



NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Instant Meeting: Sparks

Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada

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Day of Action – Healthy Relationships Instant Meeting: Sparks

Background Information for Guiders

Violence in the household has become a major concern for many families across Canada. Statistics show that about one million Canadian children have witnessed violence against their mother by their fathers or father figures¹. One of the biggest challenges faced by these children is their contaminated view of healthy relationships. The importance of providing children with the tools to form positive friendships is crucial to their personal development. If children are continuously exposed to positive role models and nourishing relationships it lessens their chances of entering into a violent relationship in the future. This Instant Meeting will help offer all Sparks the foundations for forming healthy relationships now and into adulthood.

According to Making Waves, a healthy relationship is “one that makes you feel good about yourself. In a healthy relationship, you feel trusted and respected. You are comfortable talking, listening and sharing ideas²”.

GGC feels strongly that girls today need to know how to positively cooperate with others, how to build strong connections amongst friends and peers, and how to maintain healthy rewarding friendships. The objective for the Day of Action instant meeting for Sparks is to assist Guiders in facilitating discussion, skills building activities around topics of being a friend, cooperating, and non-violent conflict resolution. 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 Sparks.

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. 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 advisable to invite a professional or qualified expert to assist you in doing so. Read over the instant meeting and adapt any or all of the activity suggestions to meet the developmental needs of your Sparks. The objective is to provide the girls with the skills that will help them form healthy relationships and identify positive role models in their lives. You could use all or some of the suggestions in this document or the Challenge 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 a Guider views the Spark program, to identify where your Day of Action activities relate to the Keepers and the possibility of attain further recognition and badges.

¹ From Stats Canada; Toronto Youth Profile, 2003, AAUW, 1993, OSDUS, 2003, Orbit, 2004, Totten, Quigley and Morgan, 2004

² Making waves





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 Spark 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

Here are some questions that can help you start a discussion 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 is your best friend?
- Do any of you have good friends?
- What is a “best friend”? Can you have more than one “best friend”?
- What are some things that you can do to be a good friend?
- What do your friends do that makes you feel good?
- What do you do to make your friends feel special?
- What fun things do you and your friends do together that makes you feel happy?
- What does your friend do that makes you feel sad?
- What do you do when your friend makes you feel mad, sad or angry?
- What can you do when you feel mad, sad, or angry?

Quiet Activity

a) *Have the girls create Friendship Rules.* Using some of the questions above as well as your own, get the girls to brainstorm what makes a good friend and what makes a bad friend. Once the list is formed, write the responses on a large poster. You could also have each girl put their painted hand print on the Friendship Rules to declare their commitment to being a good friend! Hang the Friendship Rules in a public space within your community to show your unit’s commitment to healthy relationships.

b) *Play the Good Friend circle game.* Have the girls sit in a circle. Ask the girls the questions from Appendix A. If they feel the answer is behaviour of a GOOD FRIEND have them shout out “good friend”; if they feel the answer is behaviour of a BAD FRIEND have them shout out “bad friend”. Take a minute to debrief each answer and reinforce the correct answer. Make sure to congratulate the girls when they are correct.





Active Games

a) *Act it out!* Break the unit into small groups. Provide each group with simple scenarios that deal with helping others or being nice to a friend or family member. This could include giving a big hug to someone who is sad or helping your little brother get his boots on. Give the girls time to present the skit to the unit. Ask each group why they think their scenario was a good thing to do.

b) *Mean Crow Tag.*

- Place rubber mats or masking tape squares on the ground. They will be identified as neutral zones. If you are playing the game outdoors, section off an area and identify the boundaries. Explain to the girls that the play area is a beautiful blue sky and the neutral zones are tree tops.
- Have one girl volunteer to be the Mean Crow and all the remaining girls are Lovely Blue Birds.
- The girls move around the play area pretending to soar through the sky. Note: They must not walk on or hover around the neutral zones.
- Suddenly, the Guider shouts: "Here comes the MEAN CROW!! Quick, blue birds! Find a tree top!"
- The one girl who is the crow runs in and attempts to tag someone while the girls must run to a neutral zone without being caught.
- If even only one girl is caught the game is over.
- The objective is for the girls to work together to try and fit all the Blue Birds on the neutral zones. As the game continues gradually take away one neutral zone at a time. This game shows the importance of working together as friends to avoid a bad situation.

Books or Readings

Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes

A story of two friends and how they have to adjust when a new kid moves on the block. It deals with friendship issues, such as jealousy, inclusion and change. A great read-aloud.

Sometimes I feel like a Mouse : a book about feelings by Jeanne Modesitt

A book that covers the range of emotions a young child feels by using animals as similes. This is not a story but an exploration of moods. A good book for a group to discuss or use for role-playing as follow-up.

Frog and Toad are Friends by Arnold Lobel

A book about friends and the richness of friendship. Frog and Toad each possess strong characteristics that are unique but complement each other as they share experiences. A great read-aloud. Also in the series: Days With Frog and Toad; Frog and Toad Together; Frog and Toad All Year.

Leon and Bob by Simon James

A book about a little boy who moves into a new neighbourhood where he knows no one. To cope, he creates an imaginary friend until the day another new boy arrives. It takes all his courage to approach this new boy.

Farfallina & Marcel by Holly Keller

A book about a friendship between a caterpillar and a gosling and learning to accept growth and change in a friend. It's a great read-aloud.



Crafts

a) *Draw what friendship means to you!*

- Using seven pieces of 8x10 paper (or larger), write one letter on each separate piece of paper completing the word FRIENDS.
- Tape each letter, in order, around the room.
- If possible, divide the unit into seven groups and assign each group a letter or two, again spelling out the word FRIENDS.
- Using your unit's craft supplies have each girl draw a picture. The picture should relate somehow to friendship (or some activity you do with a friend) and begin with the letter their group was assigned.
- Depending on the age of your Sparks, you might want to provide examples for each letter. For example, if your group was assigned the letter F your picture could be about friends having FUN. If your group was assigned R your picture could be about playing in the RAIN.
- Once the girls have finished creating their picture have them hang it up under the assigned letter and explain to the unit what their picture is about. NOTE: This activity would be an excellent way to get a Guide or Pathfinder unit involved.

b) *Friendship Bracelets.* Using colourful beads and durable string, parachute twine or dental floss, have the girls make friendship bracelets. They can make one for themselves and a few to give to friends. Note: Consider asking each girl to give the bracelet to someone they don't frequently talk to but would like to become friends with.

Outreach

a) *Talk to your local library or school library about hosting a one week Friendship Book Club.* Ask if they would consider having a Friendship Section in their library. Organize an evening for your unit to meet at the library. At the library, have each girl choose one or two books from the friendship Section and tell the group what the book is about. Make a display in the library to celebrate good friends. If your unit chooses to do the suggested Friendship Rules activity, hang your banner over the designated area.

b) *Friendship Show and Tell.* Have each girl bring in an item that she feels reminds her of good friendships. Give each girl some time to explain why their item reminds them of a good friendship or good friends.

c) *Be Kind.* It's as simple as that. Complete one random act of kindness for a friend. Explain to your unit what constitutes as a random act of kindness. For example, help Mom bring in the groceries or help your little brother clean up his toys. Report back to your unit on how it felt and why you chose that particular deed.

Debrief/Closing

End your meeting with a friendship chain. Give each girl two pieces of paper roughly four inches by one inch. Have them write their name and a name of someone who is a very good friend on to each piece of paper. This person could be their schoolmate, sister, tutor, etc. Once they have completed writing glue all the girls' pieces of paper into one big chain link. If possible hang the chain in your meeting space so the girls are reminded every week that they have a special friend who cares about them. Note: This is an excellent activity to incorporate Guides or Pathfinders. They can provide assistance to each girl.



Where it Fits

Being Me
Going Outside
In My Community





Appendix A: Questions for “Quiet Activity Section b”

BAD FRIEND OR GOOD FRIEND

- A person who hugs you when you are sad
- A person who says nice things about you
- A person who is kind
- A person who is honest and always tells the truth
- A person who makes you laugh
- A person who shares their toys
- A person who makes you feel safe
- A person who helps solve problems
- A person you can count on and trust
- A person who cares about your feelings
- A person who makes you sad
- A person who does not share
- A person who talks about others behind their back
- A person who laughs at you when you make a mistake
- A person who says mean things to hurt other’s feelings
- A person who does not listen when you have something to say
- A person who tells you what to do and is bossy
- A person who is dishonest
- A person who makes you feel bad about yourself
- A person who hurts another people’s feelings

