

Letting Girls Lead 4 – 8

The Girl Scout leadership experience is based on the three processes – Girl Led, Learn By Doing and Cooperative Learning. Here are some ideas to help you encourage the girls to grow in their decision making and leadership by describing some girl led techniques for Juniors and Cadettes.

Girl-Led

Girl-Led is an empowering approach that encourages girls to take increasing responsibility for designing and implementing activities. Becoming progressively more Girl-Led as the girls gain experience and move from grade level to grade level is the goal. If you can achieve some order of democracy thru troop government among the girls and then have the strength to step back and let the girls begin to make decisions, then you can rest assured that you have been successful! How does being Girl-Led fit with the troop government system? I like to think of the troop government system as the wheels that make it possible for girl led decision making and planning to happen.

Girl-Led for Juniors

With Girl Scout Juniors, leaders step back even a bit more than they did when the girls bridged to Brownies and will start to advise or facilitate. If the girls have not already begun doing some moderating, allow the girls to start to take turns moderating discussions.

- Decide how they want to plan sessions and activities, begin and end meetings, and try leading some meetings.
- Brainstorm possible way of doing suggested activities or offer substitutions to make activities more to their taste. This is a great age to let the girls look at the year planning guides and make choices or substitutions.
- Choose their own Take Action Project-one they really care about.
- Call, interview and email prospective community members to be guides and assistants on the Take Action Project.
- Act alongside other adults in the community who have come forward to assist the girls in their action plans.
- Develop additional ways to research community needs and rehearse phone calls or in person requests with each other and with you.
- Select side trips for the journey or RV Planning guides.

Girls this age can participate in all steps of planning and carrying out a task. Although planning activities for the girls would be much easier, girls learn much more from the process of planning than from actually doing the activity. Problem solving what to do when the silverware is missing from their cookout can be a learning experience and can result in a great silly memory when the remedy becomes eating with their fingers instead. They should be able to set goals with some guidance. Girls in troops that are not incorporating a Girl Led approach and helping with the planning tend to lose interest fast.

Girl-Led for Cadettes

- Encourage girls to plan challenging activities or tasks and serve as a resource for them.
- Promote discussion and debate giving guideline for depersonalizing arguments- debate without finger pointing.
- Expose girls to opportunities to teach or guide others and support girls in providing service to and for others.
- At Cadette grade level adults Coach the girls to lead the planning, decision-making, learning and fun as much as possible. This ensures that girls are engaged in their learning and experience leadership opportunities as they prepare to become active participants in the local and global communities. Think about coaches from sports. The coach generally does not play in the game, she provides encouragement and direction from the sidelines. They are up to the challenge!

Adult Planning

When the girls are planning a project or activity the adult may need to think thru:

- Task that will need to happen
- Readiness level of girls for those tasks
- Could the task be broken down into smaller steps to help the girls be successful
- Tasks essential to group safety

Imperfect is Perfect Enough

In short, do nothing for the girls that the girls can do for themselves. Activities that are Girl Led won't always be perfect-but that's not what the goal is. Those somewhat imperfect experiences will leave a much greater impact when the girls can say "I did it."