Girl Scout Tradition: Bridging (Narrative)



**Planning Ahead.**

**Start thinking of Bridging requirements now!**

If you have girls that are in the last year of a specific grade level, for example, 1st grade Daisy, 3rd grade Brownie or 5th grade Junior Girl Scouts, then bridging is the next step to look forward to. Bridging marks a girl’s transition from one leadership level to the next. There are bridging awards that can be earned. As girls complete the activities, they gain the feeling of accomplishment and are ready for new adventures and responsibilities that the next level of Girl Scouting will offer them.

 There are two steps to bridging:

* **Step 1: Pass it On**: Inspire younger girls by sharing your experiences
* **Step 2: Look Ahead**: Find out what the next grade level brings

**Step one**: girls share with a younger age of girls what they do as a Girl Scout. They can do an activity with them from a badge they had worked on. They can show them their uniform and what will be different when the younger girls bridge up.

**Step 2**: girls met with girls from a troop that is the next level above them. They get to hear what those girls have done and what the future holds for them.

After these steps are completed, the girls have earned the Bridging to Girl Scout award. Each level has an arch that they can wear on the next levels uniform.

**Question for group:** Who has done the bridging activities with their troop in the past? Share what they did to prepare for bridging.

**Finding a troop to earn the Bridging to Girl Scouts**. At your Leader Meeting, break into groups by age level. Which ones will be bridging? Which ones will be willing to work with the troops that are bridging? Then look around and see which of the older and younger troops would be willing to meet with your girls and complete the two steps. It is fun for the girls to go to the younger girls meeting and talk to them about what their experiences have been, and then have the bridging girls go to an older troop meeting to see how their troop operates.

 First full week of May is **National Bridging Week**. This nationwide event encourages councils and service units to celebrate their accomplishments from this year at a ceremony during this week. GSEIWI will be hosting eight Bridging to Brownies in various locations around the council. Check our activities calendar for this Daisy event in your area. And work with your CEM to have a ceremony as well.

Girl Scout Tradition: Bridging (Handout)



Here are five Dos and Dont’s for a great end-of-year troop celebration.

1. Do or Don’t do a bridge?

A bridge can be a symbol of the event but you don’t have to have an actual bridge if none are available. There are lots of ways to simulate a bridge and still provide a memorable experience for your troop.

Use balloons or streamers. You just need to get balloons in rainbow colors and attach weights to the balloons. Make a corridor with either the balloons at the same height or arched by tying the balloons at different heights. Or go outside in a park and find a real bridge to use!

2. DO include food.

This is a celebration and whether it’s a full-fledged dinner or just coffee and cake the girls will appreciate it. Some troops do a pot-luck with the parents signing up for a side dish or dessert while the troop provides the main course. If your troop is smaller, cupcakes in Girl Scout colors may be the right choice.

3. DO include some sage words

Include some sage words in your script as each level begins their actual physical bridging. You can reference the accomplishments the girls have made at their current level and then expand on the increased opportunities, responsibilities and awards that will be available to them at the next level.

There are lots of sample ceremony scripts online that you can use or modify for your troop. Pinterest or Google bridging for ideas

4. DO give some recognition to your parents or volunteer helpers.

Every troop has at least a few parents, grandparents, etc who help with badges, chauffeur girls to/from events or oversee camping kapers.

5. And finally, DO include the girls.

I know that it can be difficult to take the time and energy to have the girls contribute to the bridging ceremony but it will be worth it in the end. If you have a younger troop their input may be limited to choosing the design of invitations that the girls make for their parents. On the other hand, troops at the Cadette level and above can certainly help with the agenda and other specifics of the ceremony. As the troop leader, you will know how best to include your girls so that they will feel a sense of ownership and pride in the ceremony.

In the end, don’t place undue pressure on yourself to manufacture a once-in-a-lifetime event – the stress is not worth it. We know that friends and family members are going to be present and we want to produce a meaningful ceremony but at the end of the day, you’re celebrating the girls and their accomplishments.