

girlscouts
of ne kansas
and nw missouri



New Leader's Guide to Success





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Welcome to Girl Scouts!

Being a Girl Scout leader is an incredible journey along which you'll shape the future by working with girls today. With your guidance, encouragement,

and go-getting spirit, your Girl Scouts will be ready to embark on a lifetime of leadership, success, and adventure. And along the way, you'll hone your own leadership style and discover that you'll achieve more than you thought possible.

Joy Wheeler
CEO, Girl Scouts of NE KS & NW MO

The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

The Girl Scout Law

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

Our Mission

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Organizational Structure

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

A national organization supporting the work of more than 100 councils across the U.S. for more than 100 years. Headquartered in New York City.

Girl Scouts of NE Kansas & NW Missouri (GSKSMO)

Independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit chartered by GSUSA and operating under the direction of a local board of directors and overseeing all service units and troops within a specific geographic area.

Service Units

Made up of volunteers who support the work of troop volunteers within a given geographic area.

Troops

Volunteer-supervised groups of girls.



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



You—A Girl Scout Leader!

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

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



Leadership is teaching girls:

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

As a leader, see yourself as a coach who:

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

It's important to remember that:

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



Girl Scouts is all about FUN, FRIENDS and TRYING NEW THINGS



Through Girl Scouts, girls:



Discover who they are and what they care about



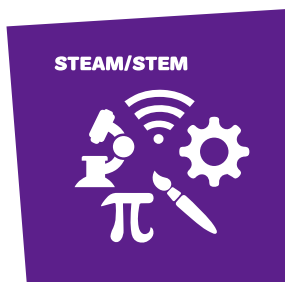
Connect with others locally and globally to learn from others and expand their horizons



Take Action to make the world a better place.

The Girl Scout Program Focus

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



Explore the many exciting possibilities with the Award and Badge Explorer at girlscouts.org/badges.

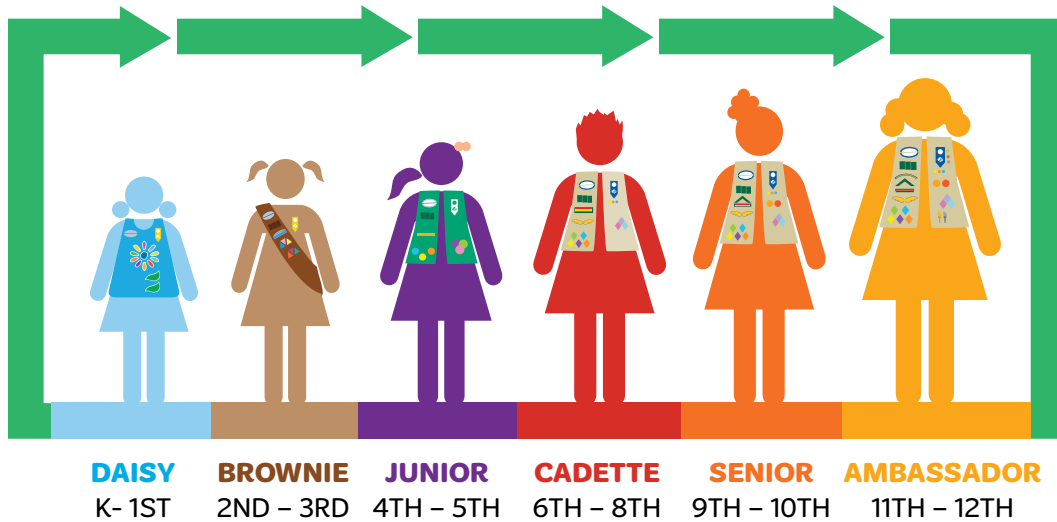


Our Troop Experience Manager staff team will support you every step of the way as you jump into this fun programming with your Girl Scouts.



Where Girl Scouts Can Take Your Girls

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



Tomorrow's Leaders Today

As your Girl Scouts progress from Daisies to Brownies or Brownies to Juniors and beyond, they will continue to hold strong to having fun, making friends and trying new things. Your Girl Scouts will also achieve these outcomes:



Develop a strong sense of self



Demonstrate positive values



Seek challenges



Solve problems in the community



Establish healthy relationships.

These aren't just good qualities – they're the leadership skills that will last a lifetime.



Guiding Your Troop Experience

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

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

Meeting logistics:

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

Your troop:

- Will our troop consist of girls in a single grade level or facilitated as a multi-level troop with girls of many grade levels?

Troop communication:

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

Money matters:

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

Your Troop Volunteer Team

It takes a village to lift up the next generation of leaders; you don't have to embark on your troop leader journey alone! Set the stage for a successful troop year by tapping into the people and resources already at your fingertips. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to participate in your girl's troop experience. Your support keeps the troop running smoothly. Get involved:

Offer to host & facilitate meetings in your home or a local venue

Send emails or texts to keep everyone in the know

Plan badge activities for the troop and rotate facilitating (Our tools will help you!)

Organize community service projects for the troop

Create a snack calendar for troop meetings

Chaperone outdoor adventures

Whether you can give a few hours, or an entire weekend – volunteering with Girl Scouts is flexible, fun and rewarding.



Check out the **NEW LEADER CHECKLIST** on page 13 of this guide. It's your step-by-step for a great year ahead!



Family Engagement: The Key Ingredient to Successful Girl Scout Troops!

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

Kick the Year Off Right With a Parents and Caregivers Meeting

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

Why? Because it helps:

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



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

Check out our parent meeting outline available on Troop Leader Central (gsksmo.org/troopleader).

Family Involvement

While Girl Scout programming is always focused on the girls themselves, it's important and helpful to open a few events to their families throughout the year. This will help parents better understand the value of Girl Scouts and be more likely to invest their time and talents with the troop.

Keep communication lines open throughout the year—whether it's through your troop's social media page, personal emails, or in-person chats—to keep parents in the loop on what the girls are doing and learning during each meeting, and encourage them to let their daughters “be the expert” at home, by, for example, explaining or teaching a new skill she's learned to the rest of the family.



Let's Go—Your First Troop Meeting!

Your first troop meeting is a great chance to get to know the girls and brainstorm all the exciting things they want to do in the year to come. If you're feeling a little nervous about leading troop meetings and experiences with your girls, that's OK! Just remember that:

It doesn't need to be perfect. Did an activity run over time? Or maybe a field trip didn't go according to plan? Take a deep breath, roll with the changes, and have fun! The girls aren't expecting perfection from you: your time, attention, and guidance are the best part of your leadership.

Learn with your girls. Keeping activities girl-led also means that at some point, the girls will want to earn a badge or complete a project in a subject unfamiliar to you. But don't let that hold you back! Be open with the girls when you don't know something and become their partner in learning more. You'll show them that learning is a lifelong process and that with an open mind, they can overcome any challenges that come their way.

Six Elements of a Great Troop Meeting

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

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

First meeting checklist:

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



Keeping Girls Safe

Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

From camping weekends to cookie booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure their girls have fun and stay safe, no matter their grade level.

Not sure just how many adults you’ll need for your activity? The helpful chart below breaks down the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls.

Volunteer-to-Girl Ratio Chart	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8

Planning Safe Activities

When preparing for any activity with girls, check [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for required guidelines on where to do the activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear for the activity, and the specific steps to follow on the day of the activity. Safety Activity Checkpoints will also note if a first-aider is required.

If a safety activity checkpoint doesn’t exist for an activity you and your girls are interested in, contact Customer Care at customercare@gsksmo.org before making any definite plans.

What to Do in an Emergency

Although we all hope the worst never happens, you should know and follow our council’s procedures for handling emergency incidents.

Remember, at the scene of an incident, safety is your first priority. Provide care for the injured person and/or obtain medical assistance, then immediately call (816) 358-8750 (press 6 once you hear the recorded message) to report the emergency.

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity. You may need to provide the kit if one is not already available at your meeting location. You must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of our council office, parents/caregivers of your girls, and emergency services such as the police, fire department, and hospital.



Volunteer Training & Resources



Find resources and guidance in response to COVID-19 at gsksmo.org/covidinfo

New Leader Training: This is a required training for all BRAND NEW troop leaders and provides the overview of your role as a troop leader. We'll walk you through some fun ways to engage your Girl Scouts, an overview of the Girl Scout program, safety guidelines and other resources that will give you support. As you get started a staff member will guide you on how to access training through gsLearn. Please reach out to our Customer Care Team if you need assistance!

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

- Explore meeting topics and program activities with girls
- Print step-by-step activity guides and shopping list
- Manage girl attendance and track achievements
- Add local events
- Edit the troop roster and update contact info
- Renew members
- Track and share financial information
- Message and share meeting activities with troop families

... plus so much more! Learn more and access the Volunteer Toolkit by logging into myGS (top right corner of gsksmo.org)

Tips for Troop Leaders

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

Volunteer Essentials

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

Safety Activity Checkpoints

This guide has everything you need to know to be prepared and keep your girls safe during a range of activities outside the normal Girl Scout troop meeting. It can be found at gsksmo.org/safety.

Web + Social Media Resources

- GSKSMO website (gsksmo.org)
- Troop Leader Central - Find meeting resources here (gsksmo.org/troopleader)
- Program Level Facebook Pages
- SU Facebook Pages
- GSKSMO Facebook Page (facebook.com/gsksmo)
- Outdoor Programs (outdoor.gsksmo.org)
- Pinterest (pinterest.com/gprograms)



Funding the Fun

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

Troop activities are powered in two main ways:

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

Money-earning activities: The fall product and cookie programs are the primary money-earning activities for a troop—and they're a hands-on way for girls to learn money management skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives. You will learn about these programs in a separate training.

We know you have more questions, and we've got answers! Your Troop Experience Manager (TEM) will be a great resource as you navigate your troop finances and opening a bank account.

Secrets to the

BEST TROOP YEAR EVER:

- Hold 2-3 meetings per month
- Complete 4 badges per year
- Participate in 4 different activity types per year (community service, field trips, camping, STEM, badges, patch programs) – be sure to ask girls for their input.
- Participate in the iconic Girl Scout Cookie Program
- Enhance the experience by...
 - ...getting girls to work together in groups
 - ...getting girls outside
 - ...engaging in community service
 - ...communicating and engaging parents/families in the troop experience



New Leader First Year Checklist

Before Your Troop Begins:










- Register as an adult volunteer at gsksmo.org/join
- Complete your background check
- Complete New Leader Training
- Join GSKSMO social media
 - facebook.com/gsksmo—our main council Facebook Page
 - Daisy Leader Page (facebook.com/groups/1217376585101307)
 - Brownie Leader Page: (facebook.com/groups/402892930349805)
 - Junior Leader Page: (facebook.com/groups/1697489990384064)
 - Cadette, Senior, Ambassador Leader Page: (facebook.com/groups/388468961813055)

Planning Your Troop Meetings & Activities:

- Once your troop has 2 registered and trained leaders and has a minimum of 5 registered girls, watch for your troop launch email that includes your troop number and other important info.
- Work with your co-leader to determine logistics for your troop like meeting day/time/location and how you will communicate with and engage girl caregivers in the experience to help you.
- Plan your first meeting—a parent/caregiver meeting. Visit [Troop Leader Central](#) for ideas and a sample agenda.
- Plan your first troop meeting. Meeting plans for Daisies and Brownies can be found on [Troop Leader Central](#).
- Collect [health history and activity permission forms](#) for each girl in your troop. Keep these on hand during meetings and other GS activities.
- When planning activities, familiarize yourself with [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) to ensure safety ratios/protocols for adults/girls are met.
- Prepare a first aid kit and emergency contact list to have with you at GS activities.
- Funding the fun! Troop money should be managed in a Girl Scout Troop Bank Account. Need help? Email troopexperience@gsksmo.org.
- Have FUN! The girls in your troop will appreciate and benefit from your work to get here! Girls depend on AMAZING volunteers like you to provide them an opportunity to join the Girl Scout sisterhood.



GIRL SCOUT YEAR CALENDAR

<p>October </p> <p>10/31: Juliette Gordon Low's Birthday</p>	<p>November </p> <p>Troop Leader/Cookie Manager Virtual Cookie Training – Getting ready for the season</p>	<p>December</p>
<p>January</p>	<p>February </p> <p>2/22: World Thinking Day Celebrating Girl Scouting around the world.</p>	<p>March </p> <p>Girl Scout Week (mid March) 3/12: Girl Scouts 109th Birthday</p>
<p>Girl Scout Cookie Season </p>		
<p>April </p> <p>4/22: Troop Leader's Day Celebrating our awesome troop leaders!</p>	<p>May </p> <p>End of year celebrations and bridging</p>	<p>June</p> <p> Day Camp Season</p>
<p>July</p> <p>Day Camp Season </p>	<p>August</p>	<p>September</p>

Quick References

For questions: Email customercare@gsksmo.org or call (800) 728-8750

Emergency: Dial (816) 358-8750 and press 6 once you hear the recorded message

My Troop #: _____

My Service Unit #: _____

My Service Unit Manager: _____

