents complete health forms and annual permission forms. Share contact info for all troop members.
- Discuss the types of activities the troop will participate in this year (regular meetings, field trips, council events, camping trips).
- Answer any questions the parents and caregivers may have.

Helpful Tips!

- Don't try to do this alone! Ask parents directly to help with the troop – list out specific needs.
- Invite a member of your Community Partnership Team to attend if you need support with this meeting.
- Have a [“Meet the Girl Scout”](#) info sheet so that parents can share helpful info for working with their daughter.
- If girls will attend this meeting, have a craft, coloring pages, or simple activity to keep them engaged.

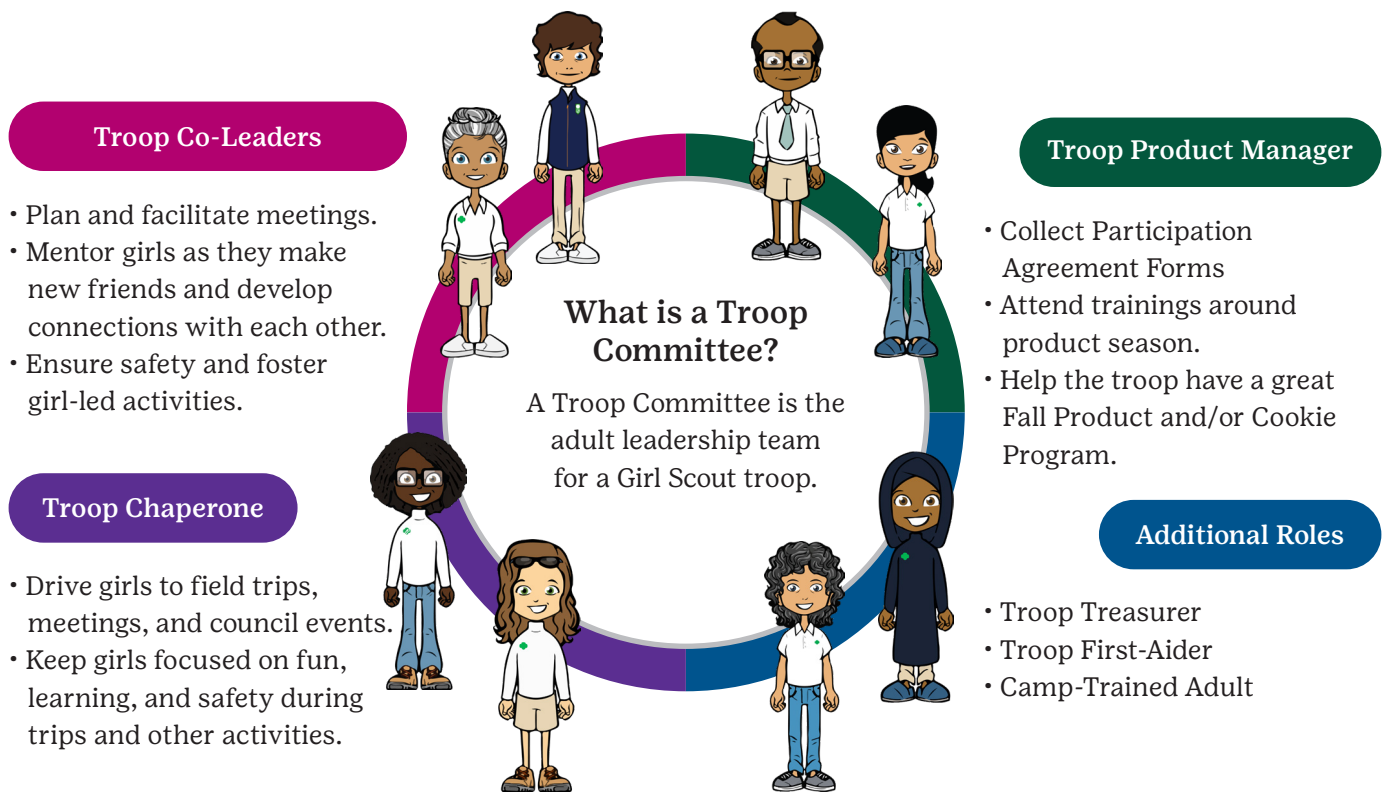
Troop Communication

Good communication is essential to a well-run troop. It's a great idea to discuss how troop communications will be handled. Will your troop have its own private rally on Rallyhood? 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 important to keep an open and honest communication line with parents and caregivers regarding behavior and/or special needs of girls and the troop.

Caregivers can take an active role in supporting your Girl Scout experience.

Adult support is vital to the experience girls have in the troop setting. The leadership structure and distribution of duties will depend on troop size and can be customized based on the skills, interests, and availability of adults to best meet their needs and the needs of their girls.



Top 5 Advantages to Organizing a Troop Committee

1. Share the load; reduce stress and avoid burning out by recruiting Troop Volunteers.
2. Lean on your co-leader for help in shouldering leadership responsibilities.
3. Busy adults can help with what they are good at and enjoy, which can be less of a time commitment. Utilize ways adults can support the troop to identify their areas of interest.
4. Allows adults to give back to their community and be an integral part of the troop.
5. Girls get to spend special time with their parents and caregivers.

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!



Create Your Troop Committee

Caregivers want what is best for their girl but can be particular with what they do with their time and money. Keep in mind that time and funds are limited for many. Ask all families for help in creating your troop committee by delegating troop tasks. Families don't all look the same, so consider the entire family—any caregivers or guardians, adult siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.

Things to consider before you ask for help:

- What is the time commitment?
- Do you expect all caregivers to be registered members?
- Be upfront about expectation—for you, the troop, and the families.
- Identify individual talents and skills and utilize them.
- Don't just focus on moms/women.

Making the ask:

- The most important thing is to just ask for help!
- Try using a sign-up platform such as Sign-up Genius or Rallyhood to help fill slots where support is needed. This helps adults make commitments that fit their schedule.
- Tell them why you think they would be good at a particular task.
- Try asking one-on-one for adult support. It's hard to say no when you are specifically asked.

Best practices:

- Use VTK to send follow-up emails with what the girls will be doing in the next meeting and other reminders you need to share.
- Set up the expectations for communication and communicate clearly. Identify communication preferences—Rallyhood group, text thread, emails, etc.
- Make a schedule or sign-up sheet and bring it to your caregiver meeting.
- Set boundaries: sometimes it may be best for the girl and their caregiver to not work together. It might be best for the caregiver to help in a different way to provide the girl with the most enriching experience possible.
- Show the value of volunteering with Girl Scouts.
- Be inclusive. Look beyond the caregiver!
- Remember to celebrate success often.
- Girl Scouting should be fun for adults, too!
- Check in with your troop committee regularly on progress and re-evaluate as needed.
- At the end of the year, plan an evaluation meeting to assess progress, successes, and challenges.

There are several resources for getting families to engage in the Girl Scout experience:

- VTK Resource Tab: Family Hub.
- VTK Parent View: Caregivers can see the year plan, what girls are working on, and access the Resource tab.
- Sweets & Treats Program Family Guide and Cookie Family Guide.



The Junior Uniform

Uniforms are fun and make girls feel like they are apart of a team, but uniforms are not required to start meeting.



Girl Scout Junior Vest



Girl Scout Junior Sash



Girl Scout Troop Finances

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.

Bank Accounts

- Two nonrelated volunteers must be on a troop bank account.
- Complete and submit the Troop Bank Account Request form on our website.
- Get approval and be on the lookout for an email from Truist to complete account setup process online.

Girl Scouts of Gateway Council partners with Truist Bank to support troop bank accounts. If your troop cannot bank with Truist or it would impose a hardship for your troop, there are alternative banking options listed on the Troop Bank Account Request form.

Troop Dues

Many troops decide to charge Troop Dues in the first year to help offset startup costs or to support regular meeting costs, like supplies or snacks. Make sure to be transparent with how funds will be utilized and 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. Troop Dues should be decided on by the troop; most troops charge between \$5 to \$15 on a per meeting or per month basis and can range depending on the troop's activity level.

Tax Exempt Status

Troops in our council are not considered independent tax entities, and thus purchases for your troop are not considered tax exempt.

Fund Raising

A troop's primary money earning should come from the GSGC Sweets and Treats in the Fall and the Cookie Program in the Winter. 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, please visit: <https://gsgc.wufoo.com/forms/financial-assistance-membership-application/>

For more information about managing troop finances check out: [Volunteer Essentials](#)

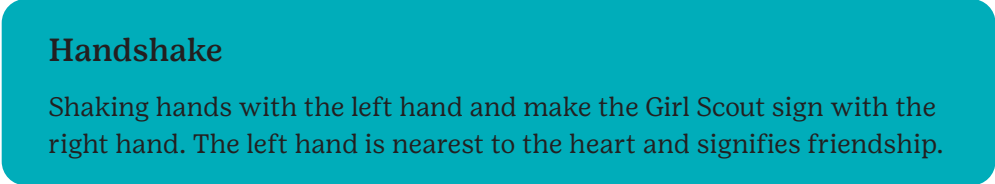


Girl Scout Traditions



Hand Sign

Raise three fingers of the right hand with the thumb holding down the pinky. The three fingers represent the three parts of the Promise.



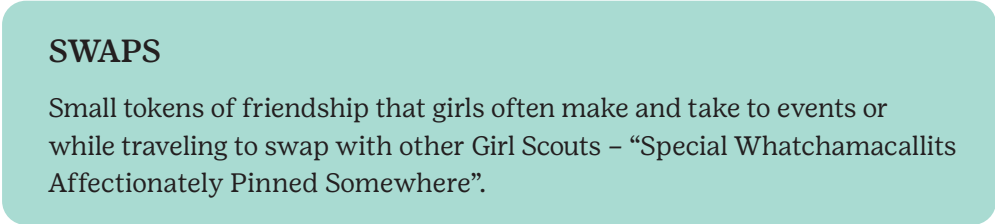
Handshake

Shaking hands with the left hand and make the Girl Scout 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

It is important to always keep the safety of your Girl Scouts as your top priority. These tips will help you build a basic first aid kit, but it is important to make sure if your Girl Scout has a special need you take measures to accommodate where possible.

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 with the troop at all times.

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.



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



Your Year in Girl Scouts

| August | September | October | November |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>GSGC Troop Leader Kick-Off.</p> <p>Start planning for the year.</p> | <p>Host a caregiver meeting.</p> <p>Sweets & Treats sales begin!</p> | <p>Celebrate Founder's Day with your troop.</p>  | <p>Thanksgiving- GSGC offices closed.</p> <p>Cookie trainings start.</p> |
| December | January | February | March |
| <p>Winter holidays- GSGC offices closed.</p>  | <p>Cookie program sales begin!</p> | <p>Celebrate World Thinking Day with your community.</p> | <p>Girl Scout Week</p> <p>Celebrate Girl Scouts Birthday.</p> |
| April | May | June | July |
| <p>Volunteer Appreciation Month.</p> <p>Girl Scout Leader Day.</p> | <p>Host a Bridging Ceremony or end-of-year celebration.</p> <p>Early Bird Renewal.</p> | <p>Summer camps begin.</p>  | <p>Complete Girl Scouts Love the Outdoors challenge with your troop</p> |

Visit <https://www.gsgateway.org/en/discover/activities/event-calendar.html> to learn more about Council-hosted events and find the most up-to-date information. All events are subject to change without notice.



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.

Quick Meeting Checklist

- Use the VTK to verify your troop roster and email caregivers. Remind them of any announcements you have.
- Know the agenda. Refer to the Six Elements of a Troop Meeting list and your meeting agenda.
- Review and practice your agenda. You'll feel calmer during the actual meeting and ready to make adjustments as needed.
- Prepare for fun! The girls will follow your lead.

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.



Meeting as a Troop

We have found that troops who meet twice a month have the best experience!

Your Troop Year at a Glance

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. For help finding just the right balance, contact our Volunteer Experience Team at customercare@gsgateway.org to set up a time to plan out your year together.

Resources for Planning 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.

Here's to a great year in Girl Scouting!





Your Junior Year-at-a-Glance

Junior Girl Scout Adventures

Junior Girl Scouts are ready to broaden their world and venture beyond their troop meetings! To get the adventure started, plan a visit to one of the GSGC camp properties for 1-2 nights and progress to traveling farther away from home. Planning for campouts and other trips is an opportunity for girls to develop decision-making skills and work collaboratively with leaders and troop volunteers. Be sure to include a Girl Scout purpose to your trip such as how the trip fits into badge earning opportunities and what skills the girls will gain from the experience. Make sure the girls are involved in each step of the planning process.

Things to think about before you get started:

- Get approval from GSGC by submitting a [Trip Request Form](#)
- Financing your adventure
- Plan for safety- check the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)
- Communication with families
- Permissions and paperwork

Learn more about earning badges in the Volunteer Toolkit found in your myGS account at mygs.girlscouts.org.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

WHAT:

Four Pillars form the Girl Scout Program



STEM • Life Skills • Entrepreneurship • Outdoors

HOW:

Girl Scouts thrive when they have a supportive, all girl environment guided by caring adult mentors and are grounded in the three processes.

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

WHY:

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

Benefits of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience include:
Sense of self • Positive values
Healthy Relationships • Challenge Seeking
Community Problem Solving

The Volunteer Toolkit: Your Digital Troop Assistant

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 VTK

For more information about the Volunteer Toolkit, check out our website: www.gsgateway.org/ or contact our Volunteer Experience Team at customercare@gsgateway.org

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.

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 Sweets and Treats, 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 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 meeting plans 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 Community Leadership Team 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 Check out VTK for a Cookie Program Family Meeting guide!

Sweets and Treats | Sept. – Oct.

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 and in person to family and friends.

How: Customers 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: Participation in Sweets and Treats is a great way for girls to experience our product programs on a smaller scale while earning funds for their troop

Cookie Program | Dec. – Feb.

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 regardless of where they live through online, in-person, and cookie booth sales.

How: Family and friends support their favorite Girl Scout by purchasing cookies to help her reach her goal. With the support of 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

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.

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.

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



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**.

Bronze Award

It all starts here. Juniors team up with fellow Girl Scouts to explore their community, discover a need or issue they care about, and work together to address it. It's a chance to create a plan and make an impact on the community they live in.

You can become a Bronze Award Girl Scout if you:

- Are in 4th or 5th grade
- Are a registered Girl Scout Junior
- Have completed a Junior Leadership Award or Junior Journey

Silver Award

Ready to help your community and earn one of the highest awards in Girl Scouting? Cadettes can team up with a small group of fellow Girl Scouts or work on their own. To earn the Silver Award, you will research an issue you care about, make a plan to address it, and then take action to improve your community.

You can become a Silver Award Girl Scout if you:

- Are in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade
- Are a registered Girl Scout Cadette
- Have completed the Bronze Award, a Cadette Leadership Award, or a Cadette Journey

Gold Award

Gold Award Girl Scouts are rock stars, role models, and real-life heroes. How do they do it? By using everything they've learned as a Girl Scout to solve a problem in their community or make a lasting change in their world.

You can become a Gold Award Girl Scout if you:

- Are in 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade
- Are a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador
- Have completed the Silver Award, a Senior/Ambassador Leadership Award, or a Senior/Ambassador Journey

For more information about highest awards check out this page.
<https://www.gsgateway.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/highest-awards.html>



Girl Scouts 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 beautiful outdoors properties throughout the school year. Summer brings sleep away camping, and fun summer day camps for our girls to enjoy. Summer opportunities are announced in January each year. For more information scan the QR code.

Camp Kateri

183 Camp Shalom Trail
Hawthorne, FL 32640

Camp Kateri is located in Hawthorne, Florida just 30 minutes southeast of Gainesville. Camp Kateri is a 550-acre property with opportunities for archery, canoeing, sailing, kayaking, hiking and exploration. The main gate is locked and requires a code, which will be given upon confirmation of reservation.

There are 213 beds available; additional overnight capacity can be accommodated by self-tent camping with camper supplied tents, ONLY permitted upon raised wooden tent pads. Self-tent camping outside of the raised platforms must be approved in advance of your arrival through Vice President of Property. Number of campers on site during time of self-tent request (outside of raised platforms) is based off maximum capacity rations of location. Additional capacity requires rental of one portable toilet per 20 people.



*Scan to register
for camp* →

For questions about reservations, please contact Customer Care at (877) 764-5237



Camp Kugelman

12180 County Road 99
Lillian, AL 36549

Camp Kugelman is located on Perdido Bay in Lillian, Alabama, 30 minutes from Pensacola, Florida beaches, and offers air-conditioned dormitory-style accommodations. There is a public boat launch to Perdido Bay located within a quarter mile of the property. This private, sandy beach-front property includes sleeping accommodations for up to 50 people at a time, a large commercial-grade kitchen, a private pool and archery range.

Two fun programs taking place at Camp Kugelman this summer are Wacky World of Art and Spatastic. Whether you are a budding artist who doesn't mind getting your hands dirty, or a girl who loves the spa life, you will enjoy these summer programs!

Scan the QR code on page 25 to register for camp!

For questions about reservations, please contact Customer Care at (877) 764-5237.



Fernandina Beach Little House

25 South 13th Street
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

This spacious, one-room house contains a separate kitchen space and two bathrooms (one shower). The kitchen is equipped with a refrigerator (no ice maker), stove, and tall kitchen trash can. Bring your own kitchen items (pots, pans, plates etc.) and enjoy cooking and eating meals with your troop! You'll also find three folding tables, 16 new folding chairs, 16 new cots (no mattresses), and a box fan. Plus, downtown Fernandina Beach is a short walk away and the beach and Ft. Clinch are only a 5-minute drive.

For questions about reservations, please contact Customer Care at (877) 764-5237.

After visiting the Fernandina Beach Little House with your troop, order this adorable patch for each of your girls through our council shop by scanning the QR code below. It's a perfect way to remember all the fun time you had together!



Scan to purchase
your patch



girl scouts 
of gateway council