Team building activities can help our youth learn about teamwork, cooperation and communication. Among Girl Scouts, these are particularly valuable skills. Team building activities are different than regular activities. Whether you’re working with your own daughters or a group of girls, it’s important for a young person to feel she belongs to a group. Team-building exercises for girls help participants learn more about themselves and one another, build trust and learn to cooperate in different ways. Because there are no boys involved, the girls may feel more comfortable opening up about themselves and participating in the activities.

Note: As part of our Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) our programming (Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouts and the Journeys) have team building built into them. The 3 Processes are Girl Led, Learning by Doing and Cooperative Learning. An example of this would be in the Journeys. Using the Daisy Flower Journey facilitator (leader) guide, page 29 has a chart of the National Leadership Outcomes. Looking at the Connect outcomes, Girls promote cooperation and team-building through Session 1 by naming something about themselves that helps them work well in a group. Each Journey has this chart in the facilitator guide. Volunteers can use this to their advantage when planning activities.

Leadership Games
Team-building exercises that use leadership games require girls to get the confidence to step up, take charge and act. A simple exercise is to have the girls form a circle, hold hands and figure out a way to turn the circle inside out so their backs face the inside of the circle. The girls can accomplish this by having two players raise their arms so the others can pass through the arch formed. Increase the difficulty level by blindfolding the girls. The “Blind Square” activity, from the Becoming program website, starts with blindfolding the girls in a group, giving them a rope that’s at least 40 feet long and telling them to form a square with the rope. This exercise requires all the girls to take charge, help organize the corners and accomplish a common goal.

Strength- and Talent-Recognition Games
Team-building games that help girls learn about each other’s strengths and talents aren’t always competitive. In the “Party” game, the girls write down their strengths and talents on strips of paper. The girls place a strip in a balloon and inflate it. One by one, each girl pops a random balloon and the group identifies the person who wrote on the strip of paper. The person who popped the balloon secures the paper to a large banner. This exercise reveals the strengths that each girl offers the group and lets the girls see their collective strengths. A similar activity is like musical chairs. Like in the classic game, there is one chair less than the number of girls in the group. To begin the game, all but one of the girls sit. The girl left standing is the leader who calls out a strength or talent. The girls who possess the quality stand up and find a new place to sit. The leader automatically gets to sit. The person who doesn’t take a seat fast enough is the new leader.
Communication Games
Communication games help girls develop a life skill as they work in teams of two or more. A simple game from the Girl Scouts of Southern Appalachians requires the girls to form teams of two. Each girl receives an envelope. All the envelopes have the same contents: shapes of various sizes cut out of different colors of paper. The girls in a team sit back to back. One girl is the designer and the other is the copier. The designer makes an image using the shapes and describes the creation to her partner, who attempts to make an identical image. After the first round, the girls switch roles. If the girls are older, they can do a similar game that is more difficult. Instead of using shapes, the designer draws a simple diagram on a piece of paper and gives instructions to the copier about how to duplicate it. In the first stage, the copier can’t ask questions. In the second stage, the copier can only ask questions that have “Yes” or “No” answers. In the final stage, the two girls can talk freely about the design before comparing the results.

Problem Solving
Sneak a Peek Game
This problem solving activity requires little more than a couple of sets of children’s building blocks. The instructor will build a small sculpture with some of the building blocks and hide it from the group. The participants should then be divided into small teams of four. Each team should be given enough building material so that they can duplicate the structure you’ve already created. The instructor should then place their sculpture in an area that is an equal distance from all the groups. One member from each team can come up at the same time to look at the sculpture for ten seconds and try to memorize it before returning to their team. After they return to their teams, they have twenty-five seconds to instruct their teams about how to build an exact replica of the instructor’s sculpture. After one minute of trying to recreate the sculpture, another member from each team can come up for a “sneak a peek” before returning to their team and trying to recreate the sculpture. The game should be continued in this pattern until one of the team’s successfully duplicates the original sculpture. This game will teach participants how to problem solve in a group and communicate effectively.

More Games
Ball Challenge
Supplies: Two soft dodge balls or another small ball to be tossed
- Split girls up into two teams
- Have girls line up in a single file line
- The first girl will throw the ball under her legs to the next girl and it will go all the way down the line and back
- Girls will race against the other team to see who goes fastest
- Time the girls to see if they can beat their previous times

Jump On In!
Supplies: Jump rope
Have two girls stand on each side to hold the rope and twirl.
See how many jumps your group can do all together with the jump rope. You can have the girls all stand in the line at once or add a few girls each time. Have the girls set a record and see how many jumps they can get as a group all together.

Balloon Tower
Supplies: Balloons (6-8 per group), Masking Tape
- Split girls up into teams based on the size of the group, make sure teams are no smaller than three and no bigger than six.
- Give the girls balloons and a few pieces of masking tape, each team will get about fifteen minutes to build the tallest tower that they can (You can use a stop watch if you like)
• When time is up, girls are not allowed to touch the tower to hold it up, whichever team has the tallest tower wins

Birthday Line-up
Supplies: None
• Tell girls they have to get in birthday order from January to December
• The trick is that they have to do so without talking
• A variation is for the girls to get in alphabetical order without talking
• You can time the girls and see how fast they can do it, have a goal for them to reach

Egg-cellent
Supplies: eggs (raw), clean up supplies, paper towel, tape, straws, paper bags, other paper products (whatever you have at home)
• Break the girls into team, about 2-6 per team
• Give girls an egg, paper products, tape and the paper bag and tell them that they have to build a protective barrier around it
• Give girls about fifteen minutes to do so, make sure all eggs are in the paper bag
• Drop the eggs from different heights, see which eggs survive longest

Debriefing After an Activity
Apples and Onions Team Building Debrief
Gather the participants into a circle at the end of the activity or at the end of the day.

Tell the participants that they should come up with an onion and an apple for the day or the activity they just completed.

An Onion is a part of the day or activity that they did not enjoy, something they disapproved, or an experience they did not particularly like.

An Apple is a positive experience, such as a something they liked about the day, a specific act of teamwork they observed, a compliment for someone else, or other positive comment.

It

You can also change the two categories. Here are some examples:

Roses and Thorns
Candy and Vegetables

Questions to ask in this phase could include: