



Detective [Meeting 1]

Overview

Note to Volunteers

A few agenda activities in this meeting plan have two options—one that can be done inside and one to be done outside (*Get Girls Outside!*). Carefully read through both activity options and choose one to add to your meeting plan agenda. **Please note all PDF-printed documents list the description and materials required for both the inside and outside options—you will only need to purchase materials for one option.**

The excitement and fast pace of running troop meetings for the first time can sometimes leave us tongue-tied. For that reason scripting is included for guiding girls through a meeting; these "lines" are under the heading "**SAY.**" However, you're the expert. If you feel you don't need the script, do what makes sense for you and your girls.

Prepare Ahead

- Talk to anyone helping you about what they will do at this meeting.
- Read the Take Action Guide for Volunteers located in the resources section. Throughout the year, you'll guide the girls on their Take Action Project. When it comes up in your meetings, you'll want to make sure girls understand the steps for taking action: They will see a need, work with others to brainstorm solutions, develop a plan, and do the project.
- If weather and space permits, some of these activities might be fun to do outside. See if there is a space large enough to get active outside.
- For Activity 1: Print out Morse Code Key, one for each girl
- For Activity 2: Find 12 household objects that are random and will all fit on a tray.
- For Activity 3: For each pair of girls, gather recycled paper towel tubes. Then create strips of paper, 2 wide by 22 long. You can use standard sheets of paper — cut and glue into strips. Or you can use old-fashioned calculator or cash register rolls of paper. Each pair of girls will need one strip of paper.
- For Activity 5: Print out Fingerprint Patterns, one for each girl.

Get Help from Your Friends and Family Network

Your Friends and Family Network can include:

- Girls' parents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, etc.
- Other volunteers who have offered to help with the meeting

Ask your network to help:

- Make snacks
- Welcome girls to the meeting
- Supply materials for the session

Meeting Length

90 minutes



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The times given for each activity will be different, depending on how many girls are in the troop. Plus, girls may really enjoy a particular activity and want to continue past the allotted time. As much as possible, let them! That's part of keeping Girl Scouting girl-led! And what do you do if you only have an hour for the meeting? Simply omit some of the activities.

Materials

Activity 1: As Girls Arrive

- Morse Code Key, enough for each girl
- Paper
- Pens

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony

- Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Tray of 12 small objects
- Cloth or towel to cover the tray

Activity 3: Breaking the Code — **Inside Option**

- Recycled paper towel tubes, one for each pair of girls
- Long strips of paper, about 2 wide by 22 long, can use standard sheets of paper (just cut into strips glued together) or use old calculator rolls of paper. Each pair of girls will need one strip.
- Scissors
- Glue
- Tape
- Pens, markers

Activity 3: Crack The Code Outdoors — **Get Girls Outside!**

- None

Activity 4: Take Action Pause

- Paper
- Pen or Pencil

Activity 5: Fishing for Fingerprints — **Inside Option**

- Black or dark blue inkpads
- Clear tape
- Small portable mirror
- 1 sheet black cardstock paper
- Talcum powder
- White paper
- Fingerprint Patterns, one for each girl

Activity 5: Be a Tree Detective — **Get Girls Outside!**



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- None

Activity 6: Snack Chat

- Healthy snack choices
- Morse Code Key
- Messages from Activity 1

Activity 7: Closing Ceremony

- None

Detailed Activity Plan

Activity 1: As Girls Arrive

Materials

- Morse Code Key, enough for each girl
- Paper
- Pens

Steps

Give girls a Morse Code Key and paper and pen

SAY:

- *One of the codes that detectives and even the military still use today is Morse Code. Use your Morse Code Key and write a message to a friend using the dots and dashes.*

Activity 2: Opening Ceremony

Time Allotment

15 minutes

Materials

- Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Tray of 12 small objects
- Cloth or towel to cover the tray

Steps

Girls gather in a circle. Welcome them to the Detective meeting.
Girls say the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law together.

SAY:

- *You've probably read about or watched stories about detectives, either in books or on TV. They have to use clues to solve a mystery. But not all mysteries are like*



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the ones in the movie — some mysteries that need to be solved happen every day, like where did I leave my shoes?

- *While you work toward your Detective badge, you will practice the same skills that real detectives use so you can solve mysteries that are all around us.*
- *One of the most important skills detectives use when working on a case is the ability to watch people and situations very closely — this is called observation. You are going to practice our observation skills right now.*
- *Bring out a tray with 12 small objects, covered with a cloth.*
- *As a group, you will have 20 seconds to look at the tray and try and remember the objects on the tray. Then I'm going to remove some of the objects without you looking, and you will call out to try and remember what's missing. Ready?*
- *Take the towel off the tray and time the girls for 20 seconds. After 20 seconds, replace the towel.*
- *Take the tray somewhere where the girls can't see, and remove 5 things. Put the towel back on.*
- *Then give the girls another 20 seconds to identify what's missing. If there is time, you can play multiple times, removing different objects each time.*
- *Now that we have learned what it takes to be an observant detective, let's practice talking in code.*

Activity 3: Breaking the Code — Inside Option

Time Allotment

20 minutes

Materials

- Recycled paper towel tubes, one for each pair of girls
- Long strips of paper, about 2 wide by 22 long, can use standard sheets of paper (just cut into strips glued together) or use old calculator rolls of paper. Each pair of girls will need one strip.
- Scissors
- Glue
- Tape
- Pens, markers
- Steps
- Have girls break up into pairs and give each pair a strip of paper, a cardboard tube, and some tape

SAY:

- *When detectives and special agents or spies have to get a message to each other, sometimes they work in codes so no one will figure out what the message says. When you first came in, you wrote messages to a friend in Morse Code. We'll work on figuring those out over snack in a bit.*

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- *Right now you are going to create a cool code and see if you can figure it out.*
- *Have girls follow these instructions:*
- *First, take your tube and hold it upright so that one opening is on the table, the other is facing the ceiling.*
- *Then take the strip of paper and hold it out lengthwise. Still holding it lengthwise, take one end of that paper and place it at the top of your tube. Tape that end into place.*
- *Now, still holding the paper lengthwise, wrap and wind the rest of the paper around your tube and head for the bottom. It's good if the paper overlaps a bit. When you reach the bottom, tape the end of your paper in place.*
- *Now, place the tube on its side, lengthwise facing you, like a rolling pin.*
- *Next, take a pen and write a message to another team. You will write across the tube, from left to right. Your message could be something like:*
- *Bring yummy snacks to the next meeting.*
- *Our troop leader is wearing something blue today.*
- *Girls are the best detectives in the world.*

[If they're having trouble: The tube should be lengthwise, facing the girl, as if they were about to use it as a rolling pin. They should write from left to right, lengthwise across the tube, then start the next line the same way. At the end, you should see two or three stacked lines of the message on the tube.]

[Once you have finished your message, gently pull the tape off of the top and bottom and unroll your strip of paper from the tube. **SAY:**]

- *Have girls exchange their strips of paper with another team. Then SAY:*
- *To read the message you received, wrap the strip of paper around the tube again to line up the letters to make words. Write down the message and then hand the strip to the next team. Keep going until you have read the messages from all the teams.*

[When girls are finished, **SAY:**]

- *Did you all manage to get the secret messages from each team?*
- *Did you have any problems trying to recreate the message?*
- *Who else uses codes that you can think of? (Sample responses: baseball players use gestures to signal plays, fire and police personnel use codes for events and emergencies, doctors use codes in an emergency room)*
- *What kind of codes do you use in your life? [Sample responses: Dial 911. Texting codes like LOL. Code to get into a locker. Code to get into a building or home.]*
- *How do codes make our lives easier?*

Activity 3: Crack the Code Outdoors — *Get Girls Outside!*

Time Allotment

20 minutes



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Materials

- None

Steps

Gather girls outdoors and create two teams. Each team will detect what's missing from a scene.

SAY:

- *One of a detective's most important skills is the ability to watch and observe things. That's what you'll be doing today as an outdoors detective.*
- *Break into two teams. Each team will create an outdoor scene by putting things you find outdoors together in one area. For example, a trash bin, a gardening rake, a stick and a rock, next to a tree, plant or flower. Be creative: add a girl's shoe, a stuffed animal or a backpack.*
- *Once your outdoor scene is set, invite the other team to observe it for two minutes.*
- *Next, without the other team seeing, change up your outdoor setting by removing, adding and moving items around. Make sure you remember what you removed, added and changed. Then invite the other team to once again look at your outdoor scene.*
- *Teams should find at least five things that are different in each group's scene.*

[When girls are finished drawing both versions, **SAY:**]

- *What was the hardest thing about remembering what was in a setting?*
- *Which team was able to detect the most changes in a scene?*
- *What would make it easier for you to remember what was in a scene? [Example: write things down, take photos]*

Activity 4: Take Action Pause

Time allotment

10 minutes

Materials

- Paper
- Pen or Pencil

Steps

Give girls a paper and pen or pencil.

SAY:



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- *As you earn badges this year, we're going to think about how you can use the skills you are learning to take action. Then we're going to come up with a small Take Action Project that you can do later in the year.*
- *Can you think of ways good observation skills or solving mysteries like a detective might be able to help people?*

[Give girls time to respond, then if need prompts SAY:]

- *If you witness an accident or crime.*
- *If a family member can't find something.*
- *If a valuable has been misplaced.*
- *Between now and the next meeting, keep an eye out for things in your community that need help.*
- *For example, is there a busy intersection that should have a traffic light or pedestrian crossing?*
- *Does the playground need a new swing? Are there a lot of stray cats that need homes? Talk to people, just the way detectives would, to find out about problems in your community.*
- *Remember, we're going to keep a list of all the Take Action ideas you come up with this year as you earn badges. When it's time to decide on a Take Action Project, we'll have the list to remind us of all your good ideas.*

Activity 5: Fishing for Fingerprints — Inside Option

Time Allotment

25 minutes

Materials

- Black or dark blue inkpads
- Clear tape
- Small portable mirror
- 1 sheet black cardstock paper
- Talcum powder
- White paper
- Fingerprint Patterns, one for each girl

Steps

Give girls fingerprint patterns and have them get ready to start the activity.

SAY:

- *Now that's you've worked on your observation skills, you will use those skills and pretend to be a real detective by using fingerprints to catch a criminal. No two people have the same fingerprint.*
- *Fingerprints are used to find people who commit crimes, but can also be used to find a missing person.*

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- *You will try to match the fingerprint left at the pretend scene of the crime with one of the suspects — you all! Everyone please put your head down on the table. I'm going to tap one of you to come up and role-play the criminal.*

[Have girls put their head down, and select one of them to come up. Have the criminal push her thumb onto a small mirror on the table. She may need to moisten her thumb just a little to get a good print. Then have her sit back down so no one knows who she is.]

- *Everyone can look now that our criminal has left her mark. Let's see if we can get her print!*
- *Shake the talcum powder over the print — you just need enough so it's covered. Blow off any excess powder, and smooth a piece of tape over the thumbprint. Peel it off carefully and stick it to the black cardstock.*
- *Explain to girls that their skin produces natural oils, which leave behind a residue when fingers press against a surface or object. The powder sticks to these oil revealing the patterns made by the ridges on our fingertips.*
- *We now have our evidence. First, we need to take fingerprints of all the suspects, so that means all of you!*
- *To get a good fingerprint, roll your finger on the ink pad, from one side to the other, then put your thumb print on a white sheet of paper. Sign your name under your print.*
- *Now, let's compare our evidence and see if we can find out who is the criminal. Make sure you look at your Fingerprint Patterns handout to identify the patterns of the fingerprints you're looking at.*

[Girls will compare the prints on the white papers and the one on the black card stock and identify who they think committed the crime. Then **SAY:**]

- *What patterns do you notice in your prints? Look at your fingerprint patterns on your handout. Is your print a whorl? An arch? A loop?*
- *How easy or hard was it to find the right print match?*
- *What pattern was the criminal's print? A whorl? An arch? A loop?*
- *How do you think fingerprints are useful for detectives solving mysteries?*
- *Besides fingerprints, can you think of other ways to get clues? [Sample responses: footprints, animal tracks, dental impressions — when someone leaves a bite mark.]*

ACTIVITY 5: Be a Tree Detective — *Get Girls Outside!*

Time Allotment

25 minutes

Materials

- None

Steps



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Girls pair up to use their skills of observation and discovery to report back on a tree.

SAY:

- *Part of the work of an arborist, a person who works with trees, is to act like a detective to find out everything they can about the tree. In fact, in 1930, Girl Scouts had a badge called “Tree Finder” where girls had to be able to read the age of a tree by its rings and by studying the growth of the branches and twigs. Just like a human’s fingerprints, trees have ways of telling us their stories.*
- *In this activity, you’ll pair up to be an outdoors tree detective and uncover those stories!*
- *As we take a walk together, your job is to find at least one type of tree to explore. If you want, you can sketch and label all the parts of your tree. Then make a “tree map” showing where your tree is located.*
- *When we get back, be ready to answer these questions to the best of your ability:*
 - *How do you think the tree got there? Do you think it was planted by someone or grew there naturally?*
 - *Can you tell if the tree is native (the type of trees that normally grow in the area) or imported (something from another area)?*
 - *Could you spot weather or fire damage on the tree? Was the tree damaged or marked up in any way? If so, how?*
 - *Did you notice any insects or wildlife in or around your tree? What kinds?*
 - *How would you describe the health and age of the tree?*
 - *What was surrounding your tree? Flowers, plants, pinecones, leaves?*

Activity 6: Snack Chat

Time Allotment

10 minutes

Materials

- Healthy snack choices
- Morse Code Key
- Messages from Activity 1

Steps

Hand out the Morse Code Key and messages that they worked on when they arrived.

SAY:

- *As you're eating your snack, try and figure out the Morse Code message that one of your friends wrote out.*
- *Can you think of times you might need to send a secret message to someone?*

Activity 7: Closing Ceremony

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5 minutes

Materials

- None

Steps

Girls form a Friendship Circle and sing a song.

SAY:

- *Do you think you could be a detective? What skill do you like the best and why?*
- *In our next meeting, we will continue to learn about how to be a Detective. We'll try out some science that detectives use to solve crimes, and we'll work on solving our own mystery.*

[Keep It Girl-Led Tip: Invite girls to choose a closing ceremony song to sing.]

Ask a girl to end the meeting by starting the Friendship Squeeze.