

How to Guide Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors on Focus on Philanthropy



Cookie Activity Pin 2008-2009

To earn this year's Girl Scout Cookie Activity Pin, girls will practice being philanthropists. They'll explore what it means to be generous as you guide them to investigate examples of philanthropy in their community and then decide whether to give money, time, or both, to make a difference in the lives of others.

Business Skills and Leadership Training

Selling Girl Scout Cookies gives Brownies and Juniors a chance to run a business, and practice leadership skills they can use in their daily lives and as they grow. Girls will enjoy all the benefits that this key component of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience has to offer: They'll engage in planning and goal-setting, teaming with others, marketing, money management (including the importance of saving for future needs), and the enduring people skill of customer service.

As you guide girls to consider all their options for earning money and putting it to work in the world, you'll be using the Girl Scouts' three keys of leadership—Discover, Connect, and Take Action—and the three processes that make Girl Scouting unique—Girl Led, Cooperative Learning, and Learning by Doing.

This will be easy because the leadership keys and the Girl Scout processes are woven right into this year's activities for you. You'll begin with simple exercises that get girls thinking about their own values and the importance of giving. First they'll figure out all that they are thankful for in their lives. Then they'll uncover needs they see around them, and groups or organizations that could support the kind of good they want to do in the world. Check out the trail of activities—you'll see how it all ties together, culminating in girls giving!

Think Close to Home

Sometimes philanthropy is triggered by an urgent need that's close to home. So guide the girls to look for critical needs in their community. Encourage Juniors to look through their local newspaper for possible ideas, and to make a list of what they find that they might contribute to. This can be the start of a larger idea bank that all the girls can build together as a team. They can even ask customers for ideas as they sell.

When It's Time to Give, Let the Girls Do It!

When the time comes for the girls to do the actual giving, make sure they connect directly—in person—with their chosen organization to do the "give." Perhaps the girls can visit the organization and its directors, or representatives of the organization can visit the girls.

Keep in mind that the girls' gift of money or time might be small. It's not the size of their gift as much as their acting on the value of generosity that will have a lasting impact.

Safety First!

As in all of Girl Scouting, be sure to follow *Safety-Wise* and any additional safety information from your council. If the girls' project calls for giving money, it must come from your Girl Scout group's treasury after the cookie sale. (Money cannot be collected for an organization or charity.) If you have any questions about the appropriateness of a gift, consult with you Girl Scout council.

The Trail of Activities

My Thank-You List

In this first activity, girls discover their values as they relate to philanthropy. You'll want to go over the definition of philanthropy that the girls have in their activity pages. You might kick off the discussion by offering examples from your own life. When have you given to others? Have others given to you? Have you ever worked for an organization involved in philanthropy?

On My Honor

In their second activity, girls relate philanthropic acts to the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law. And they examine how it feels to be helped through philanthropy.

Keep in mind that some families depend on charity during difficult times. So be sensitive—don't force any girl to talk about her personal experiences. Be sure the girls understand that we all may need help from others at some time in our life, and talk to them about the importance of always taking people's feelings into consideration when helping others.

Wishes and Dreams

This activity gets girls thinking about what they might like to do for others. Guide the girls to think about what wishes are needed in their community and in the whole world. Is there a difference when they think about the world and when they think about their community?

In today's media-savvy world, girls often feel as much a part of the whole world as their particular neighborhood. So guide the girls to bring big ideas down to community specifics.

And guide them to use their big ideas close to home. A big idea like peace, for example, can become a project about eliminating gang violence in a specific neighborhood or helping young victims of a war-torn country who are now living in the girls' neighborhood. The goal is to turn big ideas into doable actions.

Philanthropy

This is a big word, just right for the act of giving from your heart. There are two Greek words in it: **phil**, meaning love, and **anthro**, meaning man. So it adds up to loving your fellow man (add women and girls and boys and families and everybody—all living things).

Another word like philanthropy is **charity**. Charity is giving money or helping those in need.

A **philanthropist** is someone who gives money to help others.

Youth Philanthropy is when young people give service, gifts, or money to help make the world a better place. (Does that mean the "S" in Girl Scouts stands for "Service" as well as for "Sincerity?")

Group philanthropy is when groups of people pool their resources to increase the power of their giving. A group of people giving can often make a bigger difference.

A **donor** is someone who gives time or money. A donation is time or money or something.

NOTE: Girls have this sidebar in their activity sheet. Discuss what each word means. Ask them to relate the words to actions they have seen others do or have participated in themselves.

From Being a Wisher to Being a Philanthropist

This activity first asks each girl to nominate her favorite wish for others and the world at large. Then, guide the girls to make a team decision about a “wish for others” that they’d like to focus on together.

Scouting Out Organizations

In “**Be a Smart Giver**,” girls take a look at organizations that focus on the particular wish or need they’ve chosen. You can take this activity a little further with Girl Scout Juniors. Encourage them to check with the local newspaper or phone book, or use the Internet to find appropriate groups or organizations. Girls can also ask for ideas from the adults around them. Point out that a smart philanthropist checks out an organization or need thoroughly before giving.

Who Makes the Most of Their Mission?

Guide Brownies and Juniors to start thinking about the difference between various charities and organizations, and why they would opt to give to one over another. Every organization should have a mission statement that clearly states who they serve and why. (Share the Girl Scout mission statement with girls: “Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.”)

Legitimate and well-run organizations focus on their mission and address the needs of those they serve in the best and most cost-effective way possible.

So how’s a young philanthropist to know if an organization is legit? Ask around and find out as much as possible about the organization or charity. Or visit an online charity rating site (Charity Navigator, www.charitynavigator.org/, is one) to find out how an organization compares to other groups. Girls can also visit the organization and talk to those who work there—and those the organization has helped.

Time to Give!

Now that the girls have thought through what they might do and made a team decision, try to make it possible for them to have an active role in the giving. They’ll benefit from seeing where and how their gift is used.

Celebrate with a Ceremony

Don’t forget to take time at the end to reflect on all the girls have accomplished. You’ll notice that the girls’ last activity is to share their feelings about what they’ve done. So encourage the girls to circle back and do some reflecting—on their own and as a group—before they proudly add their pin to their uniform. (And if you’ve got Brownies doing the Brownie Quest journey, don’t give away any “key” clues!)

Other Options

Keep in mind—and guide the girls to keep in mind—that philanthropy is just one way how a Girl Scout money-earning activity can contribute to their Take Action efforts. When girls are interested in making a difference, they can find many ways to take action in Girl Scouting.

So if you see that they are eager to keep making a difference, guide them to decide how they might use their cookie money to fund other things, such as:

- their Girl Scout journey projects
- resources for Girl Scout Bronze Awards
- supplies for action projects
- trips to visit local organizations
- any other ways you and they might think of!

Additional Activities and Information

Sing It Out! Download the “She Wears a ‘G’ for Generosity” song from the GSUSA Web site and take a break to learn to sing the song. www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_cookies/cookie_activity.asp

Talk About What It Means To Be A Former Girl Scout. Challenge girls to ask customers whether they were Girl Scouts and what that meant to them. As girls connect with former Girl Scouts, encourage them to pass out Alumnae Association postcards so that formers can connect with other formers through the Alumnae Association. Cards can be obtained at your council office. More information can be found at the Girl Scout Alumnae Association Web site: www.girlscouts.org/for_adults/alumnae.

Dare To Share! If your project turns out awesome, your group is invited to submit a photo that tells a story with a caption and photo release forms. Submit high resolution pictures electronically only (PDF format), using the forms and directions provided online at www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_cookies/cookie_activity.asp

The Cookie Activity Pin can be purchased from your Girl Scout Shop or online at GSUSA GO SHOP: goshop.girlscouts.org/GSUSAOnline/GSHomePage.aspx.

Additional Girl Scout Leadership Resources

Consider combining the Cookie Activity with the new leadership journeys:

- **Brownie Quest Follow the Trails...of the ELF Adventure and the Three Keys.** GSUSA, 2008. (Grades 1 and 3)
- **How to Guide Girl Scout Brownies On Brownie Quest Follow the Trails...of the ELF Adventure and the Three Keys.** GSUSA, 2008. Adult guides have great strategies for guiding girls through all Girl Scout program, including this activity!
- **Agent of Change.** GSUSA, 2008. (An “It’s Your World—Change It!” leadership journey for grades 4 and 5)
- **How to Guide Girl Scout Juniors on Agent of Change.** GSUSA, 2008.
- Girl Scout Brownie Try-Its and Junior Badges related to cookies and financial literacy are listed on the Girl Scout Cookie Activity page at www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_cookies/cookie_activity.asp.

