

A great way to practice leadership—plus, it opens the path to earn the Bronze Award



# Volunteer's Guide to the Junior Aide Award\*

Find tips and ideas to help guide Girl Scouts through this award program.

**Facilitator Overview:** This guide will help you support Junior Girl Scouts in earning the Junior Aide award. You may be supporting just one Girl Scout, a few, or a larger group—adjust your delivery and language accordingly.

Much of the work of this award will take place outside of your direct supervision, but you still play an essential role! You'll assist by:

- Helping Juniors find a younger Girl Scout troop or another youth group to work with; facilitating the needed introductions; working with caregivers or guiding Juniors to do so, to arrange logistics such as transportation, supplies, etc.
- Preparing Girl Scouts to perform activities on their own, without your active participation, and making sure they have everything they need prior to each step
- Checking in regularly to make sure Girl Scouts are staying on track
- Guiding Girl Scouts to reflect on their experience once all steps are complete

Before any award work begins, have a conversation with the younger group's leader to make sure they understand the purpose and activities of the Junior Aide award. Consider giving them a copy of the award overview so they know what to expect.

Once this groundwork is set, begin by guiding a discussion with Girl Scouts about the importance of leading others. Have them think about the leaders in their lives, like teachers, coaches, or yourself. Ask questions such as:

- What do you notice or admire about these leaders?
- What differences in leadership styles do you see?
- What methods would you like to adopt, and what would you do differently?
- How do you think leaders make a difference?

Tell Girl Scouts that anyone can be a leader—they can be one, too! Leadership is a learned skill, and it's never too early to start learning.

You might use the step-by-step coaching in this guide if you plan to meet with Girl Scouts before each step. If not, go over the steps to get familiar with the guidance, and use it to answer Girl Scouts' questions along the way.

## Step 1: Observe a meeting

• 30–40 minutes

**Ask:** What kind of leader do *you* want to be?

**Share:** Leaders help, teach, and care for others. Every leader has a unique style—and you're about to find yours! You'll start by getting to know a group, joining in, and thinking about how you can help in a leadership role.

**Guide:** Prior to Girl Scouts' first group visit, talk to them about the fact that they will be entering a new-to-them group and will need to interact to be successful. Discuss the skills needed for getting to know the younger children and the new leader.

Remind Girl Scouts that one of the required activities for Step 2 is to talk to the group's leader beforehand; they can do this at the end of Step 1, if convenient.

**To Do** (and how you might help):

1. **Learn more about the group and its members.** In advance, discuss key skills, such as learning names, engaging younger children in conversation, and noticing individual personality traits. Help Girl Scouts practice these skills, if needed.
2. **Observe what works.** Help Girl Scouts brainstorm what they should look for in terms of group dynamics and function.
3. **Watch your group's leader in action.** Discuss leadership traits and guide Girl Scouts in thinking about what they should look for. Consider encouraging Girl Scouts to watch *you* in action during a meeting and to think about *your* leadership style.
4. **Make a list.** Help Girl Scouts brainstorm ways to help during the group's next meeting, if needed.

\*Detailed choice activities, meeting tools, and additional resources and materials can be found within the Volunteer Toolkit on [my.girlscouts.org](https://my.girlscouts.org).

**PAUSE TO REFLECT:** Ensure Girl Scouts have filled out Step 1 of the **Junior Aide Plan** before moving on to Step 2.

## Step 2: Assist with a meeting

• 30–40 minutes

**Ask:** How can you help the leader?

**Share:** Now that you've seen how meetings work, it's time to help! The more prepared you are, the more confident you'll be.

**Guide:** Before planning for the second meeting, ask Girl Scouts what they thought about the first meeting. Encourage them to share what they learned. Together, review the Step 2 prompts in the **Junior Aide Plan** and make sure Juniors have everything they need (in terms of information, materials, and emotional support) to proceed with confidence.

**To Do** (and how you might help):

1. **Talk to the group's leader before the meeting.** Guide Girl Scouts in setting up this conversation, if they didn't already have it at the end of Step 1.
2. **Prepare for the meeting.** Ask Girl Scouts what they've been asked to do or bring. Help them think through anything they need to prepare or provide, if needed. Assist with the actual preparations if necessary, but keep it girl-led by encouraging Girl Scouts to take as much initiative as possible—your main role is to make sure they stay on track, not help with their work.
3. **Help with the meeting's activities.** Once all preparations are complete, discuss the upcoming meeting a last time. Make sure Girl Scouts feel comfortable and ready to help out. Remind them that they'll be in a support role for this step—their job is to get comfortable with the group, pay attention, and think about how they can contribute when it's their turn to lead.

**PAUSE TO REFLECT:** Ensure Girl Scouts have filled out Step 2 of the **Junior Aide Plan** before moving on to Step 3.

## Step 3: Plan and lead an activity

• 30–40 minutes

**Ask:** Are you ready to put your new skills into action?

**Share:** There are lots of ways to teach others, and learning can be fun! Try it yourself by planning a fun and simple activity to do with the group.

**Guide:** Before planning for the third meeting, ask Girl Scouts what they thought about the second meeting. Encourage them to consider what went well and what else they can do to lead the group. Make sure they have everything they need (in terms of information, materials, and emotional support) to proceed with confidence.

**To Do** (and how you might help):

1. **Choose an activity to lead.** Help Girl Scouts brainstorm activities, if needed. Remind them to review their ideas with the troop leader before proceeding with any planning. Help set up this conversation, if needed.
2. **Prepare for the meeting.** Girl Scouts may vary in their planning experience and abilities. Help with practical aspects of the planning process as needed, but encourage Girl Scouts to take as much initiative as possible. Offer the opportunity to practice the activity, if possible and practical.
3. **Lead the activity.** Once all preparations are complete, discuss the upcoming meeting a last time. Remind Girl Scouts that this meeting will be different from the previous two—they'll be stepping up and taking the lead. Make sure they feel comfortable and ready. If they don't, help by providing words of encouragement, advice, tools and materials, or additional practice.

**PAUSE TO REFLECT:** Ensure Girl Scouts have filled out Step 3 of the **Junior Aide Plan** before moving on to the award overview process. They earn the Junior Aide award after completing the overview process.

### Award Overview: Reflect and grow

• 20–30 minutes

After all steps are complete, guide Girl Scouts to think about how their third meeting went and their Junior Aide award experience as a whole, and to ask themselves how they've grown as a leader. Use the questions from the award guide to facilitate your conversation.

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