



I Believe in We!

Girls United: Challenges to Connect

Girls today need to know how to get along with others, how to build strong connections with each other, how to be a support for each other and how to build strong rewarding friendships. “I Believe in We!” is a list of 26 activities that Girl Guide units can use to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying. These activities highlight the negative impact of social aggression and bullying and create a sense of caring, belonging and mutual responsibility between all girls.

To complete the *I Believe in We Challenge*, girls and their Guiders should work together to choose *three activities*. You can do a Brainstorm by asking the girls what kinds of activities they would be interested in completing. Record all their thoughts and look through the challenge to see which ones most reflect their interests as well as their needs. This allows the girls to be involved in the process from the very beginning and ensures that they are being engaged in a meaningful way.

1. **Write a Friendship Bill of Rights:** Have the girls in your unit discuss what their rights and responsibilities are to themselves and to each other. What do you want or need in a friendship? What are your rights and responsibilities? What would make you end a friendship? When would you go to an adult for help? Make a poster of your rights and responsibilities and display it in your unit.

◆ **An option for younger girls:**

Write up a Recipe for First-Rate Friendships: What do you want or need in a friendship? What are some things that you can do to be a good friend? What does your friend do that makes you feel good? Have you ever stopped being friends with someone? Why? What does caring look like? How do you show someone you care about them? Once the list is created, get the



girls to create a large poster that shows what makes a good friend. Have each girl put their painted hand print on the Friendship Rules to declare their commitment to being a good friend!

2. **Build a Safe Social Climate:** Get to know each other!

- Girls sit in a circle and tell one interesting thing about themselves that the rest of the group doesn't know.
- Write a group resumé highlighting all the talents of your unit (hobbies, interests, achievements, etc.)
- Write a compliment for each girl in your unit.

◆ **An option for younger girls:**

- Ask them to try and pick something that the rest of the group might not know about them to share with the group. The interesting fact could be something about their family traditions or culture, their talents, are they a big sister, what makes them a good big sister, etc. Help them find things they have in common.
- Go around the circle and have girls tell the rest of the group one thing that the girl sitting next to them is good at.

3. **Try to include someone new in your group at school this week.** Report back to your unit how it felt.

◆ **An option for younger girls:**

Say 'hi' to a girl or boy you don't know very well at school or at daycare. Report back to your unit on how it felt to meet someone new.

4. **Play the Emotional Shuffle game.**

- Grab a stack of recipe cards and write the name of a feeling or emotion on each one.
- You will need two cards for each emotion.
- Shuffle the cards and give one to each girl.
- Have the girls walk around the room "expressing" their emotion (happy-smiling, excited-jumping around, sad-frowning).
- The objective of the game is to find their partner (the girl who has the card with the same emotion).
- After a few minutes ask the girls to stop and try to guess the emotions expressed by other girls. Encourage them to discuss how they felt acting out their emotion.





Checking out assumptions:

- Get girls to divide themselves off into groups of three. Hand each group a scenario:
 - A new girl to your class doesn't talk to anyone and doesn't seem very friendly.
 - A girl you know brushes by you in the hall and ignores you when you try to talk to her.
 - Your friends plan to do something together on the weekend and they don't ask you to join them.
- Ask the girls to discuss the situation and decide why the girl is acting this way. Ensure everyone in the group has a chance to talk.

Debrief in a circle:

- What were your assumptions?
- Were you right?
 - The new girl is shy.
 - She is really upset about something and didn't see or hear you.
 - They thought you were going away for the weekend.



- Was anyone surprised?
- If you had a younger sister or brother or friend, what would you say to them about making assumptions? For example, should they make assumptions? Why or why not? What will they miss out on?
- Understanding that we will always make assumptions, what are some things we can do that will minimize the impact it will make on how we treat others?

5. **Enjoy the arts.** Have the girls come up with a variety of short bullying skits that are relevant to the age group and situations of your unit. For instance, the skit could be about three girls. One girl is making fun of the other "friend" and the third girl is standing by watching. Have the leaders or girls act out the skit. Get the girls in the audience to shout STOP when they think bullying is occurring. Then discuss why she thinks it is a form of bullying and what each character can do to change the situation in a more positive fashion. Go "on tour" and show your play to other units!

- ◆ For older girls, order the play "Shape of a Girl" by Joan MacLeod and have the girls each select a piece from the monologue and act it out. Check out your local library or Amazon.ca for a copy.

6. **Explore how the media depicts aggression in girls' relationships.** Use relevant photos, cartoons or videos that portray healthy relationships. Discuss why that character was a good friend or person. Also get the girls to pick a character from their favourite movie or television show and dress up as that character at the next meeting. You could have a fun party (snacks and drinks) for them to socialize and bond with each other. Ask the girls to discuss why they



admire this character. Make sure the theme is revolved around kindness, being a good friend, anti-bullying, healthy relationships, etc.

- ◆ **For older girls**, get them to select a relevant episode of a television show or movie (e.g., *Odd Girl Out*) and discuss how social aggression and the nature of girls' relationships are portrayed in the media. Check out the anti-social bullying commercial at www.family.ca.

7. **Pinwheels for Peace.** Spend 15 minutes discussing what girls can do to help someone who is being bullied or picked on. For example, "Stand up to the bully and Say No!!!" Follow up with a peace pinwheel activity and create a collage with the collection, displayed at your unit location. Website below: <http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/>

8. **Peace Pin Project.** This activity is designed by girls for girls! The colours of the beads represent the colours of the rainbow. They have meaning and symbolize how you can help make a peaceful world:

Red signifies the Courage to take action
Orange signifies the Energy to get involved
Yellow signifies Loyalty to your friends
Green signifies Hope for a future free from fear
Blue signifies Faith in yourself & Trust in others. "A true blue friend"
Indigo signifies Power & Dignity for all
Violet signifies the Strength to stand up for what you believe
White signifies a wish for Peace.



Taken together the colours of the rainbow represent our hope for a peaceful, bully-free tomorrow.

Directions:

- Pick a safety pin (bigger pins are better).
- String beads onto the pointed end of the pin. Create any colour scheme you like but try to use as many colours as possible to represent the rainbow theme.
- Put as many beads on the pin as you can, leaving a little room at the end to allow the pin to go through fabric.
- Wrap ribbon or coloured string around the back on the pin
- Wear your creation as a token of peace and as a commitment to a bully-free tomorrow.
- Give them out to friends and family. Ask them to make up a pledge for a bully-free tomorrow.

◆ **For younger girls:**

Read the story *The Colors of Friendship* by Adrian Iron Thunder (found on the web).

9. **Write a poem, rap or song or create a T-shirt** to illustrate connecting with others.
10. **Decorate your flip-flops with messages for girls** – "Walk a mile in my flip-flops".
11. **Make bracelets that give a positive message** about girls as a source of support and friendship. Blue is the bully-free colour.



12. **Remember when you were “the new girl”?** Sit in a circle and have each member remember a time when they were new to a group. Did anyone do anything to make you feel like you were welcome? What did they do? How did it make you feel? Was there anything you wish someone had done or said? Make a poster of welcoming strategies to use each week to make everyone feel included as part of the group.
 - ◆ **For younger girls:** Remember when you first came to Sparks. Did anyone do anything to make you feel good? What did they do? Was there anything you wish someone had done or said? Make a poster of welcoming strategies to use each week to make everyone feel included as part of the group.
13. **Focus on talking directly to each other.** Play the telephone game – girls sit in a circle and the first girl is given a message to pass on to the next girl. Each girl whispers the message to the next girl. The last girl announces the message out loud. Compare the original message to the final message. Highlight the mixed-up messages that came from not talking directly to each other face-to-face.
14. **Practice talking face-to-face with another girl** from your group about something that is important to you. The girl listening should practice being positive, supportive and encouraging.
15. **Play a trust game.** All girls stand in a line, one behind the other. One at a time, starting with the girl at the front of the line, each girl falls back and is caught by the girl behind her. The Guider stands at the back to catch the whole line as they fall back.
 - ◆ **An option for younger girls:** For younger girls have two rows of chairs facing each other, close together with a girl sitting in each chair, knees to knees. Have each girl take a turn standing at the end of the two rows of chairs and laying across the laps of the other girls as they support her with their knees.
16. **Watch and discuss a film about social aggression:** i.e. “Odd Girl Out” or “It’s a Girls’ World” (suitable for grades three or four and up).





17. **Give each girl a 'relationship journal'** and offer them time to write, draw or paste in it regularly. They might start by writing a journal entry about a time when they felt let down by a friend and what they did about it. Have the girls develop suggestions for others girls as to what to do in similar situations. Other topics girls could write about include friendship troubles, sticky situations with friends, first-rate friendships and celebrating friendships.
 - ◆ **An option for younger girls:**
Take a picture of the all the girls in the unit together and give a copy to each girl. Have them do a collage celebrating friendship with the picture of the unit in the middle.
18. **Have the girls make a "Girls United" book together** where each girl contributes some relationship experiences and recommendations for building strong positive relationships.
19. **Empower and encourage the girls in your unit to take a healthy, adventurous risk.** This could be done individually or as a group. Ask the girls to generate a list of things they wish they could do but think they can't. Explore why they feel they can't. Make a list of strategies that would allow them to achieve their goals. It might be a mother/daughter canoe trip or riding a bike further than they thought they could in a fundraising event. Highlight that it is the process of taking the risk that matters most. Focus on girl power.
20. **Exploring commonalities:** Make an inner and outer circle. The outer circle faces in and inner circle faces out. Ask the girl directly in front of you questions until you discover something you have in common. Every three minutes, the inner circle steps to the right so that they are facing a different girl. Proceed until you have found a similarity with each member of the inner circle. End by discussing as a group the things you all have in common with each other.
21. **Draw a picture of your circle of friends at school.** Draw a number of circles, one for each of your friends. Place the circles close together or far apart to represent the closeness of your friendships. Draw arrows between the circles to show who is friends with each other (this kind of picture is called a sociogram). Show your picture to another girl in your group and tell her what you like and what you would change about your social connections with other girls. Listen to her tell you about her friendships.
22. **Make a collage** to show powerful girls that are counter to the traditional stereotypes for girls.
 - ◆ **An option for younger girls:**
Have each girl in the unit bring in old magazines. Have the girls cut out pictures of girls doing the things on the list. Highlight the fact that girls can do anything. Focus on girl power. If possible, display at unit location.
23. **Be a secret friend.** Pull names from a hat and assign each girl a secret friend. Without spending any money, try to do nice things for that person for two weeks. Keep your identity secret and at the end of the month each girl will guess who her secret friend is. Small prizes can be given to those who went undetected or those that did the most creative things. Check in each meeting to find out what nice things are happening to people and how it makes them feel.



24. **Give a handmade gift.** Pull a name from a hat and make something special for that girl. Think about making something you think she would find special. For example, a picture frame, bookmark or bracelet.
25. **Draw a comic strip about healthy girls' relationships** and building connections with each other. Have each girl writes one frame and then put it together as a group.
- ◆ **An option for younger girls:** Draw a picture of you and your friend participating in an activity. Example: playing at the park!
26. **What does caring look like?** Ask girls to generate ideas about what caring looks like, sounds like and feels like. When and how do they know that someone cares for them? How do they know when someone is not being a caring and concerned friend?

Don't forget to look closely at the program book – you may have achieved more than expected! Once you have completed the challenge you can buy the challenge crest at your Guiding store or online and present it to your unit.

