

# ***RUNNING A UNIT: ALL LEVELS THE BASICS AND BEYOND***

## **Girl Involvement in Planning: We are Guiders. We Guide**

We guide the girls in developing leadership skills, planning skills, and camping skills.

We guide them by offering lots of suggestions so they can choose and make their program their own.

We guide by letting them make mistakes and learn from them.

We guide by asking questions and letting them try to figure it out.

We guide by being strong role models.

## **ALL LEVELS GUIDER PLANNING MEETINGS TIPS:**

- share responsibilities (many hands make for little work)
- take turns running meetings, or run different parts of the meeting
- change up responsible guider or treasurer part way through the year
- find a balance between socializing and business
- use the fun finder or instant meetings, or camp in a box, for ideas
- get the girls involved in some of the planning

## **GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER**

- try to plan Sep-Dec, then have another meeting in Dec to plan Jan-Jun (or Jan-Mar/Mar-Jun)  
This makes for a good excuse to get together as adults
- get out and camp – if you are not comfortable ask for a mentor
- plan a camp or sleepover as soon as possible because that time together bonds the girls way faster than meeting once a week

## **PLANNING YOUR YEAR:**

- start with a long range 'year at a glance'
  - add holidays and seasonal activities
  - add cookie selling
  - add camp/sleepover time frame
- weekly plans – use the 5W's
  - what are you going to do
  - who is going to do it
  - when are you going to do it
  - where are you going to do it
  - why are you going to do it (program? team building?)

## **Planning your Year con't:**

- Narrow it down – once you have ideas (girl suggestions too) narrow down to what is actually viable based on age, budget, and suitability
- Don't plan too much – some things take time – but have a few games that you can pull out if you end up have extra time at the end
- Short attention span – young girls have a short attention span, try to vary the activities and try to keep discussions/instructions short as you lose their interest quickly
- Be flexible and adapt as needed – don't worry if things didn't go as planned, make the best of it – if the girls see you stressed about it then they feel it – if you go with it, so will they

## **5 KEY PROGRAM AREAS AT EVERY LEVEL**

Touch on these every year at every level

- community service/volunteering
- environmental awareness
- camping and outdoors
- worldwide guiding
- bridging

## **BRANCH SPECIFIC PLANNING TIPS**

### Sparks:

- Guiders plan the meetings however leave some open areas where you can ask the girls what they would like to do. What camp theme they would like, craft ideas around holidays, or holiday party ideas or what they want to eat for these occasions. Write everyone's ideas down.
- This really empowers the girls that they are being heard and that this is about them.
- make suggestions
- give choices
- give small leadership roles

### Brownies:

- Same as Sparks but give the girls a taste of planning. Ask the girls to work in a group to present a skit or a game
- ask them about camp and what they want to do at camp, what they want to eat
- make suggestions
- give choices
- give small leadership roles

### Guides:

- Guiders plan the meeting but with more inclusion from the girls
- Brainstorm camp ideas in September and ask the girls what camps they would like to do. Remember to make suggestions. Once you have a list that the girls decided on then have them rate the camps from favourite to least favourite
- Have small groups plan a portion of the meetings – ask about time management and if they need a budget (remember to GUIDE them)
- Utilize your third year guides and have them plan a few meetings
- Ask what program areas they want to cover
- Find balance - they should be quite involved in their program however with the wide age range you need to find a balance and the leaders still need to be quite involved although craft prep is way less since the girls can do it
- when problems arise or they ask questions – ask them first how they think they can solve it – a lot of the time they know the answer but they are unsure of themselves

## Pathfinders

- The girls should be planning some of their meetings
- Guiders can plan some meetings but leave space for the girls to add their ideas.
- Have planning meetings at a unit meeting and work between the girls and the guiders who is going to do what, this way the girls are working on what they want to do, it is their program
- Find out who wants to work on the Canada Cord and help them accomplish it a little bit each year
- GUIDE THEM - Often the girls want to do stuff but they have a hard time coming up with ideas
- when problems arise or they ask questions – ask them first how they think they can solve it – a lot of the time they know the answer but they are unsure of themselves

## Rangers:

- the girls should be planning the majority of their meetings
- have planning meetings (during meeting times) to have the girls pick program area and dates they will run the meeting
- they can work together or on their own
- GUIDE them, give them ideas
- encourage them to plan fun meetings that are not just reading program from a book
- as a GUIDER try to balance the dates for meetings between something more exciting and something that is just reading
- GUIDE THEM - Often the girls want to do stuff but they have a hard time coming up with ideas
- when problems arise or they ask questions – ask them first how they think they can solve it – a lot of the time they know the answer but they are unsure of themselves
- find out who wants to complete their Chief Commissioners Award and help them accomplish each level, each year

## CAMPING/OUTDOORS

The one thing that parents and girls said we could improve upon in the survey last year is “Getting Outdoors” The girls are more capable than you may think, especially if you start young. Find a balance between crafts and getting out even if it’s just at your meeting space. Here is a ‘guideline’ or suggestions on what you can do at each level to promote getting outside

ALL LEVELS: At least 2 outdoor meetings that enhance an understanding of the natural environment

### SPARKS:

- 1 sleepover or camp - minimum
- try indoor tenting to get them learning about tents
- nature walks, campfires (ask to use the eagles hall fire pit one night – intro to fire safety)

### BROWNIES:

- 2 camps (1 or 2 nights) minimum
- residential or tents
- Platform tents at Naka Naka Naka are a good introduction to tenting outdoors and you could also do a 1 night tent sleepover – this gives you lots of time for set up and tenting gives the girls an intro to bedrolls
- host a camp skills night at a meeting and run stations setting up a tent, doing bedrolls and lighting and cooking on a camp stove and lighting a lantern – inform your parents

### GUIDES:

- 2 + camps (2 nights each) and at least 1 camp (2 nights) in tents
- give extra time for set up and take down and have your older guides give guidance to the younger guides if needed
- host a camp skills night at a meeting and run stations setting up a tent, doing bedrolls and lighting and cooking on a camp stove

## **PATHFINDERS:**

- 3 + camps – at least 2 in a tent (usually fall, winter and spring camps)
- Some things are age 13+ so be careful when planning to be sure everyone can participate – you can usually find activities that are 12+ but the odd one is 13+

## **RANGERS:**

- 3 + camps – at least 2 in a tent (usually fall, winter and spring camps)
- Certain Scout Camps are open the Rangers

## **FEEDBACK**

- allow all ages the opportunity to evaluate meetings, camps, outings regularly
- 2 stars and a wish is good for Sparks and Brownies
- you can use the above for all levels but a broader discussion is often helpful in deciding on how to overcome the 'wish' or how we could do things next time to make it better

## **GENERAL NOTES FOR ALL**

- give opportunity for girls to succeed by giving them tasks that support their strengths first then encouraging them to try something new (this goes for leaders too)
- have the girls plan an exciting fall camp so they want to return

## **APPENDICES**

Best practices for girl programming Checklist  
What to do if you suspect a girl member is being abused  
Protecting yourself from allegations of abuse  
All about planning  
Weekly plan

## **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION**

If you need any help with paperwork or ideas or anything feel free to contact me or any of us I am sure would be happy to help you.

Joy Bernardo [guiderjoy@telus.net](mailto:guiderjoy@telus.net)