

New Troop Leadership Tip: Girl Led!

Girl Scouting is girl led.

This means the girls should be in control of their Girl Scout experience.

We know sometimes this can make for a less than organized experience, but that's okay! Although it may be hard to sit back and let the girls do things themselves when you could do it much more quickly and efficiently, it's vital to the girls that they be allowed to make decisions as well as safe mistakes. This allows girls to learn and begin to grow their leadership.

We also know that girls of different age levels are capable of different levels of leadership. For Daisies and Brownies, you may give girls a few options to choose from, but as they grow, gain experience, and learn responsibility you can begin to step back and leave more of the decision making to the girls.

“Tell me and I’ll forget, show me and I’ll remember, involve me and I’ll understand.”

As you can see, the leadership ladder begins with the Daisy being present, but the volunteer is in the principal role. She has a say and does make the decisions but the adult volunteer guides those decisions. As the Girl Scout gets older, she starts to take a more influential role in the leadership of the troop and the adult volunteer steps back to allow her to lead. By the time the Girl Scout is in her teens, she is taking an ever more prevailing role and the adult volunteer steps back either further. She never leaves completely, remaining there to advise, lend a hand when necessary, and ensure the girls' safety and well-being.

Ambassadors



Seniors



Cadettes



Juniors



Brownies



Daisies



Let's look at a couple of examples:

The girls are choosing the year's activities.

Daisies can list the things they would like to do, although they may need some prompting to start generating ideas. They may have some interesting, off-the-wall suggestions, and that's okay! Help them make those ideas more practical by asking guided questions.

Brownies can use the program materials to brainstorm ideas, but should also be encouraged to think outside the box. Talk through their ideas to help them get an idea of what's possible (time-wise, budget-wise, etc.) and to help them reach consensus.

Juniors and above are capable of brainstorming lots of ideas and narrowing them down without much prompting if you give them access to the right resources. Let them research Safety Activity Checkpoints, the cost of items, and anything else that may affect the experience they'd like to have.

The girls are planning a camping trip.

Daisies and Brownies are capable of choosing from a small set of options of places to go camping and from a list of menu items for meals on their trip.

Juniors are capable of researching options for their camping location, menu items, and even hosting the activities of the camping trip!

Cadettes and above are capable of planning and budgeting the camping trip all on their own! Volunteers need to check in with the girls to ensure they have thoroughly researched their options and followed Safety Activity Checkpoints.



Six Steps to Girl Led Planning:

1. Plan in Advance

The level of planning will depend on the age level of the girls. For Daisies, leaders should determine all of the possibilities and have a solid plan. When leading older girls, you can research options for them to explore, just don't do the exploring for them.

2. Ask the Girls

Ask the girls to brainstorm ideas; there are never any wrong answers here. Let the girls' imaginations and creativity take the lead!

3. Use their Ideas to Make a Plan

Using a consensus, go through the girls' ideas and make a plan for the year.

4. Inform Other Adults

Once the plan is laid out, make sure all other adult volunteers and parents are in the loop. This will ensure that everyone is on board when it comes time to put the plan to action.

5. Use the Plan

Follow the plan as best as you can. Remember that when working with girls, it will not always be perfect! Encourage their hard work and allow for them to make mistakes. By following their plan, girls will learn and become more independent in the future.

6. Evaluate the Activity

Evaluating is important because it allows the girls to share ideas and gain meaning from their experience. If they understand what they learned, it can be applied to the next activity they plan.