



# Geocaching Adventure Kit!

For Girl Scouts



As part of the Girl Scouts' 100th anniversary celebration, Girl Scouts and Groundspeak have introduced a new Geocaching program, and badge for GSUSA Juniors. Juniors can find the complete badge requirements in *The Junior Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, available through their council stores. For more information on all the new Girl Scout badges, visit: [forgirls.girlscouts.org/home/badges/](http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/home/badges/).

Girl Scouts of all ages will love taking part in high-tech geocaching treasure hunts, which offer opportunities for outdoor adventure and service projects. This includes fun activities like CITO events: <http://www.geocaching.com/cito/>. For more about the great time girls can have while changing the world, visit: [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org).





# Geocaching Adventure Kit!

Steps for a Successful Club Geocaching Event

On the following pages, we have outlined two options for hosting a geocaching event for clubs, camps, or kids. But first, here are the basics of geocaching:

## About Geocaching

Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS devices. The basic idea is to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, outdoors and then share your experiences online. Geocaching is enjoyed by people from all age groups, with a strong sense of community and support for the environment.

## About Geocaching.com

Geocaching.com is the world's largest location-based gaming portal. Started in September, 2000, by GPS enthusiast and web developer Jeremy Irish, the site now hosts more than 5 million geocachers, and more than 1.3 million active caches. Geocaching.com offers an array of features for both novice and avid geocachers. If someone is new to this worldwide activity, Geocaching.com will lead them through all the necessary steps for their first geocaching experience. The site provides an in-depth tutorial for getting started, as well as instructions on finding geocaches.

## Resources Available Online:

These additional resources can help you prepare for your geocaching adventure. There is a glossary, a guide, and even a presentation that you can download and show to your group before the event! Visit these pages on Geocaching.com:

- [Introduction to Geocaching Presentation](#)
- [Guide to Geocaching: Printable Brochure](#)
- [Types of Geocaches](#)
- [Glossary of Common Geocaching Terms](#)
- [Guide to Hiding a Geocache](#)
- [What is a Trackable?](#)

# Option 1 – Finding Existing Geocaches

If you'd like to teach your group about geocaching while going on a real-world geocache hunt, this is the option for you. This method uses existing geocaches and [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) for finding and logging geocaches. Using the search functions on Geocaching.com, you're sure to find many listings in your area!

## Option 1 – Check List of Tools:

- **GPS enabled device.** The Magellan eXplorist or Lowrance Out & Back are good examples of a simple GPS that would be easy for novice groups to use when learning how to geocache.
- **Internet Access.** You'll need access to the free Geocaching.com website to search for geocaches in your area. Many GPS devices allow you to download geocache listings directly to your GPS using the Send to GPS button or GPX download button (Premium Member feature) on the cache page.
- **Geocaching.com Account.** Basic Memberships are free. You can either create one account that the group will use or, if you break the group into smaller teams, you can create multiple accounts for each team that is paired with an adult (for kids under the age of 13).
- **Camera.** Optional for taking photographs at the event. Photos can be uploaded with the geocache log after finding a geocache.
- **BYOP (Bring Your Own Pencil).** Geocachers should always have a pen or pencil with them for signing log books. Smaller caches (micros and nanos) won't be in containers large enough to hold a pen or pencil, so it's important that you bring your own with you.
- **Trade Items.** Since it is popular to place trade items inside geocache containers, have the group members come equipped with trinkets or trackables that they want to trade.
- **Certificates/prizes, optional.** At the end of the event, you can award prizes or certificates of completion to all of the participants. Have them share their experiences with the group and review the skills used.

## Option 1 – Step-by-Step:

### Before the Event

1. A day or so before your event, search for a local park or recreation area that has multiple geocache listings, so you have several options for searching. To do this, you can use a computer to visit [Geocaching.com](http://Geocaching.com) and click on the 'Hide and Seek A Cache' link. Enter a Postal Code or Address and click 'Search.' Choose a geocache from the list. For your first geocaching outing, it's best to select Traditional Geocaches (See the Resource above called 'Types of Geocaches') to search for. Also, be aware of the cache ratings and select caches that have a D/T (Difficulty/Terrain) rating of 1/1. This will give the participants a better chance of finding their first caches.

2. To save the coordinates into devices: You can either preload the coordinates for the geocaches onto the devices before the event day, or simply have each group load the devices themselves. Having the participants load the devices will give them the chance to familiarize themselves with the GPS units. To load the coordinates you can either mark a new waypoint on the device, then edit the waypoint to add the correct coordinates of the geocache. Add the geocache name as the waypoint's name to easily determine which geocache you're searching for. Another option is to use the 'Send to GPS' button on the cache page to send the coordinates and cache information directly to your device (this is limited to certain devices, so click on the 'Send to GPS' button to determine if your device applies).
3. If you have a large group, plan to separate the participants into teams – the size of the teams can depend on how many GPS devices you have available.

## Event Start

4. On event day, head outside and have each team follow their GPS to "Ground Zero" – the point where your GPS device shows that you have reached the coordinates for the cache location. When your GPS reaches close to zero feet, you'll want to start searching high and low. Generally, GPS devices are accurate to within about 30 feet so you'll want to search around a 30 foot radius of Ground Zero.

Note: Geocaches consist of a container and a log book. Standard geocache containers are often Tupperware-style containers or ammo cans hidden in tree stumps, under piles of sticks or in bushes. Some geocache containers are not easy to find, and can blend in well with the environment in which they're hidden. Some containers are smaller than a dime!

5. When a team finds the cache, sign the log book with the appropriate geocaching username. If the container is large enough, it will include trinkets that are intended to be used as trade items. The general rule for trading is 'trade even or trade up.' If you take an item from the geocache, you'll want to leave an item of equal or greater value.

Note: In larger geocaches, you'll often find Trackables with a goal of moving the item from cache to cache. Common Trackables include Travel Bugs (which have travelers, like a key chain, attached to them) and Geocoins. Each Trackable has a goal (for example, to travel to every US state or to visit all the countries of the world). Only take a Trackable if you can help it achieve its goal, otherwise, leave it in the geocache for the next finder.

6. After finding the geocache, return it to its hiding location so that other geocachers can have the opportunity to find the geocache.

## Event Closing

7. At the end of the event, you can award prizes or certificates of completion to all of the participants. Have the kids share their experiences with the group and review the skills used.
8. When you return to your computer, use the group or team Geocaching.com accounts and have the participants log their visit online. To do this, bring up the cache page and click on 'log your visit.' You can select a smiley face icon to show that you successfully found the geocache. It can also be fun to write a note about your experience and upload photos.

## Option 2 – Creating Temporary Geocaches

If you'd like to set up your own temporary geocaches for the purpose of teaching beginners about geocaching, you may consider using the following option with four sample geocaches that you create at home. This method omits the use of [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) for finding or logging geocaches. Temporary geocaches cannot be logged at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com).

### Option 2 – Check List of Tools:

- **GPS enabled device.** The Magellan eXplorist or Lowrance Out & Back are good examples of a simple GPS that would be easy for beginners to use when learning how to geocache.
- **Geocache containers.** We recommend waterproof food storage containers as an easy "homemade" option for geocache containers. The containers do not need to be identical. Using diverse container types for the geocaches will help the participants define their 'geosense' for the next time they're out searching for real geocaches. If you prefer to purchase official geocache containers, you can do so online at <http://shop.groundspeak.com>.
- **Items for inside the geocache containers.** Place paper or a small notebook that can serve as a log book inside the geocache. Also include some fun or educational "treasures" inside the container. Plan to have enough trinkets in the container so that each child on one team can trade an item.
- **BYOP (Bring Your Own Pencil).** Geocachers should always have a pen or pencil with them for signing logbooks. Smaller caches (micros and nanos) won't be large enough to hold a pen or pencil so it's important that you always bring your own with you.
- **Trade Items.** Since trade items are popular within geocache containers, have the participants come equipped with trinkets or coins.
- **Certificates/prizes, optional.** At the end of the event, you can award prizes or certificates of completion to all of the participants. Have them share their experiences with the group and review the skills used.

### Option 2 – Step-by-Step:

#### Before the Event

1. Decide on a public location, such as a park or recreation area, with four adequate hiding spots for the geocaches. If you use a private location, be sure to seek permission first.
2. Create your own geocache containers. Make four containers and number each container 1-4. We recommend waterproof food storage containers as an easy option. The containers do not need to be identical. Using diverse container types for the geocaches will help beginners define their 'geosense' for the next time they're out searching for real geocaches. If you prefer to purchase official geocache containers, these can be purchased online at <http://shop.groundspeak.com>.
3. Inside each geocache container, place paper or a small notebook that can serve as a log book. Also include some fun or educational "treasures" inside the container. Plan to have enough trinkets in the container so that each person on one team can trade an item.

4. A couple of hours prior to the event, hide the four geocache containers. They should be hidden in areas that the kids can find, such as under leaves, or in the nook of a tree. Do not bury the containers underground, shovels should not be needed.
5. Mark the locations as new waypoints in your GPS devices. Using four GPS devices, label each device with a number 1-4. Enter the coordinates for Geocache #1 into GPS #1, Geocache #2 in GPS # 2, etc.

### **Event Start**

6. When you are ready to start the event, make sure the groups are prepared with a pen to sign the log book and have something with them to trade for an item in the container.
7. Send the group out in four teams, giving each team one GPS device and the goal of one geocache to search for at a time. The team with GPS #1 will be searching for Geocache #1.
8. When the team finds the geocache container, they should sign the log book and trade an item of their own for one of the items inside the container. The rule of thumb is to leave an item of equal or greater value than what you take from the container. This is also a good time to have the team members read any education material that you placed in the geocache container, such as facts about nature or "be prepared" tips.
9. Upon each team's return to the starting point, swap the GPS devices between teams and send them out again. Repeat this until each team has used each of the four GPS devices and found all four geocaches.

### **Event Closing**

10. At the end of the event, you can award prizes or certificates of completion to all of the participants. Have them share their experiences with the group and review the skills used.