

Guiding Conversations

Offering adventure for all



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Girlguiding's Centenary has helped to broaden many members' perception of adventure, particularly with the success of the *Adventure 100 Challenge*, which brought adventure to the unit meeting place through their regular programme. As a result of this and other Centenary activities, many young members' expectations have been raised and girls and young women now expect adventurous opportunities as a regular part of their guiding experience.

What is an adventure?

An adventure is something which is active, offers a challenge, is chosen by the girls and gives them some freedom to explore and try something new or be free of the usual space constraints. The challenge for Leaders is finding out what their girls see as an adventure and helping them to access it.

Do remember that you may need to increase the level of adventure as the girls and young women become used to undertaking a challenge, and the greater the challenge, the greater the sense of achievement for girls. This could be the perfect way to develop your own skills as a Leader and try one of our activity qualifications.

Where do you sit on the adventure spectrum? Do you struggle to find ways to help the girls access adventure? Do you offer lots of great adventurous opportunities for the girls using other people's skills? Do you have a skill of your own that you use to help girls access adventure? In any area, urban or rural, there will be a mix of adventures offered in guiding. A team approach to delivering adventure may open up opportunities you never thought possible!

'Our District holds an annual Brownie Activity Day at the local campsite and holiday house. Leaders and Young Leaders from all sections around the District come to share their skills and provide activities for our Brownies. The Leaders and Young Leaders get the chance to catch up and share ideas for how similar activities can be delivered to Rainbows, Guides and The Senior Section. I always enjoy being part of the activity day as I know that I'll come away with ideas to share with my unit.'

Karen, Brownie Leader from Kent

Why not chat about the different skills there are in your District or Division and how you can make the most of them in adventurous activities?

Why offer adventure in the programme?

Adventurous experiences are exciting and inspiring for girls and young women and they are often the things that girls describe when they are asked about their guiding experiences. Many 'mountain-top moments' are girls' experiences of adventurous activities.

Guiding can be the only place where girls and young women access adventure and it is part of our balanced programme. Research has shown that adventure in a safe, girl-only space is supportive, creates bonds between girls, and is confidence-building and nurturing. Guiding provides fantastic examples of this and it's up to us to deliver as many opportunities as we can. One of the best aspects of being a Leader is seeing girls grow in confidence and develop friendships with other girls - offering adventure is a great way to do this.

Adventure in the unit meeting

Doing something adventurous with your unit needn't require you to go outside of the meeting place or meeting time, and it needn't be expensive or require non-guiding instructors.

'When the girls said they wanted to go for a trip to the moon we did a themed evening that included a moon landing and some indoor tasks that had to be performed as if they were walking on the moon. We even had space food. Okay, so it was not an actual journey and it needed a bit of imagination from the girls and Leaders but it turned out to be a great evening.'

Sophie, Guide Leader from London North East

Adventure means different things to different people. An adventure can be as simple as exposing the girls to a new experience or the challenge of trying something new. These may be things that you are already doing, for example:

- a Rainbow scavenger hunt in the park, meeting an owl or

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a pretend sleepover (complete with pyjamas) in the meeting place

- a Brownie mini pioneering exercise, activities with water, make-your-own rocket, making a film or tending to the girls' first campfire (indoor or out)
- Guides making a tin can stove, trying a new sport, map reading or a local walk
- The Senior Section testing different types of camping stoves, an international food evening, shelter-building or geocaching.

Myth busting

Myth: The only way to offer adventure is to run a camp or holiday.

Reality: You don't have to go very far to offer adventure to your girls as a number of adventurous activities can be accessed on your doorstep. You could go to the local swimming pool, park or beach; visit a local campsite, farm or Nature Study centre; or explore the local area.

You don't even need to leave the meeting place. You could do some wide games, invite someone to teach a new skill, create an cave system of tunnels out of everyday materials, or run an international evening where the girls get to 'visit' a new country or tour a number of countries. Consider how you can adapt a sport or activity to make it suitable for your meeting place and what equipment is available to you.

Myth: Offering adventures is expensive and you need lots of qualifications.

Reality: Girls often don't see adventure in the same way Leaders do and a conversation with your girls could lead to a number of ideas that don't involve having extra qualifications. Discuss with your girls what adventure looks, sounds and feels like and then build up an idea of the adventure you're going to experience together. It may be that you don't need a qualification to do what the girls suggest, eg a walk up your local hill. However, if this were to turn into an excursion much further afield, then undertaking the Girlguiding Walking Scheme can help you to do it safely. If the girls suggest things such as climbing, caving or canoeing, somebody in your local area may hold the relevant qualifications (or know someone who does). Your local campsite or youth centre may also be able to point you

towards low-cost sessions for community groups.

Myth: For my girls to go away I need a Camp and Holiday Scheme Qualification.

Reality: We'd love you to consider working towards this, but there are a growing number of 'book and go' opportunities available in guiding, so keep an eye on *guiding* magazine, *Adventure Made Easy*, Country and Region newsletters and Girlguiding's *e-newsletters*. You could also ask someone in your area with the appropriate qualification to go with you and together run a joint residential for both your units. Or you could attend a large residential event organised in your area.

Myth: I have to do it all - planning, organising, running it - on my own.

Reality: One of the many great things about guiding is the frequent opportunity to support one another and share skills. Joining forces with other units to offer activities gives your girls the chance to meet other girls (an adventure in itself) and enables Leaders to take advantage of skills outside their units. There may also be group discounts and cheaper transport options on offer for a bigger group.

Adventure is at the heart of what we do. It is part of a balanced and varied programme. A stronger, supported opportunity for adventure will help us to recruit and retain girls and young women.

Questions

1. What adventurous activities and opportunities do we offer in our units already?
2. How could we offer more adventurous opportunities in our units?
3. What skills, qualifications and resources are available in our District/Division to help girls to access adventure and how can we make the most of these?
4. What can we do together to help girls have an adventure in our area?

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Further information

- *Adventure Made Easy* - adventurous activities at Girlguiding's Training and Activity Centres
- Association of Scout and Guide Campsites - find your local Guide or Scout campsite
- Girlguiding activities forum - a space for members to share activity ideas
- your local Outdoor Activities Adviser (or equivalent) should know who has experience or qualifications in adventurous activities nearby
- *A to Z of Activities* - which can be found in the online *Guiding Manual*
- *guiding* magazine activities - to try in the unit and close to home
- Learning and Development webpages - for a challenge and the chance to strengthen your own skills

District action plan

Title Offering adventure for all

Action

Date

Person/Group

Action	Date	Person/Group