

# Letting Girls Take the Lead

*Why it's okay to lose control.*

The main feature of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is that Girl Scouting is girl led. This means the girls should be in control of all aspects of their Girl Scout experience. We know sometimes this results in a less than strictly organized experience, but that's okay. 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.

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*!

## **The girls want to help the local food bank.**

- Daisies and Brownies are capable of drafting a list of questions for an adult to ask the local food bank to get information for a food drive.
- Juniors are capable of calling the food bank to see what types of food they are in need of and organizing and advertising a food drive, such as a “Peanut Butter & Beans Food Drive.”
- Cadettes and above are capable of facilitating a food drive with multiple food banks’ needs in mind, delivering the food, and helping the food banks sort the donations.

Still unsure how to get the ball rolling? Here are some great opportunities for girls to plan their own experience:

**Choose Journeys and badges.** Use the "Cleaning Out the Attic" activity taught in the Jump In! workshop.

**Ceremonies.** Many Girl Scout troops begin and end their meetings with a ceremony. These can be simple or complicated, silly or serious; what's important is that the ceremony is something created or chosen by the girls. Check out the Ceremonies tip sheet for ideas!

**Plan an event.** Juliette Gordon Low's birthday is October 31. Have the girls plan a birthday party – complete with games, songs, and a cake – to celebrate.

**Help your community.** Performing service has always been an important part of the Girl Scout experience. Talk to the girls about community needs, ask for their ideas of ways to help, and make the world a better place!

A good rule of thumb is to give the girls as much responsibility as you think they can handle - and then a little more. If they need help or guidance, the girls should feel free to ask you for it, but they should be creating their own experience. You should be facilitating the activities, Journeys, and badges they choose while they should be leading them. The girls will get more out of their Girl Scout experience and enjoy themselves more as they are empowered to lead.