For Adult Volunteers

Girl Scout troop leaders have an exciting opportunity to help girls recognize and appreciate the heritage, history, traditions, 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 is a very serious issue and includes:

- Knowing one’s identity, 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

Something as simple as discussing today’s Thanksgiving Holiday may open doors you would never imagine. It begins with the English settlers, the Native American Indians and the combination of both cultures and traditions and what they have evolved into what we call today “Thanksgiving.”

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 any other group of people. 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 towards these groups during the learning process and during Girl Scout Activities.

Seek to understand what lies behind the acts and expressions in the context of culture and traditions. 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 that 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.

Prior to starting this program you should discuss the rules just like you did when you began your troop. Girls need to come up with and abide by the rules the group decide on in order to participate. They should sign a contract stating the agreed upon rules of participation. For example: no put downs, no laughing, no bullying, no sly remarks, no “fake” questions, no name calling. All comments and questions should be directed to the person giving the presentation and should be asked in earnest.
Consider inviting girls and their parents, from your troop or other troops, to give presentations about their heritage, culture and beliefs. Have them explain why little Susie can’t participate on a certain day, or eat certain foods, why she wears certain cloths or can’t participate at certain times of the day because it is the part of their cultural or religious beliefs. Ask if they can share samples of traditional foods, clothing, maybe a game.

When a girl understands the reasons behind things, then she can support her friends in their beliefs rather than ignore or not give needed support when ignorant people are causing their friends discomfort.

**Understanding is the key to knowledge while diversity is the key to a healthy, harmonious living.**

Assure all participations that there is no judgment, only an open forum of questions and answers. This should be an honest exchange of information in order to promote understanding. Give honest, factual and responsible answers to girls as they ask questions. Be honest and if you don’t know the answer to the question, the girls will respect your honesty if you say: “let me find out and get back to you” rather than trying to make up an answer.

Deal firmly yet calmly with prejudicial behavior and remarks, let girls and other participants know that such expressions are unacceptable and the offender will be asked to leave if the behavior persists.

Keep in mind that this activity may be sensitive to some people. Be sure to have parental permission prior to proceeding with this program and don’t forget...its ok if they don’t want to or if their parents feel they would rather not have them participate.

Keep in mind that Girl Scouts has members in 145 countries around the world. America is a melting pot, a treasure of diversity. We’re in a unique position to provide education on this topic with first hand information not just text book reading. World Thinking Day is Feb. 21st, Girl Scout Sunday/Sabbath is the Weekend prior to March 12 every year. We are encouraged to visit different places of worship and to explore various cultures and traditions with our friends in order to create a better understanding of our sisters around the world.

Invite parents to participate in this activity if appropriate. Be a role model. Be sensitive to the ethnic, cultural and religious differences, family traditions and social customs among the girls and adults with whom you interact. Your response may have an acute impact on the way your girls respond to the new information or on the self-esteem and ethnic pride of the girl presenting the information.

What’s happening between the girls, how they interact with each other during the presentations, the way in which they ask and receive information is the most important part of this activity. Praise and strongly encourage expressions and behaviors in the participants who demonstrate positive attitudes towards members of their own or other ethnic, cultural or racial groups.
CELEBRATING DIVERSITY PATCH PROGRAM

This program is for Brownies to Ambassadors and will touch on the Advocacy Journey as well as Its Your World Change It. You will Discover other cultures, Connect with different people, and Take Action to change your immediate world. It will take several meetings to complete or you can work on it on your own at your own pace. When you finish this patch program you will be able to:

- Recognize and understand the customs and traditions of a different person’s 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.

You must complete all activities in this program outline to earn the patch. Remember that you need not follow it to the letter as long as the activities you replace the suggested activities with are relevant to the topic. We suggest you pole your girls and find out what kinds of family heritage exists within your own troop. This will be a great place to start. It will allow your girls to understand their own family heritage and traditions as well as that of their fellow troop members.

Other possibilities may include: Native American Indian culture, Asian culture, Hispanic Culture, African-American culture, European culture, Jewish culture and Middle Eastern culture. Many others exist and there are numerous community resources and organizations, churches, people and places that your group can access to help earn this patch.

To better understand a given culture, complete one activity in each of the following areas. Remember that Feb. 21 is World Thinking Day and March 12 is the Girl Scout Birthday. These are perfect opportunities to integrate this program as during these times we are concentrating on understanding and creating friendships with Girl Scouts around the world. We currently have sister Girl Scouts in 145 countries around the world. Maybe a pen-pal troop would be something to consider starting to give the girls something to look forward to.
Activity 1:

To better understand a given culture, complete one activity in each of the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music and/or Dance</th>
<th>Clothing and/or types of shelters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crafts and/or Art</td>
<td>Families, customs and/or celebrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Language and/or communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and/or Beverages</td>
<td>Religion, beliefs and/or special holidays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This patch program is not meant to be completed in one or two meetings, or by taking one field trip to a multi cultural museum or festival. The intention of this patch program is to actually learn and become familiar with different cultures.

Again, poll your girls to see what different cultures are within your own group. If the girls want to start by exploring one of cultural groups that exist within their own group, then begin there. If the girls decide as a group to investigate a culture that they feel sounds fun, then that is where you should start. The girls should do all the research. Visit a library, a cultural center, or a museum that highlights the individual culture the girls wish to begin with. By completing one activity in each of the eight areas listed above the girls will become familiar with the differences in the cultures they are interested in learning about. If possible, try to have a guest speaker work with the girls for each topic they choose to learn about. One place to find a mentor for such topics would be a church, a nursing home, a museum, a parent or grandparent of a group member or friend or maybe even a school teacher.
Activity 2:

This patch program is intended to show girl the value of differences. It is important for them to act on what they have learned. In this activity each of them will make a pledge. They will promise to act in one simple way that will help to spread more understanding and respect for cultural differences individuality, and uniqueness.

This is also a good time to review the Girl Scout Promise and Law. When making their pledges, make sure that the goals are attainable. Give the girls a time frame in which to fulfill their pledge. Here are some suggestions of simple acts of kindness that the girls could use to fulfill their pledge:

- Eat lunch with a new kid at school
- Smile and be friendly with someone at school that you have never said hello to before
- Talk about this patch program with our family and volunteer to be a presenter at a troop meeting
- If you have been a bully, stop and practice tolerance
- Is there a group of people that you are prejudice about? If so make an effort to learn about their customs and try to understand why they do what they do.

Take a good look at your peers. Chances are that your friends or the close knit group that you usually hang out with are close in age, wear the same kind of cloths, have the same relative intelligence, and participate in the same or similar extra-curricular activities. Most of them are probably from the same racial and religious backgrounds and share the same values and beliefs. It makes sense that we gravitate towards people like ourselves, it’s comfortable and safe. When searching for friends, we look for common ground and a need to discuss and partake in things and activities that interest you both.

Sometimes we assume that people who look like us and dress like us are automatically like us. Well that isn’t always true. Another myth is that people who don’t look and dress like us, who don’t take the same classes in school, or who don’t share all the same beliefs can’t have anything in common with us. This does a horrible injustice to both us and others. People are people, kids your age are interested in the same things you are. How will you ever learn if you never ask? Just be brave enough to make the first move and see how your life can change.

A new student from another country was interviewed by her school newspaper and she made a statement that says it all. She said: “I learned that the world is much bigger than I once thought it was, I learned that kids my age are just like me. They have the same hopes and dreams and the same fears and disappointments in their lives. I think that if all of us can learn, accept, and embrace this fact, then we will eventually be able to accept and embrace each other as well.”
Activity 3:
Discover you family roots: the cultural background of our family greatly affects your life. Encourage girls to discover their family roots in the following ways:

- Each girl completes the My Heritage activity sheet and shares it with everyone at a meeting.
- Talk with older family members about memories of growing up. Where did your ancestors come from?
- Talk with older family members about memories of growing up. Was their everyday life influenced by nation and/or cultural traditions than a girl in America today? Do they have pictures they can share?
- If you are unable to complete the above, interview someone in a nursing home and find out about their culture and family heritage to share with the group.
My Heritage...Differences and Similarities

You are going to pretend that you are a reporter. Choose a family member, friend or a friend in a nursing home that you would like to interview. Someone older like a grandparent, great Aunt or Uncle or elderly friend who might remember the most family history. Ask questions on this paper and feel free to ask any other questions that may spark your interest. IF you need more room use another sheet of paper.

1) Who is the person you are interviewing?

2) What relation if any are they to you, if any?

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

4) When did your ancestors come to the United States?

5) Why did they leave the country in which they were born?

6) To what city in the United States did your ancestors first come? What did they do there for a living?

7) What language did your ancestors speak when they arrived in the United States?

8) Does anyone in your family still speak this language?

9) Are there special days or celebrations that are very important to your family? What are they and why are they and why are they important?
Activity 4:

Complete the “Some Think People In Groups Are All The Same” worksheet and share with the group.

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 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. Think hard and answer the following:

1) All girls like:

2) All boys are:

3) All teenagers are:

If they said things like “All girls like to play with dolls”, or “All boys are noisy” and All teenagers are bad drivers” then they know what a stereotype is.

Read the following scenario to the group:

Suppose that your class has a baseball game with another class at your school. Your team doesn’t do well the day you play. Some kids are not feeling well and make mistakes. The player’s trip and fall, drop the ball, have trouble catching the ball and running the bases because they don’t feel good. 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 the girls what responses they would have for the people who make those stereotypical comments without bothering to find out facts. Explain that these statements can’t be true of all of the people in a certain group. This should be an interactive discussion with a non judgmental format.
Activity 5:

Complete the “We Should Respect Each Other’s Differences activity sheet.

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
- Blame people who are different for anything that goes wrong
- Not appreciating differences, but using them to create discord
- Teasing

Read the girls the following story. Ask them to listen for examples of discrimination in the following story. Use the questions that follow to spark group discussion and create an open non-judgmental forum for discussion.

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 was in the shower at the pool. Someone scratched the words “four-eyes” into his desk at school. One day Billy accidently
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 ally. 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? Isn’t It Just Like Bullying?**

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 like Tommy?

**Activity 6:**

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, every time, we say it is universal. Some ideas, feelings and needs are universal because all human beings experience them.

Can the girls name the at least five things that every human being in the world needs.
Activity 8: for Cadets, Seniors and Ambassadors

Complete three of the following to complete your patch requirements:

- Take part in a diversity day or festival in your community
- Write a paragraph or a press release about someone from another culture who made a difference in her world
- Find out about the Nobel Peace Prize. Who awards it, how is it earned, and why it was awarded.
- Write a paragraph, and be honest, about a time when you pre-judged someone for reasons other than their character. Reasons such as the color of their skin, their dress, their food, were they too tall, too short, too fat, too thin... Why did you feel that way? Was it peer pressure?
- Start a journal, do you have what it takes to stand up for what’s right? Keep track of things you observe and journal how you could have made a difference. When you have identified an issue, will you have what it takes to correct it or to befriend the person being discriminated against? What can you do to help change the situation?