



## Ideas for Girls Empowerment

### Camps and Workshops

#### ❖ Girls Leading Our World Camp

Organize a girl's camp and begin each day by leading different exercises in self-care techniques: activities can range from yoga to aerobics to kickboxing. During the day the campers can participate in interactive sessions on topics such as self-esteem, values, goal-setting and team building.

Begin the camp by creating creative self-portraits using all different materials.

\*One idea is to have the girls depict their relationship with nature using everything from dirt to paint.

Conclude the days with different social events such as evenings, such as sing-alongs, bonfires, or talent shows.

#### ❖ Self Esteem Exercises:

Objective: Motivate girls to continue studying and learning, to be leaders in their communities, and to empower them to care for their personal health.

Lead a skit showing how one's self-esteem can easily be torn down. Next have the girls make a list of five things that they could not do, such as "I cannot dance." Then, have the girls tear up their lists and throw them to the ground. This will help the girls see that they can do almost anything they want if they put their minds to it. To conclude the exercise have the girls write their names on a big sheet of paper and a positive adjective describing themselves with each letter of their name.

#### ❖ Good Communication Skills Exercise:

Have a volunteer start speaking by using "horrible public speaking skills." The rest of the girls have to help her change so that she can be a better speaker.

Then have the girls break up into groups, give each group a topic to prepare and then present their topic using good communication skills.

The second part of this class is centered on good listening skills. Have two girls do two skits. The first should illustrate poor listening skills and the second exemplified good listening skills.

❖ Setting Goals Exercise:

Objective: How to set and realize goals.

Begin by having the girls make a human knot and try to figure out how to unravel themselves. Next lead the girls in a visualization activity. Each girl should close her eyes and picture where she wants to be in 1, 5, 15, and 20 years. Then have the girls draw pictures of these goals and begin thinking about the steps necessary to get there.

❖ Confidence Workshop:

Objective: Increasing girls' self-confidence and motivation in school.

Invite several prominent women from the community to be guest speakers. Have the women described their education, as well as their previous and present jobs.

Have the girls define issues or problems that they would like to discuss. Then break into groups by issue, with each discussion being led by one or two senior high school students. Give the girls time to discuss openly, everyone reassembled and have each group appoint a spokesperson to share the main points and conclusions of her group's discussion.

Discussion topics often include the particular problems faced by girls at a day school, ways to resist sexual pressure from boys, and the problem of parents who choose to educate their sons over their daughters. End the day by teaching and performing songs about women's issues and empowerment with the girls.

## Gender Roles

❖ Gender Discussion:

The girls make a list of things they thought only males could do or only females could do. They then list characteristics of females and characteristics of males. Have the facilitators explain the difference between the terms 'gender roles' and 'sex.' Let the girls discuss if they think society places gender roles on everyone, and if everyone has to comply with these gender roles.

❖ Gender Mending Exercise:

1. With a group of boys and girls begin by asking them to set ground rules--rules that everyone can agree upon and that will create a safe and confidential environment.
2. Next separate the genders (let the participants join the group in which they identify with). Choose someone to be the scribe and on separate pieces of paper have the girls write everything they like about being a girl, and everything they dislike about being a girl. Have the boys do the same.
3. After they are finished making their lists, give each participant a piece of paper and have them write an anonymous question to the opposite gender.
4. Join the boys and girls back together and have volunteers from each side read the others lists to the group. Ask them if anything on each others list surprises them and why.
5. Have the facilitators read the anonymous questions out-loud to the group and let the members answer to their own comfort level.

## Sports

- ❖ Organize an all girls sports team. Teach the girls the rules of the game, and set a practice time.

As you work with a team, consider taking time to chat about range of girls' issues such as good health and nutrition, dealing with relationships, or the importance of in staying school. Your influence as coach can extend to much more than the girls' athletic achievement and confidence building.

### Some Other Great Activities!

- Climbing hills and mountains—combined with journal writing, singing, environmental awareness, reflection.
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Biking trips
- Volleyball
- Netball
- Basketball
- Baseball
- Softball
- Swimming
- Tae Kwon do

## Education

### Tips for Teachers, Staff and Administrators on Ways to Encourage Girls in the Classroom

- Encourage girls to assume positions of responsibility such as mentors, peer advisors, prefects, or student government representatives.
- Work carefully with girls in positions of responsibility to assist them in becoming positive role models.
- Be sure that both female and male students share the cleaning and maintenance duties in school and that all jobs are rotated regularly.
- Consider responsibilities that girls may have at home when devising the school schedule and the term calendar.
- Be aware of personal problems that your students may be having. Find out what you can do to assist girls with their special needs.
- Encourage participation in extracurricular activities. Sports and clubs provide opportunities to build relationships and develop self-esteem. Show an equal degree of support to girl's athletics.
- Encourage the school to be used as a resource for out-of-school girls.
  - 1) In Mali, a "Second Chance School" is held during summer recess and allows girls who were held out of school for one or more years to acquire the educational background to resume classes in the next school year.
  - 2) Ghana's "School for Life" program promotes education in the local language at night for children who work on their families farms during the day.
- Visit female students and their families at home. Talk to families about their daughters' potential and ways that they can support and encourage them.
- Support female teachers in modeling competence, leadership, respect, and self-esteem.
- Identify areas where gender bias is occurring and initiate discussions with staff members and students.

## Clubs, Business and Career Building Activities

### ❖ Clubs:

Create membership cards for the girls in a club with a simple computer design and printout. You and the girls will feel a sense of pride to be members and to display the card, and you will also have a formal way to welcome new members to the club.

### ❖ Girls Magazine:

Have girls participate in writing and designing their own magazine to distribute. Get them to create the art, articles, design and format of the magazine. Invite members of the community to participate as well.

### ❖ Business Ideas:

Teach girls how to start a small business, such as a baking club. Each evening they could bake cakes to sell to students and teachers during the next day's break. Have the girls create a budget, lists of ingredients and calculate how much money they would need to make to make a profit. In addition to raising money, they are also learning basic business management skills.

### ❖ Girls Can Do Anything Activity!

#### **Objective:**

1. To get the girls to think about all the possible careers open to them.
2. To create a banner as a memento of the workshop.

**Materials:** paper, pens, cloth for the banner (bed sheet or large piece of canvas), marking pens, paint, newspapers, materials for clean-up

#### **Activity:**

This is a brainstorming activity and an art activity combined into one. First, the girls are divided into groups and challenged to come up with at least 100 different careers or jobs that a woman can have. When a group completes the list, each of its members is invited to dip her hand in paint and put her hand print on a banner that says "Girls Can Do Anything!" Below her hand print she writes any one of the 100 careers from the list and signs her name below it.

#### **Ask the participants:**

- What do you want to do when you finish school?
- How did you decide?

- Who are your role models?

#### Other Activities:

- Jewelry making
- Selling art products to community
- Language lessons
- Journal writing
- Making a scrapbook of event by participants
- Drawing experiences

#### Additional Resources

New Moon: The Magazine for Girls and Their Dreams, New Moon Publishing, Inc.

New Moon is an international magazine for girls who want to express their ideas and dreams. Girls ages 8 to 14 and girl contributors from all over the world edit or contribute to the magazine. New Moon celebrates girls, explores the passage from girl to woman, and builds healthy resistance to gender inequities. Subscriptions available by accessing the New Moon website: [www.newmoon.org](http://www.newmoon.org).

#### Works Cited

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