

Short and Snappy – Camping? Yes please!

Objective

To highlight research-based benefits of camping and provide volunteers with tips for getting outside!

Length

20-25 minutes

Materials Needed

Pencils and paper

Information to Share (spend 10 minutes on this section)

Why do Girl Scouts Camp? We've taken research-backed data from the Girl Scout Institute and combined it with experienced insights to come up with a list of benefits of, and reasons for, camping with girls!

1. **Making memories** – According to the Girl Scout Research Institute (2014: 24), girls say camping is “their number-one most memorable outdoor experience in Girl Scouts.” Girls involved in this study described their most memorable experiences using words like “fun,” “activities,” “play,” “friends,” “learn,” “cooking,” and “troop.” These memories are made through meaningful camp experiences, such as campfire stories, Scouts' Own ceremonies, active programming (hiking, boating, etc.), cooking, and reflection activities such as making a camping scrapbook with the troop.
2. **Learning new skills** – Camping provides the opportunity for skills building in multiple areas, including fires, cooking, environmental stewardship, survival, and self-sufficiency, among others.
3. **De-stress and reconnect** – Getting outside and camping helps both the girls and the adults de-stress, relax, and reconnect. There is time for fun, play, relaxation, and reflection, and the natural environment helps girls to open up.
4. **Empowers girls** – Girls are given the opportunity to show off new skills and feel self-sufficient through setting up camp, cooking, and carrying out challenging activities.
5. **Attention restoration** – Time outside improves concentration and creative reasoning among both children and adults!
6. **Promotes leadership** – Time in nature gets girls out of their comfort zones, experiencing new physical, social, and psychological situations that require girls to become more self-aware, cooperative, problem-solving, and communication oriented. (E.g. having to start a fire in the rain or using orienteering skills on a hike)
7. **Overcomes fears** – Outdoor experiences offer challenges that help girls take risks and overcome their fears – such as fear of water, heights, or wildlife – through activities like backpacking, rock climbing, kayaking, hiking, and even just sleeping outside.
8. **Involving everyone** – Girls are equally involved in the planning and facilitation of camping. From brainstorming to kaper charts, everyone gets to lead!
9. **Developing a sense of Environmental Stewardship** – Through camping, girls are taught to value their environment. Not only do they experience and enjoy first-hand the benefits of nature's beauty, they are also taught to Leave no Trace, use resources wisely, and respect their surroundings.
10. **Encourages physical play** – In the outdoors, girls can be messy, make noise, and move physically (e.g. running, hiking, jumping, etc.). This develops movement capability and confidence, **creating the foundation for a physically active and healthy lifestyle.**

Information to Share (continued)

Watch [these videos](#) and take [Troop Camping 101](#) training to find out more about camping with girls:

<http://www.girlscouts.org/en/adults/volunteer/volunteer-resources/outdoor-resources.html>

Make sure to check and follow the policies found in Volunteer Essentials before planning your camping trip.

References Cited:

Girl Scout Research Institute. More than S'mores: Successes and Surprises in Girl Scouts' Outdoor Experiences. New York: Girl Scouts of the USA, 2014. Print.

Activity (spend 10-15 minutes on this section)

1. Have everyone write down 5 things to try on your next Girl Scout camping trip on a quarter sheet of paper, fold it up, and put it in a hat/jar.
2. Shake it up, and have everyone draw out a paper.
3. Go around the room sharing the ideas by reading the paper drawn. Discuss as many ideas as you can in your allotted time. As the facilitator, make sure to point out any safety policies and precautions related to the ideas brought up in the discussion.
4. When finished, ask participants to share their most memorable outdoor experiences with girls.





Outdoor Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent in the outdoors, including how to plan and organize outdoor activities. Acknowledge a girl's mastery of an outdoor skill and invite her to challenge herself further by taking that next step up and out! Outdoor fun can be endless when girls lead.

Adventure Out

Plan and take an outdoor trip for several days.

- Learn and practice a new outdoor skill.
- Learn a new outdoor cooking skill.
- Develop first-aid skills and use safety check points.
- Budget, schedule, and make arrangements.
- Participate in an environmental service project.
- Teach and inspire others about the outdoors.
- Imagine new experiences to be had outdoors.
- Practice all Leave No Trace principles.

Camp Out

Plan and take a 1- to 2-night camping trip.

- Take more responsibility for planning.
- Learn and practice a new outdoor skill.
- Learn a new outdoor cooking skill.
- Plan a food budget, then buy and pack food.
- Practice camp-site set up.
- Plan an agenda that includes fun activities.
- Explore/protect the surrounding environment.

Sleep Out

Plan and carry out an overnight in a cabin/backyard.

- Discuss what to pack for the sleep out.
- Learn to use and care for camping gear.
- Learn and practice new outdoor skills.
- Plan a menu with a new cooking skill.
- Discuss campsite organization.
- Plan time for fun activities.

Cook Out

Plan and cook a simple meal outdoors.

- Make a list of gear and food supplies needed.
- Learn and practice skills needed to cook a meal.
- Review outdoor cooking safety.
- Practice hand and dish sanitation.
- Create a Kaper Chart for the cookout.

Explore Out

Plan and take a short and easy hike.

- Discuss what to take in a day pack.
- Dress for the weather.
- Plan a healthy snack or lunch.
- Learn how to stay safe in the outdoors.

Move Out

Plan and take a short walk outside.

- Discuss being prepared for the weather.
- Do activities to explore nature.
- Plan and carry out an indoor sleepover.

Meet Out

Step outside to look, listen, feel, and smell.

- Share what was observed.
- Learn more about what was discovered.

Look Out

Share past experiences in the outdoors.

- Talk about favorite outdoor places and why they're special.
- Wonder what else can be seen in the outdoors.

LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES:

Plan Ahead & Prepare

Leave What You Find

Respect Wildlife

Minimize Campfire Impacts

Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

Dispose of Waste Properly

Be Considerate of Other Visitors