

HOW TO TALK TO

PROSPECTIVE FAMILIES

ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS



Open Houses and events are busy and sometimes interactions are quick—but with a little training, you’ll be surprised at how much you can connect with people. Considering your body language, asking more questions, and listening to prospective family’s concerns are all key to helping families make a decision about joining Girl Scouts.

Don’t worry—you don’t need to know everything about Girl Scouts—being a good question-asker and listener is important too!



BUILD RAPPORT

Before you ever say a word, your non-verbal communication can affect how welcoming you appear. Standing in front of a table with arms at your sides (not crossed), smiling, and making eye contact will communicate that you are friendly and ready to help them. No gum-chewing, phones, or other distractions.



MAKE CONNECTIONS

No one ever joined Girl Scouts for a free pencil (Though our mood pencils are pretty cool!), but give-a-ways are a way to grab people’s attention and engage with them. If you’re talking with a girl, consider getting to her eye level when speaking directly to her. People unconsciously gravitate to individuals who exhibit similar body language and tone. Try to match the tempo and energy level of the adults. (Do they seem more reserved and serious or are they more outgoing? Are they focused on the logistics or do they want to socialize?)



GAUGING INTEREST

If girls or family members begin to show interest in your table, you can connect with them by asking questions. Asking questions will help you understand their level of interest (and avoid “selling” them), and uncover what they already know and what they want to learn more about.

*Hello, thanks for stopping by. What do you know about Girl Scouts?
Hello! So, tell me, what have you heard about Girl Scouts?*

TIP: Avoid yes/no questions (Like “Have you heard of Girl Scouts?”), that tends to stop conversations.



DIGGING DEEPER

Based on the responses you get to your initial questions, you'll be able to dig deeper and identify some of the reasons they might consider Girl Scouts for their girl. **People have a tendency to make decisions based on compelling emotions (deciding with their heart instead of their head). By asking questions to find out more, you help people to discover some of the emotions behind the decision to sign up their girl.**

- You mentioned you were a Girl Scout, what did that mean to you?*
- You mentioned you were interested in (activity like camping or selling cookies), tell me why that's important to you?*
- You said that your neighbor is a Girl Scout—what is it that she does that sounds fun to you?*

Sometimes the answers to questions will let you know what an adult is concerned about; maybe they are worried about the amount of time their girl is spending behind a screen or are concerned about her making new friends. These concerns can be motivating forces, and you can help them discover how their girl can benefit from what Girl Scouts provides.

Sometimes it's helpful to use a third-party story to illustrate why many parents choose Girl Scouts.

- A lot of parents I talk to are concerned about making sure their girl is forming strong friendships with their classmates—is that something you're thinking a lot about? (Follow-up with an example of how Girl Scouts helps girls making lasting friendships.)*
- A lot of parents I talk with wish there were ways for them to meet the families of their daughter's friends—is that something you're focused on as well? (Follow-up with an example of how you've seen parents connect—and even get as much out of Girl Scouts as their girl!)*
- A lot of parents I talk with are concerned with keeping their girl's self-esteem high as she heads into her tweens—is that something you're focused on as well? (Follow-up with an example of a girl you have seen positively impacted by Girl Scouts.)*
- A lot of parents I talk with are eager to help their girl find out what kinds of activities she is interested in—is that something you've been thinking about? (Follow-up with an example of the ways girls are able to learn and try all kinds of new activities; Girl Scouts can help her find ways to shine!)*

FIELDING QUESTIONS

When interested families ask specific questions about Girl Scouts, we often have so many awesome things to say that we go into “selling mode” and talk about ALL the things Girl Scouts do. This can be overwhelming for a new family who is still deciding if they are interested. It can be more effective to speak to a couple of things the family has already identified as being of interest. Also, if you give them a whole list, you may inadvertently talk about things that aren't important to them. (Maybe she doesn't love the outdoors.)

Interested families will often start by asking specific questions such as:

- What do Girl Scouts do?*
- How often do they meet?*
- How much does Girl Scouts cost?*
- Who leads troops?*



To keep it simple, it's helpful to answer their question, with (you guessed it) another question. This will help you speak to only the most important information.

You could respond:

I could go on all day about the different activities Girl Scouts do—what have you heard? What activities does your girl like? Are there any activities you are specifically interested in learning more about?

 **TIP:** Sometimes there is a straightforward answer to a question, but there is almost always room to ask another question before answering. For example, if someone asks, “How much does Girl Scouts cost?” you could tell them (\$25) but you might be missing the chance to address a concern. You could ask, “Are you interested in what the registration fee is or what you’d expect to spend for a Girl Scout year?” This gives prospective families that chance to let you know if they are concerned about cost, and you can share that financial aid assistance is available.

MAKING THE ASK—GIRL

After fielding questions from families, you'll want to ask a question to see if they are ready to take action (fill out a Short Interest Form, learn more at a Troop Formation Event, or become a troop leader). A few more questions will help determine if they are truly interested, need more information, or if it isn't a good fit (And that's okay too!).

What other questions can I answer for you to help you decide if you'd like to join Girl Scouts?

Based on what we've talked about, what are your thoughts—does Girl Scouts seem like a good fit for your girl/family?

Would you like to learn about next steps? I'd like to invite you to fill out short form which will start the membership process—our staff will reach out to you to follow up. We're also hosting a Troop Formation Event [date, time] and I'd like to encourage you to attend. You'll get to meet other families from the community, learn a little more about Girl Scouts, and work to form a troop.



MAKING THE ASK—ADULT

If the family is ready to fill out an interest form, it's a great time to talk about the need for volunteers—they are what makes Girl Scouts possible.

It is important to be clear that every troop needs a troop leader in order to get started. Asking questions about the troop leader role can help you determine if this person would be a good candidate.

*Have you thought about what role you might be interested in holding with your girl's troop?
Have you given any thought to taking on the troop leader role?*

If they begin to ask questions that express interest, you can use third party stories.

I've got a friend who's a troop leader, she's told me that she gets just as much out of the experience as her girl.

A lot of parents wish they had more time to meet and connect with the parents of their girl's classmates and friends—they've found that leading their daughter's troop has been a great way to do this.

Parents interested in the troop leader role will likely have lots of additional questions—you can field these to your comfort level, but also encourage them to fill out a Short Interest Form so the Girl Scouts River Valleys Customer Care team can follow up with them and help with their questions.

 **TIP:** You can also use the Become a Troop Leader flyer to provide additional details.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

It's important to help prospective families have clear expectations of the membership and troop formation process. Providing specifics can increase their satisfaction with the join and placement process. If we are too general (e.g., "just fill out this form and we'll be in touch") we risk them being dissatisfied with our outreach.

Let them know, "The next step is that you'll receive a link via email to complete you/your girl's membership." Be sure to let people know that by filling out the form, they are beginning the join process—that means we'll be contacting them to help them complete the process by answering their questions, helping with technical issues, and so on. Then let them know what to do if they need more info:

[*If you have additional questions before you're ready to join, you're welcome to reply to the email or call Girl Scouts River Valleys at 800-845-0787.*

If they don't have a troop identified, let them know that they'll be but on a waiting list with girls in their same age range in their community when they complete their membership. A troop will form, once a troop leader has been identified.

Don't forget to thank them for their interest in Girl Scouts!

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

There will be questions you'll hear a lot, so we want you to feel prepared to answer them:

How often do troops meet, where do they meet, and can we shadow a troop before we join?

Troops tend to meet twice a month—one meeting may be a badge-earning meeting and one may be a field trip or event. We don't have the option to shadow a troop before joining as we can't share troop leader contact information until families are registered members and placed in a troop.

Are there troops that meet at this school? Are there open troops?

Some troops meet at—or are affiliated with—a specific school, others meet in the community (like the local library or community center) and have girls from multiple schools. It is more common for older girls (grades 3 and up) to join existing troops. For younger girls—particularly kindergarteners—it is more likely that a new troop will form this fall. Attending an upcoming Troop Formation Event is a great way to get connected with local troops or form new ones. Troop openings in existing troops are first come—first served. We recommend girls register and get added to our wait list right away to have priority placement into open troops.

How long will I be on the waiting list if I don't want to be a troop leader?

The only way we can form new troops is to first secure a troop leader. The amount of time that requires can vary. Wait times are shorter in the fall when lots of new troops are forming, it can take longer after November.

How much does Girl Scouts cost?

Here are some estimates:

National Membership Dues.....	\$25	Optional: Two Council Events.....	\$40
Uniform and Books.....	\$65	Optional: Girl Scout Camp.....	\$320
Troop Dues.....	\$20	Potential Total Cost:.....	\$110-440

How much do uniforms cost, and is that something the troop leader purchases, or do families?

Families can visit a Girl Scout shop to purchase their My Girl Scout Kit as soon as they have their troop number. Some families wait until their first troop meeting to talk to the troop leader before making their purchase. Most troop leaders ask families to purchase their uniform individually since the troop is just getting up and running. Once the troop has participated in a cookie sale, they may decide to use their proceeds to purchase troop uniforms and badges for the following years.

Do all Girl Scouts sell cookies?

The Cookie Program is completely optional, though the money earned supports troop activities and gives girls the opportunity to develop essential life skills: goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics.