

# Songs

## Raise your voice!

Whether singing around a campfire or joining a chorus of voices on the National Mall in Washington D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship that music creates. In fact, the first Girl Scout Song Book, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925. Since then, the organization's love of music has grown along with the girls it has empowered.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. The tradition of Girl Scouts learning songs is by repetition.

## A Skill That Can Be Learned

Love to sing, but not sure how to start teaching others? Here are some great guidelines for the emerging song leader – no matter what age you are.

### Choosing Songs:

- **Know the group you will be working with.** How old are they? How many girls are there? What are their singing abilities? What is their song interest? How long is their attention span?
- **Begin with simple songs or songs** that girls know. Choose songs that are simple, like short rounds (a song where the group is divided into two or more sections to sing the melody in a way that sounds harmoniously together like, “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”), songs with tra-la-la choruses, repeat songs or those that include repetition.
- **Know what you're doing.** Know the songs words and the melody. Practice. Use note cards if you need them. Make a list of the songs you will sing and know the order in which you plan to sing them. Know something of the history of the songs so you can share it with the girls.
- If you are choosing songs for an evening program, **start out with the rowdy songs** and end up with the quiet songs to set the tone for bedtime.

### Leading Songs:

- **Be enthusiastic**
- **Sing the song through the group.** Introduce the song by telling the girls what it is and any facts you may have about it. Sing the first verse and the chorus, so group members know how it sounds. Have those who know it sing with you.

- **Teach the song phrase by phrase.** Sing a phrase, then have the group sing back to you. Then join phrases and sing the verse and chorus. If the song is long, teach a few verses, then repeat. Repeat once or twice.
- **Sing the song all together.** If singing a round, a song with parts, or a descant (a melody sung over a plainsong like “I Love the Mountains”) make sure each group knows its part well before putting the parts together. If you are signing songs with parts, have a leader who knows each part. Use simple hand motions to keep the tempo.
- **You give the starting note.** Hum the melody or use a musical instrument. If you get it wrong, stop and start over. Avoid pitching too high or too low for girls.
- **Make sure that girls follow your hand motions.** Let them know that hand motions are used to keep the group together in the right tempo, and the motions will help them know where you are in the song.

**Choose a variety of songs.** Try songs that are fast and slow, songs that include hand motions and songs that lend themselves to simple harmony, as well as funny songs. Avoid songs that might be offensive to religious or ethnic groups.

#### **Songbooks Available for Purchase:**

*Pax Lodge Songbook*

*Girl Scout Pocket Songbook*

*Brownie Girl Scout Songbook*

#### **Online Resources for Songs:**

[girlscouts.info/GSMusic](http://girlscouts.info/GSMusic)

[girlscouts.info/SongLeading](http://girlscouts.info/SongLeading)

[girlscouts.info/ScoutSongs](http://girlscouts.info/ScoutSongs)