

FOUNDATIONS

of **DEMOCRACY**

Exploring Civics and Government



K-3rd Grade



girl scouts 
of colorado

Activity #1

Who Am I?

Government Leaders Guessing Game

20-25 minutes

Materials Needed:

- *Five character signs, each labeled with one of the following: Mayor, School Board Member, Governor, President, Citizen
- Tape to hang up signs
- Open space for Girl Scouts to move around the room

Goal:

Girl Scouts will learn about different leadership roles in their community, state, and country while identifying how citizens and government leaders help make decisions and solve problems.

Let's Explore What We Already Know!

Today we're going to learn about government, leadership, rights, and how people can make a difference in their communities.

Before we get started, let's see what we already know. There are no wrong answers, and it's okay if some of these words are new to you.

We'll learn about all of them together during the program!

*Printable character signs on the next five pages!













Who Am I?

#1

Discussion Questions

Ask Girl Scouts:

- What do you think **government** means?
- Can you name the three branches of government?
- What do you think the **Constitution** is?
- What is a **right**?
- What do you think **voting** means?
- Who are some leaders you've heard about?
- What do leaders do to help our town, state, or country?

***Tip:** Let Girl Scouts share their ideas & experiences before introducing the vocabulary below.

Key Vocabulary

Government – The people who help make rules and take care of our community.

Constitution – The rulebook for our country. It explains how the government works and what rights people have.

Right – A freedom or protection that belongs to every person.

Voting – Choosing between options and sharing your voice.



Who Am I?

#1

What Is Government?

Explain:

"The government is a group of people who help make rules and take care of the places we live, like our town, state, and country. They help make sure schools are open, roads are safe, and communities have the services they need. Some government leaders help in our local communities, while others help make decisions for the whole state or country."

The Three Branches of Government

Explain:

"Our country's government works like a team. Different groups have different jobs, and they work together to help our country run smoothly."



Legislative Branch – Makes the rules (laws).



Executive Branch – Makes sure the rules are followed.



Judicial Branch – Decides if the rules are fair.

"Just like a team, each part has an important job. One makes the rules, one carries them out, and one checks that they are fair."

*Optional: [Show this 2:55 video](#) singing about what leaders in communities do. 

Who Am I?

#1

Government Leaders Movement Game

Set Up: Place the five signs in various places around the room.

Say: We are going to play a movement game! I'll read clues about a person. Listen carefully and then move to the sign that shows who you think the person is.

Read one set of clues at a time. After reading the clues, allow Girl Scouts to move to the sign they think matches the description.

Once everyone has chosen a sign, reveal the answer and briefly discuss the role before moving on to the next set of clues.

Continue until all five roles have been introduced.

**Optional Challenge:* If Girl Scouts are familiar with these roles, ask them to identify which branch of government each position belongs to and whether that leader is elected by voters or appointed to their role.

Clues

1. I help lead a city or town.
I help make decisions about parks, roads, and community events.
People in my city vote for me.
Who am I?
Answer: Mayor



Who Am I?

#1

Clues - Continued

2. I help make decisions about schools.

I work to support students, teachers, and families.

People in my community vote for me.

Who am I?

Answer: School Board Member

3. I help lead the state of Colorado.

Each state has one of me.

I work with leaders across the state to solve problems.

People throughout the state vote for me.

Who am I?

Answer: Governor

4. I help lead the United States.

I help make important decisions for our country.

I live and work in the White House.

Who am I?

Answer: President

Note: Be sure to highlight the “Citizen” role!

Citizens are people who live in the United States and are an important part of how our government works. Even though they don’t have official jobs like president or mayor, citizens help make decisions by learning about their community, following rules, helping others, and (when they grow up) voting. Being a good citizen means working together to make our country a better place for everyone.



Who Am I?

#1

Reflection Questions

1. Which leader helps your community?
2. Which leader helps our state?
3. Which leader helps our country?
4. Which job would you want to try and why?
5. Did you learn about a role today that you didn't know about before?
6. Have you ever thought about the role you and your friends/family play in the government?
7. What are some ways citizens can help their communities?



Activity #2

Meet A Civic Leader

Civic Leader = Community Helper!

30-45 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Markers/crayons
- Paper or cards for thank you letters
- Optional: printed thank-you letter template
- Optional: list of sample questions
- Optional: computer and projector for videos and/or articles

Goal:

Learn about what community helpers do and how they serve others—either by meeting a leader or exploring their role through art and storytelling.

Who Are Our Community Helpers?

Introduction – Who Are Our Community Helpers? (5 min)

- Start with a discussion about community helpers. Ask:
 - “What do you think a community helper is?”
 - “Who helps make your school, neighborhood, or city a better place?”



Meet A Civic Leader

#2

Explain:

“A community helper is someone who has a job that helps take care of people or places in our town or city. They might help make rules, solve problems, or make sure things run smoothly. Some examples are the mayor, school principal, or a city worker.”

Are there any other community leaders you can name?

* **Hint:** We might have discussed a few during Activity One.

Meet A Civic Leader

Option 1 – In-Person Guest

- Invite a local civic leader (mayor, school board member, city councilor, etc.) to speak with the girls.
- Help girls brainstorm simple questions in advance, such as:
 - “What’s your favorite part of your job?”
 - “What do you do every day?”
 - “How do you help people?”
 - “How did you get into your job?”
 - “Do you have any advice for someone my age to help the community?”

Ask the girls if they know any community leaders in their own lives and let them share their experiences.



Meet A Civic Leader

#2

Option 1 – Reflection + Thank-You Activity

- Invite the girls to share their favorite part of the visit:
 - “What did you enjoy learning the most?”
 - “What surprised you about the leader’s job?”
 - “What would you like to do if you had their job?”

Letter Writing Prompt:

- Provide the thank-you letter template* with fill-in-the-blank sentences and space to draw.
- Encourage the girls to:
 - Write a few sentences about what they learned.
 - Thank the visitor for coming.
 - Draw a picture of the leader or themselves doing the job.

***Tip for Leaders:** Collect and give the letters to your guest as a special thank-you package. You could even snap a photo of the group with their letters and email it to the guest if in-person delivery isn’t possible.



*Printable thank-you letter template on next page



Thank You!



Dear _____,

I learned so much about your job!

Thank you for helping our community! If I had your job,

I would _____.

Thank you for everything you do!

From,



A Special Drawing from Me to You:

Meet A Civic Leader

#2

Option 2 – At-Home or No Guest? No Problem!

- Introduce a civic leader through a short story, printed photo, or simple video (like a kid-friendly city government explainer).
- OR read a picture book featuring a community leader (e.g., *Grace for President*, *What Does the President Do?*, or *Madam Mayor*).
- After learning about the leader's role, invite girls to:
 - Draw a picture of the leader or themselves in a helper role.
 - Write a thank-you letter to a civic leader they learned about.

***Tip for Leaders:** Girls can mail the letter (using the same template from option 1) with help from an adult or they can bring it back to share at a troop meeting.



*Printable thank-you letter template on previous page



Activity #3

Build A Better Community

Understanding How Laws and Voting Help Communities

20-25 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Large paper or poster board
- Paper and pencil/pen for note taking
- Markers, crayons, stickers
- Tape or glue

Ask:

- What are some rules you follow at home?
- What are some rules at school?
- Why do we have rules?
- What do you think would happen if nobody followed any rules?

After discussion, explain:

Rules help people stay safe, work together, and solve problems.

Communities use laws in the same way. Laws help us take care of shared spaces and treat one another fairly.

Ask:

- Who helps make rules in our communities?
- Can you remember any government leaders we learned about in the last activity?

Explain that leaders like mayors, governors, and the president work with lawmakers to create, discuss, and vote on laws that help keep communities safe and fair.



Build A Better Community

#3

Key Words

Constitution – A constitution is a special set of rules that explains how a government works and how people should be treated fairly.

- The U.S. Constitution helps guide the government for the whole country.
- Each state, including Colorado, has its own constitution that helps guide decisions for people who live there.

***Tip:** Think of it like a school and a classroom: the school has rules everyone follows, and each classroom may have a few extra rules just for their group.

Rights – Rights are freedoms and protections that every person has, such as the right to share their ideas, practice their beliefs, and be treated fairly. The Constitution helps protect these rights.

***Example:** You have the right to share your opinion in class, as long as you are being kind and respectful.

Law – A law is an official rule that everyone must follow. Laws help keep people safe and make sure things are fair.

***Example:** Wearing a seatbelt is required by law because it helps keep people safe.



Build A Better Community

#3

Build A Better Community Challenge

Today, we're going to become community leaders! Every community has challenges to solve. Our job is to decide how to make our town even better, keeping in mind the importance of fair laws.

Part One: Identify Community Problems

Divide girls into three groups. Each group receives one problem. Groups can draw or write their ideas on their poster/paper.

Smallstown, Colorado has a few problems that they need your help solving! Can you help them out with the following:

- 1. Cars are driving too fast near the school.**
- 2. The community park has a lot of litter.**
- 3. Kids at school don't have money to buy lunch.**

*** Leader Tip:** Feel free to add or use your own community problems for Girl Scouts to discuss and relate to.

Ask them to discuss the following:

- What is the problem?
- How could leaders help solve it?
- What rule, law, or community action could help?

Examples, in case Girl Scouts are unsure where to begin:

- Add a crosswalk near the school or stop signs/lights to slow down traffic.
- Put more trash cans in the park or create a community clean-up day
- Work with the governor and schools to provide lunches for hungry students.



Build A Better Community

#3

Part Two: Community Meeting

Bring everyone back together.

Explain:

Smallstown, Colorado is very grateful for your help! Present your ideas so they can make a decision on what to do.

Each group presents:

- Their community problem
- Their proposed solution

***Leader Tip:** Encourage applause and questions after each presentation.

Part Three: Community Vote

Explain:

Unfortunately, Smallstown can only solve one problem right now. So, they need your help to decide which one they should start with. One way communities make decisions is through voting.

- Give each Girl Scout one voting sticker or opt to have the Girl Scouts raise their hands to vote.
- Allow them to vote for the solution they think would help the community most.
- Count the votes together.

Discuss:

- Which idea received the most votes?
- How did voting help the group make a decision?



Build A Better Community

#3

Part Four: Connect to Government

After counting the votes, explain:

Today we voted on ideas to help Smallstown. But what happens next?
We could only vote on one solution, so:

If the idea passes, say:

"If most leaders vote YES, the idea can move forward. Leaders work together to turn the idea into a real law, rule, or project."

What Happens Next?

Just like we practiced a moment ago,

1. Leaders discuss the idea
2. Leaders vote
3. The idea passes
4. The mayor or other leaders approve the plan
5. The new rule becomes part of the community

Explain:

When a law passes, people begin following the new rule and the community starts using the change.

But, unfortunately not all ideas pass on the first try and that is okay! So...



Build A Better Community

#3

If The Idea Doesn't Pass

Say:

“Sometimes an idea doesn't get enough votes. Do you think the idea disappears forever?”

“Not always! Leaders can listen to feedback, make changes, and try again later. Sometimes a different solution is chosen instead.”

Emphasize:

Voting helps leaders make decisions, but passing a law is just one step. After a law is approved, leaders work hard to put it into action. If an idea doesn't pass, leaders can learn more, make changes, and try again. This helps communities choose solutions that work for the most people. Leaders help communities solve problems, but citizens are important too. Citizens can share ideas, attend meetings, and vote when they are old enough.

Reflection Questions

1. Why do communities need laws and rules?
2. How did it feel to vote?
3. Why do you think voting is important?
4. Was it easy or hard to choose just one idea?
5. Why might an idea need changes before becoming a law?
6. What is one thing you would improve in your own community?



Closing & Reflection

I Can Be A Helper Too!

Post Knowledge Check

5-10 minutes

At the beginning of this program you were asked a few questions about different words. Now that we have completed this program, let's check what you have learned!

- What is **government**?
- Name the **three branches** of government.
- What is the **Constitution**?
- What is a **right**?
- What is **voting**?

Discussion Questions

1. What is one thing you learned about how leaders help people?
2. If you were a community leader, what problem would you help solve?
3. What is one way you can help your community right now?
4. Would you ever want to be a mayor, governor, school board member, president, or another government leader? Why or why not?



Closing & Reflection

Optional Wrap-Up Activity

Optional Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Markers, crayons, stickers
- Tape

Celebrate Their Civics Learning Journey!

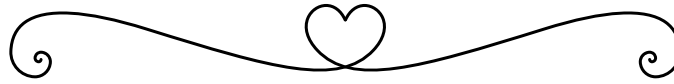
Invite girls to each draw a picture or write one sentence about how they can be a helper in their community—just like the leaders they learned about today. They can share it aloud or hang it on a “Community Helper Wall” if you have one.

Finish by saying:

- You all explored what it means to be a citizen—someone who learns about their community, the leaders within it called civics—and today, you started building your understanding of how government works. Great job learning something so important!
- As you grow, you can come back to this program each year to keep building your civic knowledge and leadership skills. By the time you reach middle school, you’ll be ready to participate in opportunities like  the National Civics Bee®—a real writing competition where students can win awards and even cash prizes by sharing their ideas to improve their communities.
- The thinking, questioning, and learning you did today is a big step toward becoming an informed and engaged citizen—and that’s something worth celebrating!



Congratulations!



You have earned your **Foundations of Democracy: Exploring Civics and Government** patch as well as met the requirements for the following badges:

- Democracy for Daises
- Democracy for Brownies

To claim your **Foundations of Democracy: Exploring Civics and Government** patch, please complete the feedback form [here](#).

