

Our Own Council's Interest Project

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

- For Whom:** Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts
- Timing:** May be earned once and completed in the time required by the girls.
- Purpose:** To help Cadette and Senior Girl Scout age level girls increase their understanding of our diverse and complex communities, and to appreciate the rich intercultural resources that result from this diversity.
- Recognition:** The Interest Project Award may be purchased in the council shop.
- Placement:** May be worn on the badge sash/vest along with other official badges.
- Requirements:** To earn this Interest Project, individuals or groups must complete eight (8) activities including those that are starred.



1. * Discover the ethnic/cultural makeup of your community. The web, your local school district, the Chamber of Commerce or your City Hall will be good sources for this information. Find out if there are areas of your community where many of the residents share a common heritage. Are there ethnic restaurants, markets, churches or other activities or businesses that primarily serve this smaller community? Talk to the Girl Scout staff member who is responsible for that area and find out if the Girl Scout membership mirrors the ethnicity of the community. Plan an activity that would encourage the girls who live in one of these neighborhoods to participate in Girl Scouting.
2. * Visit a museum or a local art gallery that reflects the art of one of your community's ethnic/cultural segments. Select one artist whose work you enjoy. Bring examples of his/her work to share with your troop. How do you feel heritage and culture influenced his/her art? Do you feel your favorites are significantly different from those of other ethnic/cultural communities?
3. Plan a get-together where you listen to several different kinds of music. Bring selections from at least five (5) different groups who live in your community. Learn to sing a song in one of the languages that is spoken in your community. Some ethnic/cultural music has a history that is intertwined with the land, the people, and/or their national life style. Find out something about the style of music you enjoy. Share your findings with those who attend the get-together.
4. Visit your local supermarket and look over the foods that are displayed in the ethnic food section. Find a recipe that uses several ingredients that are new to you, prepare the recipe for your family or your troop. If you are working on this as a troop project, plan a pot luck dinner so that you can all enjoy the variety of new foods. Find a restaurant in your community that specializes in ethnic foods. Go there for lunch or dinner with a friend or those who are working on this interest project.
5. Find a newspaper that is published in one of your community languages, other than English. See if you can understand the news or one of the regular columns that also runs in your English paper. Purchase a magazine that caters to one of your community's ethnic/cultural minorities. Look carefully at the advertisements. How do they differ from the magazines that are delivered to your home? Learn to say at least 10 common phrases in the language you have

- chosen. Try to find a video or attend a movie that is in another language with English subtitles. Did you have trouble following the storyline?
6. Go to your local library and find a book that is written about a person your age who lives in another country and lives another culture. After you have read the book, share with your troop some of the more obvious differences between life as it is depicted in the book and life as you know it.
 7. Plan a holiday party based on one of the holidays that is celebrated by an ethnic/cultural group in your community. Invite one of your sister troops to attend the party and become better acquainted with your diverse neighbors. Be sure that the food, the activities, the decorations and the music are as authentic as you can make them.
 8. Find out if there are any places of worship in your community that girls in your troop know little about. Contact the worship leader and arrange a visit. Ask if you can find out about the major issues and beliefs of their teachings.
 9. The national dress of many countries is spectacular and full of tradition. By looking in books, visiting specialty clothing stores, or by talking to someone from your community, find out as much as you can about traditional clothing worn by both women and men. Is this clothing worn today as regular attire or is it saved for special occasions? Can it be purchased locally or does it have to be ordered or purchased in ethnic neighborhoods of larger communities? Are there traditions related to the wearing of certain items of clothing?
 10. Educational systems differ greatly in many countries. Find out about the schools in the countries from which your new neighbors have come. Do they study the same subjects? Do most students go on to college? Is education free? What about books? Do most students live at school as opposed to living at home? Are most teachers women or men? If you were attending school in their homeland, do you think that you would be in the same grade you are in now? Invite a bilingual teacher to come to a troop meeting or arrange a classroom visit. Find out about job requirements for bilingual teachers. Does she/he feel that it is important to provide learning for students in their native language? How do we provide schooling for all newcomers to our community?
 11. Make an appointment to visit one of the AMNESTY offices. Find out how a person who has been living in this community for many years can become a citizen. Make a list of other community agencies that serve minority persons in your community.
 12. Find out about Girl Scouting/Girl Guiding in one of the native countries represented in your community. Find out all that you can about the program, their uniform, pin and learn their promise, and send a troop letter through GSUSA to their Girl Scout or Girl Guide national headquarters for a troop in that country.
 13. Participate in the planning of a neighborhood event designed to celebrate the diversity of your community. You can get suggestions for such an event from your neighborhood chair. You will need to hold a girl planning committee meeting and involve representatives from your neighborhood troops in making choices about what you will do at the event. You can expect help from your troop leader or other adults in your neighborhood, but your troop will have the major responsibility for the event.
 14. * Plan and carry out a service project that requires you to use the knowledge you have gained while working on this interest project.
 15. Search the web to find sites that represent 3 cultures. List the similarities.