Short & Snappy—Learning Opportunity for Volunteers

Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

Volunteer Toolkit
The new online Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), helps troop volunteers get what they need when they need it. Troops are able to plan out their whole year and have a roster of all troop member information, accessible via computer or mobile device, and tools to facilitate communication between parents and troop leaders.

The VTK is designed to help improve the girl and volunteer experience. Online resources will help volunteers work with their troops to plan troop activities, custom-fit with what their troop loves to do and coordinate it with a Journey. The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) offers:

- Yearlong badge and Journey-based troop meeting plans
- Meeting activities and resources
- Supply lists
- An easy way to add, delete and customize meetings

Watch the VTK tutorials at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLZaWZO965rJ2_OmIsOCwnzUe0xkhTBhrG&v=jAX648TLn1

Troop leaders can access all functions of the VTK. Daisy, Brownie and Junior leaders can create a Year Plan; involve girls in the planning process. This feature will be added for Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors in the future, and may work differently to allow more girl involvement. Troops that are listed as a Multi-Level troop will have access to the Daisy, Brownie, and Junior meetings.

If your troop consists of these younger levels, you can mix and match meeting plans to build a calendar for your troop. Though it’s a little more time consuming than choosing the standard year plan for one level, it’s a helpful way to stay organized and plan age appropriate meetings for your girls. For Multi-level troops of older girls (Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors), leaders can still use the Volunteer Toolkit to create custom meetings and plan their year.

Tips (practice these functions with leaders)

For everyone:
- Use Chrome as your browser, if possible.
- Dive in and give it a try; it’s very intuitive and forgiving.
- Keep your Year Plan up-to-date for clear, easy communication with troop families.
- Note that emails you send to troop members won’t come from your personal address—and replies won’t come back to you. Type your own email address at the front of the pre-populated email test so families can easily respond to you.
For new Daisy, Brownie or Junior Leaders

- Log in to “My GS” at girlscouts-ssc.org (top right of the page). Choose Volunteer Toolkit.
- In VTK, start by selecting a Year Plan. Pick a temporary petal or badge year to start with—your girls will decide which year they want to pursue.
- Each Year Plan starts with an Intro meeting, where girls get to know each other and learn a bit about Girl Scouts.
- The second meeting is a sampling of activities from the badge year and the two Journey years within VTK. After this meeting, the girls will decide, with your guidance, on the types of activities they like best. This will tell you which Year Plan is best.
- Now go to the Year Plan Library and click/tap the Year Plan the girls selected.
- Of course, girls’ passions aren’t that simple! No worries: You can drag and drop all sorts of alternate meeting plans into your Year Plan. It’s completely customizable.
  - Set meeting dates and locations
  - Customize the meetings if needed (date, order of agenda, etc.)
  - Send reminders through the Meeting Plans
  - Go!

For Returning Leaders:

- Make sure your status is set as direct primary volunteer. If you’re a lifetime member, you may still need to renew your role as a direct primary volunteer. If you’re the leader of multi-age group, choose a program grade level to focus on, and ask Membership Support to adjust the setting if needed.

Activity: Have everyone log onto VTK on their phone. Send them on a scavenger hunt to:

- Find their first meeting (in the Year Plan library)
- Switch their second meeting with the fourth meeting (use drag and drop)
- Set their meeting date and time (select “specify dates and locations” link)
- Find their troop roster
- Send an email to themselves

Still to Come:
In the future, VTK will include new badges and Journeys, registration for council events/activities, troop finance reporting and resources for Cadette, Seniors and Ambassadors. Watch for these to come.
Frequently Asked Questions - My GS Community / Volunteer Toolkit

What is the Volunteer Toolkit?

The Volunteer Toolkit will make it easier for leaders to manage their troops, prepare for and lead meetings, and connect with other volunteers. Leaders will have access to important resources to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience including three years of meeting plans for Daisy, Brownie and Junior Troops. These plans will incorporate the It’s Your Planet – Love it and It’s Your Story – Tell It! Journeys as well as all badge requirements. GSUSA also continues to develop new badges and Journeys. These will be added to the VTK as they are developed.

Who can access the Volunteer Toolkit?

As a registered troop leader (volunteer) (K-5), you will have access to the new Volunteer Toolkit—Girl Scout programming conveniently delivered to your computer, smartphone or tablet to help you and your girls plan meetings. Registered parents of girls in troops will also have “read-only” views of the My Troop (excluding contact info), Year Plan, and Meeting Plans.

Although the badges and journey program materials for Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors are currently not loaded into the toolkit, girls and their advisors can leverage the VTK to access the “Customize Your Troop Year” plan, the contacts, and the communication abilities of the toolkit.

Leaders are encouraged to involve girls in the planning of the troop meetings as appropriate by grade level, so that they can explore more of what they love!

What will I do in the Volunteer Toolkit?

Girl Scout troop leaders, when you log into VTK for the first time, you’ll have access to three year plans, including one year of Girl Scout badges and a choice of two Girl Scout Journeys. These pre-made plans will help you get started. You’ll also set your meeting calendar to include locations, dates and times. New content can be added throughout the year. Customize activities, delete ones that your girls don’t want to do and replace them with new ones. If you lead several troops you can easily switch back and forth between your troops!

How will the Volunteer Toolkit help troop parents?

It will be so easy to sign a girl up for Girl Scouts online! There is a volunteer catalog that will show parents where troops are available. There will be no getting stuck because the system tracks them through the process and if they do get stuck somewhere, it alerts us and we can help them.

Communicating with parents will be so much simpler with the VTK. Troop leaders will be able to email parents about the activities and learning that is happening in their troop, and attach photos right to those emails – all from within the toolkit!

If I don’t have internet access at my meeting place, how will I access the VTK?

You can easily download the materials to your device or print them to take to your meeting. The VTK can be accessed via tablets or smart phones. You can save the material on these devices, or access them using your mobile broadband or WiFi network.

What about volunteers who don’t have internet access at home?

The VTK is a website that can be accessed from any computer or electronic device with internet capability. Libraries are a great resource for those who don’t have access to the internet at home. You can print meeting plans or download them to your personal computer using remote internet access.
Frequently Asked Questions - Cont.

I have Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), now what?
The system is user friendly! There are some great training videos that you can watch to familiarize yourself with how it works.

You can also just jump in and play! It works like this:
1. Meet with your girls to decide what badges or Journey they want to work towards using girl-planning appropriate for their age level.
2. On the “Year Plan” tab, choose the appropriate plan based on your conversation with the girls! For Daisy, Brownie and Junior Troops there are three options: The Badge Year Plan or two Journey options. Drag and drop meetings to customize the year plan schedule.
3. Use the “Meeting Plan” tab to customize the meeting location, time, and plans for that specific troop meeting. You can utilize the Meeting Aids and other resources right from this tab.
4. Underneath the meeting agenda are specific and customizable activities, complete with scripted guides and a list of necessary materials to complete the activities.
That’s all there is to it. Less planning time = more time for fun!

It’s already mid-year and my year is planned? Is it too late to use the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)?
It is never too late to jump in and utilize the Volunteer Toolkit! There are so many great meeting ideas and resources – you and the girls in your troop will want to take full advantage of all that VTK has to offer!
Haven’t started a Journey (It’s Your Planet-Love It! and It’s Your Story-Tell It!) or want to get your girls outside more? Utilize the Journey curriculum and the Get Girls Outdoors feature to make the most out of Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) mid-year!

What about Juliette’s/Individually Registered Members?
The VTK is designed for troop management. In order to have access to the VTK, the girls need to be in a troop and thus need two registered and designated adult leaders.

Why has Girl Scouts decided to go digital?
The VTK is designed to help cut down the amount of time it takes for you to manage your troops by planning meetings (in partnership with the girls), communicating with parents, and finding support resources. The VTK puts all of this at your fingertips!

Will there be training on the Volunteer Toolkit?
The Volunteer Toolkit is designed to be intuitive and require no formal training; however, video tutorials are available on YouTube. An enrichment workshop for administrative volunteers may be offered at Super Saturday workshops.

Why doesn’t the system work from my computer?
Your Internet browser might be out of date. We recommend Firefox, Chrome or post-version 9 Internet Explorer. If you’re still having trouble logging in, contact membershipsupport@girls scouts-ssc.org.

Can the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) calendar link to a smartphone calendar?
Not at this time, but Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) can be accessed from smartphones and tablets making this tool accessible anytime and anywhere that is convenient to you.

What if I still have questions?
If you have additional questions about Volunteer Systems or the Volunteer Toolkit, contact membershipsupport@girls scouts-ssc.org or call 208-377-2011.