

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Program

The Basics

Q: What is the Girl Scout Leadership Experience?

A: The Girl Scout Leadership Experience engages girls in discovering themselves, connecting with others, and taking action to make the world a better place.

Q: What are the three keys to leadership and how do they relate to the Leadership model?

A: Discover, Connect, and Take Action. These three keys are defined as:

- **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.

In Girl Scouting, Discover+Connect+Take Action=Leadership. All Girl Scout experiences are intentionally designed to tie to one or more of the 15 national leadership outcomes, or benefits, categorized under the three keys to leadership. The three keys to leadership replace Girl Scouting's "four program goals."

Q: What are the Girl Scout processes?

A: In Girl Scouting, it's not just "what girls do" (activities), but "how" (processes) they do them (activities). When used together, these processes—Girl Led, Cooperative Learning, and Learning by Doing—ensure the quality and promote the fun and friendship so integral to Girl Scouting. Here's how Girl Scouts defines these processes:

- **Girl Led:** Girl led is just what it sounds like—girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how, and why of their activities. They lead the planning and decision-making as much as possible. This ensures that girls are engaged in their learning and experience leadership opportunities as they prepare to become active participants in their local and global communities.
- **Learning by Doing:** A hands-on learning process that engages girls in continuous cycles of action and reflection that result in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills. As they participate in meaningful activities and then reflect on them, girls get to explore their own questions, discover answers, gain new skills, and share ideas and observations with others. Throughout the process, it's important for girls to be able to connect their experiences to their lives and apply what they have learned to their future experiences.

- **Cooperative Learning:** Through cooperative learning, girls work together toward shared goals in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration that encourages the sharing of skills, knowledge, and learning. Working together in all-girl environments also encourages girls to feel powerful and emotionally and physically safe, and it allows them to experience a sense of belonging even in the most diverse groups.

Books

Q: What are the books for girls in the first series of leadership journeys?

A: The first books for girls are all part of the *It's Your World—Change It!* series of leadership journeys. This series features one new book for girls at each grade level in Girl Scouting:

Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden

Brownie Quest

Agent of Change (for Juniors)

aMAZE (for Cadettes)

GIRLtopia: Toward an Ideal World for Girls (for Seniors)

Your Voice, Your World: The Power of Advocacy (for Ambassadors)

At every grade level, these books place great emphasis on inviting girls to “Take Action” on an issue they care about. The books also contain stories, inspirational material, Girl Scout history, traditions and values, facts and games, and open spaces for girls to fill in their own ideas and memories.

“How to” books have been created for adults corresponding to each of the girl books. These guides for adult volunteers offer plenty of support, including sample sessions to tailor with girls, to carry out the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Q: When will the first journeys be available?

A: All girl and adult books in the *It's Your World—Change It!* series are slated to be off the press in summer 2008.

Q: How many other journeys will be developed and when will they be available?

A: There will be about three journeys for every grade level by 2010. A second journey series will roll out in 2009, and the third in 2010. Girls at each level will be able to choose the journey that most interests them or do them all.

Q: Will the journeys be translated into Spanish?

A: Yes. Work will begin while the English language books are at the printer this spring and will require several months to ensure accurate and relevant translation of the journeys. The Daisy, Brownie, and Junior journeys (girl and adult books) will be translated first, and are slated for release by the end of October 2008. The materials for the upper grade levels will follow.

Q: How much will the books cost?

Girl Scouts of the USA is aware of the importance of being cost-conscious and has worked to provide excellent value. The cost will be finalized very shortly. It is important that every girl has her own book to fully experience the journey.

Q: What will happen to existing badge books, handbooks, and STUDIO 2B books?

These books remain available and viable Girl Scout resources. Girls may continue using them based on their interests.

As Girl Scouting phases in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, we will be determining which resources might still be needed to supplement the new approach between 2008 and 2010, or which resources might be needed beyond 2010. Information will be provided with advance notice as decisions are made throughout the transition period. Girls will always have a chance to complete existing plans and transition to new materials.

Awards

Q: What new awards can girls earn with the *It's Your World-Change It!* journeys?

A: Girl Scouts at each of the six grade levels have a chance to earn new official awards as they complete steps along the journey. The awards are designed to be worn on the Girl Scout uniform. Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, and Cadettes have the chance to earn several badges along the journey. Seniors and Ambassadors can mark the completion of their journey with a pin or badge.

The steps for earning the awards are clearly explained in the “how-to” books for volunteers created for each journey. Girls have information about the awards in their books, too. The journey books for girls and adults also have suggested reflection and ceremony ideas related to earning the awards. The goal is to provide opportunities for girls to fully understand the achievement and growth the awards represent.

Q: Can girls still earn badges, apart from journeys?

A: Girls are welcome to continue choosing and earning badges that represent their varied interests. Earning badges is an important tradition in Girl Scouting and it is here to stay! As adults and girls become more familiar with the elements of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, they will even be able to see how the Discover, Connect, and Take Action leadership keys can be integrated into earning badges.

Of course, no matter what activities girls do in Girl Scouting, the experience is always best when it incorporates the Girl Scout processes: Girl Led, Learning by Doing, and Cooperative Learning.

Q: What is the future of badges?

A: Over the next several years, Girl Scouts of the USA will be updating some badges to ensure the learning experiences tie to the national leadership outcomes intended for girls. As new or refreshed badges become available and “old” badges are phased out, girls will have time to transition. They will not “lose out” on activities they have begun or planned.

Girl Scout members have expressed interest in the availability of badges online and GSUSA is considering and analyzing this possibility. Further information will be available in 2009.

Q: What about local badge activities?

A: Locally created badge activities remain an important way to respond to the interests and needs of girls. By using the Leadership Experience as the “engine” for all programming, Girl Scout councils will be able to begin adjusting local offerings, purposefully planning them based on the leadership outcomes intended for girls.

Q: How do the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards fit into the Girl Scout Leadership Experience?

A: Girl Scouts of the USA is working to update the requirements for earning the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards and new guidelines will be available online in spring 2009. During the transition years (2008-2010), girls may continue earning the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards based on existing standards.

Q: How can Girl Scout councils prepare for the future of the Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards?

A: Girl Scout communities eager to begin planning for the updated approach to the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards prior to spring 2009 may note the following:

Grade Levels for Earning the Awards

Bronze Award:	Earned by Juniors	(4 th -5 th grade)
Silver Award:	Earned by Cadettes	(6 th -8 th grade)
Gold Award:	Earned by Seniors or Ambassadors	(9 th -12 th grade)

Anticipated Pre-Requisite Steps

The *It's Your World-Change It!* journeys have been intentionally designed to engage girls in a critical thinking process related to identifying and researching issues they care about, developing community networks, and creating and implementing plans to take action. Upon completion of the journeys, girls will be prepared to carry out substantial award projects. Based on this, Girl Scouts of the USA anticipates that when girls complete the journeys in this series, they will have completed the prerequisites, at the relevant grade levels, for Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award projects and ultimately earn the awards.

Options for the 2008-2009 Membership Year:

- Girls may earn the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards following *existing* guidelines.

OR

- Girls may complete a journey and, upon release of the new guidelines in spring 2009, begin work toward the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award.

Uniforms

The National Board of Directors approved a new uniform policy, to begin in fall 2008. Based on this policy, girls at each level will have one official uniform item (e.g., tunic, vest, sash) so they can display the pins and badges they earn. Girl Scout Juniors and older program age groups will wear their vests and sashes with white shirts and khaki pants, making it easier for more girls than ever before to show their pride as Girl Scouts. Daisies and Brownies may also wear “khaki and white” or choose to wear full uniform ensembles for their age level. The Daisy tunic remains available. There will also be a variety of casual uniform components available for those times when official dress uniform is not required.

Adult uniforms will consist of a scarf worn with the membership pins for women and a tie for men. The scarf/tie and membership pins will be worn with navy blue business attire.

Grade Level Specifics

Q: Is there enough program content to provide a meaningful experience for Daisies?

A: Adults guiding Daisies are encouraged to follow the many tips and suggestions in the “how-to” adult guide that accompanies the journey. They will quickly find that with a little imagination, this Daisy journey can extend far beyond the six sample sessions provided in the book. As new journeys continue to be developed, Girl Scout Daisies can continue using existing Daisy resources and earn Daisy Petals, if they choose.

Beginning in fall 2008, in addition to the journeys, Daisies will have opportunities to participate in product sale program activities. Guidelines for adults and supplemental program activities for Daisies will be available online in summer 2008.

Q: What will be special for the new Ambassador level? How will girls bridge?

A: The journey for Ambassadors, *Your Voice, Your World: The Power of Advocacy*, engages Ambassadors in an advocacy experience. When they have completed the steps to advocacy, they will earn the new Advocate Award created especially for girls at this level. Ambassadors are encouraged to “pass on” to younger girls some of what they learn on their journey.. A bridging award will be available for Ambassadors in spring 2009, and girls who begin the Ambassador level in fall 2008 may earn this award retroactively.

New Membership Levels

Q: What are the new grade levels?

A: The National Board of Directors approved these grade levels in 2006 to provide increased differentiation and advancement as girls experience Girl Scouting. The new levels are effective beginning in fall 2008. Depending on local needs, councils may transition to these categories up until fall 2010.

- Girl Scout Daisies
(Grades K-1)

- Girl Scout Brownies
(Grades 2-3)
- Girl Scout Juniors
(Grades 4-5)
- Girl Scout Cadettes
(Grades 6-8)
- Girl Scout Seniors
(Grades 9-10)
- Girl Scout Ambassadors
(Grades 11-12)

Q: What changes will be made to the membership registration forms?

Currently, the dues summary registration form asks for “one grade level that represents the majority of the girls registering now” and displays the current grade levels. These categories have been changed to reflect the new levels for the 2008/2009 membership year.

Q: How will home-schooled or independently registered Girl Scouts use the journey materials?

A: Girl Scouts who are on their own—and the adults who guide them—are encouraged to network with other Girl Scouts in their communities. One of our three critical processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is cooperative learning. Sharing some of the discussions and experiences with others will enrich the journey and provide girls with opportunities to increase team-building and networking skills.

Q: How will multilevel groups use the journeys?

A: Let’s use *It’s Your World-Change It!* series as an example. Girls at every level will be engaged in taking action. Taking action provides a unifying theme for multigrade level groups so girls at multiple grade levels can have their own grade-appropriate journey, yet they will be able to support each other in accomplishing goals. All the journeys encourage girls to share or “pass forward” some of what they are learning and experiencing with other girls. Multigrade groups offer a wonderful setting for this to happen.

Outcomes and Transforming Leadership

Q: What is *Transforming Leadership*?

A: *Transforming Leadership* is a GSUSA publication that defines the specific outcomes (benefits) of the new Girl Scout Leadership Experience for girls. The book describes the outcomes for each of the six grade levels within Girl Scouting. The outcome is defined in developmentally appropriate ways for each grade level; examples of measurable signs that show whether girls are making progress are

provided as well. *Transforming Leadership* will help orient volunteers, staff, and the general public to the model underlying the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. It is the next step in Girl Scouting's effort to develop today's generation of girl leaders.

This is a pivotal time in the history of Girl Scouting. This new publication will serve as an essential resource now and into the future.

Q: How do I use the *Transforming Leadership* outcomes reference tables?

A: One way to think of the outcomes reference tables (beginning on page 23) is to view them as the Girl Scout equivalent of dictionary entries – reference tools to use as needed. These tables orient the Girl Scout community toward the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience outcomes and can be useful in selecting and implementing program, writing funding proposals, helping volunteers and parents understand the objectives of the Girl Scout program, as well as recruiting girls and volunteers.

For your convenience, the tables have been organized in two easy-to-use formats: the first set of tables “unpacks” each outcome across the six Girl Scout grade levels and the second set of tables shows all the outcomes by each specific Girl Scout grade level. The first set of tables is useful for showing progression across grade levels. The second set of tables will be useful to anyone working with a specific grade level.

The outcomes in *Transforming Leadership* apply to the new journeys, which will be released later this summer, as well as to existing Girl Scout program materials. The development of the new journeys was tied closely to these outcomes.

Q: What is the difference between outcomes and indicators/signs?

A: Outcomes describe general benefits (behavior, skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, condition, status, or other attributes) for participants as a result of involvement in the Girl Scout program. Outcomes are the *intended benefits* girls should reap as a result of the program. Indicators/signs are specific observable characteristics or changes that represent achievement of a specific outcome at each grade level. Page 17 of *Transforming Leadership* displays a guide to reading the tables. If you look at one of the reference tables, you will note the differences between outcomes—general descriptions of the intended benefits—and indicator/signs—what a girl would be doing, saying, or feeling if she had achieved the intended outcome that came as a result of her involvement in the Girl Scout program. Please note that indicators/signs in these tables are examples –you will be able to imagine others.

The Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI), in partnership with Girl Scout councils, is currently developing measurement tools using *Transforming Leadership* as a guide.

Q: I can think of more indicators/signs for each outcome than *Transforming Leadership* lists. What do I do now?

A: The indicators/signs included in *Transforming Leadership* offer a starting point. You will think of more indicators/signs that would capture the meaning of each outcome. The Girl Scout Research Institute is eager to hear from you, so please provide feedback and suggestions to gsresearch@girlscouts.org.

Q: Can we just take indicators on the tables and measure outcomes from them?

A: The signs of outcome achievement are *not* ready-to-use measurement tools, although they will inform our efforts in developing measurement tools (survey and interview questions, focus group discussion guides, observation checklists, etc.). Now that we have begun to chart the benefits of the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience and orient volunteers and staff to those benefits, the next step is to develop these types of measurement tools.

In spring 2008, the GSRI will pilot these instruments in collaboration with selected Girl Scout councils and an external research firm. Stay tuned for more exciting details.

Q: My council wants to bring its program offerings in line with the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Does that mean each of our program activities should achieve all 15 outcomes?

A: No single program activity is expected to target all 15 outcomes defined in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Over time, through accumulated experience, girls will reap the benefits described in *Transforming Leadership*. Achieving the mission -- Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character to make the world a better place -- is a long-term process.

Keep in mind the Girl Scout Leadership Experience has three keys to leadership: Discover, Connect, and Take Action. So it is important that program incorporates outcomes from each of the three leadership keys to be consistent with the new approach. It is equally important to incorporate the three Girl Scout processes: girl led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning.

Q: Are there other ways *Transforming Leadership* can assist our efforts?

A: Yes. Use the outcomes reference tables in *Transforming Leadership* when:

- Selecting and implementing Girl Scout program activities
- Writing a grant proposal
- Conducting adult learning
- Recruiting volunteers and girls
- And many others

Q: What are the next steps in terms of outcomes and measurement?

A: The GSRI is currently focusing on:

- Developing and piloting measurement tools that will capture the impact of the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience on girls. Initial measures will be shared by October 2008.
- Supporting councils' use of *Transforming Leadership* in day-to-day activities. Several kinds of support are being planned and a timeline for these will be shared at the Spring Conferences. By fall 2008 an online tool that walks readers through the use of *Transforming Leadership* will be available.

Q: How can councils communicate the success they are having in using *Transforming Leadership*?

A: Keep in touch with the Girl Scout Research Institute by e-mail: gsresearch@girlscouts.org. And remember to check the GSRI web site, www.girlscouts.org/research, as well as the OnLine Council Network (OCN) periodically for new developments. When you visit the GSRI web page, you can also subscribe to the GSRI e-newsletter, which will be delivered to you by e-mail periodically.

Volunteer Training

Q: How will we prepare volunteers for the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience?

A: GSUSA will be launching the following nationally consistent learning components to support volunteers working directly with girls:

- Volunteer Orientation e-Learning module (Spring 2008)
- Leadership Essentials course (Spring 2008)
- Troop (and other Pathways) packets (Spring 2009)

These three components, in conjunction with the *Guide for Adult Volunteers* which accompanies the girls' journey book, will provide volunteers with all they need to know to successfully work with girls. These components will replace the current New Leader Orientation, Leader Basics, and Age Level training. Troop (and other Pathways) packets will contain revised guidelines for operational and financial procedures as well as templates for council customization.

Q: Is GSUSA expecting councils to implement the Leadership Essentials course immediately, replacing our Age Level courses?

A: Although some councils may be ready to introduce the Leadership Essentials course for volunteers in fall 2008, we anticipate many councils will use the upcoming membership year as a time for testing and planning. By fall 2009, councils should be prepared to use the nationally produced volunteer learning components which will replace the current volunteer training modules.

Q: Will all volunteers have to take training again?

A: The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is exciting and new, and we want to ensure all girls have the opportunity to benefit. We urge you to ensure all volunteers working directly with girls complete the Leadership Essentials course and have a thorough understanding of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Q: Will there still be a role for trainers in a council?

A: Yes. We are shifting our focus from "training" to a much broader focus on "adult learning." In councils today many trainers are facilitating content. In moving to a Learning Support Team we see multiple roles including Adult Learning Facilitators and Coaches. Adult Learning Facilitators may facilitate content face to face or online. Coaches would provide ongoing support particularly to new volunteers, similar to the current Service Unit Consultant role in some councils.

Q: Will GSUSA be providing position descriptions and learning courses to support these new roles?

A: Absolutely. Position descriptions for Adult Learning Facilitators, Online Learning Facilitators, and Coaches will be completed by end of summer 2008.

The course Facilitating Adult Learning will be piloted in the summer 2008 and rolled out nationwide in spring 2009. This course will be offered at the council level and online. A guide to Facilitating Adult Learning will be developed and distributed simultaneously. The course is intended for the key staff and volunteers within a council who have volunteer development responsibilities. After completing the course they will be able to prepare those in all adult facilitation roles at the council. The guide will be given to all adults supporting Adult Learning and will include the basics about adult learners and how to facilitate that learning for adults. We will also be offering a course on facilitating online learning scheduled for spring 2009.

Q: Can our current trainers deliver the new Leadership Essentials course without being “re-trained our council”?

A: Yes. Trainers who completed the Instructor of Training Course would have participated in sessions on adult learning; therefore, they should be able to successfully deliver the new course.

Q: What is happening with adult recognitions?

The adult recognitions booklet is under revision. The pins will still be available until at least 2010 during this period of transition.