



Girl Scout Gold Award Program Kit

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Program Description: Find out about the highest award Girl Scouts can earn, the Girl Scout Gold Award.

Learning Objectives: Girls will learn the steps to earning the Gold Award and explore how to choose a great project that will make a difference.

Girl Scout Grade Level: Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors

Program Strand: Leadership Progression

Physical Setting: Room with tables and chairs

Program Duration: 90 minutes

Optimal Group size: 10-50 girls

Preparation:

1. Make copies of the Gold Award packet for each girl (available on the River Valleys website at http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/activities_for_girls/badges_and_awards/gold_silver_bronze_awards/).
2. Make supplies of the activity sheets below:
 - Steps of the Girl Scout Gold Award (cut into half sheets)
 - “My Community Map” handout (1 per girl)
 - Sustainability handout (1 per girl)
3. Gather the supplies listed below:
 - Markers, construction paper or cardstock
 - Copies of the journey books (It’s Your World—Change It!, It’s Your Planet—Love It! or It’s Your Story—Tell It!) for the girls to look at
 - Pens/pencils
 - Large paper/whiteboard and markers

Notes to the Facilitator: Review the FAQs sheet prior to facilitation. This will assist you in answering girls’ questions and being more familiar with the Gold Award process.

The activities outlined in this packet will help girls learn more about the Gold Award and the steps required to complete the award. These activities can be completed during one meeting session, or split out over a few meetings.

All About Me Page

An important step in developing a Gold Award project is knowing what skills and interests each girl brings to the table.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: Markers, construction paper or cardstock

Have materials available that girls can use to create their page.

Girls will make an All About Me Page answering the following questions:

- What do you do in my free time?
- What are your skills and talents?
- What are you passionate about?
- What are your interests?
- What do you care about?

Tell girls they should use words and images to convey “who you are.”

When completed, have the girls share their page with 1-2 other girls.

Information Check

What is the Gold Award? Ask girls to share what they already know about the Gold Award. Make sure the points below are covered.

Time: 10 minutes

Key Points for Discussion:

- Highest award for Girl Scouts. Earned by girls in grades 9-12.
- Gold Award projects focus on something you are passionate about.
- Gold Award projects leave a lasting impact and are something that have not been done before.
- Girls complete two Journeys (or 1 Journey and have earned the Silver Award) before beginning the Gold Award project.
- Project requires at least 80 hours of planning and implementing.
- Pre-approval is required prior to implementing the project.
- Gold Award projects must be done individually.
- Gold Award projects must serve a community need outside of Girl Scouts.
- Gold Award project must be sustainable—have lasting impact.

Gold Award Steps

There are many steps to completing the Gold Award. This activity will help girls see what goes into earning the award.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: Girl Scout Gold Award Steps sheets

Pass out the steps to the Gold Award to the girls. Girls should work together to put them in the correct order. Once completed, review the steps for completing the Gold Award (correct order below).

Girl Scout Gold Award Steps

1. Go on a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador Journey or have earned your Girl Scout Silver Award.
2. Go on an additional Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador Journey.
3. Choose an issue: Use your values and skills to identify a community issue you care about.
4. Investigate: Research everything you can about the issue.
5. Get help: Invite others to support and take action with you.
6. Create a plan: Create a project plan that achieves sustainable and measurable impact.
7. Present your plan and get feedback: Submit your project proposal to your Girl Scout council for approval.
8. Take action: Take the lead to carry out your plan.
9. Educate and inspire: Share what you have experienced with others. Submit Final Report to River Valleys.

Community Mapping

Time: 25 minutes

Materials: My Community Map sheets, pens/pencils

As a large group brainstorm a few answers to each of the following questions:

- What are the resources in my community? (examples: police, animal shelter, library, etc.)
- My community needs _____ / (examples: recycling program, healthy activity options for kids, etc.)
- Issues I am concerned about in my community are _____. (examples: bad drivers, graffiti, bullying in school, etc.)

Community is defined by the girls. This could mean their neighborhood, school, faith organization, city, etc.

Once the large group has brainstormed a few answers, have the girls work individually for 5-10 minutes to complete the "My Community Map" handout. Girls should write down all the ideas, since this is a brainstorm activity. There are no wrong answers at this stage. You never know where a great idea will come from.

Once girls have spend some time working on their handouts individually, have them get into groups of 2-3 to share what they came up with.

Girls will also need to complete a Take Action project as part of their journey, so a great idea may not be right for the Gold Award, but it might be a great Take Action project to do along with the journey.

Sustainability

Time: 25 minutes

Materials: Large sheet of paper/whiteboard, markers, Sustainability handout, pens/pencils

Sustainability is a very important part of developing a quality Gold Award project—it is what takes the project from a good community service project to a great Gold Award project.

Have the girls list community service projects they have done in the past. (examples: food drive, helping the elderly, etc.)

Pass out the “Sustainability” handout. Have a volunteer read the definitions of short-term versus take action projects and the example provided. Have girls determine if the community service projects on their list are short-term or take action projects.

Split the girls into two groups. Assign each group one of the “community issues” on the handout. Each group should brainstorm ways to address the community need with a take action project. Remember that take action projects address the root cause of the issue and are sustainable with long term impact.

Final Program Reflection Activity

As a large group or in small groups, brainstorm possible project ideas for the Girl Scout Gold Award. Use the Girl Scout Gold Award Brainstorm sheet as a resource for this activity.

Additional Resources to assist with the Girl Scout Gold Award:

- Girl Scout Journey Books: It’s Your World—Change It!, It’s Your Planet—Love It! and It’s Your Story—Tell It!
- Adult Volunteer Training Opportunities-For more information go to www.girlscoutsrv.org
 - **Take Action Basics: Light Their Fire**
Learn how to help girls make a difference in their communities by planning and doing sustainable, measurable community service projects. Take Action Basics is held at various times throughout the year.
 - **Take Action Highest Awards: Fuel Their Flame**
Get information you need to support girls working on the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. The session is offered to adults accompanying girls to a River Valleys award workshop.

Go on a Girl Scout
Senior or Ambassador
Journey or have
earned your Girl
Scout Silver Award.

Go on an additional
Girl Scout Senior or
Ambassador Journey.

Choose an issue: Use your values and skills to identify a community issue you care about.

Investigate: Research everything you can about the issue.

Get help: Invite others to support and take action with you.

Create a plan: Create a project plan that achieves sustainable and measurable impact.

Present your plan and get feedback: Submit your project proposal to your Girl Scout council for approval.

Take action: Take the lead to carry out your plan.

Educate and inspire:
Share what you have
experienced with
others. Submit Final
Report to River
Valleys.

My Community Map

Resources in my community
(people, organizations, buildings, etc)

My community needs...

Issues I am concerned
about in my community

Sustainability...

A **Short-Term Project** is a one-time effort that has a short term impact.

A **Take Action Project** identifies the root cause of the issue and has long term benefits and sustainable support, so the impact continues.

Example of the difference between a Short-Term Project and a Take Action project

Community Issue: Patients and their families spend a lot of time in the hospital.	
Short-Term Project: Make blankets; collect games, toys and books; and create care packages to donate to the hospital	Take Action Projects: Develop information packets containing details about free or inexpensive outings in the area, organize a babysitting service in your area so parents can spend time at the hospital, organize meal delivery or a household project service to support families, plan an annual health fair to encourage people to stay healthy and promote regular check-ups and screenings

Community Issue: A family's home is destroyed by a fire.	
Short-Term Project: Collect clothes, household goods, and food for the family	Take Action Project:

Community Issue: Families are going hungry.	
Short-Term Project: Hold a food drive for families in need.	Take Action Project:

Now fill out the chart with a community issue that you are interested in.

Community Issue:	
Short-Term Project:	Take Action Project:

Gold Award Project Brainstorm

Issues I am concerned about in my community

Resources in my community (people, organizations, buildings, etc)

Project Ideas

My community needs...

Girl Scouts' Highest Awards: Frequently Asked Questions

What are the minimum hours for earning each of the awards?

After the journey(s) requirement is fulfilled, the minimum number of hours to use as a guide is:

Bronze Award -- minimum 20 hours

Silver Award -- minimum 50 hours

Gold Award -- minimum 80 hours

Not all projects will require the same length of time to complete from planning to sharing and celebration. The time it takes to earn the awards will depend on the nature of the project, the size of the team, and the support of the community. Quality projects should be emphasized over quantity of hours.

How many girls can work on a Take Action project together?

Bronze Award – whole troop can work together.

Silver Award – up to 4 girls can work together but each girl must have an individual leadership role. Each girl must complete her own paperwork to be submitted with other group members' for approval.

Gold Award – girls must work individually.

Despite the group size restrictions, girls should be partnering with members of their community to implement their project plans.

Why are journeys prerequisites to earn the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?

The journeys give girls a full experience of what they will do as they work to earn the highest awards. The skills girls gain while working on the journeys will help them develop, plan and implement their award Take Action project.

How do girls know when a journey is "completed?"

A journey is completed when a girl has earned the journey awards, which include creating and carrying out a Take Action project.

What makes the awards' guidelines different from the journeys?

In contrast to journey Take Action projects, which give girls themes on which to base their journey Take Action project, the Girl Scout Award Take Action projects have no pre-designed theme. Girls select their own theme, design, and execute their Take Action project.

Can girls begin working on their awards the summer after they bridge (transition) from one Girl Scout level to the next?

Yes. Girls can begin to earn the awards over the summer.

As a project advisor what can I do to support my girls?

The best way to make sure that a girl is doing the best of her ability is to ensure that both she and her project advisor receive orientation about the award and understand the difference between a one time community service opportunity or event and a Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Take Action project. Orientation for the awards is covered during the council-sponsored Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Workshops or Take Action Workshops. During these workshops adults with participate in the Take Action Highest Awards training. General Take Action project information is also available in the Take Action Basics adult training.

Do I need to get approval for my project before I begin?

Girl Scout Bronze Award Take Action projects are approved by the advisor working with the project. A final report form is submitted to the Brooklyn Center Service Center for tracking purposes.

Girl Scout Silver Award Take Action projects are approved by council. Girls should submit their project proposal at least 3 weeks prior to project start date.

Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action projects are approved by the Gold Award Committee. Girls should submit their project proposal at least 4 weeks prior to project start date. Girls will present their proposal to the Gold Award Committee for approval.

What does it mean to have a sustainable project?

A sustainable project is one that lasts after the girl's involvement ends. A focus on education and raising awareness is one way to make sure a project is carried on.

Workshops and hands-on learning sessions can inspire others to keep the project going.

Another way to create a sustainable project is by collaborating with community groups, civic associations, non-profit agencies, local government, and/or religious organizations to ensure the project lasts beyond the girl's involvement.

Is sustainability differentiated at each grade level?

The guidelines give girls tools to examine the underlying root cause of issues, develop a sustainable project plan and measure the impact of their project on their community, the target audience and themselves. There is progression. While Junior Girl Scouts working on their Girl Scout Bronze Award will reflect on how the project could be kept going, Girl Scout Cadettes plan for sustainability. Seniors and Ambassadors work to ensure the sustainability of their project in order to meet the Gold Award standards of excellence.

While Juniors explore an issue that affects their Girl Scout community, Cadettes create a community map of their neighborhood or school. Meanwhile Seniors and Ambassadors earning the Gold Award assess an issue and its effect more broadly by interviewing community leaders, research using a variety of sources and investigate other community's solutions to a similar problem.

How does a girl measure project impact?

Girls identify their project goals for their community, target audience and themselves and evaluate how those goals were met.

What if a girl's project is not completed by the council ceremony time?

Girls and their project advisors are encouraged to work within the council timeline; however, the ceremony time should not dictate whether or not a girl is able to earn her Girl Scout Gold or Silver Award. She can be honored in a local ceremony or come back for the council-wide ceremony the next year. Final reports are due March 1, 2011 to be included in the River Valleys 2011 Gold and Silver Award Ceremony.

We really want to help raise money for our local hospital because someone in our troop is sick. Can we do this?

You need to follow national and council guidelines for fund raising. You cannot raise money for another organization according to GSUSA policy. However, you can volunteer for that organization. Instead of marching in a walkathon, what about volunteering to help with registration or making sure everyone has water and a snack along the route? It is really important that you consult the Council Reference Guide and *Safety-Wise* for troop money-earning guidelines.

If a girl starts working on her Take Action project and moves; can she still earn her award?
Councils and Overseas Committees are encouraged to be flexible to work and serve the girls' best interests. If a girl moves, she should work with her council and/or Overseas Committees to complete the project.

Do we need a different set of requirements for girls with disabilities to earn the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?

No. The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are done to the best of a girl's ability. There is no need to have special requirements for girls with disabilities — encourage flexibility and the recruitment of advisors that can work with the girl individually.

Specific questions related to the Girl Scout Gold Award

Who can earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?

A girl must be a registered Girl Scout Senior or Girl Scout Ambassador.

Can individually registered girl members or Juliettes earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?

Any girl, who meets the grade-level and membership requirements, can work on her Girl Scout Gold Award.

Can a girl earn the Girl Scout Gold Award even if she hasn't been in Girl Scouts very long?

Yes! She just needs to be a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador to begin her Gold Award project.

Does a Senior or Ambassador need to do the two journeys in any particular order?

No. She can complete either two Girl Scout Senior level journeys, two Girl Scout Ambassador level journeys or one of each.

What is the difference between a troop volunteer and a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor in the Girl Scout Gold Award process? Do girls need both?

A Troop Volunteer is the adult who works with an ongoing troop or group. Once a girl identifies her issue, the troop volunteer might help her identify a person in the community who could be a great project advisor.

A Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor is a volunteer that guides a girl as she takes her project from the planning stage to implementation. The project advisor is not a girl's parent or a Girl Scout troop volunteer. The project advisor is typically someone from the community who is knowledgeable about the issue and who can provide guidance, experience and expertise along the way.

Why can't a parent be a Girl Scout Gold Award Project Advisor?

Girls are encouraged to connect with their community when earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. That means working with a project advisor who is not her parent.

At what point should a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor be identified?

The project advisor should be identified in the planning phase before the Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal is turned in to the council. The project advisor expands the network of adults and provides expertise for a girl's project. If a girl has an idea before

she starts any work on her Girl Scout Gold Award, she might want to identify her project advisor from the very beginning.

What if a girl is 18 and graduating? Can she complete her project when she is in college?
A girl has until the end of the Girl Scout membership year (September 30th) after graduation from high school to submit her final paperwork.

What is the role of the council's Girl Scout Gold Award committee?
Girl Scout Gold Award Committees are typically comprised of community members, educators, key volunteers and young women who have earned their Girl Scout Gold Award. The Committee works with designated council staff.

The committee's role is to ensure that girls' projects meet the national guidelines. The committee reviews the Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal, makes recommendations for project development and resources, reads the final report, and approves the project. If a girl's project has not yet achieved its goals, the committee provides suggestions and tips to help her develop a high quality Gold Award project.