



# My First Year Guide

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

girl scouts   
of western new york

# Welcome to Your Multi-Level Troop

As a co-leader of a multi-level troop, you are in for an amazing adventure. It can be incredibly rewarding to create space for Girl Scouts of different ages and backgrounds to find sisterhood with one another.

We'll be honest: leading a multi-level troop takes work AND we know you can do it. Along the way, we at GSWNY are here to help.

## Girl Scout Resources

### Your Service Unit

Our GSWNY council is divided into Service Units (SU) based on neighborhood, school district, or geographic area. Each SU is supported by a team of volunteers who are there to help you. Once you complete your Volunteer Basic Training, you will receive your specific Service Unit information.

### GSWNY Customer Care

Our GSWNY Customer Care team members have years of Girl Scout experience and are ready to help you with anything you might need.

1-888-837-6410 | [customercare@gswny.org](mailto:customercare@gswny.org)



## Girl Scout Shops

Our council has four shops for your shopping needs of official uniforms, apparel, badges, program materials, and so much more. Visit our website for current locations and hours.



## Girl Scout Ceremonies & Traditions

Learn all about Girl Scout traditions like friendship circles, flag ceremonies, bridging, the Girl Scout uniform and more!



## Badges & Journey Awards

On the Award and Badge Explorer, find a list of the badges and Journey awards Girl Scouts can earn.



## Safety, Guidelines, & Procedures

You'll find Volunteer Essentials, Safety Activity Checkpoints, info on First Aid training, and more on the Members Tab on our website.



## Service Projects & Activities

Explore ideas for your troop's next adventure in the Girl Scout Activity Zone full of Girl Scout tested and approved activities and service projects.



## Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

The VTK is a digital planning tool that includes troop contact info as well as detailed troop meeting plans as you work on petals, badges, and more. Access the VTK through your myGS account on our website.



## Fieldtrips & the Outdoors

Check out our GSWNY website for more information on getting outdoors or attending Council Programs and Events.



## GS Learn

Take short, fun, and informative online courses through gsLearn. Access gsLearn through your myGS account on our website.



## Cookies & Money Earning

On the Cookies+ tab, you'll find helpful information for both Product Programs -- Fall Nuts and Candy and Cookie Program -- as well as forms, resources, training videos, and more! This is your one-stop shop for volunteers, girls and families, giving you all the tools needed for a great product program year.



## Stay Connected!

Join our GSWNY Members Facebook Group to read our monthly Volunteer Resources email, full of timely information for Troop Leaders. Be sure you've opted in to email via your myGS account on our website.

# Troop-Leader Tips for Leading Your Multi-Level Troop

## Keep it Girl-Led

**To help Girl Scouts lead, give them concrete choices or options and empower them to choose**

- Voting helps everyone have a say in what you do. Ask your Girl Scouts to offer ideas (where to go, what to do) and let everyone vote
- Ask Girl Scouts what girl-led means to them. What parts of Girl Scouts do they want to lead, what do they want the leaders to take on?
- Keep your eyes peeled for opportunities for Girl Scouts to take the lead, even if they are small
- It's OK if it isn't perfect – this is how Girl Scouts learn! As much as you can, stay back and let the Girl Scouts work it out, and even fail
- Learn from and embrace failure; it will help teach you and the Girl Scouts along the way

## Engage All Girl Scouts

**Try to be flexible in your strategies for engaging Girl Scouts of varying ages**

- Offer younger Girl Scouts more concrete guidance to help them express their thoughts
- Older Girl Scouts will have more nuanced understandings of interpersonal interactions and how to take action, as well as more in-depth knowledge about the subject matter. They will bring up more complex concepts, which won't be familiar to younger Girl Scouts. This is a great opportunity to ask older Girl Scouts to share their knowledge with younger Girl Scouts. Ask questions like, "Can you give us an example of that?" or "Can you describe that for everyone in the group?"
- Give older Girl Scouts important tasks during meetings like opening the meeting, leading icebreakers, or planning snacks to keep them engaged
- Younger Girl Scouts will need more adult supervision and it's natural that older Girl Scouts will help them, too. But make sure to treat older Girl Scouts like troop members, not as mini troop leaders.

## Involve Caregivers

**You are not alone. A strong co-leader-family partnership is key to a successful Girl Scout experience**

- Host a parent/caregiver meeting at the beginning of the year to share contact information, plans for the year, expectations, and ask for help.
- Caregivers often want to be involved, but don't know how. Make your request as clear as possible: "Are you able to bring snack next week?"
- Invite caregivers to share their skills and interests at a troop meeting.
- Keep lines of communication wide open. Decide together how best to communicate with all caregivers (email, group text, other?) and stick to it.
- Talk with caregivers about the importance of Girl Scouts taking the lead and encourage them not to jump in if possible

## Troop Logistics

**Having a clear plan for how you'll run troop meetings and activities will help you in the long run**

- Together with your troop, write a troop agreement for how everyone will operate
- Have enough co-leaders to occasionally work with Girl Scouts in separate groups. Remember, co-leaders must be registered, approved adults with a current background check who have completed council-required leader training, at least one of whom is female. See the Safety Activity Checkpoints for girl: adult ratios (Safety page on [gswny.org](http://gswny.org)). Reach out to GSWNY if you need help finding more co-leaders.
- It's OK to meet all together with older and younger Girl Scouts, it's OK to work separately, it's OK to do both
- Try out beginning your meeting with the whole troop, and then splitting off into groups with separate co-leaders
- Consider mixing up your groups: some meetings could split off into older Girl Scouts and younger Girl Scouts, another meeting could have a mix.

# Multi-Level Year Plan

## Daisy/Brownie/Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador

This year plan features a variety of Girl Scout experiences including badges, outings, community service, outdoor adventures, having fun, and building connection. This is intended as a guide -- feel free to follow this to a T or talk with your Girl Scouts about other things they'd like to do.

September		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Parent/Caregiver meeting</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> All About Girl Scouts</p> <p>Badges/Petals D: Daisy Center &amp; Be a Sister B/J/C/S/A: Girl Scout Ways</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Apple Picking</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Check out a GSWNY Council Sponsored Event (<a href="http://gswny.org">gswny.org</a> or Program Guide)</p>
October		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Outdoor Art Badges</p> <p>Badges/Petals D/B/J/C/S/A: Outdoor Art Badges</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> Juliette Gordon Low B-Day Party</p> <p>Badges/Petals D/B/J/C/S/A: Fun Patch</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Pumpkin Patch or Corn Maze</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Check out a GSWNY Council Sponsored Event (<a href="http://gswny.org">gswny.org</a> or Program Guide)</p>
November		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Trail Adventurer 1</p> <p>Badges/Petals D: Daisy Trail Adventure B: Brownie Trail Adventure J: Junior Trail Adventure C: Cadette Trail Adventure S: Senior Trail Adventure A: Ambassador Trail Adventure</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> Trail Adventure 2</p> <p>Badges/Petals D: Daisy Trail Adventure B: Brownie Trail Adventure J: Junior Trail Adventure C: Cadette Trail Adventure S: Senior Trail Adventure A: Ambassador Trail Adventure</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Check out a GSWNY Council Sponsored Event (<a href="http://gswny.org">gswny.org</a> or Program Guide)</p>
December		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Winter Holiday Party and make tray favors for Meals on Wheels</p> <p>Badges/Petals D: Make the World a Better Place Petal B/J/C/S/A: Community Helper Fun Patch</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> Break</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Visit a Food Pantry</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Check out a GSWNY Council Sponsored Event (<a href="http://gswny.org">gswny.org</a> or Program Guide)</p>

<b>January</b>		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Cookies</p> <p>Badge/Petals D: Cookie Goal Setter B: My Cookie Customers J: My Cookie Team C: My Cookie Venture S: Cookie Boss A: Cookie Influencer</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> Cookies</p> <p>Badges/Petals D: My First Cookie Business B: Cookie Decision Maker J: Cookie Collaborator C: Cookie Market Researcher or Cookie Innovator S: My Cookie Network A: My Cookie Business Resume</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Sleepover (Zoo or Aquarium)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Check out a GSWNY Council Sponsored Event (<a href="http://gswny.org">gswny.org</a> or Program Guide)</p>
<b>February</b>		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Cookies</p> <p>Badges/Petals D/B/J/C/S/A: Finish up cookie badges from previous month</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> World Thinking Day Feb 12</p> <p>Badges/Petals D/B/J/C/S/A: World Thinking Day Badge</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Fire Station Tour</p> <p>Badges/Petals D: Respect Authority and Respect Myself and Others Petals D/B/J/C/S/A: Fire Station Fun Patch</p>
<b>March</b>		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Girl Scout Birthday (March 12) GS Birthday Party!</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> STEM - Robotics</p> <p>Badges/Petals D/B/J/C/S/A: Designing Robots</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Cookie Booths</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Check out a GSWNY Council Sponsored Event (<a href="http://gswny.org">gswny.org</a> or Program Guide)</p>
<b>April</b>		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> STEM - Robotics</p> <p>Badges/Petals D/B/J/C/S/A: Programing Robots</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> STEM - Robotics</p> <p>Badges/Petals D/B/J/C/S/A: Showcasing Robots</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Cookie Booths</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Check out a GSWNY Council Sponsored Event (<a href="http://gswny.org">gswny.org</a> or Program Guide)</p> <p>Note Renew your GS Membership</p>

<b>May</b>		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Prepare for Cooking Badges</p> <p>Badges/Petals D: Responsible for what I say and Do Petal B: Snacks J: Simple Meals Badge C: Eating for You S: Locavore A: Dinner Party</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> Dinner Party for Cooking Badges</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Food Drive for Local Food Pantry</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Check out a GSWNY Council Sponsored Event (gswny.org or Program Guide)</p> <p><b>Note</b> Renew your GS Membership</p>
<b>June</b>		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Rehearsal for bridging, finish any badges, take troop photo</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> Bridging, Awards, Year-End Party</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Playground Picnic</p> <p><b>Note</b> Fill out your Troop Financial Activity Report and year-end survey</p>
<b>July</b>		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b></p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b></p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> Baseball Game</p>
<b>August</b>		
<p><b>Meeting 1</b> GS Break</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2</b> GS Break</p>	<p><b>Field trip</b> GS Break</p>

# Sample Multi-Level Meeting Plan

This sample meeting plan shows you how you might incorporate activities for girls at various grade-levels and work on a badge and petals together. Feel free to follow this to a T, or make adjustments that work for you and your troop. Use this meeting plan as a model for your future meetings and activities.

## Badges/Petals Earned

- Daisy- Promise Center and Be a Sister Petal
- B/J/C/S/A – Girl Scout Ways Part 1

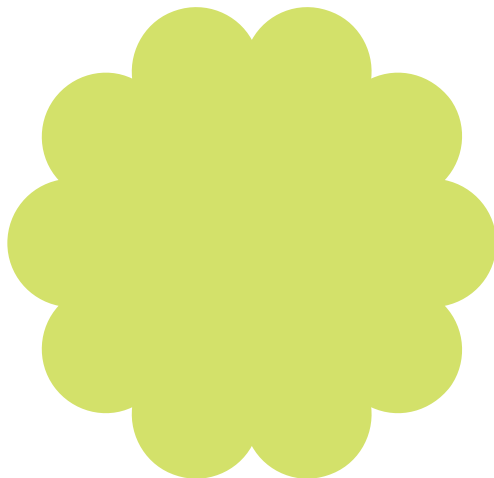
Activities	Supplies
<p><b>1. Sing Everywhere</b></p> <p>Talk about songs and the different occasions some are used. For Example: “Happy Birthday”</p> <p>Teach the Girl Scout laws song and have girls practice singing it with hand motions.</p> <p><b>Older girl tip:</b> Invite girls who have been to camp to teach their favorite camp song</p>	<p><b>Laptop to play song</b></p>
<p><b>2. Celebrate GS</b></p> <p>Play Kim’s Game to get to know Juliette Gordon Low. Show the girls each item and explain or ask if they know how it pertains to JGL’s life. Put all the items on a tray and cover them up. Have girls try to recall each item. Girls can write their answers or work in groups to come up with the answers.</p> <p><b>Older girl tip:</b> If you have older girls who know about Girl Scouts, a great way to engage them is to have them share with the group</p> <p><b>Juliette Low Kim’s Game</b></p> <p><b>Pumpkin</b> - Juliette was born on Oct 31, 1860</p> <p><b>Georgia State Quarter</b> - Juliette was born in Savannah, Georgia</p> <p><b>Daisy</b> - Her uncle took one look at her and said, “She looks like a Daisy” she had this nickname her whole life</p>	<p><b>All items in bold Tray Towel</b></p>



Activities	Supplies
<p><b>Toy Horse</b> - Juliette always loved animals, especially horses. She had a horse named Fire</p> <p><b>Paint Brush</b> - She also loved to draw and paint pictures - so much, that she created children's magazine with all of the articles and pictures done by children</p> <p><b>Wedding Ring</b> - Juliette married Willie Gordon Low in 1886</p> <p><b>Rice</b> - A piece of rice thrown at her wedding became lodged in Juliette's left ear, causing her to become deaf in this ear</p> <p><b>Sailboat</b> - Juliette and Willie decided to move to England</p> <p><b>Rubber Worm</b> - Juliette loved fishing. In fact, she would go out with the men after a formal dinner. It was not unusual for her to go fishing in her fancy party dress</p> <p><b>Picture of Boy Scout</b> - After Willie died, Juliette met Lord Baden-Powell founder of the Boy Scouts</p> <p><b>Star</b> - Lord Baden-Powell said to Juliette, "There are little stars that guide us on, although we do not realize it." This gave her encouragement to return to the USA and start Girl Scouting</p> <p><b>Telephone</b> - Juliette returned to Georgia and made the famous phone call which was heard around the United States, "I've got something for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world, and we're going to start it tonight!"</p> <p><b>Calendar for March 12 Circled</b> - Girl Scouting in the USA was born on March 12, 1912 and continues today with over 3 1/2 million members</p> <p><b>5 &amp; 1 Number Candles</b> - Juliette Low was 51 years old when she started Girl Scouts in the United States</p> <p><b>Pearls</b> - It took a lot of money to get the scouts started, so Daisy sold the pearl necklace Willy had given her as a wedding present</p> <p><b>Tomato Can</b> - Having nothing else on hand to put her honor pins in, Juliette grabbed an empty tomato can and carried the pins to a meeting in it</p> <p><b>Breast Cancer Ribbon</b> - Juliette Low died of breast cancer on January 18, 1927 at age 67</p>	<p><b>All items in bold Tray Towel</b></p>

Activities	Supplies
<p><b>3. Share Sisterhood</b></p> <p><b>Game 1: Things in Common</b>  Tell girls if you like #1 then go to the right wall and if you like #2 go to the left wall. Encourage girls to think about the choices and not to just follow their friends.</p> <p><b>Older girl tip:</b> A great way to engage older girls is to have them think up categories</p> <p><b>Examples Questions:</b>  Prefer sandals or sneakers?  Prefer hot dog or burger?  Prefer chocolate, vanilla or other ice cream?  Has brother, sister or both?  Cartoons or real people shows?  Cats or dogs?  Candy or chips?  Summer, fall, spring or winter?</p> <p><b>Game 2: Act Out Favorite Thing To Do</b>  Each girls comes to the front and acts out something they like to do while everyone else tries to guess what it is. Once guessed ask other girls who like this activity to raise their hands.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>4. Leave A Place Better Than You Found It</b></p> <p>How can we leave a place better when we found it when camping? Eating in a food court? Classroom? At Home? Public Restroom?</p> <p>What ideas do you have for leaving our meeting place even neater than we found it? How can we make it better? Maybe wipe off the tables, not just take your belongings off of it. Sweep the floor.</p> <p>Next, using poster board, write a note signed by all the girls thanking the teacher for letting us use the classroom for our meetings.</p> <p>It's the Girl Scout way to care about the world around us – whether it's a room, a campground, or the world. Practice by leaving a place in your community better than you found it. Show worksheet to complete at home.</p> <p><b>Older girl tip:</b> have them write the note on the poster board with their handwriting</p>	<p><b>White Poster board and permanent markers</b></p>

Activities	Supplies
<p><b>5. GS Traditions</b></p> <p>Talk about, Make and Trade SWAP</p> <p><b>SWAPS</b> – Special Whatyamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere. SWAPS are traditionally traded with other girl scouts at events.</p> <p>Make SWAPS based on the laws.</p> <p><b>Older girl tip:</b> Pair up girls have them choose the law that other girl most represents, then the two girls swap their craft</p>	<p><b>Printouts of Laws</b>  <b>Safety Pins</b>  <b>Green Ribbon</b>  <b>Scissors</b>  <b>Hole punch</b>  <b>Beads:</b>  Dark Blue, Light Blue, Yellow, Light Green, Magenta, Red, Light Pink, Dark Purple, Light Purple, Dark Green, Orange</p>



Activities	Ingredients
<p><b>6. Snack: GORP</b></p> <p>Have you ever wondered what goes into making a Girl Scout? Well, we have a recipe to make to show you what we're all about.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Girl Scouts come in all colors, from cities and towns. Every Girl Scout's a sister no matter what she looks like or how she sounds. Add M&amp;Ms to the bowl.</li> <li>2. Some of us are tall, and some of us are small. When we get together, size doesn't matter at all. Add pretzel sticks and marshmallows.</li> <li>3. With our words and our actions, we show that we care. We try to do our best to be fair and square. Add Chex cereal to the mix.</li> <li>4. Sometimes we act a little "loopy," we love to joke and play. We'd love to put a Girl Scout smile into everyone's day. Add fruit loops to the bowl.</li> <li>5. When we get together, we make circles so round. It's our never-ending friendships to which we are bound. Add Cheerios to the mix.</li> <li>6. When we're planning and working, we just don't stop. We keep ourselves busy; all around we will pop. Add popcorn.</li> <li>7. We respect all creatures, if they're big or they're small. The earth is our home, and there is room here for all. Add Goldfish Crackers or Animal Crackers.</li> <li>8. It was 1912 when Juliette Low started us off. And like the girls back then, we're just "chips off the old block" Add butterscotch, chocolate and white chocolate chips.</li> <li>9. We get a "kick" out of learning and doing new things, and a "kick" out of helping others, and spending time with friends. Add Kix cereal to the bowl.</li> <li>11. Now we stir to the left and we stir to the right. We mix it together with all of our might. We welcome our troop to another great year, and hope the memories they make, they will always hold dear.</li> </ol> <p>Now that our recipe is complete, we look upon what we have created. Each of the ingredients went into our recipe separately, just like each of the girls came into the troop separately. As the ingredients mix together to form one dish, our girls mix together to form a troop. But even as we look upon our mix, we can still see each ingredient as separate and unique. Our girls bring each of their own unique talents and characteristics to our troop to make it what it is.</p> <p><b>Older girl tip:</b> We have found that both older and younger girls love activities with food! Older girls could help facilitate younger girls in sharing examples of each ingredient.</p>	<p><b>M&amp;Ms</b>  <b>Pretzels</b>  <b>Chex cereal</b>  <b>Fruit Loops cereal</b>  <b>Cheerios cereal</b>  <b>Kix cereal</b>  <b>Popcorn</b>  <b>Goldfish or Animal crackers</b>  <b>Butterscotch chips</b>  <b>Chocolate chips</b>  <b>White chocolate chips</b></p> <p><b>Note:</b>  This recipe can get expensive, so feel free to pick a few of these ingredients to make your own trail mix.</p>