



Understanding Girl Scouts S.W.A.P.S.

*Our Council's Own Try-It created by:
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Every year, Girl Scouts across the country get together at various events to share special memories and to trade SWAPS to help remember the event and the other Girl Scouts. This is a great way to build new friendships, learn about Girl Scouting, develop fine motor skills, develop and encourage creativity, practice recycling principles, and have fun.

Requirements: Must complete the two (2) starred (*) skills and two additional activities.



*1. History of SWAPS

With your Girl Scout leaders, or with your parent/guardian, practice the standards of the Safety Pledge

(www.gogirlsonly.org/internet_safety_pledge.asp), and research the history of SWAPS. Try using a search engine like Google to start your internet search. (Keyword: Girl Scout SWAPS). Find the answers to the questions listed below and share them with your troop or report at a troop meeting:

- What does SWAPS mean or does it stand for?
- Where did SWAPS originate?
- What is Potlatch and how does it relate to SWAPS?
- What is the usual size of SWAPS?
- Why do Girl Scouts give or exchange SWAPS?

Some good internet sites include:
<http://gsleaders.org/files/swaps.htm>
<http://girlscouts.org/program/gscentral/swaps/>
<http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art27998.asp>



*2. Discuss SWAPS Etiquette

While SWAPS etiquette varies from council to council, there are some basic rules that everyone should be aware of and follow so that no one's feelings get hurt. (see attached SWAPS etiquette sheet)



3. Make a person SWAP

Use miniature paper dolls, toothpick "worry" dolls, wooden clothespins, pompoms, or Shrinky-Dink material to make a person SWAP. This can represent you, a Girl Scout, Girl Scouts from around the world, or a person from another culture. Use your imagination.



4. Make a recycled SWAP

Use materials that have been used before, such as aluminum foil, soda bottle lids, bottle caps, paper clips, cardboard from cereal boxes, individual serving cereal boxes, puzzles with missing pieces, decks of cards that are missing cards, etc. and make something new! Remember, - a Girl Scout uses resources wisely.



5. Make a bag SWAP

Using a small jewelry sized baggie (these are easily found in the jewelry or party section of your local megastore or Wal-Mart) to create a SWAP. Use sand, glitter, confetti, or another material that needs to be contained to include in your swap.



6. Make a traditional Girl Scout SWAP

Create a SWAP that represents something related to Girl Scouting: s'mores, camping, campfires, sit-upons, cookies, cookie sales, earning badges or patches, knots, the Girl Scout Law in beads or ribbons, daisies, brownies, or Girl Scout trefoils. Think about what Girl Scouts means to you and make a SWAP that represents that. Again, let your imagination be your guide.



7. Make a World Thinking Day SWAP
Create a SWAP to be traded on World Thinking Day (February 22nd).



8. Have a SWAPS exchange

Within your own troop or with another troop, or at a World Thinking Day, exchange SWAPS.





Girl Scout SWAPS Etiquette

- ❖ SWAPS to be traded should be carried in a baggie. SWAPS that are pinned to someone's hat or vest are generally considered off limits unless they are offered to you in a trade.
- ❖ You should trade with a variety of troops. Remember to refuse a SWAP POLITELY if you have one already. Please discourage collecting one type of SWAP as that can lead to hurt feelings. Encourage a wide variety and collection of SWAPS.
- ❖ ALWAYS say thank you! A Girl Scout is courteous.
- ❖ Always have a few extra SWAPS on hand for those who don't have any. It is also nice if you give someone a SWAP who doesn't have one to give in return. That is part of what Girl Scouting is all about.
- ❖ Include important information on your SWAP such as your troop number, city and state. You may also want to include the event date and name to help identify the SWAP at a later date. Practice safety and do not include personal information such as your full name and home address.
- ❖ SWAPS do not have to be pins. They can be bracelets, necklaces, council patches, event patches, or other small items.
- ❖ SWAPS should NOT contain edible food. Food items can't be kept as keepsakes and they attract bugs and other critters when outdoors.
- ❖ Make sure your SWAPS are weather and rain proof! Don't use materials that disintegrate in the weather.
- ❖ Make sure that the pin is closed when you pass your SWAP to another person.
- ❖ Do not pin a SWAP on another person. Let that person put the SWAP on herself.

Additional Tidbits

For SWAPS ideas, visit:

<http://www.gsswaps.net/>

<http://swaps-a-lot.ecrater.com>

http://www.makingfriends.com/scouts/swap_scouts.htm

http://parentingteens.about.com/od/girlscoutsandgirlguides/a/swaps_girlscout.htm

<http://wikihow.com/Make-Girl-Scout-SWAPS>

<http://www.scoutswaps.com/>

<http://www.scoutingweb.com/scoutingweb/Program/CraftsSwaps.htm>

<http://www.squidoo.com/swaps>