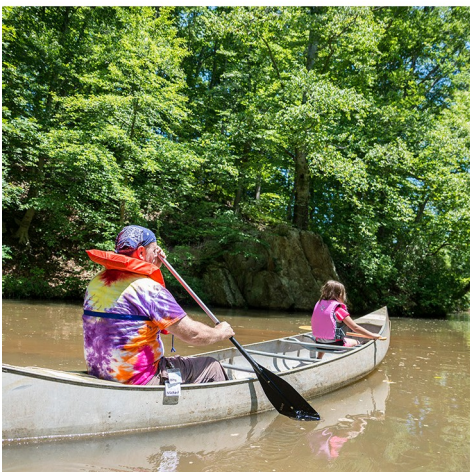




New Leader's Guide to Success





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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

Building girls of courage, confidence,
 and character, who make the world a
 better place.

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



Welcome to Girl Scouts!

We're so excited for you to join the Girl Scout Movement.

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

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

Our council spans a 27,000 square miles made up of 12,725 girls and 4,343 volunteers. Together, we are Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio.

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

Greetings New Troop Leaders,

I am very proud and excited that you have boldly stepped forward to be a Girl Scout troop leader. Through the many different fun and thought provoking activities, you will positively affect the girls in your troop in profound ways that will reverberate over the course of their entire lives.

Like me, millions of American women were Girl Scouts. We know first-hand the enormous debt we owe to our troop leaders. Recently, I had the experience of a lifetime when my own troop reassembled in Virginia Beach to honor our 93 and 96-year-old leaders. We traveled far and wide to express our gratitude to these precious women who were our mentors, our guides, and our very first examples of female leadership. We knew that they saw each of us as unique girls with different interests. They helped to nurture those distinctive interests and we all grew together. One of us particularly loved the outdoors so we all learned about bugs and stars and spent lots of time camping. I was an artsy girl and so we all took painting classes and went to museums. Another wanted to help the elderly so we were in and out of nursing homes. Many of us were keen about the water so we learned to sail and canoe. Our leaders even arranged for us to spend the whole day on a US Navy ship that took us out into the Atlantic Ocean. These are the fond memories, opportunities, and friendships I have because of two women who stepped into the role as Girl Scout troop leader. I am so grateful for them.

Thank you for believing in girls and being a significant role model as their troop leader. Wherever your girls lead, I know it will be the experience of a lifetime for them and for you!

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Cynthia

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 San Gorgonio (GSSGC)

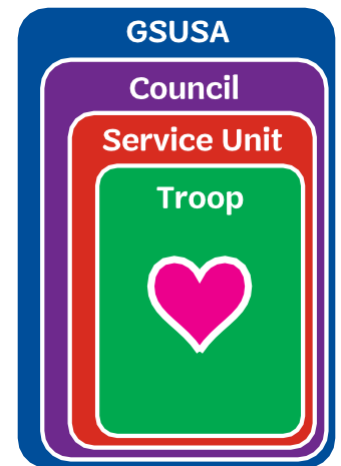
Independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit chartered by GSUSA and operating under the direction of a local board of directors and overseeing all service units and troops within a specific geographic area.

Service Units

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

Troops

Volunteer-supervised groups of girls who participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.



Girls are the heart of our organization




The Girl Scout Difference:

Girl Scouts offers the best leadership development experience for girls in the world—one that is designed with, by, and for girls.

Girl Scouts unleashes the **G.I.R.L.** (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)TM in every girl, preparing her for a lifetime of leadership—from taking a nighttime hike under the stars to accepting a mission on the International Space Station; from lobbying the city council with her troop to holding a seat in Congress; from running her own cookie business today to tackling cybersecurity tomorrow.

Our Girl Scout Leadership Experience is a **one-of-a-kind leadership development program for girls**, with proven results. It is based on **time-tested methods and research-backed programming** that help girls take the lead—in their own lives and in the world.

Girl Scouts is proven to help girls thrive in five key ways as they:

-  Develop a strong sense of self.
-  Display positive values.
-  Seek challenges and learn from setbacks.
-  Form and maintain healthy relationships.
-  Identify and solve problems in the community.

The **inclusive, all-female environment** of a Girl Scout troop creates a safe space where girls can try new things, develop a range of skills, take on leadership roles, and just be themselves.

Did you know?

Girl Scouts fuels the female leadership pipeline.



52%
OF FEMALE
BUSINESS LEADERS



72%
OF FEMALE
U.S. SENATORS



100%
OF FEMALE
U.S. SECRETARIES
OF STATE

...WE'RE GIRL SCOUTS



Girl Scout Levels



DAISIES
K & 1ST

Girl Scout Daisies

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



BROWNIES
2ND & 3RD

Girl Scout Brownies

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



JUNIORS
4TH & 5TH

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



CADETTES
6TH - 8TH

Girl Scout Cadettes

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



SENIORS
9TH & 10TH

Girl Scout Seniors

are ready to take the world by storm, and Girl Scouts gives them millions of ways to do it. Their experiences shape their world, while giving them a safe space to be themselves and explore their interests. Seniors can earn their Gold Award – which, by the way, adds something “extra” to college applications.



AMBASSADORS
11TH & 12TH

Girl Scout

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

The Girl Scout Uniform

Uniforms connect girls to Girl Scout traditions, displaying their accomplishments and creating memories to last a lifetime. While representing Girl Scouts, girls can look and feel their best with uniform options that are in step with today's trends and active lifestyles. Girl Scouts at each level now wear one required element (tunic, sash, or vest) to display official pins and awards. Girls can mix and match pieces from the official Girl Scout collection to complete the uniform. Troop leaders may opt to collect money from parents and purchase sashes, vests, and insignia from a council shop, or ask parents to purchase items on their own.

Visit one of our shop locations to purchase uniforms and uniform starter kits (and much more). Our shop staff are here to help! Or shop online at shop.gssgc.org.



What's the Girl Scout Program?

Our program centers on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience—it's what girls do and how they do it. Whether they complete Leadership Journeys, earn badges, participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, explore the outdoors, change the world through valuable "Take Action" (service) projects, or any combination of these, at Girl Scouts every girl has opportunities to take on leadership roles and hone the skills they'll need to power a lifetime of success.

In Girl Scouts, girls will:

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

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

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

And that's not all! At Girl Scouts, everything is about the girl: activities are girl-led, which gives girls opportunities to explore leadership roles and "learn by doing" in a cooperative-learning environment. It's what makes Girl Scouts truly unique!

Our Program

Everything a Girl Scout does centers around STEM, the outdoors, development of life skills, and entrepreneurship, and is designed to meet her where she is now and to grow along with her.

Whether she's building a robotic arm, coding her first app, building a shelter in the backcountry, or packing for her first hike, a Girl Scout has an exciting array of choices to suit her interests at every age.



STEM

Computer science, engineering, robotics, outdoor STEM, and more



LIFE SKILLS

Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship, communication skills



OUTDOORS

Adventure and skill building, including through camping experiences for all age levels, from the backyard to the backcountry



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Girl Scout Cookie Program—the largest girl-led business in the world—teaches goal setting, decision making, money management, business ethics, and people skills



Journeys

Journeys are topic-specific experiences that let girls explore their world through hands-on activities and take the reins through age-appropriate Take Action projects. As girls go on Journeys, they earn awards to put on their uniforms. Because of their leadership focus, Journeys are also a prerequisite for Girl Scouts' prestigious Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.

Explore all the exciting possibilities with the Award and Badge Explorer by [clicking here](#)

Badges

Make their own movie, go geocaching, plant a garden? Girls can do all that and more! Badges are worn on the front of a vest or sash and show the world that girls have learned a new skill!

Patches

Think of patches like collecting memories in Girl Scouts. They're often a part of the fun activities you can do in Girl Scouts, without the requirements linked to earning badges. Patches are always worn on the back of a vest or sash.

Highest Awards

Bronze. Silver. Gold. These represent the highest honors a Girl Scout can earn.

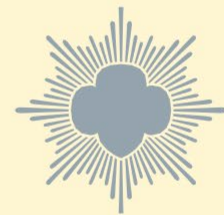
All three awards give girls the chance to do big things while supporting issues they care about. Whether they want to plant a community garden for their Bronze, advocate for animal rights for their Silver, or build a career network that encourages girls to become scientists and engineers for their Gold, they'll inspire others (and you!) while creating a lasting impact on their communities nationally—and around the world!

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the most prestigious award in the world for girls—and it's only available to Girl Scouts.

It's a one-of-a-kind opportunity for girls to engage in a rigorous process that calls for leadership at the highest level, as they tackle issues they feel passionately about.

Gold Award Girl Scouts:

- Earn college scholarships
- Demonstrate high educational and career outcomes
- Are active in their communities
- Access a powerful and supportive Girl Scout network





Keeping Girls Safe

Although working with girls and learning new skills is fun and rewarding, assuming responsibility for other people's children means that some level of risk management and due diligence is involved. There are several resources we use to help you minimize risk and keep girls safe.

Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative-learning environment and small enough to allow for the development of individual girls. Girl Scouts' volunteer-to-girl ratios specify the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls.

Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved volunteers present at all times, plus additional volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Any adult who is supervising girls must be an approved volunteer. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and screened before volunteering. In addition, one troop leader in every group must be female. Please refer to the ratio chart below.

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
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6-8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11-12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

Planning Safe Activities

When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading Girl Scouts' Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find this resource on the Resources tab of the Volunteer Toolkit. Each safety activity checkpoint specifies 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@gssgc.org or 800-400-4475 before making any definite plans.



What to Do in an Emergency

Although we all hope the worst never happens, it's important to 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 or obtain medical assistance and then immediately report the emergency to GSSGC staff. Call our office at 800-400-4475 or after business hours on our emergency line at 909-307-6555.

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/guardians and emergency services such as the police, fire department, or hospital.

You—A Girl Scout Leader!

Your Role

What does it mean to be a Girl Scout leader? It means to go on an amazing journey marked by helping girls build courage, confidence, and character through Girl Scouting. Serving as a leader can bring many joys, including developing a personal relationship with each girl in the troop, building adult friendships through the sisterhood of Girl Scouts, receiving sincere appreciation and thanks from parents, and, most importantly, knowing you're shaping the future by working with girls today.

Leadership is 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 you need it





Your Volunteer Troop Committee

Before you hold your first troop meeting with girls, consider the support and people resources you'll need to cultivate an energizing troop experience. Parents, friends, family, and other members of the community have their own unique strengths and can provide troops with their time, experience, and ideas—so get them involved from the very beginning as part of your volunteer troop team! This team is made up of troop leaders (like you) and troop committee volunteers.

Note that all of these adults must be screened and approved. They commit to their designated roles based on the amount of time they have to give and interest in specific areas on the team. Interested individuals should be guided to the Join or Volunteer buttons at gssgc.org

Your troop committee volunteers are the extra set of eyes, ears, and hands that help troop members safely explore the world around them. Depending on your troop girls' needs, troop volunteers can play an active role—for instance, someone can step up as a dedicated troop treasurer—or simply provide occasional helping hands when you need to keep a meeting's activity on track, or act as chaperones for events that require a number of adult volunteers.

If a parent or caregiver isn't sure they can commit to a committee or co-leader role, encourage them to try volunteering in a smaller capacity that matches their skillset. Just like your young Girl Scouts, once troop parents and caregivers discover they can succeed in a volunteer role, they'll feel empowered to volunteer again.

As a troop leader, you'll guide the structure and experiences of your troop—from how and when meetings are held to how the troop communicates, from steering girl-led activities to setting financial expectations. These decisions will be made collaboratively with your volunteer team, as well as with input from the girls and their families.





NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS



Troop leader responsibilities:

- Liaise with service unit volunteers and council staff.
- Manage the troop's finances.
- Communicate with parents.
- Ensure girl safety.
- Guide the troop's Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

Troop committee responsibilities:

- Assist the troop leader.
- Ensure girl safety.
- May drive girls, coordinate finances, and/or chaperone troop activities.
- Provide extra help at troop meetings.

Parent/guardian responsibilities:

- Communicate with troop leadership.
- Provide permission and information needed for activity participation.
- Ensure their girl's membership is current.
- Provide transportation to and from meetings.
- Complete and submit the Health History form.

Girl responsibilities:

- Be ready to learn and have fun!
- Use their imagination and creativity.
- Always stay with the group and be safe.
- Clean up after themselves.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Have fun!

And of course, all girls and all adults live by the Girl Scout Law!





The Key Ingredient of Successful Girl Scout Troops: Family Connections!

You want the girls in your troop to have fun, be inspired, take risks, and learn about themselves and the world this year—that's why you're a Girl Scout troop leader! The thing is, parents and caregivers want the same thing for their girls, but getting families to pitch in and play an active role in the troop while also enhancing the experience for their own daughter can be tricky. But it doesn't have to be!

Kick the Year Off Right by Engaging Parents and Other Caregivers

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!

So, what is a parent and caregiver meeting? It's the first meeting you hold to start each troop year—whether you're a new or returning troop. And it's valuable for all troops.

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 cookiemanager.
- Families know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events or schedule changes.
- Families learn about uniforms, books, and other important basics.



Kicking off each year with a parent and caregiver meeting sets the troop up for success. Outlining clear expectations, building a team, and engaging families in the Girl Scout experience is a great way to start off on the right foot. When families are involved, leaders have support, and when the troop has a plan, girls benefit!

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



After your troop's initial parent meeting, here's how you can best keep parents and caregivers on board:

Make the ask(s). The main reason people don't take action is because they were never asked to in the first place. That's why hearing that one out of three Girl Scout parents say no one communicated expectations around involvement with their girl's troop is so troubling. Parents may have many talents, but mind reading isn't one of them! If you're nervous about getting turned down, don't be. Sure, a few parents might be unable to lend a hand, but the helpers you do get will be worth their weight in gold. And just because someone wasn't available a month or two ago doesn't mean they won't be free to help now. Loop back, follow up, ask again!

Make sense of "why." Explain that not only does the whole troop benefit with extra help from parents and caregivers, but girls also feel a special sense of pride in seeing their own family members step up and take on leadership roles. Getting involved can strengthen the caregiver/girl bond and is a meaningful way to show daughters that they're a priority in their parents' lives.

Make it quick and easy. Everybody's got a full plate these days, so instead of starting parent conversations with a list of tasks or responsibilities they could take on (which can be intimidating!), ask caregivers how much time each week they might be able to dedicate to the troop, then go from there. For instance, if a troop mom or dad has 15 minutes each week to spare, they could organize and manage the calendar for troop snacks and carpools. If a grandparent has one to two hours, they could assist with leading the troop through a specific badge on a topic they're already comfortable with. For more ways parents and other caregivers can help out when faced with a tricky schedule, check out the Family Resources tab in the Volunteer Toolkit.



Make family part of the formula. While Girl Scout programming is always focused on the girls themselves, it's important and helpful to open a few events to their families throughout the year. Inviting a whole crew to celebrate her accomplishments in Girl Scouting—whether at a holiday open house, a bridging ceremony, or a fun “reverse meeting” where girls take on the role of leader and guide the adults, including caregivers, through an activity—will help parents better understand the value of Girl Scouts and be more likely to invest their time and talents with the troop. That said, there's no need to wait for one of these special events to engage parents in their Girl Scouts' troop lives. Keep communication lines open throughout the year—whether it's through your troop's social media page, personal emails, or in-person chats—to keep parents in the loop on what the girls are doing and learning during each meeting, and encourage them to let their daughters “be the expert” at home, by, for example, explaining or teaching a new skill she's learned to the rest of the family.

The Girl Scout Family Promise

Girl Scouts' values are laid out in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, which members at all Girl Scout levels learn and recite. And the Girl Scout Family Promise is a commitment your whole family can make in support of your girl as she grows as a leader and makes the world a better place. Make sure you include it all meetings that families attend!

Girl Scout Family Promise

On my honor, I will try
To support my Girl Scout
And her troop,
To help girls lead at all times
And to always keep it fun!



Guiding Your Troop Experience

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

- When will we meet and for how long? How frequently should we schedule troop meetings?
- Where will we meet? (Your meeting space should be somewhere safe, clean, and secure that allows all girls to participate. Some great meeting space ideas include schools, places of worship, libraries, and community centers. If working with teens, consider meeting at coffee shops, bookstores, or another place they enjoy.)
- Which components of the uniform will troop families need to purchase?
- Will our troop be a single-grade level or facilitated as a multi-level troop with girls of many grade levels? If multi-level, how will we make sure each girl gets an age-appropriate experience?
- How will we keep troop activities girl-led? (Use the Volunteer Toolkit to help you through this process, exploring options for activities and reviewing the meeting plans and resources lists.)
- How often are we going to communicate to troop families? Which channels will we use to keep families in the loop? (Effective communication will help set expectations and clarify parent/caregiver responsibilities.)
- Will our troop charge dues, use product program proceeds, and/or charge per activity? How much money will we need to cover supplies and activities? What should our financial plan look like?

Girl-Led

Remember, Girl Scouts is designed to be girl-led. Talk to the girls about what they'd like to get out of Girl Scouts this year, and make sure you're having fun!



Let's Go—Your First Troop Meeting!

Your first troop meeting is a great chance to:

- Get to know the girls!
- Brainstorm all the exciting things the girls want to do this year
- Introduce girls to Girl Scout traditions
- Introduce the whole troop volunteer team to the girls and their parents/guardians

If you're feeling a little nervous about leading troop meetings and experiences with your girls, that's OK! Many adults feel that when working with kids, they must be the expert and have everything perfect. But this isn't the case in Girl Scouts! As a Girl Scout troop leader, we encourage you to listen to the girls with an open mind and lead them with your heart. When preparing for your first (or any) troop meeting, keep these things in mind:

It doesn't need to be perfect. There are lots of resources to help you facilitate engaging troop meetings and fun experiences—feel free to get creative! And don't stress if you forget part of the troop meeting you planned or a field trip doesn't go the way you anticipated or you run out of time. The girls aren't expecting perfection from you; your time, attention, and guidance are the best part of your leadership.



Learn with your girls! As you think “girl-led” in developing your troop’s meetings and experiences, the girls will at some point want to earn a badge or complete a project in a subject unfamiliar to you. Be open with the girls when you don’t know something, but don’t use that as a reason to keep them from exploring the topic or doing the project.

Instead, become their partner in figuring out how to learn more! When they see you learning alongside them, their confidence in their current knowledge and skills as well as their ability to learn will rise. It also helps them to understand that learning is a lifelong process.

Six Elements of a Great Troop Meeting

Most important? Your meetings should be fun! Girls come to Girl Scouts to hone their leadership skills, make smart decisions, and have fun in the girl-led activities they choose.

1. **Start up.** Plan activities for the girls on arrival at the meeting so they have something to do until the meeting begins. This could be as simple as coloring pages, journaling, or talking with one another. (5 minutes)
2. **Open the meeting.** Each troop decides how to open its meetings—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. (5–10 minutes)
3. **Conduct business.** Collect dues and make announcements, or plan an upcoming event or trip while families are present. This gives you a chance to keep families informed. (5 minutes)
4. **Do activities.** You’re free to 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.** Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 minutes)
6. **Close the meeting.** 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 preparation checklist:

1. **Cover the basics.** Review the details about when and where the meeting will take place and make sure parents/caregivers are aware. You might find it helpful to visit the location beforehand.
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.** Use our “Six Elements of a Troop Meeting” on the next page and the Volunteer Toolkit meeting agenda to customize your meeting plan.
4. **Review and practice your agenda.** This will help you feel calmer and be more flexible during the actual meeting.
5. **Expect to have 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!



What You Need to Know About Troop Finances

Opening a bank account: If you've stepped up to lead an existing troop, you may inherit a checking account, but with a new troop, you'll want to open a new bank account. As troop leader, you and one other approved volunteer should establish a bank account for collection of troop dues (optional), payment of troop supplies and activities and product sales revenue (fall product and cookie programs). Email Customer Care at customercare@gssgc.org with the names, addresses, phone numbers and emails of the two approved, trained volunteers who will become signers on the account. And, of course, include your troop number. Your Troop Support Specialist will reach out to you and provide the documentation and instructions you'll need to get your bank account opened.

Financial assistance: Finances shouldn't stand in the way of a Girl Scout's participation. Any girl needing financial assistance for membership can request it as part of the online membership registration process. Other financial assistance is available for camp, events and travel and can be applied for by completing an application available through our website. It can be found at gssgc.org/forms.

Tax exemption: Because councils are 501(c)(3) nonprofits, volunteers can use the GSSGC Request for Donations form when purchasing supplies and materials for Girl Scout troop use. The tax-exempt form is found at gssgc.org/forms or click on "Forms" in the upper left corner of our website.

Funding the Fun

Your girls probably have some big ideas about what they want to do in Girl Scouts—and as a troop leader, you'll guide them on how to plan and budget accordingly. How do you do this?

Troop dues: Many troops decide to collect troop dues as a way to help provide start-up funds for troop activities and supplies. These could range from \$1–2 per meeting to \$30–40 for the entire school year paid all at one time. 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. You'll learn all about these fantastic programs in a separate training when the time is right. If an older-girl troop participates in these programs, members may decide to plan an additional fundraising activity. These additional fundraisers must be approved by completing the Money Earning Activity Troop Application form at gssgc.org/forms or click on "Forms" in the upper left corner of our website.

Remember Girl Scout Daisies can only earn money through the fall product and cookie programs.

Managing Your Troop's Funds

Remember, Girl Scout funds are girl-earned and girl-spent. How the funds are used is a decision made by the entire troop, not just the leaders, families, or a few select girls from the troop. It's also important to know that troop funds belong to the entire troop and can't be earmarked for individual girl use. Funds can be used to purchase badges and patches, Journey and guide books, and uniform components, and to cover celebrations and ceremonies, community service projects, field trips, and more. Let the girls come up with some ideas and then have the troop vote.

As the girls begin to spend their troop's funds, you or the volunteer responsible for the troop's finances has a responsibility to track the expenses and receipts. All income and expenses must be reported by June 15 of each Girl Scout year using the Finance tab in the Volunteer Toolkit. Girl Scout troop leaders should report out to troop parents about finances at least three times per year.



Let's Get Started!

Managing Your Member Experience Online

After your background check process is completed and you're approved to serve as a volunteer, you'll receive an email confirmation prompting you to log into MyGS, your Girl Scout member community, for the first time. MyGS allows you to manage your member experience online. It can also be accessed from the link in the header of any page at gssgc.org.

On the Troop tab in MyGS, you can see any girls and adults who have signed up for your troop and add new girls to your troop—and the Troop Opportunity Catalog allows you as the troop leader to display available openings in your troop for girls and/or volunteers. If you wish to have your troop listed in the Troop Opportunity Catalog or open your troop to more members, email customercare@gssgc.org

Next Steps

You should've also received a welcome email with details on how to access Leader Orientation Training, which gives you the basic information and resources you need to make things happen for your troop. (If you haven't received your welcome email, please check your junk email folder just to be sure.) See page 20 for more information about required training for new troop leaders.

Girl Scout Volunteer Resources

The Volunteer Toolkit

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 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 and co-leaders:

- Explore meeting topics and program activities with their girls
- Add local events their girls choose
- Print step-by-step activity guides and shopping lists
- View and edit the troop roster
- Update contact information
- Renew members
- Manage girl attendance and track achievements
- Share troop meeting activities with parents/guardians
- Email parents/guardians with a single click
- Track and share financial information

Learn more and access the Volunteer Toolkit at gssgc.org/vtk



Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

What does it mean to be a go-getting Girl Scout? These grade level-specific binders will help you break it down for your girls. It's part handbook, part badge book, and 100% fun! shop.gssgc.org.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

"SAC" is made up of lists of 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. These can be found in the under the Resources tab of gssgc.org/vtk.

Volunteer Essentials

With key information, policies, and procedures to ensure that Girl Scout programming is delivered in a safe, consistent manner 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. The procedural document is updated annually, and the newest version can always be found on our website. Find it at gssgc.org/forms

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/tips

GSSGC Social Media

Want to know what other local troops are doing? Interested in new activities for your girls? Enjoy sharing photos and videos? Stay connected and help us share the Girl Scout love on social media! Be sure to like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram. Find all the links at gssgc.org.

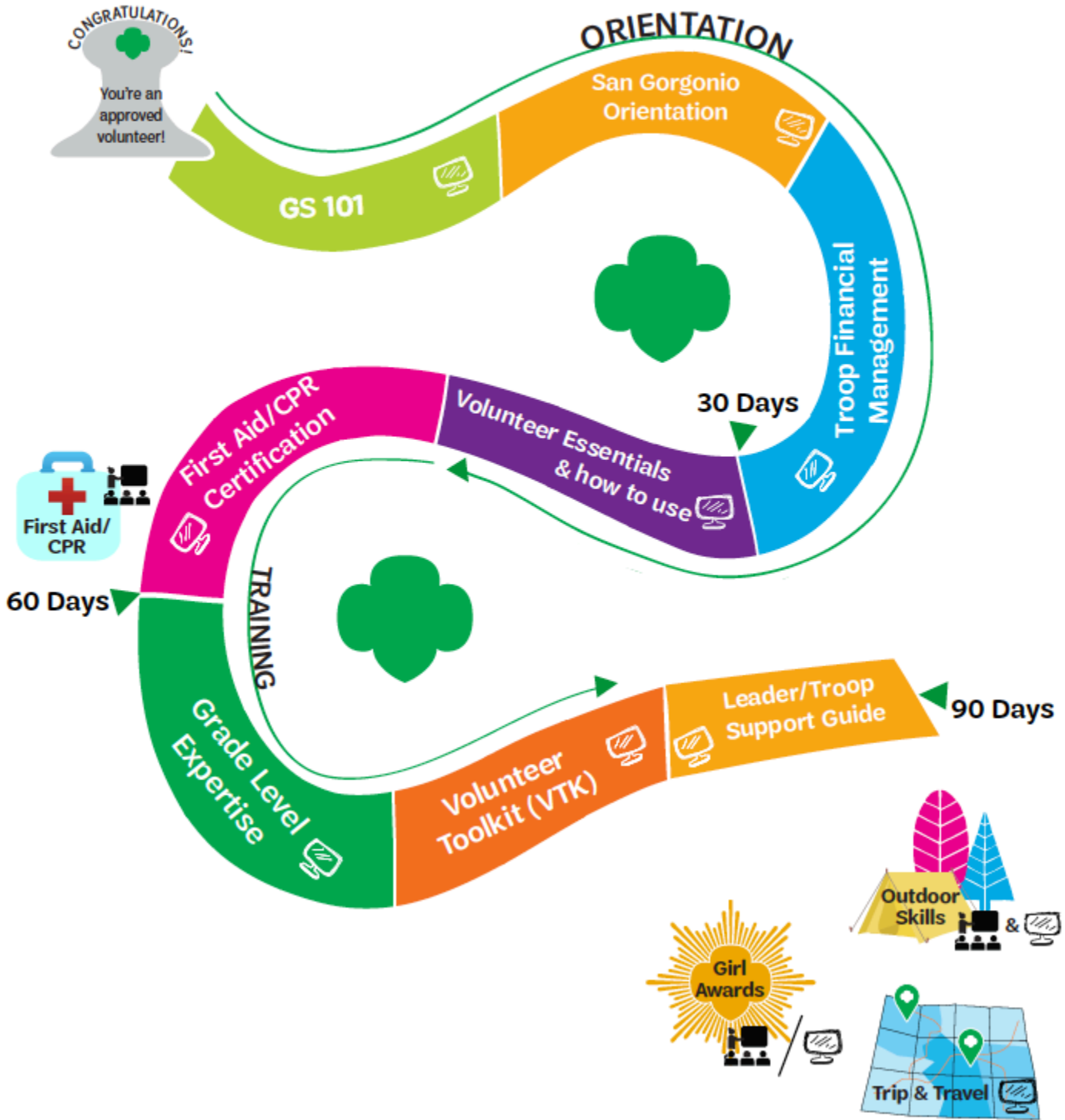
Customer Care

Questions? Need help resolving an issue? We've got you! Reach out anytime by clicking "Contact Us" at gssgc.org or email customercare@gssgc.org. During business hours (Tuesday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–6:30 p.m.; Friday, 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.), you can reach a customer service specialist by calling 800-400-4475. The team looks forward to addressing your inquiries quickly.



TROOP LEADER TRAINING PATH

In order to build our girls into great leaders, we have to start with ourselves. We offer a variety of in-person workshops and online training courses to meet your needs as a new or experienced Troop Leader. New Troop Leaders are required to complete the path through New Leader Training.





**WHERE WE'RE LOCATED
AND HOW TO CONNECT**

Offices

**Central Service Center
& Executive Offices**
1751 Plum Lane
Redlands, CA 92374

Central West Service Center
9840 Indiana Ave., Suite 7 & 8
Riverside, CA 92503

High Desert Service Center
17189 Yuma Street, Unit 1
Victorville, CA 92395

Low Desert Service Center
75-180 Mediterranean, Ste. A & B
Palm Desert, CA 92211

Southwest Service Center
40880 County Center Drive, Ste G
Temecula, CA 92591

Office & Shop Hours

Offices:
Tuesday-Thursday 8:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m.
Friday 8 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Shops:
Central & Southwest Service Centers
Tuesday-Thursday 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Friday 10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Closed daily from 1 – 2 p.m.

Low Desert & Central West Service Centers
Tuesday – Thursday 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Friday 1:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

High Desert Service Center
Tuesday – Thursday 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Friday 10:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Closed daily from 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Or shop online 24/7 at
shop.gssgc.org

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-  [/GSSGCGirls](https://www.youtube.com/GSSGCGirls)



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customerCare@gssgc.org