

"I Promised a Girl Scout I'd Vote" Patch Program

Introduction

The national, state, and local election process will be the top of the news until Election Day in November 2008. In fact, it has already started. The election process provides a vivid backdrop to learn, get involved, and become active in the political process.

The Girl Scout role in any election is to provide an accurate, age appropriate, non-partisan interpretation of the election process and to instill a commitment to participatory citizenship.

Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts will have opportunities to be active in the election process in several ways, at the troop, family, and town levels.

This program is designed to introduce Girl Scouts to the political process in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and this country. Beginning *with Voter Registration* and ending with *Our Government at Work*, girls will get the opportunity to experience what it is like to be an active citizen.

Troops should begin this program in the spring or early fall. Because this program follows the entire election process, it should take until after Election Day to complete. All sections need to be completed in order to earn a patch.

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to assure that Girl Scouts have a practical experience, which helps them understand the election process and our government.

Program Goal

The goal of this program is for Girl Scouts to become involved in the political processes of this state and country and to encourage others to become involved.

Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts
95 Berkeley Street
Boston MA 02116

Important Dates to Remember

National Conventions

The Democratic Party National Convention
August 25-28, 2008 in Denver, Colorado.

The Republican Party National Convention
September 1-4, 2008 in Saint Paul, Minnesota

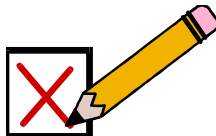
State Primary Election

Tuesday, February 5, 2008.

The last day to register to vote for the primary is 20 days before the election, by mail or in person.

General Election

Election Day is Tuesday, November 4, 2008!



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Girl Scout Program Links

Brownie Girl Scout Handbook – What Does a Brownie Girl Scout Do? p. 12,
Follow the Leader (That's You!) p. 57
Brownie Try – It – Citizens Near and Far

Junior Girl Scout Handbook – Group Leadership p. 21, What Makes a Leader p
24, How to be a Leader p. 39, Junior Girl Scout Leadership Award p. 200
Junior Girl Scout Badge and Signs – Lead On; Model Citizen; Celebrating People;
My Community.

Cadette Handbook – Leadership and Troop or Group Government p. 38,
Leadership Recognitions p.131

Girl Scout Silver Award Go For It! Book - The Girl Scout Silver Leadership Award

Senior Handbook – Leadership in Action p. 65, Leadership Careers in
Government and Politics p.92

Girl Scout Gold Award Go For It! Book – The Girl Scout Gold Leadership Award

Interest Projects for Girls 11 - 17 – Law and Order p.36, Leadership p. 38,
Women Through Time p. 146



Patch Program

Daisy Girl Scouts do at least one activity from each section
Brownie Girl Scouts complete at least two activities from each section
Junior Girl Scouts complete at least three activities from each section
Girl Scouts 11 - 17 complete at least four activities from each section

Section I: Voter Registration

1. Who is eligible to vote? Find out how a person can register to vote. What are the requirements for voter registration?
2. Plan or participate in a voter registration drive. Make posters encouraging eligible voters to register.
3. Encourage 4 family members who are unregistered to register. Give them a voter registration form.
4. Help younger Girl Scouts learn about voter registration. Get some voter registration forms and practice filling them out.
5. Educate yourself on the importance of voting. Talk to at least 5 adults about what you have learned. Find out which populations have lower voter registration and turnout, try and help them see that every vote counts.

Section II: Get Out the Vote

1. Find out where eligible voters can vote in your community. Learn about Absentee ballots and how people can vote if they cannot make it to the polls. Ask a parent or another adult family member to take you with them to the polls. See what a ballot or voting machine looks like.
2. Plan or participate in a "Get Out the Vote" drive in your community. Design pledge cards which say, "I promised a Girl Scout I would vote". Have at least 5 adults (per girl) pledge to vote on Election Day.
3. Prior to Election Day make greeting cards thanking voters for their participation in the election. Distribute the cards to voters on Election Day.
4. Discuss why voting is so important in making decisions in a Girl Scout troop. What would happen in your troop if you were not able to vote on the things you do?

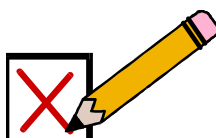


Section III: The Election Process

1. Learn about the election process. Have an election or a mock election in your troop. Girls 6th grade and older can play The Election Game. (available as a link from the <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ELE/elegme/gmeidx.htm>) Use this game to elect offices within your troop.
2. Find out about the different political parties in this country. Which party does each candidate belong to? Have each troop member bring in pictures or articles from magazines or newspapers. Make a collage featuring candidates, political parties, and political issues.
3. Talk about elections as a system of selecting people who will be expected to lead and to make decisions for other people. What are the characteristics of a good leader? Discuss who you think would make a good leader.
4. In groups or individually, pick an election issue that you believe is important. Research your issue using newspaper articles, radio, and television. Summarize what you have learned and present it to your troop. Hold a debate on the issue or issues. Find out if your issue will appear on the ballot.
5. If you will be 18 years old on Election Day, you can vote. Make sure you register and vote.

Section IV: Our Government at Work

1. Find out who the elected officials are in your community, the state, and the country. Complete the Activity: Who is representing me? (found in this packet)
2. Investigate the different ways that you can contact your town and state elected officials.
3. Did you know that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a state bug? Research interesting tidbits of Massachusetts trivia (including what the state bug is) and share your findings with your troop.
4. Find out how a bill becomes a law in your town, your state and in the federal government.



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Resources and Links

Office of the Secretary of State, Elections Division
One Ashburton Place, Room 1705
Boston, MA 02108
Telephone: 617.727.2828 OR 1.800.462.VOTE
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/index.htm>

This web site includes links to a variety of information, including The Election Game, a resource recommended for girls in grades 6 and up (includes teachers guide.)

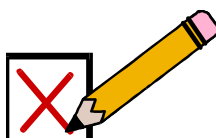
Project Vote Smart
1.888 VOTE SMART
www.vote-smart.org

This site includes information about candidates and elected officials in five basic categories: biographical information, issue positions, voting records, campaign finances and interest group ratings.

The League of Women Voters
1730 M Street
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036-4508
www.lwv.org

League of Women Voters of
Massachusetts
133 Portland Street
Boston, MA 02114
Telephone 617.523.2999
Voter Information Line:
1.800.882.1649
www.lwvma.org

Find out how the league is making democracy work in Washington and in your community



Patriot's Trail Girl Scout Council
95 Berkeley Street
Boston MA 02116

Who is Representing Me?

At each level of the government there are officials elected to represent the people. Did you know that you could find this information in the telephone book? If you have access to the Internet this information is also available on-line. For state and national offices you can go to www.vote-smart.org or www.state.ma.us. Find out if your town has a website. You may be able to find local information there.

Find a recent telephone book or go on-line and find the answers to the following questions. Also, find out what the purpose of each job is.

What form of government is used in your town/city? _____

Who is the head of your town/city government? _____

Is there a mayor? Who is it? _____

The governor of Massachusetts is: _____

The lieutenant governor of Massachusetts is: _____

The United States senators from Massachusetts are: _____

How many congressional districts are there in Massachusetts. _____

My congressional representative, or the member of the United States House of Representatives from my district is: _____

Are there any other elected officials (local, state, or national) who are listed in the phone book or on-line? Who are they and what do they do?