Girl Scout New Leader Mentor Guide and Resources

This packet is a resource for volunteers who are excited about welcoming, informing and supporting new leaders by being a new leader mentor. The information in this guide will help you engage new leaders and connect them to other service unit volunteers and staff.

Why are New Leader Mentors so important to a service unit?
Girl Scouting is a volunteer led organization and mentors are the first people in a local Girl Scout community that reach out to the new leaders and connect them to the service unit and other available resources. Because service units are the primary support to all leaders, it is critical that a new leader understands the role of service unit volunteers and how they can support leaders to deliver a quality Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls. It’s important to remember that that service unit is more than just a monthly meeting, but rather it’s a system of support. Better new leader support will result in a more successful experience for girls and adult volunteers.

What does a mentor do?
A mentor supports new leaders through their first few months as a Girl Scout Leader by:

• Connecting the new leader to the service unit team and inviting them to the service unit meeting.
• Ensuring that the new leader receives program resource materials (Volunteer Essentials, Program Opportunities for Girls and Adults, Troop Start-Up Guide and other resources).
• Helping the new leader plan the first girl meeting or a parent meeting, suggesting meeting sites, times and sharing past experiences.
• Advising new leaders to take required trainings.
• Confirming that the new leader has completed the application, background check and has access to training.
• Answering any general troop and Girl Scout related questions.
• Support leaders to implement quality programming with the Girl Scout product sales.

Communicate with the volunteer mentor coordinator on topics such as:

• Who you are mentoring and how you are supporting them.
• When you are not able to contact a new leader.
• Evaluating the mentoring process at the end of the year.

What does a mentoring system look like in a service unit?
Proper support to a new leader not only relies on the efforts of a mentor to engage the new leader, but also the commitment of the service unit to implement the mentoring system. This will require good communication between the entire service team so mentors know when new leaders enter the service unit. Work with your volunteer mentor coordinator or program consultant to understand how you will learn about new leaders in your service unit.

Mentoring systems can look very different from service unit to service unit. The key is to implement one that works for the volunteers in your service unit. Here are examples of how some service units have set up their mentors:

• One-on-One—This system allows for each new leader to be paired with their own mentor. This provides for a one-on-one-relationship between an experienced leader and a new leader.
• By Girl Scout grade level—A mentor is appointed for each Girl Scout grade level. This allows the mentor to support a group of leaders at the same grade level and helps connect the leaders of that grade level to support one another and share ideas.
• **By School**—Some service units may be able to function with one mentor at each school. Mentors could work with new leaders to have troop meetings on the same night to provide support. For larger school districts, this may not be an ideal system.

• **Neighborhood**—Service units that cover a large area may want to use this option. This system appoints mentors to leaders in their neighborhood or geographical area to make sure they have support right in their backyard.

**How do I engage new leaders?**

Ideally, we would love to have each new leader attend the service unit leader meeting. However, today’s volunteers cannot always attend a monthly two-hour meeting. There are a variety of reasons that can prevent a leader from attending the service unit meetings. **This doesn’t mean that she is not part of the service unit or not interested in staying connected.**

It is best to establish how you will communicate with each other for the first few months and establish where the new leader can find the most current service unit and council information if she/he cannot attend a meeting. Here are some suggestions for keeping new leaders engaged:

- Monthly phone calls (Don’t wait for the new leader to call you, be sure to contact her!)
- Service unit website, Yahoo group, Facebook or other forms of social media
- Regular emails
- Face-to-face meetings (Schedule a time that is convenient for you both.)

**How do I monitor the progress of new leaders?**

As a mentor, use the checklists on the following pages to monitor the progress of your new leaders. These lists are a guide for mentors to ensure that the new leader has the resources and information she/he needs to lead girls through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. The checklists cover the first three months and the topics you will want to discuss with a new leader. Some questions have resource references that the mentor can use to help guide the new leader. You are their main Girl Scout support as they get to know the organization, their girls and other adult members.

Remember, some leaders may move through these steps at different rates and in different ways. Be sure not to hold them to unreasonable standards. The one place that we cannot compromise is with girls’ safety.

**Do you have any tips for mentors?**

Yes! Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you support new leaders:

- Remember your job is not to take the place of the service team, but to direct your assigned new leader to the correct team member as needed. Make them aware that there are many people available to help.
- You are a friend and a mentor to the new leader. Make sure you don’t make the leader feel bad if all the suggested items for a certain month are not met. Help make plans to accomplish them.
- Contact the new leader to remind them of the date, time and location of the service unit meeting. Stay with them at the service unit meetings to make sure they feel included. Try to listen through their ears and hear what is being discussed as if you were hearing it for the first time. Introduce them to people, draw them into conversations.
- Help your leader understand Girl Scout terms, service unit positions, information discussed at meetings, resources available to use and upcoming Girl Scout events.
- Be helpful, but don’t do the job for them. They will feel inadequate if you take over all the things that confuse or intimidate them.
- If a real problem arises, “hold their hand” through solving it and contact a service team member if necessary.
- Remember that new leaders may need you more the first month than the third, and as they continue to develop skills, take a step back a little more each month.
- Give them all the considerations you give your friends. Express an interest in how things are going but don’t check up on them. Don’t wait for them to call and ask for help or clarification. They may not realize they need help until you ask.
Discuss the following to help keep the new leader on track. Have they:

- Taken Girl Scout Fundamentals online training, classroom training, home study packet or through an orientation from a service team member or mentor?
- Arranged to take their Girl Scout grade level training?
- Received a new troop materials packet? (Should include Program Opportunities, Volunteer Essentials, Girl Scout Troop Start-Up Guide and sample meetings.)
- Found an appropriate meeting place and time?
- Held a parent meeting? Requested that the parents in their troop help out with the troop?
- Held a troop meeting?
- Completed online membership registration and ensure that girls and other adult volunteers register on line using eBiz (www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org) or have they collected registrations and money for any girl or adult participating in the troop (including parents)?
- (If paper membership registration form is used.) Filled out and submitted a Dues Summary Form, all their registration forms and appropriate payment to the service unit registrar? (Refer leader to service unit registrar so he/she can walk them through this process.)
- Collected health forms from all girls participating in their troop? (Are they kept in a secure and organized place?)
- Met members of the service unit service team, learned about their responsibilities and know how to contact them?
- Attended a service unit meeting with their mentor?

Looking toward next month...

Order certificates and/or pins for Investiture
Purchase appropriate leader books
Take required trainings
Review Safety Activity Checkpoints, the Volunteer Essentials and Program Opportunities for Girls and Adults Book
Discuss the following to help keep the new leader on track. Have they:

- Accomplished any remaining checkpoints from the first month?
- Attended the monthly service unit meeting or sent another adult troop member in their place? (Remind them of the date, location and time.)
- Completed required trainings?
- Discussed dues with their girls and parents? (Refer to Volunteer Essentials)
- Made parents aware of the resources available to girls and where they can be purchased and found online?
- Opened a bank account for the troop and completed the initial online troop finance report.
- Purchased appropriate certificates and or pins for the Investiture Ceremony? Helped their girls make and begin to use a kaper chart?
- Taught their girls the Girl Scout Promise and Law? (Also include Volunteer Essentials and introduce Girl Scout journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting.)
- Learned a Girl Scout song?
- Explained Investiture and Rededication to their girls and helped the girls schedule and plan it?
- Held their investiture ceremony?
- Met members of the service team?
- Begun to understand what their girls would like to accomplish this year and begun to develop a yearly plan based on those interests? (Discuss Girl Scout journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting)
- Recruited adult volunteers (especially from parents) and registered them? (ex: cookie parent)
- Called their mentor for moral support, new ideas or to ask questions?

Looking toward next month...

- Locate an adult in your troop with Red Cross First Aid/CPR training or make plans to get someone trained.
- Research the appropriate form of troop government for your troop’s grade level.
Girl Scouts of Western Ohio
New Leader Mentor
Checklist—Month 3
(To be shared at the end of the third month)

**Discuss the following to help keep the new leader on track. Have they:**

- Accomplished any remaining checkpoints from the first and second months?
- Attended the monthly service unit meeting or sent another troop member in their place?
- Put a name to every face in their troop?
- Recruited a Red Cross First Aid/CPR trained adult for the troop, or scheduled the training for himself or herself or another adult volunteer?
- Determined the appropriate form of troop government for their troop?
- Helped the girls learn a Girl Scout song?
- Starting to feel more comfortable in their role as a Girl Scout leader?
- Talked to the girls about what they want to do throughout the year and made long-range plans?
- Discussed budgeting and money earning with their troop, including fall product and cookie sales?
- Started an Individual Girl Record Sheet on each girl? (Found on Girl Scouts of Western Ohio website.)
- Learned about program opportunities outside of their troop meetings, like camp, service unit events and community opportunities?

**Looking toward next month...**

Periodically order needed patches, badges and pins.
Attend or have a representative at all service unit meetings.
Be aware of safety requirements for taking trips that their girls will be planning.
Mentoring Registration Form

Return this form to the following volunteer mentor coordinator or program consultant in your service unit:

Mentor Coordinator or Program Consultant Name: ________________________________
Phone: ________________________________ Email Address: ________________________________

Yes! I would like to be a mentor in my service unit!

Service Unit Name: ________________________________ Service Unit #: ________________________________
Name: ________________________________ Email Address: ________________________________
Address, City, State, Zip: ________________________________
Phone Number: (Home) ________________________________ (Cell) ________________________________
Best time to contact you: ________________________________

List all Girl Scout positions held with number of years in position. If you are a troop leader, list the Girl Scout grade levels that you have worked with:

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Please complete and give this portion to the person you will be mentoring. If the volunteer mentor coordinator is making the matches, leave this attached so they can give this to the new leader(s).

Name: ________________________________ Email Address: ________________________________
Address, City, State, Zip: ________________________________
Phone Number: (Home) ________________________________ (Cell) ________________________________
Best time to contact you: ________________________________