SWAPS (Narrative)

Ask the participants: ***Have you have ever heard of SWAPS?***

Ask participants: ***Can anyone name what S.W.A.P. S. stands for*?**

* The origin of SWAPS is Native American. Potlatch is the ceremonial exchange of gifts practiced by Native Americans of Northwest Coastal tribes.
* SWAPS stands for “Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere” or “Share With A Pal” or “Share With Another Person”.
* 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. Quite popular for many years, SWAPS were widely exchanged at national Girl Scout Senior Roundups in the 1950's and 1960's. The practice faded in popularity, but is now popular again.
* SWAPS are exchanged anywhere scouts get together: day camp, resident camp, council events, Destinations, or National GSUSA events, and even at international events/locations.

Ask participants: *“****Why SWAP?****”*

* Girl Scout SWAPS are an easy, fun, inexpensive craft that a Scout can create to ***express her unique self***, tell a story about her troop, represent her country, community, or local Girl Scout council, or commemorate an event. Always fun, SWAPS are a great way for a Girl Scout to express her creativity, make new friends, and make special memories.
* SWAPS are handmade, thus the girl is giving a part of herself to show friendship.
* SWAPS allow a girl too have a chance/learn to talk to other people, to give and receive mementos of a good time, and to share something about where she lives, what she does, and what she likes.

Ask participants: *“****What else can you do with SWAPS?****”*

* Include SWAPS with thank-you letters to sponsors and those who helped them travel or go to an event.
* Make a display or scrapbook for travel night or troop visits.
* Keep SWAPS in a memory box or shadow box.
* Make a quilt using swaps.
* Put pins and patches on a hat or jacket.

Some standard items used to make SWAPS:

Pom-poms, nut shells, bottle caps, felt, ribbon, mini and/or regular size clothespins, beads (small and pony), safety pins, and of course some paper/cardstock/construction paper for a tag for your contact info/troop#/etc.

The idea is not for a SWAP to be expensive to make, nor extremely complicated, but to be ‘heartfelt’.

At large events, it is NOT necessary to make enough to share with everyone attending, but to make enough to share and give out while meeting people from other places. A SWAP could even be thought of as a way to start a ‘PEN PAL’ friendship.

Let’s take a look at the handout and make a very simple SWAP!!

SWAPS (Handout)

**Special Whatchamacallit Affectionately Pinned Somewhere**

**or**

**Share With Another Person**

**or**

**Share With A Pal**

**What Is A SWAP?**

A SWAP is a small item/token to share with/trade with/give to another Scout at a gathering of Scouts. SWAPs should reflect something about the giver (a special interest or hobby or characteristic or location). Try to think of sharing something that reflects you in some way. SWAPs are usually “pinnable” onto a sash, vest, or hat. SWAPs often have a tag identifying the giver (troop, service unit, or council) and something about the SWAP itself (a saying or explanation). SWAPs can be exchanged at multi-troop, service unit, or council meetings such as camps, a Juliette Gordon Low birthday party, or on World Thinking Day.

Try not to spend a lot of money. Consider making something from donated or recycled material.

Be creative, and take time to make hand-crafted swaps. Make swaps that can be worn, used, or displayed.

Keep swaps in a memory box or shadow box, or put pins and patches on a hat or jacket.

**SWAP Etiquette**

Swap face-to-face, especially if exchanging addresses or e-mail information.

Follow all *Safety Activity Checkpoints* guidelines.

Avoid using glass and sharp objects in SWAPs.

Avoid using food products, unless they are individually wrapped.

Never refuse to swap with another person.

Meet the person you are giving the SWAP to (learn her/his name, where s/he is from, what level if a girl, or how long s/he has been a Girl Scout, what they like most about that place/event or about scouting, etc.):

that’s why you **SHARE** the SWAP and why it is **SPECIAL**).

And now for some fun - carefully tear out the box on the left and make one of the suggestions on the back of this handout!

There are also some tag/label ideas you could either write on the SWAP or on its tag!

All you need to provide to complete the SWAP is a pin!

(NOTE: Origami paper is traditionally thin, but if using for a SWAP, heavier weight paper would be better.)

Suggestion Number 1: **A Fan**!

Write on the folds or on the tag “*Girl Scouts Is Cool!*” or “*Be Cool! Be A Girl Scout!*” or something similar!

1. Pleat the paper accordion style. The number of pleats you make depends on how large/wide you make them, but try to keep them even and not really large.
2. Compress the pleats into a tight stack. Flare open the top end while you pinch and hold the bottom section. This forms a fan shape.
3. Attach a pin to the base, along with a tag identifying yourself and/or your troop, and possibly even the year or event.

markings for step 1 step 2

 folds

   

Suggestion Number 2: **A Plane**!

Write on the tag “*Girl Scouts Soar!* or “*Girl Scouts Fly High*” or something similar!

Or make your own favorite type of paper airplane.

