

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Discover, Connect, Take Action

As Girl Scouting approaches its 100th anniversary, the organization is using its expertise to create a completely new approach for what girls do in Girl Scouting, how they do it, and how they will benefit. Called the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, this approach engages girls in discovering themselves, connecting with others, and taking action to make the world a better place.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience identifies three “keys” to leadership:

<i>Discover</i>	Girls understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world.
<i>Connect</i>	Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.
TAKE ACTION	Girls act to make the world a better place.

Girl Scout Processes

All experiences in Girl Scouting should incorporate the Discover, Connect, and Take Action keys to leadership. Girl Scout experiences should also be, as much as possible, *girl led* and encourage *learning by doing* (experiential learning), and *cooperative learning*. These three processes promote the fun and friendship that have always been so integral to Girl Scouting.

Follow this planning model to best incorporate the three processes into what girls do:

- **Girl led** - Ask girls what activities they want to do/attend. Have the girls look through *The Source* to see the variety of programs offered through GSNWGL and the community. Be sure to look at the Portable Programs (pages 94-96), Service Projects (pages 101-102) and Patch Programs (page 103). *Girl led* means the girls are playing an active role in deciding the what, where, when, why and how of their activities. By taking an active role, girls engage in leadership and decision-making opportunities. Another idea: Have the girls develop their own list of activity ideas rather than choosing activities from the list compiled by the Troop Leaders. Talk about finances (how will they pay for what they want to do), timing of activities (calendar for the year), due dates for permission slips, etc. Be sure they address what to do if someone cancels after committing to an activity.
- **Learning by doing** - Girls learn the best when they are actively engaged in what they are doing. Learning happens when girls take part in an activity, share experiences and then reflect on what they have learned and how it applies to future experiences. Encourage the girls to reflect on what they did by using a journal, sketch book, scrapbook, or by discussing in groups. The tangible reflections (journals, etc.) will also give girls a memento or reminder of the activities they participated in.
- **Cooperative learning** - Sharing knowledge, skills and learning promotes trust, respect, teamwork, and cooperation. Doing activities or attending workshops as a troop/group is *cooperative learning*. Examples of activities that foster cooperative learning are brainstorming, role-playing in small groups, group goal setting, partner activities, etc.

Outcomes in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience

You may be wondering: How do you know that girls are having an effective leadership experience? Surely, discovering, connecting, and taking action are different for Girl Scout Brownies and Girl Scout Seniors.

The signs are what let adults know if girls at each grade level are achieving leadership skills. Checking the outcomes is like noting road signs on a journey - the signs that let you know you're getting closer to your destination. Similarly, seeing the age-appropriate signs during Girl Scout activities let adults know that girls are achieving the intended outcomes.

Discover Outcomes

1. Girls develop a strong sense of self.
2. Girls develop positive values.
3. Girls gain practical life skills.
4. Girls seek challenges in the world.
5. Girls develop critical thinking.



Connect Outcomes

1. Girls develop healthy relationships.
2. Girls promote cooperation and team building.
3. Girls can resolve conflicts.
4. Girls advance diversity in a multicultural world.
5. Girls feel connected to their communities, locally and globally.



TAKE ACTION Outcomes

1. Girls can identify community needs.
2. Girls are resourceful problem solvers.
3. Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally.
4. Girls educate and inspire others to act.
5. Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.



Long-term Outcomes

Over time, the measurable short-term and intermediate outcomes will set girls on a life-long path to...

- Lead with courage by speaking out on issues they care about and taking active roles in their communities.
- Lead with confidence by making the most of their strengths and feeling empowered to make a difference in their lives and beyond.
- Lead with character by acting with integrity and compassion, making decisions that promote the well-being of themselves and others.

...as they continue to make the world a better place.

When Discover, Connect, and Take Action activities are girl led and involve *learning by doing* and *cooperative learning*, girls achieve the desired and expected short-term leadership outcomes, ultimately resulting in Girl Scouting achieving its mission!

