



## AMERICA CARES

The Girl Scout Mission Statement includes the words that, as an organization, we will, “Inspire girls to the highest ideals of patriotism.” Our Girl Scout Promise directs us to serve our country.

This patch program is designed to expand the feeling of patriotism and pride in our country.

Girls in all program levels can complete this patch program. Leaders are encouraged to adapt the activities to be age appropriate for their girls. Older girls could work with younger troops.

When completed, girls will be eligible to receive the America Cares patch. Patches are available for sale in our council shop.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Complete some activities in each **highlighted** section.

#### 1. FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

- Learn about the history of our flag. Look at pictures of how it has changed since it was first made. Why were the changes made?
- Hold a flag ceremony in your troop or volunteer do one in your community. Samples of flag ceremonies are available at our council service center. Know how to correctly raise and lower the US flag on a flagpole.
- Learn the proper way to display the flag when standing on a pole, hung on a wall, or carried in a parade. Find out what you should not do with a flag. Visit [www.betsy/flagetiq.html](http://www.betsy/flagetiq.html) for information.
- Do something to help educate the public in the correct display of the flag. Learn the proper way to dispose of a worn US flag.
- Fold the American flag the proper way.

#### 2. DOCUMENTS OF AMERICA

- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Learn the history behind the Pledge of Allegiance. Talk about the words and what they mean to each of us. What does “allegiance” mean? What is “the republic?” What does it mean to be “indivisible?” How does our county help ensure “liberty and justice for all?” Use the pledge as part of your troop’s ceremonies. Visit [www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm](http://www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm) for information.
- AMERICAN CREED:** Read the American creed and talk about the meaning of the words. What does the creed tell us about what our life should be like in this country? Does everyone live this



way?

- c. Visit [www.ushistory.org/documents/creed.htm](http://www.ushistory.org/documents/creed.htm) for information.

### 3. SYMBOLS OF OUR NATION

- a. BALD EAGLE: Find out why the bald eagle was chosen as the emblem of the United States. Look at our money. Which ones have a picture of an eagle on them? Which state flags have an eagle as part of their design? Visit [www.baldeagleinfo.com/eagle/eagle9.html](http://www.baldeagleinfo.com/eagle/eagle9.html).
- b. If possible, visit a place that has a live bald eagle on display. Find out how bald eagles live.
- c. GREAT SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES: Look at the back of a one-dollar bill. Learn about the different parts of the great seal and what they stand for. Visit [www.greatseal.com](http://www.greatseal.com) for information. Find out what “E Pluribus Unum” means. Create a great seal for your troop. What symbols will it have and why?
- d. LIBERTY BELL: Why is it called the “Liberty Bell?” Where is it? If possible, take a trip to see it either for real or in virtual reality. Create a Girl Scouts’ Own ceremony on freedom and liberty that includes ringing your own “liberty bells.” Ask another troop to join in.
- e. Visit [www.ushistory.org/libertybell/index.html](http://www.ushistory.org/libertybell/index.html).
- f. Talk to someone who serves in the military. How does she/he help protect our liberty?
- g. UNCLE SAM: Find a picture of Uncle Sam. Learn how he became a symbol for the United States. Create a poster using Uncle Sam asking us to help our country. Display it where others can see it. Visit [http://207.211.212.441/content/US\\_bio.html](http://207.211.212.441/content/US_bio.html) for more information. Continue through the site for pictures.

### 4. PATRIOTIC SONGS

- a. NATIONAL ANTHEM: What is its name? Find out the history behind it being chosen as our anthem. Talk about the words and what they mean. Listen to recordings of different people singing the song. Which one do you like best? Least? Why? Sing it as part of a flag ceremony. Know what to do if you are somewhere and you hear the national anthem being played. Do something to tell others what to do.
- b. Visit [www.americanhistory.si.edu/ssb/opening.html](http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/ssb/opening.html).
- c. MORE SONGS: Sing some patriotic songs. Learn one or more new ones. Sing the songs for others in your community. Visit <http://bussongs.com/patriotic-songs.php> for the words to several patriotic songs. If you don’t know the tunes, find someone who does like a music teacher or listen to a recording.
- d. WRITE YOUR OWN: Think about what you would like to say about our country in a song. What would the words be about? You could ask someone who is familiar with poetry and/or music to help you write the verse for a song. It could be sung to a popular tune. Sing your song for others.

### 5. SERVICE TO OTHERS

*Girl Scouts cannot raise money for another organization. They can, however, vote to make a donation from their troop funds.*

- a. COLLECTIONS: Find a community organization that could use your help collecting items that could, in turn, help those in need. Help collect what is needed. You could involve the community in your collection. If you know of individuals or families who could use help, you could choose to collect things to help them directly. Our Girl Scout council sponsors several collections: Operation Chill Chaser, Baby Bundles, and Children to Children. Information about

these collections is in our council Program Calendar.

- b. **DIRECT SUPPORT:** Girls can help community service organizations by stuffing fund drive envelopes, putting up posters, passing out fliers, helping at stations during an event, etc.
- c. **LETTER WRITING:** Girls can write letters of support and praise to the rescuers aiding in a mass disaster and/or open letters of comfort and support to victims and their families by sending them to such organizations as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, houses of worship, etc. For troops interested in writing in response to the September 11, 2001 disaster, letters can be given to your local organization or dropped off at the council service center for delivery to the Red Cross.

## CELEBRATING PATRIOTISM

Help plan and hold a patriotic party for your group. You could invite a sister troop, and/or family members; hold it for others in a nursing home or other type of long-term care facility, homeless shelter, or other community facility. Think about what kind of decorations you could make, what food you will serve, what the activities will be. Ask others to help you. As part of your activity, you could hold a candle lighting ceremony in remembrance of those who were affected by the September disaster. **NOTE:** *Young girls should not be holding lit candles. Instead they can hold flashlights or paste paper "flames" on paper candles drawn on a poster. For those holding lit candles, be sure to put a heavy paper or foil collar around the base to catch drips. Discuss safety before you light the candles.*

Write a story to put in the local newspaper about your patriotic party.