My First Year
Brownie

A complete guide for your first year of leading a Girl Scout troop

girl scouts of northeast texas

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On average, troop co-leaders spend 6-11 hours per month volunteering (+8 during cookie season). We want to help you enjoy as much of that time as possible! This guide takes the guesswork out of leading a troop.

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Checklist for New Troop Leaders

Starting a New Girl Scout Troop

Week 1

- [ ] Register as a Girl Scout troop leader
- [ ] Complete a **background check**. You will receive an email invite from **theadvocates@sterlingvolunteers**
- [ ] Meet your placement specialist and **set-up your troop meeting details**
- [ ] Join the New Leader Academy Facebook Group & the New Leader Rallyhood
- [ ] Find a co-leader and invite girls to join your troop – printable invite
- [ ] Complete required training: TR100: New Leader Training; TR402: Protecting Our Girs; & GSUSA Grade Level Essentials in gsLearn
- [ ] Meet your Troop Support Coordinator your main point of contact for support

Week 2

- [ ] Complete new leader training (complete within first 60 days)
- [ ] Discover the ins and outs of the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)
- [ ] Find a bank for your troop account and submit the opening a bank account form – GSNETX Bank Account Process Request to Open a Bank Account
- [ ] Meet with your co-leader and plan a parent meeting using the **Sample Family Meeting Agenda from your New Leader Kit**
- [ ] Find your troop roster in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). Email, text, or call troop parents to introduce yourself
- [ ] Hold the parent meeting (remember to use your parent meeting agenda)

Week 3

- [ ] Complete your bank account set-up and make your first deposit
- [ ] Request a free Rallyhood rally site for your troop. The Rallyhood platform combines the functionality of tools like Evenbrite, SignUp Genius, Facebook, Google, and Calendar/Forms in one place. Troops can customize their sites with photos and information, creating a space for volunteers and parents to communicate
- [ ] Plan and hold your first troop meeting - **Use your New Leader Handbook & the Volunteer Toolkit**

Week 4

- [ ] Attend a leader meeting (in your service unit or council-led).
- [ ] Reach out to get help planning your year in Girl Scouts! Email NewTroop@gsnetx.org
- [ ] Take the **Volunteer Toolkit Challenge** in gsLearn
- [ ] Paricipate in our Best New Troop Year Ever Patch Program
- [ ] Find out about the GSNETX Cookie Program



girl scouts

Welcome to Girl Scouts!

Our Mission

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

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.

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.

"Welcome to Girl Scouts and a great new adventure! Thanks to volunteers like you, a new generation of girls will get the courage, confidence and character they need to lead their lives and our world in the future. The Girl Scout team is here to support you, but YOU are enough—we couldn't do this without YOU!"

Jennifer Bartkowski, CEO GSNETX

Thank you!



Troop Co-Leaders

Help girls reach their potential as creative, courageous leaders
Create a space where girls try new things without worrying about failing
Teach lessons girls will use for decades to come
Try new things along with their girls
Develop leaders' own organizational and leadership skills
Join a global community of sisterhood

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

Getting Started

New leaders often spend the first few weeks getting started and setting up their troop. Be sure to use your **CHECKLIST** on page 3 of this handbook!



Setting up your Troop

Your placement specialist will reach out to you to set up this information in the membership system.

The number of girls to expect in your troop

As a new troop, you can expect to have 10-12 girls. Research has found this is the "sweet spot"—small enough to encourage individual development and large enough to provide an interactive and cooperative learning environment. If your troop doesn't have enough girls assigned or you would like a larger group, GSNETX is here to help you!

Looking to grow your troop more?

As a troop leader, you can make sure your troop is available in the opportunity catalog for new members to register at will, and you can also share a direct link for new families to register directly in your troop through your MY GS account. Adults and girls alike can join your troop this way. If you would like help growing your troop, contact your placement specialist at any time throughout the year.

Meeting Location and Times

Remember, set meeting times that work with your schedule! You will need to choose a location for regular meetings (e.g. a local park, library, private homes). The troop can meet anywhere that follows the GS safety guidelines. You will also need to decide what day of the week and how often the troop will meet. Most of our troops meet twice a month. So, think about what day, which weeks of the month and the time-frame (1, 1.5, or 2 hours; right after school, weekday evening, weekend, etc.)

Troop Interests/Goals/Personality

Also, think about what your troop will want to accomplish this year. What are some goals? Will the troop focus on one theme for the year? We want to know what type of activities you will plan to do throughout your first year. Every troop has a unique "personality." Let us know anything that is special about your troop! Will the girls speak a different language? Include girls with disabilities or learning differences? Do all the girls enjoy a specific sport or activity?

Building an Inclusive Troop

Establishing an inclusive environment that welcomes every girl, fosters a sense of belonging, and provides a safe space for everyone should be a top priority. Girls have a better experience when they are warmly welcomed into a troop.
www.gsnetx.org/newleader

New LeaderTraining

Required Training is Virtual, Free & in **gsLearn**!
(Located in your MY GS account) Plan to complete all three within 3 months.

1. **TR100 - New Leader Training** (required)
2. **TR402 - Protecting Our Girls** (required)
3. **GSUSA Daisy/Brownie/Junior Grade Level Essentials** (strongly encouraged)

Additional Training you need to know about:

Take the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) Challenge in gsLearn and get the exclusive GSNETX VTK Challenge patch! The VTK Challenge is designed to give troop leaders a self-paced hands-on keyboard learning experience to better understand, navigate, and use this online tool for your troop.

These courses include a fee and registration is in **gsEvents**

- When your troop is ready to go on outings/field trips outside the regular meeting place, at least one registered/background checked adult will need to take a qualifying **CPR/First Aid Training**. (Required for field trips & camping)

- Once your troop is ready for an outdoor overnight or camping trip, you will need to have a registered/background checked adult take **TR301 - GSNETX Camping**
(Required for camping OR activities involving fire)

- TR101: Meetings 101 Make & Take features tried, tested, and true best practices and techniques to help you build confidence in your ability to run successful troop meetings.



Check these out at **www.gsnetx.org/volunteertraining**.

A New Leader's Support System

New Leader Rallyhood The New Leader Rallyhood has all the resources you need to get your troop up and running. This one stop resource hub contains resources designed to help new leaders implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. You will find resources to help you plan your troop year, gain parent support, ideas for troop activities, field trips, community service projects and more!

Getting Connected, Socially

Also on **Facebook**, you will find:

GSNETX Learning Channel – facebook.com/learningchannelgsnetx

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas – facebook.com/gsnetx

New Leader Academy – facebook.com/groups/GSNETXNewLeaderAcademy
A group of volunteer mentors and GSNETX staff moderate the New Leader Academy Facebook making it a great place to reach out and ask questions at any time.

Your Support System
Girl Scouts is all about sisterhood. As a leader, you are not alone! Your troop co-leader(s) and parents are your primary team. Get to know them and allow them to help!

Check out page 10, the 4Her resources for more ideas!

Your Service Unit
What is a service unit? It is a geographically defined area that consists of Girl Scout troops that are in the same community or school district. These troops are supported by a service unit team.

Service unit teams consist of experienced Girl Scout volunteers who are there to support one another through the Girl Scout year. The team includes a manager, treasurer, product coordinator, and more.

These volunteers work together to support you by providing activities and event opportunities in your area throughout the year. They also hold monthly meetings for leaders.

Service Unit Meetings
These meetings are usually held monthly and can be in person or virtual.

- Meet and network with fellow volunteers
- Learn about upcoming events and trainings, etc
- Share resources and materials

Your Troop Support Coordinator can get you connected to the volunteers in your service unit.

Your GSNETX Council Staff
We are here for you! Your troop support Coordinator will be here reaching out to you throughout your first year as a troop leader. You will receive a 10-part email series to help guide you through your first two months. If you have a private matter, a conflict to discuss, issues with registration or any other needs, GSNETX can help! Contact your troop support coordinator, Customer Care at 972-349-2403, or email **newtroop@gnsetx.org**.

Co-Leaders, Leading Together

Each troop needs two unrelated adults who are Girl Scout members and have completed a background check to be able to meet. A friend, neighbor, co-worker, or another parent are all great people to lead a troop with. If you need assistance recruiting a co-leader, talk to your placement specialist or troop support coordinator.

Before meeting with parents or the girls, you will want to get together and make some decisions about your troop. Once you have your parent/caregiver meeting you will include them in these decisions.

- Meeting logistics: When, where, how frequently and how long will the troop meet?
- Will the troop consists of girls in the same grade, different grades in the same program grade level, or different grades and mutltiple program grade levels?
- What kind of help will the troop need from parents?
- How will you handle your own daughter during troop activities?
- What type of communication will you use with the troop families?
- Troop finances: Will you have regular troop dues, a troop start-up fee? Who will be on the troop bank account?
- What would you like the troop uniform components to include? Will the leaders purchase for everyone with troop funds or will parents need to get this on their own?
- Plan out the parent/caregiver meeting.



For more information, check for the Co-leader Discussion Questions in the Getting Started Section of the New Leader Rallyhood - **rallyhood.com/160989**.

Working with Parents/Caregivers

Parent/Caregiver Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and introductions to one another and to the Girl Scouts. Ask about each girl and get to know her a little.
- Share how important each family will be to the troop.
- Discuss meeting location, day and times, uniforms and troop dues (you may want to collect at the meeting).
- Set expectations for communication and response times and how parents can get involved to help the troop (4Her program).
- Have parents complete health history forms, annual permission forms. Share contact info for all troop members.
- Discuss the types of activities the troop will participate this year (regular meetings, field trips, events, camping trips).
- Answer any questions the parents may have.

Helpful Tips!

- Don't try to do this alone! Ask parents directly to help with the troop and list out specific needs (4HER program).
- Invite a member of your service unit team to attend if you need help with this meeting.
- Have a "Get to Know my Girl" info sheet so that parents can share helpful info for working with their daughter.
- If girls will attend this meeting, have a craft or simple activity to keep them engaged.
- You can find a list of troop duties for parent participation and a girl info sheet in the New Leader Rallyhood - **https://rallyhood.com/160989**



Parents and other family members can take an active role in supporting their Girl Scout's experience. Use this chart to engage parents at your parent meeting.

The list below explains a number of roles your troop can use throughout the year. 4Her – make a commitment to volunteer 4 hours 4 her this year!

Help Needed	Description
Co-Leader	Partner with leader to provide regular support for all troop activities. Must be a member, background check and training required. Select "Troop Leader" when registering.
Meeting Helper/ Drivers	Assist leaders at meetings with activities. Drivers help drive girls to meetings and activities. Membership and background check required. Select "Troop Volunteer" when registering.
Troop Treasurer	Help leaders with all money matters, budgets, deposits, etc. Membership and background check required. Select "Troop Treasurer or Troop Volunteer".
Camp Trained Volunteer	Coordinate and attend troop campouts. Membership, background check and training required. Select "Troop Volunteer".
CPR/First Aider	Attend outings outside regular meeting place. Membership, background check and certified training required. Select "Troop Volunteer".
Troop Cookie Manager	Promote and run the cookie program for troop members. Membership, background check and training required. Select "Troop Volunteer".
Supplies or Snack Coordinator	Provide assistance by providing or selecting snacks for troop meetings as needed. Collect/purchase troop supplies to be paid for by the troop for activities.
Communications Support	Create a Troop Rallyhood and be the go to person for troop communication. https://gsnetx.formstack.com/forms/trooprally

The help and engagement of every parent is important to the growth of the troop! Invite your parents to share their talents and skills beyond what's included in the chart above. Their is a place for every parent to volunteer in the troop.

How Many Volunteers Do You Need?

Troop co-leaders are responsible for arranging and maintaining proper adult supervision for meetings and activities. Each troop meeting or Girl Scout group must have at least two unrelated adult members and a background check on file present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and one adult in every group must be female.

Use the table to identify how many adults you need based on the number of girls participating:

	TROOP MEETING		FIELD TRIP	
	The adult-to-girl ratio is **two unrelated** volunteers, including one female, for up to this number of girls:	There should be one extra adult for every additional:	The adult-to-girl ratio is **two unrelated** volunteers, including one female, for up to this number of girls:	There should be one extra adult for every additional:
Daisies K-grade 1	**12 Girl Scouts**	**1–6 Girl Scouts**	**6 Girl Scouts**	**1–4 Girl Scouts**
Brownies grades 2-3	**20 Girl Scouts**	**1–8 Girl Scouts**	**12 Girl Scouts**	**1–6 Girl Scouts**
Juniors grades 4-5	**25 Girl Scouts**	**1–10 Girl Scouts**	**16 Girl Scouts**	**1–8 Girl Scouts**
Cadettes grades 6-8	**25 Girl Scouts**	**1–12 Girl Scouts**	**20 Girl Scouts**	**1–10 Girl Scouts**
Seniors grades 9-10	**30 Girl Scouts**	**1–15 Girl Scouts**	**24 Girl Scouts**	**1–12 Girl Scouts**
Ambassadors grades 11-12	**30 Girl Scouts**	**1–15 Girl Scouts**	**24 Girl Scouts**	**1–12 Girl Scouts**

Safety Responsibilities for Girls

Girls who learn about and practice safe and healthy behaviors are likely to establish lifelong habits of safety consciousness. For that reason, each Girl Scout is expected to:

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning.
- Listen to and follow your safety instructions and suggestions.
- Learn and practice safety skills.
- Learn to "think safety" at all times and to be prepared.
- Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation.
- Know how, when, and where to get help when needed.
- Practice the buddy method when participating in troop activities.

Girl Scout Troop Finances

Bank Accounts

- Two volunteers must be on the bank account.
- Find a bank with free accounts for GS Troops.
- Complete and submit the Request to Open a Bank Account form.
- Get approval and go to the bank together to complete the process.
- Register the account with GSNETX.

Suggested Banks that welcome Girl Scouts

Origin	Landmark
Capitol One Bank	Local Credit Unions
Prosperity	American National Bank
Point Bank	Veritex Community Bank

Troop Budgets – Keeping good financial records is a must! Keep receipts and track troop activity costs. Troops should share financial information with parents 2-3 times a year. When planning make sure to keep the troop budget in mind and to save money to help fund next year's activities, too.

Troop Dues – Most troops have troop dues and/or troop start-up fees. Make sure to be flexible with families when collecting troop monies. Troop dues/fees should be just enough to cover the cost of supplies, activity fees and badges/patches. Dues average $3-5/meeting. Start-up fees range between $5 and $30 depending on the troop needs.



Tax Exempt Status – Girl Scout purchases are exempt from taxation in Texas. Always take an exemption form with you when making Girl Scout purchases. The form can be found at **www.gsnetx.org/forms**

Fund Raising – A troop's primary money earning should come from the GSNETX fall product sale and Cookie Program. Once a troop has participated in the annual cookie program, they are able to participate in other troop money earning activities such as garage sales or car washes.

Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance is made available to all members and is intended to ensure the cost of membership never keeps a girl from experiencing Girl Scouts. For more information: **www.gsnetx.org/en/members/for-parents-and-families/financial-assistance.html**

For more information about finances check out Volunteer Essentials **www.gsnetx.org/volunteeressentials**.

Girl Scout Traditions

Hand Sign – Raise three fingers of the right hand with the thumb holding down the pinky. The 3 fingers represent the three parts of the Promise.

Handshake – Shaking hands with the left hand and make the GS sign with the right hand. The left hand is nearest to the heart and signifies friendship.

Friendship Circle – The unbroken chain of friendship. Girl Scouts stand in a circle crossing their right arms over their left, and clasping hands with their friends on both sides.

Girl Scout Out – A fun way to end a meeting are when the girls are in a friendship circle, the girls spell Girl Scout with each girl saying one letter, the girl who says "O" is out." That girl in turn raises her arms still clasping hands, turning to the right and out of the circle. The next girl begins again with the "G" until the last girl is left as the winner.

SWAPS – Small tokens of friendship that girls often make and take to events or while traveling to swap with other Girl Scouts – "Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere".

Kaper Charts – A chart dividing up troop responsibilities. Indicates all the jobs available and who is responsible during a meeting or a camp-out.

Keeping Girls Safe and First Aid Kits

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. Purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit.



Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms, and health histories may be included as well. Check the kit regularly. Make sure the flashlight batteries work. Check expiration dates and replace any used or out-of-date contents.

Items to include:

- Adhesive bandages
- Sterile gauze pads
- Antibiotic ointment packets
- Hydrocortisone ointment packets
- Antiseptic wipe packets
- Nonlatex gloves
- Instant cold compress

Always keep your kit and your emergency card with the troop at all times.

Troop Communication

Good communication is essential to a well-run troop. A good idea is to always provide a deadline for communication responses. It's also important to keep a honest and open line of communication in place with parents regarding updates to troop activites, behavior, and/or special needs of the girls in the troop.



Commonly Used Forms

gsnetx.org/forms

As a troop leader, you will find that forms are a necessity! Some useful forms you will need include:

Girl Health History Forms – To be completed by caregivers each year.

Permission Forms – To be completed by care givers each year.

Activity Approval Forms – This form is required for Girl Scout events or activities that may require extra levels of safety, care or permission. It is also required for any money-earning activity beyond the Girl Scout cookie program or fall product sales.

Opening or changing a Girl Scout bank account and ACH registration – See finances section on page 12.

Tax Exemption Form – Whenever purchasing troop supplies, etc.

Troop Changes Form – Making changes to volunteer roles and transferring girls in/out of the troop.

Troop Info Update Form – Updating meeting information and troop description.

Your Year in Girl Scouts

AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
 National S'more Day  Recruit New Girls to Your Troop Back to Girl Scouts Plan Your Year GSNETX Leader Kick-Off	Hispanic Heritage Month Back to Girl Scouts Investiture Ceremonies Fall Product Begins Recruit New Girls to Your Troop	Girl Scout Membership Year Begins  Juliette Gordon Low's Birthday	Thanksgiving
DECEMBER	**JANUARY**	**FEBRUARY**	**MARCH**
	Happy New Year!  Cookie Sale	Black History Month  World Thinking Day Engineering Week	Women's History Month  Girl Scout Week Girl Scouts Celebrate Faith
APRIL	**MAY**	**JUNE**	**JULY**
Earth Day National Volunteer Month  Girl Scout Leader Day	Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month  National Bridging Week Mental Health Awareness Month Early Bird Renewal/ Extended Year Membership Begins	National Get Outdoors Day Day/Twilight Camps Resident Camps	Independence Day Resident Camps

Visit **gsnetx.org/events** to learn more about our events and find the most up-to-date information. All events are subject to change without notice.

Product Sales Program
5 Skills + Financial Literacy

Each year, troops have two opportunities to participate in council sponsored money earning activities: the Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Each of these programs offer girls and troops the opportunity to earn funds to power their Girl Scout adventures, as well as rewards to keep girls engaged and motivated.

Through their participation in product sales programs, girls are able to launch their very own businesses while learning important life skills along the way:

Goal Setting

Decision Making

Money Management

People Skills

Business Ethics

There are also Cookie Business Badges and curriculum that help troop volunteers guide girls on this journey to developing their confidence in having a voice to set their goals, decide what they want to do with the money earned and understanding how to successfully run their Cookie Program.

- With the support of a volunteer in your Service Unit and the council Product Sales team, you will be connected to resources and support to ensure that you and your troop have everything that you need to have a successful experience.
- It's important to remember that any funds earned through money earning activities become property of the troop as a whole to further the Girl Scout experience.
- It must also be a girl-led decision on how these funds should be spent. Troop funds can be used towards meeting supplies, badges, field trips and activities, camping, experiences and more.

Fall Product Program | September – October
This is a great way to get girls and families comfortable with participating in council sponsored money earning activities.

- **What:** Girls sell nuts, candy and magazines online to family and friends.
- **How:** Customers can select to have their order delivered by the Girl Scout or shipped directly to them. Products to be delivered by girls will be shipped directly to the troop in November for distribution to girls and families.
- **Why:** Troops earn 20% of total sales that will be deposited into troop bank accounts in December.

Cookie Program | December – February
The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world! The bulk of the troop's funds are earned through girls' participation in the Cookie Program and it's where they truly get to put the 5 Skills they have learned into action.

- **What:** Girls sell cookies to customers near and far online, in-person, and at booth sales.
- **How:** Family and friends support their favorite Girl Scout by purchasing cookies to help her reach her goal. With the support of parents/caregivers and troop volunteers, girls can also participate in booth sales at local grocery stores, restaurants and more.
- **Why:** Troops earn proceeds on each package of cookies sold and girls earn rewards based on the number of packages they sell.

Ready, Set, Take Action

Community Service and Take Action Projects

Make the world a better place. For over 100 years, Girl Scouts have been encouraged to do anything they set their sights on and as a result, Girl Scouts continue to make an impact locally and globally.

Community Service Projects

Community service projects address an immediate need in the community and are appropriate for every Girl Scout – Junior through Ambassador! A great definition of community service is, "Community service makes the world a better place for some people right now."

Take Action Projects

Take Action projects transform a community service project into a long-term, lasting impact for the community. With Take Action projects, girls are challenged and encouraged to research, plan, and lead projects that tackle the root of a local, national, or global problem. Girls think bigger and are encouraged to solve and address the problem in a way that will prohibit the problem from reoccurring. Take Action projects aim for long-term benefits that change the world in a meaningful, measurable, and sustainable way!

What is Take Action?

Girls will create and carry out a Take Action project with every Journey they complete. The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards all require the completion of a Take Action project.

Overview of Take Action

A Take Action project is a chance for girls to partner with others in their community to solve a problem. They learn about getting to the root causes of issues, mobilizing and engaging community members and volunteers, and striving toward creating a lasting change in their world. An important component is to understand and address the cause of a problem.

Girls must also make sure each project is sustainable and that the impact is measurable.

- **Sustainable:** Girls must make arrangements to ensure that the project creates lasting change and is not a one-time event. (Collaborate with community leaders and/or organization; creating relationships with mentors)
- **Measurable:** The success of the project can be determined based on the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved, any reduction in the community's need, and other concrete numbers.

Steps of a Good Take Action Project

1. Girls identify assets and needs in a community.
2. Girls reach out beyond their circle to meet others. Try to meet people affected by your issue and people who are trying to solve it.
3. Girls make a decision about what they will take action on.
4. Girls learn the steps needed to carry out an action plan.
5. Girls assist with project logistics.
6. Girls take action alongside community members.
7. Girls reflect on their action and assess what they gained from it. Girls celebrate their community accomplishments.

Girl Scout Camping

When Girl Scouts get outside and connect with nature in a girl-led setting, they grown in self-confidence, develop their leadership skills, and foster a passion for environmental stewardship. Many Girl Scouts will tell you that camping trips and summer camp are some of the best things about their Girl Scout experience.

Our Camp and Outdoor Program

With a troop camp-trained adult along, girls can go troop camping at one of our five beautiful camps throughout the school year. Summer brings day/twilight camps, sleep away camping, and fun summer day camps for our girls to enjoy. Summer opportunities are announced in February /March each year. For more information about out camps check our website: **gsnetx.org/camp**

Camp Properties

STEM Center of Excellence Located in South Dallas, this camp is the perfect mix of hands-on STEM exploration and traditional camp activities. Workshops, trail hiking, and swimming is just some of the fun to be found here. Don't forget the s'mores!

Camp Bette Perot in Palestine is home to our Equestrian Leadership Center. Camp in a platform tent, cabin, or lodge. Swim in a sparkling pool, go for a horseback ride, go fishing, challenge yourself on the ropes course and so much more!

Camp Gambill is a tranquil camp retreat outside of Paris, Texas. This beautiful property features air conditioned cabins, a calming lake, Goosey Golf and a mascot, Kippy the Goose. Activities include swimming, hiking, kayaking, laser tag and paddle boating.

Camp K (Kadohadocho) is 150 rustic acres outside Pottsboro on Lake Texoma. This property is for our most adventurous, primitive campers.

Highest Awards

Once your girls are Junior Girl Scouts, your troop will be able to complete the first level of our higher awards – **The Bronze Award**.

Girl Scout Juniors team up to make a difference in their community. They learn important leadership skills, discover new passions, and watch how seemingly small actions make a big difference. Girls may earn individually or as a troop. Earning the Bronze award includes the completing of a GS Journey and a suggested 20+ hours of project planning, implementation and promotion. Learn more about the Bronze award at gsnetx.org under Programs and Highest Awards.

Cadette Girl Scouts may earn the **Silver Award**, our second-highest award and Seniors and Ambassadors may earn the highest award, **The Gold Award**. For more information about these awards, visit our website **gsnetx.org**.

The Volunteer Toolkit:
Your Digital Troop Assistant

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

This web-based program allows you more time to focus on your girls. It makes managing your troop and planning your meetings smooth and easy all year long. Inside, you'll find meeting overviews, activity plans, badge and journey outlines, meeting aids, Girl Scout resources and more!

Plan and Customize Your Year

At Girl Scouts, we know that when girls take part in shaping their Girl Scouts experience and adventures, they will be more engaged and will have more fun! The VTK makes it easy for troop co-leaders and girls explore meeting topics and ideas available for their grade level together and select what they want to include in their year. Co-leaders can take this information to plan and customize the troop's year using the VTK's pre-populated meeting plans, agendas, supply lists, and activity instructions.

Manage Troop Rosters, Attendance, and Accomplishments

With the VTK you will be able to view your troop roster, update contact information, record attendance at meetings, track girls' badge and Journey achievements, and renew memberships.

One-Click Communication

The VTK is not just for co-leaders, it's for parents, too! With its unique parent-view, parents can keep up with troop activities, meeting information, and what badges and Journeys their girls are working on. You can also email upcoming meeting agendas and troop plan to them with just one click.

Learn more about the VTK

For more information about the Volunteer Toolkit, including how to set-up a troop year plan, take the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) Challenge in gsLearn

Easy Navigation at your Fingertips!

Here are just a few of the many features you'll find inside the VTK. We strongly encourage troop co-leaders to utilize the VTK to streamline their troop management and planning. GSUSA continues to update and enhance the VTK with additional resources, features and functions.

MY TROOP

- View, edit, download and print rosters.
- Edit contact info.
- View achievements and attendance.
- Email families.
- Renew memberships.

YEAR PLANS

- Specify meeting dates and locations.
- Preview and choose pre-populated year plans.
- Add and/or combine meeting plans to customize your year.
- Add custom troop activities like celebrations, field trips, camping trips, etc.

MEETING PLANS

- View, download, or print individual meeting summaries, activity plans and supply lists.
- Track attendance and achievements.
- Search and print meeting aids such as nametags, handouts, and more.

RESOURCES

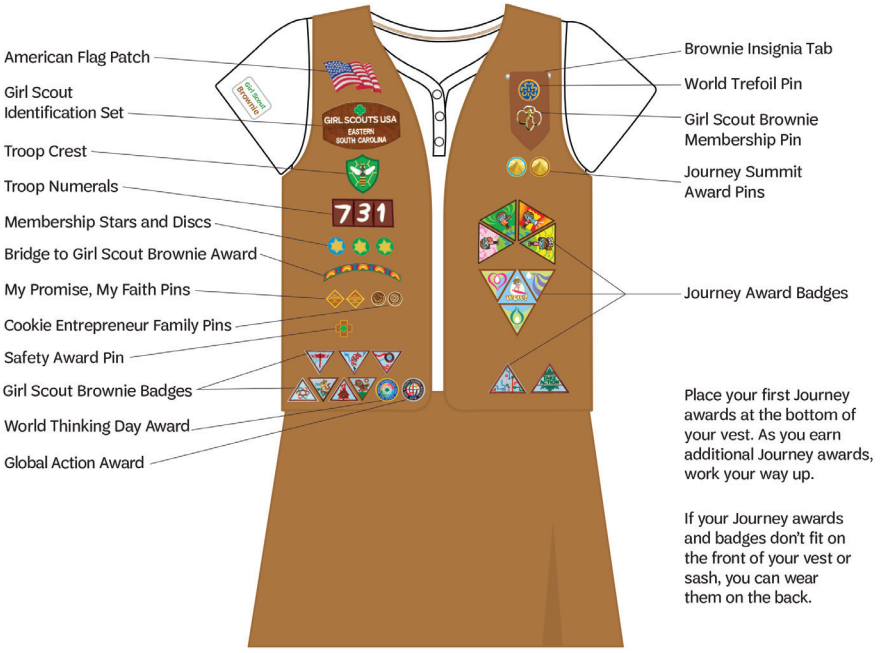
- Access award logs, badge charts, meeting plans, and more.
- Access council specific resources on troop leadership, safety, training, GS traditions and awards, trips and travel, GS product sale, and camp and outdoor programs.

FINANCES

- Submit the annual troop finance report.

Pin and Badge Placement for Brownie Uniforms

Girl Scout Brownie Vest



Girl Scout Brownie Sash



Working with Brownies

Girls at this age have a variety of skills at different levels. Reading abilities, attention spans, and small motor coordination are still developing. As you get to know your troop, you'll better help them plan activities and adjust your own expectation levels. Be sensitive to their feelings about their differences and remember that each girl is an individual.



Girl Scouts is girl-led!

Brownies (2nd/3rd Grade Girls)	This means
Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.
Are social and enjoy working in groups.	Allow girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.
Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.	Let girls lead, direct, and help out whenever possible. Allow group decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	Do more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf's adventures. Ask questions to gauge understanding and allow them to role-play a pretend visit to a new country.
Need clear directions and structure, and like knowing what to expect.	Offer one direction at a time, and have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.
Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money, and distance.	Offer support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings, count out money for a trip, etc.
Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and tie shoes, use basic tools, beginning to sew, etc.	Encourage girls' creative expression by making things with their hands. They may still need some assistance with things like holding scissors or threading needles.
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	Girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girls to their school or telling a story through dance or creative movement.
Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job done well.	Acknowledge when the girls have listened or followed directions well, which will boost their motivation to listen and follow directions again.

Letting Brownies take the lead:

- Encourage girls to be creative and add their own flair to projects and activities.
- Let the girls try new things and make mistakes in the attempt.
- Let the girls do the talking with meeting guests, their troop mates, other troops, or the service units.
- Ask thoughtful questions instead of just providing answers.
- Let girls make decisions between multiple options.
- Use the buddy system with Brownies at each meeting or outing.
- Brownies can lead meetings with a caregiver or as a small group with adult guidance!

Meeting as a Troop

Your Troop Year at a Glance

We have found that troops who meet twice a month have the best experience! Make sure you mix it up and that meetings and outings capture the interests of the girls in your troop! In the rest of your handbook we have provided a simple set of meeting plans for you to use. More information on leading these badges can be found in your **Volunteer Toolkit**.

This is a great starting place for a troop to get started, but a troop isn't just about earning badges or Journeys, it really about making sure that the girls are making age appropriate decisions and having fun. To that end, you will want to weave a variety of activities into your Girl Scout year. Girls will enjoy getting outdoors, performing community service, going on field trips and just hanging out together having fun and having new experiences. Two pieces of advice: keep it girl-led and keep it fun!

To help you create a well-rounded year in Girl Scouting, set up your troop calendar in the Volunteer Toolkit. Take the Volunteer Toolkit Challenge in gsLearn and see how easy it is to create a year plan based on the badges your Girl Scouts want to earn!

Resources For Planning Meetings

Virtual Meetings

In today's world many troops are finding the need to offer virtual meetings. Troops can meet virtually, -in-person, or a hybrid of the two. It's a great idea to discuss this with your co-leader(s) and your troop families. You can find tips, tools, and ideas for virtual troop meetings at **www.girlscouts.org/en/members/for-volunteers/virtual-meeting-planning.html**.

Virtual Meeting Playbook – This is a great resource for leaders to learn how to adapt to a virtual meeting format. Check it out at: **www.gsnetx.org/volunteertraining**

For Volunteers – Find resources, guides, and more that are essential to volunteers. The resources on this webpage will help you along the way in your volunteer journey. Whether you're looking for guidance on managing troop finances or need help planning your first year of meetings, you'll find everything you need. **https://www.gsnetx.org/en/members/for-volunteers.html**.

Jumpstart – Unsure how to lead STEM badges? This is your easy to use, on-the-go digital assistant helping leaders deliver empowering, enjoyable, STEM programming to girls! Just create an account on our website at **gsnetx.org/jumpstart**.



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. Don't let that hold you back. Be open with the girls and when you don't know something and that you will be learning together. You'll show them that learning is a lifelong process and that with an open mind, they can overcome any challenge that comes their way.

Six Elements of a Great Troop Meeting

The only requirement for your troop meetings is that your girls are engaged and having fun! Many leaders use this basic structure for troop meetings:

1. **Ramp Up** – plan an opening activity for girls upon arrival at the meeting so that have something to do before the meeting begins. Plan about five minutes for this, it could be snack, or creating a thank you card, coloring a page to donate, etc.
2. **Opening** – Each troop decides what they will do regularly. Most begin with the reciting the Girl Scout Promise & Law, a song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. Plan 5-10 minutes for this.
3. **Troop Business** – Collect dues, take attendance, make announcements or plan upcoming activities while parents may be present.
4. **Let the fun begin!** This is your activity for the meeting, work on a badge, journey, or complete other activities during this time plan 30 minutes to 1 hour according to your meeting time.
5. **Clean Up** – Girls clean up all supplies and always leave a place cleaner than they found it. Plan about five minutes.
6. **Closing** – As a troop, girls decide how they will end each meeting – a song, a game, a Girl Scout tradition. Plan 5-10 minutes for this.

Got Snacks?

Snacks are optional, but if your troop has chosen to include snacks, guide families to consider healthy snacks and always share any food allergies the girls in your troop may have. Include snack time as part of your troop meeting.

First Meeting Checklist

- ❑ Cover the basics. Review the details about when and where the meeting will take place and make sure parents/caregivers are aware.
- ❑ Get ready. Use the VTK to verify your troop roster and email parents. This might be a great time to remind parents to send health history forms, uniform orders, and troop dues to the meeting.
- ❑ Know the agenda. Refer to the Six Elements of a Troop Meeting list and your meeting agenda/plans
- ❑ Review and practice your agenda. You'll feel calmer during the actual meeting and ready to make adjustments as needed.
- ❑ 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!

Planning your Girl Scout year

- Choose your dates – be sure to consider holidays and schedules.
- Decide how many Girl Scout meetings/ activities a month the troop will do.
- We recommend you start with the badges included in your *My First Year Handbook* and let the girls vote on the order.
- Decide how the troop will choose meeting topics and activities. Remember to keep it girl-led.
- Have a list of ideas for the girls to vote on doing and when to do each, or have the girls bring ideas to your meeting for a vote.
- Alternate regular meetings with fun outings, field trips or events.
- Include a wide variety of activities for the girls to participate in throughout the year.
- Keep it age appropriate.
- Consider what the troop will do during inclement weather, illness, etc. Is virtual an option for your troop?
- Will the troop do one activity each month during the summer or be on a break?
- Remember to be flexible – be prepared for a meeting plan to run askew and adjust – keep it fun! If girls miss a meeting, it's okay. Making up a badge is voluntary.
- Take time to get to know the girls and their interests – make sure at least one meeting meets each girl's individual interests.
- As you plan your year, engage the parents with the girls – have each girl sign up to lead a meeting with her caregiver, she chooses the badge/activity and you serve as their mentor.

4 Girl Scout Pillars and The Girl Scout Promise & Law

- STEM
- Outdoors
- Life Skills
- Entrepreneurship

Other ideas to include

- Field Trips
- Service Unit Events
- Community Service
- Council-led Events
- GSNETX Patch Programs

Resources to help you plan

- Volunteer Toolkit
- GSNETX New Leader Rallyhood
- Service Unit leader meetings
- Get ideas from experienced Troop Leaders
- GSUSA Badge booklets & Journeys GSUSA & GSNETX Patch Programs

Example of how to plan your calendar

For meeting 1 & 2 each month – rotate badges/activities based on the 4 pillars

Month 1 Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 2** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 3** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 4** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 5** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 6** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?
Month 7 Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 8** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 9** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 10** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 11** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?	**Month 12** Meeting 1 Meeting 2 Additional?

*GSNETX – Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas Council *GSUSA – Girl Scouts of the United States of America

Your Brownie Year-at-a-Glance

The Brownie Smile Song

I've got something in my pocket, it belongs across my face.

I keep it very close at hand, in a most convenient place.

I'm sure you couldn't guess it if you guessed a long, long while.

So I'll take it out and put it on, it's a Great Big Brownie Smile!

Here's to a great year in Girl Scouting!

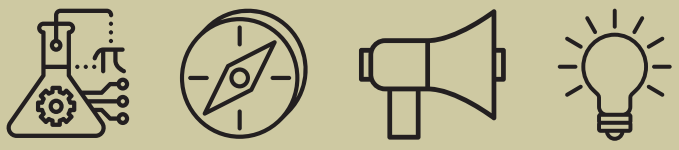
The rest of this handbook includes 8-10 meeting plans that have been simplified to help you get your year started! These meeting plans are meant to be used in conjunction with the Volunteer Toolkit. We hope this helps you gain confidence as you embark on your own Girl Scout journey.

For more information about taking your troop camping or on a trip: **www.gsnetx.org/volunteeressentials**.

The Girl Scout Secret Sauce

WHAT:

Girl Scouts do activities in Four Pillars



Traditions | Troop Meetings | Field Trips
Badges | Patches | Journeys | Camp
Cookie Business | Take Action Projects

HOW:

Girl Scouts experience our unique environment and three processes

Environment = all-girl safe space with supportive adult mentors (you!)

Three processes = girl-led, learn by doing, cooperative learning

The **"secret sauce"** is the vehicle that distinguishes Girl Scouts from other youth organizations and the driver of amazing leadership outcomes!

WHY:

Girl Scouts become people of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

Outcomes, or benefits, of the Girl Scout experience include:

Sense of Self • Positive Values
Healthy Relationships • Challenge Seeking
Community Problem Solving

Making Friends
(suggested activity time: 60 minutes)



Friends are another kind of family. They're the people you have fun with and who help you when you need it. Try this badge to learn how to make new friends, keep old friends, and be the best Brownie friend you can be.

Objective: When your girls have earned this award, they'll know how to be a good friend.

Materials: 3 sheets of paper per girl, writing utensils

Step 1: Introduce yourself (20 minutes)

Introduce: We are going to practice making introductions by playing a game. Introducing yourself to others helps you find out things you have in common and form friendships.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: How do you introduce yourself to new people? Where can you make new friends?

Do this activity: Tell the girls they are going to get to know each other a little better by introducing themselves. One at a time, have each girl introduce herself by stating her name and something she likes. After each girl shares one of her interests, ask the group, "If you share this interest, raise your hand!" If time allows, go around the group more than once to have girls share multiple interests.

Reflect: Did you have a lot in common with your friends? Did you learn something about a friend that you didn't know before?

Step 2: How to be a good friend (10 minutes)

Introduce: It is important to show your friends that you care about them. We are going to brainstorm ways to be a good friend.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What qualities do you look for in a friend?

Do this activity: Make sure each girl has a piece of paper and something to write with. Ask the girls to take a few minutes to list all the things that someone can do to be a good friend. After giving them a few minutes, go around and have the girls share their lists.

Reflect: Did you have some of the same ideas about how to be a good friend?

Step 3: Share an activity with a friend (10 minutes)

Introduce: A great way to show a friend you care is to pay special attention to what is important to them. Just because you are friends doesn't mean you both like the same things. We are going to learn about each other's favorite activities.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What activities do you like to do? *Don't have them answer; just ask them to think about it.*

Do this activity: Have each girl make a list of their favorite things to do (songs, books, shows, movies, etc.). After each girl is done, have them share their list with the group. Each girl should then pick one of the activities from their friend's list to try before the next meeting.

Reflect: Did you have any favorite activities in common? Who wants to share what activity they picked to try?

Make sure to access your Volunteer Toolkit for more info on leading this badge and for meeting aids to assist you. Also, check out the Virtual Meetings Playbook at gsnetx.org/volunteertraining for help adapting your in-person meeting to a virtual meeting.

Step 4: Kind words (10 minutes)

Introduce: Words can hurt, so it's important to use nice ones when you disagree. Practice using nice words to come to a solution that makes both people feel good.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What should you do if you disagree with someone? How does it make you feel when someone disagrees with you?

Do this activity: Tell the girls you are going to give them an example of a disagreement *(your friend is ignoring you, a classmate says they don't like your shoes, etc.)*. After you give the example, ask for volunteers to tell the group how they would solve the disagreement.

Reflect: What did you notice about the problem-solving strategies? Did you deal with disagreements in similar ways?

Step 5: Make a friendship plan (10 minutes)

Introduce: Now it's time to practice your friend skills. First, make a list of the top three things you discovered that makes someone a good friend. Then make a friendship plan for how you can meet new people and be the friendliest you can be!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Can we get some volunteers to share their top three?

Do this activity: Give the girls a sheet of paper and have them divide it into three sections labeled places, ways, and friendship plan. Under places, girls should write places they can meet new people. Under ways, have girls write ways they can make friends. Finally, have them pick a place and way from the first two sections and come up with a friendship plan for making new friends in the third section.

Reflect: Would anyone like to share their friendship plan with the group?

Painting

(suggested activity time: 60 minutes)



Artists take what they see and make it beautiful. Learn to paint and color your world in super strokes!

Objective: When your girls have earned this badge, they'll have new ideas about what to paint – and how to paint it.

Materials: Painting match up worksheet (VTK), washable paint, thick paper or small canvases, paper plates, paint brushes, large sheet of butcher paper or poster board

Step 1: Get inspired (5 minutes)

Introduce: Today we are going to become artists! To help us become inspired, we are going to start by learning more about paintings you like, and the artists that created them.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What types of paintings do you like? What do you think makes a painting "good"?

Do this activity: Break the girls into small groups and give each group a painting match up worksheet. Read through the descriptions aloud as a group, and have each group try to match up the styles of each of the four paintings. Review the answers together as a group.

Reflect: Which of the four styles was your favorite? What do you like about that painting?

Make sure to access your Volunteer Toolkit for more info on leading this badge and for meeting aids to assist you. Also, check out the Virtual Meetings Playbook at gsnetx.org/volunteertraining for help adapting your in-person meeting to a virtual meeting.

Step 2: Paint the real world (15 minutes)

Introduce: Painting what's around you is the first step to becoming an artist. For our next step, we are going to try to paint still life. A "still life" is an object, like a bowl of fruit or a vase.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Look around the room/meeting location. What items do you see that would be fun to paint? What do you notice about the item? As you are painting, be sure to think about the colors, the shape, texture, and the way the light hits it.

Do this activity: Have each girl choose which image she will paint and set her up with the object in front of her. Pass out the paper/canvases, paintbrushes, and paper plates. Help the girls put a little of each paint color on their plate. Let the girls work for 10-12 minutes. Once they are done, have then share their painting with the group.

Reflect: How did your painting turn out? Does it look like the object in front of you?

Step 3: Paint a mood (10 minutes)

Introduce: Some painters create "abstract" art. They don't paint objects or people. Instead, they use shapes, lines, and colors to paint a feeling or mood. In this next activity, we are going to pretend we are artists painting an emotion.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What colors would you use to create a calm feeling? *Ask the same for a few more emotions.*

Do this activity: Have each girl choose an emotion to paint. Be sure to affirm girls' choices. All emotions are valid, and it's healthy to be able to identify and feel a variety of emotions. On a new piece of paper, have the girls create abstract art to represent a feeling. Once the girls have finished their paintings, invite the group to guess which emotion each painting was meant to represent.
Reflect: Was your intended emotion immediately recognizable by other people? How?

Step 4: Paint without brushes (10 minutes)

Introduce: For our next painting activity, we are going to change our painting style by changing the tools we use. We are going to finish our paintings without brushes!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: If we aren't using brushes, what do you think we will use to paint?

Do this activity: Have the girls put down their brushes and either start a new painting or continue their paintings with their fingers. When all the girls have clean hands, ask them to share their painting with the group. Encourage the other girls to say what they like about their friends' paintings.

Reflect: How did your painting change when you changed your painting tool? What other types of painting tools could you use if you didn't have a brush?

Step 5: Paint a mural (20 minutes)

Introduce: A mural is a big painting that tells a story. Today, we are going to work as a team to create our own mural.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What kind of story do we want to tell with our mural? What kinds of images should we include to tell this story?

Do this activity: As a team, have the girls decide on what they want to paint for their mural. Work together to make sure each girl understands how she will contribute to the final product. Give the girls their painting materials and have them work collaboratively to create their troop mural.

Reflect: What story does your mural tell? How did it feel to work collaboratively on this piece of art?

Make sure to access your Volunteer Toolkit for more info on leading this badge and for meeting aids to assist you. Also, check out the Virtual Meetings Playbook at gsnetx.org/volunteertraining for help adapting your in-person meeting to a virtual meeting.

Bugs

(suggested activity time: 60 minutes)



Bugs help us in a lot of cool ways. Explore the world of bugs and learn more about these little creatures that do so much!

Objective: When your girls have earned this badge, they'll know all about bugs.

Materials: Computer, paper, drawing and coloring utensils, coffee filters, markers, clothes pins or pipe cleaners

Step 1: Draw a bug poster (15 minutes)

Introduce: We are going to learn more about bugs today! Many people call all insects "bugs," but a bug is actually a certain kind of insect. True bugs have a mouth shaped like a straw that they use to suck nectar from plants or blood from other insects. They also have a special type of front wing. In this badge, we call all our insect friends bugs–even those that aren't true bugs.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Before we get started, does anyone want to share what their favorite bug is? What are some other bugs you can think of?

Do this activity: After brainstorming some bugs, have the group pick which bugs they want to draw. Have the girls work together to draw the bug and list everything they know about it. After they are done with their drawings, help them find more facts about their bugs online to make an informational bug poster.

Reflect: What bug did you choose? What is your favorite new fact you learned about your bug? Do bugs scare you or creep you out? How does learning about bugs help us feel more comfortable with them?

Step 2: Try a bug craft (15 minutes)

Introduce: You have already drawn pictures of bugs and learned some buggy facts. Now, let's have some more fun with bugs by making butterflies!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What do you know about butterflies? When have you seen a butterfly? What did you notice about it?

Do this activity: Give each girl a coffee filter and art supplies. Using markers, the girls should decorate their coffee filters to create the wings of the butterfly. When they have finished the wings, cinch the middle the coffee filter with the clothes pin or pipe cleaner to create the body. Invite the girls to get moving and fly their butterflies around the room.

Reflect: Do your butterflies all look the same or different? Do they look like butterflies in nature? Why or why not? Do butterflies all look the same in nature? How do you think the different colors of different butterfly species help them thrive?

Step 3 and 5: See bugs in action (15 minutes)

Introduce: Bugs are very busy! The best place to view buggy critters is outside where they live, so we are going to go on a bug field trip to see some real bugs.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What do you think bugs do all day that keeps them so busy?

Do this activity: Go outside and look for bugs in your area. For each bug you find, have the group try to identify the bug and find out what they are doing.

Make sure to access your Volunteer Toolkit for more info on leading this badge and for meeting aids to assist you. Also, check out the Virtual Meetings Playbook at gsnetx.org/volunteertraining for help adapting your in-person meeting to a virtual meeting.

Bugs (cont.)

Reflect: What were the bugs doing? Did they seem to notice you observing them? How are we like bugs?

Step 4: Explore bug homes (15 minutes)

Introduce: We saw bugs doing things outside, but have you ever thought about where bugs live? It isn't just bugs that are cool; the places they live are fun to explore, too!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What do you think bug houses look like? Do you think all bug houses look the same, or do different bugs have different homes?

Do this activity: Ask each girl to think of one specific bug. Using the coloring utensils, each girl should draw what she thinks that bug's house looks like on a sheet of paper. Tell the girls to use their imagination. Don't worry if their ideas are accurate on not, let them be creative! When everyone is done, have them share their pictures with the group.

Reflect: Did you have fun imagining your bug houses? Why did you design your bug house the way you did?

Activity substitutions:

- Instead of making a butterfly in **Step 2**, have the girls paint small rocks to look like the bug of their choice.
- Instead of going on a bug field trip in **Steps 3 and 5**, have the girls listen to the read aloud of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (found on YouTube or check out the book from a local library) and act out what the caterpillar is doing in the story.
- Instead of drawing a bug house in **Step 4**, play the spider web game. Give each girl a small (golf ball sized) ball of yarn and have them stand in a circle. Help the girls tie one end of their yarn around their waist. Girls take turns throwing their yarn to another girl who wraps the yarn around herself once then throws it to a different girl. When they have created their web talk about how spiders spin webs to catch food.

Home Scientist

(suggested activity time: 60 minutes)



By paying careful attention during experiments, scientists learn new things–even if they've done the test before. That means you don't have to grow up to be a scientist. You're a scientist every time you do an experiment! In this badge, we'll find out where science has been hiding in your own home.

Objective: When your girls have earned this badge, they'll be able to see the science all around them.

Materials: Sugar, whipping cream, vanilla, salt, ziplock bags, ice, pepper, food coloring, mixing bowl, two balloons, sheet of paper, raisins, lemon lime soda, tall glass, vinegar, baking soda, two spoons, plastic bottle, cornstarch, water **(see detailed measurements needed in the VTK)**

Step 1: Be a kitchen chemist (20 minutes)

Introduce: Science is responsible for making lots of different foods. Today, we are going to see how simple ingredients can make ice cream.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Why do you think that the cream doesn't freeze solid even though it is a liquid?

Make sure to access your Volunteer Toolkit for more info on leading this badge and for meeting aids to assist you. Also, check out the Virtual Meetings Playbook at gsnetx.org/volunteertraining for help adapting your in-person meeting to a virtual meeting.

Home Scientist (cont.)

Do this activity: Instruct each girl to fill the pint-size bag with sugar, milk, and vanilla. Leaders or caregivers may need to assist. Once bags are filled, seal each baggie tightly. Next, fill each gallon-size bag halfway with ice, then add the salt. Place the pint-sized bag in the gallon-size bag and seal. Tell each girl to shake the bags for about 10 minutes. Consider playing music and making a dance or game out of it to help the time go quickly. After about 10 minutes, you'll see ice cream forming in the small bag.

Reflect: Did you know that science is responsible for making some of our favorite foods? Does that make you think about cooking in a new way?

Step 2: Create static electricity (10 minutes)

Introduce: Ever wonder why your clothes sometimes cling to you? Or why you feel a shock when you touch a doorknob? It's because of static electricity!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What is static electricity? Static electricity is created when objects get an electrical charge. *When two objects rub together, tiny particles called electrons move from one object to another. The object that loses electrons gets a positive charge and the object that gains electrons gets a negative charge. To see what happens when electric charges jump back and forth, we are going to make pepper dance!*

Do this activity: Give each girl a balloon, and a sheet of paper. Pour some salt and pepper on each sheet of paper. Help the girls blow up and tie her balloon, and then rub it on her hair. Finally, have the girls hold her balloon over the salt and pepper and watch it dance!

Reflect: What happened? After you rub your hair with the balloon, the balloon gets a negative charge. When you bring it close to the salt and pepper, the charge attracts the pepper first because it is lighter than the salt.

Step 3: Dive into density (10 minutes)

Introduce: Can you make raisins move without touching them? Let's try an experiment to find out!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: In this experiment, we are going to learn about density. What is density? *Density is not weight, but it is related. For example, if you swim in a pool with floaties or a raft, you won't sink because the air inside is less dense than the water around you. So, the air helps hold you up! Let's look at density in action.*

Do this activity: Pour the soda into the glass until it is about 3/4 of the way full. If each girl has her own glass, have her add six or seven raisins to the soda. If you are only doing one demo glass, let girls take turns adding one raisin to the glass at a time. Tell the girls to carefully observe the raisins in the glass for 30 seconds. They should see the raisins initially fall to the bottom of the glass, but over time begin to "dance" around from the bottom to the top of the glass, and back down again.

Reflect: Discuss their observations as a group. What was surprising? Do they have any theories about what made the raisins "dance?"

Step 4: Make something bubble up (10 minutes)

Introduce: When mixed with a gas like carbon dioxide, some household items can have a fun reaction! Let's test this by blowing up a balloon without using our breath.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: How do you think we can blow up a balloon without breath? Gases like carbon dioxide will try to find a place to go when they are expanding in a confined space. We are going to test this out using balloons.

Do this activity: With one of the spoons, add the vinegar to each girl's bottle. Have the girls work

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with a partner to hold open the mouth of the balloon, and, using the other spoon, pour baking soda into the balloon. Finally, have the girls stretch the balloon's opening over the mouth of the bottle. Make sure the baking soda inside the balloon falls into the vinegar. Observe what happens.

Reflect: What happened? The baking soda and vinegar react, causing the balloon to blow up!

Step 5: Play with science
(10 minutes)

Introduce: We can also use science to make things that are fun. For our next experiment, let's make some dinosaur snot.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Does anyone want to guess what a colloid is? A mixture of one substance suspended in another—like slime.

Do this activity: Give each girl a bowl and cornstarch to dump in it. Measure out one cup of water and add it to the bowl. Add a few drops of food coloring then use hands to mix it all together, making sure all ingredients all well combined.

Reflect: What was your favorite activity we did today? Did you learn something new?

Space Science Adventurer
(suggested activity time: 45 minutes)



Whether you've searched for shooting stars or found shapes in the clouds, you've probably already spent some time looking at the sky. Now's your chance to see the sky in a new way—like a space scientist does!

Objective: When your girls have earned this award, they'll know how to investigate and learn about the sun, moon, planets, and stars.

Materials: paper, writing utensils, computer/tablet, pretzel sticks, mini marshmallows, chocolate sandwich cookies, paper plates

Step 1: Meet the neighbors
(10 minutes)

Introduce: There are eight planets in our solar system. Let's see if we can name them all!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Can someone name a planet in our solar system? We are going to create a way to remember all eight planets.

Do this activity: Go over the eight planets in the solar system. As you name them, have the girls write the first letter of each planet down the side of their paper. Tell the girls to come up with a poem, sentence, or song that uses the first letter of every planet. Ask the girls to share what they came up with.

Reflect: This memorization trick is called a mnemonic. Do you think it will help you remember the planets? What other mnemonic devices do you know?

Step 2: See more than before
(10 minutes)

Introduce: The objects in our solar system—and beyond—are far away. In order to look at them in more detail, space scientists need to use tools. You can use some of these tools too, and today we are going to give it a try!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Can someone tell me a tool that scientists

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use to observe space? We are going to look at some of the pictures taken by the Hubble Space Telescope. It is a large telescope that stays in space to take really clear pictures of our solar system and beyond!

Do this activity: Go to the Hubble Space Telescope image gallery online. Together with the girls, look at some of the pictures. Let the girls pick which images interest them the most. If time allows, have each girl draw the picture that she liked the best.

Reflect: Telescopes allow us to see much more than our eyes alone. Without telescopes, we wouldn't know as much about space because it is so big and far away.

Step 3: Investigate the moon (15 minutes)

Introduce: Have you ever noticed that the moon looks different at different times of the month? It doesn't change shape, but it looks different. These shapes are called the "phases" of the moon.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: How many phases of the moon are there? There are eight phases. To better know these phases, we are going to create a model of all eight next.

Do this activity: Pass out eight chocolate sandwich cookies to each girl. Pull up a picture that shows all 8 phases. Have the girls recreate each phase by removing the white frosting to show the part of the moon we can see during each phase.

Reflect: Does anyone know or have a guess about why we see the moon in these different shapes? The moon does not make its own light. It reflects light from the sun, and the lit portion is what we see. As the moon orbits (moves around) the earth, the sun lights different parts of it. This makes the moon look like it is changing shape.

Step 4: Be a stargazer (15 minutes)

Introduce: For as long as people have been looking at the sky, they've noticed shapes and patterns in the stars. Groups of stars that form shapes are called constellations.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Can anyone name a constellation?

Do this activity: Pass out plates or napkins, pretzel sticks, and mini marshmallows to each girl. It may be helpful to pre portion these in baggies before the meeting. Help the girls find pictures of constellations online. Have the girls choose which one they want to make. Once girls have finished creating their constellations, ask the girls to make up a story about their constellation. If time allows, read or watch some constellation stories.

Reflect: Why do you think people in the past made up stories about these constellations?

Step 5: Celebrate and share (10 minutes)

Introduce: Now that you've learned about the Solar System and the stars, it's time to celebrate and share what you've learned!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What is something you learned today?

Do this activity: Pass out a piece of paper to each girl. Ask the girls to pick something they learned during the meeting and draw a picture they can use to share their knowledge with others.

Reflect: Great job! Make sure to share what you learned with others.

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Philanthropist

(suggested activity time: 45 minutes)



Girl Scouts make the world a better place. One way to do that is to make sure everyone's basic needs are met. In this badge, you'll explore basic human needs and how you can be a "philanthropist"–a person who gives to people who help.

Objective: When your girls have earned this badge, they'll know how to help people in need.

Materials: Magazines, grocery ads, or retail ads, scissors, poster board, glue, computer, sticky notes

Step 1: Learn what every person needs (10 minutes)

Introduce: People enjoy things like swimming pools and amusement parks, and fancy new clothes. We don't necessarily need these things, though. For this first activity, we are going to spend some time figuring out the difference between wants and needs.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What is the difference between wants and needs?

Do this activity: At the top of a piece of poster board, write: "Needs vs. Wants". Have girls sort through the advertisements and cut out pictures of items that a family uses. Once they have a few pictures, discuss the items as a group, and discuss whether each item is a need or a want. Have girls glue the pictures on the poster board with wants on one side and needs on the other.

Reflect: Looking at our poster, do you think we've captured all the things a family needs?

Step 2 and 3: Find out how to help (15 minutes)

Introduce: We are going to learn more about charities that help meet people's needs. We will use the internet to research how food banks and clothing-based charities work to help people in need.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What local charities are you familiar with?

Do this activity: Explain that about 41 million Americans (including 13 million children) don't have enough food. Search for two local charities that help people who are hungry. Let the girls know that the average American throws away about 81 pounds of clothing each year. Search for two local charities that help people who need clothes.

Reflect: What do these charities or organizations have in common? Why is it important to donate food, money, or clothing to charities? What else can we do to support these organizations?

Step 4: Know how to help in times of emergency (10 minutes)

Introduce: We know now that there are people who need help every day, and we know how we can help them. Sometimes, natural disasters can strike and affect more people who will need help in different ways.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What types of disasters might kids in this area experience? What about in other parts of the country?

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Philanthropist (cont.)

Do this activity: Give each girl a sticky note and writing utensil. Ask the girls to write down or draw something that people would need after an emergency. They can think of basic needs such as food and clothing, or specific possessions. If meeting virtually, have the girls write or draw their thoughts on a piece of paper. Write "basic needs" on the top of the poster board. Have them post their notes on the poster.

Reflect: What item would be most important to you after an emergency? Does your family have an emergency preparedness plan?

Step 5: Think and act like a philanthropist (10 minutes)

Introduce: After philanthropists learn about the needs people have, they make a plan to help. Our troop is going to organize a food drive to help families in need.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What do you know about food banks now that we learned more about them?

Do this activity: Set a goal for the number of food items you want to collect. Work with the girls and their families to promote the event to your community. Hold your collection and then deliver the donations to the North Texas Food Bank or a local food bank.

Reflect: What is one thing you learned about philanthropy? How does helping other make you feel?

Other ideas:

- When working on **Step 5**, you can earn the FREE Tackle Hunger patch. To see this and other council patch requirements, visit **http://www.gsnetx.org/patches**
- For **Steps 2 and 3**, take your troop on a tour of a food bank or Goodwill facility. You can find contact information for our partner organizations at **www.gsnetx.org/programpartners**

Budding Entrepreneur

(suggested activity time: 60 minutes)



An entrepreneur is someone who finds ways to help people and solve problems. They are curious about how things work and see each setback as a chance to make things better.

Objective: In this badge, you'll become an entrepreneur by making something, testing it out, and improving your idea to make it the best it can be!

Materials: Paper, writing utensils, colored pencils /crayons, poster board

Step 1: Come up with an idea that makes life better (15 minutes)

Introduce: Think of something you do or use that could be improved or fixed, or come up with an idea that would make life easier or better. Use your imagination and be creative! Then create a prototype. You might even come up with a few ideas before deciding on one.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What is a prototype? *(a first model of something)* What are some things that bug you or that you notice could use help?

Do this activity: Have the girls brainstorm problems/challenges in their lives or around them that could be helped. List the individual girl's suggestions on a poster board piece of paper so the other girls can see. Ask for some volunteers to share their ideas. Ask the girls to pick their favorite idea and draw a prototype.

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Reflect: What do you think the next step is after drawing a prototype?

Step 2: Share your idea with others and get feedback (15 minutes)

Introduce: Entrepreneurs don't stop with the first version of their idea–she will find out how to make her idea the best it can be!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What is feedback? Why is feedback important?

Do this activity: Ask for volunteers to share their prototype with the group. After each girl shares, invite the other girls to give her constructive feedback that might make her prototype better. Tell the girls you will take notes for them to capture everyone's ideas.

Reflect: Now that you've heard what other people think about your idea, how can you use that feedback to improve your idea?

Step 3: Improve your idea (10 minutes)

Introduce: Entrepreneurs know that to be successful, they might face stumbling blocks along the way. They aren't afraid to try something and fail. They know that's just part of the process of improving their idea and bringing it to life. Coming up with an idea is only the beginning. For the next step, we are going to keep trying and growing our ideas.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: How do you want to change your product to make it better?

Do this activity: Tell the girls they have 10 minutes to make improvements on their original ideas. They may include changes like adding something new, rearranging the design, or replacing one thing with another. Remind the girls of the feedback they received from their Girl Scout sisters. You may need to help them think through solutions or changes to their products if they are feeling stuck.

Reflect: Was it hard or easy to make improvements on your original idea?

Step 4: Share how your idea works (10 minutes)

Introduce: Once you have made changes to improve your idea, it's time to find a way to show it to the world. Our next step as entrepreneurs is to design a poster to show our idea in action!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: How do entrepreneurs share their ideas?

Do this activity: Give each girl a poster board (or half of one if you'd prefer). Tell them to draw their product and write down the things it can do. Encourage the girls to highlight the features of their product they are most proud of. **Have them work on their pitch using the resources in the VTK.**

Reflect: What are you most proud of about your prototype? How can you get other people excited about your idea?

Step 5: Title (10 minutes)

Introduce: Now that you have an ad for your invention, you are going to pitch your idea to an audience. A pitch is when you try to convince someone that you have an idea you want them to agree with, or a product you want them to buy. When you see a salesperson explaining a product and asking you to buy it, that's a pitch.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Have you ever pitched an idea before?

Do this activity: Explain the five parts of a pitch using the resources in the VTK. Invite all the girls' caregivers to come for this part of the meeting. Give each of the girls a turn to practice pitching their idea, and answering questions from the audience.

Reflect: What did you learn about being an entrepreneur?

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Brownie Hiker

(suggested activity time: 60 minutes)



Girl Scouts love to sing hiking songs, pack fun and tasty snacks, and hunt for signs of animals and birds. Here's what you need to know to become a Brownie hiker. *This meeting will consist of planning and practice. You should plan on doing your actual hike at the next meeting.*

Objective: When you've earned this badge, you'll know how to hit the trail for a hike.

Materials: Computer, paper, writing utensils, plastic sandwich bags, peanuts, raisins, optional add-ins for GORP, bowls, scoops or spoons, poster board

Step 1: Decide where to go
(10 minutes)

Introduce: We are going to plan a fun hike! First, we need to find out where we can hike in our area. Some distances look short on a map, but they are quite long. We will work together to pick a hike that's just right!

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Has anyone been on a hike before? If so, where did you go?

Do this activity: Work with the girls to find trails in your area. Ask the girls how far of a hike they want to go on (be reasonable). Look at the different trails and narrow down your list based on distance/length. Decide as a group where you are going to hike to.

Reflect: What excites you about the hike we just planned?

Step 2: Try out a hiking skill
(20 minutes)

Introduce: To get ready before we hit the trail, we are going to practice going on a hike around the neighborhood.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What skills do you think you need for hiking?

Do this activity: Before you go on your practice hike, make a simple map of your route. Break the girls into three groups. One group will be trailblazers. They're in charge of directions and will trace them on the map as you go. Another group will be plant detectives. They'll write down all the plants they see. The third group will be animal and bug detectives. They'll write down all the animals and bugs they see. When you get back from your walk, have the three groups share their findings.

Reflect: What did you think of the practice hike? What skills did you use today that will be helpful on later hikes?

Step 3: Pick the right gear
(10 minutes)

Introduce: It is important to pack the right gear when you are going on a hike. We are going to work together to make a packing list.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What are some things you think you need to pack on a hike?

Do this activity: Help the girls find a packing list for hikes online. Go through the list with the girls and decide if it should be on your troop's packing list or not.

Reflect: How many items are on our list? Do we already have these supplies or do we need to find them?

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Step 4: Pack a snack for energy (10 minutes)

Introduce: We will need to pack a healthy snack for our hike. Let's make GORP! GORP stands for "good old raisins and peanuts" and is a Girl Scout classic.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: Why is it important to bring a healthy snack on a hike?

Do this activity: Lay out all the ingredients in bowls with a scoop at each one. Give each girl a plastic bag and have them go through the ingredients to build their perfect mix.

Reflect: What did you put in your GORP? What was the most common combination?

Step 5: Go on your hike (10 minutes)

Introduce: Next meeting, we are going to go on the hike we planned. Let's make a game to play as we hike along.

Ask the girls some questions to get them thinking: What are some things we might see on our hike? Let's make a scavenger hunt of things we want to find.

Do this activity: Give each girl a piece of paper. Ask the girls to brainstorm things they may see on the hike. Write down their suggestions on the poster board. When you have a good number of suggestions, work with the girls to narrow down the list. Every girl should write down the scavenger hunt items on their own sheet of paper and bring it next week to use on the hike.

Reflect: Is there anything that we need to bring next week for the hike? Who is bringing what? What will we do if someone forgets to bring something?

Make sure to access your Volunteer Toolkit for more info on leading this badge and for meeting aids to assist you. Also, check out the Troop Leader Blueprint for help adapting your in-person meeting to a virtual meeting.

Girl Scout Glossary

- **CASC:** Collin Area Service Center
- **CIT:** Counselor in Training. An opportunity for High school girls at our summer camp locations.
- **DC:** Digital Cookie is an online platform that helps girls run and manage their Girl Scout Cookie business online.
- **DSC:** Denton Service Center
- **eBudde:** The online cookie software system volunteers use to manage the Cookie Program
- **ETRC:** East Texas Regional Center
- **FP:** Family Partnership – direct donation program from members to GSNETX
- **G.I.R.L.:** The spirit of Girl Scouts: Go-Getter, Innovator, Risk Taker, Leader
- **G.O.R.P.:** Good Old Raisins & Peanuts or Granola, Oats, Raisins & Peanuts; trail mix
- **GSE:** Girl Scout Entrepreneur-Loyalty program for girls that sold in the 2021 Cookie Program.
- **gsEvents:** GSUSA Events & Activities Platform
- **GSLE:** Girl Scout Leadership Experience - The experience identifies all the elements that need to be in place for Girl Scouting to achieve its mission; Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. When Discover, Connect, and Take Action activities are combined with the Girl Scout Processes of Girl-Led, Learning by Doing, and Cooperative Learning, girls achieve the desired and expected short-term leadership outcomes, ultimately resulting in Girl Scouting achieving its mission.
- **gsLearn:** GSUSA Training Course Platform
- **GSLI:** Girl Scout Leadership Institute – older girl career programs such as job shadowing and career exploration
- **GSNETX:** Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas
- **GSRI:** Girl Scout Research Institute – delivers customer-centric, data-driven insights across the GS Movement
- **GSUSA:** Girl Scouts of the United States of America – Girl Scout movement in the United States
- **IO:** Initial Pre-Season Order-The number of cookie packages, broken out by flavor, that you want to begin the cookie season with.
- **JAFSC:** JoAnn Fogg Service Center
- **JULIETTE/IRM:** Independently Registered Member; a member who participates without a troop
- **LIA:** Leader in Action. Cadette Girl Scouts show their leadership skills and assist Brownie sisters in completing their National Leadership Journey! They will actively assisting during Journey sessions, use organizational skills, help the Brownies complete their requirements, and—most importantly—helping them reflect on their experience.
- **LIT:** Leader in Training. The L.I.T. award is for Girl Scout Senior and Ambassadors who would like to mentor a Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie, Junior or Cadette group outside of the camp experience. A LIT project (working with a troop) needs to span a 3 to 6 month period.
- **LBB:** Little Brownie Bakers is the company that GSNETX partners with for the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
- **My GS:** Your Girl Scout Account Management System
- **NLA:** New Leader Academy – interactive, informational & digital support group for new leaders
- **OFR:** Outstanding Funds Report - form that is completed when a Girl Scout family has an unpaid cookie balance
- **PA:** Program Aide – Girl who has completed 6th grade, taken a specialized training to help troop leaders with activities for their girls
- **PGA:** Per Girl Average, is the total number of cookies assigned to the troop divided by the number of girls selling
- **PGL:** Program Grade Level. Daisies (K & 1st), Brownies (2nd & 3rd), Juniors (4th & 5th), Cadettes (6th-8th), Seniors (9th & 10th), and Ambassadors (11th & 12th)
- **PPF:** Parent Permission Form - allows participation in the Cookie Program.
- **RALLYHOOD:** Digital Communication Tool for GSNETX staff & volunteers
- **Safety-Wise:** the number of adult Girl Scout members with a background check needed to safely supervise a troop
- **SSSC:** Southern Sector Service Center
- **STEM COE:** Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics Center of Excellence; GSNETX Camp
- **SUM:** Service Unit Manager – administrative volunteer for a specific geographical area
- **SU:** Service Units support troops in their local communities and is comprised of a team of volunteers who serve as the first point of contact for troops and volunteers in their area.
- **SUCPC:** Service Unit Cookie Program Coordinator
- **SWAPS:** Some Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere; small tokens exchanged between Girl Scouts
- **TCM:** Troop Cookie Manager
- **TL:** Troop Leader
- **VTK:** Volunteer Toolkit – digital support for leaders – manage troop, communications & Girl Scout program materials
- **WAGGGS:** World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts – global association supporting female-only Guiding and Scouting Organizations in 150 countries.