

## GSOC Guide for Leading Virtual Troop Meetings

Whether online or in-person, Girl Scouts provides girls with the vital space they need to connect with friends, build confidence, and learn new skills to help them thrive in school and beyond. Whether your troop needs to meet online due to busy schedules or local health guidance, there are many options to keep Girl Scouts going strong virtually and GSOC is here to help! This guide will give you the information you need to get comfortable with online meeting technology, keep girls engaged at every level from Daisies to Ambassadors, and provide ideas for sharing Girl Scout traditions in new and exciting ways.

### Getting Comfortable with the Tech

The decision to hold your troop meetings virtually creates exciting opportunities to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in a new way, but we also understand that it can sometimes come with new challenges and considerations.

1. To get started, you will want to review Girl Scouts of the USA's [Virtual Troop Meetings & Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). This Girl Scout resource will provide you with guidance for ensuring the privacy and safety of your troop and tips to on running a successful meeting.
2. Once you've reviewed GSUSA's guidance, you will need to select a video conferencing service for your troop. There are many low-cost/no-cost options out there. Ensure that your troop utilizes a video conferencing service that is accessible on all types of devices. For example, you may need to stay away from Face Time because not everyone has an Apple brand phone (Face Time is only available on iOS). Some options include:
  - [Zoom](#)
  - [Google Hangouts](#)
  - [Skype](#)
  - [Facebook](#)

Be sure to check out [Girl Scouts Virtual Meeting Resources](#).

### Preparing Your Virtual Space

Once you've selected your online meeting platform, you will want to prepare your home or office space, from which you will be streaming your meeting. Below are tips to help you get your space ready.

- Select a quiet place to conduct your online meeting with reliable internet access. *For optimal streaming, use a hardwire Ethernet cable to connect to your router; do not rely on home Wi-Fi.*
- Test out your camera and check the lighting in the location you have chosen. *For best lighting, you may want to be facing windows or natural light sources. Do not have windows or natural light sources behind you.*
- Make sure all of the materials for your meeting are organized and within reach. If you are guiding girls in a craft activity, you may want to look into getting a [desk-mount cell phone holder](#). This will allow you to log in on your computer and your phone at the same time. You can sit in front of your computer so your girls can see your face and use your cell

phone to show what you are doing with your hands. *Don't forget to mute and turn the sound off on your phone so you don't create an echo.*

- Make sure those present in your house know you are conducting a webinar and cannot be disturbed. If your children are going to be participating in the webinar, make sure they have rehearsed their roles. Consider cue cards for them. Practice the exact spots everyone should sit or stand to ensure you are in full view of the camera.

## **Keeping Girls Engaged**

*How do I keep my meetings girl-led in a virtual space?*

Keeping girls engaged during an online meeting can be challenging. Some may feel fatigue because they are participating in distance learning and spend many hours in a digital space. The best way to counter this is to keep things girl-led. Work with the girls to find out what they would like to do. How much time do they want to spend on Girl Scout program? Do they want to include time to just talk and connect?

Surveys and Polls: Use surveys and polls to find out what your girls would like to do. Many online platforms have a polling feature that allows you to set up multiple choice questions for the girls to respond to. If you don't want to set up a poll, keep it simple, talk about different options and have them raise their hand if a topic interests them. You could even have the girls submit emojis to the chat to show what they are most interested in.

If you have older girls, hand over the planning to them. Ask the girls to select an activity, it can be a badge or a game, make the plans for the meeting, and lead the rest of the troop.

*What if the girls are bored or not paying attention?*

This happens in every troop - even at in-person meetings. We recommend creating a troop agreement to set expectations for troop conduct during meetings. Common best practices include having the girls mute themselves if they are not talking to cut down on background noise or having them raise their hand if they would like to talk to avoid talking over one another.

As a troop leader, you have to be flexible. If you feel you are losing your audience, switch gears. Do not be afraid to change up the activities if the girls are getting restless or appear disengaged. You can also add a physical component that gets the girls up and moving to help get their ideas flowing.

Some examples of quick break activities include:

- *Scavenger Hunt:* Name a few common household objects and have the girls rush to find them.
- *Dance Break:* Put on a Girl Scout or age-appropriate song and have the girls sing and dance along.
- *Simon Says or other games:* Choose a game that involves movement and thinking on their feet.

At an in-person meeting, you may sing a song or use a call and answer to bring the girls back to focus when their attention wanders. This does not have to change. Keep these troop traditions going!

Some examples of easy chants to use with your troop:

- Leader: *Girl Scouts!*  
Girls: *Sisterhood!*
- Leader: *Ready Set!*  
Girls: *You bet!*
- Leader: *Macaroni and...*  
Girls: *Freeze!*

Be sure to check out [Girl Scouts Virtual Meeting Resources](#) for more ideas.

### **Keeping Families Engaged**

Family engagement is key to a successful troop, whether you are meeting in-person or virtually. To set your troop up for success, you will want to provide your families a clear understanding of how they can help the troop reach its goals and resources to support their girl in the troop setting.

We encourage you to set up a virtual parent meeting to share what the troop will be doing over the next few months, how parents/guardians can support their girl, and your advice for keeping meetings girl-led. When you are sharing your plan, make sure that the families know what platform you will be using for virtual meetings, how their girl will get supplies for activities (E.g., Will you send out a supply list ahead of time for them to gather or will a kit be provided for pick-up or delivery?), and specifics on how they will participate with their girl. The parent meeting is also a great time to ask families about skills they can lend to the troop. For example, if a parent is skilled in camping, they might record themselves discussing Leave No Trace or a packing list for a campout.

### **Planning Programming for Fun Activities & Traditions**

There are many things your troop can do in a virtual setting to keep the fun and traditions of Girl Scouts alive.

- Start every meeting with the [Girl Scout Promise and Law](#). *Keeping foundational traditions like this one going creates a sense of normalcy and routine for the girls.*
- Explore Girl Scout's robust program offering available on the [Volunteer Toolkit](#) – including 24 new badges introduced this year in the areas of automotive engineering, STEM career exploration, entrepreneurship, and civics!
- Let girls share their skills. Have each girl take a meeting to share a special skill with her Girl Scout sisters. For example, making origami, sharing a family recipe, or tying knots.
- “Go on a Field Trip”. Many museums have created virtual tours. Explore a new place that is far away and then make plans to visit there in the future! Take a look at our [Girl Scouts at Home page for ideas](#).
- Host a friendly competition. Host a drawing competition, a cupcake decorating contest, or have them paint a picture with their eyes closed. Reserve time for the girls to share positive feedback with each other.

Be sure to check out [Girl Scouts Virtual Meeting Resources](#) for more ideas.

## Planning Alternative Experiences to Engage Girls (no in-person or virtual meetings)

If your troop cannot meet in person or virtually there are several ways you can keep Girl Scouts going.

- Check out our [Girl Scouts at Home](#) page and send the activities to your girls to complete on their own.
- Put together badge kits for porch pick-up or drop off. Package materials for each of the girls with instructions for how to complete the activities.
- Work with the girls over email to select badges that they would like to complete with their parents and add the meeting plans to your Volunteer Toolkit. This will allow parent/guardians the ability to access the meeting plans and help their girls complete the required program pieces.

### Additional Resources:

- [Volunteer Toolkit](#)
  - **New!** The Volunteer Toolkit now features resources to help you with planning virtual meetings.
- [Girl Scouts at Home](#)
- [Girl Scouts Creativity at Home](#)
- [GSOC Virtual Activity Resource](#)
- [GSOC Upcoming Events](#)
- [National Virtual Events](#)

**Need additional support? We are here to help.**

You can contact us any time at [customercare@girlscoutsoc.org](mailto:customercare@girlscoutsoc.org)