

## **Celebrate Diversity Patch**

### **Girl Scout Brownie through Ambassador**

The purpose of this program is to encourage the development of girls' appreciation of the uniqueness and commonalities of themselves and others, their culture, and other cultures. By exploring the rich diversity of various cultures in our world and our local community, a girl deepens her understanding of and respect for people who may be different from her. She will develop skills to help learn how to better relate to others. In doing so, she will be better able to make and keep friends, accept other people who may seem different, and work cooperatively with others.

The objectives of this program are to increase girls' respect for and understanding of cultural differences through a series of activities in a non-judgmental setting in order to:

- Recognize and understand the customs and traditions of a person's own culture.
- Recognize the commonalities and differences of various cultures.
- Develop an understanding of the customs and traditions of various cultures.
- Develop an appreciation for various cultures.

### **Patch Requirements**

To earn the base patch all troops must first complete the Pluralism Activities found in this packet. A segment can be added to the base patch by completing activities and learning about a specific culture. Culture is the concept, habit, skills, arts, institutions and customs of a group of people. You may wish to explore: Native American Indian culture, Asian culture, Hispanic Culture, African and African-American culture, European culture, or Middle Eastern culture. Many others exist. There are numerous community resources, organizations, people, and places that your troop can access to earn patch segments. To better understand a given culture, complete one activity in each of the following areas:

- Music and/or dance
- Crafts and/or art
- Games
- Food and/or beverages
- Clothing and/or types of shelter
- Families, customs and/or celebration
- Language and/or communication
- Religion, beliefs and/or special holiday

What activity your troop will do for each area needs to be determined by the girls. This may require locating resource people in the community to help you or visiting a cultural center. Get out the phone book, look in the local newspaper, ask teachers at schools, and check out the local library for possible resources. It is not up to the troop leaders to find all of the resources and make arrangements. Each girl could choose or be assigned an area and with her parents/guardians help find the resources and plan the activity.

Do not plan to learn about all of the areas at one time. This patch program is not meant to be completed in one or two troop meetings or by just attending a multi-cultural festival,

but rather an opportunity for the troop to embrace the culture and people over a longer period of time. In order to make a commitment to learning about a particular culture, troops will be limited to earning two segments for two cultures explored each program year.

This patch program was created with the help of the following Girl Scout members: Sharon Determan, Lisa Lukens, and Joyce Cornely.

### **For Adult Volunteers**

Girl Scout troop leaders have an exciting opportunity to help girls recognize and appreciate the heritage, history, traditions and customs, language and the on-going lifestyle of the many cultures within our world and local community. As you guide the girls on their exploration of this patch program, you also have some important responsibilities. The development of cultural awareness includes:

- Knowing one's identity—one's heritage and traditions
- Knowing about other groups—learning about the customs and ways of other groups of people
- Knowing about the relationships among these various groups—how they relate and how they've shared and influenced one another

As an educator, leaders need to be aware of a few pitfalls when studying people of various cultures. Avoid focusing on a "them" versus "us" approach. We live in a culturally pluralistic society in which all people and children are "us." Look beyond the obvious differences to see the everyday lifestyle patterns of a group. The values and behaviors of any one group are only different, not superior, to those of another group.

Remember that issues related to pluralism are sensitive in nature and can be emotionally charged. Discussions on this subject can be uncomfortable for both the leader and the girls. It is important that the leader understand her own personal attitudes and behaviors as she encourages pluralistic attitudes and healthy ethnic pride in girls. It is essential that any adult working with girls respect the traditions, customs, lifestyles and heritage of the various racial, ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups in American society and promote positive attitudes toward these groups during Girl Scout activities.

Search to understand what lies behind the acts and expressions in the context of culture and tradition. For example, if you make a piñata, find out why people of Mexican descent make piñatas. Learning about different customs and traditions of various people needs to be handled in a positive way. This will show girls the uniqueness of all people should be understood, respected, and appreciated.

Ground rules need to be established to guide you as you lead the girls. Before proceeding with the chosen activities, review these rules with participating girls and adults.

- No put downs (any behavior that hurts a person's feelings). Deal firmly, but calmly with prejudicial behavior and remarks. Let girls and others know that such expressions are unacceptable.

- No right or wrong answers. Provide an open, non-judgmental atmosphere so that girls will feel comfortable asking questions. Give honest, factual and responsible answers to girls' questions. Be honest if you do not know the answer to a question. The girls will respect your honesty.
- Right to pass is allowed (if someone feels uncomfortable with the activity).
- Adults participate in the activities with the girls. Be a role model. Be sensitive to the ethnic, cultural and religious difference, family traditions and social customs among the girls and adults with whom you interact. Your response may have an acute impact on a child's self-esteem and ethnic pride.
- The process (what is happening between the girls) is the most important part of any activity, even more important than completing the activities to receive the recognition patch. Praise and strongly encourage expressions and behaviors in girls and adults who demonstrate positive attitudes towards members of their own or other ethnic, cultural or racial groups.

**Pluralism Activities - All five activities must be completed by all program grade levels AND before exploring the cultures**

1. Discovering Family Roots - The cultural background of your family greatly affects your life. Encourage girls to discover their family roots in one of the following ways:
  - Each girl completes the My Heritage activity sheet and shares with everyone at a troop meeting.
  - Each girl find's out where her ancestors came from before coming to the United States. At a troop meeting, take a globe or a map of the world and girls can locate these places. See the diversity of people and cultural background within your own troop.
  - Talk with grandparents or other older family members about memories of growing up. See if their everyday life was more influenced by national and/or cultural traditions than a girl in America today. Look for pictures of where their ancestors lived. Share at your next troop meeting.
  - Alternative if none of the above can be done: Have the troop visit a nursing home and each girl interviews a resident about their cultural and family heritage. Later compare interview comments.
2. Stereotypes - Complete Some Think People in Groups are All the Same activity sheet.
3. Discrimination - Complete We Should Respect Each Other's Differences activity sheet.
4. Universal Feelings - All people have the same basic needs: Every human being in the world enjoys feeling wanted, needed and important. When something applies to every person in every place, in every time, we say it is universal. Some ideas, feelings and needs are universal because all human beings experience them. Can the girls name at least five things that every human being in the world needs?
5. Personal Pledge – Complete We Can Help Each Other Value Differences.

## My Heritage - Differences and Similarities

You are going to pretend that you are a reporter. Choose a family member that you would like to interview. An older relative like a grandparent or great aunt or uncle might remember the most family history. It is all right to talk with your mother or father too. Ask your relative the questions on this paper. Feel free to ask any questions about your history that you can think of. If you need room for your answers use another sheet of paper.

1. Who is the family member you are interviewing?

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2. What relation is he or she to you?

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3. Has the family always lived in this house? In this neighborhood? In this city? In this state? In this country?

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4. In what other places have you and your family lived?

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5. When did your ancestors come to the United States?

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6. Why did they leave the country in which they were born?

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7. To what city in the U.S. did your ancestors come? What did they do there?

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8. What language did your ancestors speak when they arrived in the United States?

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9. Does anyone in your family still speak this language?

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10. Are there special days or celebrations that are very important to your family? What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

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In troop discussion, talk about the different family backgrounds. Then look for and discuss those things that all the family backgrounds appear to have in common. For example, every family might have special holidays. Every family might have come to the United States from another country.

### **Some Think People in Groups are All the Same**

One belief that is important to most Americans is that we don't judge people by where they come from or what color or sex they are. We don't look at their family name or what street they live on to figure out what kind of a friend they might be. We try to get to know someone as a person, for himself or herself. However, some people believe that all of the people in a certain group will be the same and behave the same way. Such a belief is called a stereotype.

Have girls think of responses to these:

All girls like \_\_\_\_\_

All boys are \_\_\_\_\_

All teenagers are \_\_\_\_\_

If they said things like "All girls like to play with dolls", "All boys are noisy" and "All teenagers are bad drivers" then they know what a stereotype is. Explain there is practically nothing that can be true of all of the people in a certain group.

### **Read the following scenario to the troop.**

Suppose that your class has a baseball game with another class at your school. Your team doesn't do well the day you play. You make mistakes. The players trip and fall. Your class loses the game by a score of 12-0. After that game the whole school gets the idea that all of the people in your class are clumsy and bad baseball players. In fact, people in the school begin to think that no one in your class is good at any sports. Ask girls what responses they would have for the people who might think that?

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### **We Should Respect Each Other's Differences**

Some of the things that people do when they discriminate are:

- Name calling
- Destroying property
- Leaving out of activities
- Scapegoating
- Not appreciating difference
- Teasing

Tell girls you will read them a story. Ask them to listen for these examples of discrimination in the story.

### **Discrimination Hurts All of Us**

Tommy West has been in Sally's classes since kindergarten. Sally had to admit that Tommy just kept getting worse and worse. In kindergarten, he walked with a limp and squinted all the time. In first grade he came to school wearing thick and heavy glasses. He still could hardly see. In second grade, everyone knew how to read except Tommy. In third grade he had an operation on one eye. He had to wear a patch and the thick glasses too. The kids who used to call him four-eyes started calling him three-eyes after the operation. He was terrible in sports and didn't get good grades either. Sally lived next to Tommy and played with him sometimes, especially if no one else was around. She was surprised sometimes because they could really have fun together. Tommy's father was an engineer and they had computers and computer games at their house. They had a powerful telescope. Sally liked looking at the moon at night from Tommy's house. Tommy always shared whatever he had. He had a ham radio and Sally and Tommy could reach people from all over the world. No one else from class ever went to Tommy's house. Once Sally told some of the kids how interesting some of Tommy's things were. Billy Green said, "Well if Tommy has it, it can't be too cool." All of the kids laughed and Sally didn't say anything else. In the fourth grade, Billy gave a Halloween party. He invited every single person in the class-except Tommy. Sally talked to Billy when she found out. "Why don't you just invite him," she asked. "He probably won't come anyway." Billy made a face. "It's no fun to have a cripple at a party," he said. Fourth grade was hard for Tommy. The other boys hid his glasses when he was in the shower at the pool. Someone scratched the words "Four-eyes" into his desk at school. One day Billy accidentally broke the movie projector while the teacher was out of the room. He said loudly that Tommy must have done it since Tommy was so clumsy. Tommy didn't come to the fifth grade with Sally. His father said he was going to send him to a different school. Tommy's father looked mad about that. When Sally thought about it later, she felt mad, too.

### **What Can Be Done About Discrimination**

Girls heard what can happen when differences are not appreciated. Have them explore whether anything could have been done to give Tommy's story a different ending by discussing the following questions

1. How was Sally's relationship with Tommy different from Tommy's relationship with the other children in his class?
2. What do you think Sally's feelings were toward Tommy?
3. Do you think there was anything Sally could have done that would have helped the other children accept Tommy?
4. Can you think of any reasons why it might have been hard for Sally to try to help Tommy?
5. Do you think there was anything that could have been done to stop Billy from treating Tommy so unfairly?
6. What might some of the other kids in the class have done differently?
7. Do you know of any instances when people you know were made the targets of unfair treatment?

## **We Can Help Each Other Value Differences**

All the previous parts of this patch program have shown girls the value of differences. It is important for them to act on what they have learned. In this last activity, each of them will make a contract with themselves. They will promise to act in one simple way that will help to spread more understanding and respect for differences. This may also be a good time to review the Girl Scout Promise & Law and/or have a rededication ceremony. The important thing is choosing to do something that is possible for each girl to do. Leaders should choose something that they want to do, too. Give girls until your next troop meeting to fulfill their pledge. Suggestions for contracts they could make with themselves:

- I will eat lunch with a new kid at school.
- I will smile and say hello to a classmate that I have not been friendly with.
- I will talk about this patch program with the people in my family.
- If I have been doing any “name calling” or other unfair things, I will stop.
- If there is a group that I have an unfair feeling about, I will try to find out more about their contributions to the United States.