



Girl Guides
of Canada
Guides
du Canada

Be You

Brownies Program





Brownies Be You Challenge

The Be You Challenge is designed to help girls become more self-confident while building their self-esteem. Girls will develop a better understanding of body image pressures from media and society while learning skills and strategies that will have a lifelong impact on their wellbeing.

As you and your unit plan your Be You meeting(s), review the activities and decide which ones are suitable and of interest. Then you can mix and match activities to create your unit meeting. Each theme offers a variety of choices. **Girls should complete at least one activity from each theme – three activities in total – to earn the Be You Crest.** Activities have been created specifically for each branch taking into consideration the age, maturity and developmental level of the girls at that age range. However, Guiders should feel free to use/modify/adapt the activities from other branches for activities that may also be suitable for the specific group of girls they are working with.

For this Challenge, starter and closing activities have been included, which you can integrate into your normal opening and closing. Additional reference materials are in the Guider Backgrounder. Some activities might require you to collect additional materials.

Throughout the Challenge, suggested questions and conversation starters are included to prompt further discussion. These conversations will be important indicators to help you assess experiences the girls had with each activity and help to connect the experience to the broader theme. It is important to debrief whenever possible to ensure the girls have an improved understanding and have a chance to reflect on their experiences.



Don't forget to share what you are doing in the Be You Challenge by telling us about your participation in the program and sharing photos with us on social media using **#BeYou** and the following tags:



Girl Guides of Canada



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Look for the **OUTDOOR** icon throughout this Challenge. This icon identifies activities that can easily be done outdoors with little or no modifications.



≡ **BEGIN** the Challenge with this Starter Activity ≡

Starter Activity – For Girls?

Girls at this age have an image of who they are, especially in relation to their peers and the significant women in their lives. This includes their strengths and abilities, and not just what they look like. However, they also hear messages about who they should be because they are “a girl,” which can cause them to question themselves.

Materials:

- Headings written on paper:
 - Girls _____
 - For Girls
- Sticky notes
- Markers/pens/pencils
- Tape



After you have opened the meeting, have the girls share ways to describe “girls” and things that are “for girls.” Discuss with them how many people have different ideas about what makes a girl a *girl*. This can be based on what they think and what they have heard or seen in the media, society, or from other people. Give the girls four to six sticky notes and ask them to write one or two words on each one that describe the two headings. If they need further prompting, they could fill in the following blanks:

- Girls have _____
- Girls can _____
- Girls act _____
- Girls are _____

Have the girls stick their words under each heading and group together sticky notes with the same words on it. Read out the words that the girls chose, focusing on the words that appear most frequently.

Ask them to explain why they chose those words:

- What words did you choose? Why do you think you chose those words?
- What do the words chosen make you feel?
- Why do you think that so many girls picked a certain word?
- What do these words have in common?

After you debrief, leave the words up since they will be coming back to these lists.



≡ **CONTINUE** the Challenge by selecting one activity from each of the themes. ≡

Theme 1 – Media, Society and Me

Be You–nique: In the face of pressures

Recent research from the University of Ontario Institute for Technology (UOIT) and the University of Washington has found that self-esteem appears to play a critical role in how children form their social identities. This can start as early as the age of five. When girls are constantly bombarded with messages from society and the media about who they should be, girls can feel pressure to conform to unrealistic expectations that can lead to an unhealthy sense of self. Societal change is slow moving, though possible. Key to this change will be for girls to confront these pressures so that they embrace that which makes them “you-nique.”

Objective:

- Girls will work to develop an understanding that messages from media and society can set unrealistic expectations for girls and women.

Outcomes:

- Girls will develop an understanding that there is a link between the messages sent through media and pressures from society to conform.
- Girls will develop awareness that there are differences between “real life” and what they see or hear from the media, including stereotypes.
- Girls will build skills in spreading body positive messages, such as “Every Body is a Good Body.”

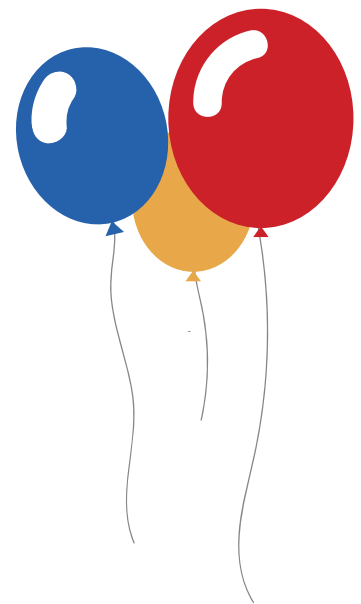
Theme Activities: Finding Support

(Modified from the game “Boop” from Playmeo.com)

Pressure to look and act a certain way can come in many forms for Brownie-aged girls. Although pressure may seem like an abstract concept in their life, girls are experiencing it every day.

Materials:

- Balloons (two per group)
- Permanent Markers (to write on the balloons so it does not smear or rub off)





Bring the girls together as a group. Ask them a few questions to help them identify some of the pressures in their lives:

- How do you choose what to do/play with?
- Do you ever decide to do something based on what someone else says or thinks? Why?
- How do you choose what you are going to do at recess or after school?
- How do you feel when you are participating in competitive activities (such as sports, dance, chess, spelling bee, etc.)?

TIP: The Kids Health Organization describes peer pressure in this way:

“Making decisions on your own is hard enough, but when other people get involved and try to pressure you one way or another it can be even harder. People who are your age, like your classmates, are called peers. When they try to influence how you act to get you to do something it’s called **peer pressure**. It’s something everyone has to deal with — even adults.” <http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/peer-pressure.html>

As the girls are answering these questions, have them write some of the words that come up from their discussion on the balloons and make a pile in the middle of the group. The balloons represent the pressures they feel in their lives. Possible words may include: family, friends, television shows, etc., and they can be repeated so every balloon has at least one word.

Once they have put the words on the balloons, divide the girls into groups of six to eight. One girl from each group is chosen to be the support person. The rest of the girls will make a circle with their hands palm-to-palm or their fingers laced. The support person stands outside the circle with the balloon. She will throw one balloon into the circle. The girls must try to keep the balloon from touching the ground, using any part of their bodies. They must keep their hands touching/or their fingers laced at all times. The support person can help them when the balloon escapes from the circle. Once they have played the game successfully with one balloon, the support person throws in the second balloon so that they are now trying to keep both balloons in the air. If a balloon hits the ground or when two minutes has passed, change the support person so the girl playing support has a chance to be in the circle, too. Play for as long as girls are interested or time permits.

After the girls have played the game, bring them back together as a group and use the discussion questions below to debrief. Preface the discussion by reminding the girls about the earlier discussion including how they may feel pressure from other people to do certain things. You can ask the girls about their experience in the game:

- What different types of pressure did you feel in the game? (*For example, pressure to keep balloons in the air, hands pressing against each other, not wanting to let the group down, etc.*)
- Why do you think this game was more challenging when there were two balloons thrown in?
- How was the support person able to help you in this game? Who are some support people in your life that can help you when you feel pressure?



#LikeAGirl: Crush Those Stereotypes

(Modified from the Always Social Media #LikeAGirl campaign)

When girls are told that they cannot do something *because they are a girl*, they feel boxed-in. These feelings can lead girls to question themselves and by the time they hit puberty they may no longer want to try new things or take risks. In this activity, girls will identify some stereotypes about being a girl.

Materials:

- Chart paper
- Boxes (two per girl) — box template (page 19)
- Markers/crayons/pencil crayons
- Tape or glue
- Scissors

As a unit, have a discussion about the things they have heard about being a “girl”. As they share their thoughts make notes on the chart paper so they can return to the list. You can also refer to the words that they shared in the Starter Activity. To prompt this discussion you can ask:

- Have you been told you shouldn't do something because you are a girl? What was it?
- When you are reading stories, who is usually the hero? Why might that be a problem?
- In what ways are you told how girls should act?
- What kinds of messages do you get about how girls should act?
- How do you feel when someone tells you that you cannot do something because you are a girl?



Give each girl a box template and in one of the squares have them pick something from the list that makes them feel unhappy or angry. Have them write the words or draw a picture of this/these things on the outside of the template. Once they have drawn their images or written the words, have them construct their boxes. They do not have to be perfect because the girls will be destroying them. To construct the boxes, have the girls fold along each of the lines to create the walls of the cube with the words on the outside. When all the walls are folded up, the girls can use the tabs on the side to hold it together with tape or glue.

After folding their boxes, have the girls hold them on the palm of their hand, and have a few of them share what they put on their boxes. Ask them:

- How do you feel when you hear all those things?
- What would you like to do to that box?

Once they have shared their thoughts and feelings, give them the opportunity to crush that box! Tell them that by crushing that box they are crushing all those bad feelings and thoughts and saying “I am strong and I can do anything.” You can have them say or shout that expression while they are crushing their boxes or afterwards.



They can either keep their boxes to remind them that they are strong, or throw it in the recycling to get rid of the negativity.

TIP: If you have a large group or you would like to simplify the activity, you can bring in small boxes and the girls can write or draw on them instead. They will crush them under their foot instead of with their hands.

Next, have the girls create a new box. Ask them:

- What CAN girls do? (*Anything!*)
- Can girls do the same things that boys can do? Can boys do the same things that girls can do?
- What is something that makes you feel strong?

Add the positives the girls suggest to the list. Have the girls write good things on their new box. As a unit, use each girl's individual positive boxes to build a wall of all their strengths so they can see how they are strong, supportive, and have the support of the others in their unit.

Words That Help

This activity gives girls the opportunity to see the effects of their words and the importance of thinking and speaking positively.

Materials:

- Construction paper
- A large smiley face drawn on chart or craft paper
- Painters tape or masking tape



Show your unit the paper smiley face and explain to the girls that when they hear things that are negative about themselves, it hurts their happiness. Ask them to share some things they have heard about themselves or others that were hurtful. These comments may be about their abilities (such as "I don't run as fast as my sister") or about their physical appearance ("you're too short").

Pass the smiley face around. For each negative comment said, have the girls rip a piece off and hold on to it. If you run out of smiley face before everyone in your unit rips off a piece, they can make their tear from another girl's piece. When the smiley face is in pieces, show them how negative comments and thoughts can leave someone feeling like they are in pieces.



Look at the pieces and tell the girls that they can change their words to help repair the torn face. Revisit some of the negative things that the girls may have said, and have them make suggestions for how to find the positive. For instance:

- If they say “I don’t run as fast as my sister” have them list something that they do well.
- If they make a comment about height, have them find a positive about being that size.
- If they make a comment about being smart, have them list something that they can do that shows intelligence in a different way.

Write every positive comment on a piece of tape and have the Brownies repair the torn face together — like a jigsaw puzzle. When all the pieces are taped back together hold it up for everyone to see and ask:

- Is the smiley face the same as when they started? What has happened to it?

Give the girls some time to discuss how even though they have replaced the hurtful words with positive words, the person will never be exactly the same. It is important to be careful what they are saying about their bodies and minds.





THEME 2 – Accepting Myself

Be You–rself: Accepting yourself and your choices

In order to build self-esteem, girls must first develop self-acceptance by embracing everything that makes them who they are, including their differences and perceived flaws. One way that girls can develop self-acceptance is by owning the wonderful things that make them special and celebrating their abilities. Making decisions and choices in aspects of their lives can help girls to feel empowered, building their self-esteem and acceptance. With the necessary tools, they can feel empowered by this independence.

Objective:

- Girls will develop self-acceptance and become more confident in the choices they make in their lives.

Outcomes:

- Girls will build self-acceptance.
- Girls will acknowledge that they have different types of choices in their lives and that even making small decisions for themselves can have a positive impact on their sense of self.
- Girls will accept the idea that everyone is unique and deserves respect regarding their lifestyle and appearance choices.

Theme Activities: Self-Esteem Shield

(Modified from the Self-Esteem Shield activity found on “The Corner on Character” blog by Barbara Gruener)¹

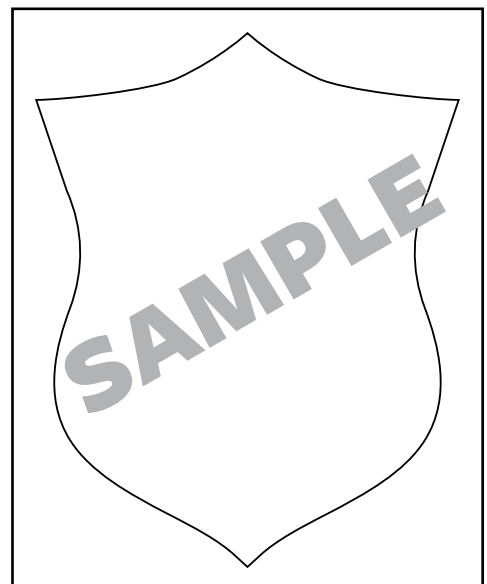
This activity gives the girls a strategy for shielding themselves from negativity.

Materials:

- Shield template (page 20)
- Crayons/markers/coloured pencils

As a unit, have a discussion with the girls about different aspects of their lives. Prompt the girls by asking them to share something that makes them feel:

- Pride/proud of
- Happy
- Strong
- Confident/positive



¹ <http://corneroncharacter.blogspot.ca/>



Once they have shared some of the positive forces in their lives ask them to share some of the negative forces or feelings. The girls can be prompted to share something that makes them feel:

- Worried
- Afraid
- Sad
- Upset/unsettled

Ask them to describe how they felt when they were sharing the positive things in their life and have them compare it to how they felt when they were talking about some of the negative things in their life. The girls may use simple language with good and bad descriptors and you can prompt them to think about how their body was responding as well:

- How does your stomach feel when you think about the positive things? Is it calm or does it feel jumpy? How does it feel when you think about the negative things?
- How does your face change when you are thinking about the negative things? How does it feel between your eyebrows and on your cheeks? Think about the positive things you listed – how does your face change?

Explain to the girls that when they think about positive things it can help their bodies to feel more relaxed and confident. Since it is not always easy for girls to keep the positive things in their mind, they are going to be making shields of positive thoughts to help them when they are experiencing negativity. Give each girl a shield template and have them draw their first initial in the middle (make it big and powerful!). Once they have their initial on their shield they can start decorating their shields with positive imagery or words including:

- Things they like to do or that make them happy
- Words that make them feel happy
- The people in their lives who help them feel strong
- Things they are proud of
- Something that they worked really hard on



The girls can also pass their shields around to have other members of their Brownie circles add decorations and positive messages. Have them share their shields with each other, and explain what the messages mean to them. Suggest to girls that they take their shields home and hang them in their room so that they are ready to defend them at all times.

TIP: You can have the girls use their shield in a role play. Using some of the things they shared from the negative discussion, have them protect themselves using their shields and suggest how some of the thoughts they included can help them in that situation. You can also remind the girls that when they are feeling upset or hurt they can also talk to the people in their lives who make them feel strong and supported.



Making Choices – Brownies

When girls are given choices – even small choices like what activity they will participate in – it increases their independence and confidence.

Materials:

- The materials needed vary depending on which choices you make available to the girls.
- Active games can take place outdoors as well
- Guiders should set up stations in advance to show the choices.

In this activity give the girls two options for a short 10-to-20 minute activity that will be completed with a small group such as:

- Singing their favourite songs
- Playing a circle game
- Colouring
- Doing a small craft
- Playing an active game
- Doing a physical activity

Each girl will have the choice of which activity they would like to do for this part of the meeting and what group they will be part of. After they have completed the activity bring all the girls together to ask them about their experiences. Possible discussion prompts include:

- Why did you choose that activity?
- How did it feel to have a choice in what activity you would do?
- What type of small choices do you have at home, at school, with friends?
- When you are making the small choices in your life, what else influences you?
- What happens when you have too many choices to make?
- How do you feel when you do not have choices in your life?
- How does making your own decision help you to be yourself?



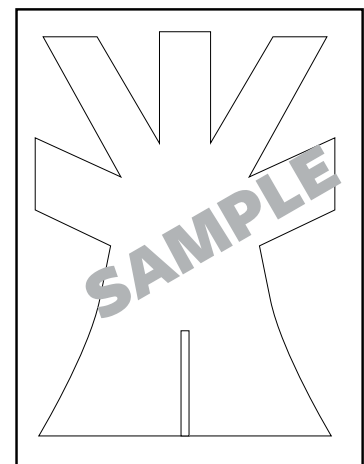
All About Me Trees

(Modified from Lakeshore Learning's "Self-Esteem Tree")

In this activity, girls will be creating a 3D tree covered in positive thoughts.

Materials:

- Brown foam or brown cardboard
- Tree tracing template (page 21)
- Base tracing template (page 22)
- Leaf tracing template (page 23)
- Coloured foam or coloured construction paper
- Scissors
- Markers/pencils/pens
- Glue/tape





TIP: You may find that the having the trees and leaves cut out ahead of time will make this activity more manageable. Ensure that the each girl receives one trunk, one base, and enough leaves so she can write a comment for each member of the unit on a separate leaf. For instance, if you have 15 girls in your unit, you will need 15 trunks, 15 bases, and 225 leaves. For larger units, you can also substitute the tree for a wreath.

Before the girls start their trees, ask them to list the possible talents or positive personality traits that can be used to describe someone. Examples may include:

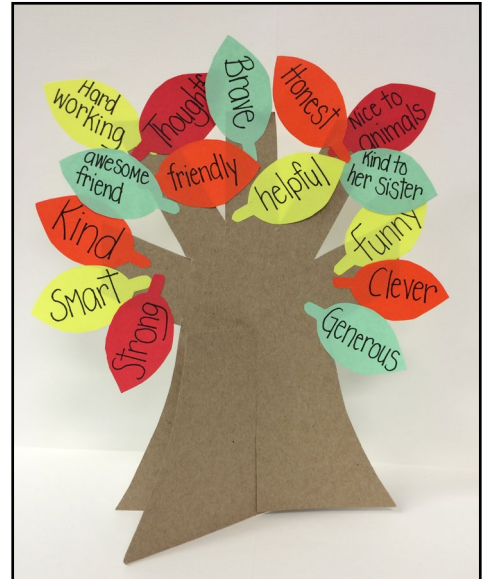
- Always tries her best
- Caring
- Smart
- Shares
- Fast runner
- Strong

Guiders can write down their words so the girls can refer back to their list while they are doing the activity.

Give each girl the two pieces of the tree you've prepared from the appendix. After the trunk and base are cut out, have the girls write their names on the trunk. The girls then assemble their trees by sticking the little piece horizontally through the cut in the bottom of the tree to make an x-shaped base.

After constructing their trees, give the girls enough leaves so they can leave a comment on everyone's tree. The girls will travel around the room with their pile of leaves. At each tree, they should write something kind about that person on one of their leaves and leave it under the tree.

Once they have written something kind about each girl, they return to their tree and find a pile of leaves waiting. As they read the comments, they should stick them on the branches of their own tree using glue or tape — like a reverse autumn! When they are finished gluing on their leaves, invite them to share how it made them feel to read all those nice things about themselves. You can also ask them to think of a place in their home that they can “plant” their tree so they can see it every day. For example, they may want to “plant” it on their dresser so they see these positive things while they are getting ready in the morning.





THEME 3 – My Balanced Life

BE true to YOU: Taking care of yourself

Balance is key to having a healthy life – a balance between rest and play, between being social and being on your own, in the foods you eat, in the activities you do, etc. But finding balance is often a struggle for girls. Although girls won't always have a say in their overall family decisions and lifestyles, becoming more aware of the importance of achieving balance will benefit them both now and as they grow since they will learn to recognize it as a priority for a healthy lifestyle.

Objective:

- Girls will learn that a healthy lifestyle is about finding a balance between the social, emotional, and physical aspects of their lives.

Outcomes:

- Girls will understand what balance can look like in their life.
- Girls will develop the courage to try new things.
- Girls will develop the knowledge that a time for both rest and activity is necessary and that there can be fun in both.



Theme Activities:

Body Cues

In this activity, the girls are going to practice listening to their bodies while they are active.

Materials:

- None

As a unit, explain that sometimes we may think we know everything about ourselves and what our bodies can do. Ask the girls some of the ways their body tells them things. You can ask:

- How do you know when you are thirsty?
- How do you know when you have stretched far enough?
- How do you know when you are tired?
- How do you know when you need to be active?

Now give the girls a chance to test out some of their body cues. As they try the activities suggested below, have them listen to their bodies and choose when to stop pushing their bodies. Possible activities include:

- How high can you reach?
 - How does your body tell you that you have reached as far as possible? (*Their arms may feel a stretch, if they went on tiptoes they may feel it in their calves.*)



- Can you lick your elbow?
 - How does your body tell you that you have reached far enough?
- How long can you jump up and down?
 - How do you know your body needs you to stop and rest?
- Have a staring contest with a partner. Try not to blink – but you can laugh all you want!
 - How did your eyes tell you that they needed you to blink?

After the girls have tried some of the activities, they can share some of the things that their bodies can do and have the other girls try them too.

- What did you notice about your body during these activities?
- What types of things do you need to listen for to make sure your body is feeling at its best?

In the Corners

This game relies on an activity and rest cycle to help reinforce to girls that rest and activity can come in spurts.



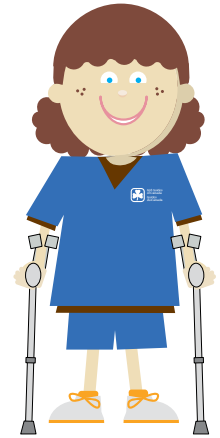
Materials:

- None

Number the corners of the room (1, 2, 3, 4) and have one girl stand in the middle facing corner number 1. She closes her eyes and counts to 10. As she is counting, the rest of the girls quietly walk or run to one of the corners. When the girl in the middle finishes counting, she listens carefully and tries to guess which corner has the most girls standing there. When she makes her decision, she calls out the corner and a physical activity. The object of the game is to get as many girls moving as possible. Possible actions can include:

- Three jumping jacks
- Hop on one foot for ten seconds
- Reach over your head four times

The one in the middle can pick someone from the active corner to take her place and the game is repeated as time permits. She counts to 10 and the girls all scramble to find a new corner or stay still in the corner they are already in. A variation of this game is that the girls who are in the active corner leave the game to sit and relax on the sidelines. The person in the middle keeps guessing until only one person is left.





Afterwards, bring them together and ask them:

- Where was the rest in this game? How was it rest? (*When the girls are sitting or standing quietly, they were resting while they wait. The girls in the corners that were not picked are also resting because they are not moving around.*)
- How did you feel after you had to do one of the activities or change corners? Could you feel your heart beat faster?
- How do you feel when you have too much activity? How do you feel when you have not had enough activity?
- How do you feel when you do not have enough rest? How does it affect your day if you do not get enough rest?
- What are some of the positive impacts on your body, mind, and feelings/mood when you have a good or not so good balance of rest and activity?

After the discussion, everyone can sit on the floor and take a deep breath in and out to help them relax and rest after the game. To deepen the breaths, the girls can silently count to seven while they are breathing in and again when they are breathing out.

Connecting with Nature Hike – Brownies



Materials:

- None

Use this activity to take the girls on a five-senses hike, where the girls walk slowly and silently, paying careful attention to the world around them. You may want to prompt them every few minutes to listen to the noises around them, or touch something, or breathe deeply and smell the air. They can also have a little snack or drink along the way.



TIP: Remind the girls as they are hiking that they should not pick any of the plants and should be careful where they are stepping. A message such as “Take only photos and leave only footprints” can be shared with the girls prior to the hike.

After they have finished their hike, ask the girls about their experiences:

- What did you notice about the space around you while you were hiking?
- What did you notice about your body while you were hiking?
- How was this activity restful?
- How was this activity energizing?



- How do you feel when you have too much activity? How do you feel when don't have enough activity?
- How do you feel when you do not have enough rest? How does it affect your day if you did not get enough rest?
- What are some of the positive impacts on your body, mind, and feelings/mood when you have a good or not so good balance of the two?

TIP: For those that do not have access to an outdoor space to complete this activity, you can adapt it in a number of ways:

- Bring items from nature (e.g. leaves and stones) to the meeting and give the girls the opportunity to see, smell and touch the items.
- Take them on a story hike. Walk them around the space and describe to them what is happening or what they might see. Have the girls contribute the details.





≡ **CONCLUDE** the Challenge with the following Closing Activity. ≡

Closing Activity – For THIS Girl

Materials:

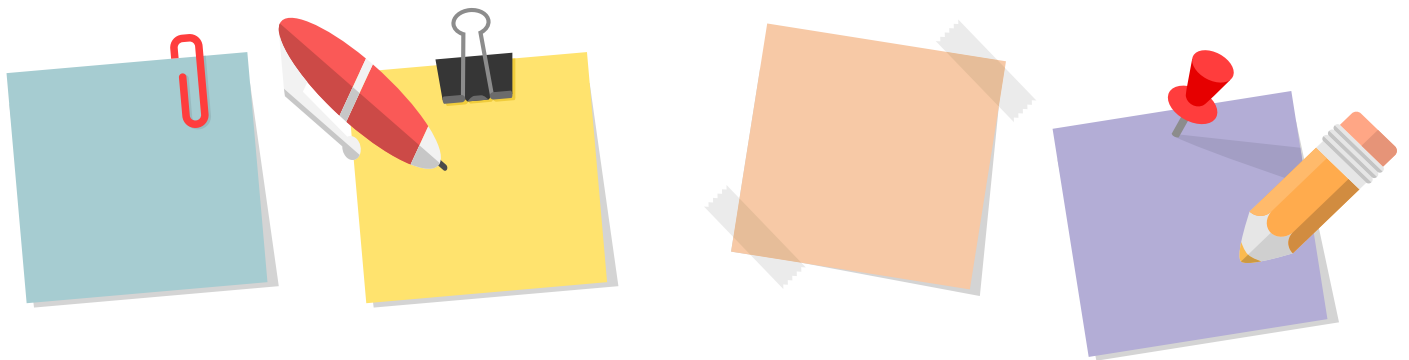
- Sticky notes
- Markers/pens/pencils

At the end of the meeting, have the girls come back to the list they made in the starter activity. Ask them:

- What would you change about the type of things that are *for girls*?
- In real life, do all girls need to like the same things or do the same things?

Give the girls more sticky notes and ask them to change the lists. They can add new words or decide as a unit to take down words. Ask the girls about the choices they made:

- What did you change? Why did you change it?
- How do the choices you make every day make YOU feel good about who you are?
- What can you do to make yourself feel good every day?
- What is your favourite thing about “YOU”?





Appendix

Theme 1: Media, Society and Me

Box Template 19

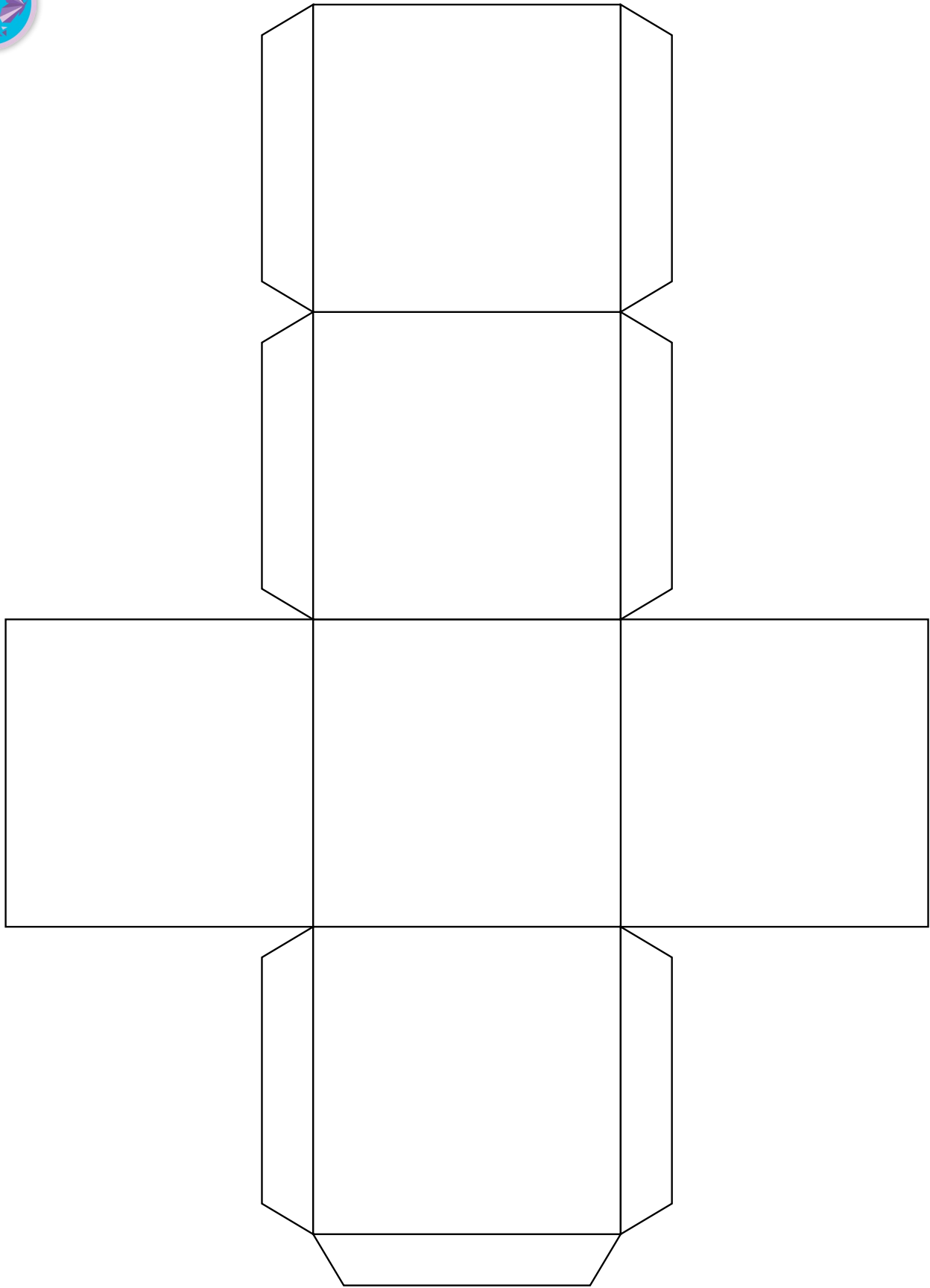
Theme 2: Accepting Yourself and Your Choices

Shield Template 20

Tree Tracing Template 21

Base Tracing Template 22

Leaf Tracing Template 23

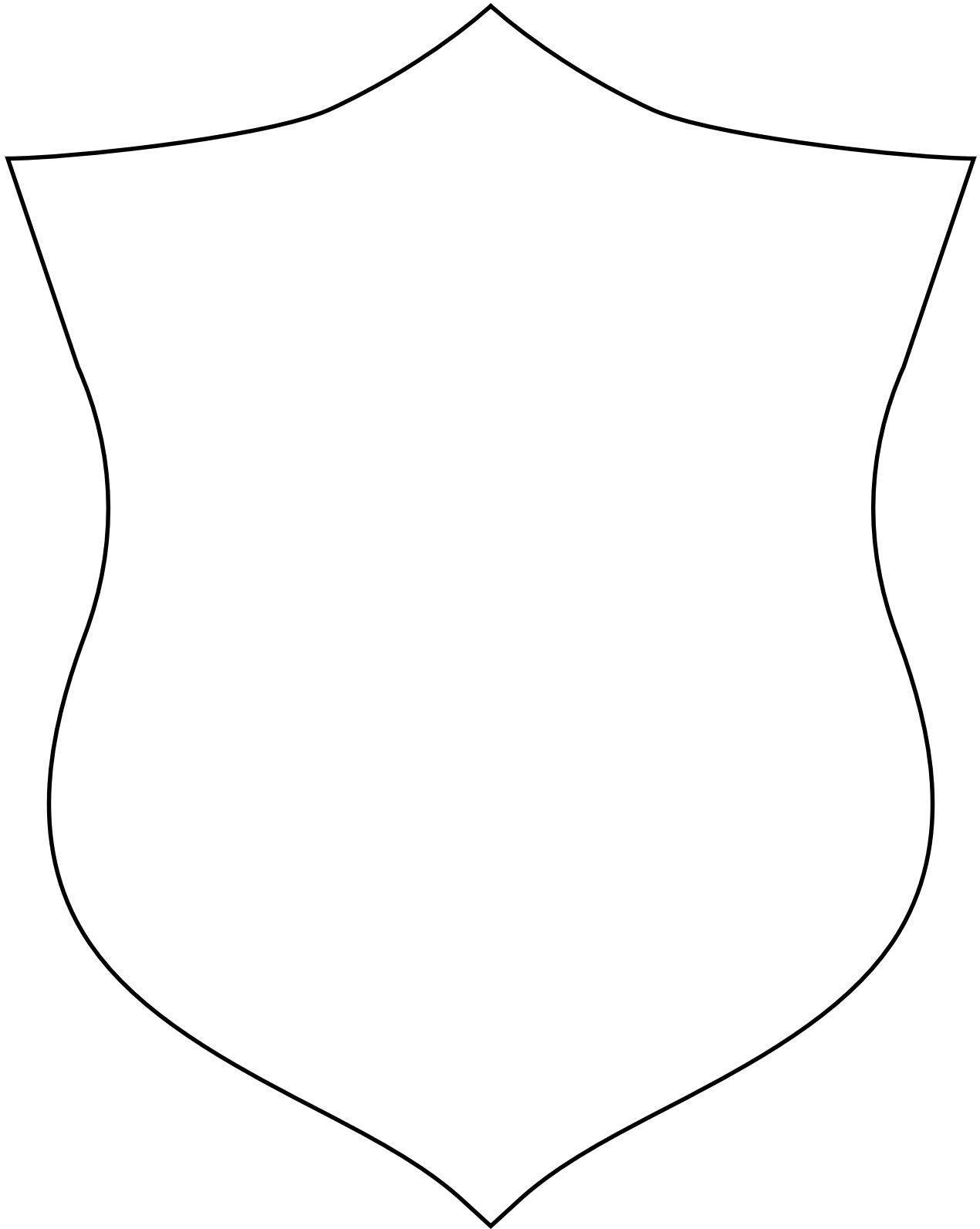


Box Template



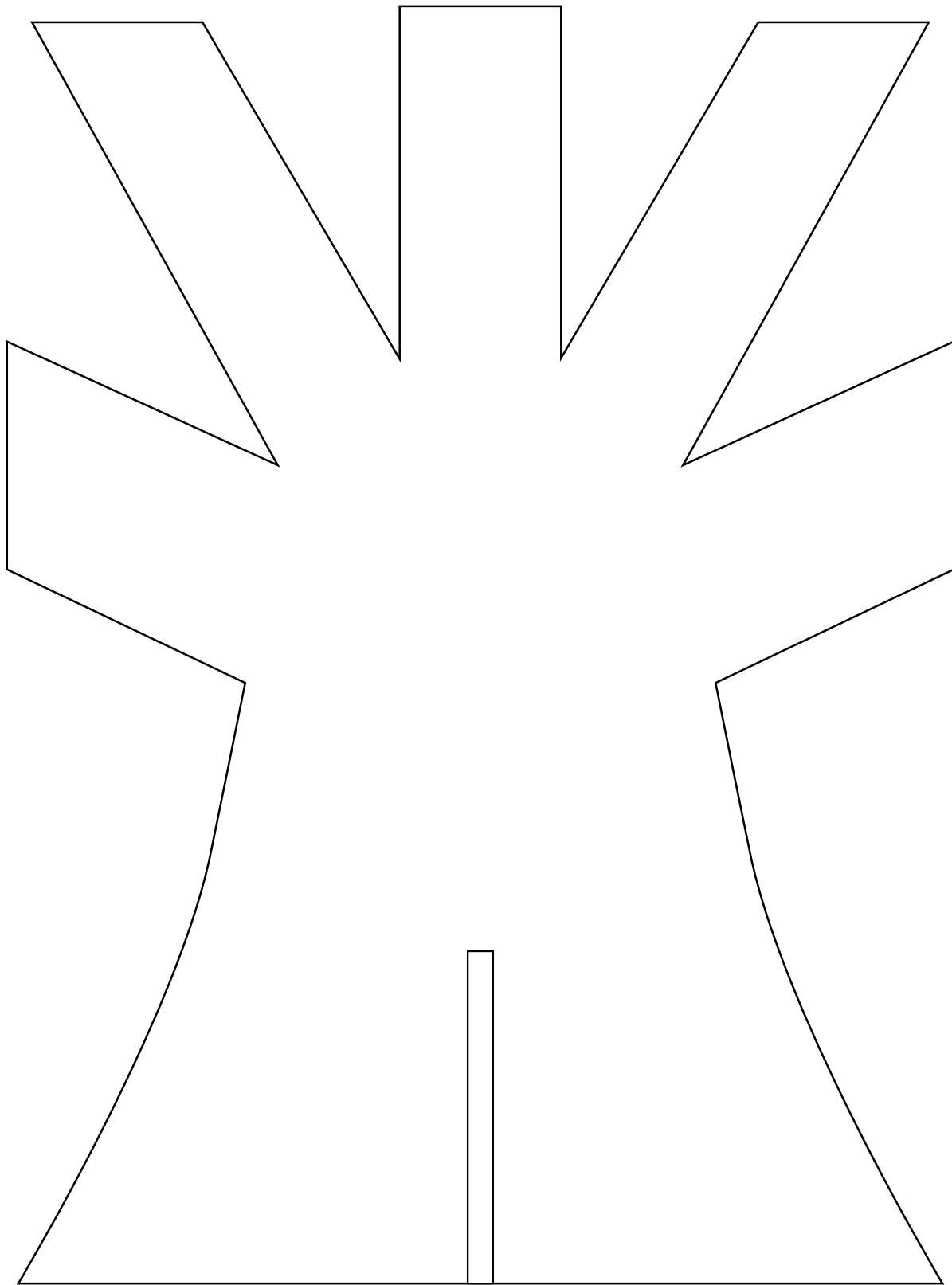


Shield Template



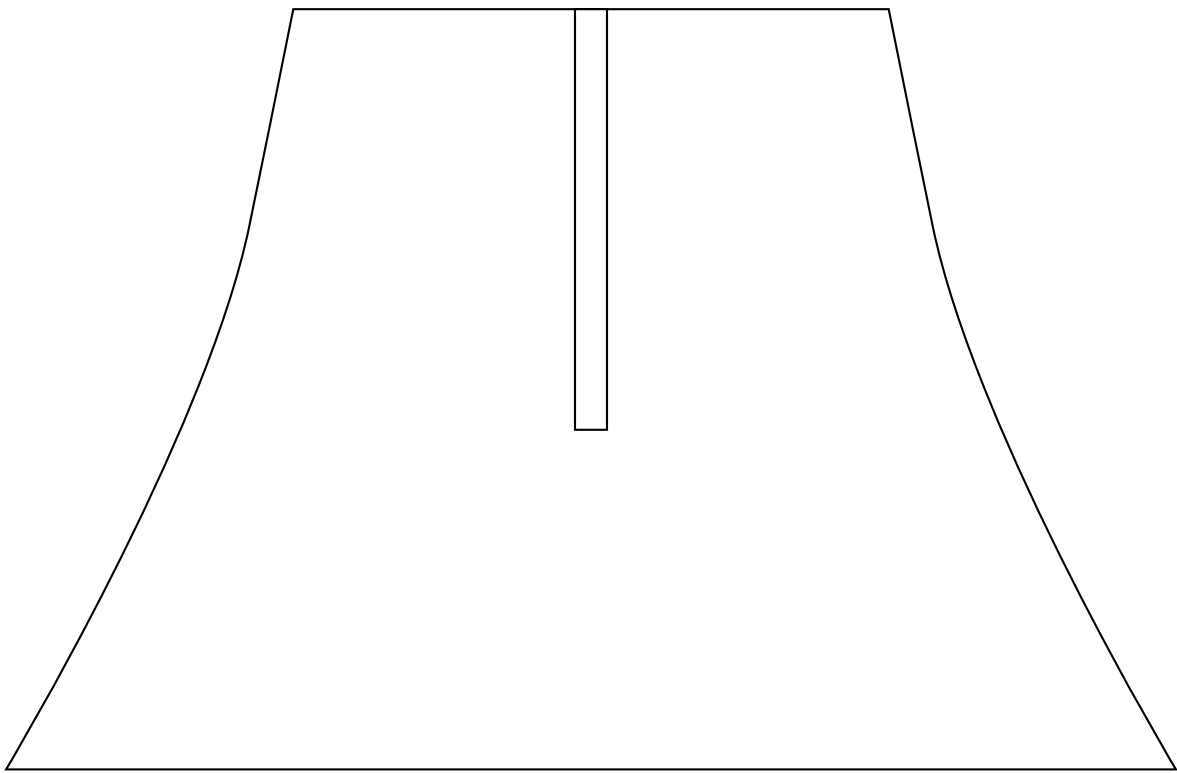


Tree Tracing Template





Tree Trunk Tracing Template





Leaf Tracing Template

