What + How: Creating a Quality Experience

It’s not just what girls do, but how you engage them that creates a high-quality experience. All Girl Scout activities are built on three processes—Girl Led, Cooperative Learning, and Learning by Doing—that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities. When used together, these processes ensure the quality and promote the fun and friendship so integral to Girl Scouting. Take some time to understand these processes and how to use them with Girl Scout Brownies.

**Girl Led**

“Girl Led” is just what it sounds like—girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how, and why of their activities. So encourage them to lead the planning, decision-making, learning, and fun as much as possible. This ensures that girls are engaged in their learning and experience leadership opportunities as they prepare to become active participants in their local and global communities. With Brownies, this might mean:

- Brainstorming lists of possibilities
- Letting them select from some choices (for opening and closing ceremonies, for example)
- Selecting “add-ons” for the Quest (crafts, trips, etc.)
- Allowing the girls to learn from plans that don’t go quite right (as long as everyone is safe!). They can talk about what they’d do differently next time.

Some girl-led experiences are built into Quest sessions to make it easy for you. For example, during Session 4, the Brownie Brainstorm has the girls identifying and beginning to plan a Take Action Project.

**Learning by Doing**

Learning by Doing, also known as Experiential Learning, is a hands-on learning process that engages girls in continuous cycles of action and reflection that...
result in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills. As they participate in meaningful activities and then reflect on them, girls get to explore their own questions, discover answers, gain new skills, and share ideas and observations with others. Throughout the process, it’s important for girls to be able to connect their experiences to their lives and apply what they have learned to their future experiences.

For the Brownie Team, this means giving the girls (and yourself!) some quiet time along the Quest to stop, think, talk, and reflect. Resist the urge to rush from “doing” to “more doing,” and try to follow the discussion tips and questions provided to assist the Brownies in getting deeper meaning from what they have just done. Plenty of additional tips are woven into this guide, and the girls have even more opportunities to reflect and apply their experiences through the optional exercises in their Quest books.

Cooperative Learning

Through cooperative learning, girls work together toward shared goals in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration that encourages the sharing of skills, knowledge, and learning. Working together in all-girl environments also encourages girls to feel powerful and emotionally and physically safe, and it allows them to experience a sense of belonging even in the most diverse groups. With Brownies, you can try:

- Providing plenty of opportunities for teaming up in mini-groups
- Making decisions together as a Team (even about small things like what snack to serve at the next session)
- Giving the girls a minute or two to work out conflicts before you jump in (as long as physical safety isn’t an issue)

Cooperative learning experiences are also built into the Quest. For example, during Session 2, the Brownies engage in Team play and then use the experience to create their own Team Agreement. At future sessions, you can display the agreement and ask the girls to reflect on their efforts to stick to it.