

Girl Planning (From: Girl Scouts Heart of Central California)

As a leader, it may seem easier for you to make plans first, then consult with your girls, but girl-adult planning, the cornerstone of Girl Scouting, is too valuable a step to skip. Girl planning helps girls feel involved and provides them more opportunities to become responsible and self-reliant. They learn how to plan, make decisions democratically, and develop leadership and interpersonal skills.

Partnering Tips

1. Recognize the amount of time needed for planning.

Set aside time at each meeting to plan special trips, to decide which Try-Its or Badges to work on, or to set money earning goals.

2. Take into account the maturity level of the girls in your group as you guide decision-making.

Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies can participate in the decision-making process through the use of the Girl Scout circle. All Girl Scouts can be given increasing responsibility within the troop. For example girls ages 8-11 can be making their own troop goals while girls ages 11-14 can plan all meetings and activities.

3. Be sure that all girls get a chance to be part of the planning.

It's easy to forget about the quiet girls when a couple of outgoing girls monopolize the conversation. Make it a practice for everyone to share at least one idea when planning. Take votes so that every person counts. Ask girls to pair up to discuss their ideas. This makes it easier for a shy child to voice her opinion.

4. Help other adults plan with girls not for them.

Parents and volunteers should understand that girl-adult partnership is a cornerstone of Girl Scouting. If you need to, give the other troop adults a separate task or topic to discuss, preferably in another room, so the planning is largely girl centered.

How do I do it?

Your attitude is the single most important factor in making girl planning a growing experience for the girls! Consider these questions:

Do I believe in the girls' ability to plan and carry out?

Can I listen to their opinions and be guided by them?

Can I let girls make a mistake in order to learn?

Do I possess initiative and encourage initiative in others?

Can I remember that Girl Scouting is for girls and that their well-being comes first?

If you can answer YES, good! You are ready to begin.

First: Get their attention! Try:

- **The hand signal:** Make a game of it. (Up-Quiet! Down-make noise!)
- **Bandana:** Tie a knot in a bandana, throw it in the air-make noise. When it drops– quiet.
- **A circle of silence:** Have the first girl hold the end of a ball of yarn, and pass it on. As the yarn unravels, each girl becomes silent as she holds a piece of the yarn.

Second: Have the girls brainstorm. Try:

- Helping the girls explore activities in their handbooks and insignia books.
- Putting up a poster board. As the girls voice what they want to do, write down their ideas.
- Dividing into patrols and having them make a list of things they'd like to do. Making a dream box and letting each girl write her own suggestions.
When the brainstorming session ends, help the girls set priorities, and establish a calendar of activities and events for the year using the girls' ideas.

Tips for Challenges

- **The overwhelmer**
She jumps up and down. She waves her hand in front of your nose and shouts.
 - **She needs:**
 - Adult recognition. She wants your attention.
 - Acknowledgement. The more you resist, the harder she'll try.
 - Always sit next to her. When she overwhelms you, put your arm around her. You can call on someone else. Say "let's let Susie do it this time."
 - Give her something specific to do before an activity. Let her hold something.
- **The negative girl or group She/they need choices.**
 - Ask yourself is this what they want to do? Can I give up what I've planned and do something else?
 - Try saying "Okay! I'm willing to do something else. What will it be?" and "Let's change moods first!"
- **Cliques and other problems**
 - First talk about it.
 - Sit in a circle. Have each girl, in turn, complete the sentence "Right now I feel..." Then the sentence (each in turn) "I can help by..." then the sentence (each in turn) "Next time I will..."
 - Write down the "Next time I will..." sentences on a large piece of paper. Now make a troop agreement about it. Keep it posted.

- Remember that... It is important to acknowledge the problem. Be consistent with their answers.
- Also try... Have each girl sit between two girls they don't know well. Having each girl pick a friend, then they pick someone they don't know well.
- **A quiet group**
 - Try... Start a list for them. "Here are some things we can do. Out of these, what would you like to do?"
 - Maybe they are shy. K them to write down their suggestions. Later share them with the group.
 - Try some mixer games to help them feel comfortable in a group.
- **The "I can't-er" or the "I don't know-er"**
 - Don't argue with her. Try saying "Oh-oh, here comes the I can. Let's get them all out." Have them list her/their "I can'ts" and the reasons why they can't.
 - Listen. Maybe she really can't, and you can help. Then, try saying, "But if you could what would it be like?" If she says "I don't know" ask her to imagine as many "coulds", or to draw a picture of a "could".
 - Always respond to an "I can't-er" with your full attention. Sit down so that you are at eye level. Ask, "and if you could what would it be like?" Help her to see alternatives.

Remember...

It is okay to be shy. Maybe the "I can'ters" are shy. Maybe "gigglers" are shy.

Try... Calling her by name when you talk. Helping her find a friend. Giving her a special, particular task. Letting her know "I'm glad you are here."

When you are having a problem, ask yourself:

Are they doing what they want to do, or what I/we want them to do? Do they really know what is expected of them? Have we planned too much?

Finally...

Don't judge yourself by the personality of the group. Tell them how you feel. Ask them for their help. Have fun!