

GSI: Girl Scout Investigator Event Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan and run a GSI: Girl Scout Investigator event! This is a community event that provides your Girl Scout community with an opportunity to connect, and invite friends and their families to learn more about Girl Scouts. This event can be utilized for girls of any age, however, the activities are most suitable for older girls (Junior and up). Some adjustments and adult support will be needed for younger girls.

What: Host a GSI: Girl Scout Investigator event that:

- Is a fun Girl Scout community event
- Encourages girls to “bring a friend” to introduce new families to Girl Scouts

When: You can host this event any time. You choose the date that works best for your community.

Who: Current Girl Scouts and their families and new families who have moved to the community or want to learn about Girl Scouts.

To host an event, please:

- Complete [the commitment form](#) indicating your interest in hosting a GSI: Girl Scout Investigator event
- Advertise the event in your community
- Hold a GSI: Girl Scout Investigator event and communicate the date to USAGSO
- Send us fun photos of the event through the [USAGSO media request form](#)

GSI: Girl Scout Investigator Promotional Resources

Promotional resources:

- [Social media event invite](#)
 - **Post the above linked image with this suggested text:** *Do you know a girl who would like to make more friends through Girl Scouts? Join me on [day, date and time] to learn investigative STEM skills, meet new friends, and lead the way to solve mysteries in real life! RSVP here: [phone number, email, link, etc.]*
- Email to troop volunteers and families. Please customize the below as needed:
 - *Hello Girl Scout family/volunteer,
I hope you're doing well!
I'm excited to share a fun opportunity to spend time with Girl Scout friends and have fun. Our upcoming GSI: Girl Scout Investigator event encourages Girl Scouts to invite their non-Girl Scout friends to learn more about Girl Scouts, use STEM skills to solve mysteries, and make new friends.
I hope you'll join us in bringing the life-changing experiences of Girl Scouts to even more girls by sharing this invitation on social media, giving a flyer to your friends and family, and encouraging your girls to give these handouts to their friends.
Please let me know if you have any questions!
Yours in Girl Scouting,*
- [Printable flyer invitation](#)
- [Printable handout invitations](#)

Event Day resources:

- [Customizable Activity Sign](#) (event station signs) —
- Station-based activity suggestions (see links below)
- [Activity sign in sheet](#) to collect new girl and family information

Event Outline

Below is a sample guide for this event. Please customize to meet the needs of your community!

Your event can have multiple stations or depending on the number of attendees, all activities can be done together by age level. Attendees can move from station to station, participating in different activities with other girls and families. If using the station model, it may be helpful to assign a troop leader or parent volunteer and a few current Girl Scouts to each station to help attendees with the activities and to make new friends. Reserve the last 15 – 20 minutes for a whole group wrap up.

Station 1: GSI: Girl Scout Investigator Orientation & Secret Missions

A volunteer will check in girls and families at this station when they arrive. If the family is new, the volunteer will record the girls'/families' information using the event sign in sheet or an online method, if possible (spreadsheet, Google form, etc.).

As part of the check in process, each girl should get a "secret mission" to complete during the course of the event. They should read it without telling anyone what it is. Girls have the duration of the party to complete the task they received without being caught by another girl. At the end of the event, anyone who has successfully completed the mission can receive a prize.

Depending on the set up of the event space, some ideas for a secret mission might include:

- Hide all of the forks, if refreshments are served
- Smuggle a roll of toilet paper out of the bathroom
- Rearrange table settings
- Leave a secret message at one of the activity stations

Supply List: Activity sign-in sheet, pens, clipboard, nametags, secret missions written on index cards or scrap paper

Station 2: Between the Laser Beams

This game can be a great way to break the ice at the beginning of the event and get girls working together. To play this game, you'll need an area where you can string yarn, ribbon, or tape in a web pattern – a hallway, small room, or an aisle created with chairs works great. Put some “valuable objects” at the end of the web. You can make the course more challenging by adding obstacles throughout (pillows, chairs, etc.).

To encourage girls to get to know each other, you can play this game relay style by splitting the girls into teams. Have the teams line up on one side of the “laser beam” obstacle course. One at a time, players must weave their way through the course without touching any of the laser beams. If a player touches a laser beam, they must freeze for a 5 second time delay. When a player reaches the other side, they must grab a valuable object and tag the next player on their team. The team that gets all their players through the fastest wins.

Supply List: Tape, yarn, or ribbon, “valuable object”, timer

Station 3: Think Like an Investigator

In these activities, girls will learn to think like an investigator and practice their observation skills.

To set up the activities, a volunteer running the station, can share the following info:

- Detecting minor details can often lead to major discoveries.
- Remind participants that everyone received a “secret mission” at the start of the event. It will be each investigators’ observation skills that help them figure out other participants’ secret missions or “catch them in the act”.

Suggested Activity 1: Shake it Up!

In this activity, girls will practice the power of observation by noting the details of the event space. Ask participants to take a good look around and thoroughly observe the room. Once they're done observing the room, have everyone close their eyes or put their heads down as volunteers “shake up the room”. Volunteers should change things

about the event space for girls to observe – try to engage all the senses if possible. Ideas might include:

- Swapping out the supplies on the table
- Changing the color of decorations
- Removing, adding, or rearranging items in the space
- Changing the sound of the space (changing the music, opening a window, leaving a faucet dripping)

Volunteers should have a list of all the things they've changed in the room. Once finished, girls should open their eyes and try to observe all of the changes in the room. They can take notes as they go and share with others in the group.

Supply List: Paper and pens for observation notes

Suggested Activity 2: Eyewitness Challenge

This activity works best if you have a helper that the girls haven't seen yet. Ask if a friend, partner, or colleague can stop by for a few minutes.

If you do have an assistant, but the girls have already met or seen them, have them leave at the end of the first activity to "get something" from another room. If there is a hat or coat or something they can put on to disguise themselves a bit, have them do so.

Whoever assists you will listen for you to say a code word you decide on when you are setting up the activity with the girls. When you say the code word, they will run into the room, take something, and run out again. Be sure to act surprised!

To make it more challenging, you can have multiple assistants enter the room at the same time. Then the girls will write what they saw. When they're finished, your assistant(s) can come back in the room to compare the reports the girls saw.

To set up the activity, you can start a conversation with the girls by asking these questions:

- Who knows what "eyewitness testimony" is?
- Who here thinks they would make a great eyewitness? Why?
- What are the things you would look for if you were watching a crime take place?

During this discussion, your assistant should run into the room and take an item. If you're going to capture video to review later, you can set up your phone or camera to record during this time.

When your assistant rushes in, takes something, and leaves the room, the girls might be surprised and excited. As soon as the assistant leaves, immediately say:

- Quick! Write down what just happened!
- Be as detailed as possible!
- What did the suspect look like? Draw a picture of them.

Go around the room and ask each girl to read their testimony out loud. When all the girls are finished, invite your assistant back into the room. They can bring the "stolen" item back in with them. Ask them to have their disguise on.

Continue the conversation by using these prompts:

- How many of you got the description of the suspect right?
- How many of you got the stolen item right?
- What about where the suspect entered? How many of you wrote that down correctly?
- What about where they exited?
- Did anyone write down how long it took for the crime to take place? Or what time it took place?

If you did record, play the recording back for the girls.

- What are some reasons eyewitness testimony might not be reliable?
 - Not every eyewitness account is reliable. Eyewitness testimony can be affected by everything from the weather and stress, to health and personal bias.
- What do you think are some ways eyewitness testimony might still be useful even if it has all these problems?
- Let's say you witnessed a crime like the one we just saw again later in the week, is there anything you could do to be more accurate in your eyewitness account?

Supply List: Paper and pens for observation notes, an assistant volunteer

Station 4: Clever Codes

In these activities, girls will learn how to communicate in secret like an investigator using codes and other techniques.

To set up the activities, a volunteer running the station can share the following info:

- Often, when detectives are on the job, many of their moves must be made in secret, including sharing information. This can be done using codes, ciphers, and other techniques.

Suggested Activity 1: Morse Code

Long before texting, Morse code was created to communicate messages without advanced equipment. Morse code was created in the 1800s to send messages via telegraph (8 years before the telephone was invented) with short and long flashes of sound. Morse code is still used by pilots, military ships, and radio operators.

For this activity, hand out a [Morse code guide](#) that shows how each letter of the alphabet corresponds to Morse code. Ask girls to create a message to be decoded by another group member.

To add another level of challenge, have girls send their messages using flashlights or phone lights. Switch the flashlight on for one second for a dot, and two seconds for a dash.

Supply List: Printed morse code guides, paper, pencils, flashlights

Suggested Activity 2: Create Your Own Cipher Wheel

Using [this guide from the Science Museum Group](#), walk girls through creating their own cipher wheel using the printable at the end of the guide.

Once girls have created their cipher wheels, have them write messages to each other in code.

Talk about modern uses for codes or encryption:

- Encryption is used to send emails and keep data safe across the Internet. Instead of a cipher wheel, a computer uses complicated math to encrypt information.
- What kind of information would you want to be encrypted?

Supply List: [Science Museum Group guide](#), cipher wheel printables, tack, pins, or brads, scissors, pencils, paper

Suggested Activity 3: Make Your Own Invisible Ink

For this activity, have girls work in pairs or groups. Give each group $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baking soda, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, grape juice (or other dark juice), paper, and something to write with like a cotton swab, toothpick or paintbrush.

- Groups start by mixing the baking soda and water.
- Dip a cotton swab, toothpick, or paintbrush into the mixture, write a message on a piece of paper and let it dry.
- Once it's dry, another group can reveal the message by dipping a cotton swab into the juice and painting it over the invisible message. Messages can also be revealed by holding the message over a heat source. Have groups try both ways to see which is more effective.

[George Washington's Mount Vernon](#) shares interesting facts about spies using this type of invisible ink during the Revolutionary War.

Supply List: baking soda, water, grape juice (or another dark juice), paper, cotton swabs, toothpicks, paintbrushes

Suggested Activity 4: Play CodeNames

CodeNames is a great way to practice speaking in "code" like an investigator. To play CodeNames, split the girls into two teams. In CodeNames, two teams compete by each having a "spymaster" give one-word clues that can point to multiple words on the board. The other players on the team attempt to guess their team's words while avoiding the words of the other team.

This game can be played online on a phone, tablet, or computer or in board game version.

- [Online CodeNames](#) (free)

- [CodeNames board game](#)

[The full rules for how to play the game can be found here.](#)

Supply List: [CodeNames online game](#), [CodeNames board game](#), devices for each player (phone, tablet, computer), wifi

Wrap Up

End the event by gathering everyone together. Have a volunteer welcome the group, share a few anecdotes about your community, say the Promise and Law together and close out by doing a Friendship Circle and enjoying refreshments.

Event Follow Up

After the event, please plan to follow up with the new families that attended the event to help them connect to the community and get registered for Girl Scouts. We recommend emailing families within 24-48 hours of the event. You can share registration information and upcoming community events or connect the family to a troop leader.

Sample Timelines

Option 1: In Person Event – Stations

15 minutes	Everyone gathers in a shared space for a welcome. Welcome girls and families and introduce stations.
60 – 75 minutes	Girls and families move through the stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One volunteer is at the Investigator Orientation station welcoming new girls and families and getting them to sign in on the sign-up sheet and answering questions about how to join
15 – 30 minutes	Girls and families come together for a wrap-up and refreshments (if provided).

Option 2: In Person Event – Whole Group

15 minutes	Everyone gathers in a shared space for a welcome. Welcome girls and families and introduce activities.
60 – 75 minutes	Girls and families move through the activities. Give each activity 15-20 minutes before moving to the next.
15 – 30 minutes	Girls and families come together for a wrap-up and refreshments (if provided).

Option 3: Virtual Event via ZOOM

Before Event	Consider delivering bags with materials to girls’ homes or asking them to pick them up at the Girl Scout meeting place. Alternatively, you could send a supply list ahead of the event and ask families to gather the materials.
15 minutes	Whole Group: Everyone gathers as a whole group for a welcome and to introduce the stations.
45 – 60 minutes	Breakout Rooms: Split the group into breakout rooms based on the number of stations at your event. After 15 minutes in each station ask participants to move to another “virtual station” (i.e., breakout room) or randomly reassign them so people make new friends at each station they attend.
5-10 minutes	Whole Group: Bring the group back together whole group to close.