

Girl Scouts of Central Maryland Service Unit Workshop  
**Increasing Parent Engagement**

Total Time: 20 Minutes

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Ask for specific help from families of girls involved in their troop/group
- Be able to apply three good strategies to encourage parent engagement

Timing	Strategies	Resources
2 minutes	<p>Part One: Introduction</p> <p>A. Introduce yourself and the topic.</p> <p>B. Then ask: "Why are you a Girl Scout Leader? In one sentence tell us what you like best about being a troop leader." Allow 3 or 4 people to answer before moving on.</p>	<p>Have posted: The #1 reason people give for NOT Volunteering is that nobody ever asked them..."</p>
10 minutes	<p>Part Two: What Needs To Be Done?</p> <p>A. Pair each participant with a partner and distribute the "Giveaway Game" handout to every person. Column 1 describes a possible task/activity that might need to be done by someone in order for a Girl Scout troop to run well. Pairs should then fill in Column 2 saying who should take responsibility for the activity. In some cases you may have more than one person in a box. Take into account the grade level of the girls.</p> <p>B. Ask: "When you look at this list, which tasks do you dislike? Which are your favorites? Why?"</p> <p>C. Say: "Are there any of these task that must be done by a leader? Why?"</p>	<p>"Giveaway Game" handout printed back-to-back with "Keys to Parent Participation."</p>
5 minutes	<p>Part Three: Actually Giving Things Away!</p> <p>A. Say: There is one technique that successful leaders have used over the years that consistently results in getting parents tuned into the troop and ready to help: the Parents' Meeting.</p> <p>B. Ask: "When should troops hold Parents' Meetings? (Minimally at the beginning of the troop year, and near the end of the troop year, a separate meeting may also be needed for preparation for the cookie program)</p> <p>C. Say: "At the Parents' Meeting and every time you interact with parents you must consistently reinforce certain ideas, because every new parent that walks in the door has different expectations."</p> <p>D. Ask participants to turn over their handouts and look at the "Keys to Positive Parent Participation". Ask: "Are there any techniques that stand out to you that you can definitely see resulting in more participation? Are there any that someone wants to add?"</p> <p>E. Reference pages 24-26 of Volunteer Essentials on working with parents and also suggest they use form 02-211 "How Families, Friends, and the Community Can Help".</p>	<p>Copy of Volunteer Essentials</p> <p>Copy of Form 02-211, available online and in the VRC.</p>
3 minutes	<p>Part Four: Evaluation and Reflection</p> <p>A. Ask: "Do you see yourself applying these techniques? If so what would it mean for you? Your troop?"</p>	



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**THE GIVE-AWAY GAME**

Adapted from the game created by Huron Valley Girl Scout Council, Ypsilanti, Michigan

**Your choices on Who Should Do It**

Leader/Co-Leader, Parent/Guardian, Girl/Girls

TASK	WHO SHOULD DO IT?
Register troop and additions to troop	
Arrange transportation as needed	
Arrange for a troop meeting place	
Teach songs and games	
Be sure permission slips are received before a trip	
Find special people for troop projects	
Arrange for camping equipment as needed	
Attend Service Unit meetings	
Find interesting Service Projects	
Order/purchase pins, insignia, patches, badges, etc. as needed	
Conduct Parent/Guardian meetings	
Help girls grow in understanding themselves and others	
Arrange for field trips	
Arrange for extra adults as needed for field trips	
Keep troop records	
Solve discipline problems	
Take Leadership and Grade Level Training	
Take Camp Training	
Make long term plans for the troop	
Gather or buy program supplies	
Prepare annual finance report	
Take attendance	
Collect and record dues	
Provide snacks	
Plan Ceremonies	
Run Troop meetings	
Clean-up following meetings	
Organize the troop's participation in the Cookie Program	
Sell Girl Scout cookies	

## Keys to Positive Parent Participation

**All successful Girl Scout Troops require strong parent/guardian participation. Start right from the beginning of your Girl Scout year – with a well organized and productive parents' meeting.**

- Help parents understand the values and goals of Girl Scouting and how they play a part. For instance, they must allow the girls to be self-sufficient in financing their troop activities. Elicit their support from the beginning by explaining the value of the Cookie Program as the primary financial support because it teaches the girls to set goals, create budgets, and make decisions.
- Explain that you are volunteers and that they must volunteer too in order to ensure the success of the troop. Discuss different ways that they can help and try to give specific assignments at the initial meeting or immediately afterward. Use the "How Families, Friends, and the Community Can Help" - form 02-211. Don't wait for them to put you on the spot asking how they can help. Be prepared!
- Be clear that, if they are going to attend meetings and activities, they must participate in meaningful (not distracting) ways. They must set a good example for the girls by listening, following directions and respecting facilitators.
- Encourage them to consider facilitating a program activity of their own relating to their special interest or expertise. For instance, parents can provide assistance with specific Try-It's/Badges/Interest Projects – there's something to fit everyone's skills.
- Prepare them by letting them know that you will be contacting them periodically to assign specific tasks; such as helping plan an outing during the year or organizing a special celebration or ceremony for the girls.
- Let them know they'll also be expected to participate in the fun too. For instance, the troop may plan or participate in a family games night, a special Guy/Gal event, a family BBQ or potluck.
- Whenever possible, include parents/guardians in the closing circle at the end of your meeting and invite families to special ceremonies such as Investitures, Bridging or Court of Awards.

**Use these tips for job assignment success:**

- ✓ Ask about each person's skills and strengths and assign the right person for the position.
- ✓ Approach people individually and have a suggestion for a specific task/position and why you think they would be good at it.
- ✓ Sit down with those handling big tasks and go over the specifics of what you need and when you need it by. Then, follow-up/check-in at least 2 times before the due date.
- ✓ Communication is the Leadership Team's greatest tool. Use it to keep the families informed through newsletters, calendars, e-mails, memos or notes.

**Remember, the more the families understand about Girl Scouting, the stronger their commitment to the program.**

**Most importantly, thank them when they help out. Have the girls thank them too with notes or in another appropriate way after they help with an event or activity.**

