



Volunteer in Training (VIT)

Want to create real change? The Volunteer in Training award challenges you to think strategically and lead in ways that matter to *you*. You'll create experiences that open minds and build confidence in younger kids while making sure everyone is included.

Remember, these aren't just leadership skills—they're life skills that will take you far, whether you're organizing projects, leading teams, planning your future, or taking on new challenges. The world needs your leadership—start now!

Steps

1. Explore how you'd like to lead
2. Lead an activity
3. Lead your first meeting
4. Reflect and prepare
5. Lead your second meeting

Purpose

When I've earned this award, I will have developed skills in creating supportive environments for younger kids.

Getting Started

This award involves working with younger Girl Scouts (Daisies through Cadettes) or another youth group. Ask someone who leads younger kids (such as a troop or after-school club leader) to connect you with younger Girl Scouts or other youth. You might join troop meetings or any other local opportunities. You can earn this award on your own, or with a group of Seniors or Ambassadors.

Use this guide to help you earn your award. After each step, use the Volunteer in Training Plan template to capture your thoughts. You can write, sketch, take photos, or share your thoughts with someone you trust—whatever works for you!



Explore leadership and take the first big step toward the Gold Award. This award stands strong on its own—and it's a prerequisite for Gold!



Meeting tools and additional resources for leaders can be found within the Volunteer Toolkit on mygs.org.

Step 1: Explore how you'd like to lead

Learn how a leader inspires others and find techniques that work for you.

There are many ways to be a leader. You'll start this award by observing a meeting and thinking about the kind of leader *you* want to be. How will you teach, support, and inspire others? Before your first meeting, do some thinking and talk to the group's leader. Then, in the meeting, get to know the group—their interests, their personalities, and what brings them together. Your findings will help you fine-tune your approach.

In this step:

1. Get to know the GSLE. The **Girl Scout Leadership Experience** (GSLE) is the foundation for everything you've done and learned in Girl Scouting. It includes three core processes—girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning—that leaders throughout the Girl Scout Movement use when working with youth. It's a great way to teach others, whether they're Girl Scouts or not. Keep these three ideas in mind throughout this award.

- **Learning by doing:** Hands-on activities are more fun and help kids of all ages stay engaged, learning as they go.
- **Cooperative learning:** When groups learn together, they find out how to use respect, teamwork, and collaboration along the way.
- **Girl-led:** Youth follow their own lead, in a way that's adjusted for their age, which helps them build confidence. Kindergartners or first graders might choose from a few activity options; second or third graders might suggest new ideas or larger projects.

2. Talk to the group's leader before the meeting. What can they share with you about the group and how to lead it? If you're working with a Girl Scout troop, ask the leader how they incorporate the three processes of the GSLE. Ask for tips and share questions to find out the leader's strategies, from how they keep activities flowing and handle unexpected challenges to how they help create an inclusive environment and build their own confidence as a leader. Go over the setup process,

meeting agenda, and any needed preparation. Ask what else you can do to support the meeting.

3. Observe the group. During the meeting, pay attention to the group members. Get familiar with their behaviors, dynamics, individual personalities, and skills. Take notes on how they connect, which activities seem to energize (and which seem to bore) them, and anything else you learn. Notice how the leader interacts with the group—how do they give directions, support group members, and make sure everyone is engaged?

How Do You Like to Lead?

Every leader has different areas of strength.

Some leaders, for example, are great at giving clear instructions, while others excel at fostering teamwork—and that's just scratching the surface. Most leaders have multiple talents that help set a group's tone. What about you? How do you like to lead? Think about what you're really good at and how you can apply those skills in a leadership situation. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Breaking complex ideas into manageable steps
- Helping to create welcoming spaces where everyone belongs
- Finding creative solutions to unexpected challenges
- Staying focused when plans need to change
- Drawing out everyone to encourage participation

Remember, your natural strengths form your foundation, but that's just a start. Build on this base to become the leader you want to be. What new leadership skills would you like to develop?

Volunteer in Training Plan

*As you're filling out this worksheet, remember to keep your comments constructive!
The purpose of reflection is to learn and grow.*

Step 1: Explore how you'd like to lead

Learn how a leader inspires others and find techniques that work for you.

Before the meeting, find out from the leader...

Their experience in leading:

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Background on the group and group members:

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Meeting logistics (setup time, your role, and anything else to help you prepare):

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Teaching tips and ideas

Girl-led:

.....

Learning by doing:

.....

Cooperative learning:

.....

During the meeting, notice:

- When group members are most and least engaged
- Each group member's personality
- How the meeting moves from activity to activity

Spot moments of leadership:

- How instructions are shared
- How each person is included
- When and how support is given
- How problems are solved
- Anything else that helps the group!

Meeting notes:

Make general notes about anything you noticed, such as the group's interests, how the leader used techniques related to the GSLE, and ideas for how you'd like to support the group.

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Step 2: Lead an activity

Create an adventure for your group.

Now that you've laid some groundwork, it's time to brainstorm what you'll do with it. In this step, you'll plan and lead an activity. Your task as a leader is to think about not only *what* the group will be doing but also *how* you'll be leading them, incorporating the three core processes of the GSLE.

Follow these instructions to help you develop and facilitate an activity:

- 1. Develop two different activity ideas.** Think about activities you love, such as art projects, science experiments, or community service. It's always more fun to teach something you're passionate about! Consider what you know about the group and how you can keep everyone active and engaged.
- 2. Share your ideas with the group's leader.** Before the meeting, review your ideas with the group's leader and share how you'll lead the group through your activity options. Ask for feedback, make any needed adjustments, then choose the activity you'll lead. Next, review the meeting agenda, identify when and how you'll lead your section, and discuss how you'll help with any other parts of the meeting.
- 3. Practice and lead your activity.** Before the meeting, create your activity plan. Gather any materials and practice with friends or family to work out any kinks. Then lead your activity. You might be nervous, and that's totally okay! Remember that younger kids look up to older kids—they'll be excited to learn from you.

Tips for Using the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

Girl-led

- Include moments for the group to make choices that shape their experience.
- Let the group run parts of activities and share their skills.
- Remind the group that failure is okay—it's an opportunity to learn something new!
- Don't be afraid to shift your plans to accommodate what the group wants to do.
- Reflect with the group so they can share their experiences and think about what they've discovered.

Cooperative learning

- Work on activities and challenges in pairs, small groups, or all together, rather than individually.
- Draw on different talents—each member brings their own personality, skills, and interests to the group.
- Include moments for the group to share ideas, listen, and reflect on how they worked together.
- Mix up groups so everyone works with different people.
- Make every role count, whether someone is showing a skill, helping others, or trying something new.

Learning by doing

- Start with something that gets everyone moving and involved.
- Show a skill, then give everyone time to try it.
- Let others share what they know—it builds their confidence and adds to the fun.
- Ask for volunteers to help with demonstrations.
- Find ways to keep everyone involved.

Know Your Audience

Check out these quick tips for different age levels.

Daisies: Keep it moving! Think in terms of short activities, simple steps, and lots of songs and games.

Brownies: Mix it up with creative projects and small group activities.

Juniors: By this age, a group is ready for challenges and multistep projects.

Cadettes: Give them leadership roles within activities and watch them shine!

Planning Tips

- Have clear goals for each activity or meeting
- Consider how to adapt your plan for different abilities
- Address safety needs and recruit extra volunteers or experts when needed
- Make backup plans for what you'll do if an activity isn't running as planned

Volunteer in Training Plan

Step 2: Lead an activity

Create an adventure for your group.

Before the meeting, develop two different activity ideas.

After meeting with the group's leader, circle the activity you'll lead during the next meeting.

Activity idea	Why might this be fun?	How would I lead the activity?	Feedback from group leader

Then, prepare for the meeting by planning your chosen activity.

Meeting logistics (setup time, your role, and anything else to help you prepare):

Activity:

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Materials needed:

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-
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Activity steps:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Meeting notes:

Make general notes about the activity or meeting, such as what went well, how it felt to lead the activity, what you learned about the group, and ideas you have for the next meeting.

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Step 3: Lead your first meeting

Try it together; discover together.

Now that you've led an activity, it's time to stretch yourself by leading a full meeting! Remember to guide your group to learn new skills through hands-on participation (learning by doing). When the group practices, experiments, and figures things out on their own, the skills really stick.

In this step:

- 1. Create your meeting plan.** Build an agenda that includes activities, timing, and materials. Make backup plans in case something doesn't go as planned. Decide if you'll need extra volunteers and make a plan to recruit them. And don't forget to add ideas for how to take care of yourself along the way!
- 2. Prepare for your meeting.** Once your plan is complete, it's time to get ready. Make sure your instructions are clear and that your meeting includes hands-on moments. Get your space and materials ready. Check safety needs and connect with any helpers who will be joining you.
- 3. Lead your meeting.** Guide the group through your planned activity or activities. Take notes along the way.



Volunteer in Training Plan

Step 3: Lead your first meeting

Try it together; discover together.

Meeting goal(s):

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Meeting preparation:

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As you create your meeting plan, consider:

- What you want the group to learn or develop skills around
- What's fun, engaging, and relevant to the group's interests and experience
- Different techniques and activities, from games and songs to an art project or discussion
- Materials, volunteer support, and other resources
- Safety needs and concerns

Meeting agenda:

Start time	End time	Activity	Materials, volunteers, and other resources
.....	Opening activity:	.....
.....	Main activity:	.....
.....	Main activity:	.....
.....	Main activity:	.....
.....	Closing reflection:	.....

Girl Scout Leadership Experience: *How will you incorporate the three processes of the GSLE?*

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Other success strategies: *What will you do if something unexpected happens, for example if the group is distracted or an activity runs short? How can you take care of yourself to prepare to lead?*

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Step 4: Reflect and prepare

Use what you've learned to adjust your approach.

You have one meeting under your belt—way to go! Use that experience to inform any changes you want to make to your final meeting. Think about how you'll guide your group to learn new skills by working together.

In this step:

1. Reflect on your experience. Now that you've led your first meeting, use your learnings and any feedback to build your plan for your second meeting. Consider how you can support the group to collaborate and work together to reach your goals as a team.

2. Create your meeting plan and prepare.

Gather your materials, enlist volunteers, and do anything else necessary to prepare for the second meeting. Practice the activities and how you'll present them. Review any safety needs and prepare the space. See where you can incorporate additional moments that allow the group to lead, as well as a final reflection or celebration to end the meeting on a high note.



Volunteer in Training Plan

Step 4: Reflect and prepare

Use what you've learned to adjust your approach.

First, reflect on your experience leading a meeting. What will you do for the next meeting? How can you use your experience from the first meeting to plan an even better second meeting?

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Then, plan the next meeting.

Meeting goal(s):

Meeting preparation:

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Meeting agenda:

Start time	End time	Activity	Materials, volunteers, and other resources
.....	Opening activity:	.....
.....	Main activity:	.....
.....	Main activity:	.....
.....	Main activity:	.....
.....	Closing reflection:	.....

Step 5: Lead your second meeting

Put your group in charge.

For your second meeting, your primary goal is to apply everything you've learned about the GSLE. As much as you can, keep the meeting girl-led. Allowing youth to take the lead shows them how much they've grown and builds their confidence. And they're not the only ones—you've grown, too!

In this step:

- 1. Lead the meeting.** Get the ball rolling, then shift the focus to the group. Encourage them to take the lead and support their decisions and choices along the way.
- 2. Reflect as a group.** When the meeting's activities are complete, reflect as a group on the experience. Talk about what you've all learned and whether you achieved what you planned. Have your group consider and discuss how, going forward, they'll continue to use the skills they've learned.

Reflect and Grow

You've led, inspired, and navigated challenges while guiding your group. Take time to think about your experience and reflect upon...

- **What worked:** When did you see your group most energized and connected? How did you help create spaces where everyone felt they belonged?
- **What challenged you:** How did you handle moments that didn't go as planned? Which parts of leading pushed you to grow most?
- **What's different:** How has your view of leadership changed? What new insights do you have about guiding others and your personal strengths?
- **What's next:** How do you see yourself using these skills next? Which areas of leadership appeal to you?



Keep Going!

Now that you've earned this award, you can:

- Keep practicing leadership with other [Leadership Awards](#)
- Become a [Gold Award Girl Scout](#)

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Volunteer in Training Plan

Step 5: Lead your second meeting

Put your group in charge.

Ideas for leading reflection:

- **Create space to share feelings.** When your group checks in or reflects, find out how they're feeling in the moment, about the activity, or about the day in general. You might find a creative way to do this, such as asking them to choose an image related to their mood, describe how they feel as a type of weather, or simply share one "feeling" word for a group pulse check.
- **Reflection can happen at any time!** You might encourage the group to reflect at the start of, throughout, or at the end of the meeting. Taking time to think about what they know before an activity and reflect on what they've learned afterward helps the group better understand their experiences and apply that knowledge in the future.
- **Reflect on the past, present, and future.** Use a sharing exercise like "Rose, Bud, Thorn," where group members share a recent happening that's positive (rose), something challenging (thorn), and something that offers potential for growth/improvement (bud). Another reflection exercise is "What? So what? Now what?"—to help group members discuss what happened, why it's important, and what actions or changes can come next.

Meeting notes:

How was the second meeting? When were you most proud of the group? How did you support them to take the lead? How did the group reflect on what they learned?



Reflect & Grow

Take a moment to think about your experience and reflect on...

What worked?

What challenged you?

What's different?

What's next?