

Life Skills



Leadership

Is there a burning issue in your life, such as the need to help feed the homeless or reduce illiteracy? You can translate your unique vision and voice into action. The key is leadership and teamwork. A leader is someone who can accomplish great things with others. On a successful team, each “player” can contribute her strengths to common goals.

Each interest project contains activities which are organized into four different categories: Skill Builders, Technology, Service Projects, and Career Exploration. By doing these activities, you will gain insights about yourself—your strengths and weaknesses, your likes and dislikes. You will have a range of new experiences, and you will develop valuable skills and expertise in specific areas. *To earn an interest project award, you must complete at least seven activities as follows: two Skill Builders activities; one Technology activity; one service project activity; one Career Exploration activity; Two activities from any category that you choose.*

Skill Builders

1. Observe leadership in action: visit meetings of at least two different group, such as members of a city council working on a piece of legislation, or a group of volunteers developing plans for an event. Before your visit, talk to the group leader about the group’s purpose and agenda. Find out how the group seeks to accomplish its tasks and what role the leader will play. Ask the leader for her tips on running a meeting. Take notes, and make your own one-page tip sheet on how to run a meeting. Refer to it when you’re a group leader.
2. In a group meeting, observe how people interact. Who talks and why? Is there a person who helps move the group along or blocks progress? How does the setting (room, tables, lighting, etc.) affect the group? How does the leader get everyone involved? Are goals stated clearly, and are they achieved? If so, how? If not, why not? Share your observations and conclusions with at least two people.
3. What leadership skills do you bring to a group? What leadership skills do you need to add to your repertoire? For some ideas about leadership skills, read the relevant chapters in either the Cadette Girl Scout Handbook or A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts. Pick one of the skills that you want to develop and devise a plan that will help you become better at it. Follow your plan for at least on month.
4. Read about leadership styles and figure out your dominant style. Ask other girls in your troop or group to do the same. Discuss how all of you differ in the ways you lead and what things you have in common. Then, each girl roleplays a leadership style different from her dominant one.

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5. Name and discuss two or three examples of “negative leadership,” such as political leaders who used their power in ways that were harmful or illegal. Come up with a group vision or checklist on how to recognize and prevent the destructive aspects of negative leadership.

Technology

1. Presentation skills are important for public speakers and leaders. Have someone videotape you speaking in front of a group. With an adult, such as a teacher, professional coach or trainer, or public relations professional, analyze what worked and what could be improved based on the tape.
2. Watch a variety of television shows and read newspapers and magazines to see how leaders are represented in the media. What people, besides politicians, are presented as leaders? What are some of the issues facing leaders? How do leaders deal with those issues? What kinds of ethical issues do leaders confront?
3. Talk to two or three educators, business people, consultants, or other leaders about how changing technologies affect leadership skills than an in-person meeting? Ask about video conferences or forum discussions on the Internet.
4. Help organize an online forum to discuss an issue affecting older girls. Establish rules for the discussion to make sure all participants are made to feel welcome and have the opportunity to contribute. Or observe an online forum. How is leadership determined and consensus reached? Compare and contrast the dynamics of a cyberspace forum with a real-life forum. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online leadership?

Service Projects

1. Volunteer to help coordinate your school elections or participate in a planning committee for a school event. Or run for an office or take the lead on a project like managing the set design for your school play.
2. Help to organize an ongoing service project, such as a community literacy program highlighted by a yearly book fair. Create follow-up activities for the project, such as a weekly reading program using community leaders, school tutoring programs matching older students with younger students, or a poster contest with the theme of reading.
3. Identify a need in your community like recycling, building school spirit, preventing child abuse, ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities, or celebrating diversity. Recruit or join others to work together on a project that addresses the needed change through outreach posters and presentations, news items, a speakers' bureau, or other means.

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4. Organize a youth meeting through your school, religious community, or Girl Scout organization to identify projects that can improve your community as a whole. Plan your work by identifying general goals and specific action steps to accomplish them.
5. Lead a group of younger girls by volunteering to be a coach for a sports team in your neighborhood. Younger girls look up to teenagers and you will have an opportunity to help girls have a happy, healthy sports experience.

Career Exploration

1. Compile a multimedia leadership resource list. Go to a public library, bookstore, video store, school library, or your Girl Scout council office to look for books, newspaper and magazine articles, videotapes, and audiotapes to create your leadership bibliography. You might search the World Wide Web for resources as well. Organize your materials in categories, such as definitions of leadership, new trends in leadership, leadership skills, ethics in leadership, and issues for women in leadership. Share your resource list with others.
2. List the careers that you are interested in pursuing and identify leadership skills that you will need to succeed in those fields. Talk with a teacher, academic adviser, or professional in one of those careers to learn about ways to develop and practice the needed skills. For example, practice listening to others or making speeches.
3. Create a resume that highlights your leadership experience and the skills and qualities you possess.
4. Start a club or after-school activity, such as a debating, drama, computer, or sports club. Enlist the aid of teachers or advisers.
5. Get involved in the election process. Help arrange a candidate forum, issues night, or voter registration drive. (Be aware that you cannot campaign for candidate or advocate partisan issues while representing Girl Scouts.)

And Beyond

Attend a Leadership Institute Sponsored by GSUSA or your local council. If your council does not offer one, ask about how you can organize one. From selling cookies to saving the planet, improve your leadership skills with these related interest projects:

- Cookies and Dough
- You Own Business
- Law and Order
- Planet Power
- A World of Understanding

This badge can be found in the book *Interest Projects for girls 11 - 17*, page 38. This text has been reproduced with permission from Girl Scouts of the USA—this document may not be copied or reproduced in any way.