



GiRLS FIRST

A Guide to the Girl Program



Girl Guides of Canada – Girls First

This guide includes all the information you need to discover, understand and, more importantly, participate in the Girls First program. Girls and Guiders can refer to this document to explore the overall program, learn about the program areas and themes, and discover the types of activities you can explore.

What will you find here?

This program guide is divided into the following sections:

- ★ [Introduction – the why of the program](#)
- ★ [The Girl Program – what it's all about](#)
- ★ [Program Areas and Themes – the good stuff](#)
- ★ [Digital Platform – where to explore the program](#)
- ★ [What You'll Do – about the activities](#)
- ★ [How the Program Works – program guidelines](#)
- ★ [Earning Badges – everything you need to know](#)



Introduction

The Girls First program puts girls in the driver's seat of their Guiding experience. The program has been developed based on what girls told us they want – from activities, content and topics, to the kinds of skills they want to learn. An evergreen program, the content is consistently changing and growing to meet your interests and needs.

But most of all, the program is FUN! Whether you're a camper, an advocate, an explorer, an experimenter, a tinkerer, a budding artist, or a do-it-yourselfer, this program has something for everyone.




Through the program, every girl in Guiding can be
Everything she wants to be.





The Girl Program is Girl-driven

What does girl-driven mean? Girl-driven is all about...

-  **CHOICE** – you pick what you want to do and what you want to get out of Guiding
-  **VOICE** – the program is relevant to your needs and you have the ultimate say in everything you do
-  **ACTION** – what you do in Guiding helps you contribute to making the world a better place in a way that matters to you

Girl-driven also means you can choose the activities and content you want to do and make adjustments and modifications as you go. The program is totally flexible. It encourages self-discovery and exploration, and takes a feminist approach by showcasing female role models and empowering girls.

Through your participation in the program, you'll explore activities that help you to achieve the following:

- 1** *Develop your sense of self and advocate for your needs*
- 2** *Build healthy relationships and develop your sense of belonging*
- 3** *Learn about and engage in your community – whether that's your local community, or global, or both!*

Five Pillars of the Girl-driven Experience



SAFE SPACE

Guiding is a supportive environment where you can talk about your aspirations and challenges, knowing you'll be listened to and respected.



GROWTH MINDSET

Guiding is about meeting you where you are and allowing you to stretch your abilities, experiment, and fail without fear.



POSITIVE IDENTITY

As a girl organization we want to inspire you to dream big! Guiding is a place where you can meet diverse female role models and debunk gender and cultural stereotypes.



SHARED LEADERSHIP

Leadership is about ownership, responsibility, and contribution. In Guiding, you have a role, you contribute to your unit in your own way, and your opinion matters. You can lead from the front, from the back, and alongside others.



ENGAGING COMMUNITY

Guiding will equip you with skills and opportunities to engage in your local community and the Guiding community as an active citizen. You'll be supported in identifying issues that are meaningful to you, participating in decision-making, and taking actions to make a lasting impact.

Program Areas and Themes

The girl program has:

- Seven program areas
- Three themes in each program area

The program areas and themes are the same across all branches, from Sparks all the way up to Rangers. The activities and content at each branch are designed to meet the interests and abilities of girls in that age group. So, what a Spark does will be very different from what a Guide does, which in turn will be different than what a Ranger does.

PA

GUIDE TOGETHER

THEMES

- Our Story
- Spirit of Guiding
- Camping and the Great Outdoors

PA

EXPLORE IDENTITIES

THEMES

- Being You
- Different Together
- Gender Power

PA

BUILD SKILLS

THEMES

- Money Sense
- Life Stuff
- How To:

PA

BE WELL

THEMES

- My Mighty Mind
- My Physical Self
- My Healthy Relationships

PA

EXPERIMENT AND CREATE

THEMES

- Science Lab
- Design Space
- Art Studio

PA

CONNECT AND QUESTION

THEMES

- Local Communities
- Canadian Connections
- World Stage

PA

TAKE ACTION

THEMES

- Your Choice
- Your Voice
- Your Action

GUIDE TOGETHER

Explore what it means to be part of Guiding in Canada and the global Guiding Movement. In this program area, you'll learn about Guiding history, enjoy tons of fun and games, and head outdoors to explore with your unit. Find out what it's like to be a Girl Guide at various ages here in Canada and around the world.

Welcome to the sisterhood!



Our Story:

Discover your place in Girl Guides – both locally and globally – and connect through stories and traditions. Discover the Guiding Promise and Law and Guiding ceremonies, taste (and sell!) cookies and learn about the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, world centres and other member organizations. Plan your meetings and build your Guiding experience, at every branch level!

Spirit of Guiding:

Come together and embrace the sisterhood within your unit. In this theme, you might run a themed meeting, plan a campfire singalong, make a trader or just be silly while enjoying Guiding games, crafts and fun challenges.

Camping and the Great Outdoors:

Explore and appreciate everything the natural world has to offer while you build your camping and outdoor skills. Pitch your tent and learn about knots and gadgets, waterproof bedrolls, orienteering and outdoor survival.

EXPLORE IDENTITIES

Explore what makes you unique and appreciate difference in other people. In this program area, you'll spend time getting to know your true self and discover the value in how we're all so unique.

Tap into the power of being YOU!



Being You:

Explore your personal identity, values and beliefs, and develop your confidence and self-esteem. Learn how to block out peer pressure, media messages, and negativity on your way to nurturing your true self.

Different Together:

Explore diversity in your unit and community, and discover the importance of being inclusive. Develop a greater awareness of and openness to difference and create more meaningful connections within your community.

Gender Power:

Explore girl empowerment and feminism, and discover the power in being who you are. Learn about the barriers girls and women face, whether at school, work or in your community and build the skills you need to tear them down!

BUILD SKILLS

Explore the life skills you have now – and the skills you want to build. In this program area, you'll learn how to fix things and make things, and how to plan and budget.

You'll also look into your future and explore jobs and careers.

Get out your toolbox and make space on your dream board – let's get going!



Money Sense:

Build the skills you need to make choices about your money. Activities in this theme will help you learn about budgeting, saving and spending, needs versus wants, foreign currency, interest, investments and money management.

Life Stuff:

Develop the skills you need to thrive. Learn how to lead, develop your communications skills, navigate your way through time management, explore different jobs and careers, learn to write a resume or excel in a job interview, and test out setting and achieving personal goals.

How To:

Build the hands-on skills you need to take on projects and do it yourself. Busted bike? Flat tire? Hungry for homemade cookies? Want to be first-aid savvy? Start with the basics, then take your know-how to the next level.

BE WELL

Explore what keeps you feeling good physically and mentally, and how they work together in your life. In this program area, you'll learn how to support your mighty mind, find balance for your body, and support others in feeling strong and confident.

Take a deep breath and find your focus – your journey starts here.



My Mighty Mind:

Build positive mental health skills you can use in your daily life, and explore self-care and how to support others in feeling strong and confident. Develop an awareness of and fight against mental health stigma while learning more about your own emotions and feelings.

My Physical Self:

Develop an understanding of how your body works best, and learn to listen to the cues your body gives you about what it needs. Experiment with the many choices you have for keeping your body working and feeling good, and discover which ones work best for you.

My Healthy Relationships:

Develop skills to help you navigate and strengthen the many different relationships in your life in order to build and nurture positive, healthy relationships. Take a closer look at conflict, and develop strategies to turn conflict into a constructive experience. Activities will also help you learn how to stand up against gender-based violence.

EXPERIMENT AND CREATE

Explore how the world works and put your stamp on it! In this program area, you'll do hands-on experiments in science, tech, engineering, and math. You'll also have fun and express yourself with art. This is your space to use your creativity to make new things and find solutions.

Grab your lab coat – it's about to get creative in here!



Science Lab:

Explore the sciences – from biology, chemistry and physics, to geology, weather and forensics! Ask questions, try something new, design experiments, test hypotheses and get a little messy as you discover how the world works.

Design Space:

Innovate and create! Activities in this theme will equip you with the skills you need to tinker with machines, build robots, code programs, and re-think recycling, as you push the limits of your imagination.

Art Studio:

Discover art for art's sake and experiment with your own creative vision. Whether a budding artist or just having fun, discover your self-expression through visual arts, drama, movement, music and more.

CONNECT AND QUESTION

Explore your connections with others in each of the communities you're a part of – from your unit to your global neighbourhood. In this program area, you'll discover more about your local communities, learn about Canada as a nation, and dig into big picture issues as you explore how you want to make a difference.

Spin the globe and check out the world – it's about to get a whole lot bigger!



Local Communities:

Connect with people, places, and things in the communities that surround you. Discover how different communities work and the different roles people play. Learn about community services and engagement. Find your place and space within your own communities, and develop your own sense of community.

Canadian Connections:

Discover what connects our diverse Canadian mosaic from coast to coast to coast. Explore Canadian heritage and discover amazing women from Canada who have made and continue to make history. Find out what connects us from community to community, and explore what citizenship means in Canada.

World Stage:

Become a citizen of the world! Develop your global connections by exploring big picture issues that affect everyone worldwide. Understand the difference between equality, equity, and inclusion, learn about social and environmental issues, and develop your capacity to connect and question at a global level.

TAKE ACTION

Explore how to turn your thoughts and passion into action! In this program area, you'll find the tools and encouragement you need to help you make your mark and push for the changes you want to see in your world.

Grab some friends, get planning, and make a difference!



Your Choice:

Taking action and getting involved in service and volunteering is at the core of Guiding, but what are you most passionate about? Have your interests changed over time? Explore local, community and global issues and discover the ones you care about most.

Your Voice:

Are you an advocate? Do you want to take action? Connect to the causes you're passionate about, and discover your individual and collective power to make change. It's your voice – learn how you want to use it!

Your Action:

Be the change! Get involved in your community, take on a service activity or project, or tackle an issue head-on. Discover a variety of different activities you can do on your own, with friends or in your unit. Or take your action one step further, by creating an action plan or building a service project to address an issue you're passionate about. It's your choice and your voice, so choose your action!

DIGITAL PLATFORM

The girl program exists on a digital platform that you can use on your phone, tablet or desktop! It is a resource to help you access GGC's program content and is not intended to replace unit meetings. On the platform, you'll be able to search through activities, instant meetings and challenges, all sorted by branch, program area and theme. You'll also find additional resources and reference materials for program work, awards, and about certain topics. You'll be able to browse, search and explore all that the program has to offer, as well as print and download program content as needed. This means that access to Wi-Fi or data won't be needed to run the program in a meeting space, and members won't need to be engaged with tech during unit meetings.

Working with your unit, you can decide what program areas and themes to explore each year, and which activities you want to do. Browsing the platform, you'll also be able to "like" and "favourite" branch-specific activities, which Guiders will see and be able to use as reference for meeting planning. Girls in Sparks, Brownies and Guides will have access to all the activities available for all branch levels below theirs and one branch above. Rangers and Pathfinders will have access to all the content.

Guiders will have access to all the content, across every branch. Units will be able to build their meetings, using their unit's own page. Unit Guiders, Pathfinders and Rangers will all have permission to build meetings, but only Unit Guiders can confirm and log a meeting to a girl's history.

An e-module will be available to help you learn how to navigate this fun digital resource.



WHAT YOU'LL DO

The program allows you to explore many different topics – from activities related to Guiding ceremonies, traditions, and camping, to activities on inclusivity, advocacy, artistic expression and robotics. There are hundreds of topics to choose from, a number only limited by your own imagination. Since the content is ever evolving, the program itself is never complete... and never the same! And if you feel there is something missing or a topic you want to see – tell us.

GUIDE TOGETHER
Camping & Campfire, MATHS, Guiding History, COOKIES, Guiding Games 3, and Crafts

EXPLORE IDENTITIES
FEMINISM, Gender, LGBTQ+, Self-Esteem, Self-Identity, DIVERSITY, Body Confidence, GIRL Empowerment

BUILD SKILLS
First AID, Leadership, Money, Jobs & Careers, Home Skills, Communication, Entrepreneurship, Digital Literacy

BE WELL
CONSENT, ACTIVE LIVING, Relationship, Physical Health, Mental Health, Resiliency, FOOD, Conflict and resolution

EXPERIMENT AND CREATE
CODING, The Arts, FORENSICS, Creative Writing, ROBOTICS, DRAMA, Animation, STEM

CONNECT AND QUESTION
Citizenship, Human Rights, Global Issues, YOUR Community, Canadian Women, Conflict, COMMUNITIES

TAKE ACTION
ADVOCACY, Global Engagement, MAKING A DIFFERENCE, VOLUNTEERISM, ACTION PLANNING, SERVICE, Community Engagement, ACTIVISM

There are three different ways you can explore topics and do programming:

- Standalone activities
- Challenges
- Instant meetings

You can also add your own activities, events and content to the program. Or mix and match – it's totally up to you!

If you have a great activity that you think other units might like too, please share with us: programs@girlguides.ca



Activities:

Standalone activities are found in every program area and throughout every theme. These activities are branch specific and topic based. They offer a wide range of experiences. You can choose from active and quiet games, or crafts and experiments; from activities that require no materials and no prep, to service activities, field trips and bridging activities to work with girls in other branches and units. There are many kinds of activities to choose from. Each activity can be used as is, or modified as needed.

Pull together a set of activities to build a meeting. You can mix and match activities that explore similar topics, or build similar skills, to design your meeting.

Instant Meetings:

1+ meeting(s) to complete

Includes:

- Starter activity
- Closing activity
- Several activities to choose from and suggested guidelines

Instant meetings are prepackaged sets of activities that are branch specific and explore a specific topic. The activities within each instant meeting offer a range of experiences and activity types, and you can mix and match the activities as you see fit... or add in some of your own activities. Every activity within an instant meeting also exists on its own as a standalone activity. It's totally up to you how you want to complete an instant meeting and how much time you want to spend on the topic and activities.

Challenges:

2+ meetings to complete

Includes:

- Starter activity
- Closing activity
- Several activities to choose from and suggested guidelines

Challenges are almost identical in design to instant meetings while offering an even deeper dive into a topic. As with instant meetings, every activity within a challenge also exists as its own standalone activity.



ACTIVITY STRUCTURE

The structure of every activity is the same, whether it's a standalone activity or an activity within an instant meeting or challenge. The additional information provided within an activity is designed to support you, so use it only as needed. Of course, you are always encouraged to modify activities as required!

Overview: Gives you a quick sense of what the activity is about. You'll see a Tweet-sized description on display in the activity cards within the digital platform. If it sounds interesting, you can click on the card for more details.

Background: Provides you with more details about the activity and what you can expect to do, experience and explore in that activity. It also gives you some topic-based information.

Outcome: What you'll learn, discover and explore as you're doing the activity.

Skills You'll Build: The skills you'll build by doing the activity.

What You'll Need: The materials needed for the activity.

Before You Start: Any preparation that needs to be done before starting.

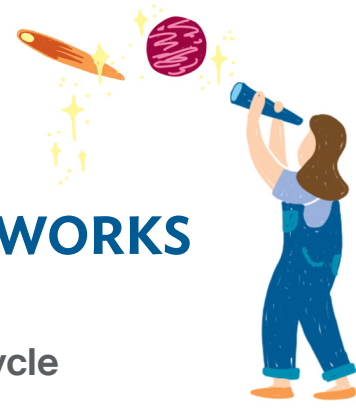
What To Do: Step-by-step instructions written so that anyone can lead the activity!

Stuff You Can Talk About: A few questions to generate some reflective discussions. These are completely optional and can be used, modified or adapted to fit the needs of your unit.

Tips, Tricks and More: Suggestions about how to explore an activity further, or modify it, as well as ideas for additional activities that link with the topic.

Resources: Any additional materials that you might need to do the activity, such as templates, game cards, handouts, etc. or links to external resources – ready for you to download and use as you wish.

Videos/Images: Where needed, photos or videos to demonstrate how an activity works, visual instructions, or diagrams.



HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Sparks and Brownies: two-year cycle
Guides, Pathfinders and Rangers: three-year cycle

The program is intended to be flexible and entirely driven by what you want to do. How that looks is entirely up to you and your unit! We suggest that each branch explores content in all seven program areas, and at least two (out of three) themes per program area, over the course of a cycle.

Here are some examples of how the program could be cycled through each branch.

Sparks and Brownies:

- o You might do the Guide Together program area every year, plus explore content in three program areas one year, and the other three the following year **OR**
- o You might do one theme from all seven program areas one year, and a second theme from all seven program areas the following year **OR**
- o Any combination that works for you!

Guides, Pathfinders and Rangers:

- o You might do the Guide Together program area every year, plus explore content in two program areas one year, two the next year and two in the third year **OR**
- o You might do the Guide Together program area every year, then explore one theme in each program area in year one, a second theme in year two and choose to explore the third theme in year three, or circle back to revisit new topics in the themes you've already explored **OR**
- o Any combination that works for you!

Remember – these are just guidelines! There are no formal rules or requirements.

Some girls and units may want to explore all three themes in a program area – and that's OK! You can choose to explore any additional program area themes or topics, as you want.

You do not have to complete every program area to move to the next branch, nor do you have to complete all the themes in each program area! If you and your unit find a particular topic within a theme really interesting or a particular theme really important, you can explore it in as much depth as you want. Or if something you set out to do doesn't meet your expectations, then shift gears and try something new.



EARNING BADGES

Badges are designed to help celebrate your adventures and achievements in Guiding. You can earn badges for each program area and each theme, across every Guiding branch. You can earn as many as 28 program badges at every branch level.

How to Earn a PROGRAM AREA badge

Program area badges are earned once you have earned two theme badges in a particular program area. For example, once you have earned your Being You theme badge and your Different Together theme badge, you will have earned your Explore Identities program area badge.

How to Earn a THEME badge

Theme badges are earned by participating in many activities, across a variety of topics. The guidelines for how many activities you will do are different depending on the branch you're in:





Sparks and Brownies

Within one theme:

- o Participate in 6-8 activities **OR**
- o Do 4 instant meetings **OR**
- o Complete 2 challenges **OR**
- o Any combination of the above that works for your unit. For example, you could do:
 - ★ 1 challenge and 2 instant meetings
 - ★ 2 instant meetings and 3-4 standalone activities
 - ★ 1 challenge and 3-4 standalone activities

Guides

Within one theme:

- o Participate in 10 or more activities **OR**
- o Do 4 instant meetings **OR**
- o Complete 2 challenges **OR**
- o Any combination of the above that works for your unit. For example, you could do:
 - ★ 1 challenge and 2 instant meetings
 - ★ 2 instant meetings and 5-7 standalone activities
 - ★ 1 challenge and 5-7 standalone activities

Pathfinders and Rangers

Within one theme:





















- o Create your own series of experiences based on a theme within a program area to earn a badge, using any combination of:
 - ★ Activities
 - ★ Instant meetings
 - ★ Challenges
 - ★ Or your own initiatives
- o Set and meet your own goals and objectives to earn theme badges

Remember, these are just guidelines!









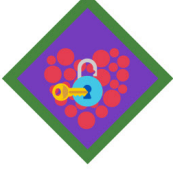











Every unit works differently and every meeting runs differently. Some units may do six shorter activities to earn a theme badge, and others may do two or three significantly more involved activities to earn the same badge – that's OK! We ask all units, girls and Guiders to use your best judgement regarding what you've learned and explored in assessing if the theme badge has been earned.

At the end of the day, it's the journey, the fun and the memories that are important – not ticking off boxes and requirements!

GUIDE TOGETHER

| | Sparks | Brownies | Guides | Pathfinders | Rangers |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Program Area |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Our Story |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Spirit of Guiding |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Camping and the Great Outdoors |  |  |  |  |  |
















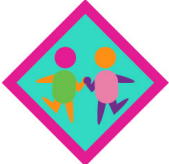




EXPLORE IDENTITIES

| | Sparks | Brownies | Guides | Pathfinders | Rangers |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Program Area |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Being You |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Different Together |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Gender Power |  |  |  |  |  |

BUILD SKILLS

| | Sparks | Brownies | Guides | Pathfinders | Rangers |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Program Area |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Money Sense |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Life Stuff |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: How To: |  |  |  |  |  |

BE WELL

| | Sparks | Brownies | Guides | Pathfinders | Rangers |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Program Area |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: My Mighty Mind |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: My Physical Self |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: My Healthy Relationships |  |  |  |  |  |

EXPERIMENT AND CREATE

| | Sparks | Brownies | Guides | Pathfinders | Rangers |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Program Area |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Science Lab |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Design Space |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Art Studio |  |  |  |  |  |

CONNECT AND QUESTION

Sparks

Brownies

Guides

Pathfinders

Rangers

Program Area



THEME:
Local Communities




THEME:
Canadian Connections



THEME:
World Stage



TAKE ACTION

| | Sparks | Brownies | Guides | Pathfinders | Rangers |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Program Area |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Your Choice |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Your Voice |  |  |  |  |  |
| THEME: Your Action |  |  |  |  |  |



THANK YOU!