

Girl Scouts of Central Maryland Service Unit Workshop

Songs

Total Time: 30 minutes

May want to break up group by grade levels.

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

- Teach songs appropriate to age level
- Utilize VRC resources
- Learn at least 1 new song

Timing	Strategies	Resources
5 min.	Start up: Have each leader list names of as many Girl Scout songs they know in 2 minutes (may be done in table groups)	Paper and pen
5 min.	<p>Choosing Songs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask leaders to look at their lists. Which songs are appropriate to teach girls of their grade level? Keep in mind difficulty of songs, words, and meaning. • Share the lists with the entire group. Recruit leaders to teach songs each Service Unit Meeting. 	Paper and markers
5 min.	<p>Review resources from VRC and Girl Scout store.</p> <p>Tapes/CD– Songs from Our Cabana, Girl Scout Greatest Hits, Our Chalet Song, Growing Strong, various song books.</p> <p>Resource Piece – Songs Girl Scouts Love to Sing (04-328)</p> <p>Store has CD – Sisters Hand in Hand</p>	You may want to have copies of the VRC to share with each troop. Please request at least one week prior to your meeting to insure copies are available.
5 min.	<p>How To Teach a Song</p> <p>Review the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn the song yourself 2. Introduce the song (i.e. tell some interesting facts about the song) 3. Provide the song lyrics if possible 4. Sing or play a recording of the song 5. Sing one line at a time, asking the group to listen 6. Have the group sing the whole song through with you. Repeat once or twice if you still have the attention of the group. 	Provide handout attached.
10 min.	Teach a Song – Be prepared to teach a song. You may want to include songs that would be appropriate for an upcoming Girl Scout Holiday or event (i.e. Bridging, Girl Scout birthday, camp)	



Song Leading

For years, singing has been an important part of Girl Scouting. When large gatherings of girls come together, the singing can be a memorable part of the event – just ask any girls and volunteers that have participated in the Girl Scout singing events in Washington, D.C. Singing not only brings joy, satisfaction, and relaxation, but can also enhance the Girl Scout mission of building girls of Courage, Confidence, and Character. The girls will develop new skills, build an understanding and appreciation of other countries through their music, and enrich their appreciation of the many types of music that can be part of their lives.

Selecting Material

The selection of material for group singing will depend on many factors. How old is the group? How often have they sung together? Can they read music? Most children cannot sing part music until about the age of nine or ten. Young children or inexperienced singers need to begin with simple melody-line tunes and advance to two-part and then three-part tunes.

The purest form of choral singing is “a capella” or “without accompaniment.” This type of singing is especially adaptable for camps and troop meetings where instruments might not be available.

If you are leading a newly formed group, start with songs that are quickly learned – those that have short verses and a long chorus or those that build up interest by addition or repetition. Once confidence is gained through songs of this simpler kind, music of a more ambitious nature may be attempted.

In general, there are four types of songs that are suited for recreational purposes: folk songs, rounds and canons, art songs, and popular and contemporary songs.

Folk songs spring from the people. They are shaped by language and custom, history and geography, contact with other people and other music traditions. In the past, folk songs were handed down orally from one generation to the next.

Rounds and canons provide a good introduction to part singing. Because they are “team singing” they help the unsure singer learn her part. It is advisable to teach rounds and canons first as straight songs and then progress to the parts.

Art songs often relate to literature and music. They are usually vocal solos of fine poetry with piano accompaniment written by a credited composer. For example, Schiller’s “Ode to Joy” was set to music by Beethoven. Singing these songs leads to a greater understanding of music in a wider field.

Popular and contemporary songs are often appropriate for groups, but this is an area where song leaders need to choose very carefully and be fully aware of copyright laws. In general, contemporary music in the folk song traditions will be easiest for amateur groups to master.

Copyrights – The people who write, arrange, translate, and publish music have legal rights and using their work without permission is against the law. The law specifies that copyrighted material may not be copied by hand, photocopied, or reprinted without the publishers permission. Also, when permission is granted, it applies to one specific occasion only.

Getting Ready

Before you step in front of a group to lead singing, there are a few ways that you can prepare yourself.

Learn

The first and most important thing is to learn the songs you are going to teach. You should really learn them so well that you will not need to look at the book while you're leading or teaching. Keep in mind, if you are uncomfortable teaching songs, there may be other troop volunteers or older girls who would love to do this.

Practice

Practice song leading by yourself, in front of a mirror if possible. If you can, practice in front of a few patient friends or family members until you feel sure of yourself.

Listen

Listening is another very important way of getting ready. Find examples of singing in different rhythms. Practice conducting with the music. Sometimes, taking the CD/Tape to the meeting will help introduce the song to the girls.

Presenting a Song to a Group

A good song is much more interesting to the singers if it is well presented. Get the groups attention and introduce the song briefly. Tell some interesting fact about it or ask the group to listen for something special such as: Who are the people in the story that the song tells about? What kind of place does the song describe: What country do you think the song came from? Does the song tell a story, suggest action, invite one to dance or merely reflect a mood? For a large group, keep your introduction very brief, but for a small group, you can spend a little more time on this.

The rhythm is most important. One way to establish this is to sing through the song or play the CD/tape two or three times, counting the beat, before asking the group to sing. Clapping also helps establish the rhythm. In general, you establish the rhythm with the right hand and use the left hand to indicate expression and entrance of parts. Volume is usually indicated by large or small beating of the right hand.

Presenting Rounds

Have the entire group sing through the entire song together until you feel that they know it.

Divide the group into the number of parts needed. For younger singers, you need at least 3 or 4 people on each part.

Cue each part as indicated in the round.

Listen to one particular group and give the signal to hold when that group has reached the exact end of the round. In this way, the round will end with a pleasing chord conclusion.

A Few Tips

1. Establish a happy atmosphere when planning to teach songs.
2. Be enthusiastic and forget yourself. All your attention should be focused on the song and the group's reaction to it.
3. Correct mistakes as you go along.
4. Be good humored.
5. Be patient under trying circumstances.
6. Avoid rigidity of program. Be prepared to change plans.
7. Do not be overly ambitious, but keep your objective just a little ahead of the group so there is always something to strive for.
8. Encourage girls to share their favorite songs.
9. Show respect for the girls and Girl Scouting, by refusing to sing songs that are in poor taste.