

Think Like an Engineer pt. 5

Overview

Brownies create what's needed to carry out their Take Action project.

Note to Volunteers:

Use The Talking Points (But Make Them Your Own): In each session, you'll find suggested talking points under the heading "SAY." Some volunteers, especially new ones, find it helpful to follow the script. Others use the talking points as a guide and deliver the information in their own words. Either way is just fine.

Be Prepared (It's What Girl Scouts Do!): Each meeting includes a "Prepare Ahead" section that includes a materials list and what kind of set-up is required. Read it in advance so you have enough time to gather supplies and enlist help, if needed.

Use Girl Scouts' Three Processes: Girl-led, learning by doing, cooperative learning — these three processes are the key to making sure Brownies have fun in Girl Scouts and keep coming back.

"Learning by doing" and "cooperative learning" are built into this Journey, thanks to the hands-on activities and tips. You'll also find specific "keep it girl-led" tips in the meeting plans. They'll help you create an experience where Brownies know they can make choices and have their voices heard.

Fail Fast. Succeed Sooner: That's how engineers solve problems. On this Journey, Brownies will learn the Design Thinking Process through hands-on activities. They'll learn to: Brainstorm ways to solve a problem, design prototypes, test them to see what does and doesn't work, then improve their designs. To engineers, failure is a good thing because every time a design fails, you learn something and can make it better.

You can help Brownies think this way. When a Brownie's prototype doesn't work, ask questions like, "Why do you think it didn't work? How can you change your design? Try again — that's what engineers do!" This approach also keeps the activity girl-led and fun because Brownies are free to invent things without feeling the pressure to make them perfect.

Leave Time For The Closing Ceremony: If Brownies are having fun doing a Design Challenge, you may be tempted to skip the Closing Ceremony so they can keep going — but the Closing Ceremony is absolutely key to their learning. Here's why:

When Brownies leave a meeting, they'll remember how much fun it was to build something out of cardboard or make a Ping-Pong ball fly across the room. However, they may not realize that they just learned how engineers solve problems or that they're

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good at engineering — unless you tell them.

That's why the Closing Ceremony is so important. It's where you can connect the dots for Brownies by:

- Pointing out how they acted as engineers. (**For example:** They did rapid prototyping. When one of their prototypes didn't work, they saw that "failure" as helpful feedback and tried something else. They worked together to find solutions. They shared their designs and offered suggestions.)
- Reminding Brownies that they are *already* engineers — and that it's fun to solve problems using engineering.
- Letting them know that they have what it takes to continue exploring STEM.

These simple messages can boost Brownies' confidence and interest in STEM — and end the meeting on an upbeat note!

Tell Your Troop Story: As a Girl Scout leader, you're designing experiences that Brownies will remember their whole lives. Try to capture those memories with photos or videos. Brownies love remembering all they did — and it's a great way for parents to see how Girl Scouting helps their Brownies.

And please do share your photos and videos with GSUSA by emailing them to STEM@girlscouts.org (with photo releases if at all possible!).

Program Pairing: The Brownie Inventor badge goes well with this Journey!

Prepare Ahead

- Gather supplies for the Take Action project. **For example, Brownies may need:** A smartphone or camera if Brownies are creating a video, poster board if they're making signs, a laptop if Brownies are making PowerPoint slides for a presentation to the school principal or city council, material for costumes if they're putting on a skit.
- If you need more adult helpers, let them know the time and place of the meeting, and brief them on what the Brownies are doing.
- If your meeting location doesn't have a flag, bring a small one from home to either hang or have Brownies take turns holding.

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- Talk to people who are needed to help Brownies to complete their Take Action project.

For example:

- If they have decided to make posters about saving water for their school or local library, call the school/library office to set up a time when the Brownies can make their proposal in person.
- If they want to put on a skit at the community center, talk to an administrator about how to arrange that.
- If they want to make a presentation to the city council, call the office to find out how to schedule that.

Get Help from Your Family and Friends Network

Your Friends and Family Network can include:

- Brownies' parents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, cousins, and friends
- Other volunteers who have offered to help with the meeting.

Ask your Network to help:

- Bring art supplies.
- Bring a camera, smart phone, or video camera to document the meetings.
- Assist with helping Brownies create their Take Action project.

Award Connection

Brownies will earn two awards:

- Think Like an Engineer award
- Take Action award

They receive both awards in **Think Like an Engineer PT. 6.**

(Note to Volunteers: You can buy these awards from your council shop or on the Girl Scouts' website.)

Meeting Length

90 minutes

- The times given for each activity will be different depending on how many

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Brownies are in your troop.

- There is no snack time scheduled in these meetings, but there are 15 minutes of “wiggle room” built in for snacks or activities that run long.
- Give Brownies 10- and 5-minute warnings before they need to wrap up the last activity so you’ll have time for the Closing Ceremony.

Brownies create what’s needed to carry out their Take Action project.

Materials List

Activity 1: As Girls Arrive: What Is an Engineer, Part 2

- Brownies’ engineer drawings from Think Like an Engineer PT. 1
- Paper
- Colored markers

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony: Why Is Our Project Important?

- Flag
- **Design Thinking Process poster**
- Optional: Poster Board with the Girl Scout Promise and Law

Activity 3: Creating Our Take Action Project

- Any materials Brownies need for their Take Action project

Activity 4: Closing Ceremony: Planning Our Celebration

- None

Awards

Brownies do not receive any awards in this meeting.

Detailed Activity Plan

Activity 1: As Girls Arrive: What Is an Engineer, Part 2

Time Allotment

10 minutes

Materials

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- Brownies' engineer drawings from Think Like an Engineer PT. 1
- Colored markers
- Paper

Steps

Have Brownies draw what they think an engineer looks like. Then compare their drawings to what they drew in the first meeting.

SAY:

In our first meeting, you drew a picture of what you think an engineer looks like.

Now that you've had a chance to learn more about engineers and what they do, and you've even had a chance to think like an engineer, draw what you think an engineer looks like.

When Brownies finish, show them their first drawings and ask what's changed. It's OK if they drew something similar.

SAY:

What is an engineer?

(Answer: Someone who designs and builds new things, someone who solves problems, and someone who helps people.)

Who can be an engineer?

(Answer: Anyone who likes asking questions, using their imaginations, and solving problems.)

Could that engineer be you one day? (Brownies can think about this and don't have to respond.)

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony: Why Is Our Project Important?

Time Allotment

20 minutes

Materials

- Flag
- **Design Thinking Process poster**
- Optional: Poster Board with the Girl Scout Promise and Law

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Steps

Recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the Promise and Law.

Conduct any troop business.

Lead Brownies in a discussion so that each will share why they think their Take Action project will make a difference.

Do the Brownie cheer to get their energy going!

SAY:

Finish this sentence: We're about to team up and Take Action to _____.

Have Brownies say what their Take Action project is about.

Have Brownies say one thing she thinks is important about their Take Action project.

Get Brownies charged up about starting their Take Action project with this energetic cheer:

SAY:

What are you doing today?

(Brownies say) Taking Action!

What will you make the world?

(Brownies say) A better place!

Who's got the power?

(Brownies say) Brownies!

Repeat even louder and do a high-five or clap at the end.

Activity 3: Creating Our Take Action Project

Time Allotment

35 minutes

Materials

- Any materials Brownies need to carry out their Take Action project.

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Steps

(Note to Volunteers: Stay on schedule so you can hold your Closing Ceremony. Give Brownies 10 and 5-minute warnings before they need to wrap up.)

Set Up. (5 minutes)

Set up the activity, and break Brownies into teams to create and build their Take Action project.

SAY:

Every Girl Scout Take Action project changes the world a little bit and makes it a better place.

You've learned to think like engineers — to spot problems, work as a team, and come up with a solution. Now you're going to help others by taking action — and you know that engineers do that, too!

In our last meeting, you came up with a plan for your Take Action project.

Let Brownies list the “to do” items from the last meeting. Remind them of any they missed.

Build and Test. (30 minutes)

Help Brownies create what they need (posters, videos, presentations, costumes, and scripts).

If Brownies have a “next step” in their project, remind them about it. For example, they may have written a script and created costumes for a school assembly skit. If so, remind them about when they'll be presenting the skit.

If you've done some “behind the scenes” work since the last meeting, such as setting up a meeting for Brownies with officials or securing permission for their project, let them know about it now.

Congratulate the Brownies if they've completed their Take Action project in this meeting (if, for example, they've created a video that an adult will now share with friends and family or post safely online).

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Activity 4: Closing Ceremony: Planning Our Celebration**Time Allotment**

10 minutes

Materials

- None

Steps

Have Brownies form a Friendship Circle and plan their celebration.

SAY:

At our next meeting, you'll celebrate everything you learned. How do you want to celebrate?

Offer prompts for Brownies to come up with their own ideas for the celebration:

- *Do you want to make a special display of our Take Action photos or show our videos?*
- *Do you want special music?*
- *Is there anyone you want to thank?*
- *What do you want to do for the Closing Ceremony?*

Write down their ideas and tell them you'll help organize this for the next meeting.

SAY:

Let's end the meeting with a cheer for Take Action. First, let's all stand up.

*For the next three things I'm about to say, jump once and yell out, **Hooray for Girl Scouts!***

Every Girl Scout, from Daisy to Ambassador, does Take Action projects.

(Brownies say: Hooray for Girl Scouts!)

It doesn't matter how big or small your project is, it makes a difference in the world.

(Brownies say: Hooray for Girl Scouts!)

You're a leader because you work as a team to make the world a better place.

(Brownies say: Hooray for Girl Scouts!)

End the meeting with a Friendship Squeeze.

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Think Like an Engineer Journey: Take Action Guide

What's the difference between a community service project and a Take Action project?

Community Service makes the world better by addressing a problem “right now.” For example, collecting cans of food for a food pantry feeds people “right now.” Gathering toys for a homeless family shelter makes kids happy “right now.” Providing clothing and toiletries to people after a fire or flood helps them “right now.” These acts of kindness are important ways to help people — right now.

Take Action encourages girls to develop a project that is sustainable. That means that the problem continues to be addressed, even after the project is over. Sustainability simply means coming up with a solution that lasts.

For example, girls might want to do something about trash in a local park. If they go to the park and pick up trash, they've solved the problem for today — but there will be more trash to pick up tomorrow.

Instead, girls could explore why there's so much trash. Here's what they might discover:

1. There aren't enough trash cans in the park.
2. The trash cans are hard to find.
3. People have to walk out of their way to throw away trash because of where the cans are placed.
4. People don't realize the importance of putting trash in the trash cans.

Here's how girls might address these issues:

- **Issues 1 – 3:** Make a presentation to the city council to report on their findings and suggest adding more trash cans or moving them to more visible or convenient positions.
- **Issue 4:** Create a public awareness campaign that encourages people to use the trash cans instead of littering.
- **Variation:** Older girls may want to design interactive garbage cans that make tossing your trash fun. Do an online search for “the fun theory” or “the world's deepest bin” to see this in action.

What are the steps of a Take Action project?

Girls team up to:

- Identify a problem
- Come up with a sustainable solution
- Develop a team plan
- Put the plan into action
- Reflect on what they learned

Keep It Girl-Led: Girls should actively participate in each step in order for this to be girl-led. Younger girls will need more guidance, but they can and should decide as a team what problem they want to address.

How do girls make their project sustainable?

Here are three ways to create sustainable change:

1. Make your solution permanent.
2. Educate and inspire others to be part of the change.
3. Change a rule, regulation or law.

How can I help girls come up with Take Action Ideas?

Next are some specific examples you can use to help girls understand what sustainable Take Action projects look like.

Keep It Girl-Led: These examples are intended to give a sense of what a Take Action project could look like. **Please do not choose a project from this list for girls to do!** Instead, guide them to brainstorm ideas, get feedback, and come up with a plan. Girls will learn key leadership skills, such as decision-making, compromise, conflict resolution, and teamwork, when their Take Action project is girl-led.

Engineering/STEM Take Action Ideas

Issue: We could conserve water if more people collected rain water and used it to water plants.

- **Solution 1: Make it permanent.** Make rain collection devices for family or friends that can be installed in their yards. Give them a list of different ways to use rain water and how they're helping the Earth.
- **Solution 2: Educate and inspire others.** Create a handout, video tutorial, or show-and-tell presentation about how to make a rain collection device, how to use rain water and how that helps the Earth.

Issue: More kids need to know that engineering is a fun, creative way to help others.

- **Solution 1: Educate and inspire others.** For show-and-tell, explain what you've learned about how engineers help others, then lead a design challenge activity with your class.
- **Solution 2: Make it permanent.** Partner with a teacher or principal to create an "engineering space" at school where kids can make prototypes and share ideas for new inventions. Put out a call for donations of recyclable materials or cheap prototyping supplies (cardboard boxes, tape, string, paper towel tubes, etc.) to stock the space.

Issue: More people need to know how exciting and fun STEM can be.

- **Solution 1: Educate and inspire others.** Create a list of great books, movies and documentaries that focus on STEM. Make copies for teachers to hand out or make posters for the school library.
- **Solution 2: Educate and inspire others.** Create a short play based on one of the books and perform it for your class or school.

Issue: It's hard for new students to meet people and make friends at school.

- **Solution: Make it permanent.** Design and build "buddy benches." Partner with the school to have the benches installed on the playground so kids who want to make new friends can find each other.

Other Ideas for Take Action

Issue: Parents often run their engines outside the school as they wait to pick up or drop off their children, which pollutes the air.

- **Solution: Change a rule, regulation or law.** Make a presentation to the school board or administrators about why this is a problem and suggest a new rule that makes the pick-up/drop-off area a "no idling" zone.

Issue: There's no sidewalk along a street near the elementary school, which makes it dangerous for children to walk home.

- **Solution: Make it permanent.** Make a presentation to the city council about the problem and suggest that they build a sidewalk. (Note: Even if the council doesn't vote to create a sidewalk, the girls have earned their Take Action award because they came up with a sustainable solution and took action through their presentation.)
- **Extra Inspiration:** Do an online search for "Girl Scout Brownies Convince City Hall to Build Sidewalk."

Issue: There have been several accidents at a busy intersection that doesn't have a stoplight.

- **Solution: Make it permanent.** Research the number of accidents and make a presentation to the city council, asking that they have a stoplight installed.

Issue: The local park doesn't have a swing for children with disabilities.

- **Solution: Make it permanent.** Make a presentation to the city council explaining the problem and offering to use troop money from the cookie sale to help pay for the swing.
- **Extra Inspiration:** Do an online search for "How One Brownie Troop Became Social Entrepreneurs.")

Issue: We should recognize women who have helped their communities and made the world a better place in all kinds of ways.

- **Solution: Educate and inspire others.** Research the "hidden figures" in your community (unsung women who've done great things). Create a display about their accomplishments for a library or community center.

Issue: The local shelter is having a hard time getting rescue animals adopted.

- **Solution: Educate and inspire others.** Use your photography skills to create pet portraits for the shelter's web site. Use your writing skills to craft heart-warming bios for each portrait.

Need more ideas?

Check out [Girls Changing the World](#) on the GSUSA web site. Girls post their Take Action and Bronze/Silver/Gold Award projects on this site. You can search by project topic or grade level. (And after the troop has done their project, please post it so they can inspire other girls!)

33 Ways to Take Action!

Make your solution permanent.

1. Make and install something outside (benches, bird houses, dog run, ropes course, sensory trail for children with disabilities, Little Library, etc.)
2. Plant something (butterfly garden, tree, wind chime garden, etc.)
3. Make something inside (Maker Space, reading room, etc.)
4. Create a collection (children's books children's hospital or family shelter, oral histories for town museum, etc.)
5. Advocate for building a permanent community improvement (sidewalk, bridge, park, streetlights, stoplight, etc.)

Educate and inspire others to be part of the change.

6. Do a show-and-tell
7. Create a poster campaign
8. Perform a skit
9. Make a "how to" handout
10. Draw a comic
11. Give a speech
12. Write and perform a song
13. Make an animated movie
14. Make a live-action movie
15. Make a presentation
16. Create a workshop (perhaps in partnership with a local business or organization) to teach a skill such as coding, camping, canoeing, robotics, sewing, car care, healthy eating, gardening, home repair, budgeting, etc.
17. Create a workshop to teach others about healthy living (exercise, nutrition, mental health, etc.)
18. Create a social media campaign
19. Make video tutorials to teach a skill
20. Organize an email campaign
21. Organize a petition
22. Organize an event (concert, play, poetry slam, art exhibit, sporting event, field day) to raise awareness about an issue
23. Make a "playbook" to help others follow your lead (how to mentor robotics teams, organize a workshop or event, advocate to city council, create an online petition, change a law, etc.)
24. Make an app that helps people take action on an issue
25. Create a web site
26. Write an op-ed or letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine
27. Start a blog

Change a rule, regulation or law.

28. Make a presentation to your school principal
29. Make a presentation to your school board
30. Make a presentation to your city council
31. Speak up at your representative's town hall meeting
32. Create an online petition
33. Advocate for a law with your state government

Think Like an Engineer Journey

Glossary for Brownies

Brownies may not know some of the words used on this Journey. Here are definitions you can share with them:

Brainstorming means coming up with lots of different ways to solve a problem. You can brainstorm with another person or with a team of people.

Confidence means believing in who you are. It means you know that what you say and do can affect others—for the better! It means you know you can use your Brownie power for good.

Empathy means trying to understand what it feels like to be another person. You use your imagination to try to understand what their life is like and what makes them happy or sad or frustrated or joyful.

Engineers are people who solve problems. They use their imaginations to invent things like self-driving cars. They also come up with new and better ways to build things, such as bridges, buildings, and planes.

A **prototype** is a quick way to show your idea to others or to try it out. It can be as simple as a drawing or it can be made with everyday materials like cardboard, paper, string, rubber bands, etc.

Think Like an Engineer Journey: Materials List

Think Like an Engineer 1

Activity 1: As Girls Arrive: What Is an Engineer?

- Paper
- Crayons, colored markers

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony: All About Helping

- Flag
- **Design Thinking Process** poster
- Optional: Poster Board with the Girl Scout Promise and Law

Activity 3: Design Challenge: Helping Hand

- Examples of levers to show Brownies: scissors, tongs, pliers, tweezers

For each pair or small team of Brownies:

- Small paper or plastic bags filled with lightweight items attached high on a wall or ceiling
- 4 - 6 paint stirrers or thin slats of wood. Alternate: thin slats of wood or strips of cardboard taped together
- 4 - 6 brass fasteners or short pieces of wire
- Tape (duct or masking)
- Small pieces of sturdy cardboard (any size)
- Scissors
- Rubber/elastic bands
- String
- Paper or plastic cups
- Toothpicks
- Wooden skewers
- Paper and pencil (per pair)

Think Like an Engineer 2

Activity 1: As Girls Arrive: Our Favorite Water Places

- Paper
- Colored markers

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony: How Much Water Do We Use?

- Flag
- Gallon jug of water (it can also be empty)
- **Design Thinking Process** poster
- Optional: Poster Board with the Girl Scout Promise and Law

Activity 3: Design Challenge: Water Collection Device

- Toilet paper/paper towel rolls
- Empty cans or jars
- Construction paper or poster board
- Markers or pens/pencils
- Glue
- Scissors
- String
- Rubber bands

Think Like an Engineer Journey: Materials List

Think Like an Engineer 3

Activity 1: As Girls Arrive: Get Ready for Pop Fly

- Paper cups (to be used in Pop Fly activity)
- Crayons or colored markers
- Stickers and other decorative items

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony: Reviewing Our Take Action Ideas

- Flag
- Index Cards (or a whiteboard and marker)
- Pens
- Tape
- Optional: Poster Board with the Girl Scout Promise and Law

Activity 3: Design Challenge: Pop Fly

For each pair of Brownies:

- Masking or duct tape
- 3 – 5 paint stirrers, wooden slats, balsa wood (used for models) or several pieces of thick cardboard taped together
- 1 small, lightweight ball (ping pong ball, foam ball, etc.)
- 1 wooden block or spool (or an empty plastic bottle)
- 1 small paper cup
- Target: Use masking/duct tape to make a large square on a wall or prop up an empty cardboard box.
- Paper and pencil

Activity 4: Closing Ceremony: Time to Decide on Take Action!

- List of Take Action ideas from last meeting

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Activity 1: As Girls Arrive: Brownie Power!

- Blank name tags – enough so that each girl can have several
- Crayons and markers
- Stickers

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony: Brownies Around the World

- Flag
- Optional: Poster Board with the Girl Scout Promise and Law

Activity 3: Designing Our Take Action Project

- Large pieces of paper or poster boards
- Markers
- Post-It notes
- Pens/pencils
- **Design Thinking Process** poster

Think Like an Engineer Journey: Materials List

Think Like an Engineer 5

Activity 1: As Girls Arrive: What Is an Engineer, Part 2

- Brownies' engineer drawings from Think Like an Engineer 1
- Paper
- Crayons or colored markers

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony: Why is Our Project Important?

- Flag
- **Design Thinking Process** poster
- Optional: Poster Board with the Girl Scout Promise and Law

Activity 3: Creating Our Take Action Project

- Any materials Brownies need for their Take Action project

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Activity 1: As Girls Arrive: Get Ready to Celebrate!

- **Girl Scout Promise and Law** poster(s)
- **Design Thinking Process** poster(s)
- Any items Brownies want to display (such as photos or videos from their Take Action project)
- Photos and videos from the Journey meetings
- Music system
- Decorations
- Snacks

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony: Welcome!

- Flag
- Optional: Poster Board with the Girl Scout Promise and Law

Activity 3: Awards Ceremony and Celebration

- Think Like an Engineer award
- Take Action award

(Note to Volunteers: You can buy these awards from your council shop or on the Girl Scouts' website.)

Activity 4: Girl Survey

- If girls are taking the survey online: Laptop/tablet
- If girls are filling out the survey on paper: Copies of Girl Survey (pdf available in Meeting Aids) and pen or pencil

Brainstorming Tips: Think, Pair, Share

How to Run a Think, Pair, Share Activity:

Tell girls that they're going to brainstorm answers to your question using "Think, Pair, Share."

Lead girls through the basic steps by telling them they will:

1. Break into small groups.

2. Listen to the question or prompt.

3. Think about their answers.

- Girls may want to write their answers down.
- Twenty seconds should be enough time, since girls will need to sit quietly.

4. Pair with other girls.

- Girls talk with one to three other girls (depending on group size), making sure everyone has a chance to share their answers. If there's time, it's OK for girls to ask questions about each other's answers.
- For pairs, 20 seconds should be enough time. If your troop enjoys discussion, consider extending this to 1 to 2 minutes.

5. Share with the group.

- Girls share their answers with the larger group.
- This can be completed in 20 – 30 seconds, but will run longer based on group size and how the group sharing is done.

There are two ways to set up group sharing:

- **Strongly Recommended:** One girl shares the best/most interesting/summary answer for the group. This approach is great if you're running short on time. It also helps develop conflict resolution and compromise skills.
- **Optional:** Each girl shares her partner's answer. This helps girls develop active listening skills, but will run longer because all girls are sharing.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

Used by engineers, inventors, and other problem solvers, the design process is a series of steps that help people think creatively and come up with solutions.



DEFINE THE NEED



BRAINSTORM



DESIGN



BUILD



REDESIGN



TEST & EVALUATE



SHARE SOLUTIONS



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The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God and my country,

To help people at all times,

And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

The Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,

friendly and helpful,

considerate and caring,

courageous and strong, and

responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,

respect authority,

use resources wisely,

make the world a better place, and

be a sister to every Girl Scout.