OPTIONS – Program Guide for Brownie Girl Scout Leaders

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 GS Shop or check out at the Emerson Resource Center at the St. Louis Girl Scout Service Center.

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 Brownie Girl Scout. Each Leadership Journey Set includes a girl book and a how to guide for the troop leader/facilitator. The Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting includes a handbook section and an awards section featuring 7 different Legacy badges, financial literacy badges, cookie business badges and religious awards. Also available are three different Skill-Building Badge Activity Sets. Each set contains earning requirements, program activities and information for earning five skill building badges. These activity sets are sold separately, and can be inserted into the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting Binder. Badges are sold separately.

Additional Ideas and options for troop meetings and activities can be found online at www.girlscoutsem.org, the Emerson Resource Center, Pep Session Packets and in each issue of Lead & Learn. Your Neighborhood Chair will also serve as a resource in finding out about Council, Neighborhood and District Events offered to Brownie Girl Scouts in your area.

Training is the most important tip we can offer to first time and returning Girl Scout Leaders. Girl Scouting 101, GSUSA’s online volunteer orientation (http://training.girlscouts.org/, password: aboutGS101) is required and provides an introduction to the organization. GSEM’s Introduction to Girl Scouting (ITGS) is also required and provides essential troop start up information for new Leaders. Journey Immersion Workshops offer additional ideas and information for working with a troop. These three courses make up the Leader Prep Series providing new leaders with information they need to get their first year off to the best possible start. Check www.girlscoutsem.org for a link to online ITGS and the current issue of the Lead & Learn, which lists course dates, times, and locations. Additionally the Adult Facilitator Guide for Brownie Quest, Wonders of Water and A World of Girls Journeys offers Leaders information regarding meeting ideas, ceremonies and Girl Scout traditions. The Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting also offers information for working with girls.
Girl Scout Brownies are in the second and third grades. The Girl Scout Brownie troop offers girls an opportunity to experience working with a group, making decisions as a group and sharing learning together.

Brownie 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 Brownie are:

- Permission slips, notices of future meetings, parent’s letters, etc. should be given to the girls at the end of the meeting as the girls are going home.
- If the meetings are held right after school, plan an action activity at the beginning of the meeting to give girls the opportunity to unwind.
- 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 “sharing time” in each meeting. It is important for girls to have the opportunity to talk about the events of their day or the past week.

Troop meetings for the Girl Scout Brownie 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 opening can be followed by a sharing time and possibly a snack. Check with parents/guardians BEFORE you begin your meetings to find out if anyone has a food allergy. The Business portion of the meeting should include brainstorming for future activities. Use the Brownie Circle 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts of the meeting</th>
<th>Time to Allow</th>
<th>What Happens</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Start Up or Arrival</td>
<td></td>
<td>Start-up activities give girls something to do until the meeting starts.</td>
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| 2. Opening           | 5 minutes     | Opening activities:  
  • 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.  
  • 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.  
  • Insignia work, activity, field trip.  
  • Outdoor time.  
  • Physical Activity (active games, etc.)  
  • Ideas from the Leadership Journeys or the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting |
| 5. Snack/Treat       | 10 minutes    | Optional:  
  • May be a food snack or special treat.  
  • Guide girls to consider the health benefits and possible food allergies of potential snacks.  
  • Parents/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.  
  • 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.
Girl Scout Brownie Troop Finances

- While there is always the temptation to do so, DO NOT SUBSIDIZE TROOP ACTIVITIES YOURSELF!! Check the Troop Money Earning Monograph (www.girlscoutsem.org>Forms and Resources>Program Forms) for planning troop budget, troop checking account, and other troop money related topics. This publication is available from your Neighborhood Chair or council resource center. Additionally, refer to the Volunteer Essentials (available online from the GSEM website) and the updated GSEM Essentials also available from your Neighborhood Chair for information regarding specific issues relating to troop funds for Brownies. Parents/guardians should decide what they will contribute to the cost of activities.

- Most Brownie 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 Brownie and World Association pins, badges offered in the Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting and Skill Builder Activity Sets, Journey Awards, membership star and green disc, fun or participation patches, craft supplies, etc. and for girls bridging to Girl Scout Juniors, Brownie Wings, the Girl Scout Pin and Bridge to Girl Scout Junior patch. Current prices of these items can be found in the Girl Scout Shop in St. Louis and online at www.girlscoutsem.org.

- The Girl Scout Brownie sash or vest (including the insignia tab, USA flag, council ID set, and troop numbers), the Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting, Skill Building Badge Activity Sets and the Brownie level Leadership Journey books are all optional purchases and are the responsibility of each girl’s family. Refer to the Brownie 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 district and council wide opportunities to enhance your troop activities.
Please always refer to the current versions of both primary and secondary resources.

**Primary:**

*Girl Scout Leadership Journey resources and publications:*

**Brownie Quest:** What are the most important keys for a Girl Scout to own? This Quest answers that question in a very special way. Second and Third graders travel along two colorful trails—one they can enjoy on their own and one they explore with their Girl Scout group. Through the Quest, Girl Scout Brownies will meet three new friends and a bright and shining elf in a brand new Brownie story meant to inspire their own Take Action Projects. The accompanying adult guide offers all the tips needed to create and maintain a sense of fun and mystery along the entire Quest. Instructions for a Brownie Brainstorm, Brownie Team Trade, and other activities ensure a quality and fun time for the girls.

**Wonders of Water:** The Brownie friends and Brownie ELF enjoy wonder-filled adventures as they invite the real life Brownies to explore the Wonders of Water. Brownies learn about the water cycle through a “Green Tea for the Blue Planet,” and explore the precious resource of water. Brownies pledge to LOVE water by protecting it, then team up to advocate for other people to SAVE water, too. As they SHARE what they have learned, they find they can inspire others to protect Earth’s water.

**A World of Girls:** In this flip-book format, one side is devoted to fictional stories that take the Brownie girl characters to diverse places in the world. The other side has stories of real-life Brownies exploring their world closer to home. Through the journey’s many adventures, anecdotes, and activities, girls follow clues about how they can create positive change in the world and enjoy a fun and challenging Girl Scout experience that strengthens their confidence.

*The Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting*

**Skill Building Badge Activity Sets:** Brownie Quest, Wonders of Water and A World of Girls

**Lead & Learn** ([online at www.girlscoutsem.org](http://www.girlscoutsem.org))

**Volunteer Essentials** ([online at www.girlscoutsem.org](http://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](http://www.girlscoutsem.org)): 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](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; Bridging, People Near and Far; Do-Re-Mi and Swaps) available at the Emerson Resource Center or online at [www.girlscoutsem.org](http://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](http://www.girlscoutsem.org).

**Troop Money Earning Monograph** — Information about troop checking accounts, planning budgets, etc. available from your Neighborhood Chair, Emerson Resource Center or online at [www.girlscoutsem.org](http://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 Resource Center.
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Brownie Girl Scout Songbook: Available for purchase at the Girl Scout Shop or to borrow from the Emerson Resource Center. (BGS)

The Girl Scout Pocket Songbook: Available for purchase at the Girl Scout Shop or to borrow from the Emerson Resource Center. (GSPS)

Online:

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

www.girlscouts.org – GSUSA’s national organization Web site, go to GS Central section for awards, ceremonies and other information. (http://www.girlscouts.org/gs_central/)

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 GS 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 Emerson Resource Center> 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 Resource Center. Available online at www.girlscoutsem.org; Emerson Resource Center>Links

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

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 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.

Superstar Troop: The Superstar Troop program and patch requirements are intended to help leaders by indicating practices which experience has shown to be effective in achieving a well rounded troop program.

Show Me Patch Program: Our own council patch program promoting local history.

Centennial Patch Program: Council patch program designed to promote awareness of the Girl Scout Centennial year. Traveling trunks are available from districts and the Emerson Resource Center to help complete the requirements of this patch available until March 12, 2013.
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Getting Started.....Meeting Ideas

Children enjoy repetition and opening and closing ceremonies offer them the comforting feeling of having “traditions” at the meeting and knowing what to expect. The PEP Session Packet – Ceremonies in Girl Scouting and various books in the Emerson Resource Center have descriptions of numerous Ceremonies that are appropriate for meeting openings and closings.

Opening Ceremony:

- Opening One: Say the Pledge of Allegiance. Follow with one of the games and songs found in one of the Journey publications or the Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting.

- Opening Two: Say the Promise and Law using the Girl Scout sign (formed with the right hand, by using the thumb to hold down the little finger, leaving the three middle fingers extended. These three fingers represent the three parts of the Promise). Talk about the meaning of the Promise and Law. Let each girl take a different Law and recite it.

- Opening Three: Play a friendship game; line up by birthdays or alphabetically by favorite color then turn and put your hands on the shoulders of the person in back of you and wiggle and walk through the room like different animals. Try to stay connected. Finish with the words of the earliest Girl Scout Brownie story: “Twist Me and Turn Me” found in the Brownie Quest p.17.

- Opening Four: Say the Promise and play “Thumbs Up.” The girls stand in a circle or line with the Leader in front. The Leader explains, “I’m going to make some statements. If a statement is true for you, hold your thumb up. If it’s false, hold you thumb down. If you can’t decide, hold your thumb sideways.” Choose a subject such as their values, their likes and dislikes, plans for the future, the day’s activities, and what they want to do next. This game is a good way to get a lot of feedback from girls in a short period of time.

Closing Ceremony:

- Closing One: Form a friendship circle and sing “Taps” (GSPS). 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: Form a friendship circle, give a friendship squeeze and sing “Make New Friends” (GSPS) or (BGS).

- Closing Three: Sing the “Brownie Smile Song” and act out the words (BGS or in the Brownie Quest)

- Closing Four: Cleanup: Girls fly into action, picking up materials and arranging things neatly while singing (tune of London Bridge) Weave the magic in and out, in and out, in and out. Weave the magic in and out, we are Brownies! We have tidied everything, everything, everything. We have tidied everything. We are Brownies! Then girls gather and adult volunteer asks: Is everything finished? Girls answer: everything! Adult asks: Is nothing left? Girls answer: Nothing! Adult says: Then be gone! (Brownie Quest).
Meeting 1: Find out about the beginning of Girl Scouting and its Founder, Juliette Gordon Low (a.k.a. Daisy). Discuss all the interesting facts about her. Ask the girls what they would want to talk to her about if she was here today. How did Daisy make the world a better place? Then ask the girls how they will make their world a better place. (Brownie Quest p.72 or Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting pp. 10-11), (Resources are available in the Emerson Resource Center to borrow concerning the history of Girl Scouting). You may wish to provide a simple “smart” snack such as carrots and low fat dressing to dip and a drink provided in reusable cups. Use the opportunity to educate girls on healthy snacking and using resources wisely.

Meeting 2: Make parent invitations to the Investiture and/or Rededication Ceremony next meeting. Practice the ceremony. Use the PEP Session Packets – Ceremonies and Celebrate! for reference and open with a flag ceremony. After the flag ceremony, recite the Promise (and Law if the girls feel comfortable with it) and then move into the Rededication Ceremony. (Participation patches for Investiture and Rededication are available for purchase through the Girl Scout Shop)

Meeting 3: Hold your Investiture/Rededication Ceremony.

Meeting 4: Begin working on the Girl Scout Way Brownie Badge (Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting). October 31 is Juliette Low’s Birthday. Have a birthday party! At the birthday party you may wish sing and act out “The Hokey Pokey” and then play the game “Kim’s Game” (Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting, Brownie Girl Scout Way Badge, p. 5). Congratulations! Just two more steps and you’ve earned the whole badge.

Meeting 5: Begin to work on the Show Me Patch (see additional resources and program ideas). The patch is awarded after girls have discovered the heritage of their neighborhood through completing a selection of activities and is available for purchase through the Girl Scout Shop. Consider planning a field trip to the Eugene Field House and Toy Museum (Trips and Tours) to learn about antique toys and dolls. Borrow resources from the Emerson Resource Center to make yarn dolls or another toy reproduction. Snack for tonight might be ice cream cones. Ice cream cones were first introduced at the World’s Fair in St. Louis in 1904.

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 suggestions. Report your troop service through the Seasons of Giving Troop Report (SOG-1) online at www.girlscoutsem.org. Service projects include making placemats or tray favors for a nursing home or caroling at a Children’s Hospital. (Participation patches for community service and caroling are available for purchase through the Girl Scout shop.)
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Other Special Girl Scout Days and Activities Ideas:

September: Get your year off to a great start. Let the girls know what fun things are in store for them this coming year. Let them begin to make decisions about what they will do. You may wish to start this process by allowing girls to choose a troop crest. There are several different troop crests to choose from, each one having a different meaning. See p.29 of the Handbook section of the Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting. Purchase through the GS Shop.


Fall Product Sales: If you choose to participate in this Council Fall Product Sale event, contact your Neighborhood Fall Product Manager for training and participation materials or the council website.

January: Cookie Go Day! Refer to your Neighborhood Cookie Manager for training opportunities and materials to participate in this council wide product sale.

February 22 – World Thinking Day: This is a day when Girl Scouts and Girl Guides all around the world do activities and projects to celebrate world friendship and honor sister scouts in other countries. Visit www.girlscouts.org for theme and program ideas. Choose one country, Africa, for example, and play a game from Africa. Serve African food and follow their traditions. No matter what country you may choose, think about how Girl Scouting in that country is both similar and different from Girl Scouting in the U.S.A. You also may choose to award the girls with their World Trefoil Pin or Juliette Low World Friendship Fund Patch as part of your World Thinking Day celebration. Refer to the PEP Session Packet – Ceremonies in Girl Scouting for World Pin ceremony options. There are new Girl Scout Thinking Day patches available every year. The patch is now considered official insignia and there are requirements for earning it. Contact the GS Shop.

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.

April – April Showers: Plan to participate in this council wide collection of personal care items. Again, patches are available. Contact the GS Shop.

April: At about this time in the program year you will want to begin preparing your third graders for “flying-up” to Girl Scout Juniors. Every Girl Scout Brownie receives the Brownie wings at the end of her Girl Scout Brownie years. Many also choose to earn their Bridge to Junior Girl Scouting rainbow patch. See the PEP session- Bridging or Brownie Girls Guide to Girl Scouting for information on how to bridge the Brownies to Juniors.

May: Continue to work with third grade Brownies on their Bridging steps. Be sure to include planning the ceremony itself. Second grade Brownies could be helping Girls Scout Daisies bridge to Girls Scout Brownies.

May: Court of Awards/Bridging Ceremony: Check out the PEP Session Packet – Ceremonies in Girl Scouting for a sample Court of Awards Ceremony. Each girl should receive a membership star with green disc and her Brownie Wings and if earned, the Bridge to Junior Girl Scouts. Journey awards, participation or fun patches or other earned badges and awards that have not already been presented during the year should be awarded at this time. Check with your Neighborhood Chair to find out if your neighborhood or school has a multi-level Bridging Ceremony.