

# Welcome to Girl Scouts

We are so excited to join you on your journey as a first-year troop leader!

Troops are more successful when families are involved and share responsibilities. That is why we suggest you and your assistant leader(s) have a family meeting at the start of each Girl Scout year.

Preparing ahead of time for your parent/caregiver meeting will help ensure its success. To help keep things simple, we have put together several resources for your first parent/caregiver meeting. Feel free to use any of these or create your own!

In this packet you will find:

1. Preparing for Your Parent/Caregiver Meeting
2. Sample Parent/Caregiver Meeting Agenda
3. Parent/Caregiver Interest Form
4. Common Girl Scout Roles
5. Girl Scout Promise and Law
6. Trefoil Template

As the troop leader, you receive an email when a new member joins your troop. The new family does not, so we ask you to reach out and welcome each one. Please remember to check your troop roster regularly.

Yours in Girl Scouting,



Your First Year Troop Support Coordinators

This packet is a resource to help guide you through your first parent/caregiver meeting. It can be used digitally, or you can print the pages that are most useful to you.

As a troop leader, one of the best ways to start the Girl Scout year strong is by holding a Parent/Caregiver Meeting. This one simple meeting can make a huge difference in setting the tone for the months ahead—and it helps make the troop experience better for *everyone*, especially the girls.

### **What Is a Parent/Caregiver Meeting?**

This is the first official meeting of the year. It's an opportunity to bring families together, share important information, and set expectations so everyone is on the same page.

**When families understand how the troop works and how they can contribute, even in small ways, it makes a big impact.**

### **Why is it Important to Have a Parent/Caregiver Meeting?**

(Best practices include starting each year with a Parent/Caregiver meeting)

- It helps families learn about Girl Scouts.
- Sets the tone for a collaborative and respectful troop environment.
- Clarifies roles, responsibilities, and how costs are shared.
- Provides you a chance to hear questions and ideas from parents/caregivers.
- Identifies potential volunteers right away.
- Builds trust and opens the door for future communication.

Parents/caregivers want to support their girls, but sometimes they just don't know how. This meeting helps them feel welcome, informed, and included from day one.

### **It Sets the Troop Up for Success**

When parents/caregivers are engaged, leaders feel supported, and that energy trickles down to the girls. Troops are more organized, more connected, and better able to deliver on the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character.

### **Tips for Preparing for the Parent/Caregiver Meeting**

- Choose a Day, Time, and Location for Your Parent/Caregiver Meeting
  - Make sure you select a time and location that will suit you and the families' needs.
  - The meeting space should have enough room to accommodate families and their girls.
  - Ideally this meeting will be where you plan to have troop meetings. This will give the girls and families familiarity with the location.

### **Preparing an Activity (Optional)**

- You may be eligible for a Girl Scout Experience Box; this will include an activity for the girls to work separately from the parents.
- Have an activity the parents/caregivers and girls can work on together. (Use suggested activity or plan one of your own.)

Activity Option:

Supplies Needed:

- Trefoil shape (one copy per girl and their parent/caregiver.)
- Crayons or markers

## Directions

- Invite the girls to draw a picture of their favorite thing to do.
- Invite the parent/caregiver to draw a picture of their favorite thing to do with their girl.
- Both works together to draw their pictures inside the trefoil template.

## Finances

### Troop Dues

- It is common for troops to ask parents to donate towards troop dues to help offset costs.
- Discuss with your assistant troop leader(s) if this is something you want to do and what is appropriate, keeping in mind the financial situations of the families.
- Collecting troop dues once a year makes things simple and easy to remember!
- During the Parent/Caregiver Meeting you can share that you are asking each family to donate troop funds. \$25.00 is a common donation.
- **Girls cannot be excluded from participating in the troop or activities if dues are not contributed to the troop.**
- Share with families that the troop will have the opportunity to participate in the Fall Treats and Reads and the Cookie Program, which will provide troop funds at the end of each season.
- Share with families that troop dues and troop proceeds (from Fall Treats and Reads Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program) help cover the cost of badges, supplies, activities, events, etc.

### Bank Accounts

- You will work with your First Year Troop Support Coordinator to open a troop bank account.
- Banks require specific paperwork from GSMISTS that you will take with you when you go.
- **Please do not go to the bank to open the troop account until you have talked with your First Year Troop Support Coordinator.**

### Uniforms

- Uniforms are not required but are very popular with girls!
- It is easiest for you, as the troop leader, to have parents/caregivers be responsible for purchasing their girl's uniform.
- Troops that want to help with the cost of covering uniforms often wait until the troop has participated in their first cookie program. This allows the troop to use. Proceeds earned through the programs.

### Forms

- You will want to have the following forms available at the parent/caregiver meeting.
  - Annual Permission and Health History Form
  - Permission to Participate in Product Program Form
- Allow time during the meeting to go over both forms and their importance. Allow time for parents/caregivers to fill them out and leave with you.

### Importance of Forms

- The Annual Permission and Health History form does not require additional permission slips from parent/caregiver for events or activities located within GSMISTS council jurisdiction:
  - That does not exceed 8 hours, including travel time.
  - Are not considered high risk/high adventures activities as outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints and GSMISTS Activity and Trip Planning Guide (any activity requiring GSMISTS approval).
  - A separate Girl Permission Form must be completed for activities/trips that fall outside the above categories.
- The Annual Permission and Health History form will also provide you with emergency contact information and allergy information. These forms will go with you wherever you and the girls go!
- By signing the Annual Permission and Health History Form, you are giving GSMISTS and the troop leader permission to use girl pictures on approved social media sites.

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- Permission to Participate in Product Programs Form needs to be completed annually by parent/caregiver. This form protects the troop from being liable for outstanding money during Product Programs.

### **Communication**

- Have several different forms of communication in mind to share with the parents. Suggestions include;
  - Email
  - Text Group
  - Closed Facebook Group
  - Band App
- Determine which one works the best and use this communication tool throughout the year.
- Share with the parents that this will be the primary form of communication and the expectation that they are checking the agreed upon platform on a regular basis.

### **Parent/Caregiver Involvement**

- Read through the Parent/Caregiver Interest document.
- This will help you decide how you want parents/caregivers involved in the troop.
- Please remember that any adults that will be participating on more than one occasion will need to be currently registered members with an eligible background check on file.

Below is a suggested agenda and time allotments for each portion of the meeting.

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## **Welcome/Introductions (10 minutes)**

- Thank everyone for coming.
- Introduce yourself, primary assistant troop leader, assistant leaders, etc.
- Give a quick overview of what will take place during the meeting.

## **Girl Scout Promise and Law (5 minutes)**

Share:

- The Girl Scout Promise and Law are traditional ways of starting a troop meeting.
- Girl Scouting offers girls the opportunity to discover their inner strengths, passions and talents.
- The Girl Scout Mission is building girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.

## **Girl Scout Leadership Experience (5 minutes)**

Share:

- The Girl Scout Leadership Experience encompasses all that a girl will do as a Girl Scout.
- Girl Scouts engage girls in discovering self, connecting with others, and taking action to make the world a better place.
- The troop will work on badges and do activities based on the girls' interests.

## **Troop Meeting Details (5 minutes)**

Share:

- Proposed troop meeting details.
- Discuss and adjust as needed.

## **Finances (5 minutes)**

Share:

- Troop Dues: You may be asking each family for a donation to help offset troop costs.
- The troop will participate in GSMISTS Programs (Fall Treats and Reads and Cookies).
- The troop will earn proceeds from both money-earning opportunities that will be used for troop expenses.

## **Uniforms (5 minutes)**

Share:

- Girl Scout uniforms are not required; they are very popular with the girls!
- A “starter” uniform includes the tunic, sash or vest, Council ID and troop numbers.
- Encourage families to purchase either the vest or sash (or tunic for Girl Scout Daisies) to help girls proudly display their Girl Scout accomplishments

## **Forms (5 minutes)**

Share:

- Complete the provided forms. (Annual Permission and Health History Form and Permission to Participate in Product Program).
- Leave the forms at the end of the meeting.

### **Communication (5 minutes)**

Share:

- There are several different options for troop communications.
  - Email
  - Text Group
  - Closed Facebook Group
  - Band App (or other communication app)
- Agree upon a communication form to use.
- Remind parents/caregivers that being part of the troop means they are responsible for checking and reading communications and responding in a timely manner.

### **Parent/Caregiver Involvement (5 minutes)**

Share:

- Please consider how you or another adult in your family can help.
- Without meaningful support from parents and caregivers, it's difficult for a troop to be all it can be.
- Plus, girls feel a special sense of pride when their families take part and show interest in the things they are doing!
- Provide the Parent/Caregiver Interest Form.
- To volunteer with the troop, you will need to register as a Girl Scout member and have an eligible background check on file.
  - The annual adult Girl Scout membership is \$30.00.
  - Once registered you will receive a link to complete the background check. (GSMISTS covers the cost of the background check.)

### **Q & A Session (5 minutes)**

Thank you and Next Steps (10 minutes)

Share:

- Thank you all for coming tonight.
- Remind parents/caregivers that girls will not be able to attend the next meeting unless they are registered Girl Scouts and you have the Annual Permission and Health History Form returned.

Girl Scouting provides the best opportunities for girls when families step up and play an active part in the troop. Without meaningful support from parents and caregivers, it's difficult for a troop to be all it can be. Plus, girls feel a special sense of pride when their families take part and show interest in the things they are doing!

**For example, you may have a certification in:**

|                                       |   |                               |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED | Lifeguarding with First Aid/CPR/AED + Waterfront Skills Certification | Level 1 Archery Certification |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|

Please consider how you or another adult in your family can help. Use this form to share how you can support your girl's troop by circling all that apply. You may have skills, hobbies, connections, or a career that could be shared with the troop and assist girls in earning badges.

|                           |                     |   |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Arts & Crafts             | Astronomy           | Audio/Visual Production and/or Podcasts |
| Auto Maintenance/Repairs  | Bicycling           | Camping                                 |
| Community Service         | Computers           | Cooking/Nutrition                       |
| Dental Health             | Ecology             | Environment                             |
| First Aid/Health & Safety | Gardening           | Health & Fitness                        |
| Hiking                    | Knitting/Crocheting | Reading/Writing                         |
| Music/Singing             | Photography         | Pottery/Sculpting                       |

**Ways to Support the Troop without Being at Troop Meetings:**

- My job, business or profession would be of interest to the girls.
- Provide space for storage, equipment, etc.
- Return pop cans the troop has collected.
- Organize the Snack Schedule.
- Donate supplies
- Provide a place for outdoor activities (Will need to complete Meet in Home application)
- Send communications and/or reminders for the leaders.
- Provide a trailer for moving items

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Method(s) of Contact:  Call  Text  Email

When registering as a Girl Scout member, parents and caregivers often choose one of the following key support roles:

### **Troop Leader**

- Expected to be at each meeting to maintain Volunteer-to-Youth ratio for troop meetings.
- The primary person for communication with GSMISTS.
- Primary signer on the troop's bank account.

### **Primary Assistant Troop Leader**

- Expected to be at each meeting to maintain Volunteer-to-Youth ratio for troop meetings.
- Second signer on the troop's bank account
- Works with troop leader on planning and coordinating troop events and activities.

### **Assistant Troop Leader**

- Expected to be at each meeting to maintain Volunteer-to-Youth ratio for troop meetings.
- Supports both the troop leader and primary assistant troop leader.
- Helps manage specific tasks or areas of responsibility as agreed upon with troop leader and primary assistant troop leader.

### **Troop Helper**

- May fill in for Volunteer-to-Youth ratio purposes for troop meetings. (Example might be the above leadership roles being out due to illness, vacations, etc.).
- May attend field trips and/or activities to maintain Volunteer-to-Youth ratio.
- Assists wherever needed (events, setup, logistics, etc.).

Once a parent/caregiver has become an approved volunteer (and is in the role of assistant troop leader or troop helper) there are more specific ways they can be involved.

### **Cookie Support Team**

- Help coordinate cookie delivery/pick-up
- Cookie Booth Coordinator
  - Help coordinate cookie booths.
  - Create a schedule to give to troop leader to put into Smart Cookie.
  - Coordinate booth sign-ups with parents to maintain Volunteer-to-Youth ratio.
  - Making sure supplies, materials, and cookies are ready to go.

## **Logistics & Safety**

- Troop Camping Skills Certified (volunteer completes GSMISTS camping training and helps with campouts)
- Adult and Child First Aid/CPR/AED
- Lifeguarding with First Aid/CPR/AED + Waterfront Skills Certification
- Level 1 Archery Certification.

## **Creative & Fun**

- **Troop Photographer:** Takes and shares photos of approved troop members.
- **Share a Skill:** Parent/caregiver may have a profession, hobby, or special skill that can offer valuable “expert” knowledge to help the girls as they work on earning badges.

Read through the Parent/Caregiver Interest Form for a more comprehensive list of ways parents/caregivers can support the troop.

Girl Scouts recite the Promise and Law at the start of meetings, ceremonies, special events, and virtual gatherings to signal the beginning of activities and reinforce their core values.

This tradition serves as a reminder of the Girl Scout mission to build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. It also provides structure to gatherings and helps strengthen the shared identity and purpose of the troop.

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## The Girl Scout Promise

The 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.

\*When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word "God."

## The Mission

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

## The 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.





The original Trefoil design, patented by founder Juliette Gordon Low in 1914, was given to new members as a symbol of their commitment to leadership values.

Today, the three leaves of the Trefoil represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise: to serve one's country, to help other people, and to live by the Girl Scout Law.

Use the template below to create a Trefoil name tag or use it as an activity parents/Girl Scouts can do together.

- Invite the girls to draw a picture of their favorite thing to do.
  - Invite the parent/caregiver to draw a picture of their favorite thing to do with their girl.
  - Both work together to draw their pictures inside the Trefoil template.
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