



# Leader's Guide to Success

June 2018



# INSIDE



|  |    |
|--|----|
| Welcome to Girl Scouts .....             | 3  |
| Let's Get Started .....                  | 4  |
| Girl Scout Levels.....                   | 5  |
| The Girl Scout Uniform.....              | 5  |
| Governing Structure.....                 | 5  |
| The Girl Scout Program .....             | 6  |
| Keeping Girls Safe.....                  | 7  |
| Your Volunteer Troop Committee .....     | 9  |
| The Family Connection.....               | 10 |
| Guiding Your Troop Experienceing.....    | 12 |
| 6 Elements of a Great Troop Meeting..... | 14 |
| Troop Finances .....                     | 15 |
| Volunteer Resources.....                 | 16 |
| Troop Leader Training Path.....          | 17 |

## 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.

## 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.

## Our Mission

Building girls of courage, confidence, and  
character, who make the world a better place.

*\*Members may substitute for the word God  
in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.*



@gsgms



/gsgms



@gsgms



/gsusa



Council Connections

*Follow us on  
social media!*



# WELCOME TO GIRL SCOUTS!

## **We're so excited for you to join the Girl Scout movement.**

Girl Scouts empowers girls everywhere to stand up and make a difference. By nurturing innovation and developing leadership skills, we prepare girls to overcome challenges and advocate for their ideas now and later. With an emphasis on self-discovery, character building, and community impact, Girl Scouts helps girls become a powerful force for good in the world.

Our council spans a 45-county region made up of nearly 9,000 girls and 2,500 volunteers. Together, we are Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi.

No matter where or how you volunteer, you'll make a difference in girls' lives. This go-to guide will prepare you to effectively lead during your first year as a Girl Scout volunteer. Need help along the way? Let us know! We have tools, training resources, and people to help support you through each step.

You're now a part of our team. We can't wait to see the impact you'll make this year!





# LET'S GET STARTED

## Managing Your Member Experience Online

After your background check process is completed and you're approved to serve as a volunteer, you'll receive an email confirmation prompting you to log into MyGS, your Girl Scout member community, for the first time. MyGS allows you to manage your member experience online. It can also be accessed from the link in the header of any page at [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org).

On the Troop tab in MyGS, you can see any girls and adults who have signed up for your troop and add new girls to your troop. The Troop Opportunity Catalog allows you as the Troop Leader to display available openings in your troop for girls and/or volunteers.

## Next Steps

You will receive a GSUSA Welcome email (please view and complete questionnaire). Troop Support will also send you information regarding GS101 and an invitation to join a GSGMS Orientation with staff. This Orientation gives you the basic information about our council and Girl Scouting, as well as, resources you need to make things happen for your troop. (If you haven't received your email, please check your junk email folder just to be safe. Otherwise, contact [customercare@gsgms.org](mailto:customercare@gsgms.org)) See page 17 for more information about required training for new Troop Leaders.



# GIRL SCOUT LEVELS



**DAISIES**  
K & 1ST

**Girl Scout Daisies** sparkle with that “first time ever” newness in everything they do. They go on trips, learn about nature and science and explore the arts and their communities – and so much more. Girl Scout Daisies can also earn Learning Petals and receive participation patches.



**BROWNIES**  
2ND & 3RD

**Girl Scout Brownies** work together, earn badges, and explore their community. Friendship, fun, and age-appropriate activities begin at the Girl Scout Brownie meeting and move out to the community and wider world. While earning badges, they build skills, learn hobbies, and have fun!



**JUNIORS**  
4TH & 5TH

**Girl Scout Juniors** are big-idea thinkers. They’re explorers at camp and product designers when they earn their Innovation and Storytelling badges, or even their Bronze Award. Every day, they wake up ready to play a new role.



**CADETTES**  
6TH - 8TH

**Girl Scout Cadettes** chart their own course and let their curiosity and imagination lead the way. They learn about the power of being a good friend, gain confidence mentoring younger girls and can earn the Silver Award.



**SENIORS**  
9TH & 10TH

**Girl Scout Seniors** are ready to take the world by storm, and Girl Scouts gives them millions of ways to do it. Their experiences help to shape their world, while giving them a safe space to be themselves and explore their interests. Girl Scout Seniors can earn their Gold Award (which, by the way, adds something “extra” to college applications).



**AMBASSADORS**  
11TH & 12TH

**Girl Scout Ambassadors** know that small acts create big change. While they get ready for life beyond high school, Girl Scouts helps them take flight. They also earn the Gold Award (which, by the way, adds something “extra” to college applications).

## THE GIRL SCOUT UNIFORM

Uniforms are an important part of the Girl Scout experience, connecting girls to Girl Scout traditions, displaying their accomplishments, and creating memories to last a lifetime. Girls want to look and feel their best when representing Girl Scouts. And now they can, with uniform options that are in step with today's trends and active lifestyles. Girl Scouts at each level now wear one required element (tunic, sash, or vest) to display official pins and awards. Girls can mix and match pieces from the official Girl Scout collection to complete the uniform. Troop Leaders may opt to collect money from parents and purchase sashes, vests, and insignia from a council shop, or ask parents to purchase items on their own.

Visit one of our shop locations to purchase uniforms, starter kits, and more. Our shop staff are here to help! Or shop Online at [www.girlscoutsshop.org/GREATER-MISSISSIPPI-COUNCIL](http://www.girlscoutsshop.org/GREATER-MISSISSIPPI-COUNCIL).

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

A national organization supporting the work of more than 100 councils across the U.S. for more than 100 years. Headquartered in New York, New York.

### Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi (GSGMS)

Independent 501(c)3 nonprofit chartered by GSUSA operating under the direction of a local board of directors and overseeing all service units and troops within a given geographic area.

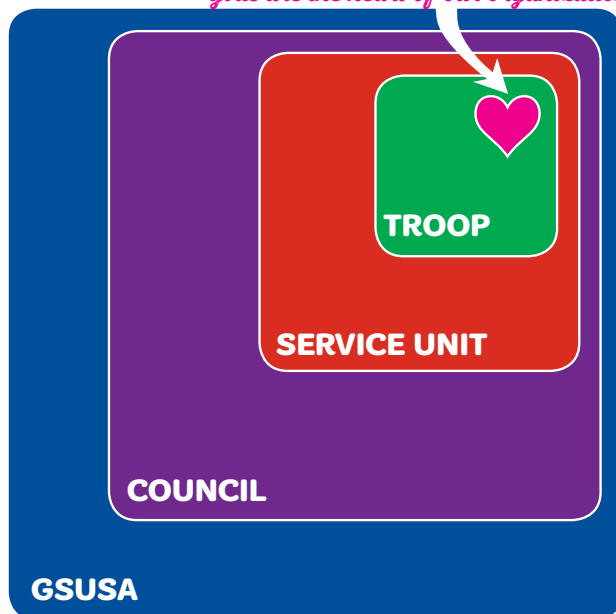
### Service Unit/Community/Membership Area

Comprised of volunteers who support the work of troop volunteers within a given geographic area.

### Troops

Volunteer-supervised groups of girls who participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

*Girls are the heart of our organization!*



# WHAT'S THE GIRL SCOUT PROGRAM?

At Girl Scouts, girls have tons of fun, make new friends, and go on fantastic new adventures. Our program centers on something called the Girl Scout Leadership Experience—a collection of activities and experiences girls have as they complete Journeys, earn badges, sell cookies, go on exciting trips, explore the outdoors and do Take Action projects that make a difference.

**In Girl Scouts, girls will:**



## Discover

Find out who they are, what they care about, and what their talents are.



## Connect

Collaborate with other people, locally and globally, to make a difference in the world.



## Take Action

Do something to make the world a better place.



## Journeys



Identify a problem, come up with a creative solution, create a team plan to make the solution a reality, put a plan into action, and talk about what they have learned. As girls go on Journeys, they'll earn awards to put on their uniforms. The Volunteer Toolkit and Journey books are your resources for the requirements to earning awards.



## Badges

What have your girls always wanted to do?

Make their own movie, go geocaching, plant a garden? Great news! They can learn to do all these things and more while earning Girl Scout badges. Badges are worn on the front of the vest or sash.

The Volunteer Toolkit and Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting are your resources for the requirements to earning badges.



## Highest Awards



### Bronze. Silver. Gold.

These represent the highest honors a Girl Scout can earn.

All three awards give girls the chance to do big things while working on an issue they care about. Whether they want to plant a community garden and inspire others to eat healthy for their Bronze, advocate for animal rights for their Silver, or build a career network that encourages girls to become scientists and engineers for their Gold, they'll inspire others (and you!).

## Patches

Think of patches like collecting memories in Girl Scouts. They're often a part of the fun activities you can do in Girl Scouts without the requirements of badges. Patches are always worn on the back of the vest or sash.



# KEEPING GIRLS SAFE

While working with girls and learning new skills is fun and rewarding, assuming responsibility for other people's children means that some level of risk management and due diligence is involved. There are several resources we use to help you minimize risk and keep girls safe.

## Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow development of individual girls. Girl Scouts' volunteer-to-girl ratios show the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls.

Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved volunteers present at all times, plus additional volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Any adult that is supervising girls must be an approved volunteer. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must be screened before volunteering. One Troop Leader in every group must be female. Please refer to the ratio chart below.

| Volunteer-to-Girl Ratio Chart         | Group Meetings  |   | Events, Travel and Camping  |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                       | Two unrelated Volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls: | Plus <i>one</i> additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls: | Two unrelated Volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls: | Plus <i>one</i> additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls: |
| Girl Scout Daisies (grades K-1)       | 12  | 1-6   | 6   | 1-4   |
| Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2-3)      | 20  | 1-8   | 12  | 1-6   |
| Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4-5)       | 25  | 1-10  | 16  | 1-8   |
| Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6-8)      | 25  | 1-12  | 20  | 1-10  |
| Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9-10)      | 30  | 1-15  | 24  | 1-12  |
| Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11-12) | 30  | 1-15  | 24  | 1-12  |

## Planning Safe Activities

When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout **Safety Activity Checkpoints** for that particular activity. You can find these on the resources tab of the Volunteer Toolkit. Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers you required guidelines on where to do this activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare yourselves for the activity, and what specific steps to follow on the day of the activity. Safety Activity Checkpoints will note if a First Aider is required.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, contact Customer Care at [customercare@gsgms.org](mailto:customercare@gsgms.org) or 601-326-GIRL(4475) before making any definite plans with the girls.



## What to do in an Emergency

Although we all hope the worst never happens, it's important to know and follow our council's procedures for handling emergency incidents. At the scene of the incident, safety is your first priority. Provide care for the injured person or obtain medical assistance and then immediately report the emergency to GSGMS staff (within 24 hours). Call our office at 601-326-GIRL(4475) or after business hours contact our COO, Sarah Edwards at 318-348-5416.

Make sure a general first aid kit is available at your meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity. You may need to provide the kit if one is not already available at your meeting location. You must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of our council office, parents/guardians and emergency services such as the police, fire department, or hospital.

# You – A Girl Scout Leader!

## Your Role

What does it mean to be a Girl Scout Leader? It is the amazing journey of helping girls build courage, confidence, and character through Girl Scouts. As a leader, it is important to remember that leadership can bring many joys, including developing a personal relationship with each girl in the troop, building new adult friendships through the sisterhood of Girl Scouts, receiving sincere appreciation and thanks from parents and, most importantly, knowing that you are shaping the future by working with a girl today.

What does it mean to you to be a Girl Scout Leader? That is something you will discover throughout your time with the girls and adults in your troop as well as relationship you make with fellow Girl Scout volunteers and families. It is an exciting adventure!

### As you build relationships, leadership...

- Will develop as you get to know each girl and adult troop member.
- Means communicating with parents and co-leaders.
- Includes understanding the needs and interests of the girls, helping them plan activities and excursions beyond the troop meeting, and guiding them as they discover new interests.

### As a leader, it is important to remember that...

- You cannot know everything that the girls might ever want to learn.
- You will also explore and learn many things along with the girls.
- You are expected to know where to go for information and resources, and get it when needed.
- It is okay not to know, you are not expected to know everything about Girl Scouting.

### Leadership is teaching...

- The girls that they can do and be anything.
- Girls that they are decision makers.
- Girls not only for the sake of knowing things, but also for the sake of development and growth.
- Through being a good role model.

### See yourself as a coach...

- Not as a teacher with a canned lesson or activity or as someone who has to perform for the girls each week.
- Who guides and instructs.
- Who advises and discusses.
- And work so that each girl can carry out responsibilities within the troop.
- As the girls build their skills and their ethics.
- And give more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop.



### “Belonging” in leadership means...

- Understanding that you are a part of a troop and a team.
- Listening, providing suggestions and contributing ideas.
- Sticking with the girls through good times and bad.
- Recognizing that you belong to a larger organization beyond the troop that will provide support and resources.



# YOUR VOLUNTEER TROOP COMMITTEE

## On my honor, I will ... not do this alone!

Before you hold your first troop meeting with girls, consider the support and resources you'll need throughout the year. Parents, friends, family, and other members of the community can provide time, experience, and ideas to a troop, so get them involved from the very beginning as part of your volunteer troop team. This team is made up of Troop Leaders (like you) and Troop Committee volunteers.

All of these adults must be screened and approved. They commit to these roles based on the amount of time the volunteer has to give and interest in specific areas on the team. Interested individuals should be guided to the *Join* or *Volunteer* buttons at [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org).



The Troop Committee volunteers play a big role in making your troop run smoothly and in supporting the girls' plans. They're an extra set of eyes, ears and hands whose skill sets are leveraged to help the troop safely explore the world around them. Ideally, your Troop Committee will have a Troop Cookie Manager, Troop Fall Product Program Manager and a Troop Treasurer. Volunteers from this group may agree to take on other tasks, depending on what your troop needs are. For instance, they may be a chaperone for events that require more adult volunteers to meet the volunteer-to-girl ratio requirements, or agree to be the driver for an upcoming trip that also requires more volunteer supervision.

Some Troop Committee members are not able to volunteer on a regular basis but are ready to help out when you need an extra set of hands to manage an activity station, provide a snack, lead songs, and keep the activity on track and fun. Often parents start in this role if they aren't sure they can commit to a committee or leader role. Once they see how fun it is, they may sign up for more!

As a Troop Leader, you will guide the structure and experiences of your troop – from how and when meetings are held to how the troop communicates, from steering girl-led activities to setting financial expectations. These decisions will be made collaboratively with your volunteer team, as well as with input from the girls and their parents/guardians.

### Troop Leader Responsibilities

- ☐ Liaison with service unit volunteers and council staff
- ☐ Troop financial management
- ☐ Communication with parents
- ☐ Girl safety
- ☐ Guiding the troop's Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

### Troop Committee Responsibilities

- ☐ Assist Troop Leader
- ☐ Girl safety
- ☐ May drive girls, coordinate finances and/or chaperone troop activities
- ☐ Provide extra help at troop meetings

### Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- ☐ Communicate with Troop Leadership
- ☐ Provide permission and information needed for participation in activities
- ☐ Ensure current membership for their girl
- ☐ Provide transportation to and from meetings
- ☐ Complete and submit the Health History form

### Girl Responsibilities

- ☐ Be ready to learn and have fun
- ☐ Use your imagination and creativity
- ☐ Always stay with the group and be safe
- ☐ Clean up after yourself
- ☐ Listen when others are speaking
- ☐ Have fun!

**All Girl Scouts live by the Girl Scout Law!**



## The Secret Ingredient of Successful Girl Scout Troops: Family Connections

Obviously, you want the girls in your troop to have fun, be inspired, take risks, and learn about themselves and the world this year—that’s why you’re a Girl Scout troop leader! The thing is, parents and caregivers want the same thing for their girls, but getting families to pitch in and play an active role in the troop while also enhancing the experience for their own daughter can be tricky for many volunteers. *It doesn’t have to be this way!* After your troop’s initial parent meeting, here’s how you can best keep parents and caregivers on board.

### Make the ask(s)

The main reason people don’t take action is because they were never asked to in the first place. That’s why hearing one out of three Girl Scout parents say no one had communicated expectations around involvement with their girl’s troop is so troubling. Parents may have many talents, but they’re certainly not mind readers! If you’re nervous about getting turned down, don’t be. Sure, a few parents might be unable to lend a hand, but the helpers you do get will be worth their weight in gold. And just because someone wasn’t available a month or two ago doesn’t mean they won’t be free to help now. Loop back, follow up, ask again!

### Make sense of “why”

Explain that not only does the whole troop benefit with extra help from parents and caregivers, but also that girls feel a special sense of pride in seeing their own family member step up and take a leadership role. Getting involved can strengthen the caregiver/girl bond and is a meaningful way to show daughters that they are a priority in their parents’ lives.

### Make it quick and easy

Everybody’s got a full plate these days, so instead of starting parent conversations with a list of tasks or responsibilities they could take on (which can be intimidating!), ask caregivers how much time each week they might be able to dedicate to the troop, then go from there. For instance, if a troop mom or dad has 15 minutes each week to spare, they could organize and manage the calendar for troop snacks and carpools. If a grandparent has one to two hours, they could assist with leading the troop through a specific badge on a topic they’re already comfortable with. For more ways parents and other caregivers can help out when faced with a tricky schedule, check out the Family Resources tab in the Volunteer Tool Kit.

### Make family part of the formula

While Girl Scouts programming is always focused on the girls themselves, it’s important and helpful to open up a few events to their families through the year. Inviting the whole crew to celebrate her accomplishments in Girl Scouting—whether at a holiday open house, a bridging ceremony, or a fun “reverse meeting” where girls take the role of leaders and guide the adults, including caregivers, through an activity—will help parents better understand the value of Girl Scouts and be more likely to invest their time and talents to the troop. That said, there’s no need to wait for one of these special events to engage parents in their girls’ Girl Scout lives! Keep communication lines open throughout the year—whether it’s through your Troop’s social media page, personal emails, or in-person chats—to keep parents in the loop on what the girls are doing and learning during each meeting, and encourage them to let their daughters “be the expert” at home, explaining or teaching a new skill she’s learned to the rest of the family.



# Meeting #1: Kicking the Year Off Right by Engaging Parents

## THE PARENT MEETING

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, 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!

So what is a Parent Meeting? It's the first meeting you have to start each troop year – whether you are a new or returning troop. It is valuable for *all* troops.

**100% of troops with the most satisfied parents and troop leaders report they hold a Parent Meeting**

Why? Because it helps:

- Parents understand what Girl Scouting can do for their girl
- Parents and leaders identify ways they will work as a team to support the troop
- Parents and leaders agree on what the troop pays for and what families pay for individually
- Fill key troop positions—you never know which parent will make an awesome assistant leader, troop cookie manager, etc.
- Parents know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events, schedule changes, etc.
- Parents learn about uniforms, books, and other important basics

Kicking off each year with a parent meeting sets the troop up for success. Outlining clear expectations, building a team, and engaging parents in the Girl Scout experience is a great way to start off on the right foot. When parents are involved, leaders have support, and the troop has a plan, girls benefit!

The best news? We've made it easy for you. Check out our step-by-step guide and Parent Meeting Outline on the VTK. This one hour-long meeting will make all the difference in the year ahead.

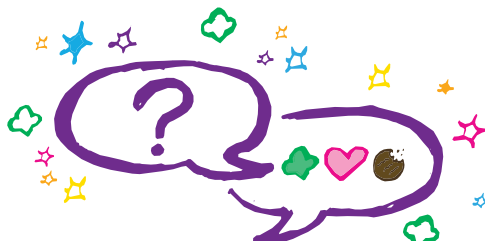
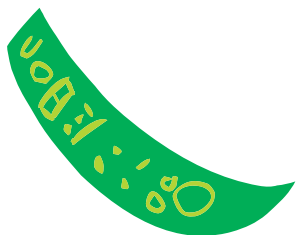


# GUIDING YOUR TROOP EXPERIENCE

Use these questions to talk with your Troop Committee volunteers to outline your troop's structure before discussing these topics with parents/guardians.

- ✓ **How often, when will we meet, and for how long (length of each meeting and until what part of year)?**
- ✓ **Where will we meet?** Your meeting space should be somewhere safe, clean, and secure that allows all girls to participate. Some great meeting space ideas include:
  - schools
  - places of worship
  - libraries
  - community centers
- ✓ **Which components of the uniform will families need to purchase?**
- ✓ **Will our troop be a single-grade level or facilitated as a multi-level troop with girls of many grade levels combined into one troop?** If multi-level, how will we make sure they each get an age-appropriate experience?
- ✓ **How are we going to work with girls to decide on activities that are what they want to do, age appropriate and help them discover, connect, and take action?** You can utilize the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) to help you through this process by exploring options for activities and reviewing the meeting plans and resources lists.
- ✓ **How and how often are we going to communicate to parents/guardians?** Keep everyone in the loop to make sure they know when, where, and what the activities will be and that girls are prepared for the activity. Effective communication will help set expectations and clarify parent/guardian responsibilities.
- ✓ **How will we fund the fun?** Will our troop charge dues, use product program proceeds, and/or charge per activity? How much money will we need to cover supplies and activities? Outline a financial plan, and then fill in the details once girls determine what they want to do this year.

Remember, Girl Scouts is designed to be girl-led. Talk to the girls about what they'd like to get out of Girl Scouts this year and make sure you're having fun!





# LET'S GO — YOUR FIRST TROOP MEETING!

The first troop meeting is always exciting! It is really where you will see the adventure of being a Girl Scout Troop Leader start to unfold. Remember to have fun! As you help the girls on their journey to discover, connect and take action in the world around them, those experiences will be a part of your Girl Scout journey too. Enjoy it!

**Your first troop meeting is a great chance to:**

- **Get to know the girls!**
- **Brainstorm all of the exciting things the girls want to do this year.**
- **Introduce girls to Girl Scout traditions.**
- **Introduce the whole troop volunteer team to the girls and their parents/guardians.**

If you are feeling a little nervous about leading troop meetings and experiences with your girls – that's ok! Working directly with girls can be challenging at times but it is always rewarding and can be a lot of fun. As a Girl Scout Troop Leader you are encouraged to listen to the girls with an open-mind and lead them with your heart.

Many adults feel that, when working with kids, they have to be the expert and have everything perfect. But this is not the case in Girl Scouts. When preparing for your first (or any) troop meeting, keep these things in mind:

- **It doesn't need to be perfect.** – There are lots of resources with information and guidance to help you facilitate great troop meetings and experiences but you are encouraged to be creative. And, if you forget a part of the troop meeting or the field trip doesn't go the way you planned or you run out of time – that's ok! The girls aren't expecting perfection from you; your time, attention and guidance are the best part of your leadership.
- **Learn with your girls!** – As you use the girl-led process in the development of your troop's meetings and experiences, the girls will, at some point, want to earn a badge or complete a project in a subject unfamiliar to you. Be open with the girls when you don't know something but don't use that as a reason to keep them from exploring the topic or doing the project. Instead, become their partner in figuring out how to learn more. When they see you learning alongside them, their confidence in their current knowledge and skills as well as their ability to learn will rise. It will also help them to understand that learning is a lifelong process.

## First Meeting Preparation Checklist

- o Cover the basics. Review the details about when and where the meeting will take place and that all the parents know that information. You might find it helpful to visit the location beforehand.
- o Get ready. Use the Volunteer Toolkit to verify your troop roster and email your parents. This might be a great time to ask parents to provide you with any needed items such as health history form, uniform order form, or troop dues.
- o Know the agenda. Use the "Six Elements of a Troop Meeting" on the next page and the Volunteer Toolkit meeting agenda to customize your meeting plan.
- o Review and practice your agenda. This will help you feel calmer and be flexible during the actual meeting.
- o Expect to have fun! When the girls and parents see that you are prepared for the meeting and ready to have a great time, they will follow your lead!

# 6 ELEMENTS OF A GREAT TROOP MEETING

**Most important – your meetings should be fun!** Girls come to Girl Scouts to learn how to be leaders, make decisions, and have fun in the activities they choose.

- 1 Start Up** – Plan activities for girls as they arrive at the meeting so they have something to do until the meeting begins. It could be as simple as coloring pages, journaling or talking with each other. (5 minutes)
- 2 Opening** – Each troop decides how to open their meeting – most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. (5-10 minutes)
- 3 Activities** – Use the meeting plans found in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). Activities are already designed to fit easily into this part of your meeting as you help your troop earn badges and complete Journeys. (30-45 minutes)
- 4 Clean Up** – Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 minutes)
- 5 Closing** – Just like the opening, each troop can decide how to close – with a song, a game, or a story. (5-10 minutes)
- 6 Business** – Collect dues and make announcements, or plan an upcoming event or trip while parents/guardians are present – this gives you a chance to keep families informed. (5 minutes)



# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TROOP FINANCES

**Open a Bank Account** — As Troop Leader, you and one more approved volunteer should establish a bank account for collection of troop dues (optional), payment of troop supplies and activities and product sales revenue (Fall Product Program & Cookie programs). This account should be opened by following the “Troop-SU Bank Account Form” which can be found at [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org) > forms.

## Funding the Fun!

Girls have some big ideas about what they want to do in Girls Scouts – and as a Troop Leader, you will guide them on how to plan and budget for those ideas. How do you do this?

**Troop Dues** — Many troops decide to collect troop dues as a way to help provide start-up funds for troop activities and supplies. These could range (on average) from \$1-\$2 per meeting to \$30-\$40 for the entire school year paid all at one time. It's completely up to each troop to decide what works best for them to support the activities they want to do.

**Money-earning Activities** — The Fall Product and Cookie programs are the primary money-earning activities for a troop. You will learn all about these fantastic programs in a separate training when the time is right. If an older girl troop participates in these programs, they may also decide to plan an additional fundraising activities. These additional fund-raisers must be approved by submitting the "Low Risk Activity Approval Form" found at [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org) > forms. Daisies may only earn money through the Mag-Nut (Fall product) and Cookie programs.



## Managing Your Troop's Funds

Remember, Girl Scout funds are girl-earned and girl-spent. How the funds are used is a decision made by the entire troop, not just the leaders, parents, or a few select girls from the troop. It is also important to know that troop funds belong to the entire troop and cannot be earmarked for individual girl use. Funds can be used to purchase badges and patches, Journey and guide books, uniform components, pay for celebrations and ceremonies, community service projects, field trips, and more. Let the girls come up with some ideas and then have the troop vote.

As the girls begin to spend their troop's funds, you or the volunteer responsible for the troop finances has a responsibility to keep track of the receipts and expenses. All income and expenses must be reported by June 30 of each Girl Scouting year using the finance tab in the Volunteer Toolkit. Alternatively, troops may use the paper report form at [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org) > forms. Copies or originals of bank statements and receipts will be submitted, so be sure to save them throughout the year. Girl Scout Troop Leaders should report out to troop parents about finances at least three times per year.



# GIRL SCOUT VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

## The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

The Volunteer Toolkit is a digital planning tool that gives you resources and program content to get your year started—and keep it going smoothly with organization and communication tools! Fully customizable, Troop Leaders can:

- Explore meeting topics and program activities with their girls
- Add local events their girls choose
- Print step-by-step activity guides and shopping lists
- View and edit troop roster
- Update contact information
- Renew members
- Manage girl attendance and track achievements
- Share troop meeting activities with parents/guardians
- Email parents/guardians with a single click
- Track and share financial information

Learn more and access the VTK at [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org) > **MyGS** > **Volunteer Toolkit**.



## Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

This easy-to-use binder (one for each grade level) is full of great info on being a Girl Scout, activities and awards. It's part handbook, part badge book and all fun! [www.girlscoutsshop.org/GREATER-MISSISSIPPI-COUNCIL](http://www.girlscoutsshop.org/GREATER-MISSISSIPPI-COUNCIL).

## Safety Activity Checkpoints

These are online lists containing everything you need to know to be prepared and keep your girls safe during a number of different kinds of activities outside of the normal Girl Scout troop meeting. These can be found in the Volunteer Resources section of [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org) > **forms**.

## Volunteer Essentials

This resources contains information, policies and procedures to guide our volunteers and staff and to ensure that the Girl Scout program is delivered in a safe, consistent manner for girls across our council. By agreeing to be a Girl Scout volunteer, you're agreeing to follow the items laid out in this resource. The policies and procedures document is updated on a regular basis and the newest version can always be found on our website. Find the Volunteer Essentials on the resources tab of the Volunteer Toolkit.

## GSGMS Social Media

Want to know what other troops are doing? Interested in new activities for your girls? Like sharing photos and videos? Stay connected and help us share the Girl Scout love on social media! Be sure to like us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. Find all the links at [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org).

## Customer Care

Serving our volunteers is a top priority. Reach out anytime by either clicking on the **"Contact Us"** form at [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org) or **email [customercare@gsgms.org](mailto:customercare@gsgms.org)**. During business hours (Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday, 8:30 a.m.-noon), you can reach a customer service specialist **by calling 601-326-GIRL(4475)**. The team looks forward to resolving your needs and inquiries quickly.

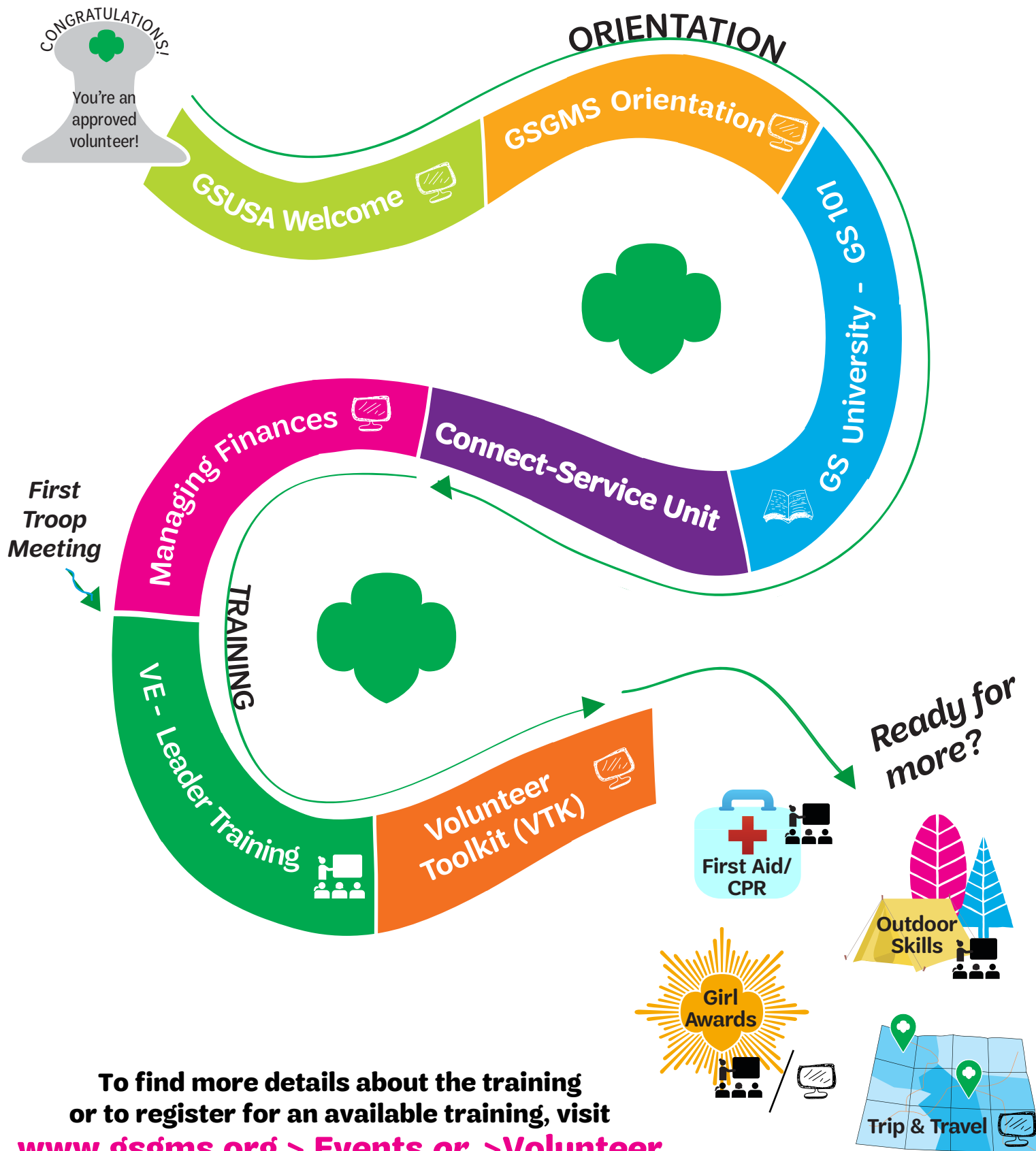
## Newsletters

On Sunday night of every week, we send volunteers an email called *Council Connections*. It lets you know important information as well as new activities and opportunities for you and your Girl Scouts. **(Text "leaderinfo" to 22828 and provide an email to receive the Council Connections.)**

# TROOP LEADER TRAINING PATH

In order to build our girls into great leaders, we have to start with ourselves. We offer a variety of in-person workshops and online training courses to meet your needs as a new or experienced Troop Leader.

**New Troop Leaders are required to complete the path through New Leader Training.**



To find more details about the training  
or to register for an available training, visit

[www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org) > Events or > Volunteer

LEADERS' RETREAT

# WHERE WE'RE LOCATED AND HOW TO CONNECT



3

  
**girl scouts**  
**of greater mississippi**

**[www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org)**  
Contact us at 601-326-GIRL(4475)  
or [CustomerCare@gsgms.org](mailto:CustomerCare@gsgms.org)

1

## Offices

### **Jackson (Council Headquarters)\***

1471 West County Line Road  
Jackson, MS 39213

### **Hattiesburg Office\***

210 W. Front Street, Suite 100  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

### **Gulf Coast Office\***

1610 25th Avenue  
Gulfport, MS 39501

### **Meridian Office**

307 24th Avenue South  
Meridian, MS 39301

\*Includes council shop location.

2

## Office & Shop Hours:

### **Offices:**

Monday-Thursday 8:30 a.m.-5p.m.  
Friday 8:30 a.m.- noon

\*Meridian office By Appointment

### **Shops:**

\*Jackson and Hattiesburg Shops  
Monday-Thursday 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m.  
Friday 8:30 a.m. - noon

\* Gulf Coast Shop  
Tuesday-Thursday 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m.

### **Seasonal:**

Open some Saturdays from 10 a.m.-  
noon. See [www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org) or your  
*Council Connections E-Newsletter* for  
Saturday schedule when available.

Or shop online 24/7 at

**[www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org) > shop**