Welcome!

This Senior/Ambassador home study course was prepared especially for Senior and Ambassador level Girl Scout volunteers at Girl Scouts of Western New York. Thank you for your desire to become or continue as a volunteer. The time and talents you share will be invaluable in the life of your girls.

The Senior/Ambassador grade level training course is required for leaders within 30 days of approval as a new leader or within 30 days of bridging to the new level. It is an excellent chance to learn about the Senior and Ambassador programs and the exciting things you can do with your Senior/Ambassador level girls.

Please make sure to have a copy of the Volunteer Essentials book with you as you complete this course. We will refer to it often. You can download Volunteer Essentials from our website or pick up one at your local council service center. Please be aware that we will also reference the Senior Girls Guide to Girl Scouting and/or Ambassador Girls Guide to Girl Scouting and Senior and/or Ambassador Journeys in this training. It is advisable that you have at least one copy of each resource to reference during the training.

Please continue to the next page to start your Senior/Ambassador Girl Scout course.
This course is broken down into three major sections:

1. Learn about the girls.
2. Get practical information, suggestions, and activities.
3. Learn about using Girl Scout program materials.

If you have any questions along the way, please contact GSWNY at 1-888-837-6410 or customercare@gswny.org.
Age Divisions

Girl Scout Seniors- Ages 13-15: Solidly in the middle, some of these teenage girls aren’t sure where they belong. Many are facing rites of passage (bat mitzvah, quinceañera) and they’re beginning to understand what it means to be a teenager. Teenage girls begin to worry about their appearance and the reaction of boys and other teens. The pressures they began facing at younger ages have intensified, and there are new pressures as they begin to prepare for college and later life.

But most importantly, teenage girls in this age group are trying to figure out who they are and what makes them special. You can help them personalize their space, express themselves, and decide what they think is most important. There is a lot of pressure to act in different ways for different people. Try to create a space where teenage girls can figure out their own identities without having to act one way or another.

Girl Scout Ambassadors – Ages 15-17: As teenage girls grow older, they become increasingly preoccupied with independence, whether in the form of a new car, a more adult social role, or deciding what to do next with their lives. Teenage girls will want to explore all kinds of options that will help them decide what to do in the years ahead. They know they’re moving on to a new phase of life and want to prepare themselves for their futures. Experiences such as college trips, time management classes, and tips on applications and scholarships are all good ways to allay teenage girls’ fears while taking their pressures seriously.

Teenage girls are also now old enough to travel internationally and to be treated like adults in many circumstances. The more comfortable they are, the more you can help them with what’s most on their minds: the future. Be aware that this age group more than any other will tell you what they’d like to do themselves.

Maturity Levels

Girls 11-17 mature academically, socially, physically, emotionally and spiritually at different rates throughout their preteen/teen years. A preteen/teen girl who gets wonderful grades at school and is an active member of her church, synagogue, or temple may have trouble relating to others. A cheerleader who gets along well with her peers and is physically fit may be struggling because of academics. Another girl may be always emotionally present for her friends, but may appear physically younger than her peers. It is important for you as an advisor not to assume that because a girl is mature in one respect, she is mature in all areas. Some teen girls in your troop or group will be more mature than others. It is important that
you be honest and fair. Make sure your group plans activities that are appropriate for all participants.

Teen girls who seem mature often need the guidance and support of an adult. Don’t overwhelm teen girls with too much responsibility. Let them decide how much they can handle. If a girl comes to you for help or support, give it without judgment, even if (especially if!) she is often a leader in your group.

**Diversity**

Because Girl Scouts is for *every girl, everywhere*, you may encounter great diversity within your troop or group. In addition to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, culture, religion, abilities, and learning styles (factors for girls of all ages), preteen/teen girls will become more individual with respect to social experiences, values, sexual orientation, and sophistication. Some preteen/teen girls may already have experienced drugs, alcohol, eating disorders and other addictions, or sexual activity; others may be more sheltered and not have considered these issues.

Instead of being judgmental or focusing on the differences between preteen/teen girls, try to create a community where all the girls feel safe and comfortable with one another.
Strategies for Managing Conflict

Girls need to feel secure, capable, and accepted in their troop. When they do, conflicts occur less often. As they feel accepted, they are more likely to empathize with others and understand different points of view. When girls feel they are actively making decisions and setting goals for their activities, they are less likely to jeopardize those activities through misbehavior. However, conflicts will arise. Many conflicts can be resolved by simple strategies:

- **Compromise:** Both parties give up something and get something.
- **Chance:** Luck decides who wins. Flip a coin or draw a straw.
- **Postpone:** Put off resolving the conflict until both parties are more in control of their emotions.
- **Apologize:** “I’m sorry” doesn’t mean “I’m wrong.” It lets the other person know you are sorry about the situation.
- **Humor:** A good laugh works miracles. Remember to laugh at the problem, not the person.
- **Get help:** Ask someone else (a friend, parent, or teacher) to be fair and help resolve the situation.
- **Share feelings:** People’s feelings become more important than the “thing” being fought over.
- **Take turns:** Everybody wins.
- **Two choices:** Give the person two choices, both of which you, as leader, find acceptable.
- **Journaling:** Have the “combatants” write down their issues.
- **Leader’s job/Girl’s job:** Make sure the girl knows what she has to do. Tell her what you must do as leader.
- **State the behavior:** I need you to _____. State the behavior you need to see, not what you want to happen.
- **Contracts:** For an ongoing problem, make a contract or agreement. Work out a solution and write it up. Participants sign. Make sure the contract is not unrealistic or unreasonable. Contracts can be renegotiated.
- **Simple troop rules:** Emphasize that rules are ways of taking care of ourselves and others. Let the girls establish some guidelines and also suggest reasonable consequences.
**The Girl/Adult Partnership and Progression**

As the leader, your goal should be to act increasingly as a facilitator, enabling girls to experience planning, decision-making, leadership, and yes, even failure. The girl/adult partnership ensures girls grow and take charge only as much as is appropriate for their age and development. This is often challenging, because with our greater experience, we can usually do a better job, more quickly and efficiently than the girls. But with a little practice, you’ll find you can change your mind-set from “How can I make this the best possible activity?” to “How can I use planning this activity as the best possible opportunity for girls to grow their leadership skills?” Initially, everything is going to take longer to plan and perhaps be less perfect than you would like. Here are some tips:

- Start small and gradually turn over more of the responsibility to the girls. You’ll be amazed at how much they can handle!
- Girl Scouts provides a safe environment for girls to try out new skills. Sometimes they will succeed with flying colors; at other times they will fail. That’s OK! We learn from our mistakes.
- Don’t forget to tell your girls’ parents about the importance of the girl/adult partnership in your troop. Parents need to understand what you are trying to accomplish as you turn over more and more responsibility to the girls. Ask parents not to “save” their daughters!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades K-1</th>
<th>Grades 2-3</th>
<th>Grades 4-5</th>
<th>Grades 6-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-10</th>
<th>Grades 11-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>Brownie</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Cadette</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scouts talk with leaders about their ideas for activities.</td>
<td>Girl Scouts work in patrols to develop ideas they like best. Leaders help girls realize their goals.</td>
<td>Girls Scouts play a larger role in planning and decision-making and adults help when necessary.</td>
<td>Leaders are advisors who help as needed.</td>
<td>Girls Scouts rotate leadership tasks and plan activities, budgets, and goals.</td>
<td>Advisors guide and help as needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Progression**

The Girl Scout program is also built on “progression”. As girls increase their confidence and skills, they can carry out activities that require more planning, take place further away from home, and utilize special skills and endurance. The girls are “progressing” in their skills to accomplish more complicated tasks.
Effective Girl/Adult Partnership Checklist

One of the things you’ll want to do after you’ve been a group leader for a while is to do a self-check. How well do you share leadership with your Girl Scouts? Read through the statements below and when you feel it is appropriate, rate yourself on how well you share decision-making with the girls in your troop. *Circle 1 (low) to 4 (high).*

1. Girl Scout events are planned around girls’ time schedules, as well as cultural and religious holidays.  
1 2 3 4

2. Girls actively participate in planning meetings and activities.  
1 2 3 4

3. Girls choose activities that reflect a diverse range of interests.  
1 2 3 4

4. Girls are actively involved in money management.  
1 2 3 4

5. Girls experience a variety of leadership roles.  
1 2 3 4

6. Girls generate most of the conversation and ideas.  
1 2 3 4

7. Girls show enthusiasm and excitement about Girl Scout activities.  
1 2 3 4

8. Girls are learning skills to manage group disagreements.  
1 2 3 4

9. Girls feel involved in the decisions being made by the group.  
1 2 3 4

10. Girls are involved in age-appropriate activities that progressively build skills.  
1 2 3 4
Group Government

Girl Scouting has a built-in structure that will help facilitate girl/adult planning. This structure is traditionally referred to as group government. There are three models ideal for older girls: the patrol system, the executive board (also called the steering committee), and the town meeting.

The Patrol System
In the patrol system, the larger group divides into small groups, with each member playing a role. The recommended size of these groups is 4 – 6 girls so that each girl gets an opportunity to participate and express her opinions. Each patrol takes responsibility for some part of the total project. This kind of government is good for medium to large troops/groups. A Kaper Chart (covered on next page) lists jobs and which patrol is responsible to complete it.

These smaller groups make it easier to do some of the activities at meetings or outings. Cookouts are one way patrols are used most frequently. Patrols can also be used for nature activities, arts and crafts, and setting up camp for an overnight.

Patrols work well when everyone has ideas, everyone helps plan, and everyone does her part. Units can be divided into patrols several different ways. It is a good idea to have buddies in different patrols as possible (more productive and breaks up cliques.) Patrols choose a patrol name, patrol symbol, patrol leaders and assistant patrol leaders. The leadership jobs should be rotated among the members of the patrol as appropriate.

Benefits of the Patrol System
• It is an easy and fair way to delegate tasks.
• It helps maintain the girls’ interest.
• It teaches cooperation.
• It encourages responsibility and leadership.
• It reduces the work load for the leader.
• More girls can express their opinions in a shorter amount of time.

The Executive Board
In this system there is one leadership team for the whole troop/group. An executive board is a good way to govern a small troop. The main responsibility of the board is to help make plans and assign jobs based on interests and needs. The board usually has four members but it can vary: a president, a vice president, a secretary and a treasurer. The board holds
its own meetings. In order that all girls have the opportunity to serve on the board, the length of service time is limited. The girls decide how to pass their ideas and suggestions to the executive board throughout the year.

**The Town Meeting**

Under this system, business is discussed and decisions made at meetings attended by all the girls. Everyone gets to participate in decision-making and leadership. This system usually requires a moderator whose main job is to ensure that everyone gets a chance to talk and that all ideas are considered. It is a good idea to rotate the moderator position so that everyone gets a chance to lead.

---

**Girl Planning Techniques**

Leaders need lots of tools as they guide girls to become good decision makers. Along with group government models, here you will find suggested ways to stimulate ideas, encourage participation, decide plans fairly, and organize tasks. You’ll help match their interests and ideas with activities, Badges, and events. You’ll also ensure that the activities are age appropriate.

1. **Brainstorming**: A technique for getting lots of ideas. *How to do it:* Explain to the girls that every idea, no matter how wacky, will be heard and recorded without judgment. Sorting comes later! List everyone’s idea, build on ideas, repeat, combine, and write them down without worrying about spelling. When done, sort the ideas into three categories: use now, use later, and use with modification. Choose an idea from the “use now” category and save the rest.

2. **Make a Stand**: A technique that gets everyone physically involved and committed. *How to do it:* Choose places in the room as stations, each representing an idea or topic. Label them with signs like “agree” or “disagree” or with the choices being discussed. Have girls show their opinions by physically moving to the station they choose. Encourage discussion and moving around to change minds.

3. **Ways to Vote**: Techniques for choosing, often between two ideas or options. *How to do them:* Say, “All in favor, go to this side of the room; all against, go to the other side,” or “All in favor, raise your hand; all against, raise your hand.” You can also choose to have the girls close their eyes during the vote to ensure girls don’t influence each other’s decision.

4. **It Bag**: A technique for choosing a girl to do a particular job. *How to do it:* Put the names of all the girls in your troop into the *It Bag*. When you need someone for an assignment, pick a name from the *It Bag*. When the assignment is over, put that name in the *Other Bag*. 
5. **Sealed Orders:** A technique to be used when there is a big decision to be made or a large project to be completed.

*How to do it:* Break girls into groups and give each group an envelope with instructions on their part of the project. One group might get the instructions to do some research on the Internet. Another group might be asked to prepare and present a skit. One group might have to brainstorm ideas on a specific topic.

6. **Fishbowl:** A discussion technique that ensures good listening and thoughtful responses.

*How to do it:* Set up chairs equal to the number of girls in two circles, one within the other. Place one or two extra chairs in the inner circle. The girls in the outer circle listen to the girls in the inner circle discuss a topic, as if the inner circle were all alone. If a girl wishes to say something, she may come into the inner circle to make a comment, a suggestion, or a reaction, and then return to the outer circle. It’s important that girls joining the inner circle stay only long enough to give a brief statement or to ask a question and get a response. They do not become a part of the inner circle.

---

**Group Agreements**

You can help girls grow in their ability to create useful and reasonable rules within the troop/group. By involving your girls in the problem-solving process, you are helping them to learn to trust themselves. A group agreement becomes an instructional method for assisting girls to become increasingly resourceful, self-sufficient and productive.

Tips for creating a group agreement (also called rules):

- Post them at group meetings as a reminder.
- Keep them positive. Try to avoid the word don’t. (Example: “When the room is clean, we will all leave”, instead of “No one leaves the room until the room is clean.”)
- Keep them to a minimum. Too many rules stifle enthusiasm and imagination. When a problem arises, talk it over and you may discover that making a rule in every situation is unnecessary.
- Make sure parents understand them and will support them.
- Let girls help in deciding the consequences. Be realistic.
- Reward good behavior rather than just punishing infractions.
- Be consistent and fair.
Girl Scouts would like to be the Premier Leadership program for girls. In 2008 GSUSA revised the National Program to center on the GSLE. This is so we can show what girls do, how they do and more importantly, by providing the Girl Scout Leadership Program to Girls, what outcomes are achieved. Being able to show proven outcomes is very important to parents, caregivers and program partners. It gives us the leverage to not only show what we do in girl scouts, but why we provide Girl Scouts to girls. The GSLE can provide girls with the soft skills needed to be productive in life that are not gotten at school.

Soft Skills Include:
Arts and Culture
Social Skills-collaboration
Innovative Thinking
Gathering and Analyzing Data
Communicating Persuasively
**Focus of Activities**

**Discover:** Girls discover who they are, what they care about and what they can do. What their values are and what they stand for. What they care about and what issues they want to take on.

**Connect:** Girls learn social skills. How to resolve conflicts. How to treat others with respect. They also learn how to connect to others in their community who can help them take action.

**Take Action:** Take action is done for girls to be able to strengthen leadership skills while being community and Civic minded. They take action to change the world.

**Girl Scout Processes**

**Girl Led:** All girls have the chance to make decisions and shape their own experiences.

**Cooperative Learning:** Takes place when all members of a group are working together toward a common goal.

**Learning by Doing:** Girls get to do hands-on, experiential activities and then process what they did after.

---

*When girls participate in Girl Scouts, they benefit in 5 important ways:*

**STRONG SENSE OF SELF**
Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and form positive identities.

**POSITIVE VALUES**
Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.

**CHALLENGE SEEKING**
Girls take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.

**HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**
Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.

**COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING**
Girls desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create “action plans” to solve them.
Girl Scouts prepares every girl for a lifetime of leadership.

Everything a Girl Scout does centers around STEM, the outdoors, development of life skills, and entrepreneurship, and is designed to meet her where she is now and to grow along with her from age 5 to 18 and into adulthood.

---

Program Resources:

The Volunteer Tool Kit Makes Troop Planning a Breeze

The volunteer tool kit is a comprehensive digital tool accessible on your computer, smartphone or tablet. It is a primary support resource for troop leaders. For volunteers this resource will enhance the adult leaders guide for badges and Journeys as most content is available on the toolkit. Please contact girlexperience@gswny.org for training or questions regarding this tool.
**Outdoor Progression**

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent in the outdoors, including how to plan and organize outdoor activities. Acknowledge a girl’s mastery of an outdoor skill and invite her to challenge herself further by taking that next step up and out! Outdoor fun can be endless when girls lead.

**LEAVE NO TRACES PRINCIPLES:**
- Leave What You Find
- Plan Ahead & Prepare
- Respect Wildlife
- Leave No Trace
- Minimize Campsite Impact
- Dispose of Waste Properly

**Traveling with Girls**

Girls love trips! And Girl Scouts is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take exciting trips. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips in Girl Scouting’s Ladder of Leadership:

**Day trip:**
An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bring their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip planning, while never too far from home.

**Overnight trips:**
One (or possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness.

**Extended overnight trips:**
Three or four nights camping or a stay in a hotel, motel, or hosted within the girl’s home region (for example, New England, Upper Midwest, Southwest, Pacific Northwest, and so on). Planning a trip to a large museum, and many other unique opportunities for girls to actually spend the night on museum grounds—makes for an exciting experience for girls.

**National trips:**
Travel anywhere in the country, if often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer an educational component (this often means no Disney and no cruises, but can incorporate some incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.

**International trips:**
Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation; when girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact your council to get permission to plan the trip and download the Global Travel Toolkit. Visiting one of the four World Centers is a great place to start, but also consider traveling with worldwide service organizations. Recently, girls have traveled to rural Costa Rica to volunteer at an elementary school, to Mexico to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and to India to work with girls living in poverty in urban slums.
Cadette, Senior and Ambassador Uniforms and Emblems
# Girl Scout Recognitions and Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>Bronze Award</th>
<th>Silver Award</th>
<th>Gold Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Levels</strong></td>
<td>Girls must be in 4th or 5th grade and a registered Girl Scout Junior</td>
<td>Girls must be in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade and a registered Girl Scout Cadette</td>
<td>Girls must be in 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade and a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Overview**          | - First complete a Junior Journey  
- Take action on a community issue the troop or group cares about  
- Help and guidance is provided by the troop/group volunteer  
- Council approval is needed for any money earning | - First complete a Cadette Journey and complete the Silver Award Training  
- Work as an individual or in a small group  
- Take action on a community issue that the girls care about  
- Help and guidance is provided by the troop/group volunteer  
- Council approval is needed for any money earning | - First complete two Journeys (Senior or Ambassador) or Earn the Silver Award and complete one Senior or Ambassador Journey and complete the Gold Award Training  
- Girls work individually  
- Take action on a community issue the girls care about  
- Help and guidance is provided by the Project Advisor  
- Council approval is needed for any money earning |
| **Suggested Project Hours** | 20 | 50 | 80 |
| **Project Approval**   | Troop/Group Volunteer | Troop/Group Volunteer | Council's Gold Award Committee |
| **Submission to Council** | Leader Reporting Form | Final Project Reports | Project Proposals and Final Reports |
| **Resources**         | - Junior Journey  
- Bronze Award Girl Guidelines  
- Adult Guide | - Cadette Journey  
- Silver Award Girl Guidelines  
- Adult Guide | - Senior and/or Ambassador Journeys  
- Gold Award Girl Guidelines  
- Adult guide |

Award Guidelines can be found in the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting or at gswny.org. If you have any questions or are ready to submit your Gold Award project proposal or final report, contact the Girl Experience team at girl.experience@gswny.org. Special request trainings are available to troops and Service Units with a 10-girl minimum. To request a training please contact girl.experience@gswny.org.

**GSWNY Online Trainings** - gswny.org
Goal Setting with Girls

GET SMART
SMART is an acronym to help girls remember to set goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. Using SMART goals is an effective way to help girls break down their goals into doable parts. Using this goal setting tool will help girls when preparing for any Take Action Project when completing Journeys or other awards.

- **Specific:** Girls need enough detail so they know exactly what they should be doing.
- **Measurable:** Girls need clear evidence that a job is complete. Saying, “I want to get in better shape” is not measurable. Saying, “I want to run one mile non-stop” is.
- **Attainable:** Help girls set goals they can actually meet. This might mean breaking down a bigger goal into smaller, bite-sized chunks.
- **Realistic:** Encourage girls to set goals they are likely to stick with by having them identify goals relevant to them. Don’t allow them to set goals that just “seem like a good idea.”
- **Timely:** Girls operate best when they have a clear sense of a deadline. Have them set “expiration dates.”

Helping girls craft SMART goals can be tricky because an advisor has to help girls decide what is doable and what may not be so realistic. It is important though not to dismiss girls’ ideas outright. Even the broadest goal has some achievable aspect.

SET A TIME FRAME
Once girls have sculpted their ideas into SMART goals, encourage them to give the goal a “due date.” Fuzzy definitions of what constitutes the “finish line” can be confusing and cause girls to give lackluster efforts. If the goal is to “write a newsletter,” is the goal completed when the newsletter returns from the printer? Or is it completed once the girl has collected all the articles? Make sure that the end goal can be assessed. Saving animals can’t be assessed, but “rescuing and finding homes for five cats” can.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS
Girls have probably had experience in setting goals but that doesn’t mean they have had much success. How can you help girls reach their goals? Here’s some advice from the By Girls, For Girls National Advisory Committee.

- Write them down. It’s easier for girls to commit to goals if they have them in a concrete, visible form.
- Let girls set their own pace. Everyone works differently. Give girls space to craft their own ways of work.
- Help girls create a path. Strike the balance between too much help and too little. If a girl is struggling, help her find her way.
- Encourage girls but don’t do the work for them. Set things up in the beginning to get girls started, but taper off. Resist the urge to micromanage.
- Make sure girls are passionate about their goals. Every outstanding Girl Scout Gold or Silver Award project has a passionate Girl Scout behind it. Girls are more interested if the idea started with them.

Here is an example from an older girl leader on how she explains SMART goals with her girls:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMART</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>I will drink water instead of fizzy drinks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurable</td>
<td>I don’t want to drink fizzy drinks for a month.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Attainable – set small goals | Use a funky water bottle  
                        | Take it to school with me every day  
                        | Avoid the drink machine            |
| Realistic            | Saving money  
                        | Better health                     |
| Timely               | I will do this for one month.             |

★ Girl Scout Ceremonies ★

Girl Scout ceremonies are a time to celebrate and share the values girls are learning through Girl Scouting. All ceremonies should include three basic parts: the opening, the main part, and the closing.

The opening part of the ceremony is a time to welcome guests, tell the purpose of the ceremony, and set the mood for the occasion. Ceremonies can be a festive time of celebration or a more serious time of reflection.

The main part of the ceremony is centered on the reason you gathered people together. This time of sharing might include poems, songs, or dramatics.

The closing part summarizes the ceremony. It might include forming a friendship circle, saying goodbye or thank-you to special guests, or singing a closing song.

Investiture Ceremony:
An investiture ceremony symbolizes the beginning of Girl Scouting. At this ceremony, families are invited to observe girls pledge the Girl Scout Promise for the first time and receive their Girl Scout Pin as well as the World Trefoil Pin.
Bridging Ceremony:
The bridging ceremony symbolizes a Girl Scout crossing a bridge to the next level.

Court of Awards
Awards can be given throughout the year to the girls through a Court of Awards Ceremony. Planning for this ceremony should include the girls.

For more ceremonies and ideas visit: 
girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/traditions/ceremonies.html

Troop Travel

Need to just pick up and go somewhere? You and your Girl Scouts could look into destinations, GSUSA’s teen travel program. Visit: girlscoutsosw.org/events/travel for all the latest information!

Girl Scouts and adults should plan trips together. Teen girls will dream about places they want to see and things they want to do. Advisors can help make those dreams real, provided they fit with the goals, values, and safety standards of Girl Scouts. Has everyone in your troop always wanted to see Washington, D.C., a California beach, or a foreign country? Imagine the response your girls will have when they actually arrive at their dream location!

In keeping with the girl/adult partnership guidelines, advisors should be able to help girls plan for the trip by brainstorming the things they’ll need to take care of ahead of time: budgeting, transportation, food, lodging, tourist attractions, and so forth. Older teen girls will be able to handle most of the responsibility, while younger teen girls may need you to spell out some of the ideas and/or take care of some of the arrangements. Even if you’re working with a younger group, don’t leave them out of the planning.

Older teen girls will probably be able to deal with getting information on their own. One teen girl could look up plane or bus fares, while another could check local hotels, hostels, and campsites, and that another could find tourist attractions. Younger teen girls or troops/groups that have been together for a shorter amount of time will need more direction. Not only will they need to know what kind of information is necessary, they will need to learn how to find it. (For example: Is the Internet a good place to look for airfares? What about a hotel?)

Advisors should help to oversee the information gathering itself. If younger teen girls don’t find what they’re looking for fairly quickly, they may give up or get frustrated. After
researching a topic, girls of all ages should be encouraged to bring several choices to a meeting so that the whole group can decide on the best use of their time and money.

Trips are invaluable for Girl Scouts in many respects. Seeing a new place teaches an appreciation of diversity and exposes girls to new cultures and experiences. It is thrilling to see a dream accomplished! By planning the trip themselves, girls have spread their wings and proved to themselves and others that they have the power to accomplish great things.

How would you help 11–13-year-old girls plan a trip? What would you do, and what would you ask them to do? Would it be the same for 13–15-year-olds and 15–17-year-olds?

Just Hanging Around

Sometimes teen girls just want to “hang out.” They’d like to order pizza, discuss boys, school, or life in general.

This can be very frustrating for an advisor to watch. It may seem as if your teen girls aren’t getting anything out of meetings. You might imagine that if they aren’t pursuing projects, trips, or goals, they can’t be learning anything. While it’s true that Girl Scouts encourages girls 11–17 to set goals for themselves and follow up, it is not always true that these girls aren’t getting anything out of more relaxed meetings.

Many teen girls feel alienated from their families. Friendships in middle school and high school are sometimes uncertain. Girls may just want a place to relax, be themselves, and de-stress. As long as everyone has an opportunity to speak, and the group is friendly and supportive, girls can profit from the chance to relate to one another.

It is also true that older teen girls are frequently very busy. They may have dozens of academic, social, and extracurricular commitments every week. Scheduled relaxing time may be just what these girls need! Often, preteen/teen girls don’t realize they need time to process the information they are given during a day or a week. It can be a very healthy thing for them to have a chance to unwind.

It is important to remember that active groups may lapse for weeks at a time into a more relaxed pattern. There could be many reasons for this: final exams or midterms at school, sports, application deadlines for college or trade school, holidays, summer jobs, vacations with family, or general burnout at the end of a long project or big accomplishment. Don’t pressure the girls to start up again right away. Sometimes they may need a few weeks to recharge before they think about their next activity.
Though time for relaxation is important for preteen/teen girls, it’s also important not to go too
too far. If no one can think of anything to do and your girls become discontented and
discouraged with sitting around all the time, the group might disband. If they lack direction,
it may be up to you to begin suggesting activities. Make sure your Girl Scouts are
comfortable with the level of activity (or lack thereof) in the troop or group.

Guest Speakers

Girls ages 11–17 have spoken! They want to see young, professional women doing well in
interesting fields. There are several reasons for this:

1. They can be a source of career ideas or practical advice on what is actually involved
   in being a politician, chef, or doctor.

2. Teen girls are interested in what a young, successful woman did to prepare herself
   for her chosen field.

3. Younger women are especially interesting to teenagers who look up to women a
   little older than themselves.

Program Pathways for Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts offers many different opportunities or “pathways” in which girls can participate
in Girl Scout programs. These varied experiences provide girls with choices that best fit
their interests, time commitments and family values.

- Troop/Group Meetings
- Day Camps/Resident Camp as program aides or participants
- Travel – troop/group or Destinations
- Service Unit and Council Sponsored Events
- Product Sales

Remember any activity girls do should always be planned according to GSWNY council
policy and procedures and Safety Activity Checkpoints. Council Policy and Procedures are
located in the back of Volunteer Essentials or on the GSWNY website on the Forms library.
Safety Activity Checkpoints, a national publication, is a virtual document and can be
accessed through the GSWNY website by the following link: SAFETY ACTIVITY
CHECKPOINTS
Troop Funds and Money Earning

Troop activities will sometimes cost money. Where will the money come from? Troops often need to collect dues or a start-up fee from each member. This should be a small amount. Girl Scouts is not intended to be expensive for members. Be sensitive to disparities in families’ financial circumstances; a family’s inability to pay should not be a barrier for participation. Girls can earn money from the Fall Product Program Activity and the Cookie Program Activity to supplement dues.

Money earning opportunities are also a way to help provide program to girls. Following a budget for planned activities, money earning is any event when girls provide a service or non-commercial products in exchange for payment. Girls cannot in any way solicit cash or money for other organizations. Please refer to the Finances section of the GSOSW Policies and Procedures for all procedures related to troop/group monies.

Troop money belongs to the whole troop and needs to be carefully and accurately accounted for. It is unfair to the leader to have to keep supplying her own funds and materials for group supplies, and it is dishonest for the leader or troop members to use troop funds or supplies for private purposes. The job of troop treasurer is a good one to delegate to a parent volunteer. No more than $100 should be carried over from year to year unless it is for a special trip or event and is noted on the Annual Report of Troop.

Troop checking accounts are required for troops with $100.00 or more in their troop funds. Please follow Council Volunteer Policies & Procedures regarding requirements for troop checking accounts and financial paperwork. See your Service Unit Finance Consultant with questions.

Creating a Troop Budget

Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts should be thoroughly involved in the group finances. Plan a group budget with your teen Girl Scouts so that they are aware of the amount of their troop funds, where those funds come from, and how they are spent. This is the first step toward future budget planning skills.

See how creative you can be at assembling the supplies you need without money. For example, you will need a first-aid kit, you can have each girl contribute one item. The first-aid kit is then valuable as a learning tool as well as a safety necessity, and the girls feel proud of what they have put together. A similar method could be used to assemble group craft supplies such as scissors, glue, and other supplies. See if you can use recycled
materials or things found around the house rather than expensive craft supplies. Some equipment can be borrowed from the council service center.

The chart below can be used as a guide for things to consider. Keep in mind that Girl Scouting is meant to be a low cost program. Examples of low/no cost activities include: use of recycled products in crafts, free events in your community, sharing/swapping supplies with other troops, service projects helping those in need, nature walks, touring a pet store and playing at the park.

**Sample Troop Budget Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awards and Emblems (Pins and Badges)</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop equipment (First-aid kit, Resource books)</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service projects</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program fees (Event registration, Start-up fees, etc.)</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Expenses** $__________ **Total Income** $__________

**Product Program Activities**

There are two annual product program activities sponsored by Girl Scouts of Western New York Council.

- **The Fall Product Program Activity** provides start-up funds at the beginning of the new Girl Scout year. Order taking begins at the end of September. Registered Girl Scouts ask for support of Girl Scouting by offering a variety of products.
- **The Cookie Program Activity** provides funds for services for our troops. Girls take orders in January and deliver cookies in February. Extra cookies are made available in March. Did you know that five of the most popular cookie varieties in the United States are...
Girl Scout Cookies®? There is a separate training just for your troop’s cookie manager.

**Keeping Troop Records**

Being a Girl Scout troop leader involves some clerical details. This section offers some practical help in getting organized so that Girl Scout paperwork does not interfere with the fun part of the job.

Some forms are required to be completed by all girls and adults involved with your troop; other forms are optional, but can make your life easier. All forms are available at [www.gswny.org](http://www.gswny.org) by clicking on the Forms link at the top of the home page. You should refer to this document and to Safety Activity Checkpoints (also available on the forms page) any time you are planning an activity.

- **Girl Scout Registration**
  All girls and adults participating in Girl Scouts must be registered as members of Girl Scouts USA. Registration is easy! You can register online at girlscoutsosw.org, just click the “Join” button on the home page to sign up and pay your dues. Financial assistance is available. If you are renewing your membership or your troops’, you can do so through the Girl Scout Member Community (MyGS).

- **Annual Permission Slip & Health History**
  Refer to Council Volunteer Policies and Procedures to ensure you know when permission slips are required. The circumstances will determine which form is appropriate.

- **Troop Financial Report**
  All Girl Scout troops are required to submit the Troop Financial Report form and the most recent bank statement to the service unit treasurer by June 30 of each year. It is required that the troop leader keeps a copy of the troop financial report, all receipts, along with a detailed bank activity record form #107 (or other financial tracking tool) and have available upon request for review. To participate in product sales or money earning activities all troops (who were active in the previous year) must have their completed financial report on file with GSOSW. If you keep good and up-to-date records, filling out the report is easy. Read over the report form before you begin your troop so you know what you’re accountable for at the end of the year.

**Congratulations!**

You have completed the Senior/Ambassador Grade Level home study. To get credit for this course, please submit your evaluation online at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Senior_AmbassadorGLT](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Senior_AmbassadorGLT).