



Learn To Lead 4: *Year Planning*



girl scouts
of central california
south



The fourth segment in the GSCCS Learn to Lead Series focuses on planning a year's worth of fun, girl-led experiences for your Troop that support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. By the end of this training, Troop Leaders learn the fundamentals of planning their Girl Scout year and how to incorporate elements of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

What is the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)?

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is the core framework of the Girl Scouts program and should have a prominent role in the plan for your Troop's Girl Scout year. It focuses on helping girls develop leadership skills through a variety of engaging and meaningful activities. Girls who participate in the GSLE are more likely to develop strong leadership skills, build confidence, and form lasting friendships. They also gain valuable life skills that prepare them for future success.

GSLE Key Components

Girl - Led

Girls take the lead in deciding what they want to do and how they want to do it. This empowers them to make decisions, plan activities, and take ownership of their experiences.

Learning by Doing

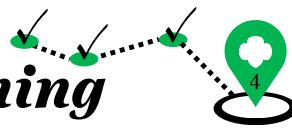
Hands-on activities are central to the GSLE. Girls learn through direct experiences, which helps them build confidence and resilience.

Cooperative Learning

Working together in teams, girls learn the value of teamwork, respect, and collaboration. This fosters a sense of community and mutual support.



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Why Is Planning Important?

Planning a year of meetings and activities can be a rewarding experience for you and your Troop and is essential for creating an enriching and enjoyable experience for the girls and volunteers. A thoughtful plan ensures that the Troop can explore a wide range of topics, from outdoor adventures and STEM projects to community service and leadership development. This balanced mix of educational, fun, and skill-building activities helps the girls grow and learn in a supportive and nurturing environment.

Having a clear plan also helps leaders manage resources effectively, communicate with parents, and adapt to any changes throughout the year. Ultimately, a well-organized plan sets the stage for a memorable and impactful Girl Scout year with a lot less stress for volunteers.

Getting Started

7 Easy to follow steps on how to plan your Girl Scout Year!

Step 1

Set Goals and objectives by talking to the girls about what they want the girls to achieve by the end of the year.

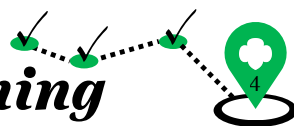


- What do the girls hope to accomplish this year in Girl Scouting?
- What specific badges they are interested in earning?
- What types of activities would they like to prioritize?
- What skills would they like to develop?
- Are there community service projects that they would like to participate in or organizations that they would like to help?





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Step 2

Create your Troop calendar by starting with a broad outline of the year.



- Mark important dates such as holidays, school breaks, Girl Scout events, and other Girl Scout programming such as Cookie Product Program or Highest Awards due dates.
- Block out the dates that your volunteers, Troop Leaders and necessary chaperones are unavailable. This will help provide balance for your volunteer team and prevent unexpected cancellations.
- Indicate important dates for GSCCS events that your Troop can attend. Events like Agri-Nation, Camporee and Cookie University are easy, impactful additions to the Troop calendar that girls can enjoy each year.
- Use the GSCCS Program Guide to identify any other workshops or activities that your Troop may be interested in. This is a great way to simplify your meeting planning.
- Add in Service Unit events that your Troop will be invited to attend.
- Assign a theme or focus for each month based on your Troop's interests. For example, October could be about "Outdoor Skills," while February might focus on "Community Service." Use the Badge and Award Chart to help guide girls in prioritizing badges.
- Fill in the themes on your calendar.



Agri-Nation
September



Fall Product Season
October - December



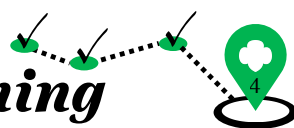
Cookie Season
February - March



Camporee
March



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Step 3

Begin outlining your meeting and activity schedule.



- Decide on your Troop's regular meeting dates and times. Add these dates to your calendar, indicating the number of volunteers needed to support each meeting.
- Add in your Service Unit Meeting schedule and designate a volunteer to attend monthly meetings.
- Use the themes outlined in Step 2 to roughly outline meeting content. This may be as simple as choosing the badges you will work on each meeting or as detailed as outlining how you will earn each badge at each meeting.
- Decide how often your Troop will host a special activity and add those dates to your calendar. Many Troops will host an activity outside of the regular meeting schedule once per month while some may opt for once per quarter; the frequency should be based on the goals of the girls in your Troop and the availability of parent chaperones. Some examples of additional activities are parades,
- Outline activities that align with girl ideas and your monthly themes and goals. Include a mix of educational, fun, and skill-building activities.

Step 4

Incorporate Special Events and begin moving forward.



- Plan activities that complement your monthly themes, such as visits to nature centers, museums, or community service projects.
- Schedule at least one camping trip or progressive outdoor experience to teach outdoor skills and foster team bonding.
- Organize community service projects to instill a sense of civic responsibility
- Use Safety Activity Checkpoints to determine what, if any, additional training or documentation is required to support your Troop's activities.
- Mark due dates for paperwork and additional training.
- Delegate jobs amongst volunteers to put plans into motion. This may be assigning responsibilities for meeting planning, making reservations, securing guest speakers, or recruiting additional parent volunteers to support more involved activities.
- Set due dates and Leader Meeting dates to reconvene with finalized plans.



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Step 5

Budget and Resources



- Estimate the costs for activities, supplies, and events and share these costs with the girls in your Troop. Share ideas for supporting the cost of the Troop's year plan including setting goals for participating in Girl Scout Product Programs to support your budget.
- Utilize resources from the Girl Scouts organization, such as badge guides, activity books, and online tools to begin planning your meetings.
- Use personal contacts or community resources to support needs for guest speakers, tours, or added activities.

Step 6

Set frequency for communication with parents and guardians



- Mark the communication schedule that your Troop will keep to parents informed with regular updates through emails, newsletters, or a troop group or page.
- Encourage parents to volunteer and participate in meetings and events.

Step 7

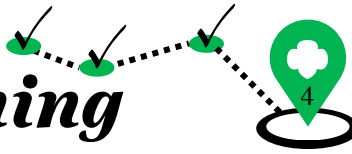
Review and Adjust



- Be prepared to adjust your plans as needed to accommodate changes in interest, availability, or unforeseen circumstances.
- Remember that Troop participation is voluntary and everyone is giving their time to support the Troop. Open communication and a supportive volunteer team that extends grace to themselves and each other are the foundation of a successful Troop.



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Resources

GSCCS Activity Calendar:



Available year-round to showcase upcoming GSCCS staff-led events. Registration is required for all attendees.

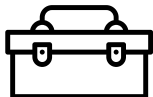
GS of Central California South (girlscoutscs.org)

Service Unit Meetings or Communication Platform:



Service Units are a valuable resource for Troops as they not only provide mentorship from experienced Girl Scout volunteers but often use Service Unit funds to support additional activities and experiences for the girls and Troops in their footprint. Contact your Service Unit Manager for meeting and activity schedules.

Volunteer Toolkit:



Requires your unique log in to access information such as meeting plans, Troop calendars, communication templates, and much more.

my.girlscouts.org

GSUSA Year Plan Meeting Outlines:



GSUSA Year Plan Meeting Outlines: Year plans outlined by GSUSA to support traditional Troops in providing a Troop experience that incorporates the GSLE. Year Plan Guides

<https://www.girlscouts.org/en/members/for-volunteers/troop-year-planner.html>

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