**Girl Scout Traditions (Narrative)**

***Sharing traditions with millions of Girl Scouts—and the huge network of Girl Scout alumnae who came before them—helps remind girls they belong to a big, powerful sisterhood.***

*Ask the group***: *“Who can name some Girl Scout Traditions?”*** *See if they match up with those listed below. Ask those that mentioned the traditions to talk about them and fill in as needed.*

[*The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/girlsguide/) features seven Legacy [badges](http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/home/badges) that build on 100+ years of Girl Scout history. Each of these badges (Artist, Athlete, Citizen, Cook, First Aid, Girl Scout Way, and Naturalist), is available at five levels of Girl Scouting, from Brownie to Ambassador. *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting* also offers **vintage illustrations and quotes from Girl Scout history** to help girls feel connected to the proud traditions of the past.

Girls can participate in [ceremonies](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/traditions/ceremonies/) honoring **Founder's Day** also known as[**Juliette Low's**](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/history/low_biography/) **Birthday**, October 31. This valued Girl Scout tradition is a time to remember the important role Juliette Gordon Low played in the development of the Girl Scout movement in the United States. Girls might even plan a trip to the **Juliette Gordon Low** [**Birthplace**](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/history/birthplace) in Savannah, Georgia.

**Girl Scout Week** is another special time to mark the first Girl Scout meeting which started in Savannah, Georgia on March 12, 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low. We celebrate each year with a week of activities. You can find out more by going to GS Week under [resources](http://girlscoutstoday.org/volunteers/resources/celebrations/gs-week) on our website.

April 22 is another traditional date known as **Girl Scout Leader’s Day**, where we honor all of our Girl Scout volunteers.

Here are a few other popular traditions for Girl Scouts to enjoy:

Girl Scouts make the **Girl Scout sign** when they say the Girl Scout Promise. The three fingers represent the three parts of the Promise.

The **Girl Scout motto** is "Be prepared." In the 1947 *Girl Scout Handbook*, the motto was explained this way: "A Girl Scout is ready to help out wherever she is needed. Willingness to serve is not enough; you must know how to do the job well, even in an emergency." The same ideas are true today.

The **Girl Scout slogan**, which has been used since 1912, is "Do a good turn daily." The slogan is a reminder of the many ways girls can contribute positively to the lives of others.

Girl Scouts can greet each other with the **Girl Scout handshake**, used by Girl Scouts and Girl Guides all over the world. The handshake is made by shaking hands with the left hand and making the Girl Scout sign with the right. The left hand is nearest to the heart and signifies friendship.

The **friendship circle** stands for an unbroken chain of friendship with Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world. Everyone stands in a circle, crosses their right arms over their left, and clasps hands with their friends on both sides. Everyone makes a silent wish as a **friendship squeeze** is passed from hand to hand.

**SWAPS**, the tradition of Girl Scouts exchanging keepsakes, started long ago when Girl Scouts and Girl Guides first gathered for fun, song, and making new friends. SWAPS were first widely exchanged at national Girl Scout Senior Roundups in the 1950s and 1960s. Today, SWAPS are still the perfect way for Girl Scouts to meet one another and promote friendship. Each one reflects a memory of a special event or Girl Scout sister.

**Ceremonies are all important in Girl Scouting. What are other ceremonies can you name?** *Ask when each is done, and what makes it special. Listed below are**traditional ceremonies with explanation if needed.*

**Important Ceremonies in Girl Scouting  
 Flag ceremonies**: It is a tradition for Girl Scouts to perform a flag ceremony at their troop meetings or at their schools, special events or other occasions.

**Bridging ceremonies**mark a girl's move from one level of Girl Scouting to another.

A **Fly-Up** is a bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies bridging to Girl Scout Juniors. Girls receive the Girl Scout pin along with their Brownie wings.

A **Highest Awards Ceremony** honors Girl Scouts who have earned Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

**Girl Scouts' Own** is a girl-planned program that allows girls to explore their feelings around a topic, such as friendship or the Girl Scout Promise and Law, using spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other expressions. It is never a religious ceremony.

**Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Girl Scout Brownie, or Girl Scout Daisy pin at this time.

**Journey ceremonies** honor Girl Scouts who have earned the final award along a Journey. The ceremonies are usually held at the troop/group level and invite the girls to develop a themed celebration of their Journey, often including friends and family.

**Opening ceremonies** start the Girl Scout meeting.

**Pinning ceremonies** help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.

**Rededication ceremonies** are an opportunity for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

*After completing this Grab & Go, pass out handout.*

**Girl Scout Traditions: Handout**



In March of 1912, Juliette Gordon Low organized the first Girl Scout troop to prepare girls to meet the world with courage, confidence, and character. With over 100 years of history, Girl Scouts has taken on quite a few traditions. Here are some awesome traditions you can take part in to celebrate Girl Scouts!

**Slogan & Motto**

**The Girl Scout slogan**, used since 1912, is “Do a good turn daily.” The slogan is a reminder of the many ways that girls can contribute positively to others every day.

**The Girl Scout Motto** is “Be prepared.” A 1947 Girl Scout Handbook explains, “A Girl Scout is ready to help out wherever she is needed. Willingness to serve is not enough; you must know how to do the job well, even in an emergency.” Decades later, Girl Scouts still follow the same example.

**The Girl Scout Sign**

**The Girl Scout Sign** is a symbol used by Girl Scouts around the world to gather attention, open a meeting, or to show support for Girl Scouting everywhere. To make the sign, raise your right hand and hold up the number three. While making your three, make sure that your thumb is holding your pinky finger, imagining how the strong protect the weak. Now, squeeze your three fingers together to show how Girl Scouts stick together!

**The Girl Scout Promise & Law**

The Girl Scout sign comes in handy (get it?!) when reciting [**The Girl Scout Promise**](http://www.gswo.org/content/gswo/en/about-girl-scouts/who-we-are.html). The Promise is said at the beginning of each meeting while flashing the Girl Scout sign proudly, and standing up as straight as can be. Your three fingers in the Girl Scout sign also symbolize the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise. The last line of the Promise agrees to live by the **Girl Scout Law**. Girl Scouts promise to be honest, friendly, courageous, respectful, and responsible.

Girl Scout Law

*I will do my best to be*  
honest and fair,  
friendly and helpful,  
considerate and caring,  
courageous and strong, and  
responsible for what I say and do,  
*and to*  
respect myself and others,  
respect authority,  
use resources wisely,  
make the world a better place, and  
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Girl Scout Promise

*On my honor, I will try:*  
To serve God and my country,  
To help people at all times,  
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

**Greeting**

Girl Scouts recognize each other by doing the **Girl Scout Handshake** when they meet. To do this, hold up the Girl Scout sign with your right hand, and shake hands with your left. Your left hand is closer to your heart, which signifies your new friendship. The handshake is used by Girl Scouts and Girl Guides all over the world, so no matter where you go, you can always introduce yourself and make a new friend!

**Friendship Circle**

Girl Scouts end their meetings with a**friendship circle.**The troop stands in a circle crossing their right arms over their left and takes the hand of each friend beside them. This circle represents the unbroken chain of friendship with Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world. A light**friendship squeeze** is passed from hand to hand while everyone sings “Make New Friends.”

**Badges**

[Badges](https://www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/uniforms/insignia-list.html) give girls the opportunity of exploring their interests and learning new skills while showing the world all that she’s accomplished. The seven legacy badges are built on over 100 years of Girl Scout history. These seven (Artist, Athlete, Citizen, Cook, First Aid, Girl Scout Way, and Naturalist) are available at five levels of Girl Scouting, from Brownie all the way up to Ambassador. New badges and opportunities are added every year, so no matter what your girl is interested in, there’s a badge for that!

**Uniforms**

When girls earn badges, they need to put them somewhere! That’s where [**uniforms**](https://www.girlscoutshop.com/GIRLS/UNIFORMS) come in. For over a century, Girl Scouts have proudly worn distinctive uniforms that symbolize the high ideals for which the organization stands. Girls want to look—and feel—their best when representing Girl Scouts. Girl Scouts at each level wear one required element (tunic, sash, or vest) to display official pins and awards. Girls can mix and match pieces from the official Girl Scout collection to complete the uniform, or add items from their own wardrobes.

**SWAPS**

Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere, or**SWAPS,**are small tokens of friendship that girls share with other Girl Scouts they meet while traveling. SWAPS can be handmade and should tell something about the givers or their group. They should also represent where the givers’ are from, like their country, community, local Girl Scout council or troop.

**Ceremonies**

Celebrating is fun and **ceremonies** help Girl Scouts mark special events throughout the year. Ceremonies can commemorate accomplishments or simply added to the start or end of a meeting. Quite a few [Girl Scout ceremonies](https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/traditions/ceremonies.html) have already been established, but girls can always create their own! Whatever they’re celebrating, ceremonies allow girls to be involved in Girl Scout history and traditions while creating special memories of their own.

**Special Days in Girl Scouting**

Continue making memories by also celebrating some of these big dates in Girl Scouting throughout the year!

* October 31 is **Founder’s Day**. In 1860, founder of Girl Scouts of the USA [Juliette Gordon Low](https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-history/juliette-gordon-low.html) was born in in Savannah Georgia.
* [**World Thinking Day**](https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/global/world-thinking-day.html)**,** February 22, is when Girl Scouts of the USA and the [World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts](https://www.wagggs.org/en/) (WAGGGS) celebrate together by taking part in activities that promote changing the world for the better.
* On March 12 we celebrate**Girl Scouts’ birthday**. It’s when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the first 18 girl members in Savannah, Georgia of 1912. Actually, we celebrate the whole week! **Girl Scout Week** starts on a Sunday and ends with Girl Scout Sabbath on Saturday, always including Girl Scouts’ birthday.
* **Girl Scout Leader’s Day** falls on April 22. This day honors all the hard-working volunteers that serve as leaders and mentors in partnership with girls. Girls, their families, and communities find special ways to [thank their adult Girl Scout volunteers](https://www.girlscouts.org/en/adults/volunteer/volunteer-appreciation.html).
* Every three years we celebrate the **Girl Scouts’ national convention**. G.I.R.L. 2017 was held in Columbus, Ohio. The next one will convene in Orlando, Florida of 2020. Stay tuned for details!

Traditions are an important part of Girl Scouts. They give Girl Scouts a sense of history—and inspire them to be the best they can be. Sharing traditions with millions of Girl Scouts—and the huge network of Girl Scout alums who came before them—helps remind girls they belong to a big, powerful sisterhood.