



New Leader Launch

February Questions

Topic 1 – Girl Scout Birthday & Stemapalooza

1. **What is the Girl Scout Birthday, and why do troops celebrate it?**

Girl Scout Birthday celebrates the founding of Girl Scouts in the United States on March 12, 1912. For troops, it's a fun, meaningful moment to learn a little about Girl Scout history, celebrate our movement, and help girls feel proud of being part of something bigger.

2. **If a leader is brand new, is this something they have to do?**

Not at all. It's optional. Think of it as a tradition you can make as simple or as creative as your troop wants. Leading up to it, leaders can also ask the girls how they would like to celebrate.

3. **When should new leaders celebrate Girl Scout Birthday? Does it have to be on March 12?**

It does not have to be on the exact date. Many troops celebrate sometime in March, often during the week that includes March 12, known as Girl Scout Week. The key is picking a time that works for your troop.

4. **About how long does it take?**

It can be very short, 10 to 15 minutes, or you can build an entire meeting around it.

5. **What are a few easy, low-prep ways first-year troops can celebrate?**

A leader does not need a big party plan. You can start with a quick birthday moment and share a short story about Juliette Gordon Low. Then add one hands-on activity, like making a troop banner, friendship bracelets, or swaps.

Another great option is a simple service action, because service is a big part of Girl Scouts. To help with some simple ideas to celebrate, every year GSUSA releases a Girl Scout Week calendar with a different theme for each day.

For example, Affirmation Monday – Share a positive message with a friend. Or Service Saturday – Serve your community as a sisterhood.

6. **How can leaders make Girl Scout Birthday girl-led, even with younger girls?** The easiest way is to offer a few simple options and let the girls choose. Even Daisies can vote between two activities.

Leaders can also ask a guiding question like, “What do we want our troop to be known for this year?” and let girls shape a small ceremony, a song, or decorations.

7. **Can Girl Scout Birthday connect to badges or fun patches?**
Yes. If your troop’s activities match the requirements for a badge, they can count toward badge steps.

Fun patches are another option; they are flexible and are meant to celebrate participation. There is even a Girl Scout Week fun patch available.

8. **So badges have required steps to earn them, and fun patches are more open-ended, right?**

Exactly. Badges have specific steps to complete, and fun patches are a great way to mark an experience.

9. **What is STEMapalooza?**

STEMapalooza is one of our signature council events focused on STEM, science, technology, engineering, and math.

Girls rotate through hands-on stations run by staff and community partners, so leaders do not need to be experts.

10. **What can new troops expect?**

It’s a great “try a little bit of everything” day where girls can explore and discover what they like.

There will be a lot of partners hosting hands-on activities, and even Girl Scouts presenting their High Awards or STEM Fair projects in our Girl Scout Way area.

11. **When and where is STEMapalooza?**

This year, we have moved locations, so it will be Saturday, April 11, 2026, at Hillsborough College, Brandon Campus.

12. **How do leaders register and prepare for STEMapalooza?**

Where can they go for more information? The best starting point is the event listing on our council website at gswcf.org/events. That page will have the date, cost, which grade levels can attend, and how to register for all of our events.

STEMapalooza is for all ages and is \$10 -\$15 depending on when you register. Our discounted early registration pricing ends this Saturday, February 28th. Leaders will also decide whether to register as a troop or have families register individually, depending on how the troop is paying.

After you register, and about a week before the event, a “Know-before-you-go” email will be sent that reviews where to park, check-in, what badges and patches are available, and the event map, so you can start planning your day!

13. Do troops have to attend together as a troop? Or can individual families attend on their own?

Good question! Yes, families can register and attend on their own. And a Girl Scout membership is not required to attend, so we encourage all girls who are interested in STEM to register for STEMapalooza.

Feel free to bring the whole family; this event is open to all Girl Scouts, friends, and families.

14. Where can troops go if they have questions about Girl Scout Birthday celebrations or STEMapalooza?

Leaders can email the Girl Program Team at girlprogram@gswcf.org or contact the Customer Care team at Info@gswcf.org

If they are not sure where to start, we can help point them to the right event page, resources, or next steps based on their troop’s grade level and goals.



Topic 2 – Girl Scout Trip and Travel

1. Why do Girl Scouts travel?

Girl Scouts travel to discover new experiences, broaden their perspectives, and deepen their understanding of cultures around the world. Through travel, they explore global issues firsthand, build meaningful connections, and gain the inspiration and insight needed to make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

As Girl Scouts of the USA founder Juliette Gordon Low once said, “Girl Scouting and Girl Guiding can be the magic thread which links the youth of the world together.” Travel brings that vision to life—uniting girls across borders, fostering leadership, and empowering them to help create a better world.

2. Where can Girl Scouts travel to?

USA Travel - from local day trips to exploring coast to coast adventures.

International Travel – Fly off to discover new places & cultures

3. How does a troop leader know if their troop is ready to travel?

Girl Scout travel is a lifelong journey—one that builds confidence, skills, unforgettable memories, and lasting friendships along the way.

Every Girl Scout can begin this adventure early. Daisies and Brownies take their first steps with group field trips, then grow their independence through overnight and weekend experiences.

As girls progress to Juniors and beyond, their opportunities expand to three- or four-night regional trips that deepen leadership and teamwork skills. By the time they become Cadettes, the possibilities are endless. With guidance from Girl Scouts of the USA planning tools, girls can turn their travel dreams into reality—whether that means exploring the California coast, discovering the Swiss Alps, or visiting one of the WAGGGS World Centers around the world.

4. What is the first step for a troop to start planning their first field trip?

First thing: All Girl Scout Leaders will complete the Trip & Travel Training Module found in gsLearn.

5. Where would troop leaders find guidelines on how to get started after training?

For All Travel:

- Review Volunteer Essentials and
- Safety Activity Checkpoints, including the Travel section, must be reviewed prior to planning your Girl Scout trip.

For International Travel Visit www.gswcf.org

- Search in your browser: Girl Scouts Travel
- Scroll down and click on “USA Travel” Or “International Travel” for a PDF guide.

6. How can troop travel be girl led?

Use these resource links:

- [Sample Itinerary](#)
- [Sample Budget](#)
- [Travel Checklist](#)

For younger Girl Scouts, you can ask them to make a simple decision, such as giving them two options to vote on, a visit to the zoo or to the fire station, for example.

7. Do troops need permission to travel?

Yes!

While simple day trips do not require approval, overnight trips do, unless it is at a Girl Scouts of West Central property, or if it is a Girl Scouts of West Central program event.

For trips that require travel, there is a form to submit, depending on the trip's length.

- Visit www.gswcf.org
- Search [Girl Scouts Travel](#)
- Complete the jotform that best fits your type of travel.
- [Simple Overnight Troop Travel Application](#) (duration of two (2) or less nights that is not on council property)
- [Extended Overnight Troop Travel Application](#) (3 or more over night for National & International travel)

8. How long will it take for approval?

The form must be submitted for approval at least four (4) weeks in advance of the date of departure.

9. How do troops fund troop travel?

Troops can raise funds by participating in the

- Sweets & Treats Fall Product Sales
- Girl Scout Cookie Program
- Collect Troop Dues
- Other types of fundraising

Once a troop participates in both council programs in a calendar year, or Girl Scout Membership Year, girls qualify to do additional council-approved fundraising. Donations should go directly to the Troop Bank Account first. This way, all funds are documented before paying for travel expenses.

- Fundraising is optional and not required for participation
- See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for rules and details

10. Where can troop leaders find additional information?

Visit www.gswcf.org for your online resources or use the links below:

- [GSUSA DESTINATION SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION](#)
- [Simple Overnight Troop Travel Application](#)
- [Extended Overnight Troop Travel Application](#)
- [Sample Itinerary](#)
- [Sample Budget](#)
- [Permission Form for Minors to Travel Internationally](#)
- [Troop Travel Guide](#)
- [Travel Checklist](#)
- [Destinations Scholarship Girl Application](#)