



Short and Snappy

Learning Opportunity for Volunteers

What is a Short and Snappy?

- These short trainings can be provided at a service unit meeting.
- Any interested volunteer may lead a Short and Snappy.
- Short and Snappys are usually 10-45 minutes in length.

What you'll need

- Short and Snappy outline
- Tips and Advice for Multi-Level Troops handout

Things to remember

- Stay within the allotted time.
- If you don't know the answer, seek the correct answer from the appropriate support person.

Questions? Comments?

Contact training@sdgirlscouts.org.

www.sdgirlscouts.org

Tips and Advice for Multi-Level Troops

20 minutes

Having a multi-age-level troop offers lots of benefits to Girl Scouts, but might come with a few challenges. Distribute the attached handout, share the introduction, and review the handout tips and advice. Finish up with the closing.

1. Introduction: Volunteers become involved with multi-level troops for many reasons. Perhaps a troop leader or family has daughters in different grade levels. Or perhaps the community or school just isn't large enough to support multiple troops. Older girls (Cadette, Seniors and Ambassadors) often choose to form a single troop if there aren't enough girls of each level to fill individual troops.

Whatever the reason, multi-level troops are the best way to meet the needs of some volunteers and girls.

Multi-level troops offer younger girls a chance to look up to older girls. Bringing girls of different ages together provides younger girls with role models who follow the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

In addition, older girls have the opportunity to put their leadership skills into action as they mentor younger girls. Many badge and Journey activities suggest that older girls (starting as young as Brownies) work with younger ones on service projects, to teach skills, to play games, etc.

Girls are grouped by grade level nearly everywhere else — school, sports, Sunday school. A multi-level environment allows girls to interact with a diverse group and make new friends! Plus, multi-level troops can pool resources across several grade levels. On the other hand, they can also come with their own set of challenges.

2. Sharing: Review the attached handout tips and advice.

3. Closing: So, having a multi-level troop can be a great experience for both girls and adults. It may allow you to serve more girls in your area, and it gives the girls a more diverse Girl Scout adventure, as well as opportunities to have and be mentors. Eventually, if your troop gains more girls and volunteers, you may want to consider branching off into individual troops. For now, keep in mind these tips and advice for running your multi-level troop.

Tips and Advice for the Multi-Level Troop

- Select one troop manager to provide a single vision for the troop direction to make sure there's a consistent and standardized approach applied and maintained through all program grade levels.
- If possible, assign one or more adults, reporting to the troop manager, to work with each grade level.
- Open all meetings together, then break out into grade level patrols; finally, close together in one large friendship circle.
- Alternately, you could have one combined meeting per month, and separate grade level meetings the rest of the time. If possible, however, open and close meetings together and then break into level groups to preserve the benefits of a multi-level troop.
- If activities for badge work or a Journey overlap grade levels, such as interviewing a person about a particular job, do it together. This will take close planning and communication between your girls and the troop's leadership team.
- Consider providing consistency by having all grade levels do the same Journey series at the same time. For example, all grade levels could work on the age-appropriate Journey in the *It's Your Planet – Love It!* series. You can sync up badges as well; for instance, Juniors can work on the Simple Meals badge while Cadettes work on New Cuisines.
- Be sure girls are involved in planning and leading their own experience, but make sure they don't mix up their grade level requirements. Often, in a large group, girls forget they have read different books with different themes and will accidentally plan a project using both Journey topics at the same time.
- Be sure older girls do a mature level of work and don't try to get by on a Brownie load. They should challenge themselves to progress and build their skills.
- Give Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors time and space to be with their own peers. They may want and need a safe, confidential space in which they can share concerns and talk about sensitive issues that may not be appropriate in settings that include younger girls.
- Support older Girl Scouts in selecting and participating in activities and programs that are just for them.
- Allow Girl Scout Ambassadors to take ownership of projects and activities they develop and implement with younger girls, as well as activities they plan for themselves.
- Ensure that filling the role of program aide is just one small part of their activity in the multi-level troop.
- Most of all, ensure your older Girl Scouts are provided the guidance and support they need to work on their own achievements and leadership experience. Don't use them as babysitters for the younger girls, and make sure they aren't always used to lead and service the younger girl programs. At the same time, make sure younger girls aren't always tag-alongs. This is why it's such a great choice to regularly separate your troop into program age level patrols for field trips and activities.

Group activity: Search the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting books for Legacy badges. In small groups, discuss how you could combine two age levels' programs into a meeting. Discuss what skills girls would learn and what progression looks like at both age levels. Come up with creative ways to meet the activity needs of a multi-age-level troop.

Group activity: Practice this group activity for girls by dividing adults into the roles of Daisies, Brownies and Juniors. Bring out your first aid kit and have Daisies gather around a few items from it. Give them 30 seconds to memorize the contents and ask them how many items there were and what they were. Add more supplies, and ask Brownies to join; give them 30 seconds to memorize the contents and again ask how many items there were and what they were. Finally, add the Juniors to the group, add more first aid gear to the table, ask them to memorize content for 30 seconds, then ask how many items there were and what they were. Close out the activity by picking a few of the items and asking what they might be used for – extra points for creativity! (For example, a glove could be used to create an ice bag!)