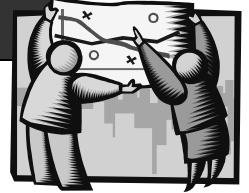


Asking Good Questions: The Key To Planning With Girls

As a Girl Scout leader, you will need to refine the art of asking questions. The art of asking questions will give you information regarding group planning, readiness of girls, feelings of girls and will help you to develop personal relationships with the girls. A good leader doesn't tell...she **asks!** As a teacher, mentor and manager of girls, you will have a direct impact on their planning and decision making skills. Asking good questions guides and teaches girls. It empowers and gives girls a voice in their troop activities.

A good plan is like a road map; it shows the final destination and usually the best way to get there.

- H. Stanley Judd



Planning Questions

Ask these questions of yourself and inject them into your troop's form of government. Train patrol leaders, executive committee members and other girl leaders to ask them of troop members. Once you have set a goal and the girls have decided what it is they want to do, ask these questions of the girls:

Question	How To:
What are the parts of this project?	Think about the project/activity...How can it be broken into parts for planning. Think about transportation, food, safety issues, forms, budget, money earning projects, etc...Have the girls think through every piece of the activity. A good way to think of the parts is to ask the following: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?
Do we know how to do it?	If not, what new skill do we need to learn in order to be successful? For example, you are planning on going to the Kentucky Horse Park and the girls need to make calls about cost, places to stay, etc.... You are encouraging the girls to find out this information. You may need to teach them how to make a "business" call or how to research on line.
Who will do what?	This is where the girls can really take a leadership role. In any good project you need to identify who will carry out the tasks. Be sure that girls are taking responsibility for what they want to have happen. Assign out the tasks to the girls. As the advisor, you may need to send reminder emails or make reminder phone calls. Remember, by the girls for the girls. This means that the girls are the planners, implementers and evaluators.
What supplies or materials do we need?	Since you have identified the activity and the various components for planning you need to talk about the resources needed to implement (supplies/materials). Do we have them? Will the group supply them? Can they be brought from home? How will we get them?
How long will it take?	Put together a realistic timeline for the project. You may want to start from the end and work to the current day. Have the girls think about everything that needs to happen for a successful trip and write down deadline dates. This also becomes a planning guide or checklists to make sure things are moving toward the goal.
How much will it cost?	Everything costs money! Planning includes developing a budget. If your girls are Juniors or older, they should take an active role in this step. If they are Daisy or Brownies then the adults that support the troop will need to help. Have the girls research costs, set goals for money earning and document income and expenses.
What did we learn the last time we did a similar activity?	Are there past records from a similar activity? Has research already been done? Has another troop tried it before? Ask these questions. Learning from experience is important. Teach the girls to apply past learnings to new experiences by evaluating activities and applying past experiences to new experiences
What do the girls want to learn?	Ask the girls what they would like to get out of this activity? What do they want to learn? What new skill? What do they want to see? What do they want to experience?
How does this support the Goals for Girls & troop goals?	Do our plans support the Girl Scout program? If your plans are not supportive of one of the four Goals for Girls, then you must help the girls evaluate what they are doing. If we are not achieving the goals, then we must ask if it is really Girl Scouting? How does this activity support the goals of the troop? What have the girls identified for goals? Does this project/activity support those goals?


Involving Girls in the Planning Discussions



Setting a goal is not the main thing. It is deciding how you will go about achieving it and staying on that plan.

-Tom Landry

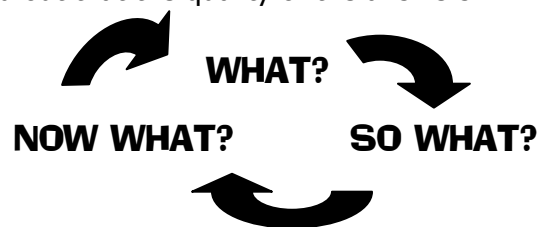
A great way of involving girls in planning is through troop government. Consider the following methods of troop government and how you can involve the girls in sharing ideas, planning and evaluating. Remember to consider the girl readiness, age level and progression.

Daisy	Brownie	Junior/Cadette/Senior
<p>Daisy Girl Scout Ring: A place where they can share stories, sing songs, and pick snacks and activities they want to do.</p> 	<p>Brownie Girl Scout Circle: A place where they can say the Promise and the Law, share stories, sing songs, pick activities they want to do, and places they want to go.</p> <p>Remember: You will need to give this age level choices to choose from which will then spark discussion.</p>	<p>Patrol System: Girls break up into separate groups with everyone having a role within that group. Patrols are changed periodically to allow girls to learn how to better work with others.</p> <p>Town Meeting: Every girl has an opportunity for leadership and guidelines are established for decisions being made.</p> <p>The Executive Board: Troop elects officers, which then make most of the decisions based on the needs and interest of the troop.</p>
<p>Remember: Progression is important when planning with girls. What are the girls capable of? What can they learn in order to take on more responsibility? Planning is a process: With Daisy and Brownie Girl Scouts, the leader takes the lead...with Juniors and Cadette/Senior Girl Scouts, the girls take the lead. What can you do to make this transition happen?</p>		

The Questioning Cycle

Asking good questions in regular discussion, planning and evaluating with girls is an art. Every discussion will be different; every question will have different meaning behind it. The following is a questioning cycle that can be applied to both planning and evaluating with girls. Try it out and you will see how simple it is to ask good questions. You will also find out that the quality of the answers will improve!

NOW WHAT? What do we need to do to make this successful? What planning needs to take place? When evaluating, ask what they would change, why they would change it, how they can apply their learning to future events.



WHAT? This asks the group to think about the activity? What is it? What does it look like? What do you see at it? When evaluating with the girls, ask what the girls saw, heard and what was the best and worst parts.

SO WHAT? Your goal here is to get to the meaning of the activity. What will we learn? How does this support the troop goals? Why is this important to us? When evaluating ask the girls, what they learned, how they felt and what was important to them.

