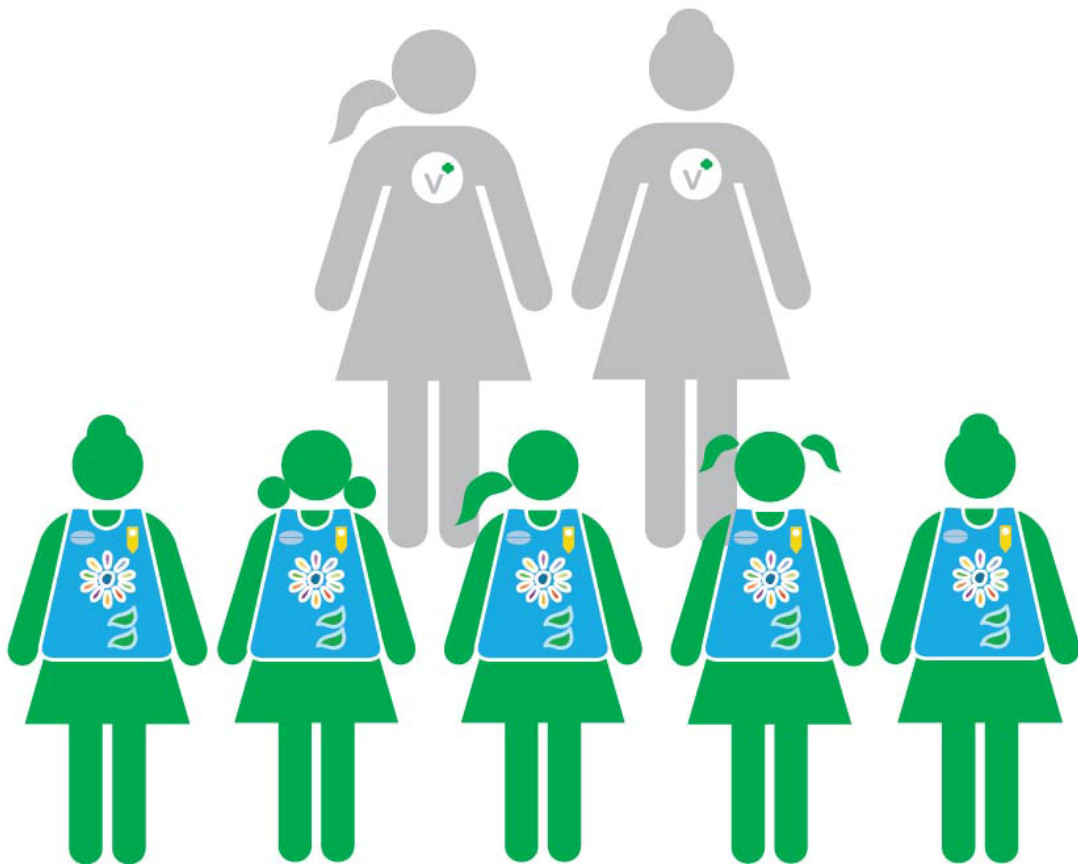


Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council

Volunteer Basic Series

Troop/Group Basics



Thank you for volunteering your time and talent to offer more girls in our community the complete Girl Scout Leadership Experience. In this brief training, you will gain information that will help you organize your leadership team, host your first parent meeting and begin working with the girls. We know you will have questions along the way and a team of dedicated staff and experienced volunteers are always here to help so don't hesitate to contact us.

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council

www.gssjc.org

713-292-0300

1-800-392-4340

Behind Every Girl Scout



Is a Great Leader

So what exactly IS a troop?

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council (GSSJC) defines a troop as consisting of at least five girls from more than one family who have submitted membership applications.

Girls and adults participating in troops usually stay together for at least an entire school year and meet once a week, once a month, or twice a month – how often is up to you and the girls! However, Girl Scout troops may form at any point in the year. As a member of a troop leadership team, your investment of time and energy will pay back tenfold. Little can compare to the satisfaction you'll feel as you help girls grow in self-confidence, discover their genuine selves, connect with the people and community around them, and take action to make a difference in the world.

The first few steps of the process to becoming a member of a troop leadership team include background screening and placement, which you may have already experienced. Now, you're in a position to assess the skills and competencies Girl Scouts has identified as most important—the ones that will lead to the best results for girls. You surely already possess many of these skills and behaviors and will develop more in the coming year, as you work more closely with girls and with your volunteer support team. After you've evaluated your skills and identified opportunities for growth, you can utilize the learning opportunities offered by your Council. You'll have the chance to learn and grow, right along with the girls!

Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

Your most important role as a Girl Scout volunteer is to be excited about everything this opportunity affords you: a chance to partner directly with girls; an invitation to play a critical role in their lives; a chance to watch them blossom under your guidance! You also want to be someone who enjoys the activities you'll be embarking on with the girls.

The Troop Leadership Team

The troop leadership team will work together to make the magic of Girl Scouting possible! Girl Scouting should be a positive experience not only for the girls but also for the troop adults.

Remember: Two adults must be present at all times when working with girls, and at least one of those volunteers must be female and not related to or living in the same house as the other adult. This is an important distinction and bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to or living in the same house with the other volunteer must be present at all times, and at no time is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer.

*At least one member of the troop leadership team must have completed the following before a troop can begin meeting:

1. Cleared the Girl Scouts of San Jacinto volunteer screening process including a criminal background check.
2. Be a registered member of Girl Scouts—that is, have submitted the membership information, and paid the \$15 registration fee.
3. Completed Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Volunteer Basics video series and completed the quiz. If a troop leader has completed Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council's *Passport to Girl Scouting-Parts A,B,and C* training and can be verified, this may also be considered.

NEW TROOP LEADERSHIP TEAM CHECKLIST

Establishing the leadership team

- ____ 1. I have completed and submitted the Girl Scout member registration. (Verify with Community Registration Specialist or Organizer).
- ____ 2. I have completed volunteer screening and submitted information for a criminal background check and received notification from the Volunteer Management Services.
- ____ 3. I have received a leadership appointment letter from Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council. (Your appointment letter will be sent after verification of completion of the required Volunteer Basics video series .)
- ____ 4. I have reviewed a copy of the Leadership Position Description (F-217).
- ____ 5. I have activated my account on the Council website -(www.gssjc.org).
- ____ 6. I know when and where my next Community or Region meeting is scheduled.
 - Place: _____
 - Regularly scheduled on (date) _____
 - At (time) _____
 - Name of Community _____
- ____ 7. I have received a copy of the Community service team roster, and a list of dates for Community meetings and activities.
- ____ 8. I have verified with the appropriate Community Leadership team member that the other adult(s) on the troop leadership team have registered and completed volunteer screening and submitted information for a criminal background check and received notification from the Volunteer Management Services.
- ____ 9. I will help ensure that all members of the troop leadership team complete the above steps in a timely manner.
- ____ 10. I have discussed with the troop leadership team how we will handle the care of our own younger children as well as those who attend a meeting with a parent helper.

Before meeting with the parents:

- _____ 1. I have reviewed the sample Parents' Meeting Agenda from this training handout with the troop leadership team and have scheduled a parents' meeting on:
 - Date: _____
 - Place: _____
 - Time: _____
- _____ 2. I will encourage all parents to support the troop in some way by asking for volunteers for a variety of jobs.
- _____ 3. I will begin identifying parents who will be providing first aid, working with money or with the girls in the troop. These individuals (with the exception of: drivers and periodic meeting helper) will need to be registered members and completed volunteer screening and submitted information for a criminal background check and received notification from Volunteer Management Services.
- _____ 4. I will plan, with the assistance of the troop leadership team, the parents meeting using the "Possible Agenda for Parents Meeting" from the *Troop/Group Basics* handout as a reference.

Before meeting with the troop:

- _____ 1. I know which girls will be in the troop this year – Girl Roster
- _____ 2. I know the troop's (#) number _____ and the troop's program level(s)
- _____ 3. All members of the troop have completed Girl Scout member registration.
- _____ 4. I know where and when the troop will be meeting and have met with a representative from the troop meeting place, or with the school organizer to understand the guidelines.
 - Place: _____
 - Day/Time: _____
- _____ 5. I know whether the troop has a sponsor.
 - Sponsor contact person: _____
 - Phone number: _____
- _____ 6. I have assembled the troop's First Aid kit
- _____ 7. I can identify the parts of a troop meeting by using the *Troop/Group Basics* handout or the online Volunteer Toolkit
- _____ 8. I know how to access Council publications on the GSSJC website (www.gssjc.org) and "Resources (resources.gssjc.org)" to help gather ideas for activities that may interest the girls in the troop.
- _____ 9. After reviewing the *Troop/Group Basics* handout and the materials in the leader packet, I can find information regarding policies and guidelines, safety and emergency procedures, child abuse, and suggestions for troop activities.
- _____ 10. I have received from parents/guardians the following:
 - Girl Scout Medical Information Form (F-185) for each girl in the troop
 - Signed Girl Scout Parent Permission Slip (F-204) for each girl for regular troop meetings.
- _____ 11. I understand how to compile travel folders and what they should contain for field trips/activities away from the meeting site.

PLEASE NOTE: All forms can be found online on the Council website (www.gssjc.org).

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

Ratios for Adults to Girls

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

Here are some examples:

- If you're meeting with 17 Daisies, you'll need three adults, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female. If this isn't making sense to you, follow the chart: you need two adults for 12 Daisies and one more adult for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three adults.
- If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of which is female (because, on the chart, two adults can manage up to 25 Cadettes).
- In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old or at the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18. (Texas defines age of majority as 18.)

- Girl Scouts requires you to be a positive role model for girls, adhering to the following guidelines at all times:

- Don't use illegal drugs!
- Don't smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol in the presence of girls.
- Don't engage in child abuse of any kind. Abuse includes neglect, physical injury, emotional maltreatment including verbal abuse of a child, and sexual abuse. Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are strictly prohibited.
- Don't carry firearms or ammunition in the presence of girls. If you're facilitating a marksmanship activity, you must get council permission for this activity, and then transport weapons separately. The minimum age for girls using firearms in highly supervised activities is 12 years old.
- Refrain from gossip or talking negatively about girls, their families or other volunteers.
- Refrain from verbal or physical altercations of any kind.

*GSSJC encourages a diverse group of adults to be involved in troop activities. To ensure the safety of the girls, adults serving in the following positions must be registered members and completed volunteer screening and submitted information for a criminal background check and received notification from GSSJC Volunteer Management Services.

- All members of the troop leadership team
- Troop Treasurer
- Troop Fall Product and/or Cookie Manager
- Troop Camp-Trained adult
- Troop First Aider

Note: No troop can *require* that any other adult apart from the above mentioned positions must complete volunteer screening and submitted information for a criminal background check.

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

- **Cookie and Fall Product Manager:** Volunteers who would manage all aspects of Girl Scout Cookie and/or fall Product Programs
- **Transportation Coordinator:** The Volunteer you'd look to whenever you need to transport girls for any reason; this person would arrange for volunteers to drive and chaperone
- **Talent Scout:** Locate adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized troop meeting

GIRL SCOUT TROOP MEETINGS

Meeting Places

Troop meetings can take place in a variety of places, i.e. the local school, community center, nearby church/synagogue/temple, or your home. The location must be safe, easily accessible to girls and adults, and within a reasonable commute ("reasonable" having different definitions in different areas: In rural areas, a two-hour drive may be acceptable; in an urban area, a 30-minute drive may seem too long).

School/Community Center/Faith based institutions

- Meet with the person(s) responsible for the maintenance of the location and give them your name and phone number.
- Request a set of guidelines/rules for use of the site from the site manager. If none are available, write your own. (refer to *Safety Activity Checkpoints* on the Council website.)
- Discuss arrival/departure times, restroom/hand washing facilities, water fountains and possible troop equipment storage.
- Have a key or know name/phone number of the person who is responsible for your gaining access to the site and an alternate person, in case of a "lockout".
- Request ideas from the site administrators about possible service projects the girls can perform for them (i.e. weeding flowerbeds or cleaning windows).

Homes

- Establish physical boundaries, where the girls may go -- the rest of the house is off limits.
- Establish procedures on how to treat the furniture, repeating them firmly and clearly when disobeyed.
- Clean-up is part of the troop meeting, so be sure to prepare for messy activities and have the girls clean up.
- Be sure to use the meeting opening/closing ceremonies as a way to make it different from a visit from friends.
- If possible, have those children not members of the troop occupied elsewhere with adult supervision to allow your attention to be with the girls.
- Pretend you are meeting outside your home, so if refreshments don't make it to the meeting, you are not obligated to raid your cupboards.

**Tagalongs

A tagalong is any person not registered with the troop. A tagalong is not just a younger brother or sister attending a troop meeting or going along on a Girl Scout outing or activity. A tagalong may also be a registered Girl Scout who is attending a meeting or event not designed for her age group. Tagalongs can distract girls from their planned activities and distract the leaders from providing proper supervision of girls. Decisions as to how to handle this situation should be discussed by the leadership team. If it is absolutely necessary, tagalongs may attend but the leadership team should ask/recruit an extra adult to help watch the tagalongs so the leader or parent can concentrate on working with the girls. Sometimes other troop parents can volunteer to fulfill this role during troop meetings or activities.



Is YOUR Meeting Place a “Safe Space?”

Interior Meeting Place

- Are two or more separate, usable exits available? Are they clearly marked and kept clear?
- Are steps clear of hazards?
- Are handrails and railings on stairs present and secure?
- Are floors and walking areas free of hazards?
- Is floor space adequate for desired activities?
- Are toilets and sanitary facilities accessible?
- Do girls or adults have special needs that require adaptations of facilities?
- Are electrical outlets protected with covers?
- Are extension cords tucked away or taped down?
- Are barriers or warnings provided for hot surfaces such as fireplaces, heaters and radiators?
- Are fire extinguishers available and have girls been trained on how to use them?
- Is the troop first aid kit readily accessible?
- Is a telephone available and charged?

Physical Hazards

- Are chemical cleaning solutions, prescription medications and weapons properly stored out of reach?
- Are all tools and power equipment properly stored out of reach?
- Is access to recreational equipment such as ATVs, archery equipment, trampolines and other sports equipment restricted unless part of the planned and supervised activity?

Exterior Grounds

- Is lighting adequate?
- Are sidewalks and exterior stairs kept clear?
- Is playground equipment anchored so it does not move in an unintended manner?
- If the property has a pool, is pool access restricted unless swimming activities are planned and supervised, and are pool chemicals stored securely out of reach?

Arranging Meetings with Parents/Guardians

A parent/guardian meeting is a chance for you to get to know the families of the girls in your group. Before the meeting, be sure you and/or your troop leadership team have done the following:

- For younger girls, arrange for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too).
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how our program is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters' Girl Scout experiences.
- Obtained information on Council product sales (fall sale of magazines, nuts and candy and Girl Scout Cookie sales); parents/guardians will absolutely want to know!
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting.
- Created a one-page information sheet (your contact information, contact information of co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to bring with them, and information on how to obtain Girl Scout resources like *Journeys* or the *Girls' Guide to Girl Scouting*, and other merchandise like sashes, vests, T-shirts, and so on).
- Assemble a Parents' Meeting packet or folder for each family.
 - a. Agenda for the meeting

- b. Leaders' information sheet with addresses and phone numbers. You may want to include the names and phone numbers of your Community Leadership Team.
- c. Forms needing parents' signatures:
 - Girl Scout Member Registration form or direct parent to register their girl online
 - Permission Slip (F-204)
 - Medical Information Form (F-185)
 - Driver Checklist (F-477) – this form is required only when girls are being transported.
- Have the meeting in a comfortable setting and at a time when parents are home from work.
- Send letters or phone parents to invite them. Let each parent know the importance of his or her attendance. If they cannot attend the scheduled parent meeting, make plans for them to meet with you at another time, *before* the girl attends the second troop meeting.
- Invite a member of your Community Leadership team. You can request they present a portion of the meeting or just be present to answer questions and offer moral support. Make your needs and expectations clear when you invite them.
- Before the meeting, the leaders should decide on the kinds of help you will want from the parents. If you know some of the parents, you may even want to ask them to take committee positions before the meeting. Refer to “Ways Parents Can Help” in this handout.

Be sure to tell parents:

- ▶ Families can also make donations to the Council—and why they might want to do that!
- ▶ You may be looking for additional volunteers, and in which areas you are looking (be as specific as possible!)



- Collect the completed paperwork and forms.
- Remind the group of the next meeting (if you'll have one) and thank everyone for attending. Hold the next meeting when it makes sense for you and your co-volunteers—that may be in two months if face-to-face meetings are best, or not at all if you're diligent about keeping in touch with parents/guardians via e-mail, phone calls, or some other form of communication.
- After the meeting, follow up with any parents/guardians who did not attend, to connect them with the group, inform them of decisions, and discuss how they can best help the girls.

POSSIBLE AGENDA FOR THE PARENTS/GUARDIAN MEETING

1. Introductions/Welcome

As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in. Provide each family with the packet you have prepared. Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other members of your troop leadership team. Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout, and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them. Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you're new to Girl Scouting, don't worry—just let everyone know you'll be learning about Girl Scouting together!) Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion.

2. What is Girl Scouting? (optional information you can include if you wish)

Points you might want to consider making: Founder, purpose, the name, location and size of the Council, areas covered by your Community and the name of the Community, what training leaders will be taking, what meetings leaders will be attending. The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law plus the Girl Scout program, introduce the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and what the program does for their daughters.

3. Leaders' ideas for possible troop activities

Remember to make note that the girls will also be involved in planning and choosing. The troop will be carrying out activities the girls plan, based on what they decide to do. Present ideas of possible meeting days, places and times. All the fun girls are going to have and some examples of activities the girls might choose to do.

4. Parents' roles in the troop

Have position descriptions ready so parents know what they are volunteering to do and the time commitment. Remind parents that they will be doing these particular 'jobs' so their daughter will have the best troop experience possible. Refer to 'Ways parents can help' for ideas of 'jobs' (in this handout).

5. Girl/Adult Requirements for membership

Complete member registration, pay the registration fee, and accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Invite parents to become Girl Scout members as well.

6. Forms and Finances

Explain clearly the Girl Scout Permission slip(s) and the Girl Scout Medical Information form. (This saves phone calls later.) Ensure all member registrations are completed. Give receipt for any cash received.

7. Explain how a troop is generally financed

Discuss with the parents the idea of Troop dues and Council product sale bonuses. Discuss financial assistance for families that need help with membership registration, troop dues, books, etc. (see Financial Assistance Guidelines in your Financial Basics handout.)

8. Uniforms

Uniforms are an important part of Girl Scouting but are not required for participation. Today's Girl Scouts can wear khaki slacks, shorts or skirt with a white shirt – all are items that can be found in most department stores in the school uniform section. Each program level has an appropriate colored sash and/or vest for attaching badges, pins and other insignia. Members who do not own uniforms wear the appropriate Girl Scout membership pin for their program level.

9. Troop Program and supplies

Many activities will come from the *Girls' Guide to Girl Scouting* or Leadership Journeys. Encourage each family to purchase the books that correspond to their daughter's program level. Let parents know that once the troop decides which resources will be used, their daughter may want and/or need their own program books. Discuss with parents possible ways to obtain troop supplies such as crayons, markers, paper, etc. Possible suggestions: Troop birthday party where gifts that are brought are gifts of supplies for the troop, each family provides assigned items from a list, or you can check with your Community Leadership team for other suggestions.

10. How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (e-mail, text messaging, a phone tree, fliers the girls take home, posting on an invitation-only group you create on Facebook are just some ideas)

11. Expectations for girls

All girls will be expected to behave in an appropriate manner – not being disrespectful to the other girls or the leaders. Should behavior be excessively undesirable, parents will be contacted for their input and/or suggestions on how to make the situation better for the girl and the troop.

Basic support provided by all Parents/Guardians includes:

- ◆ Providing “on-time” transportation for their daughters, to and from meetings and outings.
- ◆ Seeing that their daughter has the needed equipment, books, dues, permission slips, etc.
- ◆ Calling the leader first with questions or problems.
- ◆ Showing interest in what their daughters are doing.
- ◆ Letting their girls try new skills at home.
- ◆ Encouraging their daughter's regular attendance at meetings and events.

Additional support Parents/Guardians could offer includes:

- ◆ Sharing a skill or hobby with the troop.
- ◆ Providing transportation for outings. Discuss need for Driver's Checklist (F-477).
- ◆ Baby-sitting leaders' children while leaders attend training or Girl Scout troop meetings.
- ◆ Helping to find a troop sponsor.
- ◆ Helping the leaders at troop meetings.
- ◆ Being a troop committee member or chairing the troop committee.

You may want to close the meeting with the “Parent’s Promise”.

Parents' Promise

*On my honor I will try to share my daughter's new Girl Scout interests
and show appreciation for her efforts to live up to the Promise and Law;
to give her opportunities to practice her new skills at home;
to attend the troop events to which I am invited;
and to support Girl Scouting by working for and contributing to activities
and funds that make Girl Scouting possible in our community.*

Having a Parents’ Meeting is the perfect opportunity to find out in what ways parents are interested in helping and form your Troop Committee right away. It’s a good idea to schedule one before the first troop meeting to have parents/guardians complete the Permission Slip (F-204) and the Medical Information Form (F-185) on their daughters. You can also educate parents about Girl Scouts and inform them of the needs of the troop as this time as well.



WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP

To make Girl Scouting the best possible experience for your daughter, your help is needed. Please complete this sheet, and return.

I am willing to support the troop in the following ways:

- ____ 1. Offer use of your home for a special troop activity.
- ____ 2. Provide a place to store troop equipment.
- ____ 3. Provide transportation for troop activities and trips.
- ____ 4. Do telephoning for the leader.
- ____ 5. Assist troop with the Girl Scout Cookie Sale by becoming Troop Cookie Manager
- ____ 6. Assist troop with Fall Product Sales by becoming Fall Product Manager.
- ____ 7. Collect materials such as craft materials and other items needed for troop projects, as requested.
- ____ 8. Help leader with records, registration, and other paperwork.
- ____ 9. Share hobby with leader or girls. My hobby is _____.
- ____ 10. Be in charge of coordinating who will bring refreshments to troop meetings.
- ____ 11. Occasionally provide simple refreshments for a troop meeting.
- ____ 12. Take Troop Camp Training and help prepare troop for a camping experience.
- ____ 13. Register as a member of Girl Scouts and serve as a member of the troop committee.
- ____ 14. Take the place of one of the leaders if an emergency arises. (A minimum of 2 adults must be with the troop at all times.)
- ____ 15. Be on the lookout for "community service" projects of interest to the girls.
- ____ 16. Assist the leader(s) at troop meetings, as needed.
- ____ 17. Care for leaders' younger children while they attend training or troop meetings.
- ____ 18. Other ways I can help - please list: _____
- ____ 19. Take (or already have) First Aid and CPR and accompany troop on outings.

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Daughter's Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

Best Time to Call: _____ Email Address: _____

Meeting Time

The length of a Girl Scout meeting depends on the needs and interests of the girls. In general, Girl Scout troop meetings last 60-90 minutes. Most troops meet weekly, but some meet less often depending on the needs of the girls and the availability of troop leadership. There is no one “right” way. Some things to consider when planning a meeting with the girls:

- Who is responsible for leading each part?
- What equipment and supplies are needed?
- How long will each activity take?
- Does everyone participate together, or will the activity be done in groups or patrols?
- Will refreshments be served? If so, when?

Parts of a Girl Scout Meeting

Start-up (pre-meeting activity - time varies) Self-directed activities girls may do if they arrive early for the meeting. Activity should not require a lot of time to complete and little clean up. The supplies for the pre-meeting activity should be set up and ready for the girls to use when they arrive. This activity gives the leader time to greet people as they arrive and keeps girls busy with something structured. Hint: If you make this part fun, the girls will tend to be on time.

Opening – should be chosen by the girls (approximately 5 min.)

This is the official call to order of the meeting and sets the tone for the meeting. This is the first activity of the meeting that the girls do as a group. Girls can gather in circle or horseshoe formation. This opening may begin with a flag ceremony, reciting the Girl Scout Promise, a song or a game. The Opening helps girls become focused on their meeting.

Troop Business (5-10 min.)

Girls should sit in circle or horseshoe formation to share ideas and make simple decisions. This is when planning and decision-making can happen. Discussion of old business, collection of dues and forms is also done here. But whatever you do keep it brief and moving.

Activity (20 plus minutes)

This is the part of the meeting where girls can learn new things and have FUN. The major amount of troop time should be spent here – working on crafts and projects, sharing ideas, and playing games. This is when you’ll accomplish the primary activity objective(s) for the meeting.

Sharing time (5 min.)

This time can be incorporated into the activity portion, Troop Business, or during the Opening. Encourage girls to talk about their interests, feelings, and daily experiences. Sharing time helps girls create the “safe space” that they say they need to feel free to learn and develop their leadership skills.

Clean-up (approx. 5 min.)

A time for putting supplies and equipment away and leaving the meeting site "cleaner than you found it." This is the girls' responsibility. Using a Kaper Chart helps assign kapers (tasks or jobs) to girls. This chart should show the delegation of jobs and rotation of responsibility meeting by meeting. Everyone helps out! Clean up is important because it teaches girls how to take and share responsibility in the troop. Samples of Kaper charts can be found in Resources on the website, but will also be covered more thoroughly in leadership level training.

Closing – should be chosen by the girls (approx. 5 min.)

This should be a definite time of "winding down" the meeting. It is important to emphasize to the girls what they have accomplished, what they can look forward to, and to bring closure to the meeting. Close with a song or special Girl Scout Activity. Parents should be discouraged from picking up their daughters before the closing takes place.

Snacks

There is no designated time for snacks and no "rule" saying you must have snacks. If girls attend troop meetings immediately after school, snack time may come early in the meeting, after the opening; if meetings are after dinnertime, snacks may be later in the program. Girls should take turns bringing and serving snacks. Snack time should be organized, yet simple and relaxed. It's all up to what the girls want to do.

CREATING A GROUP AGREEMENT

A group agreement, when established in first couple of meetings, sets the tone and expectations for all future gatherings to be a positive experience for everyone. Girls should be part of this discussion and help create a sign or poster that each girl can sign to signify her willingness to abide by the group agreement. An example of such an agreement might be:

Troop 12345 agrees to:

1. Listen when someone is talking.
2. Have a good attitude.
3. Help clean up.
4. Be a friend to everyone.
5. Have fun! ☺

Tips for Positive Girl Behavior:

- Keep in mind that the troop belongs to the girls. The girls must feel "in charge" so that they develop ownership of the troop.
- Help the girls create the rules the troop will follow, and the consequences for violation. Put them on a poster and display the poster at troop meetings.
- Keep the girls busy...Be organized...Over-plan...Busy girls usually don't have time to be disruptive.
- Have a routine established. Girls should know what to do and where to go when they get to the meeting.
- Be positive. Girls will reflect your attitude. If you are negative, you can count on them to be negative also.
- Listen to the girls. It will give you ideas, insight, help you to know and understand them better, and create a caring atmosphere. It also gives you some warning before problems occur.
- Be flexible. Every idea or activity will not be successful. Be flexible enough to adapt or discontinue an activity if it's not working.
- Don't take behavior personally. Misbehavior is not a personal attack on you and does not mean you are a failure.
Be realistic about attention span. Vary activities, alternating from quiet to more active.
- Be loving and understanding, but firm and consistent. Decide ahead of time what your expectations are with input from the girls. Make sure the girls understand them. Then, be firm and consistent.

- Be aware that sometimes disruptive behavior may be caused by a deeper problem. A learning disability or emotional problem may be the underlying cause. Don't try to diagnose if you are not a doctor. Call a member of your Community Leadership team for suggestions.
- Stress the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Discuss what these mean in day-to-day living. Sometimes, these are just words that are memorized and girls don't relate them to their own lives.



No matter what age you're working with, here are five cool solutions to 5 hot challenges.

#1 – Cliques. Have the girls mix it up – after all, they don't listen to the same song over and over again. Why have the same buddy over and over again? Match girls by their favorite food, their favorite TV show or movies, or their favorite color – great ways for the girls to start to see the similarities with others outside their cliques.

#2 – The Sensitive Girl. Stopping everything because Sandra has burst into tears or Maria is personalizing everything Cassandra says isn't fun for anyone. Instead, have the girls decide upon a private space where they can go to regroup until they are ready to rejoin the others. Meanwhile, keep the fun going for the rest of the group. Eventually the sensitive girl probably will want to join in the fun. After a while she may choose never to leave it. At the end of the troop meeting, check in with the girl and make sure she is okay.

#3 – Inappropriate Language. Let the girls decide on appropriate behaviors, consequences, and language for the group. Make sure that some of the consequences are funny – you don't want to turn into their parent. Post the agreed upon guidelines on your "Troop Rules" poster, right next to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Teach the girls how to monitor their own behavior and reinforce the rules they set.

#4 – Bossy Girl. No one has fun when one girl is the boss. Talk with the girls about the differences between leadership/teamwork and bossiness. Have them identify examples of leadership/teamwork that work with the group. When girls start getting bossy, offer one of them teamwork roles instead so they can learn a better way to lead.

#5 – Bullying. Discuss with the girls how people can have different perspectives and guide them to find ways to respect and celebrate each other's differences – what seems funny to one girl can be embarrassing to another. And point out that no one likes to be told how to do something—that there's a difference between suggesting and demanding. Recognize that many of these behaviors are ways to gain attention – after all, negative attention is better than no attention at all! But, if you give girls an opportunity to lead and shine, and keep them involved in the conflict resolution process, they'll learn how to handle life's challenges on their own.

Meeting with Girls for the First Time

In your first few meetings with girls, you'll likely want to accomplish some or all of the following, depending on how much time you have and on the grade level of the girls:

- **Get to know the girls, and give them a chance to get to know each other.** Ice-breaker games—in which girls share simple details about each other, or are charged with finding out about another girl with whom they are paired—are a simple way to start off your first meeting.
- **Introduce the *Girls' Guide to Girl Scouting* and leadership journey books for the troop's level:**
This is also a great time to introduce badges and earned awards (petals and leaves for Daisy Girl Scouts).
- **Find out what interests the group, including other adult volunteers.** Without promising anything (yet!), ask the girls to talk about what they're passionate about, what they've always wanted to do, and how they would spend their time if money or other barriers were no object. Build off the ideas shared, but also ask direct questions of the girls who seem shy or unsure about answering, so that no one is left out.
- **Talk about how they want to schedule their time together,** starting with the draft schedule you bring. Can they organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular topic or theme? Is there an event that meshes with this topic or area of interest? Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via e-mail or social media? Can they invite a local guest speaker to answer specific questions or demonstrate particular skills? Which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?

GETTING STARTED – THE TROOP'S MEETINGS

Meeting plans are available for Girl Scouts Daisy, Girl Scout Brownie, and Girl Scout Junior troops in the Volunteer Toolkit to assist you in planning troop meetings. These plans are guidelines--substitutions should be made according to the needs of the girls, what you feel comfortable doing, and the troop facilities. Additional meeting plans are available on GSSJC's Resources website (resources.gssjc.org) and can provide program ideas until you can attend your program level training. NOTE: There are more activities listed for each meeting than you will have time for. It is not necessary to do ALL the activities. Choose the activities you think the girls will enjoy most, and have the rest ready in case an activity takes less time than you planned.

On the following pages, you will find a sample and suggested meeting plan for each of the three younger program levels. Choose any of the activities that fit your situation. If you feel comfortable “doing it your way,” by all means, do so. Once you find what works, however, try to follow the same format at each meeting. Providing this kind of structure will really help with group behavior management. However, you also want to keep in the front of your mind, our mission to provide girls with the total Girl Scout Leadership Experience and allow the girls an active role in choosing their *Leadership Journey* and *Skill Building Badges* they want to earn. The *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* at each level and Journey girl and adult books will help keep you on the right track. Each meeting plan follows a basic format:

1. **FOCUS** – states the Girl Scout goal(s) of the meeting and what the girls will do/learn.
2. **PREPARATION** – lists materials needed to implement the six segments of the meeting and what needs to be done before the meeting.
3. **DETAILS** – explains the six segments of the meeting in detail.
4. **PROGRAM LINKS** – links meeting activities to each level’s program.

To help you get started with your Girl Scout **Daisy** troop, you’ll find examples of how you and the girls can structure your first four meetings. Each example follows a typical troop-meeting format, and each incorporates the *Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden* Leadership Journey. If you’re using *Between Earth and Sky*, or *5 Flowers*, *4 Stories*, *3 Cheers For Animals*, you may be able, with a bit of creativity, to adapt these meetings to include that series of journey books.

Prior to your meetings with girls, be sure to let each girl’s parent or guardian know where to get a copy of her own journey book. It is important that each girl have her own book, so she can write and color in it.

In the adult guide that accompanies *Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden*, you’ll find six flexible, customizable sample journey mini-sessions. You and the girls may decide to do all six of these sample mini-sessions during one or two troop meetings (and that’s perfectly okay), or you may decide to extend the sample mini-sessions over several troop meetings, which is what the enclosed example meetings reflect. Given that all your meetings will be girl-led, however, your meetings will probably go in a different direction than these examples, but these are a great place to start.

One final note: In the third meeting, girls plan for and prepare their Investiture Ceremony. New girls will receive their Girl Scout Daisy pins and returning girls will use it as a rededication ceremony.

Ready to get started? Grab the girl books and adult guide for *Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden*, and get ready to have fun with your group of Girl Scout Daisies!

Girl Scout Daisies: Sample Meeting 1 (60 minutes)

Goal: To get to know one another, learn basic Girl Scout values, and sample the Daisy story.

Supplies needed:

- *Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden*, girls' books and adult guide (with photocopies of pages 8, 10, and 12, in case girls forget their books)
- Crayons and/or colored pencils
- An "It" and "Other" can
- The Girl Scout Promise on large easel paper
- Snack or treat

Pre-meeting: Lay out the crayons/pencils and keep the photocopies nearby, just in case.

Arrival activity: Girls color and decorate their Color Me! pages (page 8, 10, and 12 of the girls' book), which have pictures of the garden girls—Chandra, Cora, and Campbell. Your group may require the help of an adult or older girl.

Snack/treat: Have girls serve a healthy snack here; if preferred, you and the girls may opt to have a treat toward the end of your meeting.

Opening: Use 1-2-3 Hello: You and the girls join hands in a circle. The group moves on the count of 1 toward the inside of the circle while holding hands. The leader says, "Hello, Daisy Girl Scouts." The group quickly goes back out, and then repeats enthusiastically for 2 and 3. (Note: You can also do 1-2-3 Goodbye.) Have the girls sit in a circle. Let them know this is their Daisy Circle. Another opening option is to teach and sing (or say) "Sandy's Song" for Girl Scout Daisies (page 5 of the girls' book and page 75 of the adult guide).

Business: Take care of introductions and Girl Scout basics:

You and other volunteers introduce yourselves.

Ask the girls say their name and one thing about themselves they want all the girls to know. Give them an example: "Hi, my name is Amy, and I like to sing."

Introduce the Girl Scout Promise (page 37 in the adult guide).

Introduce the girls to Juliette Low, the first Girl Scout Daisy (page 6 in the girls' book).

Activity 1: *Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden.* Ask girls to share their colored pictures of the arrival activity of the garden girls: Cora, Campbell, and Chandra. Ask them, "Look at the pictures, what can we tell about them?" For example, "Look at Cora. She likes music." Ask them who likes music in the Girl Scout troop. Let them know these garden friends will be with us throughout our journey through the Daisy flower garden. Read Chapter 1 in the girls' book (pages 17–19).

Activity 2: "It" and "Other" cans. Give each girl a wide craft stick to decorate and help her put her name on. Also provide two cans (such as coffee cans) that girls can help decorate. When the cans and sticks are complete, you have an easy way to get girls to help with any chores related to meetings. When a helper is needed in a meeting, a stick is drawn from the "It" can, and the name drawn is the helper. After the task is finished, the stick goes in the "Other" can, until all sticks have been drawn from the "It" can.

Clean-up: You may want to draw a name from the "It" can and let this girl be the leader of the clean-up. At the same time, encourage all the girls to be part of the clean-up process.

Closing: Get in the Friendship Circle (page 45 in the adult guide)

Note: Refer to the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting for Daisies* for more activities and meeting ideas.

To help you get started with your Girl Scout **Brownie** troop, you'll find examples of how you and the girls can structure your first four meetings. Each example follows a typical troop-meeting format, and each incorporates the *Brownie Quest* Leadership Journey book. The *Brownie Quest Leadership Journey* is not available in the Volunteer Toolkit at this time. If you're using *Wow! Wonders of Water or A World of Girls* you may be able, with a bit of creativity, to adapt these meetings to include that series of journey books. Prior to your meetings with girls, be sure to let each girl's parent or guardian know where to get a copy of her own journey book. It is important that each girl have her own book, so she can write in and decorate it. In the adult guide that accompanies *Brownie Quest*, you'll find six flexible, customizable sample journey mini-sessions. You and the girls may decide to do all six of these sample mini-sessions during one or two troop meetings (and that's perfectly okay), or you may decide to extend the sample mini-sessions over several troop meetings, which is what the enclosed example meetings reflect. Given that all your meetings will be girl-led, however, your meetings will probably go in a different direction than these examples, but these are a great place to start.

One final note: In the third meeting, girls plan for and prepare their Investiture Ceremony. New girls will receive their Girl Scout Brownie pins and returning girls will use it as a rededication ceremony. Ready to get started? Grab the girl books and adult guide for *Brownie Quest*, and get ready to have fun with your group of Girl Scout Brownies!

Girl Scout Brownies: Sample Meeting 1 (60-90 mins)

Goal: The girls will discover their special qualities and the qualities of their sister Brownies. They will also find the values within the Girl Scout Law.

Supplies needed:

- *Brownie Quest*, girls' books and adult guide
- Slim markers (small decorative stickers are optional)
- Light ball or koosh ball
- Poster board with a star on it and the names of the girls written on the star
- Clues for the Girl Scout Law search—ten strips of paper with one part of the Law on each strip
- “It” and “Other” cans and wide craft sticks
- Snack or treat

Pre-meeting: Set up a table with arrival activity material; display the Quest Master Map.

Arrival Activity: Finding the First Key: Discovering Me (page 49 in the girls' book). Each girl uses slim markers and decorative stickers to make her own unique stars. Have an adult or an older Girl Scout help the girls, if necessary.

Snack/treat: You and the girls may opt to have treat time here or toward the end of the meeting.

Opening: Sit in a Brownie Ring (which is simply a group of Brownies sitting in a circle). Welcome the girls and introduce yourself and any co-volunteers. Do the Ball Toss (page 46 of the adult guide).

Business: Take attendance and collect the dues, explaining to the girls what you are doing, since they will do this task in the future. (You and the girls may opt to collect dues at the beginning of your meetings.)

After the first meeting, assign taking attendance as one of the kapers for one of the girls.

You will create “It” and “Other” cans: Give each girl a wide craft stick to decorate and help her put her name on. Also provide two cans (such as coffee cans) that girls can help decorate. When the cans and sticks are complete, you have an easy way to get girls to help. When a helper is needed in a meeting, a stick is drawn from the “It” can, and the name draw is the helper. After the task is finished, the stick goes in the “Other” can, until all sticks have been drawn from the “It” can.

Activity 1: Decorate the “It” sticks. Each girl decorates her “It” stick and writes her name on it. Sit in circle and have girls place their sticks in the container. Ask the girls how they help at home, and talk about how they might help in their troop.

Activity 2: Play Going ELF (pages 47–49 in the adult guide; see page 44 in the adult guide for suggestions on ways to set up the search). Then have girls, with assistance (if necessary), complete Discovering Values (page 50 in the girls' book). For tips on winding down from the search, see page 50 in the adult guide.

Clean-up: Draw a stick from the “It” can and ask this girl to lead the clean-up effort. Encourage all the girls as a team to be part of this effort.

Closing: Give each girl a stapled copy the take-home letter and family start (pages 53–55 in the adult guide). Encourage her to share and do the star with her family and bring the star back to the next meeting. Close with teaching them the Friendship Circle (page 27 in the adult guide).

Note: Refer to the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting for Brownies* for more activities and meeting ideas.

To help you get started with your Girl Scout **Junior** troop, you'll find examples of how you and the girls can structure your first four meetings. Each example follows a typical troop-meeting format, and each incorporates the *Agent of Change Leadership Journey* book. The *Agent of Change Leadership Journey* is not available in the Volunteer Toolkit at this time. If you're using *Get Moving!* or *Amuse* you may be able, with a bit of creativity, to adapt these meetings to include that series of journey books.

Prior to your meetings with girls, be sure to let each girl's parent or guardian know where to get a copy of her own journey book. It is important that each girl have her own book, so she can journal and decorate her book.

In the adult guide that accompanies *Agent of Change*, you'll find seven flexible, customizable sample journey mini-sessions. You and the girls may decide to do all seven of these sample mini-sessions during one or two troop meetings (and that's perfectly okay), or you may decide to extend the sample mini-sessions over several troop meetings, which is what the enclosed example meetings reflect. Given that all your meetings will be girl-led, however, your meetings will probably go in a different direction than these examples, but these are a great place to start.

One final note: In the third meeting, girls plan and prepare for their Investiture Ceremony. New girls will receive their Girl Scout Junior pins and returning girls will use it as a rededication ceremony.

Ready to get started? Grab the girls' book and adult guide for *Agent of Change*, and get ready to have fun with your group of Girl Scout Juniors!

GIRL SCOUT JUNIORS: SAMPLE MEETING (90 mins or more)

Goal: The girls get to know their troop/group members, review or learn some Girl Scout basics, and discover their own values and individual powers.

Supplies needed:

- *Agent of Change*, girls' books and adult guide
- Markers, paper, scissors, small glitzy stickers, yarn for necklace, and a hole punch
- Long rope and large sheet of paper for mounting the rope and index cards (one per girl)
- Girl Scout Law written on easel paper
- Blank trefoil-shaped cardstock for nametags
- Snack or treat

Pre-meeting: Lay out the materials the girls will need to make their nametags.

Arrival activity: Girls make their trefoil name tags. Ask each girl to put her name on one side and three things about herself on the back, and then decorate it as she wishes. Punch a hole and use the yarn to drape this around her neck.

Snack/treat: You and the girls may decide to have the treat now or toward the end of your meeting.

Opening: Form a standing circle and introduce yourself and any co-volunteers. Introduce the Quiet Sign, which is used by Girl Scouts all over the world to quiet a group. (The right hand is raised with a flat hand. Be patient. When individuals see the hand raised, they also raise their hands. In just a few moments, the group will become quiet.) Discuss the importance of having an agreed-upon sign for quiet. Introduce or review the Girl Scout Sign. Ask them what this sign represents. The three fingers represent the three parts of the Promise. Review the Girl Scout Promise.

Do the Rope Ceremony, a modification of the one described on page 46 of the adult guide. Use a rope long enough to go around a circle of the girls. Have a knot tied in it for each girl. You speak then pass the next knot to the next girl in the circle until every girl has had the chance to introduce herself and say three things about herself. She can refer to her trefoil nametag.

Sit down, staying in a circle. Show the paper with the Girl Scout Law. Talk about the journey they will go on together and the opportunity to discover the qualities of the Girl Scout Law in themselves along the journey. Give each girl an index card (see step 3 on page 46 of the adult guide).

Business: Assign a girl to take attendance and dues, with your guidance. (You and the girls may decide to collect dues as the girls arrive.)

Activity 1: Do Thinking About Power (page 47 of the adult guide and page 6 of the girls' book). Give an overview of *Agent of Change* and the awards they can earn along the way (page 7 of the girls' book). Next, do Your Daily Power (page 14 of the girls' book). Discuss what power means. Ask each unfinished sentence in the Did You... box, one by one, and ask who has an example.

Activity 2: Play a game, because they have been sitting for a long time. Let the game choice be theirs, or try People to People (or call it Junior to Junior), a high energy game that requires no equipment. When a quick or change of pace is needed, have the girls pair up, with one designated as the "caller." When the caller shouts out "Junior to Junior," the girls run to find a new partner to stand next to. The odd person out becomes the new caller. The caller may call different body parts, such as hand to hand, foot to foot, head to head, or back to back. Then the girls run for a new partner and touch head to head, foot to foot, or whatever body part the caller indicated.

Activity 3: Complete the Power Log (pages 48–49 of the adult guide). Ask the girls whether they would like to make individual power logs or create a big team power log. Discuss with the girls how they would like to do this as this is part of earning the first badge on their journey.

Clean-up: Note that Girl Scouts always leave places cleaner than they found them. Encourage all the girls to help.

Closing: Ask the girls to complete What Makes Me Me? (page 13 girl's book) at home, and to bring this with them for the next meeting. Conclude with the Friendship Circle (page 28 of the adult guide)

Note: Refer to the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting for Juniors* for more activities and meeting ideas.

"IT" AND "OTHER"

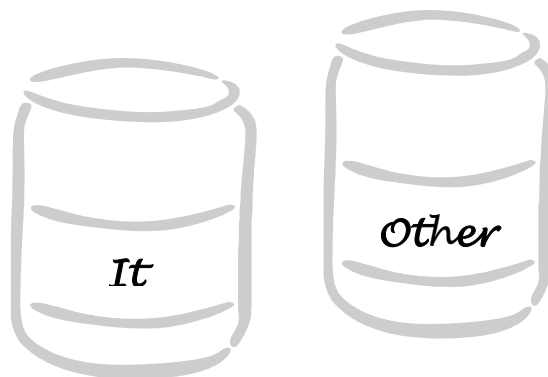
You can use this idea for an "IT" and "OTHER" can to make sure each girl has a fair chance to help or to be "it" for a special game or activity.

You will need:

- Two coffee cans or boxes and one smooth stone, wooden circle or popsicle stick for each girl in the troop.
- Markers or acrylic paints

Let the girls decorate the cans or boxes as shown or in any fashion that appeals to them. Have each girl write her name or initials on the stones or sticks.

To use: Place all the stones or sticks in the "IT" box. When you need to select someone to do something (lead a song or grace, help the leader with a special assignment etc.) just draw a name from the "IT" box and then, after the deed is finished, put the stone or stick in the "OTHER" box. Continue using names from the "IT" can and placing into the "OTHER" can until all names have been used. Then start the process all over again. It really works and the girls know that you are being fair.



CLEAN-UP

Dilemma: The troop has spent the last 30 minutes cutting and pasting and creating a truly grand wreck of your meeting place AND another group is scheduled to be here in 10 minutes and well...

Solution: Here is a way to turn a kaper into song and ceremony. As the girls clean, they sing this song to the tune of "London Bridge".

Weave the magic in and out
in and out, in and out.
Weave the magic in and out,
We are Brownies! (Daisies or Juniors)

We have tidied everything,
everything, everything,
We have tidied everything,
We are Brownies!

Then the girls come before the Leader for the following exchange:

Leader asks: "Is everything finished?"

Girls: "Everything."

Leader: "Is nothing left?"

Girls: "Nothing!"

Leader: "Then, be gone"



KAPER CHARTS

A Kaper Chart is used widely in many Girl Scout meetings. In troop activities, it can be used to clarify which individual, pair or patrol is responsible for completing specific tasks.

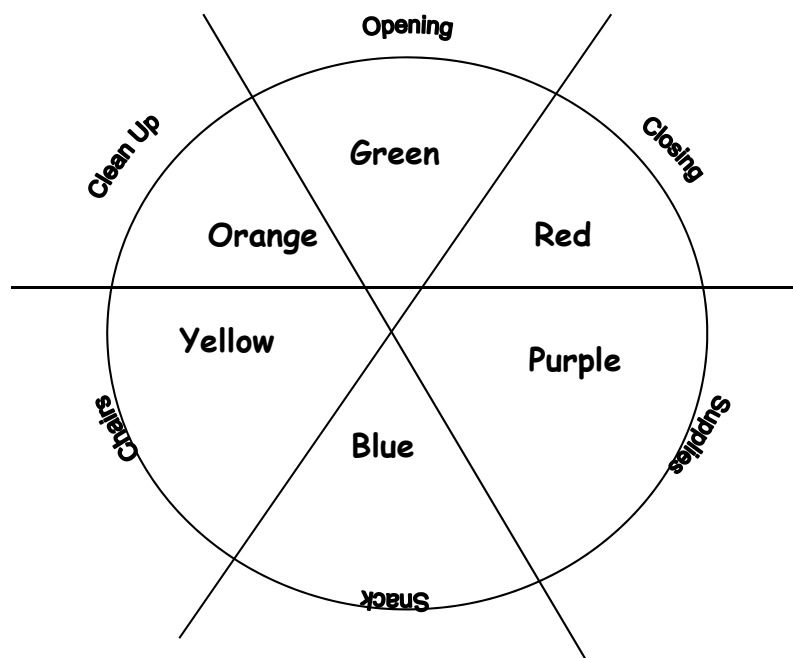
There are many different ways to make a Kaper Chart. They are only limited by your own resources and the imagination of your troop.

Below are just a few ways Kaper charts can be made and used. First is divided by girl, next by patrol.

Meetings

Kapers	1	2	3	4	5
Opening	Jane	Lisa	Maggie	Lilly	Shonda
Flag	Shonda	Jane	Lisa	Maggie	Lilly
Clean Up	Lilly	Shonda	Jane	Lisa	Maggie
Closing	Maggie	Lilly	Shonda	Jane	Lisa
Equipment	Lisa	Maggie	Lilly	Shonda	Jane
Songs	Jane	Lisa	Maggie	Lilly	Shonda

Another chart would list which girls were in each color team.



Place paper fastener (brad) in center of wheel and rotate same direction after each meeting.

Kaper charts can be made for a short time or they can be made with perpetual rotation in mind, eliminating the need to make a new chart every few weeks.

Explaining the duties involved in each kaper saves questions and prevents delays.

When possible, you might consider having a rotation where a group of girls work together over a period of time. This allows the girls to get to know each other better and gain more cooperative skills. A kaper chart can help groups avoid the harmful aspects of cliques. Have the girls make a habit of checking at the beginning of the meeting or trip to see what their job is.

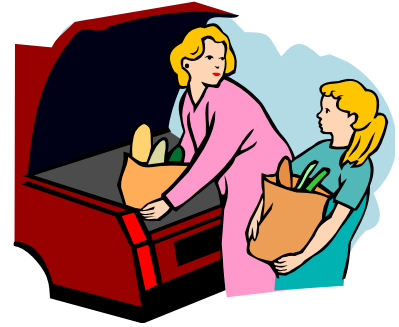
Plan how many people should be in each work group to equalize the responsibility. Work groups can consist of individuals, buddies, patrols, or other small groups. If desired give the work groups names and or symbols for the chart.

The Kaper chart should:

- Be a graphic representation of delegated responsibilities
- Be eye catching
- Provide for rotation of jobs if appropriate
- Include lists of tasks for each individual/group

Most importantly, girls should be involved in making kaper charts. Girls should decide:

- What needs to be done
- What tasks are placed into work groups
- The type and size of work groups
- The type of rotation
- Design of kaper chart



MEETING PLAN WORKSHEET

	What we will do	Who will do it	What we need
Start-up			
Opening			
Business			
Activities			
Clean-Up			
Closing			

Use this planning template or the very handy Volunteer Toolkit online. Just choose your Girl Scout level and plan year then together, you can build your calendar. This toolkit allows you to account for holidays, special council events your girls may want to attend and includes helpful troop meeting plan templates. Browse the activities and choose those that spark the most interest. Just drag and drop them into your calendar. There are even supply lists included for all activities which makes it easy to pass on to that helpful parent who asks “What can I do to help?” ☺

BUILDING A TROOP CALENDAR

In the building of a group calendar, YOU AND THE GIRLS will need to consider different kinds of calendars:

1. Leaders' personal calendars
 - a. Best time to hold the meetings
 - b. Dates not convenient due to other commitments
2. School calendar
 - a. School holidays and vacations
 - b. Special school activities
 - c. Year-round school attendance days and breaks
 - d. Grading periods and exams
3. Regular calendar
 - a. City, state, federal holidays
 - b. Religious holidays (of all girls in your group)
 - c. Traditional holidays (remember Halloween, Mother's/Father's Day, too!)
4. Girl Scout Calendar of Special Days
 - a. October 31 – Juliette Low's birthday
 - b. February 22 – Thinking Day
 - c. March 12 – Birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA
 - d. April 22 – Girl Scout Leader's Day
5. Community Calendar
 - a. Meetings
 - b. Planned activities that include part of or the whole Community
 1. Thinking Day activities
 2. Sister Troop activities
 3. Bridging activities
 4. Community Camping Weekend
 - c. Membership Renewal – Early Bird (May-June)
 - d. Annual Financial Report – due May 15
6. Council Fall Product & Cookie Sales
 - a. Order taking / delivery dates
7. Council-offered program activities
 - a. Activities for troops
 - b. Activities for individuals
8. Council Training Schedule
Things that you, another leader, or a helping adult might need to take.



TROOP MEETING PLANNING CALENDAR

AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.	6.
DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.	6.
APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.	6.

GIRL SCOUT FIELD TRIPS

Purpose of Field Trips

Why do Girl Scouts take field trips? For fun, variety, petal or skill building-badge or activities, and balanced program. After the troop has met several times, you and the girls might begin to think about an activity away from your regular meeting place. Progression is paramount in planning trips with girls. The first step in this progression can be a field trip close to home. Always consult *Volunteer Essentials* and the appropriate *Safety Activity Checkpoints* on the Council website during the planning phase. Always use girl planning and plan trips with the troop budget in mind. It is recommended that the troop carry out several day trips before planning an overnight.

Overnight Trips

The term “overnight trips” includes the slumber party held in the home of a troop leader, or spending the night at the troop’s meeting place, as well as going out-of-town to a hotel or on a campout.

If a troop trip involves a stay of one to four nights off Council property, the troop must submit the Short Troop Trip Form (F-413) to the Girl Experience Department at the Girl Scout Center at least 2 weeks prior to the trip.

Transporting Girls

Transportation decisions are an important aspect to any off-site Girl Scout activity, and your greatest concern is always safety.

Private Transportation

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats, and chartered flights. How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent’s individual decision and responsibility.

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

- Every driver must complete a Driver’s Checklist with a member of the leadership team and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed.
- Anyone who is driving a vehicle with more than 12 passengers must also be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver’s license (CDL)—check with your council to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time. (**Remember: Age of majority in Texas is 18 and a Driver’s Checklist is always required for anyone transporting girls to locations other than the regular meeting place.*)

When the troop is ready to go to activities outside the meeting place, the following are needed:

- _____ 1. Driver's Checklist (F-477) for each driver of each vehicle. These forms will be retained in the leader/adult-in-charge's master folder during the activity.
- _____ 2. A first aid kit will be required for each car transporting girls. An actual First-Aider is required for specific activities. Consult the Safety Activity Checkpoints during the planning phase to verify if one is needed for your activity.
- _____ 3. Travel packets (folder, envelopes, etc.) for each car containing:
 - _____ Adult Emergency Slip (F-22) for each adult in car
 - _____ Girl Scout Permission Slip (F-204) for each girl in car
 - _____ Girl Scout Medical Information Form (F-185) for each girl in car.
 - _____ Girl Scout Accident Insurance Voucher (F-579)
 - _____ Girl Scout Accident Insurance Information (F-578)
 - _____ Emergency Card (F-338) for each adult in car
 - _____ Directions and map to location of activity
 - _____ Phone numbers for Emergency Contact
 - _____ Phone numbers for other troop drivers participating in the activity

Checklist for Drivers

- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first-aid kit and a flashlight.
- Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns, and fluid levels before each trip and check them periodically on long trips.
- Keep all necessary papers up to date, such as your driver's license, vehicle registration, any state or local inspections, insurance coverage, and the like.
- Wear your seat belt at all times, and insist that all passengers do the same; keep girls under 12 in the back seats.
- Follow all the established rules of the road in your state (following the speed limit, keeping a two-car-length between you and the car ahead of you, not talking or texting on a cell phone or other personal electronic device, not using ear-buds or headphones, driving with your headlights on, and so on).
- Avoid driving for extended periods at night, when tired, or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- Plan rest stops every few hours; if driving with others, prearrange stopping places along the way. When planning longer trips, arrange for relief drivers.
- Phone numbers of other drivers and at-home contact
- Map and directions or address to the destination

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council requires that any adult transporting girls must complete the Driver's Checklist form (F-477), have proof of current driver's license, insurance, and inspections/registrations. This form must be on file with the troop leadership team before transporting girls.

It is recommended that you create a travel folder for each car that will be transporting girls. This folder should contain the following items:

- Permission slip (F-204) for each girl in the car
- Medical Information form (F-185) for each girl in the car
- Adult Emergency slip (F-22) for each adult in the car
- Insurance Coverage Voucher (F-579)
- Girl Scout Accident Insurance Information (F-578)
- Emergency Card (F-338)

Remember that every time a group meets at a time and location different from the regular group meeting, you must use a permission form—even if the girls are responsible for getting to that location on their own. Permission forms give parents the “who, what, when, where, and why,” so that they can decide whether their daughter can participate in an event or go on a trip. A signed permission form permits you to include the girl in the activity and also provides you with up-to-date emergency contact information.

Texas state law requires that any child younger than 8 years of age *must* be transported in an approved child restraint seat unless the child has reached 4’9” in height. Visit the Texas Department of Public Safety’s website at www.txdps.state.tx.us for more information.

Checklist for Girls

Girls need to adhere to the following checklist when being transported. You may decide to create a contract listing the following items, which girls sign before leaving on any trip. Girls will:

- ✓ Follow all rules and instructions for this trip.
- ✓ Assist with reading signs and maps, when asked.
- ✓ Keep seat belts fastened at all times.
- ✓ Refrain from arguing, yelling, and throwing things.
- ✓ Play games or listen to music quietly with other passengers, being considerate of the driver and other passengers.
- ✓ Stay with the group during stops.
- ✓ Alert the driver and an adult volunteer to a missing buddy, an obstacle, or an open door or trunk.

Thank you for completing *Troop/Group Basics Training*.

Troop/Group Basics Training has covered information that will help you get your parents and girls organized for the year. This handout provided a guide for planning troop meetings with and for the girls. You will still need to complete two other brief trainings, *Safety Basics* and *Financial Basics* and complete the short quiz online to receive credit for completing the Volunteer Basics Series. Check the council website for future trainings on everything from songs and games to camping and ceremonies. Recruit a friend to join you in the fun!

We're here to help so please contact us at:

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council
www.gssjc.org
713-292-0300
1-800-392-4340

Your
GIRL SCOUT
JOURNEY
begins
NOW!



Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council

Statement on Pluralism

The Girl Scouts of San Jacinto is a pluralistic movement, committed to understanding our similarities and differences, building relationships and promoting a dialogue of acceptance and respect. Each individual involved must uphold the basic tenet that Girl Scouting is for all girls.

Published by
The Volunteer Experience Department

Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council
3110 Southwest Freeway
Houston, TX 77098



July 2015