

## Planning a Camporee

Service Unit camporees are a great way to share Girl Scout sisterhood in the great outdoors!

A camporee gathers Girl Scout troops for camping and activities, generally with a common theme, working towards building courage, confidence, character, and leadership while having fun! It is an opportunity to share Girl Scout sisterhood in the great outdoors.

A camporee differs from troop camping in that it is a gathering of multiple troops sharing camp activities that might be planned around a theme, or be a competition-style event. Many camporees have a day event for Daisy Girl Scouts, a one-night overnight for Brownies, and two-night overnight for Juniors and older.

Camporees can help older Girl Scouts learn to plan and lead activities; help volunteers new to camping start to experience the outdoors; help younger Girl Scouts learn new camp skills; and provide opportunities for older Girl Scout to gather, challenge, and improve their outdoor skills.

This guide will help you get started planning a camporee, and explains the process of reserving a GSGWM property for a camporee.

### What is a camporee?

A camporee is a local gathering of Girl Scout troops, consisting of troops from the same Service Unit (SU), for a weekend of camping and common activities, usually planned by the older Girl Scouts in the SU.

## Steps to Planning Your Camporee

### Choose a theme

Engage girls, volunteers, and families in brainstorming a theme or activities for the camporee. Once the theme is chosen, activities and ideas for evening programs or even meals will begin to form. Remind all the volunteers of the outdoor camping training requirements - Outdoor Adventure Workshop (OAW), Basic Outdoor Living Skills (BOLS), and/or Advanced Outdoor Living Skills (AOLS) and let them plan ahead for training. OAW is available online anytime and is free, BOLS is offered regularly in April, May, June, and September. AOLS is offered every September, and every other February (next February 2023). Look for trainings on the activities calendar online. Reach out to [customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org](mailto:customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org) with questions!

## Choose a Camporee Coordinator

While you are choosing a theme, choose a Camporee Coordinator. This adult volunteer will be the person who ensures your property reservation is complete, confirms any certification needed, communicates dates and makes the reservation for the property. The Camporee Coordinator will also need to coordinate other volunteers and girls who might take on leadership for planning meals, activities, creating flyers, tracking troop/girl reservations and payments, and more.

## Make a reservation for your preferred property

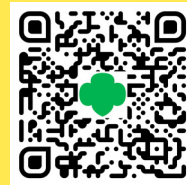
Don't delay! Once you have an idea of dates, be sure to make the reservation. Check the Property Reservation calendar to see available dates and sites for GSGWM properties. Once you have your dates in mind, fill out the online Camporee Reservation Form. Filling out the form to make the reservation requires a \$500 deposit. The remainder of the balance for the property rental and any equipment or specialist fees are due 8 weeks before the camporee. Once the deposit is made, and the dates reserved, you'll work with a staff member to plan out the spaces you want to reserve, and will receive a detailed invoice for the balance due. You will be able to release "held" spaces from your rental reservation up until 8 weeks before your camporee. Once final payment is made, all spaces are yours and you will not be able to have fees refunded.

**More about choosing specific options:** Once you have made the reservation for the property, you'll be able to choose your camping and activity spaces and your activity reservations. For example, if Camp Kettleford is your reserved camporee location, you can now choose from the 12 Adirondacks or lodge spaces for sleeping. You can also choose to reserve funyaks as an activity with your own boating qualified volunteer and a lifeguard; or you could decide to reserve a GSGWM staff member for 3 hours of funyaks and 3 hours of archery. If you will need set-up time to be on property before your camporee, that will be planned right into your options.

Once your options are chosen, you'll receive an itemized list and an invoice, with a due date for payment (8 weeks before your camporee date). You can drop items from this invoice, and add items if they are available, until the due date for final payment.

### Ready to turn in your Camporee Reservation Form?

Scan the QR code below or visit [bit.ly/camporee\\_reservations](http://bit.ly/camporee_reservations).



## Plan your activities

Work with your camporee committee members and the girls' ideas to plan out your weekend, your activities and your budget. Check with Safety Activity Checkpoints to be sure you are meeting safety ratios, girls engaged in activities are the right grade levels, and check for any certifications required. Be sure your payment schedule and fees will pay for the rental of the property, food, activities, and anything else you have planned.

## Eight weeks before your camporee

Be sure to pay your balance due for the property rental. On time payments receive a 5% discount; payments after the invoice due date will be charged full price. Start working on your emergency plans and certifications-those will be due in four short weeks. If your event will be welcoming adults or children who are not Girl Scout members, you will need to purchase supplemental insurance at 11 cents per person, per day. This must be done well in advance because, per Mutual of Omaha, payment must be a check mailed in; it cannot be paid online.

## Four weeks before your camporee

Review and update your emergency plans and turn in certifications. The Camporee Coordinator must submit the camporee emergency plans and any certifications required (for lifeguards, health care, etc) not later than 4 weeks before the date of the camporee. This includes being sure every troop has a volunteer trained in OAW (for one-night overnights in Adirondacks or cabins, and campfires and stick cooking) or BOLS (two or more camping nights, tent camping, cooking with Dutch ovens, propane stoves, box ovens, buddy burners). This is a good time to also remind troops about health forms and having a first aider with their troop.

## Enjoy your camporee

The Thursday before your camporee, you'll get the codes and reminders for any buildings and spaces on the GSGWM property you need. We'll also check in to let you know who to expect if you scheduled to have staff lead any activities for you. Be sure you communicate your emergency plan with the girls and volunteers on property for your camporee.

## After your camporee

We'll follow up with an online evaluation about the property; but you'll want to connect with the Camporee Committee to record notes, ideas, successes, and celebrate your event! Be sure to share photos, things you learned, and feedback with us, too!

If your service unit would like to plan and organize a camporee for the first time, we are glad to connect you with other SUs and their Camporee Coordinators for ideas and support. Just send us a message at [customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org](mailto:customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org).

## Important reminders

**Health Supervisor:** For camporees of over 100 people (adults and campers together) a camporee will need to have a dedicated health care supervisor on property during the event and available. This Health Supervisor must have advanced training such as Wilderness First Aid, EMT, LNA, RN, Physician; and their certification must be turned in to council not later than 4 weeks prior to the camporee.

**Farnsworth Kitchen:** In order to use the Farnsworth kitchen to serve meals at a camporee, at least one adult supervising the kitchen must be trained in ServSafe® kitchen and food safety. If you are using a food service provider who is using the kitchen, they must have a ServSafe® certificate. All certifications are required to be turned in to council not later than 4 weeks prior to the camporee.

# Planning your first camporee?

Here are some key points gathered from experienced Camporee Coordinators.

## Keep it Girl-Led

A camporee event can be as elaborate or simple as you want it, but the most important element is that a camporee should be girl-led. This helps pass the camporee tradition along from girl to girl, and keeps the event focused on the girls and their goals from start to finish.

## Plan Ahead

Set your dates and start promoting the event early. For a May camporee, we recommend starting to plan not later than December. Plan for one meeting a month through February, and more frequent meetings leading up to the date. Remember to plan to market the event and plan for how girls/troops will register.

## Choose Your Focus

Decide on whether your camporee will be skill-based or focused on fun activities. Brainstorm themes and ideas for activities. Let girls plan fun activities because the planning required to teach skills and do badge work can be a lot for first-time volunteers and their girls. However, if you are interested in doing a skill-based camporee, reach out to your volunteers—you may be surprised at how much their expertise can help!

Some past themes for Camporees: Storybook Tales; Secret Agent; Little House on the Prairie/ Settler Days; TV shows (Survivor, Lost); Books and Movies (Harry Potter); Badge Themes (Outdoor Art).

## Stay Flexible

So many unexpected things can happen while planning, so it's best to stay upbeat and flexible. One year, it might rain the entire weekend, and everything you plan might have to be modified. The girls will still have a good time, and the adverse conditions might show their commitment to making camporee a fun learning experience despite what the weather throws at them. Another time, it might be too hot, or a featured event or speaker might not work out.

## Create a Camporee Committee

Whether you are planning a skill-based camporee or fun activities camporee, reaching out to girls and volunteers and have them join the Camporee Committee will make planning a whole lot easier. Having multiple adults really helps in splitting up the responsibilities, and lets girls and volunteers share their skills and interests!

## Channel Your Love for Girl Scouting

Be sure that camporee is something the girls and volunteers have a love for! From the theme the girls choose, the activities they plan, the camaraderie of the volunteers, let the camporee reflect your passion for Girl Scouting and sharing the outdoors with Girl Scouts.