

WORKING WITH GIRL SCOUT JUNIORS

You need to know a few things about your Junior Girls. She (is):

- Becoming articulate and logical
- Becoming independent
- Becoming more responsible
- Begins physical changes
- High energy level
- May not be mindful of safety
- Loves to learn and experience new things
- Sensitive to the opinions of others
- Cliques begin to form
- Develops close friends
- Is open to the influence of others
- Has outside activities
- Wants to voice her ideas

Five Simple Things Girl Scout Juniors Want

What keeps fourth and fifth grade girls involved in Girl Scouts? According to their leaders, Girl Scout Juniors want five simple things, whether they live in a city, the suburbs, or rural areas. Girls love:

Being Active: Girl Scout Juniors like doing things. They especially enjoy activities like horseback riding, camping, hiking, and *attending events*.

Going Places: Girl Scout Juniors love to expand their horizons. Many troops look for any excuse to take a trip! They enjoy meeting new people, working with girls from other troops and attending events.

Making Decisions: Girl Scout Juniors want to choose what they do. *Leaders need to guide the girls by providing them direction, not control.*

Running Things: Girl Scout Juniors want to be in charge, and great leaders find ways for that to happen. As Juniors, girls want to think bigger than their families and schools. And they don't want to pretend to be "bigger", they want to BE bigger. They are looking for challenges. Give your girls lots of leadership opportunities.

Having Fun: The girls want to do what they think is fun. Don't decide for them what is "fun" – let them tell you what fun means to them. **Having fun is the most important reason girls join and stay in Girl Scouts!**

Promoting Harmony & Sisterhood

Girls this age will often establish cliques within the troop that lead to exclusion of some girls and hurt feelings. Here are some ways to build "sisterhood" in your troop:

- ♥ Badge work – like "Healthy Relationship" and "Be My Best"
- ♥ Junior Journey Books has lots of activities about connecting and working as a team
- ♥ Include open discussion on how a girl might feel if everyone else is paired up for an activity and what other girls can do to prevent this from happening.
- ♥ One-to-one discussion with individual girls and their parent/guardians (if situations can't be resolved within the troop or between leaders and girls.)
- ♥ Rotating girls in leadership roles, like "patrol leader".
- ♥ Changing buddies frequently on long outings or overnights
- ♥ Using various methods to group girls for carpools, small group activities, buddies, etc. Choose by using splitter activities like: alphabetical first names or last names, birthdates, shoe size, drawing straws etc.
- ♥ Choosing secret sisters or secret pals. Draw names at the beginning of the year. Ask the girls to be a special friend to that person by complimenting her, sitting by her, choosing her as a helper, etc. Have the girls brainstorm other ways to make their Girl Scout sister feel special. Possibly, have a small gift exchange with inexpensive, preferably hand-made gifts to exchange on Girl Scout holidays. You can reveal you secret sister at the end of the year!
- ♥ Specific reinforcement by leaders of desired behavior ("I'm glad to see that Susan and Maria have teamed up today!")