



# World Thinking Day 2024 Activity Guide

Our World, Our Thriving Future:  
The environment and global poverty

Fun activities for Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors.



*“World Thinking Day is a time for [Girl Scouts and Girl] Guides all around the world to stop and think about our sisters; especially those living in poverty, forced to fight in war, or suffering from the impact of a natural disaster.”*

— Rachel, Barbados

Join Girl Scouts and Girl Guides in over 150 countries around the world to make a difference on a global level!

On February 22 of each year, Girl Scouts and Girl Guides celebrate World Thinking Day. Each year has its own theme, such as helping the environment, fighting poverty, achieving gender equality, or making sure everyone has access to education. On this day, Girl Scouts and Girl Guides everywhere will honor their global community by doing activities around this special theme.

**Here are the four steps to earn your World Thinking Day award.**

1. Explore World Thinking Day.
2. Experience World Thinking Day with purpose.
3. Investigate this year’s World Thinking Day theme.
4. Share what you learned and commit to a better future.

Ready to think big and explore meaningful issues in your community and beyond? Let’s get started!



The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) is the largest voluntary movement dedicated to empowering girls and young women in the world.

## STEP 1: Explore World Thinking Day.

World Thinking Day is one of the most popular events in Girl Scouting. Find out how it started, what's changed, and why it's so important!

### Choice 1: Make art about the World Thinking Day story.

With your friends, create a poster, mural, or collage showing the story in three parts and include this year's theme as part four. See **The World Thinking Day Story in Four Parts**.

### Choice 2: Sing "The World Song" and create your own song.

Gather your friends to listen to the video by Melinda Carroll\* or see the activity online here. Sing the song with friends, family, your troop, your community, or at school. You can even create props. For instance, you could draw a flag to hold while singing or tie a ribbon around your group to show unity. You could also take turns singing each line, use hand movements to act out words, or come up with a drumbeat or claps for the rhythm. After you sing "The World Song," create your own song or poem. Make it about this year's World Thinking Day theme. \*Credit: Melinda Carroll Music, <https://www.melindacarrollmusic.com/>

### Choice 3: Write a message for your future.

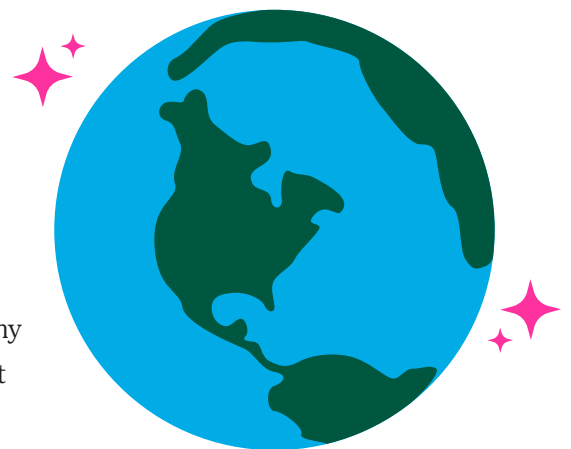
On a piece of paper, write or draw your vision for what you want to happen in the future. Think about things that would make the world a better place, such as:

- ▶ A cleaner planet
- ▶ Education for all girls
- ▶ No more poverty
- ▶ No one goes hungry
- ▶ Clean water for everyone
- ▶ An end to all wars
- ▶ Kindness
- ▶ Healthcare for all people
- ▶ Equal rights for all people

Next, decorate a cardboard paper towel tube using markers, stickers, and any other craft supplies you have. Share your message with your troop, then put it into the cardboard tube. Store it somewhere safe until next year's World Thinking Day. When that time comes, share what you wrote with your Girl Scout friends and family. Why is this vision important to you?



The World Trefoil symbol's background is **blue** to represent the color of the sky. The outer ring's **gold band** represents sunshine. The inside **gold leaves** stand for the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise. There are two **gold stars**: one is for the Girl Scout Promise and the other is for the Girl Scout Law. The center **gold compass** needle is the safeguard between the Promise and Law. The **gold base** underneath the compass is the flame of international friendship.



## STEP 2: Experience World Thinking Day with purpose.

World Thinking Day is more than just thinking. It is knowing that you have the power to make a difference alongside your global community of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides. Create an experience for World Thinking Day that helps you learn more about the world and your place in it.



### **Choice 1: Investigate what's global in your community.**

Plan a field trip with your troop or with a family member to explore what's global in your community. You might discover a parade, fair, exhibit, or festival celebrating culture. Who is participating in this cultural event? Where did the culture originate? Ask someone to help you check calendars in your community center to find an event with a global connection. Or explore your neighborhood to find signs of culture in your community. It might be the food at a restaurant or the practices used at various places of worship, or books for your age group in the library that explore various cultures. Draw or make a list of everything you find and create a journal about what you learned about various cultures.

### **Choice 2: Get to know someone from another culture.**

There are many cultural differences among people who grew up in the United States, and there may be even more between people who grew up in a country outside of the United States. Let's learn! Connect with someone in your community—maybe in your own troop or family—who grew up outside of the United States. Ask if they'll speak to your troop about the culture they were raised in and what it was like coming to a new country. Think of ideas together and invite one or more of these people to a meeting where you can ask questions. Make sure to come up with ideas for questions beforehand. Ask your guest if they can bring something from their culture to show the group, such as a food or a piece of clothing. Is there a special dance or song they can teach you from their home country? Or maybe they can teach you how to say hello or show respect to adults in their culture.

### **Choice 3: Make a personal connection.**

Ask your troop leader to help you find international pen pals to exchange ideas on leadership and how they'll make the world a better place. Have your troop leader browse the WAGGGS member organizations and check individual country websites to research their pen pal programs. You can also spend time with a friend or family member who has traveled to another country or comes from a country outside of the United States. Look on a map to find the country your pen pal, friend, or family member is connected to. Have a conversation to learn what their experience was like living in the country. What foods did they typically eat? What was the common form of transportation? How did they like to spend their weekends? You might find that things are more similar between the two of you than you realized!



## STEP 3: Investigate this year's World Thinking Day theme.

The theme for 2024 World Thinking Day is **Our World, Our Thriving Future: The environment and global poverty**. Choose one of these activities to find out more.

### Choice 1: Find out about Trees of Peace.

Think about your favorite food. Take a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, for example. Where do the ingredients come from? The bread comes from wheat that is grown from the earth. The peanuts come from a plant, too. And the jelly might be made from fruit juice, which comes from fruit grown on land. All of these foods need healthy soil and water to grow. The same is true for all foods that we eat. What happens when our climate changes and we can no longer use land to farm and grow the food we need?

Many women live in places where they farm for their food. They need trees to help keep the land, soil, and water healthy. Without trees, these women can't grow enough food for their families.

Wangari Maathai was an activist who wrote a book called *Wangari's Trees of Peace*. When she was growing up in Kenya, she was surrounded by trees. Many years later, she was shocked to find whole forests being cut down. So, she gathered the women in her community, and they started planting trees together.

Borrow Wangari's book from your local library to read out loud with friends or family. Why do you think it was important for the women of the village to plant trees? What do you think would have happened without the trees?

Then, draw the three stages of growing a tree.

1. Start with the seed. Seeds are different depending on the type of tree. Pine trees, for example, come from seeds from a pinecone. Some seeds are found inside nuts. Some seeds can be big and others small. Draw any seed for your tree!
2. Draw the sprout. Once you've planted your seed in the earth, a tiny stem will pop up with maybe a few leaves. This is a sprout! It's a delicate time for your tree because so many things can happen. It might not have enough water or too much water, there might be a fire, or it might become food for animals and insects. How do you want to protect it?
3. Now draw your tree all grown up! What do the roots look like underground?



## Choice 2: Explore composting and recycling and play a game.

In the United States, we throw away a lot of food scraps and yard waste. When this waste ends up in landfills, the rotting process releases a greenhouse gas that harms the environment.

Composting our food and yard waste is one way to solve this problem. If you put that waste—things such as banana peels, apple cores, carrot tops, tea leaves, and dead flowers—in a compost bin with earthworms, nature will break it down in a way that releases less harmful gas. As a bonus, the waste will also turn into material that can be added to soil to help plants grow. So, not only are you preventing greenhouse gases, you are also reusing the waste for good!

Recycling also keeps trash out of landfills. Recycling turns paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum into new products. This means items like cereal boxes, milk cartons, plastic bottles and bags, paper, and aluminum cans get a whole new life.

Decorate one empty box with a sign reading Compost. Decorate another empty box with a sign reading Recycle. On each box, draw the items that can go inside it.

Then play this game with friends. Draw or write things that can be recycled or composted on small pieces of paper or index cards. Ask friends to take turns picking a card or paper and tossing it into the box where they think it belongs. When you're done, see what's in each box.

## Choice 3: Play a money game to find out what equal pay means.

In many jobs, women are not paid equally to men. Women earn about 80 percent of what a man gets in the United States. This means that for the same work, a man will earn one dollar and a woman will earn 80 cents! And actually, the number is not the same for all women: data suggests that women who are Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islander will earn 93 cents, women who are White/European will earn 83 cents, women who are Black/African-American will earn 70 cents, women who are Latina will earn 65 cents, and women who are Native American/Indigenous will earn 51 cents.

This doesn't just hurt the women, it hurts the whole family because they will have more difficulty paying for their home, food, and basic needs to live.



### Make the Girl Scout Tree Promise

One of the biggest ways that poverty affects the environment is through deforestation, which means when trees are cut down and not replanted and forests are destroyed.

You can help reverse this cycle by spreading the word about how important it is to preserve and care for our trees.

Look at the illustration on top of **The Power of One Tree** meeting aid in this activity packet. This handout shows why trees are important to us. Look at the **Our World, Our Equal Future**, and the **Girl Scout Tree Promise** meeting aid at the end of this packet.

Read the Girl Scout Tree Promise out loud with your Girl Scout troop and then sign it.

When the environment creates hardships for women and girls, equal pay becomes even more important.

Find out what unequal pay looks like. You'll need play money (dollar bills and coins). Use your play money to create these three piles of money:

**Pile 1:** Imagine that a man just got paid \$5 for the same job you did. Put \$5 in pile 1.

**Pile 2:** Count out 80 cents times 5 and put that in pile 2. (You can use a calculator or have an adult help you with the math.) How much do you end up with compared to the man's \$5? You did the same job—does that seem fair?

**Pile 3:** Now put the money that should have been paid in the “company's pile” (pile 3). This would be 20 cents times 5. This is the money the company keeps that should have been fairly paid to you.



## STEP 4: Share what you learned and commit to a better future.

Share what you learned about World Thinking Day with others! Did you connect with someone to learn about their country or culture? Tell your friends about it and share what you discovered. Did you explore something interesting about the World Thinking Day theme? You could share that instead.

### Choice 1: Participate in a World Thinking Day event.

Ask your troop leader to help your group plan an event that can show what you've learned. Think about creating flyers or a poster with the message you want to share. Have food or music from countries you may have learned about. Find creative ways to show your guests the problem you learned about and what some solutions might be. Invite a guest speaker to talk to your group. Reach out to your troop network to find organizations with experience in global issues, especially one that connects to the theme you learned about. Find out from your guest speaker how you can make a difference. What can you do in your home, community, and the world?

### Choice 2: Create a message.

With the help of an adult, come up with a message about what you learned and things you want to see happen to help make a difference. You can draw or write your message in a poster, film it as a video, or create a skit or play about it. Then, with your friends, brainstorm ways you can share your message. For example, you could post it on social media (with an adult's help), present it at school, or display your message in a community center.

### Choice 3: Plan a project.

The best way to help with a problem is to Take Action. First, think about what the problem is. Write it down.

Next, come up with some ideas for ways you and/or your troop can help. Then make a plan to help. This might be a troop Take Action project or one you do on your own.

### Write a Pledge

A pledge is a promise or agreement you make with other people and agree to keep. Come up with a pledge for yourself and your group to sign that honors this year's World Thinking Day theme. Create a pledge using this model:

I join my global community of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides on World Thinking Day.

This year's theme is \_\_\_\_\_

I learned about \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to share what I learned and make a difference by \_\_\_\_\_

Signed, \_\_\_\_\_

When you are done with all four steps, make sure you celebrate! Working with your global Girl Scout and Girl Guide community to explore this year's theme and earn your World Thinking Day award means you've helped make the world a better place.





# The World Thinking Day Story in Four Parts

## **Part 1: A Special Day**

In 1926, Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world met in the United States and created a special day where we can all think of one another and express thanks for our community of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world. They called it Thinking Day. They chose February 22 because it was the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts, and his wife Olave Baden-Powell, who founded the Girl Guides.

## **Part 2: A Birthday Gift**

In 1932, at the 7th World Conference in Buczek, Poland, it was pointed out that since a birthday often involves presents, it would be a good idea to offer gifts on Thinking Day to support Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world. Olave Baden-Powell wrote a letter asking Girl Scouts and Girl Guides to “Send a penny with their thoughts” on Thinking Day.

## **Part 3: World Thinking Day**

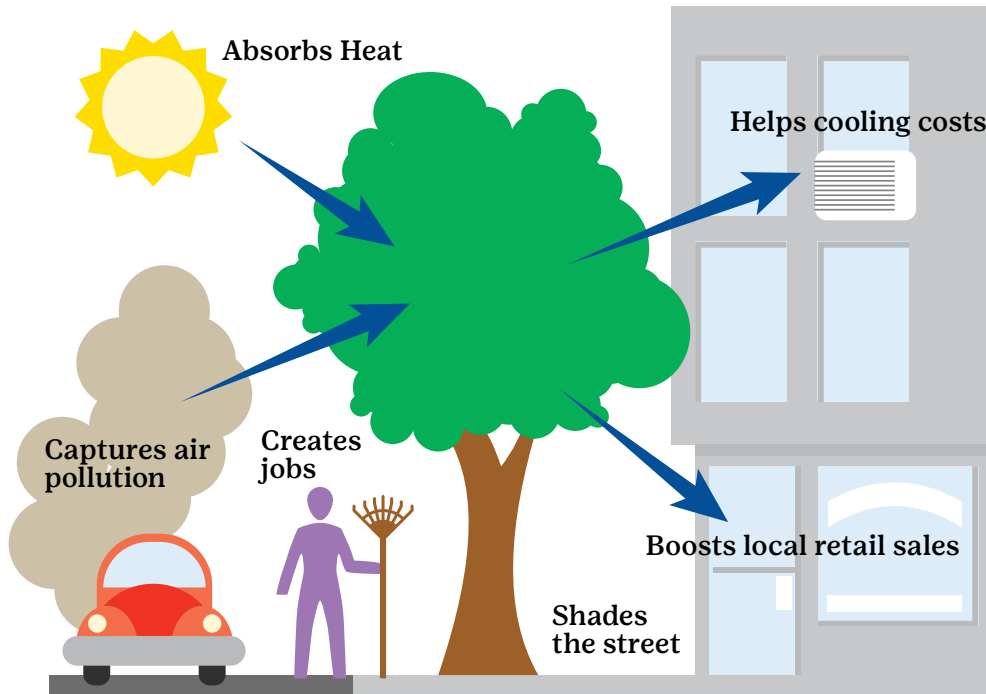
In 1999, at the 30th World Conference in Dublin, Ireland, Thinking Day changed to World Thinking Day as a better name to show our connection with Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the globe.

## **Part 4: Coming Together**

Each year, World Thinking Day focuses on a theme where the whole community of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the globe works together to find ways to help. This year’s theme is *Our World, Our Thriving Future: The Environment and Global Poverty*.



# The Power of One Tree



## Water

- ▶ A tree can capture 10–40% of the rainfall it comes into contact with, depending on species, time of year, and amount of rain that falls in the storm.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Over the course of 20 years, a single red maple tree can intercept 27,000 gallons of rainwater, avoiding 4,800 gallons of runoff.<sup>2</sup>

## Climate

- ▶ A large tree absorbs 40–50 pounds of carbon dioxide—a greenhouse gas that causes global warming—per year.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Over the course of its life, a single tree can capture and store one ton of carbon dioxide.<sup>4</sup>

## Forest Products

- ▶ According to estimates calculated by the University of Maine, one tree can produce around 8,333 sheets of paper.<sup>5</sup> The average office worker uses 10,000 sheets of copy paper each year.<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ “An apple tree can yield up to 15–20 bushels of fruit per year and can be planted on the tiniest urban lot.”<sup>7</sup>

## People

- ▶ A single tree can capture 3.5 pounds of air pollutants—like ozone, dust and particulate matter— per year.<sup>8</sup> Air pollutants like fine particulate matter are a major cause of asthma and other respiratory problems.
- ▶ A mature tree can reduce peak summer temperatures by 2°–9°F.<sup>9</sup>
- ▶ “The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to 10 room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours per day.”<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ “Trees absorb and block noise and reduce glare. A well-placed tree can reduce noise by as much as 40 percent.”<sup>11</sup>
- ▶ A single large tree can produce approximately 260 pounds of oxygen per year.<sup>12</sup>
- ▶ While lifespan varies by species and growing environment, trees generally live to be 50 to 300 years old.
- ▶ The tallest tree in the world is a Coast Redwood named Hyperion, growing in Northern California’s Redwood National Park. It’s 380 feet tall!<sup>13</sup>

## More general facts/facts about more than one tree:

- ▶ In one year, an acre of forest can absorb up to twice the carbon dioxide produced by the average car’s annual mileage.<sup>14</sup>
- ▶ Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning costs by 50%.<sup>15</sup>
- ▶ Trees increase property value of your home by 10–20% and attract new home buyers.<sup>16</sup>
- ▶ Trees can reduce crime and improve perceptions of business districts.<sup>17</sup>
- ▶ One study showed that hospital patients whose rooms had a view of trees recovered more quickly and were less depressed than those looking out at a brick wall.<sup>18</sup>
- ▶ Students with trees outside school windows have higher test scores and graduation rates after controlling for other factors. High school students with more natural features like trees outside classroom and cafeteria windows showed higher standardized test scores, graduation rates, and intention to attend college, after controlling for socioeconomic status and other factors.<sup>19</sup>
- ▶ After a walk in the park or playing in green spaces, children with ADD displayed fewer symptoms.<sup>20</sup>

- ▶ Eight in ten species found on land—that’s over five million and counting—live in forests.<sup>21</sup>
- ▶ More than half of U.S. drinking water originates in forests. Over 180 million Americans in over 68,000 communities rely on forests to capture and filter their drinking water.<sup>22</sup>

*This content was provided by American Forests as a resource for the Girl Scout Tree Promise.*

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1 <https://extension.psu.edu/the-role-of-trees-and-forests-in-healthy-watersheds> 2<https://www.itreetools.org/>

3 <https://www.itreetools.org/>

4 <https://www.itreetools.org/>

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11 [https://www.taketwoenvironmental.com/how\\_trees\\_help\\_the\\_environment](https://www.taketwoenvironmental.com/how_trees_help_the_environment)

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14 <https://www.itreetools.org/>

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16 <https://www.hgtv.com/design/real-estate/increase-your-homes-value-with-mature-trees>

17 Wolf, Kathy. *Journal of Arboriculture* 29(3): May 2003 “Public Response to Urban Forest in Inner-City Business Districts”

18 <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/03/how-nature-resets-our-minds-and-bodies/274455/>

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21 <http://www.wri.org/blog/2015/05/forests-housing-rare-and-endangered-species-lost-12-million-hectares-trees-2001>

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# Our World, Our Equal Future, and the Girl Scout Tree Promise

## **There is a climate crisis.**

The past 10 years have been the warmest in centuries. Because of climate change, we have more natural disasters like wildfires, droughts, hurricanes and floods.

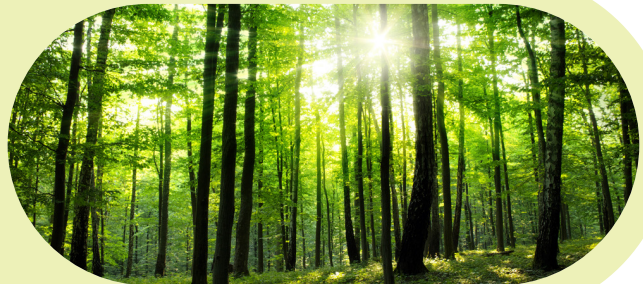


## **The climate crisis has a larger impact on girls and women.**

In general, women spend more time acquiring food, fuel and water, or struggling to grow crops.

## **Trees are one solution to climate change.**

Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere. Trees help stop climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air and storing it in the trees and soil.



## **Girl Scouts are taking the lead in protecting our planet by taking the Tree Promise.**

Our Goal? To plant 5 million trees in five years and to protect and honor new and existing trees. This will help reduce climate change and benefit our communities. Girl Scouts everywhere are being called to action to plant, protect, and honor trees in their backyards, camps, communities, and states—across the country and even across the world.