

## Guide to Conducting a Plática – A conversation for All Families

In Spanish-speaking communities, a plática is a warm and friendly conversation. The goal of our Plática is to create just such an environment so that the conversation between parents/caregivers and the recruiter can yield insights into their thoughts and needs. The Plática model is not exclusively for the Latinx community, you can apply this engagement technique with **all communities**, and we recommend you do.

Council staff/volunteers should act as a guide, but not control the conversation. The primary objective is to **listen** and then draw connections between what the parents/caregivers say about their girls and the ways Girl Scouts can support their goals.

### **Consider these general guidelines for the conversation:**

- Know your audience – Who are these families? What are common cultures, circumstances, or challenges facing this community?
- Avoid Girl Scout acronyms or internal language. Use vocabulary that is familiar to everyone, or make sure to clearly explain Girl Scout traditions and terms.
- Note opportunities to connect the values of Girl Scouts through our Promise and Law to the values and goals expressed by the parents/caregivers.
- Answer questions with clear next steps. Note new opportunities that have been released (Girl Scouts at Home/Girl Scouts en su hogar, virtual programming, and new badges) as well as upcoming milestones or council events.
- Before you close, ask if anyone is ready to join or if they would like to gather more information and participate in another Girl Scout experience.
- Note: Some families will not be ready to join after the first experience, and that is okay! Make sure all families leave understand their next step and how you will continue to communicate with them.

### **Opening + Icebreaker 10 minutes**

- Sit in a circle so there is no “head” of the group, like a Girl Scout meeting. Share with families why the circle is an important part of Girl Scouts.
- Introduce yourself and thank them again for coming. Assure parents/caregivers that this is a safe space to share and get to know each other.

### **Build connection among the adults through this icebreaker:**

- Ask parents/caregivers to think of one woman they look up to. What qualities do you admire in this woman? How has she made an impact on you?
- Give participants some time to think and then ask each parent/caregiver to introduce themselves, share their girl(s) name and age, and then share the woman they look up to and why. Would you like your girl(s) to be like this woman when she grows up?

### **Discussion 20 minutes**

Use the three conversation starters below to prompt the discussion but allow parents/caregivers to continue if they are building their own topics as they get to know each other.

**Starter #1: Learn who they are, what they value and how they spend their time.**

- What is important to your girl and to the family?
- What is most important to you as a family?
- How does your family support your girl?
- What do you all enjoy doing as a family?
- What things do you do only with your girl?

**Starter #2: Learn what they want for their girl.**

- What are your dreams for your girl?
- What is most important to you in your girl's development?
- Tell me about when you are most proud of or happy for your girl.
- What does your girl struggle with the most?
- Imagine your girl as a young adult: Describe the person you hope she becomes.
- What do you think she will do when she grows up?
- What challenges might get in the way of her reaching these dreams?

**Starter #3: Identify the types of activities they and their girl enjoy.**

- What is important for your girls to learn?
- What does your girl love to do most?
- What does she get excited about?
- When she is happiest and most engaged?
- Outside of school, how does your girl spend most of her time?
- Are you / is she happy about this?
- If not, how do you / does she wish she were spending her time?
- What types of activities or experiences do you wish your girl(s) could have that she is not having now?
- What is holding her (or your family) back from having those experiences?
- Are there experiences or opportunities you missed out on growing up that you hope your girl(s) can have?

**Girl Scout Connection 10 minutes**

While this should not be the same formal Girl Scout presentation we have done in the past, families should still leave with a clear connection between Girl Scouts and their experience.

What did you hear parents/caregivers express that uniquely connects to Girl Scouts? Do we meet a challenge in their life or support a goal for their girl(s)?

Ask a parent to read the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

- When complete, ask the parents what they think?
- Does this align or differ from their values?
- Does this align or differ from their perspective of Girl Scouts?

Emphasize that Girl Scouts is not just an after-school activity. They are joining a local community, and a national Movement.

- Note that Girl Scouts grows up with their girl, and she can continue through high school and then join our Alum Network. Providing a vision of the Girl Scout journey will help with overall retention.
- Be clear that all parents, caregivers, and adult supporters are encouraged to join this journey with their girls as volunteers. ***Everyone has a role and place in Girl Scouts.***
- Describe the opportunity as a supportive troop leadership or volunteer team – a group of parents/caregivers that all work together to support their girls’ troop – not the traditional burden of one parent being the troop leader.
- Ask the parents if they have special skills or a skill they want to develop further, and then describe the different types of volunteer roles, if time permits. This may also be a good follow-up after the party.
- Give specific examples of Girl Scouts programming based on the shared interests of the parents/caregivers and how the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and Foundational Girl Scout Experience work together for successful outcomes for girls. Share that we are more than just cookies and camping by explaining the type of programming that falls within our four pillars, for example.

### **Questions/Considerations Specific to COVID-19 Pandemic**

- How have you managed your girl(s) schooling and activities?
- Does your girl have access to Internet and a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone at home?
- Are you looking for enrichment and community for your girl(s) online?
- What would be most helpful to you during this time?
- Do you imagine you would want to continue with some virtual programming after the restrictions on in-person meetings are lifted?

### **Closing 5 minutes**

Ask parents/caregivers to rejoin their girls but assure them you will be available to answer questions after the last activity.

- If they are ready to join, direct them to the registration table.
- If they want to learn more, encourage them to participate in another experience (in-person or virtual) including another party, Girl Scouts at Home, or other council events.
- Tell families that you will be following up with them by phone and/or email.
- Be sure to thank every family and stay to answer questions after the official event concludes.