

OPTIONS

Girl Scout Leaders today are usually juggling some combination of family, career, volunteer commitments and leisure activities. Finding the time for all of these could, at best, be described as difficult. Planning time is even more precious. Here, then, to help get you started, are OPTIONS for the busy Girl Scout Leader.

Each OPTIONS guide will offer meeting ideas for the beginning of the year as well as presenting a collection of openings and closings to be mixed and matched at meetings throughout the year. To implement OPTIONS, certain resources are necessary. Each OPTIONS identifies those resources considered primary (used at nearly every meeting) and secondary (used at certain specific meetings). Resources listed on pages 5 & 6 are supportive to leaders and girls and are available for purchase at the G.S. Shop or check out at the Emerson or Hannibal Resource Centers at the St. Louis and Hannibal Girl Scout Service Centers.

OPTIONS is here to help you – do not think your troop meetings should be planned around what is written here. The girl/adult partnership always has been a fundamental concept in Girl Scouting; it is one of our unique strengths and values. In Girl Scouting, a girl can learn to make decisions, accept the consequences of those decisions, and help plan activities for her troop. Through your efforts, girls will Discover (themselves and their values) Connect (with others) and Take Action (to improve their communities and the world).

So feel free to use OPTIONS in helping to get you started in planning your troop year. You are encouraged to use the Girl Scout Journey Publications and resources, which invite girls to “Take Action” on an issue they care about. The books contain stories, inspirational material, Girl Scout History, traditions and values, facts and games, and open spaces for girls to fill in their own ideas and memories. There are currently three different Leadership Journey’s available to the Junior Girl Scout. Each Leadership Journey Set includes a girl book and a how to guide for the troop leader/facilitator. The *Junior Girls Guide to Girl Scouting* (available in the fall of 2011) will include a handbook section and an awards section featuring 7 different Legacy Badges, financial literacy badges, cookie business badges and religious awards.

Additional Ideas and options for troop meetings and activities can be found online at www.girlscoutsem.org, the Emerson and Hannibal Resource Centers, *Pep Session Packets* and in each issue of *Inspire: Leader Program Bulletin*. Your Neighborhood Chair will also serve as a resource in finding out about Neighborhood, District and Council sponsored events offered to Junior Girl Scouts in your area.

Training is the most important tip we can offer to first time and returning Girl Scout Leaders. Junior Leaders responded that Introduction to Girl Scouting (ITGS) and Junior Leader courses gave them a great start. The GSUSA Online Volunteer Orientation (<http://training.girlscouts.org/>, password: Discover) is required and provides an introduction to the organization. GSEM’s ITGS is required and provides essential troop start up information for new Leaders. Leadership Essentials and Junior Essentials offer additional ideas and information for working with a troop. Check www.girlscoutsem.org for a link to online ITGS and the current issue of the *GSEM Course Catalog*, which lists course dates, times, and locations. Additionally the *Adult Facilitator Guide for Junior Agent of Change, Get Moving and Amuse Journey s* offers Leaders information regarding meeting ideas, ceremonies and Girl Scout traditions. *The Junior Girls Guide to Girl Scouting* will be available in the fall of 2011 and will also offer new and updated information for working with girls.

Girl Scout programs change and update to keep girls interested and involved. Check www.girlscoutsem.org for a link to online courses and the current issue of the *GSEM Course Catalog*, also available online, which lists course dates, times, and locations.

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Girl Scout Juniors are in the fourth and fifth grades. The Girl Scout Junior troop offers girls an opportunity to experience decision making and different forms of troop government (particularly the Patrol System).

Junior meetings should last approximately 60-90 minutes. Time of day and frequency will depend on your schedule and the girl's schedule. Meetings may be held in a school room, church hall, day care, recreation center, or other places where space is available.

Some things to take into consideration when working with the Girl Scout Junior are:

- ✓ Permission slips, notices of future meetings, parent's letters, etc. should be given to the girls at the end of the meetings as the girls are going home.
- ✓ Family involvement is encouraged by inviting the participation of family members (parents, guardians, foster parents, grandparents, older brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, etc.) in troop activities. Adults that participate in on-going troop activities should register as an adult Girl Scout. A welcoming ceremony may be held in the very beginning of the year to welcome the girls and their parents/guardians to Girl Scouting.
- ✓ Plan for a discussion time in each meeting. It is important for girls to have the opportunity to tell you what they would like to do.

Troop meetings for the Girl Scout Junior have a certain structure (see following example). They should begin with a short opening ceremony that might include a song, the Promise or a flag ceremony. The Business portion of the meeting should include brainstorming for future activities. Use the Junior Patrol System or Town Hall meeting to give the girls an opportunity to talk about the project/activity they are doing. The Program Activity portion of the meeting may be filled with patch/badge work, *Journey* activities or a hand's on activity. Some meetings may include a field trip or the trip can also take the place of the meeting. The meeting should have a definite closing – a song, game or the Girl Scout handshake or friendship circle.

Tips for planning a meeting:

- ❖ Meeting outlines provide structure and help the troop meet its goals.
- ❖ A typical Girl Scout meeting will have some or all of the parts listed on the next page.
- ❖ Selection of major activities will depend upon location, facilities, weather, interest of the girls and the capabilities of the leaders and available consultants.
- ❖ Leaders may wish to plan extra activities in case the meeting moves more quickly than anticipated.

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Parts of the meeting	Time to Allow	What Happens
1. Start Up or Arrival		Start-up activities give girls something to do until the meeting starts.
2. Opening	5 minutes	Opening activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus the girls on the meeting. • Are chosen by the girls. • Often include the Girl Scout Promise and Law. • May include a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story or other.
3. Business	10 - 20 minutes	Troop Government is utilized during this part of a meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking attendance and collecting dues. • Making announcements. • Planning an upcoming event or trip.
4. Activities	20 – 40 minutes	Girls help plan activities they will do during troop meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insignia work, activity, field trip. • Outdoor time. • Physical Activity (active games, etc.) • Ideas from the Leadership Journeys or the new <i>Girls Guide to Girl Scouting</i>
5. Snack/Treat	10 minutes	Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be a food snack or special treat. • Guide girls to consider the health benefits and possible food allergies of potential snacks. • Girls can take a turn bringing a treat.
6. Clean-up	10 minutes	Clean-up gives girls the opportunity to observe the familiar Girl Scouts tenant, "Leave a place better than you found it."
7. Closing	5 minutes	The closing lets girls know the meeting is ending. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand out information. • Review next activity/meeting.

Some meetings may need more time for an activity. Flexibility, wise planning and observing how things are going will help you judge the proper timing of a meeting.

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Girl Scout Junior Troop Finances

- **While there is always the temptation to do so, DO NOT SUBSIDIZE TROOP ACTIVITIES YOURSELF!!** Check the GSEM Troop Money Earning Monograph for planning troop budget, troop checking account, and other troop money related topics. This publication is available from your Neighborhood Chair or council resource centers. Additionally, refer to the *Volunteer Essentials* (available online from the GSEM website) and the newly updated *GSEM Essentials* also available from your Neighborhood Chair for information regarding specific issues relating to troop funds for Juniors. Parents/guardians should decide what they will contribute to the cost of activities.
- Most Junior Troop Leaders have determined the amount needed per girl by discussing estimated expenses with experienced Troop Leaders, Troop Organizers, Neighborhood Chairs, and Mentors.
- Keep field trips simple and low cost.
- Know the total cost of recognitions for the entire year. Please take inflation into consideration when determining annual dues for your troop. To determine yearly dues for your troop be sure to include Girl Scout Pin and World Association pins, new badges offered in the new *Junior Girls Guide to Girl Scouting* (available fall, 2011), Journey Awards, membership star and yellow disk, fun or participation patches, craft supplies, etc. and for girls bridging to Girl Scout Cadettes, Bridge to Girl Scout Cadette patch. Current prices of these items can be found in the Girl Scout Shop in St. Louis and Hannibal and online at www.girlscoutsem.org.
- The Girl Scout Junior sash or vest (including the insignia tab, USA flag, council ID set, and troop numbers), the *Junior Girls Guide to Girl Scouting*, available in the fall of 2011 and the Junior level Leadership Journey books are all optional purchases and are the responsibility of each girl's family. Refer to *the Junior Girls Guide to Girl Scouting* or online for uniform insignia placement guides.
- Have a parent meeting early in the year to review plans and costs. The meeting will afford you the opportunity to organize the troop committee (i.e.; assistant leaders, cookie manager, fall sale manager, etc.) and to get acquainted with the parents/guardians and other family members. It will give you the opportunity to find out what the parents/guardians expect for their daughters and what interests they may have regarding the Girl Scout program. You will be able to tell the parents/guardians about the troop's plans and let them know how they can help. This is your opportunity to collect registration money and gather information.
- Go to your Neighborhood meetings. You'll get great ideas, meet experienced leaders, and learn about exciting neighborhood events and council wide opportunities to enhance your troop activities.

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Resources

Please always refer to the current versions of both primary and secondary resources.

Primary:

Girl Scout Leadership Journey resources and publications:

Agent of Change: Power. In this journey, there's a whole spiral of it waiting for Girl Scout Juniors. This powerful journey is filled with ceremonies and circles, real life heroines, and special new characters, including the fashion-savvy spider named Dez. Along the way, girls learn how their own power combines into team power and then moves out to become community power (kind of like how Dez weaves her web from the inside out). The journey's centerpiece is a comic story of girl heroines who will inspire the real-life Juniors as they take action to improve their own community.

Get Moving: Girls explore the energy inside them, the energy used in their places and spaces, and the energy of getting themselves from here to there. A new comic story, "¡Vamos Ya!" will inspire the action and Dez, the fashionista spider, is back with some wit as she tries to figure out life "off the grid". Along the way, juniors can earn Energize, Investigate, and Innovate awards.

Amuse: Juniors learn just how many roles are open to them in the world and the possibilities those roles open for them.

The Junior Girls Guide to Girl Scouting (available fall, 2011)

Inspire: Leader Program Bulletin (online at www.girlscoutsem.org)

Volunteer Essentials (online at www.girlscoutsem.org): Contains content that impacts the entire volunteer membership of the GSUSA, with current GSEM specific information. Online only

GSEM Essentials (available from your Neighborhood Chair): Minimizes content from *Volunteer Essentials* and current GSEM specific information. Printed Document

Safety Checkpoint: Guidelines and checkpoints regarding safety issues by specific activity (<http://www.girlscoutsem.org/content/822/safety-activity-checkpoints.aspx>)

Secondary:

Perfectly Effortless Program (PEP Session Packets) – activities to enhance troop program (Topics include *Ceremonies in Girl Scouting; Celebrate!; Fun in the Out-of-Doors; Helping Others; People Near and Far; Do-Re-Mi and Swaps and Bridging*) available at the Emerson and Hannibal Resource Centers or online at www.girlscoutsem.org.

Trips and Tours – A resource designed for Girl Scout Leaders to explore the many outstanding venues in and around our community. *Trips and Tours* is available online at www.girlscoutsem.org. Note: for troops taking overnight trips, leaders must get Neighborhood Chair and council approval by completing a Troop Trip Application (P-10) available online at www.girlscoutsem.org.

Troop Money Earning Monograph – Information about troop checking accounts, planning budgets, etc. available from your Neighborhood Chair, council resource centers or online at www.girlscoutsem.org.

It's Your Journey – Customize It! – GSUSA Publication. This publication is available for purchase at the Girl Scout Shop or to borrow from the Emerson and Hannibal Resource Centers.

Melinda Carroll Girl Scouts Greatest Hits – Pocket Songbook of Vols. 1 & 2 and CD's Vols. 1-11 (GSPSB): available to borrow from the Emerson and Hannibal Resource Centers.

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The Girl Scout Bronze Award Adult Volunteer Guide and Girl Guide: Available online at www.girlscoutsem.org
>Programs and Events>Awards.

On-Line:

www.girlscoutsem.org – GSEM news source, online courses, workshops, council program activities, Neighborhood Announcements and other council publications.

www.girlscouts.org – GSUSA's national organization Web site, go to Girl Scout Central section for awards, ceremonies and other information.

Additional Resources and Program Ideas:

Girl Scout Virtual Catalogs: Online at www.girlscoutsem.org : Girl Scout Shop

Girl Scout Promise and Law: Online at www.girlscoutsem.org

Girl Scout Fun Patches: Girl Scouts offers various patches for sale in the G.S. Shop or online at www.girlscoutsem.org. The variety of these patches is constantly changing. You can view the updated available patches on a virtual catalog through the Girl Scout Shop link on our website. Fun patches and participation patches may include: Manners, First Aid, Pet Care as well as Fire Station Visit, Ice Cream Party, Roller and Ice Skating etc. There are no requirements specifically for these patches. Girls may earn or be given them at your discretion.

Living the Girl Scout Law: Individual level ideas for working with the girls about living the law are available online under the Resource Centers – Links section at www.girlscoutsem.org.

Religious Awards: Contact your religious organization directly to see if there is a program available for your level of girls to earn awards.

Resources for Volunteers: A listing of all resources available to borrow from the Emerson and Hannibal Resource Centers is available online at www.girlscoutsem.org; Resource Center; Links

The following Patch Programs are available at www.girlscoutsem.org: Programs and Events: Patch Programs or in the Emerson or Hannibal Resource Centers:

Juliette Low World Friendship Fund Patch Program (JLWFF)

Making CENTS in the City Patch Program - Girl Scouts of Missouri financial literacy program. Age level traveling trunks may be borrowed from the Emerson or Hannibal Resource Center.

Economize Energy (ECO-EN) Patch Program: Help girls learn to use resources wisely and to protect and improve the world around them.

Disability Awareness Award Programs: Our own council program promoting disability awareness for all levels of girls.

Paddle Wheels and Wagon Wheels Badge Program: Our own council badge/patch program promoting local history.

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Getting Started.....Meeting Ideas

Opening Ceremony:

- Opening One: Have a flag ceremony (PEP Session Packet- *Ceremonies in Girl Scouting and Celebrate!*).
- Opening Two: Say the Promise and Law. Discuss what it means to live by the Girl Scout Law (*Agent of Change* Journey p. 29). Use a symbol or sign to make the ceremony more special e.g. string (the thread that unites everyone – see *Agent of Change* p. 30)
- Opening Three: Here's one for the Power of One Award (*Agent of Change* p.31). In a circle, cross arms for a friendship squeeze. Go around the circle and say one thing that you can imagine Juliette Gordon Low congratulating your group for having just done.
- Opening Four: Sing "Hello! Hello!" (GSPSB). Say hello in a foreign language.

Spanish:	Hola	OH-lah
French:	Bonjour	Bohng-Zhoor
Japanese:	Konnichi wa	Kohn-Nee-chee-wah
Swahili:	Jambo	KJAHM-bah
German:	Guten Tag	goo-t'n TAHK

Closing Ceremony:

- Closing One: Form a friendship circle and sing "Taps" (GSPSB). Friendship Circle: In a friendship circle, you stand in a circle with other girls. Place your right arm over your left arm. Hold hands with the girls next to you. The friendship squeeze begins when you hold hands in a friendship circle. One girl or the Troop Leader should start. With her right hand she squeezes her neighbor's hand. Then that girl squeezes with her right hand. One by one, each girl passes on the squeeze until it travels all around the circle.
- Closing Two: Texas Hug: Everyone stands in a circle, arms over each other's shoulders. Leader says: "Take one giant step forward. That's the Texas Hug. Goodnight, Girl Scouts."
- Closing Three: Sing "Whene're You Make a Promise," (GSPSB) and form a Chain of Friendship. Everyone stands in a circle hands on waist. Leader removes her right hand from her waist, links arm with the person on her right and says, "I am a link in the golden chain of friendship, Girl Scouting." The person on her right repeats the action and statement, and so on around the circle until the Leader has both arms linked.
- Closing Four: Sing "Make New Friends" (GSPSB) and say good-bye in a foreign language.

Spanish:	Hasta la vista	AHS-tah lah VEES -tah
French:	Au revoir	aw V'WAHR
Japanese:	Sayonara	sah-YOH-nah-rah
Swahili:	Kwaheri	Kwah-HEH-ree
German:	Auf Wiedersehen	Ahoor-VEE-duh-zain

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Meeting 1: Prepare for next week's Rededication and Investiture Ceremony by reviewing the Girl Scout Promise and Law, facts about Juliette Gordon Low and Girl Scouting. The *Agent of Change* Journey book talks about Girl Scouting, and would serve as a good guide for discussion. Information regarding Juliette Gordon Low can also be found online. Girls can work in teams to plan a part of the ceremony.

Meeting 2: Have your Rededication and Investiture Ceremony. The Investiture Ceremony may be very simple. The new member repeats the Promise, is given her Girl Scout pin, and welcomed into the troop and the organization. (Participation patches for Investiture and Rededication are available for purchase through the Girl Scout Shop)

Meeting 3: Check out the current issue of *Inspire: the Leader Program Bulletin* online at www.girlscoutsem.org with your troop. Review the *Agent of Change*, *Get Moving*, and *Amuse Journeys*, the *Bronze Award Guides*, and when available, the *Junior Girls Guide to Girl Scouting*. Have each girl pick a badge, award, activity or event they want to try and make up a commercial for it. The girls should present their commercial to the troop and vote on what they would like to try this year. (Note: if your troop will be earning the Bronze Award, they must choose one of the three Journey books to complete as a prerequisite to earning the award). Play a team building game from the PEP Session Packet – *Building Leaders Since 1912*.

Meeting 4: Begin to work on the *Disability Awareness Junior Badge* (see additional resources and program ideas). Choose to work on activities three and four regarding feelings about disabilities as well as occupations for working with people with disabilities. Refer to the parts of the law: "respect myself and others" and "be a sister to every Girl Scout". See also the *Amuse* journey regarding role playing. (The *disability awareness junior badge* is available for purchase through the Girl Scout Shop.)

Meeting 5: Begin to work on the "*Paddle Wheels and Wagon Wheels*" Junior badge (see additional resources and program ideas). This junior badge offers girls a chance to explore the unique history and heritage within our council's jurisdiction and its impact on each girl's community. It is awarded to a girl after completing a selection of activities and is available for purchase through the Girl Scout Shop. Begin work on activity number 4. You may consider a field trip to American Indian Educational Resources of St. Louis (*Trips and Tours*) to fulfill activity #6.

Meeting 6: Start a Seasons of Giving project. Check with your Neighborhood Seasons of Giving Coordinator for a list of agencies to serve. Visit www.girlscoutsem.org or check PEP Packet-*Helping Others* for additional service project ideas and craft suggestions. Report your troop service through the Seasons of Giving Troop Report (SOG-1) online at www.girlscoutsem.org. Your troop may wish to do an activity for Seasons of Giving in addition to or instead of "making something" (i.e. caroling, packages for a homeless shelter, food pantry baskets, volunteering at a food bank, etc.)

Other Special Girl Scout Days and Activities Ideas:

October 31 – Juliette Low's Birthday. Celebrate by having a birthday party for Juliette "Daisy" Low! Start earning the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund (JLWFF) patch. Design and develop your own celebration. Visit the Emerson and Hannibal Resource Center or online at www.girlscoutsem.org for patch requirements and other ideas to celebrate Juliette's birthday.

October is the time for registered adults in your troop to look into certifications and trainings required to take your troop camping. Check the current issue of GSEM Course Catalog at www.girlscoutsem.org. Application deadlines may seem far away but by starting the process now your troop will be prepared for a great outdoor experience. Begin to train your girls the skills they will need for camping. Review the PEP Session Packet – *Fun in the Out-of-Doors* for skills, songs, games or crafts.

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Fall Product Sales: If you choose to participate in this Council Fall Product Sale event, refer to the *Inspire: Leader Program Bulletin* and Fall Product Training materials for more information about this sale.

January: **Don't Forget!** Check for Troop Cookie Training dates in your Neighborhood! Refer to the current issues of *Inspire: Leader Program Bulletin* and Troop Cookie Training materials for more information about the sale.

January: Look at the exciting council sponsored events being held this spring (see the current issue of *Inspire: Leader Program Bulletin* online at www.girlscoutsem.org for details and registration information). If part or all of your troop is planning to bridge to Girl Scout Cadettes this year, you will want to look into some of the council-sponsored events offered to bridging Girl Scout Juniors (i.e. Cadette Camp-A-Rama, Troop Ride and Cookout). Participating in a Girl Scout Cadette activity is part of Bridging to Girl Scout Cadettes. (See the PEP Session – *Bridging*)

February: A Girl Scout Summer is usually published and distributed to each registered Girl Scout in late January or early February. Discuss the opportunities available for Girl Scout Juniors such as LARKS, Day Camp or Resident Camp. Some opportunities will be individual girl and some will be troop. Many of the camp registration deadlines are at the beginning of March, so be sure to have girls start thinking NOW about what they would like to sign up for.

February 22 – World Thinking Day: Visit www.girlscoutsem.org for theme and program ideas. On this day, the birthday of both Lord and Lady Baden-Powell, Girl Scouts and Girl Guides everywhere “think about” each other and their union through the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. Complete the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund requirements and present the girls with the JLWFF patch or segment. There are new Girl Scout Thinking Day patches available every year as well. Contact the GS Shop for purchase of both the patches and segment.

March 12 – Girl Scout Birthday. Celebration of the first Girl Scout troop meeting ever held. How about some cake? There is always a Girl Scout Patch available yearly for this event. Contact the GS Shop.

March: Tally up overall troop cookie sales. Decide through troop government system how to use the proceeds.

April – April Showers: Plan to participate in this council wide collection of personal care items. Discuss how April Showers benefits our community and spreads Girl Scout values throughout the area. Think about more service opportunities that your troop can participate in. This may spark some interest in earning the *Girls Scout Bronze Award*. April Showers main patches and year segments are available to purchase through the Girl Scout Shop.

April: Do several activities from the PEP Session Packet – *Fun in the Out-of-Doors*. Plan menus and activities for a camping trip. Work with knots and participate in a team-building activity. (*Agent of Change*, p.36)

May: If you have second year girl's bridging to Girl Scout Cadettes, invite a group of Bridging Brownies to attend your meeting. Review the camping skills that you and your girls spent so much time learning and teach and demonstrate them for the visiting Girl Scout Brownie Troop. This will help girls to complete their Bridge to Cadette Girl Scout patch. (PEP Session Packet – *Bridging*).

May: Finish plans and projects for the Bridging Ceremony.

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May: Court of Awards and Bridging Ceremony: If there is no neighborhood bridging ceremony, check the *Agent of Change* Journey book, PEP Session Packet – *Ceremonies in Girl Scouting, Celebrate! Or Bridging Packet* for ideas and tips for conducting ceremonies. Each girl should receive a membership star with yellow disk and if earned, the Bridge to Cadette Girl Scouts. Journey awards, participation or fun patches or other earned awards that have not already been presented during the year should be awarded at this time.

LC/6/13/11