Virtual Troop Meeting FAQs and Tips

Virtual Troop Meeting FAQs

Do I need to maintain girl-to-adult safety ratios even though it's not an in-person meeting?
Parents should be monitoring their younger girls' use of the computer. If they are doing that, then ratios are 1:1. Older girls can communicate with their troop leader and others in the virtual setting and can follow the standard Girl Scout girl-to-adult ratios.

Troop leaders: be sure to follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints:
- Safety Activity Checkpoints | Virtual Troop Meetings
- Safety Activity Checkpoints | Computer and Internet Use

What if the internet isn't available to some of our girls and their families?
Many online platforms have cell phone apps as well as call-in options. Your girls do not need a computer to participate. Keep in mind you may need to modify some of your activities if not all girls can see you.

What if the girls drop off the call and can't get back in?
As Girl Scouts, we're always prepared! If you can, and if it is age appropriate, send out a meeting agenda and/or PowerPoint to the girls beforehand.

What if my girls aren't engaged with the meeting content?
- Engagement can vary by age level. We know that our younger members may need more parent support than our older girls. Make sure to include physical activities like a scavenger hunt, stretch breaks, and keep the activities short and sweet!
- Engage all the girls, if some aren't participating, ask questions.
- Be comfortable with silence, and do not jump to fill it, meeting participants may be unmuting their microphones, or simply processing the discussion to formulate a response. Let some time pass with silence, if need be, to allow attendees to respond.
- Praise the girls for the good things they are doing.
- Manage your expectations. For many girls, the social interaction may be the most important aspect of a virtual troop meeting. If they need to use the space to simply be together, that's okay too. "Meeting" with their friends will recharge their batteries, and they can support one another just by talking and listening.
- Have the girls help you establish a routine.
- Go over the badge/activity girls voted on. See if their interests have changed. Take another poll and brainstorm with girls on ways to make the badge content interesting.

What if my girls don't have the materials they need to complete badge activities?
Encourage your girls to problem-solve and think outside of the box. This can be as simple as pretending to have the object or finding something that is similar. Are there alternative, freely available materials? Could the same concept be covered in a different way? Could they pair up with other girls who do have materials and work together via video chat?

Virtual Troop Meeting Tips and Best Practices

Five Best Practices for Conducting Virtual Girl Scout Troop Meetings

There are five best practices for conducting virtual meetings that are engaging and enjoyable for both you and the girls. These techniques will be different for your troop depending on the ages of the girls in your troop:

- **Actively build real relationships and a positive social space** with opportunities for identity expression, sharing and showcasing, play, and co-creation of social norms.
- **Structure the experience to support full participation** by varying live (synchronous) activities and ones that participants do on their own time (asynchronous), creating predictability, making materials accessible and persistent, and chunking activities to accommodate shorter attention spans.
- **Design activities to invite higher levels of engagement** by creating clear pathways for participation, including opportunities for girls to create, teach, lead and dialog with each other, and building in engagement check-ins and family involvement.
- **Encourage participants to use their bodies** through movement breaks, embodied activities, and hands-on engagement with physical materials.
- **Maintain flexibility in expectations, activities, and facilitation!** It's not going to be perfect, be willing to drop an activity or spend more time on one if girls are engaged. You may need to modify activities during the meeting, you can think of "plan b" just in case.

Coming Up with a Virtual Meeting Plan for a Badge

Badge Overview:
- List the requirements for the badge you will be working on - this will help you keep on track and give an overview of the goal.

Activities Overview:
- List out all of the activities you plan to do to earn the badge; this gives you a nice visual of what you will be doing and also help you decide how you would like to organize the meetings.
- Use the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) and other resources you normally utilize as a starting point.
- GSUSA has provided several Activities for Girls with activity lesson plans and videos.
- Ask families which skills they can lend to the troop. Perhaps someone loves to camp and can share a video of themselves demonstrating how to pack for an overnight.

Before the Meeting:
- Create a list of tasks you'll need to do before the meeting.
- Create a detailed agenda for yourself and the other leaders of the order of events and instructions for the activities you'll be doing.
- Over prepare. You want to have more material than you think you will need, in case something doesn't work out and you need to move on to something else.

During the meeting:
- Make sure you ask girls to mute themselves as they arrive. Have a note up on the screen on how to mute/unmute.
- Be sure to talk about what the girls will be doing at the next meeting, and let them know if they will need to come prepared with anything.

After the Meeting
- Debrief with your Virtual Meeting Support Team. What went well? What didn't go well, and how can you do it better next time? What types of activities really engaged the girls?
- If you had technology issues, what can you do to fix it? Does your team need more practice? Do you need to train the girls on how to use the technology?

Engaging Parents and Caregivers

- Host a parents' meeting first to make sure everyone understands how to use the app and to troubleshoot issues before your start time for girls' programming.
- Communicate with families beforehand to make sure they have the supplies needed for the meeting.
- Planning ahead and creating email templates to send out to your troop parents and girls may save you some time and help you stay organized with what will be happening in each meeting. Below are some examples of templates you can use, please feel free to edit these to what fits your troop best:

Meeting Email Template #1

Hello!

Our troop will be working on the *INSERT BADGE NAME* at the next meeting on *DATE, TIME*. Here is the link to access the meeting: *INSERT LINK (and any meeting codes and passwords)*

Before the meeting, please have your Girl Scout come prepared with: *INSERT MATERIALS THEY MAY NEED TO COMPLETE ANY ACTIVITIES*

Thank you and see you at our Virtual Troop Meeting!

Meeting Email Template #2

Hello!

Our troop will be working on part two of *INSERT BADGE NAME* at the next meeting on *DATE, TIME*. Here is the link to access the meeting: *INSERT LINK (and any meeting codes and passwords)*

Before the next meeting, please have your Girl Scout come prepared with: *INSERT MATERIALS THEY MAY NEED TO COMPLETE ANY ACTIVITIES*

OPTIONAL: I've encouraged the girls to bring a snack to the next meeting so we can all snack together!

Thank you and see you at our next Virtual Troop Meeting!

Additional Resources

- The Trailhead: A Girl Scouts Guide to the Internet: Volunteer Edition
- GSUSA: Tips for Troop Leaders
- 10 Tips for Moderating Dynamic Virtual Meetings
- Tips for Video Chatting with Young Children