

Special **W**hatchamacallits **A**ffectionately **P**inned **S**omewhere



Share With A Pal

What Are SWAPS?

Swaps are small crafts that Girl Scouts give as gifts or trade with other scouts. Swaps can be simple or complex, cheap or expensive, whatever the maker desires.

Each girl needs to decide how many swaps she wants to make. This is the same number she will receive. Larger troops may want to make several kinds of swaps so that the girls will have more opportunities to trade. Probably 20 to 30 per girl is a good number to aim for.

Some ideas for swaps will follow. Swaps can be made during a troop meeting, during a special meeting called for the express purpose of making swaps, or examples shown at the meeting, with the swaps to be made at home. One suggestion, which might be helpful for younger girls, is to have a parent/daughter evening to mass produce the swaps in one night. It is important that the SWAPS are made BEFORE you come to camp! Though, it's a good idea to bring materials in case you need to make some extras. Just remember to bring glue, not glue guns!

You can demonstrate some of the ideas below or just provide an assortment of beads, ribbons, felt, pipe cleaners, etc. and let their imaginations run wild. Or you may want to have your group plan a swap and then consider the costs, materials needed, how long it will take, etc. Try to make SWAPS that you would like to receive!

Swaps are usually only an inch or two in size and attach with a safety pin. Traditionally they are pinned on a swap hat. This hat could be part of your troop identification - all a certain color, with troop number decorated on with fabric paints.

On the day of the swap, each girl will come with a baggie (or something) with her swaps in it, and will mingle with other girls, trading her swaps for others that interest her. Hopefully, the swaps will have small safety pins attached and can be pinned to a swap hat or jacket. Leaders may want to come prepared with a few extra swaps for girls who were absent when they were made, etc.

Why swap?? To promote friendship. To learn to talk to other people. To have mementos of a good time. To share our handiwork with other Scouts. Girls on Wider Opportunities and adults at national meetings swap patches and handmade items. These often reflect the area the Scout lives in. Camp swapping is a great background for this. Note: Make sure your SWAPS are rain proof!!!

Swap Ettiquette:

Swapping "do's and don'ts" can vary from council to council, but there are basic rules that everyone should be aware of and follow so there are no hurt feelings.

- S.W.A.P.S. to be traded should be carried in a baggie. S.W.A.P.S. that are pinned to someone's hat/vest are generally considered off-limits unless they are offered to you as a trade.
- Girls are encouraged to trade with a variety of troops. They can POLITELY refuse a SWAP if they already have that SWAP. Please discourage girls from collecting one particular kind of SWAP - it ends up hurting feelings. Encourage them to get the largest variety possible!
- ALWAYS say thank you! A Girl Scout is courteous.
- Always have a few extra S.W.A.P.S. on hand for those people who don't have any. It is also nice if you give someone a S.W.A.P. who doesn't have one to give in return. That is what being a Girl Scout is all about.
- Include the information such as your troop number, city and state on the S.W.A.P. You may also want to mark it with the date or the event name to help identify the S.W.A.P. later on.
- S.W.A.P.S. do not have to be pins. They can be bracelets, necklaces, council patches, event patches, or other small items. S.W.A.P.S. **should NOT contain edible food**. Food items can't be kept as keepsakes and they attract bugs and critters when outdoors.

A Few Ideas For Swaps.....You Can Come Up With More!

- Wooden clothespins, large and small. Painted and made to look like different animals or people. A pin glued to the back.
- Individual “leaves” of a large pinecone can be the head of the animal. Add eyes, then twigs for antlers and you have a deer. A small red pom-pom can turn it into Rudolph.
- Shells—glue eyes on to make shell critters. Or take those natural holes and string them on one end of a piece of yarn. On the other end glue a fish drawn, colored and cut from a construction paper.
- Nuts are great for animals, baskets and many other things.
- “Laminate” (with clear contact paper) nice leaf rubbings and use as swaps.
- S’mores from cut up sections of a box, a square of brown felt and a cotton ball. Glue all together with yarn attached to a pin.
- Pizza made of tan felt with red, yellow and green felt straps glued on.
- Construction paper and typing paper can be folded and cut to make a mini book. Selected stickers can help give it a certain theme.
- Square knot ribbon. Take different colors (for example, Juniors might use blue and green) of ribbon, about 6” long. Tape the ends of the ribbon to a table, and have the girls practice making square knots in them until there is about an inch and a half left. Then tie a small bell on the end. Usually they will get 4-6 knots on the ribbon, and it is a great square knot practice! Change the color to suit the season, etc. You could also do this, but braid the ribbon.
- Glow in the dark.... Glow in the dark stickers on black contact paper on cardboard. Make a circle with cardboard and black paper and put the star and planet glow in the dark stickers on it. Or paint wooden cut outs and decorate with fabric paint—write troop number, name of event, I Love GS, etc. Some fabric paints glow in the dark.
- Small scraps of leather can make tiny saddles, using yarn and pipe cleaners for the stirrups.
- Wooden cut outs—attach eyes, paint, etc.
- Campfire made from cinnamon sticks and red, orange and yellow felt. Mall, rolled logs can also be made from brown grocery bags.
- Pipe cleaners—cut into quarters, wrap yarn around the middle to make a spider. Twist red and white pipe cleaners together to make candy canes. Make wreaths with pipe cleaners and decorate with ribbon, pom-pom or sequins.
- Silk leaf with a rolled pipe cleaner in it to resemble a worm. Wrap a pipe cleaner around a thin paintbrush (pencils work but give fatter worms). Hot glue the worm to the leaf, add eyes and antenna if desired. Glue a pin to the other side.
- Native American—beads threaded on yarn with a small feather tied on the end. Also small strips of brown felt, glued to form headbands. Add a small feather and decorate with fabric paint. Teepee—frame formed with two toothpicks. Triangle of black felt glued to it. Then tan and cream colored felt was wrapped around to form the teepee (it was flat with only two toothpicks). Glue down—brown yarn tied at top to help secure it. Decorate with fabric paint.
- Tiny plastic seasonal shapes available at craft stores—have girls draw faces on them if desired. Attach string to them and to safety pin.
- Mini potpourri using lace, ribbon and potpourri.
- Mini cups of mini champagne glasses. Put several pom-poms in them, a small red pom-pom on top, and a section of plastic straw to create a sundae.
- Felt trefoils with troop number written in fabric paint.
- Pom-pom critters. Add eyes, feet and antenna if desired. Add beak and feathers for a bird, flippers for a seal, a trunk for an elephant....
- Bottle caps can be glued to the flip top part of an aluminum can and spray painted black to resemble a cast iron skillet. Pin goes on the bottom, and felt can be used to put food in the skillet.
- Use netting and yarn to make a mini dunk bag. Cut the netting in circles and have girls thread yarn through the top to make a drawstring. Maybe you could create mini dishes to put inside.
- Mini baskets filled with tiny pom-poms to look like an Easter basket. Or put small flowers in it.
- Eyelet trim (inch and a half wide), cut into sections and glued to white ribbon makes a cute apron.
- Make friendship pins with beads on a safety pin.
- Felt pennants with activity name and date on them.
- Mini sit upons made from vinyl with plastic lacing.
- Puzzle pins painted in hot colors, sealed with iridescent colors sprinkled on them.
- Peanut trolls with pin on back

How Did Swaps Originate?

Swaps are sometime referred to as *potlatch*. Potlatch is the ceremonial exchange of gifts practiced by Native Americans of Northwest Coast tribes. The custom stems from the legend explaining why birds have colored feathers.

As the story goes, two Indian girls plucked feathers of a magic bird and distributed the multicolored plumage to the colorless birds living in the forest. From that time on, birds have had brightly colored feathers, and those gifts were remembered at potlatch ceremonies.

Families were summoned to the potlatch by a messenger carrying a bundle of sticks representing the number of people to be invited. The ceremony included speeches, songs, dances, games, races and refreshments. The host and members of his family were costumed and enacted legends about their heritage.

The gift giving came last of all, just before the guest departed. Since potlatch gifts were symbols of the family's status in the village, they were often quite elaborate, often being carved boxes, canoes, dishes, jewelry, mats and baskets. The potlatch ceremony was given to commemorate the births, deaths, marriages or coming of age or members of the group.