



Volunteer Orientation Handbook

Girl Scouts of Manitou Council

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Girl Scouts of Manitou Council

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

Girl Scouts of Manitou Council is a chartered member of Girl Scouts of the USA. Girl Scouts is a membership organization open to all girls, kindergarten through high school, and to women and men over the age of 18, who make the Girl Scout Promise, accept the Girl Scout Law, and pay membership fees. All registered adult members are subject to a background check prior to appointment as a volunteer.

Girl Scouts of Manitou Council has more than 5,000 members in seven counties: Dodge, Calumet, Fond du Lac, Manitowoc, Ozaukee, Sheboygan and Washington.

The Girl Scout Center
5212 Windward Court
Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53083
920-565-4575

The Girl Scout Center is located in Sheboygan where staff offices and the Girl Scout *Petals to Patches* Shop is located.

Girl Scouts *Petals to Patches* Shop is where Girl Scout uniforms, badges, insignia, books, resources and gifts may be purchased. Online shopping is also available at **shop.gsmanitou.org**.

Camp Evelyn
W6598 Camp Evelyn Road
Plymouth, Wisconsin 53073

Camp Evelyn is nestled on 240-acres of beautifully wooded property near Plymouth, Wisconsin. Camp Evelyn is a year-round camp designed especially to enable Girl Scouts to experience high quality activities in the out-of-doors. It is the perfect place for any group desiring a camp setting for a getaway, educational program, or retreat.

Highlights include the Mullet River, swimming pool, a lake, open areas for games, trails for hiking and plenty of room for various winter sports. There are five winterized buildings available for renting for Troop Getaways; The Troop House (sleeps 25), Gemini I (sleeps 25) and The Crystal Lake House (sleeps 25), The Pavilion (daytime use only) and The Dining Hall (daytime use only). Call the Girl Scout Center for more information or go online www.gsmanitou.org to reserve a building.

Camp Manitou
6616 Manitou Drive
Shoto, Wisconsin 54241

Camp Manitou is a 140-acre property located near Two Rivers, Wisconsin. Camp Manitou offers large open areas for field and wide games, access to the West Twin River, a lake for swimming and canoeing, a nature trail through wooded and wetland areas for exploration and a disc golf course. There are three buildings available for renting for Troop Getaways; The Lodge (daytime use only), The Pine Troop House (sleeps 25) and The Cedars (sleeps 25). The Pine Troop House and the Cedars are winterized. Call the Girl Scout Center for more information or go online www.gsmanitou.org to reserve a building.

Welcome to Girl Scouts!

Thank you for becoming a Girl Scout leader! We're so excited to have you join the Girl Scout Movement.

Girl Scouts helps girls empower themselves to stand up and make a difference. By cultivating girls' leadership skills, we prepare them to overcome challenges and advocate for their ideas now and in the future. With an emphasis on self-discovery, character building, and community impact, Girl Scouts helps girls become a powerful force for good in the world.

No matter where or how you volunteer, you'll make a difference in girls' lives—and this go-to guide will prepare you to effectively lead during your first year as a Girl Scout volunteer. Need help along the way? Let us know! We have various tools, training resources, and people to support you through each step.

You're now a part of our team. We can't wait to see the impact you'll make this year!

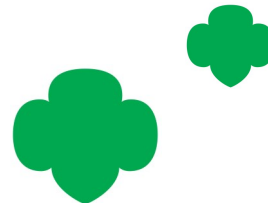


Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be:
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to:
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Girl 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.



You—A Girl Scout Troop Leader!

Being a Girl Scout troop leader is an incredible journey along which you will shape the future by working with girls today. With your guidance, encouragement, and go-getter spirit, your Girl Scouts will be ready to embark on a lifetime of leadership, success, and adventure. And along the way, you will hone your own leadership style and discover that you will achieve more than you thought possible!

In Girl Scouting, leadership is about more than “being in charge” or having a title; it’s recognizing that you’re part of a team and understanding that team’s needs and interests.

Leadership is teaching girls:

- That they can do and be anything!
- That they are decision-makers and should own their decisions
- How to live the Girl Scout Law by modeling it for them

As a leader, see yourself as a coach who:

- Guides and instructs, not as a teacher providing repetitive lessons and activities
- Advises and discusses
- Ensures each girl can carry out her responsibilities within the troop
- Encourages girls to build their skills and their ethics
- Assigns more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop

It’s important to remember that:

- You can not expect to know everything the girls want to learn
- You will explore and learn alongside your girls and grow your confidence in the process
- You are not expected to know everything about Girl Scouting, but you should know where to go for information—and to ask for help when you need it

Troop Leader Position Description

Purpose: To guide a group of girls in the Girl Scout Program based on the Girl Scout Promise and Law; to help them build courage, confidence, and character to make the world a better place.

Appointment & Support: Reports to and supported by the Troop Organizer and/or Membership Development & Support Director for an annual term. Volunteers shall receive performance evaluation based on job expectations outlined in their position description. Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to council and Girl Scouts of the USA policies and standards, support of the Girl Scout purpose, values, and council goals as well as positive relationships with the community, parents, other volunteers and employed staff of the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council.

Accountabilities:

- Complete learning opportunities for the position within three months of appointment
- Attend troop leader meetings and distribute girl/parent information
- Register girl and adult members in a timely manner
- Guide girls in girl-led planning, cooperative learning experiences and evaluating activities based on the Girl Scout program appropriate to their interests, needs, and abilities
- Schedule, prepare for, and attend troop meetings (2-3 meetings a month)
- Submit records and reports as needed by the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council
- Manage troop funds and troop bank account according to council policies and procedures
- Keep parents well informed of troop activities
- Support and comply with the policies, standards and guidelines of Girl Scouts of the USA and Girl Scouts of Manitou Council
- Accept the responsibility of consistent troop support
- Subscribe to the mission of Girl Scouting and demonstrate this through Girl Scout membership

Qualifications:

- Enjoyment of and interest in working with girls
- Willingness to support Girl Scouts in girl-led planning
- Organizational skills
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Delegation skills
- Communication skills
- Willingness and ability to work as part of an adult leadership team

Requirements:

- Register to be an adult member of the Girl Scouts
- Accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Submit to a complete background check
- Complete required learning opportunities for the position

Affirmative Action

As provided by Wisconsin law, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, citizenship, marital status, ancestry, need for reasonable accommodation or socioeconomic status. There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified applicant or employee by reason of disability of age, use of lawful products, honesty testing, pregnancy or childbirth, sexual orientation, genetic testing, military service membership or arrest or conviction record except as allowed in the applicable laws. In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the Council, every Staff Worker employed in Girl Scouting shall be selected under fair employment procedures that provide equal employment recruitment, hiring, training and promotion of disabled individuals and of persons from groups that are underrepresented ethnically and racially. **GSMC Policy**

Adult Leadership Team

Please do not think that you must do everything yourself. Recruiting other adults to help with the troop responsibilities will help distribute the work evenly and make it more enjoyable for all. Think about the people you know whom you admire, who connect with children (especially girls), who are dependable and responsible, and who realistically have time to spend volunteering.

Adults who volunteer with the troop on an ongoing basis (or more than two meetings) will need to register as Girl Scout members, complete the volunteer application form, complete all online learning courses, review Girl Scout resources and submit to a background check for the safety of the girls.

Adult Leadership Team members might help by:

- Becoming a Cookie Sale Manager for the troop
- Arranging meeting places
- Locating adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized troop meeting
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Managing troop records and communication (i.e. troop newsletter/finance report)
- Coordinate transportation
- Helping with activities during the troop meeting

Tips to successfully recruiting adult team members:

Open and constant communication—When everyone knows what is going on it is much easier to offer help to the volunteers and troop.

Be specific—Making a general request for help will often be ignored because people are afraid to commit to something when they don't know what they will be doing. Say things like: I really need one more volunteer to help the girls make masks for the play. Can you help with that?

Be direct—If you don't ask for help you probably won't get help.

Be organized—If you have plans in place for meetings it makes it much easier to ask others to help.

Say Thank you—Thanking your volunteers with a simple note or statement of gratitude for their help can go a long way in showing how much you appreciate the help.

Suggested Ways to Communicate with Families

- Communicate with troop members using email through the Volunteer Toolkit. Be sure to find a way to communicate with parent/guardians who don't have email access. Be sure to follow internet safety rules.
- Have girls decorate clear plastic green file envelopes to send all paperwork home in. This makes it easy for parents/guardians to identify Girl Scout paperwork and prevents permission forms from getting lost in backpacks. Parents can also send back information in this envelope.
- Create a monthly newsletter. On a regular basis, have the girls take home a newsletter—if they know when it comes, they will look for it.
- To make sure you have ample volunteers for your meetings, put down the list of volunteers for upcoming meetings on each newsletter sent home. If a parent/guardian can't volunteer on that assigned day, they trade with another parent.

The more you keep families updated about what the troop is doing, the more likely they will be involved.

Let's Get Started!

Managing Your Member Experience Online

After your background check is completed and you're approved to serve as a volunteer, you will receive an email prompting you to log into MY GS, your Girl Scout member community. MY GS allows you to manage your member experience online, access the Volunteer Toolkit and complete online learning through gsLearn.

If you do not receive an email to log into the MY GS go to www.gsmanitou.org and click on "MY GS" in the upper right corner of the page. Click on the "Forgot your password?" link below the login. When it asks for your username, enter the email address that you provided when you registered for Girl Scouts. That will be your username going forward. Once you submit your username you should receive an email to reset your password. The reset email may go into your junk file so be sure to check if you don't receive it. Please contact growstrong@gsmanitou.org if you have problems accessing MY GS.

Tips and Tricks: The Volunteer Toolkit works best with the web browser Chrome. It is not compatible with Internet Explorer. If you experience problems while using the Volunteer Toolkit you may need to log out, clear your browsing history/cookies/cache and log back in.

Next Steps

When you're set up for success, you'll be empowered to set up your troop for success! To help you become the best leader you can be, we offer in-person orientation, online training courses, in-person workshops, troop leader meetings and other great resources.

Get started by visiting gsLearn in MY GS to complete the Successful Leader Learning Series and the Volunteer Toolkit Tutorial online.

Area Troop Leader Meetings

At least three times a year, area troop leader meetings are held in your community to provide excellent opportunities to learn from other volunteers, share ideas, network and provide you with vital information about upcoming activities and new resources.

It is required that each troop is represented at these meetings. If you cannot attend the meeting yourself, please make sure another volunteer or parent with your troop attends the meeting. Materials are only distributed during scheduled troop leader meetings.

Membership Kick-off meeting date and time: _____

Girl Scout Cookie Sale meeting date and time: _____

Girl Scout Summer Camp meeting date and time: _____

Meeting Location: _____

Volunteer Resources

The Volunteer Toolkit

The Volunteer Toolkit is your official source for delivering easy, fun troop meetings year-round! This fully customizable digital planning tool provides you with Girl Scout program content, award requirements, and other resources, so you can keep your Girl Scout year running smoothly. Accessible on any computer, tablet, or mobile device, the Volunteer Toolkit lets troop leaders:

- Explore meeting topics and program activities with your girls
- Print step-by-step activity guides and shopping lists
- Manage girl attendance and track achievements
- Add local events
- Edit the troop roster and update contact information
- Track and share financial information
- Message and share meeting activities with troop families
- Plus so much more! Learn more and access the Volunteer Toolkit by logging into MyGS at gsmanitou.org

Successful Leader Learning Series

Confident leaders are prepared leaders, and this online learning series will give all the info you need to get started as a troop leader. Go to gsLearn in MY GS.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

This guide has everything you need to know to be prepared and keep your girls safe during a range of activities outside the normal Girl Scout troop meeting. It can be found in the Resources tab of the Volunteer Toolkit and at gsmanitou.org.

Volunteer Essentials

With key information, policies, and procedures that support the safe and consistent delivery of Girl Scout programming to girls across the council, *Volunteer Essentials* is just that—essential. By agreeing to be a Girl Scout volunteer, you agree to follow the items outlined in this resource. *Volunteer Essentials* is updated annually, and the newest version can always be found on our website. Find it at gsmanitou.org.

Tips for Troop Leaders

When you're looking for real-world advice from fellow troop leaders who have been there, this volunteer-to-volunteer resource on the Girl Scouts of the USA website has the tips you need for a successful troop year. Find it at girlscouts.org/tipsfortroopleaders.

Family Connections:

The Key Ingredient to Successful Girl Scout Troops!

Girl Scouting provides the best opportunities for girls when families step up and play an active part in the troop. Without meaningful support from parents, it's difficult for a troop to be all it can be. Plus, girls feel a special sense of pride when their families take part and show interest in the things they are doing!

Kick the Year Off Right With a Parents and Caregivers Meeting

A parent and caregiver meeting should be the first meeting you hold to start each troop year—it sets up both new and returning troops for success!

Why? Because it helps:

- Families understand what Girl Scouting can do for their girl
- Families and leaders identify ways they will work as a team to support the troop
- Families and leaders agree about what the troop pays for and what families pay for individually
- You fill key troop positions—you never know which parent will make an awesome assistant leader or troop cookie manager
- Families know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events or schedule changes
- Families learn about uniforms, books, and other important basics

Outlining clear expectations, building a team, and engaging families in the Girl Scout experience is a great way to start off on the right foot. When families are involved, leaders have support, and when the troop has a plan, girls benefit!

Check out our step-by-step guide and parent meeting outline in the Volunteer Toolkit. (Remember, you can access the Volunteer Toolkit via MyGS!) This hour-long meeting will make all the difference in the year ahead: **100% of troops with the most satisfied parents and troop leaders report they hold parent meetings.** You'll also want to hold an additional family meeting ahead of cookie season to introduce parents and caregivers to the program and how they can pitch in.

And remember to make family part of the formula! While Girl Scout programming is always focused on the girls themselves, it's important and helpful to open a few events to their families throughout the year. Inviting a whole crew to celebrate her accomplishments in Girl Scouting—whether at a holiday open house, a bridging ceremony, or a fun “reverse meeting” where girls take on the role of leader and guide the adults, including caregivers, through an activity—will help parents better understand the value of Girl Scouts and be more likely to invest their time and talents with the troop.

That said, there's no need to wait for one of these special events to engage parents in their Girl Scouts' troop lives. Keep communication lines open throughout the year—whether it's through your troop's social media page, personal emails, or in-person chats—to keep parents in the loop on what the girls are doing and learning during each meeting, and encourage them to let their daughters “be the expert” at home, by, for example, explaining or teaching a new skill she's learned to the rest of the family.

Making a Successful Troop Experience

No matter where your girls live, a universal Girl Scout experience connects them to their Girl Scout sisters around the country. And there are so many ways to make sure your girls get the full Girl Scout experience in a way that excites and inspires them!

You can count on Girl Scouts providing...

- Tools for family involvement
- All-girl spaces
- Supportive adult mentors
- Cooperative, hands-on learning
- Girl-led activities
- Rigorous safety standards

Throughout their troop year, you'll support your girls as they...

- Hold regular meetings
- Earn badges and Girl Scout Awards
- Complete Take Action Projects
- Participate in the Cookie Sale Program
- Learn Girl Scout traditions
- go on field trips
- Get outdoors

Girl Scout Terminology

The Quiet Sign is made by raising your right hand high. As girls in the troop see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

Group Agreement is a "girl-led" process to create a list of appropriate individual and group behaviors that will support a good learning environment. Having a group agreement will also help the girls manage conflict.

Buddy system is a safety practice in which two or three girls are grouped to keep watch over each other. In an activity such as swimming or hiking the girls grouped together should be of equal ability.

Sit-upon is a lightweight pad or mat used when sitting on the floor or ground.

Girl Scout Ring is a circle formed by members of a Girl Scout troop for discussing troop business and planning activities. This process promotes inclusiveness and equality among the troop members.

Defining the Girl Scout Troop

Girls and adults participating as a Girl Scout troop usually stay together for an entire school year and meet at least twice a month—how often to meet is up to you and the girls! Troops can meet just about anywhere, as long as the location is safe, easily accessible to girls and adults, and within a reasonable commute. In each meeting, girls participate in fun activities that engage them in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

What do Girl Scouts do?

Troop – a group of 5-25 girls and two or more adult volunteers who meet at least two times a month to have fun, earn badges, go on trips (near and far), and work together to make the world a better place!

Cookie Sale – the only council-sponsored money earning activity for the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council. The cookie sale helps girls earn money for activities and supplies and teaches girls many valuable life lessons along the way.

Camp – outdoor experience for girls to learn about and appreciate the natural world around them. Camping also encourages girls' sense of exploration and independence.

Girls at Every Grade Level

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

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

Registering the Girls in the Troop

Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of the Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). Membership dues may not be transferred to another member and are not refundable.

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

Pluralism and Diversity in Girl Membership

All Girl Scout councils and lone troop committees shall be responsible for seeing that membership is reflective of the pluralistic nature of their population and that membership is extended to all girls in all population segments and geographic areas in their jurisdiction. A girl who meets or can meet membership requirements shall not be denied admission or access to Girl Scout program because of race, color, ethnicity, creed, national origin, socioeconomic status, or disability. **GSUSA Policy**

Where Girl Scouts Can Take Your Girls

As your girls progress through Girl Scouts, they'll learn to take the reins and make their Girl Scout experiences their own—it's what being girl-led is all about! And as a leader, you'll encourage them to dream big and challenge themselves as they take their newfound passions to the next level.

While program elements—like outdoor expeditions and entrepreneurial ventures—align across all grade levels, Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies won't be doing the same activities as seasoned Seniors and Ambassadors. But by building on the knowledge and skills they gain year after year, your girls' confidence will grow exponentially, and they'll be eager to take those next steps.

So what can you expect as they grow through each level of Girl Scouting?

Girl Scout Daisies sparkle with that first-time newness in everything they do. They go on trips, learn about nature and science, and explore the arts and their communities—and so much more. Daisies can also earn learning petals.

Girl Scout Brownies work together as they earn badges and explore their communities. Friendship, fun, and age-appropriate activities begin at the Girl Scout Brownie meeting and move out to the community and the wider world. While earning badges, Brownies build skills, learn hobbies, and have fun!

Girl Scout Juniors are big-idea thinkers. They're explorers at camp and product designers when they earn their Innovation and Storytelling badges, or even their Bronze Award. Every day, they wake up ready to play a new role.

Girl Scout Cadettes chart their own courses and let their curiosity and imagination lead the way. They learn about the power of being a good friend, gain confidence by mentoring younger girls, and can earn their Silver Award.

Girl Scout Seniors are ready to take the world by storm, and Girl Scouts gives them countless ways to do it. Their experiences shape their world, while giving them a safe space to be themselves and explore their interests. Seniors can earn their Gold Award and change the world in a tangible, lasting way.

Girl Scout Ambassadors know that small acts produce big change. While they get ready for life beyond high school, Girl Scouts helps them take flight. They can also earn their Gold Award and drive lasting impact in their communities.

All of the skills and experiences girls gain throughout their time in Girl Scouts set them up for special recognition through the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. Through their award projects, your girls will tackle issues close to their hearts and make a real difference—and if they decide to pursue their Gold Award, they'll also be eligible for unique college scholarships and open doors to promising career opportunities. The longer your girls are in Girl Scouts, the brighter their futures will be—and they'll have you to thank for it!

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

What makes Girl Scouts truly unique? Everything is designed especially for, and is tested by, girls! Our program centers around our research-backed Girl Scout Leadership Experience—that is, *what* girls do and *how* they do it. Activities are girl-led, which gives girls opportunities to explore leadership roles and “learn by doing” in a cooperative-learning environment.

In Girl Scouts, girls will:

Discover: Every activity girls tackle in Girl Scouts helps them discover who they are, what they care about, and what their talents are.





Connect: Girls collaborate with and learn from other people and expand their horizons. This helps them care about and inspire others locally and globally.

Take Action: As girls connect with and show care for others, they become eager to take action to make the world a better place.

So what does this mean for your troop? Through Girl Scouting, your girls will develop a strong sense of self, demonstrate positive values, seek challenges, solve significant problems in their community, and establish healthy relationships. These aren't just good qualities—they're leadership skills that will last a lifetime!

What is the Girl Scout Program?

No matter what excites your girls, they'll find engaging and fun activities in the four areas that make up the core of the Girl Scout program:

 <p>STEM Computer science, engineering, robotics, outdoor STEM, and more</p>	 <p>OUTDOORS Adventure and skill building, from the backyard to the backcountry, including camping experiences for all ages</p>	 <p>LIFE SKILLS Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship, communication skills—to name a few</p>	 <p>ENTREPRENEURSHIP The Girl Scout Cookie Program—the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world— teaches goal setting, decision making, money management, business ethics, and people skills</p>
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Whether they complete Girl Scout Leadership Journeys, earn badges, unleash their inner entrepreneur through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, pack for their first hike, change the world through “Take Action” projects, or any combination of these activities, at Girl Scouts, every girl has countless ways to explore our four program areas and hone the skills they'll need to power a lifetime of success—whatever that looks like for them.

Explore the many exciting possibilities with the Award and Badge Explorer at https://www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/badges/badge_explorer.html, and in your Volunteer Toolkit.

Community Service or Take Action

What's the Difference?

Girl Scouts often do Community Service, and Take Action Projects. Both kinds of projects help communities in different ways. Direct and immediate service changes something right now. Long-lasting action gets at the root cause of issues.

Community service makes the world a better place for people “right now.” For example, collecting cans of food for the local food pantry feeds people “right now.” Gathering toys for a homeless-family shelter makes kids happy “right now.” Providing clothing and toiletries to people who have suffered a disaster helps them get through a traumatic event “right now.” These acts of kindness are important ways to help people-right now.

Take Action projects address the root cause of an issue, and come up with sustainable, longer-lasting solutions. These projects strive to make the world a better place for more people for a much longer time. As a Girl Scout, you use both service and action to live out the Girl Scout Law and “make the world a better place!”

Example: The girls notice that the school playground is scattered with trash.

Community Service approach: The girls tell their leader and suggest that they could clean it up. They get trash bags and gloves and go pick up the trash on the playground.
Impact: At the present moment there is not any trash on the playground. Tomorrow...next week? Unclear.

Take Action approach: The girls tell their leader and suggest that they could clean it up. Their leader asks the girls to consider why the trash is there and charges them to investigate and try to figure out if this was a one-time event or something more long-term.

Take Action Projects are sustainable and the impact is measurable. Because these two words are difficult to define in concrete terms, be prepared to take the time to define each word with the girls.

Measurable: The success of the project can be determined based on the number of people the project helped or involved, any reduction in the community’s need, and other concrete numbers.

Sustainable: Girls make arrangements (such as collaborating with community leaders and/or organizations or building alliances with mentors) to ensure that the project creates lasting change and is not a one-time event.

Sample Root Cause	Sample Take Action Solution
Lack of trashcans on the playground	Talk with the principal then... 1. Campaign for the PTA to purchase more trashcans 2. Raise money to purchase trashcans
Students don't use the trashcans that are available	Talk with the principal and student council, then... 1. Create a campaign of posters and PSAs on the morning announcements promoting use of trashcans 2. Create a clean-up club after school to make sure that the playground is regularly cleaned up
The trash truck drives by every Tuesday with the back hatch open and trash always falls out	Talk with the student council and the principal, then... 1. Start a letter writing campaign among students, teachers, and school neighbors to the trash collection company to have them make sure that the hatch is closed 2. Attend a city council meeting and ask that they require that trash collection companies drive with their hatch closed

5 Ways Girl Scouts Builds Girl Leaders

Girl Scouts' mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Since 1912, girls have explored new fields of knowledge, learned valuable skills, and developed strong core values through Girl Scouts. Today Girl Scouts is, as it always has been, the organization best positioned to help girls develop the important leadership skills they need to become successful adults.

At Girl Scouts, guided by supportive adults and peers, girls develop leadership through age appropriate activities that enable them to discover their values, skills, and the world around them; connect with others in a multicultural environment; and take action to make a difference in their world. These activities are designed to be girl led, cooperative, and hands-on—processes that create high-quality experiences conducive to learning.

When girls participate in Girl Scouts, they benefit in 5 important ways:



STRONG SENSE OF SELF

Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and form positive identities.



POSITIVE VALUES

Girls act ethically, honest, and responsibly, and show concern for others.



CHALLENGE SEEKING

Girls take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflict constructively.



COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

Girls desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create “action plans” to solve them.

“A badge is a symbol that you have done the thing it stands for often enough, thoroughly enough, and well enough to be prepared to give service in it.”

-Juliette Gordon Low



Guiding Your Troop Experience

In leading a troop, you'll want to guide the structure and experiences of your troop—from how and when meetings are held to how the troop communicates, and from steering girl-led activities to setting financial expectations. You'll make these decisions collaboratively with your volunteer team or co-leader, as well as with input from the girls and their parents/caregivers.

Use these questions to guide your conversation with troop volunteers or co-leader before discussing the topics with parents and caregivers.

Meeting Logistics:

- When will we meet and for how long? How frequently should we schedule troop meetings?
- Where will we meet? (Troop leader pro tip: great meeting spaces include schools, places of worship, libraries, and community centers. If working with teens, consider meeting at coffee shops, bookstores, or another place they enjoy.)

Troop communications:

- How often will we communicate with troop families?
- How will we keep families in the loop? The Volunteer Toolkit? Emails? Group texts?

Money matters:

- Will our troop charge dues?
- How much money will we need to cover supplies and activities? What should our financial plan look like?
- Which components of the uniform—the tunic, sash, or vest—will troop families need to purchase? (Troop leader pro tip: get the full rundown on uniform and insignia at [girlscouts.org/en/our-program/uniforms.html](https://www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/uniforms.html)).

Your Troop Volunteer Team

It takes a village to lift up the next generation of leaders; you don't have to embark on your troop leader journey alone! Set the stage for a successful troop year by tapping into the people resources already at your fingertips: caregivers and other family members, friends, and members of the community have their own unique strengths and can provide troops with time, experience, and ideas—so get them involved from the very beginning as part of your troop volunteer team!

Some members of your volunteer team might play more active roles than others—and that's OK! One caregiver in your troop might step up as a dedicated troop treasurer, while others might volunteer to chaperone a field trip. Some roles, especially those that involve handling troop funds and supervising girls, require additional registration and approval. Be sure those volunteers get signed up before they jump into the fun!

Deciding When and Where to Meet

When to meet is at your troop committee's discretion: What day and times work best for the girls, for the troop volunteers, and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once per week throughout the school year is common, but so is twice per month. Is after-school best? Can the troop volunteers meet at that time, or will meetings work better in the evenings or on the weekends? If so, which day of the week? At what time?

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

- **Cost:** The space should be free.
- **Size:** Large enough to hold all the girls in the troop while engaged in a variety of activities.
- **Availability:** Be sure the space is available for the entire length of time you plan to use the space.
- **Resources:** Determine what types of furnishings come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate.
- **Safety:** Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated or cooled, free from hazards, and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional.
- **Facilities:** Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical.
- **Communication-friendly:** Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space or a telephone is available.
- **Allergen-free:** Pet dander and other common allergens won't bother susceptible girls during troop meetings.
- **Accessibility:** Be sure the space can accommodate girls and adults with disabilities.

Making the Ask

If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started: "I'm a Girl Scout volunteer, and I advise a troop of _____ girls. We're doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like _____ and _____. We're all about leadership—the kind that girls use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We'd love to hold our meetings here because _____."

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 when you don't know something, and become their partner in learning more. You'll show them that learning is a lifelong process and that with an open mind, they can overcome any challenges that come their way.

Six Elements of a Great Troop Meeting

The only requirement for your meeting? That your girls are laughing, smiling, and having a fun time! That being said, many troop leaders use this basic structure for their meetings:

1. **Ramp up.** Plan activities for the girls on arrival at the meeting so they have something to do until the meeting begins. This could be as simple as coloring pages, journaling, or talking with one another. (5 minutes)
2. **Opening.** Each troop decides how to open its meetings—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. (5–10 minutes)
3. **Troop business.** Collect dues and make announcements, or plan an upcoming event or trip while families are present. (5 minutes)
4. **Let the fun begin.** Use the meeting plans found in the Volunteer Toolkit! Activities are already designed to fit easily into this part of your meeting as you help your troop earn badges and complete Journeys. (30–45 minutes)
5. **Clean up.** Because Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 minutes)
6. **Closing.** Just like the opening, each troop can decide how to close—with a song, a game, a story, or pretty much anything else! (5–10 minutes)

First meeting checklist:

1. **Cover the basics.** Review the details about when and where the meeting will take place and make sure parents/caregivers are aware.
2. **Get ready.** Use the Volunteer Toolkit to verify your troop roster and email parents. This might be a great time to ask parents to provide you with any needed items, such as health history forms, uniform order forms, and troop dues.
3. **Know the agenda.** Refer to our “Six Elements of a Troop Meeting” list and the Volunteer Toolkit sample meeting agenda.
4. **Review and practice your agenda.** You'll feel calmer during the actual meeting and ready to make adjustments as needed.
5. **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!

Funding the Fun

Your girls probably have some big ideas about what they want to do in Girl Scouts—and that's awesome! As a troop leader, you'll coach them as they learn to earn and manage troop funds. But where do you start?

Troop activities are powered in two main ways:

Troop dues: Many troops decide to collect troop dues to help provide startup funds for troop activities and supplies. These could range from a few dollars per meeting to a lump sum for the entire school year. It's completely up to each troop to decide what works best for them to support the activities they want to do.

Money-earning activities: The cookie program is the primary money-earning activities for a troop—and a hands-on way for girls to learn money management skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives. Approximately 85% of troop activities are funded through the cookie sale. You'll learn the ins-and-outs of this program in a separate training.

We know you have more questions about troop finances, and we've got answers! Check out the troop finances portion of the Successful Leader Learning Series on gsLearn and in *Volunteer Essentials* for the details you'll need to keep troop business running smoothly.

Troop Money Management

- Girl Scouts of Manitou Council takes misuse of troop funds seriously. Volunteers who misuse or misappropriate funds will be released from all Girl Scout positions. Manitou Council may file criminal and/or civil charges.
- Purchases made for use by Girl Scouts are exempt from taxation under the Wisconsin Sales and Use Tax Law pursuant to sec. 77.54(9a), Wisconsin Statutes. A tax-exempt card will be provided annually to troops.
- All money collected, or earned, in the name of Girl Scouts must be deposited in the established bank account and thereafter used for the purpose of providing the Girl Scout Experience to all girls in the troop.
- All signers are responsible for safeguarding and maintaining sufficient funds to cover payments drawn on the account. As with any bank account, signers are legally responsible for all account transactions.
- Security of troop funds is necessary to safeguard troop assets. The bank account should be reconciled regularly, preferable on a monthly basis.
- Troop financial records should be shared with and be made available to girls and parents/guardians throughout the year to maintain transparency. Every year each troop shall file an Annual Troop Summary. **GSMC Policy** This report is a summary of the troop's financial activity throughout the year and is available on the Volunteer Toolkit in the Finance tab.
- Funds and equipment of a disbanded troop/group are the property of the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council. Troops planning to disband may choose to give the bulk of the troop funds and equipment to another troop prior to disbanding. Only Girl Scouts of Manitou Council may close a troop account with a financial institution. **GSMC Policy**

Guidelines for a Troop Bank Account

Once a troop has registered, it is required that the troop volunteers establish a troop bank account. All money received from parents and Girl Scout cookie troop proceeds should be deposited in the troop account as soon as possible and should never be held in a personal checking account. For security reasons, we do not recommend keeping cash in a house or vehicle unless it is appropriately secured. It is critical that all authorized signers are in communication with the other signers before spending funds to prevent overdrafts on the account. There may be timing issues with the online balance since there can be delays in posting transactions to the account in the banking system. Cash and ATM withdrawals should only be made if absolutely necessary – i.e., cookie booth change, tips, or hotel services.

Each account signer should make sure that there are funds in the account to cover the amount of the transaction before making a purchase. The troop debit card should pay for all expenses. If your bank has checks available, you may use those for making a purchase. If there is an instance where a signer paid out of pocket for troop supplies and needs to be reimbursed using troop funds, those reimbursements should be approved by a signer other than the payee. With ATM withdrawals (when absolutely necessary) please email jodi@gsmanitou.org detailing what the money was for and make sure to write on the ATM receipts what was purchased for your records.

When the troop treasury exceeds \$100 it is deposited in a council approved financial institution in an account entitled “Girl Scouts of Manitou Council Troop (or Group) # ____.” Authority to withdraw and deposit funds and to obtain online reports is granted to Girl Scouts of Manitou Council and to the adult troop leaders. Should the troop not reregister as members for the following Girl Scout membership year, or the troop leaders no longer remain affiliated with the troop at any time, the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council may close the account or restrict access to the funds by the troop’s former troop leaders. **GSMC Policy**

The following banks have been approved by the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council with branches conveniently located throughout the council jurisdiction:

- Bank First National
- Marine Credit Union
- Port Washington State Bank
- National Exchange Bank & Trust
- State Bank of Chilton
- Westbury Bank

Contact Jodi Steines at jodi@gsmanitou.org or 920-565-4575 x324 to have a letter drafted for you to open an account at the bank of your choice. When the letter is sent, you will also receive the procedures for the specific bank selected.

Girl Scout Cookie Sale

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

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

Girl Scout cookies are an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. With every season of cookies, another generation of girls will learn five important skills:

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

And most of all, girls gain a tremendous amount of confidence. It's not easy to ask people to buy something—you have to speak up, look them in the eye, and believe in what you are doing—all skills that help a girl succeed now and throughout the rest of her life. For more information about Girl Scout Cookies go to Little Brownie Bakers' website at www.littlebrowniebakers.com.

Recruiting a Troop Cookie Sale Manager

As a troop volunteer you must recruit a cookie sale manager for your Girl Scout troop for the annual cookie sale. This volunteer position is short-term but very important to Girl Scouting. A position description explaining the responsibilities will be provided for the troop cookie sale manager. You can also find more information here: <https://www.gsmanitou.org/en/cookies/for-cookie-sellers/troop-cookie-sale-manager.html> You will want to recruit your cookie sale manager as soon as the troop is formed.

Reference and Background Check

If you are recruiting a troop cookie sale manager who is new to Girl Scouting, have them complete all sections of the adult membership registration form, provide two references, their social security number, driver's license number and date of birth. As the troop volunteer, you can be listed as one of the references if you know the potential volunteer personally.

It is your responsibility to contact the references listed and complete the New Volunteer Reference Form found on the reverse side of the front page of the registration form. You will need to check the Wisconsin Department of Corrections Sex Offender Registry website and the Wisconsin Circuit Court Access (WCCA) website.

Information to access websites is found on the back of the registration form. Please contact the Girl Scout Center at 920-565-4575 or growstrong@gsmanitou.org if there are any entries on the WCCA website or the Sex Offender Registry website.

Troop Cookie Sale Managers are recruited by troop volunteers, but will be supervised by local Community Cookie Sale Managers for the annual cookie sale.

As a troop volunteer, you are responsible for following the same procedures listed above for troop committee members.

Group Money Earning Activities

Girl Scouts of Manitou Council abides by the policies and standards of Girl Scouts of the USA and complies with applicable IRS requirements.

Money raised or earned in the name of Girl Scouting in the council jurisdiction is the property of the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council and not the property of individuals, service units, communities, associations, or Girl Scouts of the USA. Funds from troop/group money-earning projects will be reflected in the troop treasury and is not the property of individuals. Decisions on the use and spending of troop/group funds in the treasury will be made through the troop/group system of government. **GSMC Policy**

Troops/groups may have money-earning activities provided that the troop has or intends to participate in the annual cookie sale, the money earning activity does not conflict with the annual cookie sale, or require the girls or adults to solicit money or go door-to-door. **GSMC Policy**

Troops/groups may accept unsolicited donations not to exceed a total of \$20.00 from all sources per registered Girl Scout member (including registered adults) per membership year. **GSMC Policy**

Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the ages and abilities of the girls and consistent with the goals and principles of the Girl Scout program. Some examples include making items and selling them; washing cars; putting on meals or dances for families; providing a gift-wrapping service; recycling beverage cans; working at special events in the community. Product demonstration parties, raffles, drawings, games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash, and the sale or endorsement of commercial products are examples of inappropriate money-earning activities. **GSUSA Guideline**

Group money-earning activities may not be held during the council-sponsored cookie sale ordering and delivery times (dates will vary—contact the Girl Scout Center for guidance.)

Girl Scouts may not raise money for other organizations.

With the prior approval of Girl Scouts of Manitou Council adult members in their Girl Scout capacity may solicit financial contributions for the purpose of Girl Scouting in which the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council is the beneficiary. All money received is administered by and for the benefit of the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council. **GSMC Policy**

All donations solicited, requested or received from corporate or foundation volunteer/matching programs, including United Ways/United Funds or Community Chests are administered by and for the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council and cannot be accepted by an individual, Girl Scout troop or group. **GSMC Policy**

Important:

Group money-earning activities must be approved by the Girl Scouts of Manitou Council. Please refer to www.gsmanitou.org for the [Council Approval Application-Group Money-Earning Activities](#).

Money-Earning Basics

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

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

Following Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

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

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the *Safety Activity Checkpoints*, available at gsmanitou.org. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, registered adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18) and must be screened by Manitou Council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow Manitou Council's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting. See page 23.
5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, contact information for girls' families, and the council emergency procedures card.
6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Parents of campers shall be notified of all attendees (children and adults) accompanying the troop/group camping or on an over-night troop get-away.
8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by Manitou Council for group marksmanship activities.
9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group web sites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge at girlscouts.org and have them commit to it.
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning.** Girl Scout cookies are an integral part of the Girl Scout program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that raise money for other organizations, represent partisan politics, or that are not Girl Scout-approved product sales and efforts.

Harassment/Advocacy/Abuse

Harassment

Girl Scouts of Manitou Council has adopted a policy of “zero-tolerance” with respect to unlawful harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, past or current military service, or for any other protected reason. This policy applies to all incidents of alleged harassment while working or volunteering on or off council property where the alleged offender or victim is a supervisor, co-worker, a non-employee with whom an employee is involved, a vendor, or a volunteer.

Sexual Advocacy

Girl Scouts of Manitou Council reserves the right to refuse affiliation and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with Girl Scouts of Manitou Council any employee or volunteer who, in conducting Girl Scout program, advocates, solicits, or promotes sexuality/homosexuality/heterosexuality so as to create substantial risk that such conduct will be detrimental to the proper role model for girl members or to the work environment or encompasses a matter outside Girl Scout program.

Sexual Harassment

Girl Scouts of Manitou Council prohibits the following:

- A. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and all other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or otherwise offensive nature, especially where:
 - Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of affiliation with Girl Scouting;
 - Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual’s affiliation with Girl Scouting;
 - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidation, hostile or offensive environment.
- B. Offensive comments, jokes, innuendoes, and other sexually oriented statements.

Child Abuse

The Girl Scouts of Manitou Council supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts, and it is against the council’s policy for any employed staff member, or volunteer, male or female, to physically, sexually, verbally or mentally abuse or neglect any child participant in the Girl Scout program.

The Girl Scouts of Manitou Council reserves the right to refuse affiliation to a volunteer or employed staff member found guilty of child abuse and neglect or who has been convicted of child abuse and neglect.

Reporting

Any individual who believes that she or he, or a child participating in the Girl Scout program has been the victim of or a witness to harassment, sexual advocacy, or child abuse should report the alleged incident to the CEO or management staff, without regard to the formal chain of command. Supervisors who are witness to harassment, sexual advocacy, or child abuse must report the alleged incident to the CEO. The CEO will begin a prompt review of the circumstance according to established process. The utmost discretion will be used consistent with the requirement of the law in the conduct of the review. If the council determines that an alleged offender is guilty of harassment, sexual advocacy or child abuse, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the offender, up to and including termination of employment, business relationship, or volunteer involvement. Should the perceived violator or the perceived victim be the CEO, the complainant shall contact the council president.

The council prohibits any form of retaliation against anyone filing a bona fide complaint or for assisting in the complaint investigation. If, however, after investigating the claim the council determines the complaint is not bona fide and was not made in good faith or that the person reporting the alleged harassment, sexual advocacy, or child abuse has provided false information regarding the complaint, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual who filed the complaint or who gave false information.

Sensitive Issues

In order to be contemporary and responsive to the girls' needs and interests, some Girl Scout activities focus on subjects that may be considered sensitive or controversial. In general, highly personal topics such as human sexuality, religious beliefs, and cultural and family values are sensitive. Subjects such as AIDS, child abuse, suicide and teenage pregnancy are other examples.

When Girl Scout program activities involve sensitive or controversial issues, the leader's role is as a caring adult who can help girls acquire their own skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere rather than as an advocate of any particular position.

When activities focus on a sensitive or controversial topic, parents and guardians are informed and asked to provide additional written consent. An outline of sensitive subjects to be covered in the planned activity should be furnished to parents or guardians ahead of time. Girls who attend these activities should have written parental approval for participating in the activity. Attendance should be optional for all or part of the activity. Before covering any sensitive issue beyond the scope of the Girl Scout program resources, obtain council support and approval.

Procedure for obtaining parental permission for sensitive issues activities

1. Complete an outline of proposed activities.
2. Print copies of the Sensitive Issues Permission Form at www.gsmanitou.org for each of the girls in the troop, and distribute them to the parents with ample time for them to consider the activity.
3. Monitor the activity to assure that the outline is followed and that only girls who have parental permission participate.

Procedure for obtaining council approval for sensitive issues:

1. Submit a complete Council Approval Application for Trips and More from www.gsmanitou.org at least two weeks before the proposed activity.
2. A staff member will confirm safety details and approve the activity if appropriate.
3. If the activity is not approved, you will be contacted personally.
4. Upon approval of the activity:
 - a. Complete an outline of proposed activities.
 - b. Print copies of the Sensitive Issues Permission Form at www.gsmanitou.org for each of the girls in the troop, and distribute them to the parents with ample time for them to consider the activity.
 - c. Monitor the activity to assure that the outline is followed and that only girls who have parental permission participate.

Religious Opinions and Practices

Girls are encouraged and helped through the Girl Scout program to become better members of their own religious group, but every Girl Scout troop must recognize that religious instruction is the responsibility of parents and religious leaders. Every Girl Scout troop shall respect the varying religious opinions and practices of its membership in planning and conducting activities. **GSUSA Policy**

Religious awards programs in which Girl Scouts can participate have been developed by and are administered by the individual religious groups themselves. Girl Scouts who wish to work on religious awards should contact the religious leader in their church or synagogue or the Director of Program Quality at the Girl Scout Center or visit www.praypub.org.

How Many Volunteers are Needed

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

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

Here are some examples: If you are meeting with 17 Daisies, you will need three unrelated adults (in other words, not your sibling, spouse, parent, or child), at least one of whom is female. To break it down: you need two adults for 12 Daisies and one more adult for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three adults. If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of whom is female.

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old or at the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18.

5 Tips to Recruit Troop Volunteers:

1. Be specific about the volunteer role/tasks.
2. Be honest about time commitment, task, supervision, etc.
3. Express the positives of volunteering.
4. Explain why you decided to ask this specific person for help.
5. Simply ask!

Providing Emergency Care

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

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

First-Aid/CPR

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

The levels of first aid required for any activity take into account both how much danger is involved and

Access to EMS	Minimum Level of First Aid Required
Less than 30 minutes	First Aid
More than 30 minutes	Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR)*

how remote the area is from emergency medical services. See below:

**Although a WFR is not required, it is strongly recommended when traveling with groups in areas that are greater than 30 minutes from Emergency Medical Service (EMS).*

It is important to understand the differences between a first-aid course and a wilderness-rated course. Although standard first-aid training provides basic incident response, wilderness-rated courses include training on remote-assessment skills, as well as the emergency first-aid response, including evacuation techniques, to use when EMS is not readily available.

Note: The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders: physician, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic, and emergency medical technician.

Caution: First-aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts’ requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you are taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous

Procedures for Accidents

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe Manitou Council's procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. Follow established council procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of council staff, parents/guardians, and emergency services such as the police, fire department, or hospital emergency technicians. Troop volunteers are provided with a Crisis/Emergency Procedures Card each year.

After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance, if needed, at the scene, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical; especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let council-designated staff discuss the incident with these representatives.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, notify the police. A responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings. Follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, Manitou Council, and, council designees.

First-Aid Kit

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity, including transportation to and from the activity. Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a commercial kit or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. Note medications such as aspirin require parent/guardian permission. You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites, and the like.

First-Aid Kit Checklist

GSMC Crisis/Emergency Procedures Card	1 instant cold compress
Parent consent forms	2 pair of non-latex gloves (size large)
Health histories	2 hydrocortisone ointment packets
First-aid instruction booklet	Scissors
2 absorbent compress dressings (5x9 inches)	1 roller bandage (3 inches wide)
25 adhesive bandages (assorted sizes)	1 roller bandage (4 inches wide)
1 adhesive cloth tape (10 yards x 1 inch)	5 sterile gauze pads (3 x 3 inches)
5 antibiotic ointment packets	5 sterile gauze pads (4 x 4 inches)
5 antiseptic wipe packets	2 triangular bandages
1 blanket (space blanket)	Tweezers
1 breathing barrier (with one-way valve)	Oral thermometer (non-mercury/non-glass)

Using Safety Activity Checkpoints

When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for that particular activity. You can find these in the Volunteer Toolkit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

One additional note: What may seem benign to one person could be a sensitive issue for another, so when you or the girls wish to participate in anything that could be considered controversial (health or education in human sexuality, advocacy projects, work with religious groups, or anything that could yield a political/social debate), put the topic on hold until you have obtained written parental permission on forms available online at www.gsmanitou.org. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls are to do when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep them on hand in case a problem arises. For non-Girl Scout activities, find out in advance from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content what will be presented, and complete the Council Approval Application for Trips and More at www.gsmanitou.org in the forms section.

Activity Approval and Guidelines

All adults within the Girl Scout Council work in concert to ensure the highest quality program experience for girls. Communication and cooperation are essential for providing training, giving ongoing support to groups, and obtaining appropriate activity approvals. **GSUSA Standard**

Any activity that may involve travel, cover subjects of a sensitive or controversial nature, or involve special equipment or supervision should be carefully considered and planned. It should be approved by the council and discussed with parents or guardians before it is included in troop plans. **GSUSA Guideline**

Council guidance and advice is necessary before selecting a site for the following activities: Horseback riding, boating, canoeing, ice skating, rafting, roller skating, row boating, sailing, sports, swimming, tubing, water skiing and other high-risk activities. **GSUSA Guideline**

Parents of campers shall be notified of all attendees (children and adults) accompanying the troop/group camping or on an over-night troop get-away. **GSMC Policy**

The above list is not all-inclusive. When there is a question about whether an activity is in good judgment the volunteer should provide the council with full details and not proceed without council approval. **GSUSA Guideline**

Procedures for Obtaining Council Approval

1. Submit a Council Approval Application-Trips and More in the Resources tab of the Volunteer Toolkit at least two weeks before the proposed activity.
2. A council staff person will confirm safety details and approve the activity if appropriate.
3. If the activity is not approved, personal contact will be made.

When activities take place outside of the scheduled meeting place, involve overnight travel, or focus on sensitive or controversial topics, parents and guardians are informed and asked to provide additional written consent. **GSUSA Standard**

See the Parent Permission Form in the Resources tab of the Volunteer Toolkit.

Online Resources

The following websites provide activities, ideas, videos, travel information, Girl Scout Cookie Sale information and so much more. These websites are also great ways to get girls and parents involved by researching activity ideas or participating in Girl Scout activities at home with families.

MY GS: Volunteer Toolkit and gsLearn: www.gsmanitou.org

Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints: www.gsmanitou.org

Girl Scouts of Manitou Council Facebook: www.facebook.com/gsmanitou

Rallyhood: rallyhood.com/girl-scouts-of-manitou

A World for Girls: forgirls.girlscouts.org

Girl Scout Leadership Experience: girlscouts.org/gsl

Little Brownie Bakers: www.littlebrowniebakers.com

Traveling with Girls

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

Here are some examples of the progression of troop events and trips in Girl Scouting's ladder of leadership:

- **Short trips to points of interest in the neighborhood (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies. Please note: girls who have completed kindergarten may attend overnights and two-night camp sessions.
- **Day trip (Brownies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home.
- **Overnight trips (Brownies and older):** One (or possibly two) nights away to Girl Scout camp, a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not so long as to generate homesickness.
- **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or a stay at Girl Scout camp, in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls' home region (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and so on). Planning a trip to a large museum—and many offer unique opportunities for girls to actually spend the night on museum grounds—makes for an exciting experience for girls.
- **National trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component. Incorporate incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.
- **International trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation; when girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact Manitou Council to get permission to plan the trip. Visiting one of the four World Centers is a great place to start, but also consider traveling with worldwide service organizations. Recently, girls have traveled to rural Costa Rica to volunteer at an elementary school, to Mexico to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and to India to witness the devastation of poverty in urban slums.
- **Destinations (Cadettes and older):** destinations travel adventures, which range from two days to three weeks and are for all Girl Scouts ages 11–17, help girls develop leadership skills, gain confidence, and enjoy valuable learning opportunities. Council scholarships and grants are available. For more information go to: <http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/take-a-trip/destinations/>

Travel Tip

Set the right tone. Remember, girls take cues from adults. So, once you're on the road, stay positive. If you're negative about the quality of the tour or cranky about the food, girls will replicate that attitude.

This is a trip of a lifetime. When they look back, will girls remember their lunch was cold or that they climbed the Eiffel Tower? Put it in perspective.

Transporting Girls

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

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

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

Approaching Activities

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

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

Girl Scout Activity Insurance

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

This insurance coverage is *not* intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. It does not duplicate medical-expense benefits collected under other programs. If there is no family insurance or other healthcare expense reimbursement program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available under this plan.

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

Camping

Every Girl Deserves to Camp...

It's Fun!—Every child should have the opportunity to splash in the lake, row a boat and sing around a campfire. Camping is a right-of-passage that is never forgotten. It only takes the smell of a campfire or the melody of a camp song to open the memory flood gates and bring people back to time of camaraderie, anticipation, and joy.

Provides Quality Time—Camping gives girls a chance to unplug from technology. When girls take a break from television, cell phones and the internet, they rediscover their creative powers and realize there is always plenty to do!

Encourages Exploration—Camp is a place to re-connect with the outdoors. Outdoor experiences enrich girls' perceptions of the natural world around them. In some instances, camp may be the only time a child is in contact with nature.

Camp Definitions

Summer Camp is a way for girls to go to camp as an individual or with buddies for overnight camping at Camp Evelyn or Camp Manitou. Summer camp is filled with fun activities such as swimming, river stomp, archery, singing songs around the campfire, making art projects, hiking in the woods, learning new games and of course making s'mores!

Troop Getaway is a way for troops to meet away from their regular meeting place. This includes renting one of the Manitou Council camp facilities or going somewhere else for a troop getaway.

Day Events are opportunities for individuals and troops to experience camp only during the day. Girls are dropped off in the morning and picked up in the afternoon. Camp Day Events are similar to what girls experience at Summer Camp, without spending the night.

Counselor-in-Training I & II (CIT I & II) is a two-week long session for girls in grade 9-12 wanting to learn more about being a camp counselor. While partaking in camp activities and learning the ins and outs of camp the CITs also work with the campers under the supervision of the camp staff.

Tips to Prepare for Camping

- Set up a tour or attend an event at camp
- Plan an overnight with the troop
- Share fun camp stories
- Learn about the outdoors like what kind of animals the girls might hear at night
- Go on a hike in the outdoors
- Discuss what to pack for camping
- Create a budget for camping so that everyone can go; plan a money-earning activity if needed
- Talk to parents about camping to address any questions they may have

Communicating with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

- **Listen:** Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do is the first step in helping them take ownership of their activities.
- **Be honest:** If you are not comfortable with a topic or activity, say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.
- **Be open to big issues:** For girls, important topics are things like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious issues. When you do not know, listen. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of caring adult who can help girls acquire their own skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates any particular position. Check with Manitou Council about which sensitive issues may require additional council support to present and discuss, as well as whether parent/guardian permission is required. See page 24.
- **Show respect:** Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as a young adult helps them grow.
- **Offer options:** Providing flexibility in changing needs and interests shows that you respect the girls and their busy lives. But whatever option is chosen, girls at every grade level also want guidance and parameters.
- **Stay current:** Be aware of the TV shows girls watch, movies they like, books and magazines they read, and music they listen to—not to pretend you have the same interests, but to show you are interested in their world.

Develop Guidelines for Troop Discussion

Warm up your group with two questions: What do we need in order to work together successfully on group projects? What makes working together in a group uncomfortable or unsuccessful? Then divide your troop into small groups and ask, “What do you need from me, and one another, to make sure all voices are heard when we work on a group project?” Have each group make a list and report out. Use their feedback to create a master document that you post and/or refer back to during group projects. Some sample ideas:

- We will watch our body language when we talk or listen—no eye rolling.
- Girl Scouts is a gossip-free zone.
- Use I-Statements to resolve conflicts and work toward resolution.

For more activities and tips like this one go to girlscouts.org/banbossy

Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

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

Making Decisions as a Troop

Consensus vs. Voting

Consensus is a process for group decision-making. It is a method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of everyone are carefully considered and an outcome is crafted that best meets the needs of the group. Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible or even that they are sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her/his position on the matter was misunderstood or that it wasn't given a proper hearing.

Voting, on the other hand, is a means by which we choose one alternative from several. It is a win or lose model, in which people are more often concerned with the numbers it takes to "win" than with the issue itself. Voting does not take into account individual feelings or needs. In essence, it is a quantitative, rather than qualitative, method of decision-making.

Why use consensus?

- **Consensus gathers the experiences from the whole group.** It is a way to draw on the collective knowledge of all troop members and craft the best decision possible for everyone.
- **Consensus builds relationships between people.** By encouraging shared leadership and participation, it empowers all the members of a troop to make the best decision.
- **Consensus moves toward doing what is best for the common interest** encouraging all members to consider other interests beyond just their own.
- **Consensus agreements need less enforcement.** Once an agreement is made, and every one gives their consent to it, the agreement is backed by the relationship of the troop. If one honors their relationship to the troop, their respect for the agreements they participated in guides them to follow the agreement.

When deciding on troop/group activities, here are some basic steps for helping to build consensus:

1. Narrow down the list to no more than 4-5 choices.
2. Carefully discuss alternatives.
3. List pros and cons or positives and negatives.
4. Decide what criteria you will use for decision-making.
5. Combine, adjust, compromise, and revise ideas.
6. Rank choices/ideas.
7. Look at areas of disagreement and discuss further.
8. Discuss and rank again, if necessary.
9. Continue to revise ideas until the final decision is one of agreeable consensus.
10. Discuss the outcome(s) to ensure everyone has been heard and can support the group's decision.

If consensus cannot be reached, consider splitting into groups for some activities according to the girls' interests or reach some compromises. For example, one month do the first place choice, and next month do the second one.

Girl Scout Traditions: Pass it On!

Girl Scouts celebrate several special days each year, which you are encouraged to include in your troop planning.

- **February 22:** World Thinking Day, A day set aside to celebrate the international aspects of Girl Scouting.
- **March 12:** The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912. Note that Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12, a day known as “Girl Scout Sunday,” and extends through the Saturday following March 12, a day known as “Girl Scout Sabbath”.
- **Third week in April:** Volunteer Appreciation Week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders’ Day, April 22, but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop volunteers to include all the volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.
- **October 31:** Founder’s Day, Juliette Gordon Low’s birthday.

Time-Honored Ceremonies

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

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons: to open or close meetings, give out awards, welcome new members, renew memberships, and honor special Girl Scout accomplishments. A brief list, in alphabetical order, follows, so that you can become familiar with the most common Girl Scout ceremonies:

- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl’s move from one grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. Note that **Fly-Up** is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something spectacular during the Girl Scout year.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Girl Scout Bronze, Silver or Gold Award** ceremony honors Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award, Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award, Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award.
- **Girl Scouts’ Own** is a girl-led ceremony that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic, such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from Girl Scout Promise and Law, using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout pin at this time.
- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

New Troop Volunteer Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure you have completed the onboarding process to becoming a Girl Scout volunteer. All Girl Scout troops are unique so if you need to adjust some of the steps to better fit your needs, please feel free to do so. This checklist is to help you through the hurdles of the first few months in your role as a Girl Scout Volunteer.

Week 1-2

Complete Application Process

- Complete Girl Scout registration form and pay \$25 registration fee
- Background check/references conducted
- Receive confirmation of your appointment as a Girl Scout volunteer

Complete Girl Scout Learning Opportunities

Step 1 – Face-to-face Orientation

Step 2 – Online Learning through gsLearn

Visit our Volunteer Resources page to familiarize yourself with the online resources available.

Review Girl Scout Materials

- At orientation you will learn about online and printed Girl Scout materials for the level of your troop
- Please review the materials thoroughly so that you can explain them to the girls and their parents/guardians; it is highly encouraged that each girl purchase her own set of books

Prepare for your first troop meeting

- Secure a meeting place
- Plan schedule for the year; be sure to schedule at least 2-3 troop meetings per month

Weeks 2-4

Hold First Troop Meeting/Parent Meeting

- Share Girl Scout and troop information with the families
 - ◇ Develop a communication plan to share information with parents
- Form a troop committee
 - ◇ Adult leadership teams help distribute the work among several adults making troop organization easier and more enjoyable for all
 - ◇ Be direct and specific when asking for assistance
 - ◇ Examples: troop cookie sale manager, snacks, chaperone, drivers, help with a skill building badge, extra helper for troop meetings

Assure All Members of Your Troop are Registered

- Submit all adult and girl registration forms to the Girl Scout Center
 - ◇ New troop members may join and register at any time throughout the year
 - ◇ Girls and adults may register online once troop is registered

New Troop Volunteer Checklist—Cont'd

Set Troop Goals with the Girls

- What do the girls want to accomplish?
- What would you like to accomplish as a volunteer?

Plan Meetings

- Use your Volunteer Toolkit to plan for first few meetings with girls along with the troop committee
- Badges, Girl Scout Journey, cookie sale, community service, field trips, guest presenters

Weeks 3-6

Visit Petals to Patches Shop

- Girl Scout Center in Sheboygan or online at www.gsmanitou.org
- Books, uniforms, badges and more

Attend Troop Leader Meetings

- There are three to four meetings per year, you will receive a meeting notification through an e-mail
- Please ensure at least one adult from the troop attends every troop leader meeting to receive important information, learn about area events and resources, and network with other volunteers

Prepare for the Cookie Sale

- Troop cookie sale manager recruited, registered, completed training
- Prepare girls for selling, using online tools
- Hold a cookie meeting with parents to complete permission forms, learn about the troop's cookie sale goals and parents' role in the cookie sale
- Keep detailed finance records for the annual troop summary
- Establish a troop bank account

Weeks 7-12

Continue Holding Troop Meetings

- Plan for bridging if necessary, camping, troop getaways, Take Action projects, survey the girls for ideas for next year
- Keep in contact with area manager, troop organizer, membership development manager—we are all here to help
- Have fun!