

GIRL SCOUTS OF THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

LEADER'S GUIDE TO EIGHT BASIC CAMPING SKILLS

Before you begin to use this program with your troop or camp unit, please read this page.

This four level program has been developed to help every girl and leader gain a basic foundation in outdoor skills, so that together they can find the fun of camping and outdoor life.

The award for the completion of these skills is a round patch with four segments. When Level I is completed, the patch and the first segment may be awarded and worn. With the completion of Levels II, III, and IV, the appropriate segments may be added.

Everyone, from Brownies through adult, begins with Level I and continues at their own pace. Brownies and Juniors may earn their segments in day camps, established camps, or in their own troops. Cadettes, Seniors, and adults may earn them in the same way or by teaching these same skills to a camp unit or troop.

Each level must be completed before the next level is begun. It is best if the girls see only the requirements for the level on which they are working.

Some of these requirements may overlap with some Brownie Try-Its, Junior Badges and Cadette/Senior Interest Projects. That's fine. It just means one more chance for the girl to practice and apply her skills.

GENERAL HINTS: To the leader, program aide, consultant, or whoever is helping others to earn this Patch.

These guides are merely ideas and suggestions that may help you in working with the girls to carry out a program featuring the 8 basic camping skills. Use this as an additional resource.

Use resources...a list of publications that can help you is on the back of this page. People who can help you include the camp first aider or school nurse, older Girl Scouts, troop consultants, fathers, neighbors, other troop leaders, etc.

Develop skills...your own and the girls'. Some activities need to be done more than once, like practicing a knot. Make sure the girls are learning by doing, not just by listening. Try to get every girl to participate in the activity and the discussions.

Using this program is optional...you don't have to do a whole level in one week or one month. You can take all year with a group of 7-8 year old Brownies. With 11-year-old Juniors you might complete a whole level in 3 days of day camp or on one weekend campout. Cadettes might finish Level I & II quickly, but spend much longer on Level III or IV. It's just one way to help us all grow in the out-of-doors.

Eight Basic Camping Skills - Level I - Leader's Guide Sheet

These are basic steps to help a girl get acquainted with skills needed to be resourceful, happy, and comfortable in the out-of-doors.

1. Discuss with girls that good manners mean caring for the feelings of others. Leaving your litter behind is not considerate. A Scout always leaves her campsite better than she found it.
2. Have girls explain how they should dress for different situations, like a day at the beach, a rain hike, a windy bike ride, a summer picnic, etc. Keep health & safety in mind when discussing proper shoes, and sleeves to prevent sunburn.
3. A square knot is used for tying two ends together when both ropes are of about the same thickness. Practice tying and releasing the knot until the girls can do it fairly fast. Knots are shown in Brownie and Junior Handbooks. Try a knot-tying relay (i.e. closing flaps on tents, tying a bandanna).
4. Keep safety in mind when using a knife of any kind. Give every girl a chance to open, close, and pass a knife safely. All Brownies may not be strong enough to open a knife themselves, but they should learn to handle them correctly because they will need to use knives in simple cooking. Have them practice with a buddy, ensuring girls are far enough apart so their arms do not reach each other. Good descriptions are in the Junior Handbook and Outdoor Education in Girl Scouting.
5. Always stress the importance of preventing accidents, for instance running may lead to skinned knees or disturbing bees may lead to being stung. Learn first aid for a skinned knee and a bee sting.
6. Choose a safe spot to build a fire. Fires burn upward. Don't ever build one under low or overhanging branches. Make sure the ground area is clear of things like leaves, dry grass, twigs, etc.
The best place for fires is in designated fire rings or park stove. Long hair should be in braids, or tied back to keep it from catching fire. (This is also good to do to keep the hair out of the food when the girls cook.) See Safety - Wise for more tips.
7. Prepare a meal that needs no fire. Here are some ideas to get you started, friendship salad made of cut fruit and a sack of mini marshmallows; celery sticks stuffed with peanut butter, cream cheese, or cheese spreads; sandwiches - think of different kinds of breads, rolls, buns, bagels, or even open face; raw vegetables; desserts like graham crackers spread with frosting made from mix or a can, or fill cones with instant pudding, or homemade ice cream; mix up some punch to top it off.
8. Discuss with the girls how trees and plants help us. Ideas - shade, food, furniture, beauty, animal homes, paper, fuel, toothpicks, flood control, oxygen, building material, toys, smog absorber. As an outdoor activity, choose a community area (i.e. park center, recreation area) in which to plant a tree or shrub.

Eight Basic Camping Skills - Level II - Leader's Guide Sheet

1. Safety means walking on sidewalks, crossing with the light, walk facing traffic when there are no sidewalks, crossing together as a group--not all strung out. Do not obstruct the sidewalk. Girls should walk with a buddy. It is a good idea to have the girls count-off and keep the same number for a hike, then it is easy to check the girls when you leave and arrive at each rest or lunch stop. Always keep yourself very visible; wear bright colors by day, white by night. It is also best to carry a light at night, but do not aim it at drivers eyes which blinds them; keep the light aimed below driver's line of vision. Have whole troop get up and take a walk to practice some of the things discussed above.
2. Dress in several layers of clothing. As the day warms it is easy to peel off a layer or two and add them back on in the evening. The layers also serve to trap body heat and are often warmer than one heavy garment. Always take a hat for sun protection and heat retention. Girls might want to have a "fashion show" using the layering technique.
3. Review the square knot from level one and add the clove hitch. A clove hitch is used to put up a clothesline, tie the end of a rope around a pole or tree, and to start lashing.
4. Clean a knife by washing with water and drying with a soft cloth. Never clean a knife in the dirt or sand. To sharpen a knife, use a sharpening stone which has been lubricated with oil or water before using. Always keep blade pointed away from body. Practice with a buddy.
5. Talk with girls about preventing cuts and burns. Cuts should be washed well with soap and water, and covered. Minor burns should be put in cool water quickly. More severe burns should be treated by a doctor immediately. Girls should practice what to do if someone's clothing catches fire ("stop, drop, and roll"). American Red Cross offers basic first aid training; consult your trained first aider when reviewing first aid practice.
6. Safety equipment for fires consists of a bucket of water, a bucket of sand, and a shovel. It's a good idea to have a box of baking soda near by. The A-frame foundation is to hold the kindling off the ground so air can circulate. Teach the girls about the three sizes of wood used in fire building.
7. One pot meal can be your favorite casserole cooked outdoors. Some other Girl Scout favorites to try are Brownie stew, fractured tacos, casualty (a huge omelet with bacon and potatoes cooked in), campfire stew, tuna casserole, and/or macaroni and cheese with diced hot dogs.
8. The girls should now be ready for a walk, a cookout, or a backyard overnight. Find out more about ways to protect the natural world, and choose a project to include in your next outdoor activity.

Eight Basic Camping Skills - Level III - Leader's Guide Sheet

1. The buddy system is having a partner to help you. If a girl gets into difficulty in a pool, or on a hike, there is someone to call the leader. The buddy system helps to keep a girl from wandering off and getting lost. The triple buddy system is excellent for trips or backpacking adventure because if one of the three is injured, there is one to go for help, and one to stay to give first aid to the injured party, or to keep her company.
2. When your troop plans a hike, determine what equipment will be needed. The troop needs a well-stocked first-aid kit, map of hiking area, flashlights and waterproof matches. The girls should have sturdy shoes, a bandanna or sun hat, sunscreen and chapstick, canteen full of water, a whistle, and food. As the complexity of your hike increases add additional items such as extra socks, rain poncho, compass, and a jackknife. Plan clothing accordingly.
3. Review square knot and clove hitch. Teach how to tie a bowline knot which is used in life saving and rescue work; or, to make a loop in the end of a rope that will not slip or change size.
4. Review knife safety. Consider carving a potato, balsa wood, apple heads for dolls, or a walking stick.
5. Practice tying a triangle bandage for an arm sling. Triangular bandages may be cut from unbleached muslin or old sheets. Discuss other uses for a triangle bandage.
6. Teach how to light a charcoal fire. Charcoal may be lit with fire starters. Remember to allow about thirty (30) minutes from the time you start the charcoal until the time you need to have the fire ready for cooking. Place fire-starters on the bottom and charcoal on the top. Never use liquid type starters, they are extremely dangerous. This fire is used for foil cooking.
7. A foil packet may be placed directly on the coals. Use heavy-duty foil or two layers of the lighter weight to form foil packages. Seal well on all edges. You will need a pair of long handled tongs for turning packets and removing them from the fire. The packets can contain a complete meal or a side dish. Some examples are potatoes and onion with a pat of butter; fish, hamburger patty, or chicken leg with sliced vegetables; sliced ham or spam with pineapple and sweet potatoes. Slice vegetables thin so they will cook through. Core an apple and fill with cinnamon, raisins, and brown sugar, bake in foil. Time depends on kind of food, heat of fire, and size of package. Use outdoor cookbooks for reference or experiment a bit. Open one packet to test for doneness. If it is not cooked enough, seal it up and put it back for longer cooking.
8. Share with girl's activities that will improve their outdoor site. Let the girls think up ways to put their ideas into action. Remain flexible to new ideas when you arrive at the activity site.

Eight Basic Camping Skills Level IV - Leader's Guide Sheet

1. The length of the hike will depend on your site; it may be through a park, around school buildings, or around a campground. In pairs, have girls note landmarks on their maps and make a legend. Have the girls had fun? Maybe they would like to do this again on another day with a different destination. Trail signs and sketch maps are in several Girl Scout resource books.
2. Practice with girls how to roll and tie their own sleeping bag or bedroll. At day camp, or resident camp, sleeping bag or bedroll rolling can be practiced.
3. Review square knot, bowline, and clove hitch. Teach sheetbend. The sheetbend is used when you need to join two ropes of unequal thickness together.
4. Practice knife safety. A good habit to develop when passing a knife, is to always wait for the receiver to say, "thank you" before letting go. This can prevent the tool from being dropped and causing injury. Try a new project with your knives. Be sure they are sharp!
5. Discuss prevention of accidents. Fainting - have victim lie down for at least 10 minutes; keep head low; if recovery is not prompt or if condition recurs, seek a doctor's help. Sunburn - try to prevent by limiting exposure at start of season; once burned stay out of sun completely until soreness is all gone. If burn covers large area or is severe, a doctor may be needed. Whenever possible, have a nurse talk with the girls about these conditions.
6. Lay and light a fire. The girls should know what the fire will be used for. This will assist them in deciding what kind of fire to build and how large it needs to be. Girls need to know how to put out a fire first, before starting to build one. Fire should be put out by, first spreading out what is left with tongs or shovel so it can cool down, then sprinkle water a little at a time around the fire with a small cup or your hand or a squirt gun, then stir ashes around and wet down again. Be careful with water - too much all at once will send up large clouds of dangerously hot steam.
7. Try a new cooking method. Use any two cooking methods not employed in Levels I, II, or III. If you can find a new one that is not on the list, so much the better.
8. Practice conservation of fuel using only as much fuel as needed for cooking and campfires. Let the girls try practicing this as they use fuel for cooking and campfire. A fire that is too big is also too hot to get close enough to use for cooking. Plan for a fire to burn itself out about the time you are done using it. Don't add a lot of wood to a campfire just before bedtime.

EIGHT BASIC CAMPING SKILLS - REFERENCE LIST

- Community First Aid and Safety - American Red Cross
- First Aid Fast - American Red Cross
- This should be part of your first aid kit.
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- Brownie Girl Scout Handbook - G.S.U.S.A.
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- Junior Girl Scout Handbook - G.S.U.S.A.
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- Safety-Wise - G.S.U.S.A.
- Activity checkpoints contain many outdoor safety requirements.
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- Exploring Wildlife Communities with Children - G.S.U.S.A.
- Help for exciting outdoor involvement.
-
- Outdoor Education in Girl Scouting - G.S.U.S.A. 1996 edition
- Camping skills and more outdoor ideas.
-
- Contemporary Issues: Earth Matters - G.S.U.S.A.
- Develop skills for environmental action.
-
- Teaching Leave No Trace - Contact Leave No Trace Inc. www.Int.org

Most of these books should be part of a good troop library, and you should be able to borrow them from there. Many other books are available that cover the same subjects. Some of them are printed by other youth organizations. Some are available from the public library.

Eight Basic Camping Skills

Level I

1. ___ **Learn good manners to use in the out-of-doors.**
2. ___ **Learn how to dress for the expected weather and what to bring along for the unexpected.**
3. ___ **Learn how to tie and release a square knot, and what a square knot is used for.**
4. ___ **Find out how to open, close, and pass a knife safely. Practice with someone.**
5. ___ **Learn first aid for a skinned knee and a bee sting.**
6. ___ **Learn how to choose a safe spot to build a fire and why hair should be tied up when working near fires.**
7. ___ **Help prepare a meal that needs no fire.**
8. ___ **Find out how trees and plants help us. Do something to help a tree or a plant.**

GIRL'S NAME_____

DATE COMPLETED_____

Eight Basic Camping Skills

Level II

1. ___ Know rules to follow for hiking safely on city streets or country roads.
2. ___ Find out what “dressing in layers” means and how it helps you to be more comfortable.
3. ___ Show that you can tie a square knot and clove hitch and know the uses of both knots.
4. ___ Find out how to clean and sharpen a knife and know why it is safer to use a sharp knife.
5. ___ Learn first aid for cuts and burns and discuss ways to prevent these accidents.
6. ___ Know what safety equipment should be ready before a fire is started. Practice laying a foundation fire.
7. ___ Help prepare a one-pot meal.
8. ___ Find out more about ways to protect the natural world and choose an outdoor good turn to include in your next outdoor activity.

GIRL'S NAME _____

DATE COMPLETED _____

Eight Basic Camping Skills

Level III

1. ___ Discuss the buddy system and triple buddy system and how they add safety to trail hiking and swimming.
2. ___ Find out what equipment each person needs on a hike and what items are needed by the whole group.
3. ___ Show that you can tie a square knot, clove hitch and bowline, and know the uses of each knot.
4. ___ Working a safe distance from others, carve or whittle something. Plaster sculpture, soap sculpture, fuzz sticks, point stick for cooking are examples.
5. ___ Practice tying a triangle bandage for an arm sling. Can you think of other ways to use a triangle bandage?
6. ___ Know how to light a charcoal fire by helping to build one and keep it going.
7. ___ Cook something in foil or on a stick.
8. ___ On an outdoor activity, do something to improve the site that shows you understand the saying. "A Girl Scout leaves a place better than she found it".

GIRL'S NAME _____

DATE COMPLETED _____

Eight Basic Camping Skills

Level IV

1. ___ **With a buddy, make a sketch map for someone else drawn by another team, or use trail signs to lay and follow a trail.**
2. ___ **Know how to roll and tie your own sleeping bag, or be able to stuff it yourself, or with a buddy.**
3. ___ **Show that you can tie a square knot, clove hitch, bowline, and sheetbend; know the uses of each knot.**
4. ___ **Use your knife to carve or whittle something new. Discuss more ways to utilize a knife.**
5. ___ **Learn what to do if someone faints, or is severely sunburned. Discuss ways to help prevent these conditions.**
6. ___ **Be able to lay and light a fire and keep it going. Know how to put out a fire when you are done using it.**
7. ___ **Use at least two of the following cooking methods; reflector oven, Dutch oven, beanhole, planking, paper bag cooking, orange shell on coals, coffee can cooking, solar cooking, box oven or other method you have not tried before.**
8. ___ **Practice conservation of fuel using only as much as you really need for cooking and campfires.**

GIRL'S NAME _____

DATE COMPLETED _____