

# First Troop Meeting Annual Activity

Girl Scouts is a place for every girl, and as adult leaders in the movement, we want to create an environment that is warm and inviting for all our members. Our communities are a rich tapestry of people from diverse ethnic, religious, racial, and cultural backgrounds. As we treat each other with dignity and respect and “be a sister to every Girl Scout,” **it’s important to develop and strengthen our sense of cultural differences and inclusivity.** It takes all of us working together to build the environment within the Girl Scouts of Central & Southern New Jersey that’s welcoming to any girl and family who accept our mission, promise and law, and want to become a part of our movement.

**One way you, as a Troop Leader, can help is through inclusive planning with your Girl Scouts to understand the traditions, holidays, and celebrations that are important to them and their families.** Every family is different, and it’s a wonderful way for the girls to learn about cultures and religions different from their own.

**By following the simple steps below as you plan your troop’s annual calendar, you will be fostering a greater sense of inclusivity in your troop.**

## 1. Prep your parents.

At your first parent meeting, let parents know your troop will discuss the holidays and celebrations that are important to their families to better plan your troop’s gatherings and events for the year. Invite them to start the conversation at home to help their girls identify which holidays to share and discuss with the troop.

## 2. Involve the girls.

At your next troop meeting, ask your Girl Scouts about the holidays, traditions, and important religious observances they share with their families. What do they celebrate? When is it? What do the observances involve? What does it mean to them?

## 3. Decide how to honor these holidays.

Are you going to celebrate or recognize these important dates together as a troop in some way? Will you invite the girls to share photos or memories from their celebration? Will you ensure no troop events are planned during that time? There’s no wrong answer - decide as a group what works best for your troop.

## 4. Add it all into your troop calendar on the VTK.

Use the gsLearn Volunteer Toolkit Training to learn about adding custom events to your troop’s year plan.

## 5. Keep the conversation going!

Honor the girls in your troop. Stay informed about these observances, holidays, and celebrations, ask questions and be open to learning more.

**Want to learn more? Check out the following resources and activities:**

- **Calendar of Observances** created by the Anti-Defamation League
- **Racial Justice Patch Program** designed by the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland and the YWCA
- **Coming Soon:** GSCSNJ Patch Program!