

Short and Snappy – Inclusion, Diversity, and Pluralism

Part 1



Objective

To explain Inclusion, Diversity, and Pluralism and discuss how to incorporate it into our leadership practice in Girl Scouts.

Length

20-25 minutes

Materials Needed

Pencils and paper; canned goods (see next page); clear bowl/jar; can opener

Information to Share (spend 5-10 minutes on this section)

Inclusion, Diversity, and Pluralism – these three concepts are key to what Girl Scouts is all about. Creating an INCLUSIVE environment that encourages DIVERSITY and PLURALISM is a primary function of Girl Scout volunteers. It is the first step in creating a safe space for girls to grow in courage, confidence, and character.

What do these words mean?

Inclusion – being included within a group or structure. In Girl Scouts, this means that all girls and volunteers are included equally in any Girl Scout event, activity, or group.

Diversity – a range of different things or types. In Girl Scouts, this means that all girls and volunteers who come to Girl Scouts have unique backgrounds and beliefs, and those differences are valued and respected.

Pluralism – a condition where many different groups, ideas, backgrounds, etc. coexist. In Girl Scouts, this means that regardless of our differences, we are all one body in the Girl Scout organization. While we value our diversity, we also value our belonging and our sisterhood – we are all Girl Scouts.

How do I create an inclusive environment that values diversity and pluralism?

1. **Come to Girl Scouts with an open mind, full of respect.** Diversity comes in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes diversity cannot be seen or witnessed straight away. Individuals within a group may be diverse in terms of age, belief, ideology, level of confidence, ethnicity, nationality, economics, ability/disability, and many other factors. As a Girl Scout volunteer, be ready to include, value, and respect every girl.
2. **Model the behavior you wish to see in the girls.** Make sure to never make jokes or statements based on stereotypes. Explain the value in diversity and pluralism to girls, and show how you value it through your interactions. Acknowledge each girl's ideas, and hold all girls accountable for treating each other's ideas with respect.
3. **Do activities and lead discussions that get girls thinking.** There are many games and activities that help to demonstrate the importance of diversity and pluralism and guide discussions that allow girls to reflect on themselves and their experiences.
4. **Demonstrate pluralism through Girl Scout traditions,** such as rededication ceremonies, the Friendship Circle, the Weave, wearing uniforms, and reciting the Girl Scout Law.

Activity (spend 15 minutes on this section)

Jenny's Canned Diversity

This activity illustrates the concepts of Diversity and Pluralism, and leads to discussion surrounding Inclusion.

Supplies:

- Assortment of canned food (vegetables, fruits, protein, different sizes and shapes of cans, etc.) One item should be something that almost all people would not want to eat.
- Can opener
- Clear bowl or jar

Set up:

- Before others arrive, switch the label of the one that no one would want to eat (i.e. pickled beets, sardines, etc.) with the label of something sweet and nice (i.e. canned peaches). Make sure you have the label on such that no one can tell that it has been switched.
- Randomly arrange the canned items on a table for all to see.

Steps:

1. Give everyone a piece of paper and a pen/pencil.
2. Tell everyone that this is an individual activity and they should not share what they write with others until the discussion session.
3. Have everyone come up and look at the cans. They may take 2-3 minutes.
4. On their paper, participants should write down different ways to group the cans (examples include: size, color of the label, healthy/not healthy, type of food, etc.) Try not to give very many examples – you want them to come up with the different ways that they group the items and you want everyone to come up with their own ideas. Tell participants to find as many ways to group them as possible.
5. After everyone is finished, discuss the following questions as a group.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did you group the cans? (You will get a variety of answers...some people might say "I never thought of that" when hearing others' groupings.)
2. What you have explained are all the ways these items are different...that is their DIVERSITY. Is it a diverse group? (The answer should be yes.)
3. In what ways are all of the items similar/the same? (Answers may include: all food, all non-perishable, all edible, all sitting on the same table, etc.)
4. Does this group have pluralism? Do the cans co-exist as part of the same group? (The answer should be yes).
5. Is there anything in this group that you think is gross, or would never eat? (They should mostly agree on the can you switched).
6. Take the can, open it, and pour out the sweet/nice contents into the clear bowl or jar (i.e. the can of pickled beets, when emptied, reveals sweet peaches).
7. How can a group of Girl Scouts be like this group of canned foods?

Lead this last question into discussion about diversity, judgement, prejudice/paradigms, then on to pluralism and inclusion.