

LET'S GO – YOUR FIRST TROOP MEETING!

The first troop meeting is always exciting! It is really where you will see the adventure of being a Girl Scout Troop Leader start to unfold. Remember to have fun! As you help the girls on their journey to discover, connect and take action in the world around them, those experiences will be a part of your Girl Scout journey too. Enjoy it!

Your first troop meeting is a great chance to:

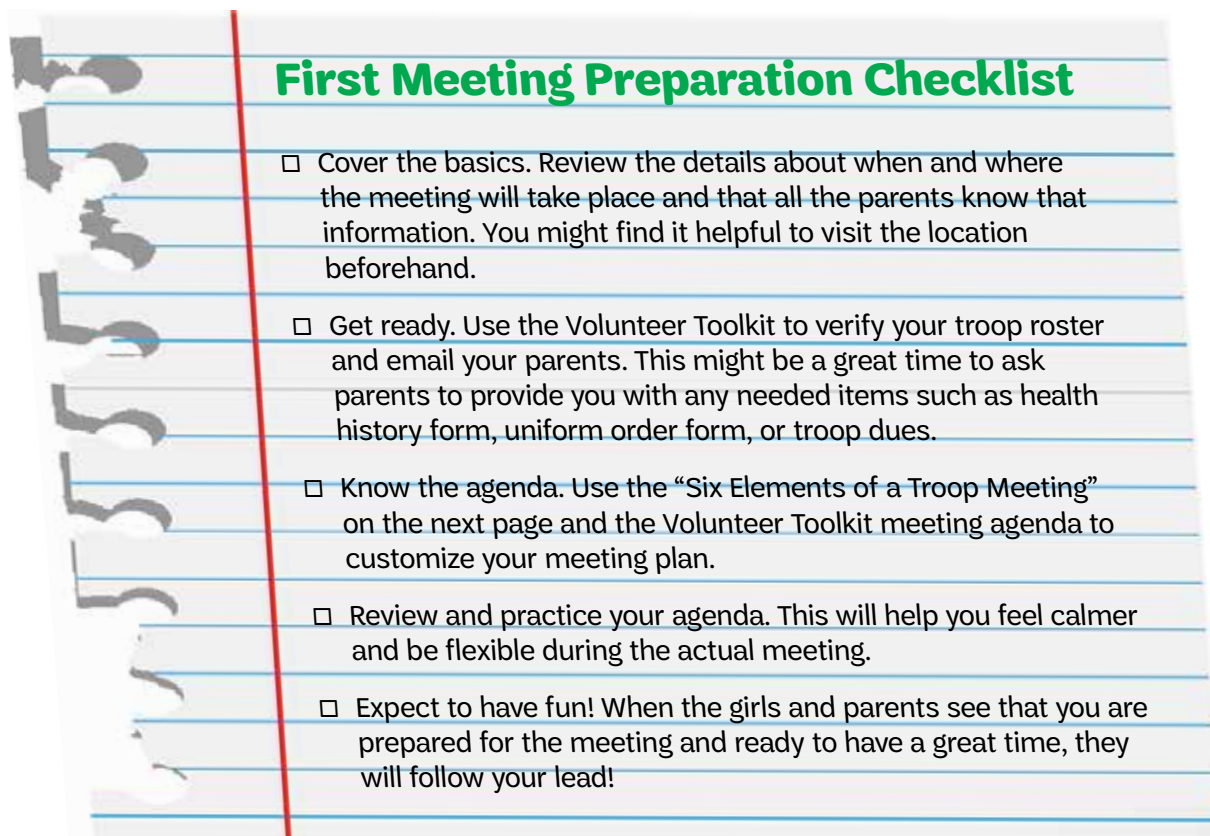
- **Get to know the girls!**
- **Brainstorm all of the exciting things the girls want to do this year.**
- **Introduce girls to Girl Scout traditions.**
- **Introduce the whole troop volunteer team to the girls and their parents/guardians.**

If you are feeling a little nervous about leading troop meetings and experiences with your girls – that's ok! Working directly with girls can be challenging at times but it is always rewarding and can be a lot of fun. As a Girl Scout Troop Leader you are encouraged to listen to the girls with an open-mind and lead them with your heart.

Many adults feel that, when working with kids, they have to be the expert and have everything perfect. But this is not the case in Girl Scouts. When preparing for your first (or any) troop meeting, keep these things in mind:

• **It doesn't need to be perfect.** – There are lots of resources with information and guidance to help you facilitate great troop meetings and experiences but you are encouraged to be creative. And, if you forget a part of the troop meeting or the field trip doesn't go the way you planned or you run out of time – that's ok! The girls aren't expecting perfection from you; your time, attention and guidance are the best part of your leadership.

• **Learn with your girls!** – As you use the girl-led process in the development of your troop's meetings and experiences, the girls will, at some point, want to earn a badge or complete a project in a subject unfamiliar to you. Be open with the girls when you don't know something but don't use that as a reason to keep them from exploring the topic or doing the project. Instead, become their partner in figuring out how to learn more. When they see you learning alongside them, their confidence in their current knowledge and skills as well as their ability to learn will rise. It will also help them to understand that learning is a lifelong process.



First Meeting Preparation Checklist

- Cover the basics. Review the details about when and where the meeting will take place and that all the parents know that information. You might find it helpful to visit the location beforehand.
- Get ready. Use the Volunteer Toolkit to verify your troop roster and email your parents. This might be a great time to ask parents to provide you with any needed items such as health history form, uniform order form, or troop dues.
- Know the agenda. Use the “Six Elements of a Troop Meeting” on the next page and the Volunteer Toolkit meeting agenda to customize your meeting plan.
- Review and practice your agenda. This will help you feel calmer and be flexible during the actual meeting.
- Expect to have fun! When the girls and parents see that you are prepared for the meeting and ready to have a great time, they will follow your lead!

6 ELEMENTS OF A GREAT TROOP MEETING

Most important – your meetings should be fun! Girls come to Girl Scouts to learn how to be leaders, make decisions, and have fun in the activities they choose.

- 1 Start Up** – Plan activities for girls as they arrive at the meeting so they have something to do until the meeting begins. It could be as simple as coloring pages, journaling or talking with each other. (5 minutes)
- 2 Opening** – Each troop decides how to open their meeting – most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. (5-10 minutes)
- 3 Activities** – Use the meeting plans found in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). Activities are already designed to fit easily into this part of your meeting as you help your troop earn badges and complete Journeys. (30-45 minutes)
- 4 Clean Up** – Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 minutes)
- 5 Closing** – Just like the opening, each troop can decide how to close – with a song, a game, or a story. (5-10 minutes)
- 6 Business** – Collect dues and make announcements, or plan an upcoming event or trip while parents/guardians are present – this gives you a chance to keep families informed. (5 minutes)

