

Letting Girls Lead K-3

Girl Scouts is, as it always has been, the organization best positioned to offer girls the tools they need to be successful leaders now and throughout their lives. The Girl Scout leadership experience is based on the three processes – “Girl-Led,” “Learn by Doing,” and “Cooperative Learning.” Here are some ideas and tips on letting girls take the lead and incorporating “Girl Led’ thinking into Daisy and Brownie troops’ activities.

What is Girl-Led?

“Girl-Led” is an empowering approach that encourages girls to increasing responsibility for designing and implementing activities. Becoming progressively more “Girl-Led” as the girls gain experience and move from grade level to grade level is the goal. One of the biggest jobs of being a leader is to help the girls decide for themselves what they want to do in their troops. How does being Girl-led fit with the troop government system? The troop government system is kind of like the wheels that make is possible for girl led decision making and planning to hit the road. Giving girls the empowerment to make decisions will probably be the greatest gift you can make to your troop. Girl Scout Daisies use the Daisy Circle, Brownies use the Brownie Ring and so on.

With Girl Scout Daisies, Girl-Lead Means:

- Repeat activities that girls say they really enjoyed
- Listen to their ideas on how to make activities more fun
- Give girls the opportunity to ask questions or predict what is going to happen next
- Allow girls to take on responsibilities that are short tasks and easy enough to accomplish
- Identify new experiences with ones they already know

Don’t forget to ask for their input. Be thinking about ways to lay the foundation for the girls to understand that they will be able to contribute their opinions and ideas and that their opinions will guide the activity of the troop. At Daisy age, the leader will still be doing the majority of the decision making. Try to limit choices to two so that the girls are not overwhelmed. Girls at this age love to be helpers, so remember to allow girls to help collect forms, take attendance, pass out supplies, lead a game, choose a song to sing, or other small tasks.

Also, they may need some practice at taking turns talking and sharing in the Daisy circle so that everyone can have a chance to speak. This will help them “try out” being open to others’ ideas and to cooperate.

Girl Lead for Brownies:

- Help the girls make informed choices by talking them through the various steps of decision making
- Encourage girls to be creative and add own flair to projects and activities. Ask the girls for their ideas and explore the ideas with the girls to see how they could work.
- Look for opportunities to role play problem solving and give girls the freedom to solve problems on their own.
- Let the girls make “safe” mistakes. If girls are not making mistakes, they are not doing the planning (Only on health and safety issues are there no compromise) it’s not a “mistake if you learn something from it.
- Let the girls try new things. When the girls ask to do something that you don’t know how to do find another adult who can help make that happen.
- After an activity ask the girls their opinions about their activities and what they might do differently.
- Let the girls do the talking when sharing something with their troop mates, meeting guests, other troops, the service unit, etc.

Girl led from Brownies means taking another step forward and allowing more discussion and decisions. It may mean making choices between multiple options. The Leader can moderate the conversation to begin to let the girls take turns being the moderator if it’s a good fit. Begin to let the girls do some of the deeper thinking. Brownies can also generate some of their own ideas for activities and do some simple brainstorming (this is sometimes fun and may get a little silly and that’s ok) for activities they want to do. One girl may say let’s go to the moon—but that may inspire a trip to go stargazing.

Adult Advanced Planning

When the girls are planning a project or activity the adult may need to think through

- Tasks that will need to happen
- Readiness level of girls for those tasks
- Could the task be broken down into smaller steps to help the girls be successful
- Tasks essential to group safety

Imperfect is Perfect Enough

In short, do nothing for the girls that the girls can do for themselves—even if it takes a little longer. Activities that are Girl Led won’t always be perfect—but that’s not what the goal is. Those somewhat imperfect experiences will leave a much greater impact when the girls can say “I did it.”

