Belonging: Building Troops Where Everyone Can Thrive

Practical Tools for Building Inclusive Girl Scout Troops

Why This Matters

- Belonging helps girls participate, contribute, and grow.
- Inclusive troops create safer, stronger communities.
- Small leader actions can make a big difference.

Common Inclusion Challenges

- New girls feeling left out
- Activities that aren't accessible to everyone
- Communication differences or misunderstandings
- Cultural assumptions or unspoken barriers

The Belonging Check

- **Seen** — Do girls feel noticed and welcomed?
- **Safe** — Do they feel respected and emoticinally safe?
- **Supported** — Do they have what they need to participate?
- **Significant** — Do they feel their voice and presence matter?

Tools You'll Practice

- **B.E.L.O.N.G. Planning Lens** — A simple way to design inclusive experiences.
- **C.A.R.E. Conversation Tool** — A supportive framework for tough moments.
- **Real-World Troop Scenarios** — Practice and problem-solve together.
- **Inclusive Troop Activities** — Ideas you can use right away.
- **Reflection and Action Planning** — Turn learning into next steps.

What Participants Will Leave With

- Conversation tools for real situations
- Ready-to-use troop activities
- Inclusion strategies for the Girl Scout year
- Resources to keep building belonging

Quick Inclusion Tips

- Learn and use each girl's name
- Offer more than one way to participate
- Check for access needs early
- Invite quieter voices in
- Normalize curiosity, kindness, and repair

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Quick Reference for Inclusive Girl Scout Troops

DEIA Kickoff 2026

The Belonging Check

Ask whether each girl feels:

- **SEEN:** My identity, strengths, and needs are noticed without becoming my whole story.
- **SAFE:** I can ask questions, make mistakes, use support, and be myself without ridicule.
- **SUPPORTED:** I have what I need to understand, access, and participate.
- **SIGNIFICANT:** My ideas matter. I have a role, a voice, and a reason to be here

Use the B.E.L.O.N.G. Lens

B Begin with curiosity — notice first; ask before assuming.

E Examine barriers — look at the setup, not just the person.

L Listen and learn — let girls and families describe what helps.

O Offer options — create more than one path to participation.

N Normalize support — make help routine, private, and stigma-free.

G Give meaningful roles — ensure every girl can contribute and influence

Three Minute Pre-Minute Scan

COMMUNICATE

- Share what to expect in plain language.
- Give key information in more than one format.
- Name who to contact with questions.

SET UP

- Check physical access, noise, movement, and break options.
- Make supplies reachable; avoid surprise participation demands.

PARTICIPATE

- Offer choices in how to join and contribute.
- Build in processing time and a Plan B that does not isolate anyone.

When Something IS Not Working: C.A.R.E.

C CONNECT
"I noticed today felt frustrating. I wanted to check in."

A ASK — DON'T ASSUME
"What would make this easier next time?"

R RESPOND WITH OPTIONS
"We could try A, B, or something else you suggest."

E EVALUATE + FOLLOW UP
"How did that feel today? Anything we should adjust?"

Inclusive Response Habits

- Check in privately.
- Stay curious; do not diagnose or guess.
- Change the environment before excluding the person.
- Collaborate with the girl and family when appropriate.
- Offer support without demanding personal disclosure.
- Follow up and keep adjusting.

Helpful Conversation Starters

- **When you notice a struggle:** "I noticed that part seemed tough today. What would make it easier next time?"
- **When you are planning:** "Is there anything about this activity that could make it hard to participate?"
- **When a girl asks for something different:** "Thanks for telling me. Let's figure out what would work."
- **When you do not know the answer:** "I want to get this right. Let me learn more and follow up."