Chapter 2: Girl Scouting as a National Experience

The Girl Scout program—what girls do in Girl Scouting—is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, a national model that helps girls become leaders in their own lives and as they grow. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, as Girl Scouts they are part of this powerful, national experience. As they build leadership skills, they also develop lifelong friendships and earn meaningful awards, two of many treasured traditions in the sisterhood of Girl Scouting.

Girls tell us that a leader is defined not only by her qualities and skills but also by how she makes a difference in the world. Girl Scouting engages girls in activities around three areas that Girl Scouting believes are essential to developing leadership:

- Discovering who they are and what they value
- Connecting with others
- Taking action to make the world a better place

These three areas are known as the three keys to leadership: discover, connect, and take action.

Girl Scout activities also ask adult volunteers to engage girls in three ways that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities:

- **Girl-led**: Girls of every grade level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why, and how they’ll structure activities. As part of the adult-girl partnership fostered by Girl Scouts, you use this process to strengthen and support girls’ empowerment and decision-making roles in activities. Your role is to provide grade-level-appropriate guidance while ensuring that girls lead as much as possible in the planning, organization, set-up, and evaluation of their activities.

- **Learning by doing**: Girls use hands-on learning to engage in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection, deepening their understanding of concepts and mastering practical skills. As girls take part in meaningful activities—instead of simply watching them—and then later evaluate what they have learned, learning is far more meaningful, memorable, and long-lasting. You assist girls in this process by facilitating grade-level-appropriate experiences through which girls can learn, and also by leading discussions that reflect on those experiences. When girls learn by doing, they can better connect their experiences to their own lives, both in and out of Girl Scouting.

- **Cooperative learning**: Girls share knowledge, skills, and experiences in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation, working together on a common goal that engages each individual girl’s diverse talents. In cooperative learning environments, people learn faster, process information more efficiently, and are better able to retain the information learned. This idea, also known as “positive interdependence,” engages girls in meaningful ways, encourages and appreciates differences in outlook and skills, and creates a sense of belonging. In your role as a volunteer, you want to structure cooperative-learning activities that will nurture healthy, diverse relationships, and also give continuous feedback to girls on those learning experiences.

When used together, these processes ensure the quality and promote the fun and friendship that’s so integral to Girl Scouting. The adult guide of each journey contains full definitions of these processes and examples of how to support their use in all you and the girls do in Girl Scouting. And each girls’ journey book has these processes built right into all its activities and discussions. So as you and the girls take part in a journey, you’ll be using the processing without even knowing it—and you’ll learn by doing, right along with the girls!

More details about the three Girl Scout Processes can also be found in *Transforming Leadership Continued*, available online at [www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gsoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gsoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp).
Journeys!

The best way to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is through leadership journeys. These powerful, fun, and multidisciplinary experiences, each spread over a set of gatherings, are the core of the Girl Scout program. Journeys immerse Girl Scouts in specific themes, which are detailed in each journey's resources: the girls' book and the adult guide. The adult guide for each journey also features sample session plans with enriching activities, discussions, and reflections for a group of girls, along with corresponding coaching tips. You can customize these sample session plans to fit the needs of your group, whether you guide a troop, volunteer at a Girl Scout camp, mentor girls on a travel adventure, or engage with girls in a series or at an event.

Leadership journeys ensure that every Girl Scout in every pathway receives a consistent, high-quality experience that engages girls in realizing specific leadership benefits. Each journey also offers opportunities to enjoy the longstanding traditions of Girl Scouting, from ceremonies and song to earning awards and related skill badges. Here are a few tips for enjoying a great journey with your group of girls:

- **Customize!** Your journey’s adult guide offers step-by-step activities, discussions, ceremonies, and reflections. But no journey is meant to provide hard-and-fast, unchangeable, lockstep sessions. Along with the girls, make the most of resources in your region to add trips, activities, guest speakers, and the other special items to the journey. You’ll find plenty of tips for doing so in your adult guide, and the journey will be so much more fun and relevant as girls make it their own!

- **Take your time or speed things up.** Sample sessions in the journeys have been created to show how it is possible to have a Girl Scout Leadership Experience in a set number of gatherings. Many girls and adults quickly find there is more they want to do, which is why your adult guide is filled with tips for how to stretch out the experience. As their imaginations take hold, girls will have many more ideas about how to extend the journey. Conversely, you and the girls may decide you want to complete a journey in only four or five group gatherings. Do whatever works for you and the girls.

- **Harness the power of stories.** All Girl Scout leadership journeys engage girls in stories—real and fictional—of girls and women taking action in the world. Make use of these stories and expand upon them whenever you can—in any way that you and girls will enjoy. Stories, after all, capture the imagination and motivate. Ultimately, girls will create their own stories on the journey, meeting new people and taking action in the world. What other stories are going on in your region, and how can girls connect to them? What can girls find in stories—in art or life—that add to the feelings and ideas during this adventure?

- **Connect to the three keys.** As a volunteer in Girl Scouts, your experiences—and your view of leadership—will influence and inspire girls. Use the reflection exercises in the adult guide to think about the three keys to leadership (discover, connect, take action) and how you can best apply them as you team up with Girl Scouts on their leadership journey.

**It’s Your World—Change It!**

This journey series invites girls to develop a deep understanding of themselves, understand how powerfully they can act when they team with others who share a vision, and make a difference in their communities by inspiring, educating, and advocating. Grade-level journeys in this series are:

- **Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden**
- **Brownie Quest**
- **Agent of Change** (for Juniors)
- **aMAZE!** (for Cadettes)
- **GIRLtopia** (for Seniors)
- **Your Voice Your World—The Power of Advocacy** (for Ambassadors)
It’s Your Planet—Love It!

This journey series invites girls to make sense of the wealth of environmental information available so that they can act for the betterment of Earth and its inhabitants. In this series, girls tackle issues like conservation, pollution, and renewable and reusable resources—all while focusing on leadership development. Grade level journeys in this series are:

- *Between Earth and Sky* (for Daisies)
- *WOW! Wonders of Water* (for Brownies)
- *GET MOVING!* (for Juniors)
- *BREATHE* (for Cadettes)
- *SOW WHAT?* (for Seniors)
- *JUSTICE* (for Ambassadors)

It’s Your Story—Tell It!

This series of leadership journeys, made possible in part by a generous grant from Dove, is designed to strengthen a girl’s sense of herself and boost her capacity to seek and meet challenges in the world—all by giving her the opportunity to hear, create, and tell stories in a range of creative mediums.

- *5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!* (for Daisies)
- *A World of Girls* (for Brownies):
- *aMUSE* (for Juniors)
- *MEdia* (for Cadettes)
- *MISSION: SISTERHOOD!* (for Seniors)
- *BLISS: Live It! Give It!* (for Ambassadors)

For a description of each book for each grade level, check out the six following tables.
**Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden**

A Girl Scout Daisy friends and Little Girls who, together, do great things. The world of flowers and Little Girls enjoy meeting the colorful, global characters of the Flower Friends, who teach them to live the Girl Scout Law.

**Between Earth and Sky**

On this journey, Girl Scout Daisies join the Flower Friends for a cross-country trip in their special flower-powered car. As the Flower Friends travel the country living the values of the Girl Scout Law, Daisies join them in exploring the natural world, learning what’s local and why that’s important. Along the way, Daisies get to explore shapes in nature, learn the wisdom of women working to protect the planet, and gain an understanding of what it takes to protect the environment.

**5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!**

As Daisies enjoy a fictional story about the Flower Friends, they learn just how much they can care for animals and for themselves—and just how confident that makes them feel.

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**Brownie Quest**

What are the most important keys for a Girl Scout to own? This quest answers that question in a very special way. It has Girl Scout Brownies traveling along two colorful trails—one they can enjoy on their own and one they explore with their Girl Scout group. Along the Quest, Brownies meet three new friends and a bright and shining elf—a brand-new Brownie story meant to inspire their own take-action projects.

**WOW! Wonders of Water**

Girl Scout Brownies join the Brownie friends and Brownie Elf as they enjoy some wonder-filled adventures. As they dive in, the Brownies try out new ways of working as a team, learn about the water cycle, and enjoy making their own rainbows. As Brownies learn how precious water is, they can pledge to protect it and team up to advocate for water conservation.

**A World of Girls**

In *A World of Girls*, Brownies have fun learning that stories contain clues and that they can use those clues to make the world better. *A flip book, A World of Girls* devotes one side to fictional stories that take the Brownie girl characters to diverse places in the world. The other side has the real-life Brownies exploring themselves and their world closer to home. Through the journey’s many adventures, anecdotes, and activities, the Brownies follow through on clues and enjoy a fun and challenging Girl Scout experience that strengthens their confidence and gives them a chance to better the world.
### Agent of Change

A fashion-savvy spider named Dez shows Juniors how they can combine their own power into team power and use it to spark community power. When Juniors learn how the “power of one,” “power of team,” and “power of community,” work together they not only make their own communities better but have impact around the globe.

### GET MOVING!

This journey invites Juniors to engage their minds and hearts as they explore the many forms, uses, and misuses of energy. From paper-making experiments to making beads from newspapers and magazines to forming a "perpetual human motion machine," Juniors will find that *GET MOVING!* is crammed full of energizing stuff to make and do! *GET MOVING!* challenges girls to safeguard Earth’s precious energy resources by using their leadership skills—their ability to energize themselves and others, and their ability to investigate and innovate.

### aMUSE

In *aMUSE*, Juniors gain an understanding of just how limitless their potential can be as they fuse storytelling with the many roles—real and creative—that the world offers. They’ll have fun trying on roles and learning about people and the power of real-life action and leadership.

### aMAZE!

Life is a maze of relationships and this journey has Girl Scout Cadettes maneuvering through all its twists and turns to find true friendships, plenty of confidence, and maybe even peace. Girls can make “peacemaker kits,” learn about bullying behavior, and complete a take-action project that thrives on these relationship skills.

### BREATHE

Air is everywhere in *BREATHE*. And as Cadettes explore the air they’ll learn to assess air quality inside and out as they gain an aerial view of everything from cigarette smoking to noise to deforestation. Along the way, they’ll try some scientific experiments and meet scientists, engineers, writers, and artists—all of them working for Earth’s air. Above all, *BREATHE* inspires Cadettes to create “breathing room” to be leaders who use their flair to make a difference in the world.

### MEdia

Cadettes put the “me” in *MEdia* as this journey encourages them to explore the great, big multimedia world around them and then remake media to better match the reality they know. Along the way, Cadettes become aware of the value of media, its limitations and effect, and the power they have to lead and inspire others.
**GIRLtopia**

Girl Scout Seniors know the world is not ideal. This journey is their chance to imagine a perfect world—for girls. Seniors are invited to create their vision—in any medium they choose. Then they'll take action to make their vision a reality. Leaders, after all, are visionaries! As Seniors learn to define the ideal environment, they learn a lot about their own values, attitudes, actions, and leadership.

**SOW WHAT?**

In Sow What?, Seniors get the opportunity to ponder land use around the world (corn’s a big issue!) and get down to the science and roots of complex and global food issues. Girls plan and conduct a local "food forage" to scope out their "food print" choices, and talk to scientists, local growers, and business owners—-and even global hunger experts. Using what they learn, girls consider their "leader prints" as they decide who and what they can cultivate en route to a take-action project that positively impacts their food network. Along the way, Seniors take time to enjoy a "truly happy meal" together, experiment with new recipes, and try out being "locavores" who know how to savor local bounty.

**MISSION: SISTERHOOD**

In MISSION: SISTERHOOD, Seniors harness the magic of stories to widen their networks and ignite the energy of sisterhood to create real change in the world. As Seniors expand their friendship borders, they boost their own confidence and make the most of their leadership skills.

**Your Voice Your World—The Power of Advocacy**

How often have you seen something that really needed to be changed and wondered, "Why isn’t someone doing something about that?" This journey gives Girl Scout Ambassadors a way to be that someone—an advocate with the power to start the first flutter of real and lasting change. While creating their own "butterfly effect," they’ll gain an array of skills—such as networking, planning, and learning to speak up for what they believe—that will benefit them as they prepare for life beyond high school.

**JUSTICE**

Justice—for Earth and all its inhabitants—we all know what it is. Why is it so hard to achieve? Ambassadors realize that maybe justice needs a brand-new equation—their equation. By "doing the math" with even the simplest of acts, deciphering how decisions get made, and exploring how to use scientific evidence, Ambassadors create and then present their own unique equation for what justice asks of us. Along the way, Ambassadors find they are also networking and gathering ideas for college and careers. When they conclude this journey, Ambassadors may recognize themselves as the wise and healing leaders Earth yearns for!

**BLISS: Live It! Give It!**

In BLISS: Live It! Give It!, Ambassador’s dream big, now and for the future, and assist others in dreaming big, too. They explore their values, strengths, and passions as a way to open doors to wonderful, new adventures. Designed as a flip book, Bliss: Live It! inspires girls to pursue their dreams while Bliss: Give It! encourages girls to assist others in pursuing theirs.
The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting

In addition to the resources created for leadership journeys (the girl’s book and the adult guide), girls at every grade-level have a Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting. Through fun activities, girls can earn a variety of badges to build the skills and gain the confidence they’ll use to change the world. They can even develop and complete activities to make their own badge—a great way to explore a topic of personal interest. (In addition, girls who make their own badge will learn how to learn, which is an important skill to have in school, on the job, and in life!)

Inside a Girl’s Guide

The Girl’s Guide is a binder that’s designed to keep everything organized. Using a binder allows for maximum flexibility: outdated badges can be removed, while new badges based on girls’ changing interests or funded opportunities can be added. All badges are called National Proficiency Badges and are grouped in following categories: Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business, Skill-Building, and Make Your Own. (Daisies continue to earn Petals, as well as four new Leaves.)

For Daisies, the Girl’s Guide includes:

- **Handbook:** The handbook offers information about Girl Scout traditions and history, as well as the requirements for bridging to Brownies.
- **Awards:** Daisies earn ten Petals, one for each line of the Girl Scout Law, so this section includes ten short stories starring the Flower Friends, plus related activities that help girls learn the Law. This section also includes a chart of all Girl Scout earned awards for that grade level, and a chart showing all badges for all grade levels. Here, Daisies can also find the requirements for four new awards that they can now earn in addition to their petals. These awards, called Leaves, focus on skills related to financial literacy and the cookie business.
- **My Girl Scouts:** Scrapbook and journal pages allow each girl to customize her binder and keep a record of her Girl Scout experiences. Daisies have coloring pages, stickers, and pages for photos, friends’ autographs, and other mementos.

For Brownies through Ambassadors, the Girl’s Guide includes:

- **Handbook:** The handbook includes Girl Scout history and traditions, a chart of all Girl Scout earned awards for that grade level, and a chart showing all badges for all grade levels. This section also includes a girl-friendly explanation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, requirements for bridging to the next grade level and, at the appropriate grade level, the requirements for earning the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.
- **Badges:** This section includes badge requires for the Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business, Skill-Building, and Make Your Own badges. The requirements for Skill-Building Badges are sold separately, giving each girl the ability to customize her Girl’s Guide by adding badges that interest her.
- **My Girl Scouts:** Scrapbook and journal pages allow each girl to customize her binder and keep a record of her Girl Scout experiences. In addition to pages for photos, friends’ autographs, and other mementos at all levels, Brownies and Juniors also have sticker pages.

The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting is designed to complement the journeys at each grade level. This means that each Skill-Building Badge Set (there are currently three; each is sold separately from the Girl’s Guide) is tied to one of the three journeys (as you can see in the following chart). You’ll find that doing a journey and the related badge set at the same time will make it easy to offer the entire National Program Portfolio—journeys and badges—in a seamless way.
Anatomy of a Badge

Each badge begins by stating the badge’s purpose; that is, the skill girls will have learned when they’ve completed the badge. This program-with-a-purpose approach was tested with girls—and they loved it! Girls complete five steps to earn each badge. There are three choices for completing each step (girls have to choose only one to complete the step).

As you begin exploring the journeys and the badges, you’ll see that many steps to earn a badge can be worked naturally into activities that girls are doing on their journey. To help you and the girls see some of these connections, each badge also includes a tip for tying the badge into a specific journey.
Each badge ends with a few ideas about how girls can use their new skill to help others, plus a space for girls to jot down their own ideas. Although girls aren't required to help others to earn the badge; these ideas were offered to honor the standard that Juliette Gordon Low set for badge work 100 ago: “A badge is a symbol that you have done the thing it stands for often enough, thoroughly enough, and well enough to be prepared to give service in it.”

Emblems and Patches

In addition to journey awards and badges in the Girl’s Guide, girls can commemorate their Girl Scout adventures with emblems and patches, which can be worn on their vests or sashes.

- **Emblems** show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout group. These can be worn on the front of a sash or vest (see the diagram in the handbook section of The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting to see where these are placed).

- **Participation patches** are developed at the national or council level with a focus on participation. Some come with companion activity booklets, while others are given out at events. These are worn on the back of the sash or vest, since they are not emblems or earned awards.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at GSNNJ’s shop or by visiting the GSUSA online shop. There, you not only find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level but also can click on a link that shows you exactly where girls can place all their emblems, awards, badges pins, and patches on their vests and sashes!
Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting’s highest awards. These awards offer girls relevant, grade-level-appropriate challenges related to teamwork, goal setting, and community networking and leadership. They also engage girls in building networks that not only support them in their award projects, but in new educational and career opportunities.

Like everything girls do in Girl Scouting, the steps to earning these awards are rooted in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This is why, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level journey (two journeys for the Gold Award). With journeys, girls experience the keys to leadership and learn to identify community needs, work in partnership with their communities, and carry out take-action projects that make a lasting difference. They can then use the skills they developed on a journey to develop and execute excellent projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, encourage girls to go for it by earning these awards at the Junior through Ambassador levels. Check out some of the award projects girls in your council are doing and talk to a few past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award. You’ll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish as leaders—and by the confidence, values, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so. And imagine the impact girls have on their communities, country, and even the world as they identify problems they care about, team with others, and act to make change happen!

All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage girls to go after Girl Scouting’s highest awards—information is available online. Adult guidelines for you to use when helping girls earn their awards are also available online. Information is also available at www.gsnnj.org in the Girl Scouts’ Highest Awards section under Things to Do, Awards & Internships.

Did you know that a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in all four branches of the U.S. Military? A number of college-scholarship opportunities also await Gold Award designees. A girl does not, however, have to earn a Bronze or Silver Award before earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. She is eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which she is registered.

A Tradition of Honoring Girls

From the beginning of Girl Scouts, one prestigious award has recognized the girls who make a difference in their communities and in their own lives. The first of these awards, in 1916, was the Golden Eagle of Merit. In 1919, the name changed to The Golden Eaglet, and in 1920, the requirements for The Golden Eaglet were updated. The First Class Award existed for only two years, from 1938–1940, and was replaced in 1940 with The Curved Bar Award, the requirements for which were updated in 1947. In 1963, GSUSA re-introduced the First Class Award, for a girl who was an “all-around” person, with skills in many fields and a proficiency in one. Today’s highest award, the Girl Scout Gold Award, was introduced in 1980.
Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other exciting initiatives and opportunities exist to support the GSLE. A few examples are listed here, and you can find out how to engage your group in opportunities like these by contacting your council or by visiting www.girlscouts.org/program/program_opportunities. Note that councils may offer different experiences, based on availability of resources and partners in your area.

- **Elliott Wildlife Values Project (EWVP):** Launched more than 10 years ago, the EWVP provides girls with resources, collaborations, and opportunities that enable girls to explore nature, protect the environment, and develop a lifelong commitment to wildlife conservation.

- **First LEGO League (FLL):** FLL introduces girls to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) using LEGO MINDSTORMS, programmable robotics that test girls’ technical skills and expose them to leadership skills.

Girl Scout Traditions: Pass it On!

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important, and are still practiced today. This section describes annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions.

Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate several special days each year, which you’re encouraged to include in your group planning.

- **February 22:** World Thinking Day (the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide).

- **March 12:** The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912. Note that Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sunday”) and extends through the Saturday following March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sabbath”).

- **Third week in April:** Volunteer Appreciation Week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders’ Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop leaders to include all the volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.

- **October 31:** Founder’s Day (Juliette Gordon Low’s birthday).

World Thinking Day: February 22

World Thinking Day, first created in 1926, offers a special day for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world to “think” of each other and give thanks and appreciation to their sister Girl Scouts. February 22 is the mutual birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, and his wife, Olave, who served as World Chief Guide.

Today, girls show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day not only by extending warm wishes but also by contributing to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.
Time-Honored Ceremonies

Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions, and reinforce the values of the Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with their fellow Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways. Many examples of ceremonies—for awards, meeting openings and closings, and so on—are sewn right into the journey, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create.

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons: to open or close meetings, give out awards, welcome new members, renew memberships, and honor special Girl Scout accomplishments. A brief list, in alphabetical order, follows, so that you can become familiar with the most common Girl Scout ceremonies:

- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl’s move from one grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. (Note that *Fly-Up* is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.)
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something spectacular during the Girl Scout year.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Girl Scout Bronze (or Silver or Gold) Award** ceremony honors Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award; Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award), and is usually held for a group or combined with the council recognition.
- **Girl Scouts’ Own** is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic (such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.
- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

For more about ceremonies, visit [www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/ceremonies](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/ceremonies).

Hosting a Girl-Led Event

If you’re working with girls who want to host an event—large or small—be sure girls are leading the event-planning, instead of sitting by passively while you or another adult plans the event. To get girls started, ask them to think about the following questions:

- What sort of event do we have in mind?
- Who is our intended audience?
- Does the audience have to be invited, or can anyone come?
- What’s our main topic or focus?
- What’s our objective—what do we hope to accomplish at the end of the day?
- Will one or more speakers need to be invited? If so, who? How do we find speakers?
- Where will the event take place?
- Is there a charge for this venue?
Is the venue large enough to accommodate the audience?
Do we have to obtain permission to use this venue? If so, from whom?
Are there adequate facilities for the audience? If not, how much will extra portable toilets cost, and how many do we need?
Is there adequate parking or a drop-off point for girls?
Do we need tables? chairs? podiums? microphones? speakers?
What sort of entertainment will we provide?
Will we provide or sell refreshments? If so, what kinds?
How many chaperones will we need? Who will we ask?
What emergency care do we need to plan for? Is the event large enough that local police and fire departments need to be notified?
Do we need to purchase additional insurance for non-Girl Scouts?
How will we advertise the event?
What decorations will we use?
Will we give away any keepsakes?
Will we charge for the event?
Who will set up the event?
Who will clean up after the event?
How will we determine whether the event was a success?

Ideas for girl-led events with family, friends, and community experts are also available in the journey adult guides!

Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

Over time, any organization is going to develop a few common signals that everyone understands. Such is the case with Girl Scouts, which has developed a few unique ways to greet, acknowledge, and communicate, some of which are listed here.

Girl Scout Sign

The idea of the sign came from the days of chivalry, when armed knights greeted friendly knights by raising the right hand, palm open, as a sign of friendship. To give the sign yourself, raise the three middle fingers of the right hand palm forward and shoulder high (the three extended fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise). Girls give the sign when they:

• Say the Promise or Law.
• Are welcomed in Girl Scouts at an investiture ceremony that welcomes new members.
• Receive an award, patch, pin, or other recognition.
• Greet other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.

Girl Scout Handshake
The handshake is a more formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts, and is also an appropriate way to receive an award. To do the handshake, shake left hands and give the Girl Scout Sign with your right hand.

**Quiet Sign**

The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer, so teach it to girls during your first meeting. The sign is made by raising your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the group see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

**Girl Scout Slogan and Motto**

The Girl Scout slogan is, “Do a good turn daily.” The Girl Scout motto is, “Be prepared.”

**Songs**

Whether singing around a campfire or joining a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship that music creates. In fact, the first *Girl Scout Song Book*, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925. Since then, the organization’s love of music has grown along with the girls it has empowered.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to [http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp). A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out the GSNNJ shop or visit the [GSUSA online shop](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp).