Meeting One

**Patch Purpose:**

When girls have earned this patch, they will have developed an appreciation of the uniqueness and commonalities both of themselves and others and of various cultures in their community and world. Girls will deepen their understanding and respect for people who may be different from them and learn how to better relate to others. This will truly teach them to respect themselves and others and be a sister to every Girl Scout according to our Girl Scout Law.

**Note to Adults/Leaders**:

It has been a long-held belief by many, including social learning experts, that not calling attention to racial differences would lead to children being less likely to notice and develop bias, therefore being less likely to discriminate against others. This is commonly known as the colorblind approach to handling discussions and interactions dealing with race. Research has since disproven this theory. Studies have shown that children notice and begin assigning meaning to race at a very young age. For example, distinguishing between white and Black people and drawing conclusions about traits inherent to those groups of people. Research has shown that parents and guardians who meaningfully talk to their kids about race end up with better racial attitudes than kids with parents or guardians who don’t. At Girl Scouts of North Central Alabama, we believe that education is power, and are committed to helping educate girls to recognize and celebrate the differences of every Girl Scout.

Erin N. Winkler is a professor at the University of Wisconsin who studies racial identity; she states, “Children pick up on the ways in which whiteness is normalized and privileged in U.S. society.” When working through these activities with your troop, make a concerted effort not to make whiteness the default and inadvertently mark other races as other. For additional resources on how to support healthy racial identities, refer to the list of additional resources at the end of this activity plan.

**Preparation Notes**:

Please read through the plan carefully before beginning this patch program. Each activity has a material list and preparation notes detailing what needs to be purchased, prepared, and discussed with families prior to conducting these meetings and activities.

**Getting Started**

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* Girl Scout Promise and Law Poster (optional)

**Steps**:

1. Welcome everyone to the meeting and recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

**Activity #1**: Did You Know?

**Time**: 15 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* index cards (one per girl)
* writing utensils

**Steps:**

1. Have girls gather in a circle. Say to the girls, “Pretend you don’t know me. What do you think you know just by looking at me?” Most girls will likely respond with descriptions of your physical appearance. Ask, “Is there a lot you can tell about a person just by looking at them?”
2. Hand out an index card to each girl. Instruct them to write a little-known fact about themselves on the card; this fact should be something that you can’t know just by looking at someone**. Remind them not to write their names on the card, and that this fact will be shared aloud with the group**, so only write something they’re comfortable revealing to the group but still not too easy to guess. Discuss that today a lot of personal information will be shared and say,” Girl Scouts is a safe place to share, and I want you to trust your Girl Scout sisters with the information you share. Can we all agree to respect ourselves and others by not sharing with other girls outside of our troop the information we hear about others today? Hold up the Girl Scout hand sign if you agree.”
3. After everyone has written down their fact, collect and shuffle the cards. Read one fact and have girls try to guess who shared that fact. Continue until you’ve read through all the cards, and then have the girls reveal which card and fact belonged to them.
4. How did the girls do? Discuss the results with your troop. Were many of them able to guess which fact belonged to which girl? What made it easier or more difficult to pair the fact with its owner?
5. Say, “As the activity shows, it can be difficult to tell a lot about someone just by looking at them. There are many unique aspects of our identity that other people can only discover by getting to know you.”

**Activity #2**: Hand Identity Charts

**Time**: 15 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* chart or large sheet of paper
* tape
* blank paper (one sheet per girl)
* writing utensils

**Prep Needed**:

* It’s a good idea to create your own hand identity chart in advance to show the girls an example of what a completed chart looks like. Sharing your own identity chart might also help girls be more willing to share aspects of their own identity.

**Steps**:

1. Tape the chart paper on the wall. Write the word identity at the top of the sheet. Ask, “What do you think the word identity means?” Jot down their responses on the paper. After they’ve called out a few definitions, explain “Your identity is made up of the individual character traits, beliefs, interests, and groups that you belong to. Sometimes these character traits are visible, or able to be seen, and sometimes they’re invisible. Think back to the previous activity you just did—what can you tell just by looking at someone?”
2. Ask the girls to come up with a list of categories that people commonly use to define their identity. Some examples include gender, age, hobbies, religion, race/ethnicity, what school you go to, what sports you play, where your family is from, etc.
   1. Note: Discussing gender may get into sensitive topics. It is wise to discuss this issue with caregivers beforehand to see what they are comfortable with as far as discussing gender identity with the girls. Fill out a [Sensitive Issues Form](https://www.girlscoutsnca.org/content/dam/girlscouts-girlscoutsnca/documents/Sensitive%20Issues%20Permission%20Form.pdf) if needed.
3. Hand each girl a sheet of paper and a writing utensil. Instruct them to draw an outline of their hand on the piece of paper. On the inside of the hand, girls should write down words that they use to describe themselves or how they see themselves. On the outside, they should jot down words that others would use to describe them or how others see them.
4. Give girls a few minutes to complete their identity charts. After everyone’s finished, have them share out their completed charts. If girls seem hesitant to share, break the ice by sharing your completed identity chart first.
5. As girls share their identity charts, ask them if the words they wrote inside their hands matched the ones they wrote outside their hands. Does the world see them as they see themselves? Which words overlap? Which words don’t? Why do they think that is?

Activity adapted from [facinghistory.org](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/identity-charts-1)

**Activity #3**: Fourth-Grade Stories

**Time**: 15 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* tablet or computer with internet access

**Prep Needed**:

* In this activity, girls will be learning about fourth graders around the world through an installation called Fourth Grade Stories (<https://www.judygelles.com/fourth-grade-project>).
* Review the portraits on your own before sharing them with girls. There are a few mentions of physical safety and bullying that may not be appropriate for all girls. You know your girls best, so please use your discretion when sharing the Fourth Grade Stories portraits with your troop.

**Steps**:

1. Say, “Imagine a fourth or fifth grader living in a different part of the U.S., or in a completely different country. What do you think their lives and experiences are like? If you had to describe your day-to-day life to them, how would you do it?” Have girls turn and talk about the questions with a partner near them and turn to face you when they finish discussing.
2. Introduce them to artist Judy Gelles and her Fourth Grade Stories project. Gelles traveled around the world taking photographs of students living in many different places. As she took their pictures, Gelles asked each student the same three questions: Who do you live with? What do you wish for? What do you worry about?
3. Look through the portraits together. Choose 3-5 to share with the girls. You can give caregivers the link to the whole collection, so girls have an opportunity to explore more at home.

**Activity #4**: My Fourth Grade Story

**Time**: 20 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* Three Questions sheet
* writing utensils
* camera or phone with a camera
* computer with internet access
* printer (optional)
* printer paper (optional)
* tape (optional)

**Prep Needed**:

* Print copies of the Three Questions sheet (one per girl).

**Steps**:

1. Say,” Now you have the chance to create your own Fourth Grade Story portrait.” Hand each girl a Three Questions sheet and a writing utensil. Give them a few minutes to think and write down responses to the questions. Remind girls that they’ll have an opportunity to share their portraits with the troop but that they can also choose not to share.
2. As girls are completing their answers, have each girl line up to have their portraits taken in the style of Judy Gelles with their backs turned to the camera.
3. When all girls have been photographed, upload the pictures to a graphic design website like Canva (<https://www.canva.com/>). Use the software to add each girl’s response to their photo.
4. Ask girls who are willing to let you share their portraits to return their answer sheets to you.

Note: Pictures can be shared with caregivers digitally or you can print them for a gallery as a pre-meeting activity for meeting two.

Meeting Two

**Optional Pre-Meeting Activity: Gallery Walk**

**Time**: 10 Minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* printed Fourth Grade Portraits (one per girl who wanted to share)
* tape

**Prep Notes**:

* Create a “gallery” of the finished portraits. Print out the photos, and tape them to the wall.

**Steps**:

1. As they arrive, encourage girls and caregivers to walk around the room to look at their troop’s photos.
2. After girls have had a chance to look at each other’s portraits, reconvene as a larger group and discuss:
   * 1. What did you learn about the other girls in our troop?
     2. Why do you think other girls had different answers than yours?

**Getting Started**

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* Girl Scout Promise and Law Poster (optional)

**Steps**:

1. Welcome everyone to the meeting and recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

**Activity #1:** Mirrors and Windows

**Time**: 15 minutes

**Materials Needed**: Various books (brought in from home by girls)

**Prep Needed**:

* Prior to the meeting, send out a reminder to families to have girls bring in a copy of their favorite book. It can be from their personal collection or from a library.
* Obtain a copy of a book you enjoyed when you were a kid.
* Understand the terms **windows** and **mirrors** to describe literature. They were first coined by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop. You can read more about her here: [www.readingrockets.org/teaching/experts/rudine-sims-bishop](http://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/experts/rudine-sims-bishop).

**Steps**:

1. Have girls gather in a circle. Tell girls that you’ll be chatting about your favorite books today. Share with them your favorite book, and a few reasons why you picked it to share with the group. Allow girls time to share the books they’ve brought in, and why they picked that book to share.
2. Explain that stories are a powerful way to learn about ourselves, and about people who might be different from us. In this way, books can be mirrors and windows. Ask girls what they think these terms might mean when talking about books.

* What do you see when you look in a mirror? Your reflection. **Mirror books** are books that reflect your identity or books with characters who have the same racial, cultural, religious background, and/or family makeup as you. These are books you can see yourself in.
* What do you see when you look out a window? Other people or other things. **Window books** are books that let you see other people, events, or places that might be unfamiliar to you. It helps you get a glimpse of what it might be like to be that person, live through that event, or live in that place.

1. Circle back to the books they brought in—would they classify their chosen book as a mirror or a window? Why?

**Activity #2**: Who’s in Our Books?

**Time**: 20 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* Diversity Gap Infographic
* tablet or computer with internet access (optional)
* Data Collection Sheet (one per girl)
* writing utensils

**Prep Needed**:

* Girls will be looking at books to examine representation in literature. Plan on meeting at your local library or connecting with a school to request access to their library or media center.
* Print out the diversity gap infographic, found at the end of this activity plan (or pull it up on your tablet or computer).
* Print out copies of the data collection sheet (one per girl).

**Steps**:

1. Tell girls,” In our previous meeting, we learned that everyone has a unique story, and that story is one that deserves to be told. When we look at the books that surround us, do we see an accurate reflection of the stories of the different people in our community and around the world?”
2. Share the “Diversity Gap in Children’s Books” infographic with girls. Explain that an infographic is an information graphic or a way to show data and information through pictures and visuals. Explain that **diversity** means variety or a range of different things.
3. Explain a few terms for your girls to ensure girls are working from the same definitions:

* Race: A term that is used to categorize people based on their physical traits like skin color, hair type, and facial features. Examples of different races include Native American, Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, White, and Asian/Pacific Islander.
* Ethnicity: A term used to categorize people based on their shared cultural heritage like language, customs and traditions, religion, etc.
* People of Color: In the United States, this term is mainly used to describe people who are not racially categorized as white.

1. Ask, “What information do you get from the infographic I’ve just shared with you?” Give them a few moments to share their observations.
2. The girls may have noticed that books written by or about people of color only make up a small percentage of the total number of books published. Ask girls, “What’s negative about not having books or movies accurately and respectfully represent different people? People need to have their experiences because it helps them feel like their experiences as people are valued and worth celebrating.”
3. Say, “Today, we’re going to analyze how diverse our local or school library is. Diversity can encompass a lot of various categories, like age, ability, family makeup, and gender. For our project today, we’ll be focusing on racial diversity.”
4. Hand each girl a data collection sheet and a writing utensil. Instruct them to randomly choose 20 books. They should use their data collection sheet to guide them as they examine each book. Look at the covers. If there are people on the cover, what are their racial identities?
   1. Note: Of course, there are flaws to judging books just by their cover. A person who appears white can be biracial, multiracial, or have multiple ethnicities. However, this activity serves as a good jumping-off point to discuss which populations are generally well-represented and under-represented in books. [This activity was adapted from Lee & Low Books, a multicultural children’s book publisher.](https://blog.leeandlow.com/2018/05/10/the-diversity-gap-in-childrens-book-publishing-2018/)
5. After all girls have finished sorting through their books, have them share their findings. Be sure to split girls evenly with one strong leader per group. Did they notice any trends in the books they reviewed? When they tallied up their books, were the numbers similar or different from the infographic you shared with them at the beginning?

**Activity #3**: 1,000 Black Girl Books + Snack Chat

**Time**: 15 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* tablet or computer with internet access
* healthy snack (optional)

**Steps**:

1. Have girls gather in a circle. Pass out snacks to girls, then watch an interview with Marley Dias ([www.bit.ly/marleydias](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utTSMzfDZcA)).
2. Discuss the following questions:
   1. What was the video about?
   2. What kinds of books does Marley enjoy reading?
   3. What did Marley notice about the books she was reading in school?
   4. How did Marley take action to make sure other kids had access to more mirror books?

**Activity #4**: Campaign for Diverse Books!

**Time**: 20 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* tablet or computer with internet access
* completed data collection sheet (from Activity #2)
* paper
* printer
* envelope and stamp
* writing utensils (optional)
* letter template (optional)

**Prep Needed**:

* If girls will hand write their letters by hand, print out copies of the letter template (at the end of the activity plan).
* If girls will type their letters, send a reminder to parents before the meeting reminding them to have their girls bring a device.

**Steps**:

1. Tell girls,” If you think your school or local library could use a few more mirror books, you can follow Marley Dias’s example—take action for diverse books in your community!”
2. Girls should compile their data from their diverse book audit (from Activity #2), then use the website Live Gap (<https://charts.livegap.com>) to make an infographic of their findings.
3. Help girls draft letters to their school or public library’s librarian making their case for diverse books. They can use the template at the end of this activity plan or come up with their own. Girls can type or handwrite their letters.
4. When girls have finished writing their letters place them all in an envelope and send them off.

**Wrapping Up**

**Time**: 15 minutes

**Materials Needed**:

* Make New Friends Lyrics Poster (optional)

**Steps**:

1. Close the meeting by singing Make New Friends and doing a friendship circle.

**Additional Resources**

* “A Guide for Selecting Anti-bias Children’s Books” (Article)

Link[: socialjusticebooks.org/guide-for-selecting-anti-biaschildrens-books](https://socialjusticebooks.org/guide-for-selecting-anti-bias-childrens-books/)

* “Children Are Not Colorblind” (Video), Erin N. Winkler, Professor and Chair, Africology Department, UW-Milwaukee.
  + Link: [wpt.org/University-Place/children-are-not-colorblind](https://pbswisconsin.org/watch/university-place/university-place-children-are-not-colorblind/)
* Talking About Race: Alleviating the Fear (Book) by Steven Grineski, Julie Landsman, and Robert Simmons
* Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria: And Other Conversations About Race (Book) by Beverly Daniel Tatum

Diagram

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