

## Getting Started with Girl Scout Journeys

Journeys will provide an important foundation for each age level in Girl Scouting for girls and volunteers. Just by following a journey, members will be engaging in the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience (and practicing some Girl Scout traditions!). When the journey ends, girls and their volunteers can apply what they have learned to everything else they do in Girl Scouting.

The journeys have been created to provide meaningful experiences centered on the three keys to leadership—for girls participating during a troop year and girls participating during shorter time periods. The “sample sessions” in the adult guides are intended not as a “set number of meetings” but to provide momentum and a road map for a “whole adventure” that has more impact than any one activity in the journeys.

No matter how much time girls spend on a journey, the whole is always greater than any single part. When a Girl Scout journey comes to a close, girls and their adult volunteers will truly feel a sense of accomplishment. The awards girls earn on journeys mark their achievements—so let’s encourage everyone to take their time with the “learning and earning”! Plenty of tips in the girl and adult books provide suggestions for ceremonies and reflections to make earning the awards a more meaningful part of Girl Scouting.

Thank you for your partnership as we work together to support girls in being leaders who change the world.

We hope you share our excitement as we focus the energy of the Girl Scout community on the new opportunities journeys provide to bring our leadership experience to life.

## Journey Implementation Tips

- **You and the girls you work with are encouraged to customize the sample sessions.** The journey adult guides provide you with ideas, examples, and encouragement, along with ideas about sequencing experiences, facilitating discussions, and assisting as girls earn awards. But neither the girls' books nor the adult guides are meant to provide hard-and-fast, unchangeable, lock-step sessions. Have fun creating new activities surrounding each topic. The journey will be much more fun and relevant as girls make it their own!
- **Take your time.** Sample sessions in the journeys have been created to show how it is possible to have a Girl Scout leadership experience in 6-8 gatherings. Many girls and volunteers will quickly find there is more they will want to do! Those who have more time in Girl Scouts (a whole troop year perhaps!) can make the journey longer. The journey books are filled with tips for out to stretch out the experience. As their imaginations take hold, girls will have many more ideas about how to extend the journey with guidance from volunteers.
- **Capture girls' imagination and motivate them to take action by sharing stories.** Stories inspire girls (and adults!) to put values into action. The journey series engages girls in stories—real and fictional—of girls and women taking action in the world. Make use of these stories and expand upon them whenever you can—in any way that you and girls will enjoy. Stories, after all, capture the imagination and motivate. Ultimately, girls will create their own stories on the journey, meeting new people and taking action in the world. What other stories are going on in the region, and how can girls connect to them? What can girls find in stories—in art or life—that add to the feelings and ideas along this adventure?
- **Link!** Through the It's Your World—Change It! and It's Your Planet—Love It! journey series, Girl Scouts at each level will be engaged in exploring some of the same themes. Consider all the ways that girls networking together can increase the benefits of the journey. Are Ambassadors in the region interested in advocating together? Imagine every Girl Scout Senior in the region creating and exhibiting a unique vision for GIRLtopia. As Cadettes navigate the maze of relationship issues, what could they teach Juniors? What if Brownies link up on some of the steps of their quest? As Daisies in one area of the council engage in “growing something” how could they benefit from a family field trip to meet Daisies doing something similar in another area? These are just a few ideas of how expanding the connections Girl Scouts can make will contribute to powerful journey experiences around the country.
- **Connect to the three keys.** As a volunteer in Girl Scouts, your experiences—and your view of leadership—will influence and inspire girls. Use the reflection exercises in the adult guide to think about the three keys to leadership (Discover, Connect and Take Action) and how you can best apply them as you team up with Girl Scouts on their leadership journey.
  - By doing a journey, you get your own “learning by doing” opportunity on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
  - Apply what you learn about the processes and outcomes to whatever else girls want to do (badge explorations, trips, cookie program, etc.)