

YOUR FIRST GIRL SCOUT TROOP MEETING

VERY FIRST MEETING CHECKLIST:

- ❑ You've had a "Welcome to Girl Scouting" meeting with your Service Unit Director
- ❑ You've completed "Helping Girls Grow I" and have a copy of "Getting Started With [your program level] Girl Scouts."
- ❑ You and your assistant leader(s) have met to talk over your goals for the girls and to divide troop leader jobs
- ❑ You've met with the parents of the girls in your troop and lined up a troop committee and other parent support.
- ❑ This is it - time to plan your first troop meeting!
 - Have fun
 - Keep safe
 - Get acquainted
 - Learn a little about Girl Scouting

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

1. Handbook, award book, and leader guide for your program level.
2. Name tag supplies
3. An attendance roster
4. A game to play
5. An activity from the handbook
6. The Girl Scout Promise written on newsprint or posterboard or a chalk board.
7. Your Girl Scout uniform (or a Girl Scout t-shirt if you don't have a uniform yet.)
8. A Girl Scout Catalog, if you have one.

MEETING PLACE SET UP:

- A “welcome” sign
- Display of handbooks, catalog, uniform if you can borrow one, any other Girl Scout “stuff” you can borrow.
- Chairs set up in a circle OR area ready for girls to set up chairs as they arrive.
- Table or work space with name tag supplies
- A leader at the door to welcome girls.

DAISY, BROWNIE, AND JUNIOR GIRL SCOUTS

“EARLY BIRD”/START UP ACTIVITIES:

As girls arrive at the meeting place and are welcomed by a troop leader, have something for them to do until the meeting actually begins. Making name tags, helping set up chairs, taping up the Girl Scout Promise or other posters, or any other getting-ready jobs you may have.

At other meetings you might have puzzles set out, or jump ropes or bean bags, or what ever the girls suggest. This could even be your snack and social time, if you meet right after school.

OPENING:

Your opener brings the girls together and officially starts the meeting. It could be a song, a quick game, a flag ceremony, reciting the Promise and Law, or other activity the girls choose. (After the first meeting or two, the girls take turns choosing and leading the opener.) For your first meeting, you might:

- Play a “name” game that helps everyone learn each other’s names, or “icebreaker” game that helps everyone have fun together and feel more comfortable as a group. If your daughter is in the troop, ask her about a circle game that most girls like to play.

- Pledge allegiance to the flag and read or say the Girl Scout Promise together.

MEETING PLACE TOUR: be sure everyone knows where restrooms and emergency exits are located!

BUSINESS MEETING:

Teach the Quiet Sign. Take attendance (or have a girl do it.) Go around the circle and have girls share one of their favorite things to do; write them all down and tell them they can use these favorite things to help choose troop meeting activities.

ACTIVITY TIME:

Show girls the handbook and award or activity book for their program level. Tell them that there are many activities there they may do on their own and at troop meetings. Today you've chosen an activity you hope they'll like, but later they will choose together.

You'll find outdoor activities, science discovery activities, art activities, health and safety activities and many MANY more in the girl's handbook or your leader guide. Choose one that appeals to you and can be done in the time you have and within your budget.

CLEAN UP:

Everybody works together to keep the meeting place clean and neat. Allow time to finish up the activity and "change gears" for clean up. Take clean up one step at a time: "Jane and Sue, take the paint brushes to the sink and wash them. Tanya and Carol, roll up the newspapers and put them in the trash. Shakeya, Madison, Dawn and Jennifer, stack the chairs around the wall. Britney, please take down the poster and then collect name tags." And so forth! At your next meeting, you'll introduce the Kaper Chart, a Girl Scout way of dividing up jobs fairly.

CLOSING:

Don't let parents waiting at the door rush you – closing is important! Bring the girls back together as a group for last-minute reminders and a special good-bye. The Friendship Circle is always popular, but you can also retire the colors (put away the flag) or sing a song “(Taps”) play a counting out game (S-C-O-U-T) or share a few words of inspiration and thank the girls for a good meeting.

SAFETY NOTE: find out ahead of time if girls will walk home, be picked up by a parent or other approved person, ride a bus or be in a carpool. Ask parents to put in writing who may and may not pick up their daughter. Do not release them to anyone else.

AFTERWARDS...meet with your assistant leader(s) and talk over the meeting – what worked, what you wanted to do and didn't get around to, what didn't work, and what you'll do at the next meeting. Be sure everyone knows what her responsibilities are, and touch base by phone before the next meeting.

AND DON'T FORGET: You have lots more about troop meetings in your leader's guide, in the girls' handbook (Brownie Girl Scouts and older) and in your “Getting Started” booklet. There are also videos available from the Program Resource Center. You may also have a real live resource person in your own service unit to help you with your first meetings – a Troop Leader Coach or “TLC.” She'll be your mentor as you plan your parent meeting and troop meetings, sign up for training and take part in Service Unit events. Call her!

CADETTE AND SENIOR GIRL SCOUTS

MEETING SET UP:

Don't have a first meeting – have a kickoff! Can you meet at the local swimming pool? At the pizza place? In the community room at the mall? Have a cookout or picnic? Anything that involves food and sounds like a party is more attractive than a traditional troop meeting. Plan to be organized but casual.

AS GIRLS ARRIVE: Have a sign-in sheet.

Have plenty of pencils and copies of a teen magazine-type "What's Your Personality Type?" "What's Your Style?" "What Kind of Fish Are You?" quiz.

Have name tag materials for girls to create a name tag that reflects their personality, style, hobby, special interests, etc.

START UP:

Go around circle and have girls introduce themselves: name, school, and one goal they have for themselves this year. Leaders do the same.

BUSINESS:

Help girls decide how they will manage the troop – steering committee, town meeting, or patrols? What officers will they need? Who will do what?

ACTIVITY:

Lead an activity from the *Cadette Girl Scout Handbook* or *The Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts* or from *Interest Projects for Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts*.

Tell the girls where you found the activity; encourage them to look through their own books for troop meeting activity ideas, trips, and service projects.

CLEAN UP:

Allow time for girls to clean up as needed after your activity. Eleven and twelve year-olds will still need some direction here!

CLOSING:

Ask girls to come to the next meeting ready to elect officers and offer ideas for the troop year.

Read one of the girl-written poems from the Cadette handbook or Senior resource book.

Thank the girls for a good meeting and tell them how much you're looking forward to working with them. (Or praise them for the parts of the meeting that were good and say you're looking forward to the next meeting!) Close with the Girl Scout Promise.