



NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Instant Meeting: Brownies

Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada

Table of Contents

<i>Background Information for Guiders</i>	2
<i>Using this Instant Meeting</i>	3
<i>Discussion/Reflection Questions</i>	3
<i>Active Games</i>	3
<i>Books or Readings</i>	4
<i>Crafts</i>	5
<i>Outreach</i>	5
<i>Debrief/Closing</i>	5
<i>Where it fits</i>	6
<i>Appendix A: Danger Zone Examples</i>	7
<i>Appendix B: Personal Safety Questions Examples</i>	7
<i>Appendix C: Information List</i>	9





Day of Action – Personal Safety Instant Meeting: Brownies



Background Information for Guiders

Keeping children safe is the number one concern for all parents and guardians. With the introduction of violent media coverage, television exposure and potentially dangerous internet sites children become more vulnerable to violence. It is our responsibility as adults, to protect our children and to teach them the skills needed to be safe. We can further teach them to be strong, smart, and confident when protecting themselves or participating in their everyday routines. It is important to recognize as a Guider, that you are a trusted adult in the eyes of your unit members and because of this will be highly effective in carrying out the important message of personal safety.

This Instant Meeting is designed to assist you in talking to girls about how to protect themselves in dangerous situations. It will discuss community danger zones and how to keep themselves safe from those spaces as well as strangers. Help the girls to understand that there is no specific way to tell by the way someone looks what kind of person they might be on the inside. Talk about stereotypes. They should know that judging someone by their appearance is a mistake. Children need to learn about strangers: not any one type of stranger in particular, but strangers in general, so that they can apply the discussed safety rules. Please remember that a child's ability to comprehend and practice safety skills is affected by age, educational, and development level – adapting the activities in the Instant Meeting to your units needs is highly recommended. Read through the Day of Action Toolkit. It provides useful information and many resources. Use that information and the details you gather about your own community as you use this Instant Meeting with your Brownies.

It is important to factor in the age and maturity level of the girls in your unit. The instant meeting does not directly discuss peer-to-peer or family violence or conflict. However, based on your community's needs, you may feel that incorporating such mature topics would be beneficial. It is recommended that you ask a social worker to help adapt your program in accordance to your community's needs. If you choose to discuss a more mature topic, it is also advisable to invite a professional or qualified expert to assist you in doing so. It is highly recommended to read over the instant meeting and adapt any or all of the activity suggestions to meet the developmental needs of your Brownies. The objective is to provide the girls with the tools to help them develop personal safety skills and identify safe spaces to go when faced with a dangerous situation. You could use all or some of the suggestions in this document or the Day of Action toolkit or your own ideas when creating your Day of Action meeting. As long as you provide fun, interactive and well-informed activities your Day of Action will be a success!

Once your unit has successfully completed a Day of Action Event, either based on one of the activities from the toolkit or something you have created yourselves, you are then entitled to the Girl Guides of Canada Purple Ribbon Crest. The crest illustrates that your unit has worked together in the fight against violence against women. You can purchase your crests at your local guide store or on-line at www.thegirlguidestore.ca



It is recommended that you review the Brownie program to identify where your Day of Action activities relate to the Keepers and the possibility to attain further recognition and badges.

Using this Instant Meeting

In this Instant Meeting, there are many activities that you can choose to do. Some require planning and organizing and some can be done with just the information provided here.

As you and your Brownie unit plan your Day of Action meeting, review the activities and decide which ones are suitable and of interest. Then you can mix and match activities to create your unit meeting.

You may want to open and close your meeting in the same way you always do, or you might want to create a special opening or closing for this meeting. The Discussion/Reflection Questions can help you with that.

Base your meeting on one of the Outreach Activities. This will help you determine how much time you have for Quiet Activities, Active Games or Crafts.

The Books and Readings offer helpful suggestions on how parents can continue the discussion around this important topic at home.

Discussion/Reflection Questions

Here are some questions that could be used to start a conversation about healthy relationships or to encourage private reflection. You could ask a couple at one time to get a large discussion going or you could ask the questions throughout the meeting to get girls thinking as they work on something else.

- Who are the people you could go to help for if you were in trouble?
- Where in [your community's name] could you go if you were in trouble or a dangerous situation?
- Why is it important to use the buddy system?
- What do you do if a stranger approaches you? (Explain to the girls that adults should not approach children for help or directions. If this happens, tell them to step away from the person and stay alert because this may be a trick.)
- Why is it important to always ask your parents for permission before leaving the house or going out on your own? For example, going to the park with your friends.
- Do you know your personal information? For example full name, phone number, parent's cell phone number and address.

Active Games

- a) *Identify Safe Spaces.* As a unit, walk around the local neighborhood and ask each girl to identify a place, building or person that they feel would be a safe space or person they could go to if in danger. For example, the person might be a police officer or crossing guard and the safe space might be a police station or library. Write down the suggestions each girl presents on a note pad. Once you have returned from the walk have the girls sit in a circle. Discuss the answers with the girls. Ask them why they chose that particular person or place. Using a large piece of paper write down the answers. Hang the piece of paper in your unit meeting to continuously remind the girls of where they can turn to if in trouble or faced with a dangerous circumstance.



- b) *Safety Obstacle*. Create a safety obstacle using the girls in the unit.
- First, have them pair up into groups of two. If there are an odd number of girls, ask a Guider to participate.
 - Ask a group to volunteer to go first.
 - Have the remaining groups scatter themselves around your play area; they are considered danger zones.
 - Using the attached list of danger zones (See Appendix A), have each group pick which danger zone they would like to be and get them to act it out. Note: you can also ask girls to come up with their own list of danger zones they face in their community.
 - Place a pylon at the beginning and end of your obstacle course; each pylon represents a safety zone. Explain to the girls that a safety zone is a place they feel completely comfortable and safe. For instance this could be their house, school or library.
 - Have the group that volunteered to go first line up at the pylon. Blindfold one of the two girls. The girl without the blindfold has to safely direct the blindfolded girl through the obstacle course stopping at three danger zones. Note: Allow the girls to choose which danger zone they want to go through.
 - Once they have arrived at a danger zone, the Guider asks them one of the Personal Safety Questions (See Appendix B). Note: it is recommended that the Guider create additional questions that are relevant to the community's specific environment.
 - The girls talk through the question together and decide what they think is the final answer. If they answer correctly they continue on to the next danger zone. If they answer incorrectly, they have to start again.
 - The objective of the game is to reinforce the importance of the buddy system when you are outside of your safe space. Discuss questions such as why is it always important to be with a friend or adult when walking to and from your safe environments. This activity illustrates the important skill needed to stay safe: smart thinking!

Books or Readings

The following recommendations are books that can be read in a unit meeting or would be great for parents to read with their daughters to continue the discussion of personal safety. Check with your local or school librarian for more titles.

Precious and the Boo Hag by Patricia McKissack

A young girl is home alone and must deal with the boo hag at her door. A great read-aloud about a resourceful and smart girl who comes face to face with what her mother warned her about.

On the Town by Judith Caseley

A book about the people and places in your community. Charlie and his mother take a walk in the neighbourhood to visit the police, fire station, bank, library etc. for a school project.

Berenstain Bears learn about Strangers by Stan Berenstain

This is a popular author dealing directly about the subject of strangers. The author explores the topic without being too scary.



Crafts

a) *Know your info!* This activity will take some preparation. Ask each girl to come to the next meeting prepared with a piece of paper listing her:

- Full name
- Home address
- Phone number(s)
- Parents full names
- Parents cell phone number or a trusted adult that can be reached if the parent(s) were unavailable

Using the provided template, have each girl fill in the information requested (See Appendix C for template). Using your unit's craft supplies, have the girls decorate the paper to highlight all her important information. This list should be placed in a commonly viewed area in the house (e.g., near the house phone or on the fridge.) This will help girls learn their personal information should she need it in an emergency.

b) *Superhero Safety Capes!* One way to stay safe is for children to wear reflective gear when walking at night. Making their own super hero cape is a fun way to do this. Using two safety pins and a shirt, fasten each corner of the sheet to the child's clothing (shoulder area). Using an old blanket or a coloured sheet, have each girl design and decorate it to replicate their favourite super hero, T.V character, something original. In addition to the standard craft supplies, add in rolls of reflective tape. Note: try to find different colours of reflective tape. You could also use glow-in-the-dark stickers and markers. Using scissors, a hole-punch or pinking shears, cut out fun shapes to place on your cape. If you decide to use glow-in-the-dark material turn off the lights and admire each girl's creation. Use a flashlight to see the reflective areas.

You'll Need:

- Two safety pins
- A shirt
- A sheet/ blanket
- Standard craft supplies
- Rolls of reflective tape (variety of colours)
- Glow-in-the-dark stickers

Outreach

a) *Invite presenters to the unit meeting to discuss personal safety issues and self-protection strategies*, for example, a self-defence instructor or a local police officer. Ask the presenter if he or she would mind bringing in some material regarding further opportunities for self-defence classes for kids.

b) *Personal Safety Posters.* Have each girl create a poster with a "personal safety in your community" theme. Hang the posters throughout different businesses and institutions in your area.

Debrief/Closing

As a unit sit in a circle and have each girl explain one thing that they have learned throughout this Day of Action. It can be as simple as when and where to say NO! or as advanced as learning their telephone number. Also, give the girls an opportunity to ask questions. This activity allows for a debriefing session and helps reinforce all the important highlighted information you discussed throughout your Day of Action Event.



Where it fits

Key to My Community - My Neighbourhood
Key to My Community – Community Counts (Interest Badge)
Key to I Can – Staying Safe
Key to Active Living – Say No!





Appendix A: Danger Zone Examples

- A dark alley
- A shortcut home from school
- A stranger asking for directions
- A stranger offering candy
- Crosswalks and busy roads
- An area with broken glass or needles
- Construction zones
- Getting off the bus
- The internet
- Home alone

Appendix B: Personal Safety Questions Examples

The following are examples of questions you could ask at each danger zone. It is recommended to take notice to what personal safety topic your unit is discussing and what subject matter would be the most appropriate based on the girls needs and community structure. Try and create questions that would help reinforce the personal safety message with your community's characteristics in mind.

True or false: You should always ask your parents or a grown-up in charge for permission before you leave to go somewhere.

- True. It is important that your parents or guardian always knows exactly where you are and what time you expect to be home.

Why is it important to walk to and from school or the playground with a friend?

- Walking with a friend keeps you safe. Two people are always more intimidating than one!

Why is it important to know your personal information?

- Knowing your personal information, such as your phone number, parent's name, or address, helps you or your safe stranger contact family members when needed.

Who is a stranger?

- A *stranger* is someone you do not know or does not look familiar to you. There is no certain "stranger look," therefore reinforce that even people who look nice and friendly are still considered strangers unless your parents say they are safe to talk to. A *safe stranger* is a person you don't know, but can trust to ask for help. For example, a police officer.

What do you do if you were approached by a stranger?

- Step away from the person so that you are at least arms distance away. Ignore the person. Trust yourself and the feelings you have. If it feels wrong, say no and run away.

How could a stranger "trick" you into talking to them?



- With a bribe, calling out for help, saying he/she has an emergency, needs directions, or says he/she knows your parents. Note: Remind the girls that as a child it is not their responsibility to help an adult with a serious situation.

What do you do if a stranger tries to grab you?

- Scream “Stranger stranger stranger!!!” as loud as you can. Kick the person and fight back with all your strength. Run away to a busy area and tell a “Safe stranger” immediately. A safe stranger could be a Police Officer, Crossing Guard, Teacher, Librarian, Fire Fighter, or close Family Friends.

True or False: If you find yourself at home by yourself you can open the door to anyone you knocks?

- False. Never open the door for a stranger or tell someone on the phone that you are home alone.

A secret code is something you share with another person. Have a secret password with your parents. If someone else comes to pick you up from school or while walking, ask for the password. If they don't know it, don't go with them and then tell your parents. What would be an example of a secret code?

- Your personal secret code can be anything! Make it creative!

Why should children be careful when surfing on the internet?

- The internet can be a very dangerous place, but it can also be a very fun way to interact with your friends. Try to avoid giving out your personal information over the internet and do not talk to people you do not know. Avoid sites that are not kid-friendly.

What is the difference between a Good Secret and a Bad Secret?

- A good secret is one you can share with your friends and it causes NO harm. It could be a present for someone or a surprising act of kindness. A bad secret is something that makes you feel bad, sad or scared. For instance, a friend at school told you she found a broken needle on the play ground. This is something you should tell a trusted adult immediately.

Why is it always important to recognize the bad feeling you have when something just doesn't seem right?

- This is your body's way of telling you to be ALERT. Something just does not seem right. You should always trust that feeling.

True or False: It is important to always walk in a brightly lit area

- True. Walking in a bright area helps you see everything around you therefore avoiding dangerous situations.

True or False: When crossing the street, it is always important to use a clearly identified cross walk or ask the crossing guard for assistance.

- True. If your community does not have a crosswalk or crossing guard than ask a safe stranger or parent or help you get across the street. Do not cross a street by yourself.



Appendix C: Information List

My full name is...

My home address is...

My phone number is...

My parent(s)/guardian(s) names are...

A trusted adult that can be reached if my parents were unavailable is...

