

Girl Scout Volunteer Orientation Self Study

Welcome to Girl Scouting. We are delighted that you are interested in volunteering with the Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys. You will be thrilled, amazed, and honored at the difference you can make in a girl's life whether you provide direct or indirect service.

This is your first close-up view of the Girl Scout organization. It is designed to introduce you to Girl Scouting and the many rewarding opportunities that Girl Scouting offers girls and adults.

This volunteer orientation integrates you, a new volunteer, into the council environment and its ways of work and, because the basic program content of the orientation is standardized, the messages shared throughout the council and nationally will be consistent.

Materials Needed

In order to work through the activities in this self study, you will need:

- Self study packet
- Pencil or pen

Course Objective

After completing this self study, you will be able to:

- Explain the history of Girl Scouting and appreciate Juliette Gordon Low as a role model.
- Explain the relationship of Girl Scouts of the USA within the worldwide Girl Scout movement.
- Describe Girl Scout pathways as ways girls and adults participate in Girl Scouts.
- Appreciate the resources available to Girl Scouts of the USA and River Valleys volunteers.
- Explain the meaning of the three keys and processes of the Girls Scout Leadership Experience.
- Describe the benefits of being a Girl Scout.

Course Completion

It is recommended that you complete the Girl Scout Volunteer Orientation followed by a Fast Start meeting and then Leadership Essentials for New Leaders (also available as a self study). Throughout this self study, there will be questions for reflection. These are for your use only and need not be returned.

If you haven't done so already, you must register as a member of Girl Scouts of the USA and complete an online background check. The online background check may be accessed at www.girlscoutsrv.org.

Complete and return this page of the self study along with the evaluation on page 11 to River Valleys to record your completion of your Girl Scout Volunteer Orientation.

Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys
400 Robert St. S.
St. Paul, MN 55107
Attention: Adult Development Department

Signature _____ Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home) _____

Service Unit _____

Introduction to the History of Girl Scouts

Our founder, Juliette Gordon Low, was born on October 31, 1860, in Savannah, Georgia. "Daisy," as she was affectionately called by family and friends, was the second of six children of William and Eleanor Gordon. She had a happy childhood and developed a life long interest in the arts. She had many pets and was also known for her great sense of humor.

In her teens, Daisy attended school in Virginia and New York City. She then traveled extensively in the United States and Europe.

On December 21, 1886 Juliette married William Low, a wealthy Englishman, at Christ Church in Savannah, Georgia. The couple moved to England and Juliette continued her travels and divided her time between England and America. Before her marriage, Juliette had suffered from chronic ear infections. She had lost most of her hearing in one ear because of improper treatment. At her wedding she lost hearing in her other ear after a grain of good-luck rice thrown at the event lodged in her ear, puncturing the eardrum and resulting in an infection and total loss of hearing in that ear.

During the Spanish-American War, Juliette came back to America to aid in the war effort. She helped her mother organize a hospital for wounded soldiers returning from Cuba. At the end of the war, Juliette returned to England to a disintegrating marriage. The Lows were separated at the time of her husband's death in 1905.

Juliette Gordon Low then spent several years searching for something useful to do with her life. She met Sir Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, and became interested in the new youth movement.

Less than a year later, she returned to the United States and made her historic telephone call to a friend saying, "I've got something for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and we're going to start it tonight!" On March 12, 1912, Juliette Low gathered 18 girls to register the first troop of American Girl Guides. The name of the organization was changed to Girl Scouts the following year.

Juliette brought girls of all backgrounds into the out-of-doors, giving them the opportunity to develop self-reliance and resourcefulness. She encouraged girls to prepare for traditional homemaking and for possible future roles as professional women—in the arts, sciences and business and for active citizenship outside the home. Girl Scouting welcomed girls with disabilities at a time when they were excluded from many other activities.

From the original 18 girls, Girl Scouting has grown to 3.7 million members. Girl Scouts is the largest educational organization for girls in the world and has influenced the more than 50 million girls, women, and men who have belonged to it.

Juliette Gordon Low accumulated admirers and friends of all ages, nationalities, and walks of life. She died at her Savannah, Georgia, home on January 17, 1927.

More information on Juliette Gordon Low can be found at www.girlscouts.org.

About Girl Scouts

Who can join Girl Scouts? All girls in grades K -12 and adults who accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law and have paid the annual membership dues may join Girl Scouts. To encourage participation, Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys budgets money to help girls and adults who need financial assistance grants. Girl Scouts values diversity and inclusiveness and does not discriminate on any basics.

The Girl Scout Mission

The Girl Scout mission is “Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.”

We have a proud history of diversity, partnership, and community service. Our Girl Scout mission clearly defines our purpose. Who inspired you or influenced you to turn your life around? What did it mean to you? What do you think it would mean to girls today? The girls in our community need you. As a Girl Scout volunteer you will help them discover their dreams and make the world a better place.

The Girl Scout Promise

The Girl Scout Promise, shown below, is the way girls agree to act everyday toward one and other and the people surrounding them. The promise helps you guide decisions and actions as you work with girls, helping each to discover her best self. The motivating force in Girl Scouts is spiritual. The ways members identify and fulfill their spiritual beliefs is personal and private. Girl Scouts may substitute another word for God based on their spiritual beliefs.

On my honor I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
and to live by the Girl Scout Law.

**The word God can be interpreted in a number of ways depending on one’s spiritual beliefs. When reciting the Girl Scout Promise, it is ok to replace the word ”God” with whatever word your spiritual beliefs dictate.*

The Girl Scout Law

The Girl Scout Law, listed below, outlines a way to treat one and other and the environment. The Girl Scout Law lies at the root of everything girls do in Girl Scouting.

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Girl Scouting is Global

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). The mission of WAGGGS, which represents 144 member countries, is aligned with our own – to enable girls and young women to develop to their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world. More information regarding WAGGGS can be found at www.waggsworld.org. USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO) serves thousands of girls living abroad. GSUSA provides more information regarding USAGSO at www.girlscouts.org.

The Girl Scout Movement

Girls Scouts has served 50 million girls since 1912. GSUSA is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls, with 3.6 million girls and adults participating worldwide. We are the leading authority on girl's healthy development and we build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. Girl Scouting provides a physically and emotionally safe place for girls. We depend on volunteers who reflect the national population. Girl Scouting continually evolves to meet the needs of each generation of girls and adults.



Checking In

1. In what ways can you help the organization fulfill its mission?

2. Which aspects of the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law inspire you the most? Why?

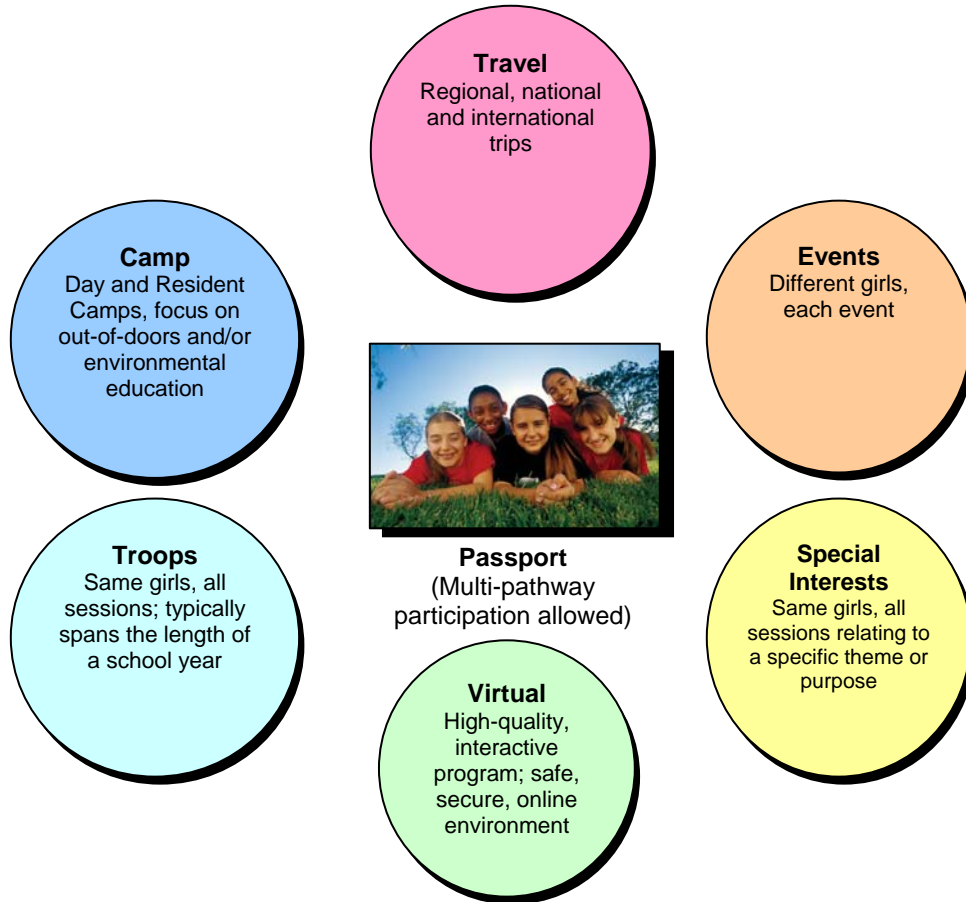
Girl Scout Pathways

Getting Started in the Girl Scout Program

Girl Scout Pathways are the flexible ways girls and adults participate in Girl Scouting. The flexibility of pathways ensures that all girls and adults can participate in Girl Scouting the way she or he desires.

How can I participate?

A Girl Scout program can be as unique as each girl member. Many girls may choose to participate in events, travel or develop a special interest. Many girls will join a troop to share their scouting experience with others. Many girls will explore scouting and technology. There are many ways to experience Girl Scouting.



How much time do I need to volunteer as a Girl Scout?

Hours, days, weekends, weeks, months, years?

Schedules are flexible and you have many opportunities to gain new skills, make new friends and enjoy new experiences.

We value your skills!

As a Girl Scout volunteer you have so much to contribute. Use your skills to make a difference.

- Build partnerships
- Select sites for meetings and events
- Provide administrative support
- Serve as a coach
- Use your life skills

Support

How will I be supported?

The responsibility of volunteering sometimes seems to be a big commitment. Whatever role you choose will be supported by River Valleys and other volunteers in your area. You can count on...

- Guidance and direction
- Training when you need it
- Recognition for your efforts
- Opportunities for new assignments

Girl Scouts does appreciate the time and efforts and talents of its volunteers. Two of the benefits of being a Girl Scout volunteer are the flexibility of when and how you volunteer and the opportunity to learn and grow from a variety of volunteer opportunities. With our support you can discover new opportunities.

Girl Scout Councils

Girl Scout councils are chartered by GSUSA to deliver the Girl Scout program to girls. Councils are responsible for carrying out Girl Scout program activities, for recruiting and supporting volunteers, governing and managing Girl Scouting within their jurisdiction, securing funds for council expenses, and promoting Girl Scouting within their community.

Policies and Procedures

The Leader's Digest Blue Book of Basic Documents includes all of the basic documents of GSUSA and is the foundation for the work of all Girl Scout councils. It includes the constitution and bylaws of GSUSA as well as the policies and procedures on endorsement, fundraising, marketing, and other issues. It is in the new leader welcome kit, available at the service center, or upon request at www.girlscouts.org.

What about safety?

Safety-Wise is a guidebook on safe practices for Girl Scout activities. This resource is especially important for volunteers who work directly with girls. River Valleys includes a *Safety-Wise* book in each troop welcome kit or at the service center.



Girl Scout Research

The Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI), a department within GSUSA, collaborates with colleagues, councils, and outside collaborators to address the complex and everyday need of girls. The GSRI conducts outcomes measurement and program development research and publishes original research.

- *Transforming Leadership*

Transforming Leadership, clearly defines the specific outcomes of the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience for girls. The outcomes are identified in developmentally appropriate ways for each grade level, with examples of measurable signs that show whether girls are progressing. *Transforming Leadership* is available in the River Valleys shop or as an online pdf at www.girlscoutsrv.org or www.girlscouts.org.

The following publications are available as an online pdf at www.girlscouts.org.

- *Exploring Girls' Leadership*

The goal of this publication is for youth development organizations to better understand the state of the leadership field and translate theory into action.

- *Feeling Safe*

Explores girls' definition of safety and coping strategies for girls in unsafe situations.

- *The New Normal*

Sheds light on the childhood obesity crisis by asking girls directly how they define health and what motivates them to lead a healthier lifestyle.

- *The Net Effect*

Examines trend in the Internet habits of girls ages 13-18, with advice on how parents and other adults can empower girls to have safe, positive online experiences.

- *Weighing In*

Addresses various underlying causes leading to the epidemic of obesity and being overweight among children and adolescents.

More Information on Girl Scouts

You might want more information about Girl Scouts. These resources might just answer a few of your remaining questions.

www.girlscouts.org
www.gogirlsonly.org
goshop.girlscouts.org

www.girlscoutsv.org
www.girlscoutcookies.org



Checking In

1. What are some of the issues that girls face growing up?

2. If you were looking back at your volunteer experience in Girl Scouting how would you like to remember it?

Program

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

The new Girl Scout Leadership Experience is the heart and soul of Girl Scouting.

Since its founding in 1912, GSUSA has continuously developed, adapted, and provided program activities so that girls would have the leadership skills necessary to succeed.

Program activities are based on the promise and law and are organized around the three keys to leadership:

Discover: Girls understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world.

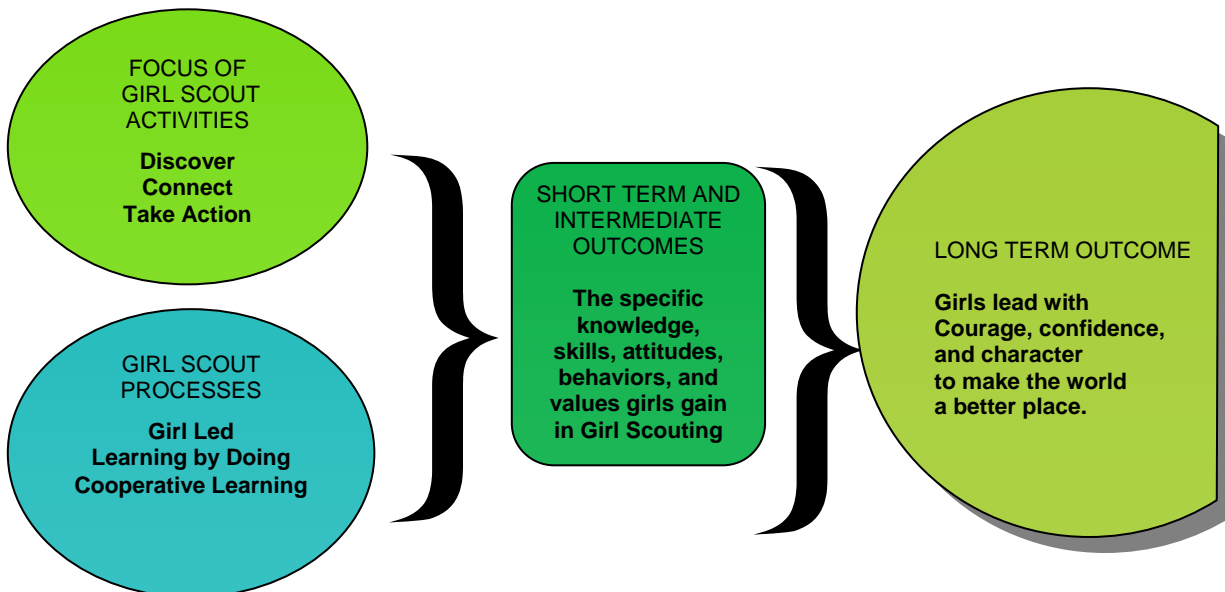
Connect: Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.

Take Action: Girls act to make the world a better place.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is not just about what girls do but how they accomplish their activities. The how reflects the processes: girl-led, learning by doing and cooperative learning. This is what makes Girl Scouts unique and drives the quality of each girl's experience. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience model helps us to picture how activities and programming are carried out.

The Leadership Model

Girls are engaged in playing a critical role as decision-makers in planning and implementing their activities. As part of the girl-adult partnership, volunteers can use this process to strengthen girls' empowerment and decision-making role in activities.



The Three Keys to Leadership

The Girl Scout program has specific outcomes that are based on the three keys to leadership. Girls will *Discover, Connect and Take Action*. The outcomes of this model create the benefits the girls will gain through their participation in activities. As girls venture through leadership experiences, adults will be able to see the outcomes or benefits that the girls have achieved.

Discover Outcomes for Girls

- Girls develop a strong sense of self.
- Girls develop positive values.
- Girls gain practical life skills.
- Girls seek challenges in the world.
- Girls develop critical thinking.

Connect Outcomes for Girls

- Girls develop healthy relationships.
- Girls promote cooperation and team building.
- Girls can resolve conflicts.
- Girls advance diversity in a multicultural world.
- Girls feel connected to their communities, locally and globally.

Take Action Outcomes for Girls

- Girls can identify community needs.
- Girls are resourceful problem solvers.
- Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally.
- Girls educate and inspire others to act.
- Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.

Girl Scout Processes

Girl Led where girls are engaged in playing a critical role as decision makers in the planning and implementation of their activities. As part of a girl-adult partnership, volunteers can use this process to strengthen girls’ empowerment and decision-making roles in activities.

Learning by Doing is a “hands-on” learning process that engages girls in continuous cycles of action and reflection resulting in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills.

Cooperative Learning takes place when all members of a group are working toward a common goal. Working together in all-girl environments encourages girls to feel powerful, emotionally and physically safe, and to experience a sense of belonging even in the most diverse groups.

Girl Scout Membership Levels

The Girl Scout membership levels span from Kindergarten to the twelfth grade. As girls progress through each level their leadership role increases and the adult leadership role decreases. As girls venture through leadership experiences, adults will be able to see the outcomes, or benefits, that the girls have achieved.

Name	Grade level
Girl Scout Daisy	K-1
Girl Scout Brownie	2-3
Girl Scout Junior	4-5
Girl Scout Cadette	5-6
Girl Scout Senior	9-10
Girl Scout Ambassador	11-12



Checking In

1. Keeping in mind the three leadership keys – Discover, Connect, Take Action – how can you help girls to achieve their leadership aspirations?

2. How can you use the three Girl Scout processes – girl led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning in your volunteer role?

3. List three ways you would enjoy being involved in Girl Scouts. Include the reasons why.

Conclusion

Our Future

Today's girls need Girl Scouting more than ever. Young women can transform the world when given the opportunity and you are helping young women on the road to transformation. The future of Girl Scouting depends on you! Volunteers keep the organization vibrant, progressive, and growing. Thank you.

GSUSA Volunteer Orientation Self Study Evaluation

Course: GSUSA Volunteer Orientation Self Study	
Date:	Service Unit:

How prepared do you feel to begin your role as a member of Girl Scouts of the USA?

Very prepared 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Not prepared

Please rate this training session in the following areas. If you wish, you may add comments.
5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree.

Area	Rating	Comment
Through this training, I am now able to ...		
Explain the history of Girl Scouting and appreciate Juliette Gordon Low as a role model.	5 4 3 2 1	
Explain the relationship of Girl Scouts of the USA within the worldwide Girl Scout movement.	5 4 3 2 1	
Describe Girl Scout pathways as ways girls and adults participate in Girl Scouts.	5 4 3 2 1	
Appreciate the resources available to Girl Scouts of the USA and River Valleys volunteers.	5 4 3 2 1	
Explain the meaning of the three keys and processes of the Girls Scout Leadership Experience.	5 4 3 2 1	
Describe the benefits of being a Girl Scout.	5 4 3 2 1	

The two most useful things I learned from this training session are:

One suggestion that would improve this training session is:

Thank you for volunteering with Girl Scouts.