# Planning the Troop Year With Your Junior Girl Scouts



This guide provides information, ideas, and tips for planning a year of engaging, interactive, and fun activities for your Girl Scout Juniors.

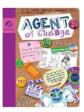
To learn more about working with girls at the Junior level, dig into the grade-level program resources available from GSUSA (described on the next page). The new Journeys are especially rich in ideas and facilitation tips that provide some great self-study about working with girls even if you don't plan to do a journey yet.

And, the best kept secret....talk with other Troop Leaders in your Service Unit. Hearing what others on the path ahead of you have tried is priceless information!

# Program Resources for Girl Scout Juniors - 4th & 5th Grade

Below is a brief description of your primary national program resources. You can purchase these at either of our council stores (Boise and Idaho Falls) or at our online store (<a href="www.girlscouts-ssc.org">www.girlscouts-ssc.org</a>). You might be able to acquire a used copy from another leader or from your Service Unit Library to review before purchasing.

Agent of Change -It's your World, Change It Journey Series



In this journey, girls find their power to change the world for the better. Dez, the designer spider, offers help along the way. As the journey progresses, the girls expand their own web into the community. They develop and strengthen leadership skills and form relationships -- often long lasting and powerful ones. On this journey, Juniors earn the Power of One, the Power of Team, and the Power of Community awards.

Adult Guide for Agent of Change Journey



The journey adult guide offers key information about the journey, its awards and its leadership benefits, and step-by-step sample plans for how journey sessions can unfold as girls meet. The adult guides also feature sections on Girl Scout history as well as understanding girls at each grade level.

**Get Moving! -** It's Your Planet, Love It Journey Series



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 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.

Adult Guide for Get Moving!
Journey



The journey adult guide offers tips, facilitation guides, and is a complete resource to using the Get Moving! Junior journey.

# Junior Girl Scout Leader's Guide



This resource includes information on how to facilitate discussions and guide girls in traditions, ceremonies, earning awards, activities, and safety.

# Junior Girl Scout Handbook



This resource includes activity ideas (and associated awards) for cooking, working with computers, first aid skills and more.

## **Junior Badge Book**



All Junior Girl Scout Badges are listed here with specific requirements for earning each badge. Badges are great for learning about specific topics and for supplementing a journey or other activity plans you and your girls have for your troop year.

# **The Big Picture**

At the beginning of the year, you will start thinking about the general layout of the program activities for the year. Here is a generic troop year structure that you might use as a starting point.

October	November	December
<ul> <li>Founder's Day Event</li> </ul>	Journey Start	Journey, cont.
<ul> <li>Investiture</li> </ul>	Badgework, etc.	Badgework, etc.
Yearly Planning	Service Project	Service Project
		Cookie Program Goal
		Setting
January	February	March
<ul> <li>Journey, cont.</li> </ul>	Cookie Program, cont.	Cookie Program, cont.
Badgework, etc.	Thinking Day Activity	Girl Scout Week Activity
Cookie Program	Journey, cont.	<ul> <li>Journey, cont.</li> </ul>
April	May	June
<ul> <li>Journey, cont.</li> </ul>	Day/Overnight Trip	Troop Camping
Badgework, etc.	Journey Wrap-Up	Girls might go to Resident
Service Project	End of Year Celebrations	Camp

Many leaders suggest loosely planning the entire year structure with 'room to move.' These leaders find that they add detail or make changes to the basic plan as they have planning discussion with their girls, and then make changes throughout the year as they notice what the girls enjoy doing and how long it takes them to accomplish activities.

You and your co-leaders might get together and discuss the following:

- Given our meeting schedule, how many troop meetings are we planning?
- Which journey do we feel best equipped to do this year?
- How many meetings should we devote to the journey?
- Will we do an Investiture/Rededication ceremony at our first meeting?
- How many meetings do we have available for badge-earning activities?
- How many trips might we have the time and resources for?
- How many service projects do we think the girls might like to do?
- What Service Unit events are being planned that we might want to participate in?
- How much time will we devote to the cookie program?

# **The Planning Partnership**

At the Girl Scout Junior grade level it is important to have a planning meeting with your girls to give them a lead role in shaping the year. Planning can still be somewhat new to Girl Scout Juniors, but with encouragement the girls will open up and voice their opinions. At this grade level 'Troop Leaders' begin to transition to 'Troop Advisors' offering suggestions and supporting the girls' decision making.

You and your co-leader will layout the basic plan including options on core program material and let the girls decide on the particulars. Offer girls possibilities and options for the year and open the discussion up for brainstorming, suggestions, and ideas for how to make activities more meaningful to them.

Other examples of making the program decisions girl led at this grade level are found in your Journey Adult Facilitator Guides, and include:

- Let them decide how they want to plan journey sessions and encourage them to lead a journey session, activity, or project
- Brainstorm possible ways of doing suggested activities, or offer substitutions to make activities more to their taste

Guaranteed, your troop plan will evolve over time. Girls may want to spend more time on a particular activity or spend more time reflecting on certain activities. Girls may want to add another field trip or it may take them longer to complete their *Take Action* projects. It is your role to make sure girls are engaged in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and to coach and guide them through their year.

Remember, girls at this grade level may think large with ideas that are unfeasible or may suggest things that aren't the best learning activities. It is your job as the troop leader to listen carefully and acknowledge the idea but keep the troop focused within the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and make sure every girl has a quality experience. You may have to offer alternatives to projects or activities, and ask leading questions to see what else the girls can come up with. And, in addition to your preparation for each session or activity, since girls at this grade levels girls will have a hand in planning and running the activities, it is your responsibility to see that girls are organized and have completed their tasks for the activity or trip.

"From beginning to end, keep your eye on what the girls want to do and the direction they seem to be taking. It's the approach begun by Juliette Gordon Low: when she and her associates couldn't decide on a new direction, she often said, 'Let's ask the girls!'"

-Excerpt from Get Moving!, the It's Your Plane-Love It Journey Series.

# **GSLE'ing Any Activity**

With a little planning, any activity can become a Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). Let's say that you have decided to do one of the Junior journeys this year, and participate with your Service Unit for two big traditional events, but you also want to invite your girls to choose an idea for an multi-session activity that they feel passionate about. So, you and your co-leader facilitate a brainstorming session, supporting the girls in healthy team decision making, and they choose to host a fashion show.

Girl Scout Juniors are very creative and have lots of great ideas. Planning a fashion show may not seem like a great learning experience, but with a little attention on the three leadership keys and the three GSLE processes, you can make it a Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

# **Applying the GSLE Keys**

Discover	Have girls work in teams on different tasks to plan the fashion show.  Through this process girls will learn more about what they are good at and where they might need to develop themselves further.
Connect	As the girls are working in their teams (possible examples of teams are logistics of show, clothing designs, invitations, and 'crowd management') have the teams come together often to collaborate and see how their projects need to connect for a successful outcome. Ask them leading questions to facilitate this process.
Take Action	Support the girls in learning basic project management as they plan the entire show. They can create tasks, timelines, and assignments. Have them interview local experts in the fashion industry (such as the local mall clothing purchaser). They might even charge a small fee and donate it to a needy organization.

# **Applying the GSLE Processes**

Girl-Led	This is an easy one: Have the girls make all the clothing designs, invitations, set up logistics, and agenda of the show.
Learning By Doing	Have the girls go to a local fabric store and price fabrics, ribbons, buttons, etc. Make them create a budget for how much the clothing will cost. This can be done even if girls are modeling existing clothing that they do not have to sew.
Cooperative Learning	By girls working in teams and dividing up tasks they will have opportunities for conflict management and for learning how to best work in teams to accomplish the group goals.



## Traditions at the Junior Level

This section provides detail about the traditional Girl Scout activities and where you can find information to help you plan with your Juniors.

#### **General Resources:**

- Traditions link on Resource Central on our council website (<u>www.girlscouts-ssc.org</u>)
- Girl Scout Central under Program on the GSUSA website (www.girlscouts.org)
- Let's Celebrate! Girl Scout Ceremonies, a GSUSA Program Resource
- www.scoutingweb.com

## Investiture/Rededication Ceremony: Usually held at the beginning of the year

Investiture is a ceremony that welcomes new members to Girl Scouts. The ceremony includes girls and adults making the Girl Scout Promise for the first time. You can invite friends and family and have girls help plan the ceremony. If you have a new Girl Scout Junior join your troop you should hold an investiture ceremony for her. Girls at this grade level will want to participate in the planning and execution of the ceremony. Girls will receive their Girl Scout Membership Pin.

A Rededication ceremony can also be conducted any time the girls want to review what the Girl Scout Promise and Law means to them.

#### Find out more:

Junior Girl Scout Handbook Ceremony Worksheet, Page 13

#### Founder's Day or Juliette Low's Birthday: October 31st

This is a great day to celebrate Girl Scout Founder, Juliette Gordon Low, by participating in an event or party with your Service Unit. Your troop might want to help plan this celebration and invite a sister troop.

#### Find out more:

- Junior Girl Scout Handbook
  - Ceremonies in Girl Scouting, Page 12
  - Ceremony Worksheet, Page 13
  - Activity: A Girl Scout Scrapbook, Page 5
- Junior Girl Scout Badge Book
  - o Girl Scouting Around the World, Page 2-3
  - Girl Scouting in the USA, Page 6-7

### Girl Scout Cookie Program: January through March

Each year our cookie baker, Little Brownie Baker, develops great *Cookie Activity Kits* with suggestions on how to design a fun, educational, and successful cookie program. These will be available at the start of the membership year.

#### World Thinking Day: February 22nd

This is an important day to think about our sister Girl Scouts around the nation and the world. Girl Scout Juniors might help a younger troop with their Thinking Day Activities. Girls can earn their World Trefoil Pin if they have not already. Make sure you plan to attend your Service Unit Meetings since many Service Units plan a special Thinking Day activity for all troops.

#### Find out more:

- Junior Girl Scout Handbook
  - Ceremonies in Girl Scouting, Page 12
  - Ceremony Worksheet, Page 13
  - o Girl Scouts Are Global 18-19
  - o People Near and Far, Chapter 5, Page 117-134
- Junior Girl Scout Badge Book
  - Global Awareness, Page 14-15
  - o Through the Years, Page 10
  - o World Neighbors, Page 28-29
  - Celebrating People, Page 44-45

#### Girl Scout Birthday/Girl Scout Week: March 12th

**Girl Scout Sunday/Sabbath:** The Sunday that begins the week in which March 12<sup>th</sup> falls. This gives girls an opportunity to attend their place of worship and be recognized as a Girl Scout. If a place of worship is the group sponsor, girls may perform a service, such as greeting, ushering, or doing a flag ceremony. These days can also be a time when girls explore other faiths.

**Girl Scout Birthday:** On March 12th, 1912 Juliette Gordon Low started Girl Scouting in Savannah, Georgia. The week in which March 12 falls is Girl Scout Week. During this week Girl Scout troops hold ceremonies within their Service Units or with sister troops. Juliette Low wanted to show young people that they can make their world a better peaceful place and the ceremonies should reflect this sense of goodwill.

**Girl Scout Week:** The week of March 12<sup>th</sup> is a special time in Girl Scouts where people can recognize Girl Scouting in their local community. Many Mayors in cities across the council agree to make a special proclamation for Girl Scout Week. This will be a perfect time to have a ceremony or special activity in your Service Unit, and a perfect time for Girl Scout Juniors to do a service project for their community.

#### Find out more:

- Junior Girl Scout Leader Guide Book
  - o Religious Awards, Page 12-13
- Junior Girl Scout Handbook
  - o Girl Scout Insignia, Page 14
- Junior Girl Scout Handbook, Page 4
- Junior Girl Scout Badge Book
  - Girl Scouting Around the World, Page 2-3
  - o Girl Scouting in the USA, Page 6-7

Trips: Girls can take and help plan trips at any point during the year

At the Girl Scout Junior grade levels girls are usually ready for an overnight trip, and they are mature enough to make most of the decisions when planning trips.

#### Find out more:

- Junior Girl Scout Badge Book
  - o Traveler, Page 26
  - o On My Way, Page 24-25

## **Service Projects:** anytime during the year

Plan service projects with your girls based on their interests. Some samples that are good for the Junior grade level include:

- Planting a garden and donating the food to the local food bank
- Participating in your local Festival of Trees
- Planning service projects in conjunction with the Bronze Award (see Highest Awards)

# **Bridging:** At the end of the year for girls moving to Cadettes



The last year of Girl Scout Juniors your girls can choose to bridge to Girl Scout Cadettes. If girls earn this award it should be presented at their end of year ceremony along with a membership star and yellow disc. Girls can help plan a ceremony within their troop or join Service Unit wide ceremony and bridge together.

#### Find out more:

- Junior Girl Scout Handbook
- Junior Girl Scout Leader Guide
- Updated Bridging Requirements on the Bridging link on Resource Central