

Annual Parent Meeting

Give a Girl Scout welcome

Kick off your meeting by introducing yourself and any co-leaders you'll be working with, and have each parent/caregiver introduce themselves. Depending on the size of your group, you might also have the parents say what they hope their girl will gain through Girl Scouting. It's an opportunity for you to not only get to know the adults in your troop, but to also get a sense of the kinds of activities that excite the larger group.

One of the best parts about Girl Scouting is the inclusive, welcoming environment, and as the troop's leader, you can set that tone for parents.

Introduce the world of Girl Scouts

Explaining the Girl Scout mission and the breadth of experiences the girls will enjoy is a great way to get all adults on the same page. Use volunteer training materials like the *Volunteer Essentials* handbook to explain Leadership Journeys to parents who aren't as familiar with the programming.

Set aside time for paperwork

You'll want to have enough copies of the Girl Health History & Emergency Medical Authorization, Meet My Daughter, Girl Membership Registration, and Photo Release forms for caregivers to complete at the meeting. Some experienced troop leaders have also found success in sharing a "troop contract" or "troop year charter" that tells parents exactly what to expect during the year.

Parents and caregivers will inevitably ask about dues, so have a list of costs ready, including dues, sash or vest, handbooks, and any other materials the girls may need during their troop year. If your troop is participating in the cookie program, let parents know how cookie sales work and how sales can help fund troop activities.

Remember cost should never be a barrier for girls to participate in Girl Scouts. We are happy to make arrangements as needed.

Set expectations

Teamwork makes the dream work, and your parent volunteers can help your troop dream big. Be prepared to share a list of specific tasks that you'll need help with throughout the year—troop snacks, carpooling, managing the troop's social media and communications—and note the time required for each so parents know what to expect. Some may be surprised that some recurring tasks will only take about 15 minutes of their time each week!

You can also take this opportunity to specify how parents can use their unique skills and strengths to pitch in. And while you might not go as far as setting up a Kaper chart for the caregivers in your troop, the principle is the same. Rotating volunteer tasks eases the burden on specific people and spreads the work evenly.

Close your meeting, with intention

Leave time for any questions before you officially close the meeting, and let parents and caregivers know how you'll stay in touch. Remind the group that by actively sharing in troop life, they're also modeling what leadership looks like for their girls!