



# Becoming Me for Girl Scout Cadettes



Welcome to the Becoming Me program series for Girl Scout Cadettes. In this six- to eight-week program experience inspired by former First Lady Michelle Obama's memoir *Becoming: Adapted for Young Readers*, Cadettes will complete three badges as they discuss and explore who they are and what they want to become. While adults and Girl Scouts ages 10 and up are encouraged to read Mrs. Obama's book, this is not a requirement for the series. A free excerpt from the book can be found at [www.girlscouts.org/becomingme](http://www.girlscouts.org/becomingme).

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## Becoming Me Service Project

As part of this series, Cadettes can join Girl Scouts across the country in recognizing and honoring members of their own community who are helping them become who they are. Visit [www.girlscouts.org/gratitude](http://www.girlscouts.org/gratitude) for full details about this national service project.

*Becoming: Adapted for Young Readers*

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# Volunteer Guide



“There’s power in allowing yourself to be known and heard, in owning your unique story, in using your authentic voice. And there’s grace in being willing to know and hear others. This, for me, is how we become.”

—Michelle Obama

## Making a Plan

The three badges Cadettes will complete in this series and the themes they’ll explore in the badges are:

- **Eco Trekker:** Before becoming first lady, Mrs. Obama founded an organization that prepared young people for careers in public service. Through the Eco Trekker badge, Cadettes choose an environmental issue that means something to them, then make a difference by raising awareness and inspiring others.
- **Science of Happiness:** In *Becoming: Adapted for Young Readers*, Mrs. Obama writes of the importance of learning to swerve: to change course when something doesn’t feel right. Through this badge, Cadettes take control of their own happiness, equipping them to make a swerve when the time comes.
- **Finding Common Ground:** Through this badge, Cadettes learn strategies for bringing people and groups together to reach compromise. Along the way, they discuss how these tools can strengthen their support systems in everyday life.

The badges may be earned in any order and over as long a time period as you and your troop would like, but each badge should take at least two meetings to complete. If Cadettes have already earned one or more of these badges, that’s just fine—they can still participate in the Becoming Me program and receive the patch! Their experience will give them an even stronger foundation for reflecting on the program themes.

## Getting Started

Make sure to open each meeting with the Girl Scout Promise and Law and close with reflection questions about the Cadettes’ experience. Additional volunteer resources can be found on the Volunteer Toolkit.

Start the program by talking a little bit about Mrs. Obama. You might say:

- What do you know about former First Lady Michelle Obama?
- You probably know some things about her already, including that she’s married to former President Barack Obama, that she has two daughters, that she’s been photographed in glamorous gowns alongside the most famous people in the world...
- But did you know that Mrs. Obama started her life in a small home on the South Side of Chicago, where she took lessons on a piano with chipped keys and cheered for the Cubs with her family? Her story—like yours—includes all kinds of little details that made her the person she is today. In her book about her life so far—*Becoming: Adapted for Young Readers*—Mrs. Obama describes herself as “an ordinary person who found herself on an extraordinary journey.”
- What can be gained from sharing our own stories and listening closely to the stories of others? Mrs. Obama writes, “There’s power in allowing yourself to be known and heard, in owning your unique story, in using your authentic voice. And there’s grace in being willing to know and hear others. This, for me, is how we become.”

- We're going to think about stories—what's shaped your life so far and what you hope for the future—as we work together on the Becoming Me series.

## Earning Badges

### Eco Trekker

Through the Eco Trekker badge (found on page 6 of this booklet), Cadettes learn skills for minimizing their impact on the environment while planning and taking an outdoor trek.

Please note that this badge may take more than two meetings to complete, and that's absolutely fine! Take as much time as you need to ensure a meaningful experience for the Cadettes. The badge steps are:

1. Learn how to make minimal impact on a trek
2. Plan an eco trek with a purpose
3. Practice an eco skill on your trek
4. Make a difference on your trek
5. Make a difference after your trek

As you work with Cadettes on this badge, ask questions like these to encourage reflection on the theme of giving back through public service:

- Have you ever heard of public service? What do you think it means? (Public service is something that's done for the good of a community.)
- What are some of your past experiences with public service? What was most memorable about those experiences?
- Before becoming first lady, Mrs. Obama founded an organization that prepared young people for careers in public service. Can you think of some examples of public service careers? Do any of those careers sound like something that might interest you in the future?
- In the last step of the Eco Trekker badge, you put together a project that raised awareness about your chosen environmental issue. Do you think that's an example of public service? Why or why not?

### Science of Happiness

Through the Science of Happiness badge (found on page 12 of this booklet), Cadettes find out how to use the science of happiness to make their world the happiest place it can be.

1. Make yourself happier
2. Think differently for happiness
3. Get happy through others
4. Do a helpful happiness experiment
5. Create a happiness action plan

As you work with Cadettes on this badge, ask questions like these to encourage reflection on the theme of learning to swerve:

- Do you know what it means to make a swerve? (Swerving is the ability to change directions in life when you want to—or need to.)
- In *Becoming: Adapted for Young Readers*, Mrs. Obama writes about feeling unfulfilled by studying law. She was afraid to change course because she cared so much about what others thought of her. "Even though I wasn't passionate," she wrote, "I didn't want to fail. I wasn't willing to swerve. I had to keep achieving in order to finally answer that important question. *Am I good enough? Yes, in fact I am.*" Can you think of a time in your life when you were afraid to swerve? How did you handle it? Have you ever swerved, or is there a swerve you could make right now that might make you happier?
- In the last step of the Science of Happiness badge, you created a "happiness action plan." How might your plan help when it's time to make a swerve in your life?

### Finding Common Ground

In Finding Common Ground (found on page 18 of this booklet), Cadettes learn strategies for bringing people together to find common ground.

The badge steps are:

1. Get to know someone different from you
2. Make decisions in a group
3. Explore civil debate
4. Understand a compromise
5. Find common ground through mediation

As you work with Cadettes on this badge, ask questions like these to encourage reflection on the theme of exploring support systems:

- What do you think it means to have a support system?
- In her book, Mrs. Obama writes, "I knew there was a stereotype about politicians' wives, that we were meant to look like perfectly groomed dolls with painted-on smiles, gazing bright-eyed

at our husbands, as if hanging on their every word. This was not me and never would be. I could be supportive, but I couldn't be a robot." What does it mean to support someone while staying true to yourself? Can you think of examples in your own life?

- Through Finding Common Ground, you practice skills for bringing people together and finding common ground. What is one thing you learned that might help strengthen the relationships within your support system?
- If you've read *Becoming: Adapted for Young Readers*, what real-life examples of political or personal compromise did you see? Do you think the compromise was fair? Would you have handled anything differently if you'd been involved?

## Wrapping Up

Close the Becoming Me series by awarding Cadettes the badges they've earned and the Becoming Me patch. You can find all of the badges in your council shop or at [www.girlscoutshop.com](http://www.girlscoutshop.com).

Share your feedback on the Becoming Me program series with GSUSA using these two links: volunteer survey, <https://bit.ly/3tFNmbX>; girl survey, <https://bit.ly/2QPmXtJ>.





# Eco Trekker

An outdoor trek can mean anything from a walk in the woods to a long-distance hike. As an eco trekker, you will discover your important role in nature and find an environmental issue to explore. You will become responsible for the choices you make outdoors. You will learn how to conserve, preserve, and protect, and then share your knowledge with others.

## Steps

1. Learn how to make minimal impact on a trek
2. Plan an eco trek with a purpose
3. Practice an eco skill on your trek
4. Make a difference on your eco trek
5. Make a difference after your eco trek

## Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll have learned the skills for minimizing my impact on the environment while planning and taking an outdoor trek.



# Step 1: Learn how to make minimal impact on a trek

In Girl Scouting, you've pledged respect for nature by being considerate and caring and using resources wisely. Leave No Trace is a group aligned with those beliefs. They created Seven Principles that will help you leave minimal impact on the land. Let Leave No Trace be a lifelong guide in your relationship with nature.

## Choices—do one:

**Interview an experienced outdoor enthusiast.** Talk to someone who regularly enjoys the outdoors—like a hiker, kayaker, or mountain climber. Go over the Leave No Trace Seven Principles with them and find out why they think they are important. Find out what they do to protect nature. What does a hiker do when forced off a trail? What happens when a climber encounters wildlife? Get the stories and tips that will help you on your outdoor trek.

**Visit a local environmental conservancy group.** Find out how they practice the principles in the outdoors and get tips to help you on your trek. Learn what land, air, or water concerns there are in your area.

**Take the Leave No Trace Online Awareness Course.** Go to [www.lnt.org/learn/online-awareness-course](http://www.lnt.org/learn/online-awareness-course) for a 30- to 60-minute course that includes questions about Leave No Trace practices and techniques. (Note: The course doesn't work on a mobile device.) Learn about the Leave No Trace history and mission, find out about visitor-created impacts in recreational areas, and understand how to apply the Seven Principles on your outdoor trip. You can print a certificate when you complete the course.

## Nature, Defined

In Sweden, the word **gökotta** (pronounced zyohh-koh-tah) means “rising in the early morning to watch the birds or to go outside to appreciate nature.”

In Japanese, the word **komorebi** means “sunlight that filters through the leaves of trees.”

Can you think of English words that celebrate nature?

## Leave No Trace

Learn and be prepared to use the Leave No Trace Seven Principles to help protect the environment as you explore. The principles are:

1. **Plan Ahead and Prepare:** Do what it takes to accomplish your trek goals safely and enjoyably, while also minimizing damage to the land.
2. **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces:** Avoid travel damage, which occurs when surface vegetation or communities of organisms are trampled beyond recovery. The resulting barren area leads to soil erosion and development of undesirable trails.
3. **Dispose of Waste Properly:** Carry out what you carry in—never dump anything on a campsite or into a water source. Bury solid human waste at least 200 feet from water, trails, and camp—and at least 6–8 inches deep.
4. **Leave What You Find:** Don't collect or take anything from the outdoors.
5. **Minimize Campfire Impacts:** If campfires are not allowed in certain parks or protected areas, pack a lightweight cooking stove and lantern.
6. **Respect Wildlife:** Only check them out at a distance. Never approach, feed, or follow them.
7. **Be Considerate of Other Visitors:** Remember you're not alone in the wilderness. Keep your voices down and let nature be the loudest sounds you hear.

## Step 2: Plan an eco trek with a purpose

Start by deciding where to spend your time in nature—do you have a park nearby? Trails you want to explore? Make sure to plan what you'll eat and wear, depending on the weather and the amount of time you'll be outdoors. Use the buddy system by trekking with others, never alone. Always let an adult know where you'll be.

### Choices—do one:

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**Talk to an experienced hiker or outdoor retailer.** Find out where you can take an outdoor trek in your area and what land, air, or water issues you might find on the trail. Make it somewhere you haven't been before so you can see nature with new eyes. Plan ahead to address one issue you learned about.

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**Visit a water source or water treatment plant in your community.** Learn about water conservation or water quality efforts being made for your area. Plan a boat trip on a lake or river, or hike a trail that goes along a waterway to explore one water quality issue you learned about.

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**Learn about invasive plants, aquatic life, or other species in your area.** Find out how you can help prevent invasive species from being introduced into the area. Make a plan for an outdoor trek where you can explore an invasive species.

### More to Explore: National Parks

Many national park websites include volunteer programs that offer Girl Scouts a chance to get involved in short- or long-term projects to improve and protect park resources and facilities. Check out what might be available for you and your troop!

## Step 3: Practice an eco skill on your trek

Before your trek, do the research and make a plan to practice an eco skill. While on your trek, do one of these three things—or all of them!

### Choices—do one:

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**Identify durable surfaces.** One Leave No Trace principle is to travel and camp only on durable surfaces, like rock, gravel, dry grasses, or snow. A surface is durable when it can tolerate repeated trampling and scuffling. (You can read more in “Surface Check” on the next page.) Check the surface on your path—and off it—to identify the different properties. Bring a map and make notations of areas where the path might be compromised.

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**Find a source for water and purify it when you get home.** Find a safe water source and collect the water. When you get home, purify it. (Read more in “Water Sources” and “Purify It” on the next page.) You don't have to drink it, but if you can, test the water before and after for impurities.

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**Build a minimum-impact mound fire.** With an adult in a safe setting, follow the instructions in “How to Build a Mound Fire” on page 10 and build one at a campsite or in a park. Make sure to check for permissions and fire regulations beforehand.



# Surface Check

Travel on established trails or paths to reduce creating multiple routes that can damage the landscape. It's better to have one route than many poorly chosen paths.

## Durable Surfaces

- Rock, sand, and gravel
- Ice and snow
- Dry grasses
- Concrete and asphalt

## Nondurable Surfaces

- Vegetation: This means anywhere with plants, grass, flowers, or soil with living organisms.
- Cryptobiotic crust: Found in desert areas, cryptobiotic crust (also known as living biological soil) consists of tiny communities of organisms that look like raised crust on the sand.
- Desert puddles and mud holes: Since water is a precious resource for all living things, don't disturb surface water in any way. Potholes are home to tiny desert animals.

## Water Sources

### Good:

- Clear flowing water from a stream without signs of pollution can be collected.
- Snow and ice, if eaten, can lower your body temperature, so let it melt in a container before purifying it. Do not consume snow or ice until purified, and never start with discolored snow. It should be white and fresh.

### Not good, unless you have proper purification or filtration:

- Still water that is stagnant and doesn't move, such as that from lakes or ponds, can have bacteria.
- River water is typically polluted.
- Seawater is not good but if it's all that's available, boil it, collect the steam with a plastic sheet or bag, and drink that.

## Purify It

1. First, filter your found water. Run it through a coffee filter or even a clean T-shirt.
2. Next, boil it. The safest way to kill bacteria and viruses in water is to bring it to a rolling boil for at least 60 seconds.
3. Do a taste test. Does water from a found source taste different from bottled water?

# How to Build a Mound Fire

The advantage of a mound fire is that it can be built on flat exposed rock or on an organic surface such as litter, duff, or grass. You will need:

- Garden trowel
  - Large stuff sack
  - Ground cloth or plastic garbage bag or tarp
  - Coals
1. First, make sure it's OK to build a fire. Check regulations in the area.
  2. In your stuff sack, collect some mineral soil, sand, or gravel from an already-disturbed source, like the root hole in an upturned tree.
  3. Spread out your ground cloth on a flat surface that will have the least impact on the land, away from any vegetation.
  4. Dump your soil into a circular, flat-topped mound at least 6–8 inches tall and 18–24 inches wide. The thickness of the mound protects the ground below from the fire's heat. The ground cloth or garbage bag is important because it makes cleaning up the fire much easier. Keep the circumference of the mound no larger than what you need to spread the coals for the size of your fire.
  5. Spread your coals and light the fire. Make sure to always keep an eye on it.
  6. Put out your fire—burn the coals all the way through until they become ashes that are cool to the touch. Sprinkle the fire with water but never pour water on a fire because it turns to instant steam.
  7. Once your fire is out, dispose of the ashes and soil by scattering them. Fold the ground cloth up so it's ready to use again. Return leaves, twigs, and other natural materials to the place your fire was located so the area is back to normal.

## Campfire Safety Tips

- Make sure the fire building area is clear of overhanging branches, steep slopes, rotted stumps or logs, dry grass and leaves, and anything that could burn, like litter or pine needles.
- Watch for flying sparks! Tell an adult if you see any, and have them help you put them out right away.
- Make sure you have a bucket of water or sand near your fire.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Don't wear anything nylon or plastic, like a poncho, near an open flame.
- Remove any scarves or loose clothing.
- Tie back long hair before starting a fire.

## Give Boots the Brush

Before and after hiking the Appalachian Trail in Tennessee, hikers use a boot brush to scrub mud and debris from their boots. Help avoid the spread of invasive species by brushing your own soles to remove dirt and seeds before and after your trek. Also take the time to remove dirt, plants, and bugs from your clothing and gear.

# Step 4: Make a difference on your eco trek

Now is your chance to act as an environmentalist explorer. Select the issue that means something to you, whether water, land, or wildlife—and do research before your trek. On your trek, take notes, observe, and come up with possible solutions to help. You'll put your ideas into action in the next step.

## Choices—do one:

**Explore a wildlife issue.** The best way to protect wildlife is to give them space and distance when you trek into the natural environment and help protect the habitats they live in. Find out what wildlife you should expect to find on your outing and the ones that are endangered. This can include marine life, birds, insects, butterflies, squirrels, and other critters. How are they being protected? How are they being threatened?

**Explore a water issue.** Is there a drought in your area that's impacting plants and wildlife? Or has rain and snow caused mudslides and soil erosion? You might discover a polluted water source, such as a river or pond. Or see traces of tar from an oil spill along a sand bank. Record what you see and think of solutions based on your research.

**Explore species in your area that are native and need protecting.** Before your trek, find out what plants, insects, or animals are native to your area. Native insects, like bees or butterflies, can help pollinate plants. Are any of these native plants or wildlife threatened or endangered? While outdoors, check to see which species are thriving and which ones are not. (Before you go, learn which plants you need to avoid in your area—like poison ivy, poison oak, stinging nettles, and poison sumac—and keep a close eye out for insect nests.) Find out what you can do to protect any species that need help.

# Step 5: Make a difference after your eco trek

You completed your eco trek—hooray! Now make a difference by creating awareness and inspiring others about your issue.

## Choices—do one:

**Make a video of your eco trek.** Put together a short documentary of your trek and the environmental issue you explored. Share it with your troop, school, family, and friends. Get a discussion going after your presentation to talk about possible solutions.

**Make an art installation.** While on your eco trek, collect human-made, littered objects (while wearing gloves!) you find along your journey. Create a sculpture or art presentation with these objects. Display your work at school or a community place to inspire others.

**Start an awareness campaign.** Create awareness to get the word out in your school and community about the environmental issue you explored. Create a flyer, write a blog, or design a newsletter.

### Museum of Litter

An online museum shows art made from trash found in nature. What do you think the number one trash item is? (Yep. Cigarette butts!)



# Science of Happiness

In this badge, you are the test subject and your life is your laboratory. You'll find out how scientists measure happiness, and you'll put their results into action. You'll also get to perform a happiness experiment on your friends or family—all with the goal of making your world a happier place.

## Steps

1. Make yourself happier
2. Think differently for happiness
3. Get happy through others
4. Do a helpful happiness experiment
5. Create a happiness action plan

## Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll know how to use the science of happiness to make my world the happiest place it can be.

## Tips Before Takeoff

- Sign your Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge before you begin this badge.
- In this badge, you're both the experimenter and the research subject! Keep a journal to record the results of your happiness experiments, so you'll end the badge with a record of the strategies that work for you.
- In each step, you'll experiment with one activity science says will increase your happiness. If you find the method doesn't work for you, you might go back and pick a different choice to see if another method is more effective. That's the scientific process.

# Step 1: Make yourself happier

What would make you happiest? Money? Cool clothes? Living in a mansion on a tropical island? Such things may make you happy for a while, but science shows they aren't what keep you happy in the long run. Scientists found these three things can make you happy: pleasure, engagement and meaning. (See "The Three Keys to Happiness" for more information.) In this step, practice getting more engagement and meaning in your daily life. Do one of these choices for two weeks.

## Choices—do one:

**Get into a state of "flow."** When you hit your flow, you're really into whatever you're doing. You get so focused that you might not notice time flying by! Try getting into the flow of playing a sport, reading a great story, or doing a cool craft project for at least a half hour each day.

**Count three blessings.** In a gratitude journal or in a video or audio recording, write down, draw, or record three things that went well each day and why you consider them blessings.

**Stop and smell the roses!** Pay attention to the little things that make you happy. Try taking mental photographs of the things you love throughout your day—it might be a pretty sunset, a fuzzy dog, or a food that tastes really good. Record three to five things every day.

► **More to Explore: Focus on pleasure.** During your two weeks, record how you feel after doing something you find pleasurable, like watching a movie, eating a piece of cake, or window shopping. Compare how happy these moments made you versus your happiness level while doing the choice you picked, which science says will make you happier.

## The Three Keys to Happiness

Scientists have found that the three things that make people most happy are **pleasure** (doing things you enjoy), **engagement** (feeling interested in your activities and connected to others), and **meaning** (feeling like what you do matters). While most people spend their time trying to have pleasurable experiences, experiments show that pleasure is the least likely of these three to bring true joy.

The choices for this step—getting into flow, counting your blessings, and savoring the little things—are three ways that help you connect with yourself and others throughout your day. By doing these things, you'll often find that your activities are more meaningful.

► **TIP: Taking good care of yourself is another factor in happiness—exercise is great for your body and your mood!**



## Step 2: Think differently for happiness

Sometimes you can't change what happens in your day, but you can change how you react to it. Scientists say that people who stay positive, or are "optimistic," are happier, even if more bad things happen to them! Choose one of these ideas, and use it for two weeks each time something happens that upsets you. Don't forget to track your results!

### Choices—do one:

**Try to use your strengths.** Maybe you're good at listening, a whiz at math, or have a great sense of humor (see "Signature Strengths"). Make a list of all your strengths. (If you're having a hard time thinking of them, ask your friends what they are!) Then, when you have to face something tough in the next two weeks, focus on what you're good at and think of how you could use one of your strengths.

## Signature Strengths

Your "signature strengths" are the things you're good at. Positive psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman has found that people are happiest when using their strengths, and that these strengths tend to fit into 24 categories. Which strengths are yours?

1. **Creativity:** You love finding new, and interesting ways to do things
2. **Curiosity:** You take an interest in new experiences
3. **Open-mindedness:** You're able to see things from all sides
4. **Love of learning:** You love to learn new ideas and skills
5. **Wisdom:** You have a way of looking at the world that makes sense to other people
6. **Bravery:** You do not back down from a challenge if you know you are right
7. **Persistence:** You finish what you start, no matter what stands in your way
8. **Integrity:** You present yourself in a genuine way and take responsibility for your actions
9. **Vitality:** You approach life with excitement and energy
10. **Love:** You value your relationships with family and close friends, and they value you
11. **Kindness:** You're generous; you enjoy doing favors and good deeds for others
12. **Social intelligence:** You're aware of the feelings of yourself and others
13. **Citizenship:** You work well in a group or team, and you're loyal to your group
14. **Fairness:** You treat all people fairly; you aren't biased
15. **Leadership:** You like leading groups; you're comfortable motivating people and helping everyone get along
16. **Forgiveness:** You feel comfortable giving people second chances
17. **Humility:** You don't seek attention, letting your accomplishments speak for themselves
18. **Prudence:** You weigh your choices carefully and think before you act
19. **Self-regulation:** You're able to control your impulses
20. **Appreciation of beauty and excellence:** You notice the beauty in everyday life
21. **Gratitude:** You're aware of the good things in your life and take the time to express thanks
22. **Hope:** You expect good things to happen; you believe the future is in your control
23. **Humor:** You love to laugh and make other people laugh
24. **Spirituality:** You have strong beliefs in a higher purpose

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**Focus on what's realistic.** Sometimes our worries make us focus on the very worst outcome, even when that's pretty unlikely to happen. During your two weeks, when you start to feel negative about something that's coming up, write down what you think the worst part could be, what the best part could be, and what you think will most likely happen. When you look at all sides realistically, does it help you feel more comfortable?

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**Be happy for others.** Scientists say that if you celebrate with someone, you'll be happier. So when a friend or family member tells you about something great in their lives, pay attention and try to be happy for them—even if you're busy or a little jealous. Celebrate with some kind words, by asking more about what's happening, or even by giving a short speech in their honor. See how you feel—are you more positive about your own situation?

## Step 3: Get happy through others

One of the most common ways to find engagement and meaning is in our relationships. A good way for you to be happy on the inside is to care about others and focus on relationships with people on the outside. In Steps 1 and 2, you worked on yourself, so now it's time to work on your relationships with others. Do one of these activities at least twice so you'll know if it works for you. Record the results in your journal.

### Choices—do one:

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**Make a gratitude visit.** Thank a mentor, friend, teacher, coach, or family member who has helped you in some way. Visit them face-to-face, and tell them why you're thanking them and how they helped. After you have done that, ask yourself how you feel. What was hard or easy about this? How long did the effect last?

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**Write a forgiveness letter.** In a handwritten note to a mentor, friend, teacher, coach, or family member, ask them to forgive you for something you might have done wrong. If you stop feeling bad about what you did, the science of happiness says you'll be happier. Send the letter and see how you feel. What was hard or easy about this? How long did the feeling last?

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**Make something meaningful.** Make a collage, video, or painting that shows how much someone means to you. Explain to them why you made it and what it means. Once you give it to them, see how you feel. What was hard or easy about this? How long did the feeling last?

► **TIP:** Even doing “small” things for others can increase our happiness—stuff like complimenting a friend's outfit, helping someone carry their books, or putting away the family groceries without being asked. All these little things you do for others can add up to big happiness for you.

## Pay It Forward

Cornell University professor Alice Isen worked on a well-known positive psychology experiment. In the experiment, Isen and other researchers randomly placed coins in the return slots of pay phones. They then observed the behavior of people after they used the phones—some found coins, some did not. They found that people who found coins were more helpful to others. People with coins were far more likely to help others carry their bags or pick up things they'd dropped. So it only takes a small boost in our mood to encourage us to be a little kinder!

# Step 4: Do a helpful happiness experiment

The science of how you think, or psychology, used to focus only on mental illnesses. Now scientists also try to find out what makes people stay well—just as exercising keeps your body strong, staying happy keeps your spirit strong. So “positive psychologists” test people’s happiness. In this step, do your own experiment to test the happiness of a group. Share your results so the whole group can be happier!

## Choices—do one:

**Design your own five-question happiness survey.** Happiness surveys usually include statements that subjects agree or disagree with on a scale. Use what you’ve learned about happiness to make some statements for your survey (see “How to Make a Survey” for tips). Give it to a group of friends—maybe you can help them find their strengths, point out where they might be more optimistic, or share the power of gratitude!

**Try quick polling.** Through IM, texts, emails, or verbal questions, ask 10 schoolmates or Girl Scout sisters to rate how happy they feel at three different moments throughout the day on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being very happy and 1 meaning they’re not happy at all. Also, ask them what they are doing at each moment and who they’re with. The science says if they’re doing something they find meaningful with people they care about, they’ll be happier than if they’re alone or disinterested. Is that true for your group? Afterward, make a chart to share with your friends. Explain what you measured, and share ideas about what could make them even happier. (If you’re going online for this choice, remember to do so with an adult!)

**Focus on one friend.** Talk to a friend who seems sad, and ask if you can help them become happier with what you’ve learned. Suggest an activity to do together, and try one of the tips for being happy. For example, you could help them find their strengths or count their own blessings. Which tip helped them feel better?

## How to Make a Survey

What do you think is something a happy person would say—and why? Choose five different happiness factors you want to test. Then, for each one, create a statement that your test subjects will rate from 1 to 5—1 meaning it isn’t at all true and 5 meaning your subjects feels that way all the time. The factors your subjects rate the highest are likely those that make them happiest.

Here are some example statements:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>“When I’m doing something I love, time seems to fly by.”</b> (a high score means this person gets happy through “flow”)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>“Even if someone hurts me, I forgive them if they apologize.”</b> (a high score means this person gets happy through forgiveness)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>“I like to share my talents with others.”</b> (meaning)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>“Even when things look bad, I try to see the bright side.”</b> (staying positive)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>“My family and friends are the most important things to me.”</b> (being with other people)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Step 5: Create a happiness action plan

Now that you're becoming an expert in what makes you happy, take what you've learned about yourself and put it into action. Look back over your journal and use your notes as you do this step.

### Choices—do one:

**Find a happiness helper.** Share what you discovered with a friend or family member, and together make a list of five ways that person can help you stay happy. In the process, list five things that make your helper happy, too—so you can look out for each other's happiness!

► **For More Fun: Create a Happiness Club!** You might include a happiness check-in at the beginning of your Cadette meeting or find friends who want to support each other in finding pleasure, engagement, and meaning in their lives.

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**Create an inspiration collage with the five top tips that help you stay happy.** Hang it beside your desk or bed or post it in your locker—wherever it's most helpful to you.

.....  
**Create a Bliss Box.** Write the happiest moments from your journal on scraps of paper—an activity you were doing, a reason you're thankful, something a friend said, or one of your strengths. Then search for photos, quotes, souvenirs—anything that will make you smile. Now put them all into your Bliss Box. When you start to feel down, open it up and read your happy moments! Keep adding to it as what makes you happy changes.

► **For More Fun: Start a family or group Bliss Box to remind others why they should stay happy.** You could use it to leave positive notes for others, which will make you feel good, too. Then anyone can open the box when they need to lift their spirits.

## Careers to Explore

- Psychologist
- Career counselor
- Conflict mediator
- Social worker
- Sports psychologist
- Physical therapist
- Psychiatrist
- Clergy person
- High school guidance counselor
- Medical researcher
- Pediatrician
- Day care worker
- Art or music therapist
- Motivational speaker
- Advice columnist
- Cartoonist
- Novelist
- Copywriter
- Wedding photographer
- New product developer



# Finding Common Ground

Democratic governments exist to help citizens with differing opinions find common ground—the place where people’s thoughts, opinions, and beliefs intersect. Whether it’s Congress, your state, or the local town council, elected leaders often have to make trade-offs—giving up some things they favor to gain support for others. In this badge, investigate how our government does it—and how you can, too.

## Steps

1. Get to know someone different from you
2. Make decisions in a group
3. Explore civil debate
4. Understand a compromise
5. Find common ground through mediation

## Purpose

When I’ve earned this badge, I’ll know strategies for bringing people together to find common ground.



# Step 1: Get to know someone different from you

Sometimes we make our differences so big we can't see past them. But when you get to know people who aren't exactly like you, you often find that they care about many of the same things you do and that you can find common ground—not by sacrificing or changing what you think, but by being open to other perspectives.

## Choices—do one:

**Difference of background.** Interview someone from another country, region, or town who lives in your community now. Ask them how they came to live in your community, what things were like for them in the place they left, and what things are like now; then share things about your life. Do you have any tips to help them feel at home?

**Difference of belief.** Find out more about someone with beliefs different from yours. If you have a friend who practices another faith, you might go to services with her family and talk about their traditions. Or you might meet with a youth group at a different place of worship or an interfaith alliance. You could also have a respectful discussion about politics with someone who thinks differently.

**Difference of opinion.** Even friends have different opinions—on foods, songs, movies, books, and games, to name a few! Find a friend who loves something that's not your favorite, and vice versa. Listen to her reasons and try her favorite thing—and have her do the same for your favorite. Then share at least two things you do like about each other's favorites.

# Step 2: Make decisions in a group

For this step, do an activity with a group, such as running your Cadette meeting or spending a few hours together. The important thing is to make at least six decisions together—when, where, and what you'll eat, how long you'll do things, etc. Afterward, talk about the common-ground strategy. What trades did you make for the good of the group or to gain what you wanted? How do you think the strategy would work on a government level?

## Before you start, pick a choice (together!):

**Use one of the methods from “Decision Methods.”** Get really familiar with one of the methods so you understand it thoroughly.

**Use two of the methods.** Try the two your group is most eager to use.

**Try them all!** Use each of the methods for different decisions throughout the activity. When you have your post-activity discussion, compare the methods. Did you have a favorite? Is everyone's favorite method the same?

## Decision Methods

- **Majority rules.** Poll your group. Ask everyone in the group for her top three options. Write down the two most popular options, then take a vote. The option with the most votes wins!
- **Consensus or compromise.** Your brother wants burgers. You want pizza. You could order a cheeseburger pizza. Or you could agree to have burgers this time if you have pizza next time. But you both like tacos. Could you have those instead? Discuss the issue until you arrive at a decision everyone can accept.
- **Pick at random.** Have everyone write her choice on a slip of paper. Put them in a hat, and choose one at random. You could also flip a coin or draw straws.

**More to Explore:** During your activity, try coming to consensus on something subjective—like the best women's soccer team, the most beautiful place in your area, or the cutest puppy in a picture of a litter. What's it like to find common ground when the “decision” is based purely on opinion?

# Common Ground in Court: Hung Juries

A jury is usually made up of 6–12 people, depending on the type of case. After a jury has listened to the arguments made by both sides, they must decide on a verdict. To give an official “guilty” or “not guilty” response, the majority of jurors must agree with one another. In most criminal cases, every person on the jury has to agree—the vote must be unanimous. If a jury can’t come to an agreement, it is called a hung jury. A hung jury results in a mistrial, which means the case can be tried again with a new jury.

## Step 3: Explore civil debate

A debate is a discussion between people or groups in which they express different opinions about a topic. It’s important to know how to use facts and logic to support your opinions and persuade others to see things your way. In this step, consider both sides and keep an open mind—that’s how common ground is found.

### Choices—do one:

**Ask an expert to teach you the techniques of debate.** This might be a local politician or a high school or college student on a debate team. Then hold a short debate on an issue you’re interested in (see “Debate Topic Ideas”). Afterward, discuss the arguments both sides made and whether you see common ground.

► **For More Fun: When you hold your debate, choose to argue the side you don’t agree with!** It might give you insight into the opinions of people who think differently than you.

**Watch candidates for elected office debate.** It could be between the candidates for president, Congress, or governor from your area. Or you could attend a debate among local candidates for mayor, town council, or student council. After the debate, discuss the arguments both sides made and whether there’s common ground. (You might want to look into the issues before you watch so you can understand the arguments.)

**Understand a famous debate in American history.** It might be one of the debates between the suffragists and elected officials in the early 1900s, or a debate between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. Find out why the debate proved historic and who was considered the winner, and why. What was the common ground in the opposing positions?

► **For More Fun: Come to your Cadette meeting ready to re-enact the debate—perhaps in costume and with snacks from the time period.**

► **More to Explore: Debate for fun! Join the debate team or mock trial team at school, and share what you learn with your Girl Scout group.**

### Debate Topic Ideas

- The United States should lower the voting age
- Junk food should be banned in schools
- School should be year-round
- Peer pressure can be more beneficial than harmful
- Schools should not use standardized testing
- Television is a bad influence
- Schools should ban animal dissection
- School attendance should be voluntary
- There should be mandatory drug testing for participation in extracurricular activities

What other topics are you interested in debating?

# Step 4: Understand a compromise

Compromise is a settlement where both sides yield, or concede, some points to the other in order to find the common ground where their wishes intersect. Take a closer look at one of the following.

## Choices—do one:

**A community compromise.** Ask a historian or an elected official to tell you about a compromise in your community. (For example, there may have been a compromise on your school’s P.E. uniform requirement.) Where did the two sides stand at the beginning? Where did they end up? How did they arrive at that decision? How does this compromise affect life where you live?

**A family or friendship compromise.** Think of a situation in which you and a family member or friend had to compromise to be able to work or live together. Use that situation, or interview an older family member about a compromise that helped shape your family. If you can imagine a more positive outcome, open up the discussion, and try finding common ground.

**A state or national compromise.** Speak with a history teacher, elected official, or another expert with knowledge of the government about a compromise in your state or the federal government. Where did the two sides stand at the beginning? Where did they end up? How does this compromise affect your life?

► **For More Fun: Write a short alternate history story based on a different compromise outcome.** (An “alternate history” is a story set in a world where historic events turned out differently. For instance, a story might be set in a future where the Equal Rights Amendment has become part of the U.S. Constitution.)

# Step 5: Find common ground through meditation

Mediators are third parties who help people or groups in a dispute find common ground. At some schools, peers are trained to be conflict mediators for one another. Civil mediators within the U.S. court system help both sides come to an agreement without going to trial. As the final step, try being the citizen who helps others come to an agreement.

## Choices—do one:

**Mediate a cookie conflict.** Here’s the conflict: There are nine cookies in a variety of flavors and differing numbers of each one—and they need to be divided fairly between two people. Serve as the mediator to find a solution both sides can live with. (Before the mediation begins, give each person time to decide how they think the cookies should be divided and to come up with three reasons they believe their solution to be fair.)

## Careers to Explore

- Judge
- Elected official
- Civil mediator
- Chief executive officer
- Ambassador
- School principal
- Teacher
- Foreign-service officer
- Elementary school teacher
- School psychologist
- Social worker
- Lawyer
- Psychiatrist
- Counselor

# Follow the six steps of a formal mediation:

1. **Give your opening remarks:** Review the conflict and set ground rules.
2. **State the problem:** Let both people state their positions.
3. **Gather information:** Ask open-ended questions (those without yes or no answers) to get to the heart of each person's position.
4. **Summarize:** Summarize the conflict, based on what you've heard.
5. **Brainstorm solutions:** Brainstorm all together about possible solutions.
6. **Reach an agreement:** Offer ideas about where you think there is common ground. If the two sides don't agree, start with step 4, and keep going until you reach an agreement.
7. **Together, enjoy a yummy snack!**

► **TIP: Make sure you have some of your favorite cookies on hand so you can truly be neutral.**

.....  
**Mediate with a pro.** Invite a civil mediator or a student or professor in law or conflict resolution to visit your group. Ask them to share real-life examples of civil or international mediation and to lead you in an exercise to try out some mediation skills of your own.  
.....

**Suggest solutions for a current international conflict.** What are the positions on both sides? Pretend they've come to you to help them negotiate a peace treaty. (A treaty is a formal agreement between two or more states.) On your own or with friends, decide what you think is the common ground, and develop a one-page proposal for a "treaty." Share it with your history or social studies teacher.

► **For More Fun: Have each girl in your Cadette group develop a treaty proposal for the same conflict.** How do your treaties differ? How are they the same? Where did you all see common ground?

# 10 Qualities of Effective Mediators

Here are a few qualities of effective mediators. Do you see any of your skills or skills you'd like to develop? If so, see if your school has a peer mediator program you might take part in.

Effective mediators:

1. Are sensitive to each party's strongly held values
2. Are aware of cultural, economic, social, and gender differences
3. Listen carefully and well
4. Communicate clearly
5. Come up with helpful questions
6. Maintain and demonstrate neutrality toward all parties
7. Control their own biases, prejudices, and emotions
8. Command the respect of all parties involved
9. Are creative in imagining solutions
10. Are patient and determined

# Startup Guide for New Volunteers

It's exciting to be running troop meetings for the first time, but it can feel like a lot to tackle. Read through this guide for some advice on how to organize your meetings. Remember, be flexible and be ready to change your approach as you and your troop get to know each other. The goal is to give everyone a chance to make decisions and choices, and keep the experience cooperative, hands-on, and fun!

## Organizing Your Meeting

- Arrival and opening ceremony: Establish an arrival routine that has troop members working together to set up snacks and anything else that may be needed for the meeting. Although some badges include warmup activities, consider making an activity available before the meeting begins (themed coloring pages, puzzles, wordsearches, etc.).
  - Warmups and wellness checks: If you're meeting virtually, a warmup or wellness check is especially effective at the start of the meeting. Their overall impact can enrich your troop's experience and the connections members feel with themselves and each other.
  - The Girl Scout Promise and Law: Have a copy on hand at each meeting in case a new member joins! Many memorize the Promise and Law after a few meetings.
- Choosing step activities: In order to earn badges, each Girl Scout must complete one activity for each step. The activities in the badge booklet are suggestions for how you can achieve each step, but you can adapt an activity or change it completely based on the interests and personality of the group.
  - For meeting one, volunteers often select the first activities for the group. Choose what will work best for you to introduce the badge to the troop!
  - At the end of meeting one, encourage your troop members to work together to make activity choices for future meetings so that they can earn their badge. Gather and prepare materials for meeting two based on their choices.
- Closing ceremony: Establish a closing routine that works for your troop. It can involve cleaning up while singing or playing a song, or a game. For example, you could invite each Girl Scout to share one happy thing ("rose") and one challenge ("thorn") that happened recently.
- Following up with families: After the meeting, send a short note to families about all the fun you had!

## Meeting Length

Meetings can range from 60 to 120 minutes, depending on the Girl Scout level and badge activities and the age of your group. If the troop really enjoys a particular activity and wants to continue past the suggested time, as much as possible let them! That's part of keeping Girl Scouting girl-led!

## Additional Resources

[Tips for Working with Girls at Different Levels](#)

[More Levels, More Fun: Tips for Running a Multi-Level Troop](#)

[Tips, Tools, and Ideas for Planning a Great Virtual Meeting](#)

[Digital Games and Icebreakers](#)

[Easy Badge and Journey Adaptations for Virtual Troop Meetings](#)



# Becoming Me: Support for Multi-Level troops

This **Becoming Me** program series provides an opportunity for Girl Scouts to discuss and explore who they are and who they want to become. Due to differences in ages, the conversations, questions, and ideas that will be generated will vary greatly within a multilevel troop. To most effectively facilitate those conversations, we recommend using one of these two approaches with your group:

**1) For troops with two levels:** Choose one set of badges to complete (or a combination from each level if you prefer).

**2) For troops with more than two levels:** Separate your group into Girl Scout levels so that each level can complete the associated badges. Start and end your meetings as a large group, as described in the chart below.

## Badge Set 1 Theme: Building support systems and the importance of mentors

<b>Start together:</b> Begin together as a large group. Ask: What is a support system? Share: A support system is something that provides strength and balance. For example, your skeleton is your body's physical support system. Discuss what a support system of people is and how it can help you. Ask participants to keep the idea of support systems and community in mind as they move into their badge work.	<b>What Daisies Do</b>	Good Neighbor	<b>Finish together:</b> Provide time after each meeting for Girl Scouts at each level to share what they did. Make connections between the idea of support systems and the badge activities. Older girls can take the conversation further and discuss what mentors are and how they're part of your support system.
	<b>What Brownies Do</b>	Making Friends	
	<b>What Juniors Do</b>	Democracy for Juniors	
	<b>What Cadettes Do</b>	Finding Common Ground	
	<b>What Seniors Do</b>	Collage Artist	
	<b>What Ambassadors Do</b>	Coaching	

## Badge Set 2 Themes | Public service | Unseen history: your entire story matters

<b>Start together:</b> Begin together as a large group. Ask: What is public service? Share: Public service is something that is done for the good of a community, rather than an individual. Discuss some examples of when participants have given public service. If your group includes Juniors, also ask: What do you think a person's "unseen history" might be? Share that unseen history is not necessarily secrets, but rather aspects of your life or experience that you might not realize have influenced the person you are today. Ask participants to make note of when public service and unseen history come up during their badge work.	<b>What Daisies Do</b>	Outdoor Art Maker	<b>Finish together:</b> Provide time after each meeting for Girl Scouts at each level to share what they did. Discuss any surprising things they realized related to their own unseen history or the power of public service.
	<b>What Brownies Do</b>	Philanthropist	
	<b>What Juniors Do</b>	Scribe	
	<b>What Cadettes Do</b>	Eco Trekker	
	<b>What Seniors Do</b>	Women's Health	
	<b>What Ambassadors Do</b>	Eco Advocate	

**Badge Set 3 Themes** | Owning your story and finding your voice: building confidence and character | Unseen history: your entire story matters | Learning to swerve

**Start together:** Begin together as a large group. Ask: What does it mean when people refer to “your voice”? Share: “Your voice” is another way of referring to what makes you unique. Discuss why understanding what makes you special can make you feel more confident and stronger. If your group includes Cadettes or Seniors, also ask: What do you think a person’s “unseen history” might be and how does that influence their voice? What does it mean to “swerve”? Share that unseen history is not necessarily secrets, but rather aspects of your life or experience that you might not realize have influenced the person you are today. Swerving is the ability to change directions when you need to—or want to!

**What Daisies Do**

Buddy Camper

**What Brownies Do**

Outdoor Adventurer

**What Juniors Do**

Junior Trail Adventure

**What Cadettes Do**

Science of Happiness

**What Seniors Do**

Behind the Ballot

**What Ambassadors Do**

Public Policy

**Finish together:** Provide time after each meeting for each level to share what they did. Discuss what they have discovered about their own personal voices and strengths, as well as what they think has influenced their development.