

Explore Camp Patch Program

Camp Aquasco Patch Activities



About the Explore Camp Patch Program

The Nation's Capital "Explore Camp" Patch Program encourages Girl Scouts to explore the outdoors, take part in Girl Scout traditions, and discover the unique features of each of our eight camp properties. Girl Scouts completing this patch program will hone their eight basic outdoor skills, which help improve outdoor literacy and support positive, environmentally friendly outdoor experiences. The eight basic outdoor skills are as follows: *Outdoor Manners*, *Be Prepared*, *Know Your Knots*, *Outdoor Tools*, *Fire Building*, *Outdoor Cooking*, *Stay Safe*, and *Find Your Way*. A ninth skill, *Girl Scout Traditions*, accompanies the eight basic skills so girls can experience outdoor camping traditions in Girl Scouting.

This program is appropriate for Girl Scouts of all levels, with a primary focus on Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, as well as Girl Scouts with limited camping or outdoor experience.

Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors, and Girl Scouts with more camping or outdoor experience may also complete this program, but are encouraged to not only complete each activity, but to test their skills by completing the optional **Challenge Mode** variations in some activities or by helping younger Girl Scouts complete the program.

Girls must complete the Explore Camp Main Patch first before beginning any of the eight individual camp patches, each of which focus on one of the eight Nation's Capital camp properties. The last activity in each of the individual camp patches – Commemorate & Reflect – must be completed last but does not have to be completed at camp. Otherwise, you must complete all activities at camp, and activities may be completed in any order. Refer to page 16 for an activity checklist that can be used to track each girl's progress.

By completing this patch program, girls will:

- **Discover** the outdoors in their own backyard and at Nation's Capital camps while honing their eight basic outdoor skills and learning about Girl Scout traditions
- **Connect** with nature and the unique features of Nation's Capital camp properties

Information for Girl Scout Volunteers

- Patches in the Explore Camp Program can be purchased at Girl Scouts Nation's Capital shops and online. See page 15 for web links and other helpful resources.
- Volunteers interested in learning how to deliver main patch activities in a virtual format can visit [gsLearn](#) and navigate to the content library. From there, click the learning path titled "204 Optional Enrichment Training: Virtual" and find the course titled "Explore Camp Main Patch Live Webinar" to register for a session.
- In order to take a troop camping or to do outdoor cooking, one adult attending must have completed a Girl Scouts Nation's Capital Cookout/Campout certification course, and another adult attending must hold a current certification in first aid and CPR. Refer to [Volunteer Essentials](#) for more information about camping and volunteer responsibilities, as well as page 15 for links to upcoming trainings.
- If your Girl Scouts enjoyed the outdoor activities in this program, check out the outdoor badges named in the table on page 14.

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About Camp Aquasco

Camp Aquasco is a 172 acre, two-sided camp in Aquasco, Maryland. It is about a 15 minute drive from Camp Winona in Hughesville, MD. Camp Aquasco is the only camp to have an entirely primitive side of camp – the farm side. Camp Aquasco was acquired by Girl Scouts Nation's Capital in 1974, and the first campers set foot on the property in fall of 1979. In fact, local Girl Scouts helped to develop the vision for Camp Aquasco. They wanted the camp to be primitive so that more girls were able to experience tent camping. Girl Scouts have given back to the camp in many ways, by planting native trees and plants, removing invasive plants, and other service projects.

On the farm side at Camp Aquasco, there are six primitive sites, three small pavilions added in 2019, and the large Mary Rhomberg Pavilion. The amphitheater at Aquasco can be visited via a scenic walk on the Red Trail. Newly added tomahawk and slingshot ranges complete the farm side of Aquasco, but there are also ranges on the lodge side of the camp. Much smaller than the farm side, the lodge side has Aquascake Lodge and the Sunnyside glen shelters. In the past, Camp Aquasco has hosted day camps, and every fall and spring the Aquasco Teen Encampment is held for teens to develop their primitive camping skills.

Outdoor Skill Activities (choose 1) - Outdoor Tools

Activity #1 – Tent Relay

Tent camping is a great next step after you feel comfortable sleeping outside in a glen shelter, and Camp Aquasco is famous for its open farm side perfect for tent camping. Tents can be set up in different areas, you can bring your tent with you, and tents allow you to make a primitive campsite. If you've been tent camping before, you know that tent setup can sometimes be tricky, especially if you have never set up a certain tent before. **Test your tent setup skills by having a tent relay.**

🍀 Supply List

- ☆ You will need at least two tents that are similar in size. You are welcome to have more tents so that smaller groups are working together to set up a tent. Pop-up tents that don't require assembly cannot be used for this relay. You can rent tents from the GSCNC Equipment Center – see the Resources for Girl Scout Volunteers page. If you're completing the Challenge Mode, you'll need a flashlight too.

🍀 Tent Relay

- ☆ Split the troop in half so that one group is in charge of setting up one tent, and the other is in charge of setting up another tent.
- ☆ Have each group choose if they would rather setup the tent silently or without the provided instructions. Depending on what each group chooses, remove the instructions or have an adult monitor to make sure no one is speaking during setup.
- ☆ Let each group know that they will be competing against the other group to see who can set up the tent correctly first.
- ☆ At the same time, allow both groups to begin assembling the tents. The first group to finish setting up their tent correctly wins.

- 🍀 **Challenge Mode:** Set up the tent in the dark while using only a flashlight as a light source.

🍀 Discussion Questions

- ☆ Would you want to sleep in the tent you set up? Why or why not?
- ☆ Why might we practice setting up a tent without instructions or silently?

Top Tent Tips

- 🍀 Before you go camping, make sure all parts of your tent are in the tent bag – including stakes, rain fly, poles, and the tent itself.
- 🍀 Get a tarp to fold under your tent to keep the tent floor dry. It should be folded so that the tarp doesn't come out from under the tent. Any parts of the tarp sticking out can collect rainwater and dew and make the tent wet.
- 🍀 Any gear that touches the sides of the tent can let in water from the outside.
- 🍀 Never spray anything inside the tent. The droplets can remove the waterproofing layer on the tent fabric.
- 🍀 Take your shoes off before going inside a tent. There will be less dirt to sweep up when it's time to go home.
- 🍀 Always keep your tent zipped up to reduce the number of bugs inside!
- 🍀 Always make sure your tent is dry before putting it away, otherwise it could get moldy and ruined.

Outdoor Skill Activities (choose 1) - Outdoor Tools

Activity #2 – Bandana Uses

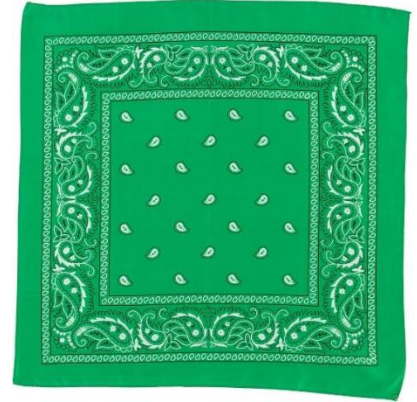
Bandanas are an awesome outdoor tool you can use in lots of different ways while camping. Perhaps the most common use is to keep a bandana tied around your waist and use it to dry your hands after you use the bathroom at camp. **Use your bandana four different ways - for first aid, sun and heat protection, cooking, and campsite setup.**

◆ Supply List

- ☆ You will need a sturdy, 100% cotton bandana.

◆ Bandana First Aid Ideas

- ☆ Make a triangle bandage sling to hold an injured arm in place against your chest. Fold your bandana in half diagonally so it makes a triangle, put the injured arm's elbow in the middle of the widest side, and tie the two ends together on the back of your neck.
- ☆ Put a bag of ice on your bandana and tie the ends together to make an ice pack.
- ☆ Use your bandana to apply pressure on a cut to slow down the bleeding.



◆ Bandana Sun & Heat Protection Ideas

- ☆ Wear your bandana on your head or neck to keep the sun off.
- ☆ When it's hot outside, put some water on your bandana or dip it in cool water. Stay cool by putting it on your wrists, ankles, neck, or forehead.
- ☆ After a hike, use your bandana to dry off sweat.

◆ Bandana Cooking Ideas

- ☆ Use your bandana to strain your pasta! Hold the pot of pasta and have someone else hold the bandana over the sink or other pot where you're dumping the water. Very carefully pour the pasta and water onto the bandana. The bandana will catch the pasta.
- ☆ No oven mitt? No problem! Fold your dry bandana in half twice and use it.
- ☆ To reduce waste, try using your bandana as a napkin. Just be sure to wash it after using it!

◆ Bandana Campsite Ideas

- ☆ Figure out how many bandanas long and bandanas wide your tent is. Before unpacking your tent at camp, use your bandana to see if the area is large enough to fit your tent.
- ☆ In the morning, use your bandana to wipe off dew from your shoes outside the tent. Or, cover your shoes with your bandana to keep the dew off.
- ☆ Tie your bandana to a stick to make a campsite flag.

◆ Challenge Mode: Invent a new way to use a bandana while camping and try it.

◆ Discussion Questions

- ☆ Which bandana use worked the best? Did any uses not work as well as you thought?
- ☆ What's your favorite way to use a bandana?

Hike: Song & Skit Hike

The Red Trail at Camp Aquasco provides a scenic route to the amphitheater, which is a great place to perform songs and skits. **Sing at least three repeat-after-me Girl Scout songs while you're hiking on the Red Trail, and perform a skit using a skit in a bag on the stage at the amphitheater.**

🌿 Supply List

- ☆ You will need the words of the songs if you aren't familiar with them, and at least one skit in a bag for each small group. To make a skit in a bag, you will need a bag and five random items. An example skit in a bag could include, a magnifying glass, a book, a bouncy ball, a toy car, and a cowboy hat. To make the skits more creative, the person compiling the skit in a bag should not be involved in performing the skit later.

🌿 Repeat After Me Songs

- ☆ For this activity, you can choose any three repeat-after-me Girl Scout songs you'd like, or use the repeat-after-me songs provided on the next page: Everywhere We Go, All Girl Scouts, and G for Generosity.

🌿 Skits in a Bag

- ☆ Skits in a bag are a great way to exercise your creativity muscles! Skits in a bag are bags of random items that you use to perform a skit. The skit can be about anything, the only requirements are that it must have a beginning, middle, and end, and you must use all the items in the bag at least once during your skit as either a prop, costume piece, or character in the skit.
- ☆ Do not open your skit in a bag until you reach the amphitheater. Then, take 10-15 minutes to develop a skit using the requirements above. Take turns performing the skits and get ready to laugh!

- 🌿 **Challenge Mode:** Create a skit in a bag that has at least three well-developed characters with only seven minutes to prepare before performing it.

🌿 Discussion Questions

- ☆ Do you know any other repeat-after-me songs? What are they?
- ☆ What skit in a bag item was used in the most creative way?

Everywhere We Go

(repeat louder and louder each time)

Everywhere we go,
People wanna know,
Who we are,
So we tell them.
We are Girl Scouts
Mighty, mighty Girl Scouts.
And if they can't hear us,
We'll shout a little louder!



G For Generosity

She wears a G for generosity,
She wears an I for interest too.
She wears an R for responsibility,
She wears an L for loyalty, for loyalty
She wears an S for sincerity,
She wears a C for courtesy.
She wears an O-U-T for outdoor life, outdoor life,
And that Girl Scout is me!

Camping Version:

She wears a "G" for grimy fingernails
She wears a "I" for insects too
She wears a "R" for rolling sleeping bags
She wears a "L" for leaky tents, for leaky tents
She wears a "S" for scrubbing pots and pans
She wears a "C" for clean up too, for clean up too
She wears a "O-U-T" for outdoor life, outdoor life,
And that Girl Scout is me!

All Girl Scouts

I don't know but I've been told
All Girl Scouts are good as gold.
I am one and this is true,
Scouting's great for me and you.

CHORUS

Sound off: 1, 2

Sound off: 3, 4

Bring it on down: 1,2,3,4....1 2, 3 4

Daisies have a disc of blue,
They are scouts who are brand new.
They are cute and they are sweet.
Daisy Scouts are fun to meet.

CHORUS

Brownies have a disc of green,
They are second on the scene.
They wear a uniform of brown,
Their smile song erases frowns.

CHORUS

Junior level is the next,
A yellow disc is on their vest.
They say camping is big fun.
And they earn badges 1 by 1.

CHORUS

Cadettes sure do care a lot,
Their service projects hit the spot.
A white disc is the one they wear,
The name Girl Scouts they're proud to bear.

CHORUS

Senior discs are red I know.
They are Girl Scouts on the go.
With wider opportunities
Some Girl Scouts go overseas.

CHORUS

Ambassadors they come last,
In Girl Scouts they have a blast.
A disc of navy they will wear,
Their Gold projects show they care.

CHORUS

Leaders have no disc at all,
They come all sizes, big and small.
They share their time and talents too.
They make Girl Scouting great for you.

CHORUS

Nature/STEM Activity: Tree ID

Did you know that Girl Scouts have planted trees at Camp Aquasco? The eight trees planted by Girl Scouts are sycamore, tulip poplar, sweetgum, Washington hawthorn, black cherry, persimmon, sourwood, and swamp white oak trees. All eight trees are native to Maryland and support the local ecosystem. **Find and identify leaves from at least four of the eight kinds of trees planted by Girl Scouts at Camp Aquasco.**

🌿 Supply List

- ☆ You will need a way to identify tree leaves. You can use the tree identification sheets, found on the next two pages, or you can choose to use a different resource such as an online guide or printed field guide. All leaf photos used in the tree identification sheets come from the Arbor Day Foundation. You can visit their website at www.arborday.org.

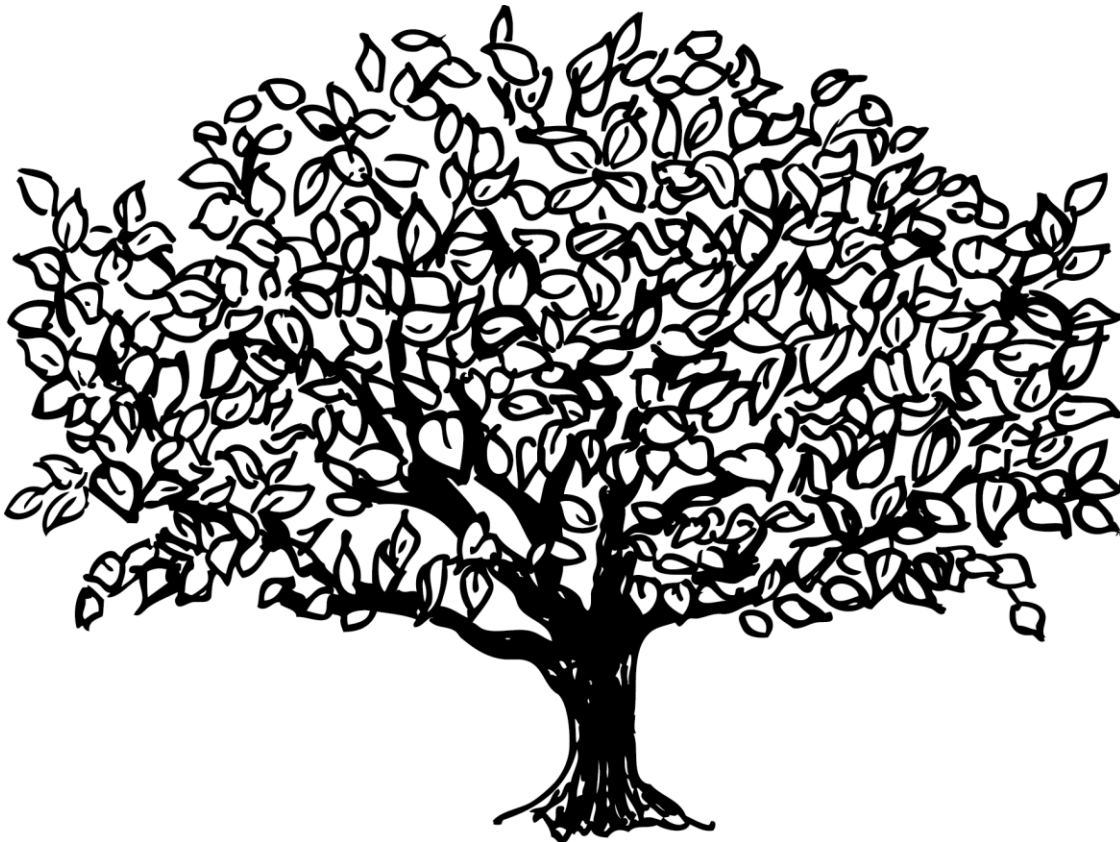
🌿 Tree Identification Vocabulary

- ☆ Crown - every part of a tree above the ground, including the trunk, leaves, and branches.
- ☆ Spread - how far the branches extend out from the trunk of the tree on either side. For example, a tree could have branches that are 5 feet long, making for a spread of 10 feet.
- ☆ Deciduous - a type of tree that sheds its leaves each year. All eight trees are deciduous trees.

🌿 Challenge Mode: Find leaves from all eight trees planted by Girl Scouts at Camp Aquasco.

🌿 Discussion Questions

- ☆ Why might it be important to plant trees that are native to the area?
- ☆ Was there a leaf that was easier to find than others? What leaf was the hardest to find?



Trees at Camp Aquasco – Page 1 of 2

Sycamore *Platanus occidentalis*

Sycamore trees can grow up to more than 130 feet tall and have a large dome-shaped crown. Their leaves turn brown in the fall. Sycamore bark peels off and looks like a camouflage pattern with patches of white and brown.



Tulip Poplar *Liriodendron tulipifera*

Tulip poplars grow quickly. They have a long, straight trunk and can grow around 100 feet tall. These trees have tulip-shaped flowers that grow to be greenish-yellow in the spring. The leaves turn yellow in the fall.



Sweetgum *Liquidambar styraciflua*

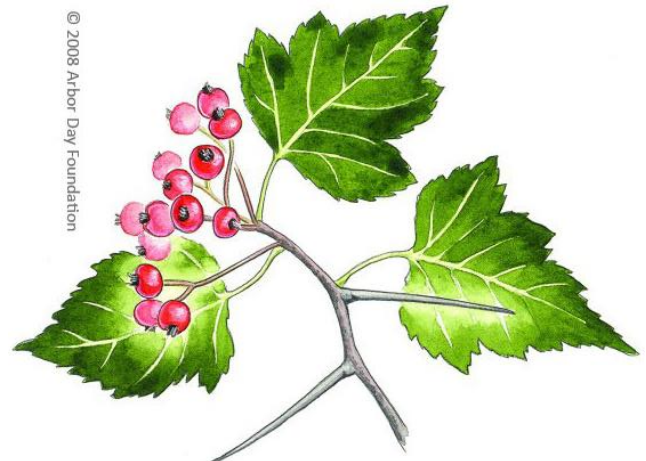
Sweetgum trees are pyramid-shaped and can grow up to 70 feet tall. Their leaves turn yellow, red, and even purple in the fall. Sweetgums drop “gumballs”, which have tiny seeds inside eaten by birds and squirrels.



Washington Hawthorn

Crataegus phaenopyrum

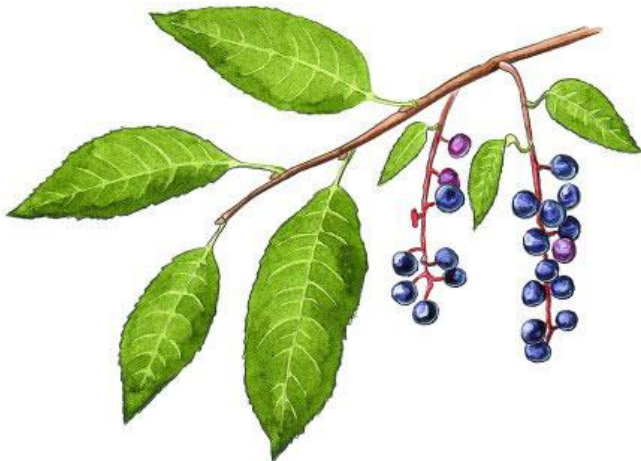
Washington Hawthorns grow up to 30 feet tall. They have a pyramid-shaped crown, and grow thorns on their branches. These trees bear small white flowers and red berries in the spring, and its leaves turn deep red, orange, and purple in the fall.



Trees at Camp Aquasco – Page 2 of 2

Black Cherry *Prunus serotina*

Black cherry trees grow up to 60 feet tall with a spread of 20-30 feet. In the spring, black cherry trees have snowy white flowers. In the summer, dark blue berries appear. In the fall, leaves turn yellow and orange. Black cherry trees have dark gray or black scaly bark.



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Persimmon *Diospyros virginiana*

Persimmon trees grow anywhere from 35-60 feet tall. The leaves turn yellow in the fall, and persimmons produce orange-brown fruit. The fruit is edible but it's very bitter if eaten before it's ripe. Once the fruit ripens in the late fall, it has a sweet flavor. Persimmon tree bark is textured and blocky.



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Sourwood *Oxydendrum arboreum*

Sourwoods have a pyramid shape in the spring – their white flowers look similar to lilies-of-the-valley. The leaves are glossy and green but turn a deep red or orange in the fall. Sourwood trees grow up to 25-30 feet tall and have a gray-brown bark with deep ridges and square sections.



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Swamp White Oak *Quercus bicolor*

The Latin name for the swamp white oak comes from the appearance of its leaves – dark green on top and white on the bottom. In the fall, the leaves turn a yellow-orange gold color. Swamp white oaks grow up to 60 feet tall, and young trees have a flaky, peeling bark that is orange on the inside.



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Special Activity: Semaphore Signaling

Camp Aquasco's farm side is a large open field great for stargazing and tent camping. Another great activity to try in the open field is sending messages through semaphore (flag signaling) to a friend on the other side of the field. Semaphore was a skill that all Girl Scouts were expected to know – you can find instructions for semaphore signaling in old Girl Scout handbooks. **Send at least four one-word messages via semaphore from one end of the field to the other.**

🌿 Supply List

- ☆ You will need two printed copies of the semaphore guide on the next page (or any preferred semaphore guide) and at least four semaphore flags. You can choose to make them by following the instructions below or borrow them from another troop.
- ☆ To make a semaphore flag, you will need a wooden dowel, glue gun, yellow fabric or construction paper/cardstock, and red fabric or construction paper/cardstock. If you don't have yellow or red, choose one dark color and one light color to make the flag.

🌿 Sending Messages

- ☆ Split up into at least two groups and have each group come up with the two words they will send to the other group. You can choose to split up the groups even further into smaller groups, but you'll need more supplies so that each group can signal and decode.
- ☆ On each team, you will need a signaler, a watcher, and a decoder. The signaler and watcher can be the same person if needed. You can also have girls rotate between each role to try out all aspects of the signaling. The signaler is the one who sends the message to the other group by moving the flags. The watcher watches for the other group's message and speaks what they see out loud for the decoder. The decoder decodes the message by listening to what the watcher says and using the guide to decode the message.

🌿 Making a Semaphore Flag

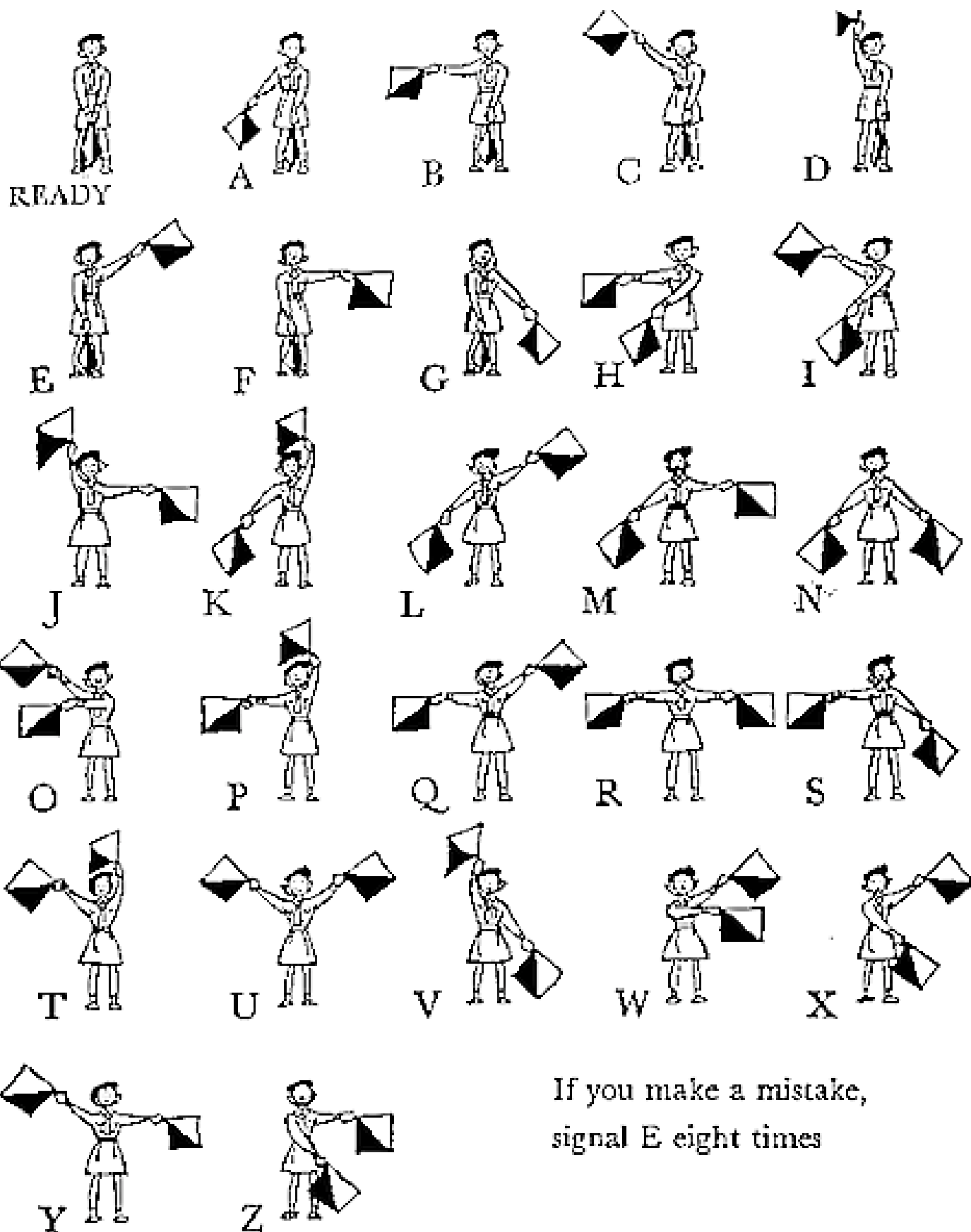
- ☆ First, cut your fabric or construction paper into two even isosceles triangles (one side longer, two even sides) so they look like the illustration to the right.
- ☆ Using your glue gun, glue the pieces together along the long triangle sides so they make a square.
- ☆ Glue the red side of the flag to the dowel rod like the illustration on the right.



- 🌿 **Challenge Mode:** Send at least four complete sentences via semaphore to the other group across the field.

🌿 Discussion Questions

- ☆ Were you able to successfully decode the messages that you received? What made it difficult?
- ☆ Can you think of any situations where using semaphore would be helpful? What about during a camping trip?



If you make a mistake,
signal E eight times

Commemorate & Reflect

Now that you have experienced the wonders of Camp Aquasco, it's time to reflect on your time at camp.

Commemorate your visit to Camp Aquasco.

- ✿ You could create a vision board, collage, art piece, compose a song or poem, or make a presentation to show to sister troops. The possibilities are endless!
 - ☆ **Challenge Mode:** Commemorate all your visits to each camp property in a similar way. You could make a scrapbook, create a photo album, or paint blocks of wood. Whatever you do, create something that is part of a set - one for each camp.
- ✿ Discussion Questions
 - ☆ What is one new thing you learned while completing the activities for this camp patch?
 - ☆ On your next visit to Camp Aquasco, what would you want to do? Think about high adventure, hikes, units you would like to stay in, etc.

Outdoor Badges by Girl Scout Level

Outdoor Badge Theme	Daisy	Brownie	Junior
Art in the Outdoors	Outdoor Art Maker	Outdoor Art Creator	Outdoor Art Explorer
Outdoor Explorer		Outdoor Adventurer	Horseback Riding
Adventure		Letterboxer	Geocacher
Outdoors		Hiker	Camper
Naturalist		Bugs	Flowers
Troop Camping	Buddy Camper	Cabin Camper	Eco Camper
Environmental Stewardship	Eco Learner	Eco Friend	
Snow or Climbing Adventure	Snow Play or Bouldering	Cross-Country Skiing or Rock Climbing	Slope Sliding or Recreational Tree Climbing
Trail Adventure	Jogging or Outdoor Hiking Games	Trail Running Basics or Roamer	Trail Running or Day Hiking
Outdoor Badge Theme	Cadette	Senior	Ambassador
Art in the Outdoors	Outdoor Art Apprentice	Outdoor Art Expert	Outdoor Art Master
Outdoor Explorer	Archery	Paddling	Ultimate Outdoor Recreation Challenge
Adventure	Night Owl	Traveler	
Outdoors	Trailblazing	Adventurer	
Naturalist	Trees	Sky	Water
Troop Camping	Primitive Camper	Adventure Camper	Survival Camper
Environmental Stewardship	Eco Trekker	Eco Explorer	Eco Advocate
Snow or Climbing Adventure	Slope Sliding II or Outdoor Climbing 1	Snow Camping or Outdoor Climbing II	Snow Trekking or Climbing Adventure
Trail Adventure	Long Distance Trail Running or Trail Hiking Challenge	Competitive Trail Running or Backpacking	Trail Running Coach or Trekking

Resources for Girl Scout Volunteers

Information

- Girl Scouts Nation's Capital: www.gscnc.org
- Explore Camp: <http://www.gscnc.org/camp>
- Troop Camping: <http://www.gscnc.org/en/camp/troop-camping.html>
- Camping FAQs: <https://bit.ly/GSCNCCampFAQ>
- About Our Camps: <http://www.gscnc.org/en/camp/troop-camping/AboutOurCamps.html>
- High Adventure: <http://www.gscnc.org/highadventure>
- Upcoming Trainings: www.bit.ly/gsupcomingcourses
- Volunteer Toolkit: <https://my.girlscouts.org/content/girlscouts-vtk/en/vtk.home.html>
- Program Kits and Council's Own Patch Programs: <http://www.gscnc.org/kits>
- Leave No Trace: www.lnt.org

Rentals and Reservations

- Camping Equipment Rental: <http://gscnc.doubleknot.com/facilitysearch/3246>
- Camp Aquasco Reservations: <http://gscnc.doubleknot.com/facilitycalendar/3079>

Online Store

- Girl Scouts Online Store: <https://www.girlscoutshop.com>
- Nation's Capital Camp Patches: <https://www.girlscoutshop.com/NATIONS-CAPITAL-COUNCIL/NATIONS-CAPITAL-PRODUCT-LIST>

Council Contact

- Camping Services Department: campingaa@gscnc.org or 202-534-3793
- Girl Scouts Nation's Capital: customercare@gscnc.org or 202-237-1670
4301 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite M-2
Washington, DC 20008

Camp Aquasco Patch Activity Checklist

Note: Challenge Mode items are optional activities and are not required to earn this patch.
Use this checklist to track your progress as you complete activities.

Outdoor Skill Activities: Outdoor Tools

(choose one of the two activities)

Activity #1: Tent Relay

- ☐ Test your tent setup skills by having a tent relay.
- ☐ **Challenge Mode:** Set up the tent in the dark while using only a flashlight as a light source.

OR

Activity #2: Bandana Uses

- ☐ Use your bandana four different ways - for first aid, sun and heat protection, cooking, and campsite setup.
- ☐ **Challenge Mode:** Invent a new way to use a bandana while camping and try it.

Hike: Song & Skit Hike

- ☐ Sing at least three repeat-after-me Girl Scout songs while you're hiking on the Red Trail, and perform a skit using a skit in a bag on the stage at the amphitheater.
- ☐ **Challenge Mode:** Create a skit in a bag that has at least three well-developed characters with only seven minutes to prepare before performing it.

Nature/STEM Activity: Tree ID

- ☐ Find and identify leaves from at least four of the eight kinds of trees planted by Girl Scouts at Camp Aquasco.
- ☐ **Challenge Mode:** Find leaves from all eight trees planted by Girl Scouts at Camp Aquasco.

Special Activity: Semaphore Signaling

- ☐ Send at least four one-word messages via semaphore from one end of the field to the other.
- ☐ **Challenge Mode:** Send at least four complete sentences via semaphore to the other group across the field.

Commemorate and Reflect

- ☐ Commemorate your visit to Camp Aquasco.
- ☐ **Challenge Mode:** Commemorate all your visits to each camp property in a similar way.