

JUNIOR INSIDE GOVERNMENT BADGE – MEETING 1

Badge Purpose: When girls have earned this badge, they'll know more about how government runs.

Activity Plan Length: 1.5 hours

Time	Activity	Materials Needed
15 minutes	Getting Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls recite the Girl Scout Promise + Law. 	<input type="checkbox"/> (Optional) Girl Scout Promise and Law poster
15 minutes	What Makes an Active Citizen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls decide what being an active citizen means to them. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Large paper or whiteboard <input type="checkbox"/> Writing utensils <input type="checkbox"/> Book about being a good citizen
30 minutes	Planning a Commission Hearing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls learn how the government makes decisions about community matters. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning Commission Public Hearing handout (one per small group) <input type="checkbox"/> Writing and coloring utensils <input type="checkbox"/> Graph or drawing paper
15 minutes	Mock Vote and Snack Chat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls enjoy a healthy snack and participate in a mock vote. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing utensils <input type="checkbox"/> Ballots (one per girl) <input type="checkbox"/> Ballot box (any type of small to medium sized box, which can be decorated if desired) <input type="checkbox"/> Large paper or whiteboard <input type="checkbox"/> Snack items
15 minutes	Wrapping Up	<input type="checkbox"/> (Optional) Make New Friends song lyrics poster

Getting Started

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed: (Optional) Girl Scout Promise and Law poster

Welcome everyone to the meeting, recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law.



Activity #1: What Makes An Active Citizen?

Time: 15 minutes

Badge Connection: Step 1 – Decide what being an active citizen means to you

Materials Needed: Large paper or whiteboard; writing utensils; book about being a good citizen

Prep Needed:

- Check your local library for books about being a good citizen.
1. As a large group, ask the girls to brainstorm characteristics of active citizens. Write them on the large paper or whiteboard for everyone to see. Answers will vary, but some ideas include:
 - Following laws
 - Paying taxes
 - Cleaning/protecting the environment
 - Being informed or knowledgeable about things going on in the world
 - Voting
 2. Read the children's story about being a good citizen.
 3. Ask girls to list all the examples/traits of good citizenship they noted in the book.
 4. Discuss these characteristics with the girls and ask why they are so important. What would happen if people didn't do these things?
 5. Save talking about voting for the last portion of your discussion so you can easily transition to the next activity.

RESOURCE SUGGESTIONS:

- *Being a Good Citizen: A Book about Citizenship* by Mary Small
- *She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head!* by Kathryn Lasky
- *We Live Here Too!* by Nancy Loewen
- *America Is...* by Louise Borden

Activity #2: Planning Commission Hearing

Time: 30 minutes

Badge Connection: Step 2 – Go inside government

Materials Needed: Planning a Commission Public Hearing handout (one per small group); writing and coloring utensils; graph or drawing paper

Prep Needed:

- Make copies of the Planning Commission Public Hearing handout.
1. Explain to the girls that they will be acting out how the government takes part in making community decisions and each girl will have a part to play.
 2. First, introduce the situation:

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

Development Application Description: Site Plan approval for a Trampoline and Dodge Ball Park

I. Development Application

The Developers are requesting approval to open a 51,000 square foot indoor trampoline facility in the Excelsior and Grand redevelopment on Excelsior Boulevard and Grand Way. It would include various sized trampolines, a dodge ball arena, a foam pit, a basketball court and four long running tracks.

II. Apply City Rules



City Staff believe that according to the City's Rules, the developers must limit the park size to 51,000 square feet, add parking rules, signs, shrubs, trees, security cameras, and hire private security on the weekends.

IV. Action

The Planning Commission approves or denies the development of the trampoline and dodge ball park.

3. Divide the girls into three groups: developers, city staff (i.e. fire inspector, city attorney, building official, city planner) and citizens. The adults present will form the Planning Commission. Note: For larger groups, you may need to do two role plays in separate areas so every girl can actively participate.
4. Give each of the three groups copies of the Planning Commission handout so they may see their position on the proposed development.
5. Ask the girls to take the next 5–10 minutes drawing what they think the development should look like, based on the role they are playing. Give groups a few additional minutes to talk about the roles they are playing and the position they are taking. They can also use this time to think of any questions or statements to use in the role-play.
6. Now it's time for groups to present their position in front of the Planning Commission. The adults on the Planning Commission will facilitate the hearing and serve as moderators. Begin with the following:

Welcome to the {insert town name here} Planning Commission Public Hearing on {insert date and time here}. Today, the commissioners will hear from developers, city staff and residents about a site plan proposal for a trampoline and dodge ball park. The development application states the business will include various sized trampolines, a dodge ball arena, a foam pit, a basketball court and four long running tracks.

Allow the developers a few minutes to present their application and talk about their position.

7. Next, the Planning Commission will ask for input and questions from city staff.

Does the city staff have any findings on the site plan proposal?

Allow the city staff a few minutes to ask questions, state concerns and present any of their own ideas or modifications to the proposal in front of the Planning Commission. Developers will answer questions as they are asked.

8. After city staff has had a chance to speak, the moderator will turn it over to the citizens in opposition of the development, followed by the citizens in support of the development. Each group should have a few minutes to voice their position and ask questions of the developers and city staff.
9. The adult Planning Commission will ask for any last questions, concerns or ideas, and then vote yes to approve or no to deny the proposal by a raise of hands.

Activity #3: Mock Vote and Snack Chat

Time: 15 minutes

Badge Connection: Step 5 – Get involved in community government

Materials Needed: Writing utensils; ballots; ballot box (any type of small to medium sized box, which can be decorated if desired); large paper or whiteboard; healthy snack

Prep Needed:

- Print ballots (one for each girl).
1. Read the questions from the ballot aloud for the girls to think about before they vote.
 2. Have girls vote yes or no for each question and then drop their ballots into the box.
 3. Have one or two girls help count the votes and tally them on the large paper or whiteboard and say the results out loud.
 4. After announcing the results, serve snack and pose the discussion questions below.
 - Was your vote the end result?
 - What would you change about the result?
 - Why do you think your answer is the right answer?



- Why is voting a good way to make a group decision? What are its faults?
5. Next, have the girls think about laws that they might propose one day if they were in the following situations:
 - You are the mayor of the first town on the moon.
 - A toxic-waste dump is being built next to a farm.
 - There is a five-story building with no elevator. It only has one staircase inside.
 6. If time, have girls vote on some of these proposals and discuss.

Wrapping Up

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed: (Optional) Make New Friends song lyrics poster

Close the meeting by singing Make New Friends and doing a friendship circle.

More to Explore

- Field Trip Ideas:
 - Go to the state or city capital building, or visit a local government office.
 - Attend a city council meeting.
- Speaker Ideas:
 - Invite local government officials (current or former) to your meeting.
 - Invite a member of the League of Women MN Voters to your meeting.



Planning Commission Public Hearing

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THE PLAYERS

Developers propose new ideas to bring into cities, like new neighborhoods and businesses. In this role play, the Developer tells the City that trampoline and dodge ball parks are popular in other parts of the country and are now starting to open here. They argue that:

- Children burn about a thousand calories an hour on these types of activities
- Kids are actually engaging in healthy physical activity, but they are bouncing around having a good time while doing so
- This development would get kids to spend less time in front of their TVs, video games and computers.
- This development will make the city healthier

The Developer says things like:

- "We actually have a ton of safety. All employees will know first aid and CPR."
- "We have a computer program to track the number of people in the park. We don't want 300 kids in the park at the same time."
- "This will encourage physical activity and make the city healthier!"

City Planners figure out the best way to use city land where citizens live work and play. Planners should address any potential benefits of the proposal and any problems that could arise.

- Pros of the proposed development:
 - Bring in new business and tourism
 - Locally-owned
 - After-school, healthy activities for kids
- Cons of the proposed development:
 - Increase in vehicle and foot traffic
 - Noise and trouble-making kids
 - Increased taxes

Building Officials ensure that all buildings in the city are safe. The Building Official wants to know how strong the building is and what materials will be used to make the park.

Fire Inspectors ensure that citizens are safe from fire hazards and have clear escape routes in case of emergencies. The Fire Inspector needs to know if the fire trucks will fit in the proposed parking lot and where the hydrants will be located.

City Attorneys ensure all laws are being followed and assist city staff and the Planning Commission with legal questions. The City Attorney would like the Developer to explain exactly what is meant when they say they have things in place to keep kids safe.



City Planning Commissioners review new developments. They study the positive and negative effects of a development, and then make recommendations on what the city should develop and how it should do so.

Citizens in Support provide reasons that the development is good for the city:

- Encouraging Ellen: “We believe the city needs more healthy entertainment options.”
- Happy Hannah, a parent: “I’m thrilled about this! There would be more for my family to do and I love the convenient location too!”
- Energy Emily: “I think this new business would encourage more activities for everyone to get out and MOVE! An active lifestyle is very important to kids and adults alike.”
- Busy Betty, a business owner: “As a business owner, I believe this will boost all business property values. That’s a big bonus for all of businesses in the area.”

Citizens in Opposition argue the reasons that the development is not good for the city.

- Cautious Kelly: “Is the company even aware that some residents are concerned about safety? Those parks are dangerous!”
- No-No Nancy: “I do NOT want this loud accident-waiting-to-happen in my backyard! With all those screaming kids around all the time, I’ll have a constant headache and have to move!”
- Concerned Connie, a parent: “What I’m most worried about are all the falls and collisions and about safety in general!”
- Hardy Henrietta, a homeowner: “I think this will decrease the value of my house and property.”



Ballots for Mock Vote

<p>Question 1:</p> <p>Should the Minnesota Constitution be amended to dedicate funding to protect our drinking water sources; to protect, enhance and restore our wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat; to preserve our arts and cultural heritage; to support our parks and trails; and to protect, enhance and restore our lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater by increasing the sales and use tax rate by three-eighths of one percent on taxable sales for the next 25 years?</p>	Yes	No
<p>Question 2:</p> <p>Should all students grades K-12 be required to wear uniforms to school?</p>	Yes	No
<p>Question 3:</p> <p>Should a law be passed to deny a driver's license to students missing too many days of school?</p>	Yes	No

