

The spring conference

for GB's children and youth leaders

7 March 2015

All Nations Church, Brickhill Drive,
Bedford, MK41 7QF

Including

volumise

What is this resource?

Soul sisters; feuds, fun and friendships among girls was a session held at Girls' Brigade's conference in March 2015 focusing on friendship issues among teenage girls.

This resource has been produced to help you, as leaders, run a practical session with the girls you work with to address these issues. Check out the Volumise section within our website's Go leader zone to find four video clips of Rachel Gardner equipping you to run the session and related to each section of this resource. You'll also find a link to a film by koko called *I've Got Your Back*, which you can show your girls to introduce the theme as a discussion starter, before starting the activities in this resource.

Where should I use it?

The resource is flexible and can be used in a variety of settings...

- GB groups – you could have a theme night around friendship and encourage the girls you already work with to bring a friend. You can then signpost the girls to the regular programmes you run – unpacking the theme further by linking to GB's **n:counta** materials (such as the *Who Am I? Track*, the *Looking At Self-Esteem Track*, and the *Relationship Issues Track*) and GB's **n:spire** materials (such as the *Emergency Channel*, *Pressure Channel*, and *Diva Channel*).
- Why not use the koko film and some of the activities to run a workshop or assembly in a local school? You can then encourage the girls who attend to come along to your GB group to find out more or to join the online koko community.



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SOUL SISTERS; feuds, fun and friendships among girls

I. ENGAGE

- What is friendship?
- How do you feel about your friends?
- How do you feel about yourself as a friend?

Check out the Volumise section (within the GB website's Go leader zone) for a video clip from Rachel equipping you to think about how we can **engage** girls to think about friendship. Plus a resource of discussion questions/activities which you can use in your group, district network or region to help equip other leaders.

MAGAZINE MADNESS

Collect a load of magazines (*Home*, *Grazia*, weekend paper mags, music mags, *Cosmo Girl*, *National Trust* mag etc.) and scatter them on the floor. Then in pairs the girls have to come up with as many torn out images/words/stories/ideas about FRIENDSHIP.

To increase the energy around this activity you could set a stopwatch. Once the time is up, explain that each group is going to have 60 seconds to show what they found.

Close by asking what this activity has shown them about how people in society see friendships i.e. does everyone in the magazines look like they're smiling and only hanging out with other great looking people? Might this make people feel that if you're sad or don't look like them, you're not friend material?

PICTURE PERFECT

Ask the girls, if you could invent a best friend out of thin air, what would she;

- Look like?
- Act like?
- Talk like?
- Be into?
- Wear?
- How would she treat you?
- How would she treat other people?
- Want to do in her future?
- Do in her spare time?
- What would her family be like?

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

1. Is she like you? Often we want to be friends with people who are already like us, or who are like the person we want to be!
2. We all know that no one is a perfect friend (including us). What things have you come up with that you think are a bit too unrealistic!
3. If you could only keep three things from your Picture Perfect list, what would they be and why?
4. Share your ideas with the other groups/girls and see if your top three overlap with any of theirs.
5. Do you feel your friends have any of these qualities/skills etc.?
6. Do you feel that you have any of these skills/qualities?

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2. EQUIP

- Recognise the differences between a healthy friendship group and an exclusive clique.
- Imagine life where you're free to have many different friends.

Check out the Volumise section (within the GB website's Go leader zone) for a video clip from Rachel equipping you to think about how we can **equip** girls to recognise healthy friendships and cliques. Plus a resource of discussion questions/activities which you can use in your group, district network or region to help equip other leaders.

CLIQUE or UNIQUE

On a large sheet of paper, get the girls to write down all the words and phrases they can think of when they hear the word 'UNIQUE'. Do the same on a sheet that says 'CLIQUE'.

Cliques are when girls are exclusive, bully people not in their clique, want people to go through a 'make-over' to join them and want to make sure they're the most popular clique.

ASK:

- Which list of words is more positive and which is more negative?
- Have you had much experience of cliques?
- Why is it almost impossible to be in a clique and be unique?
- What cliques exist in your school/college?
- Is there tension between different cliques at school/college?
- Why do you think this tension exists?
- What might it feel like to be in a clique?
- What might it feel like to not be in a clique?
- What does a clique give you?
- What does a real friend give you?

THE 'IN-BOX' GIRL

Describe the characteristics of a negative/unhealthy friendship (type of friendships formed in a clique). We'll call her the 'in-box' girl. Use a cardboard box to illustrate being in the box/part of the clique. Then ask the girls to write on sticky notes different things about someone that might keep them out of a clique e.g. 'wrong' skin colour/wear glasses/not sporty/haven't got a boyfriend etc.

FEEDBACK & RESPONSE:

Once they've done this, ask for their feedback. You might like to ask one of the leaders to stand in the box and represent the clique/negative friendship for the girls to talk to or fire questions at, like;

- Why are you so critical of people because of these random things like they wear glasses or don't listen to your music etc.?
- Your life is so narrow, don't you think you're missing out on getting to know some really great people?

Benefits of not being in a clique are:

NO GOSSIP

Cliques are prone to gossip and rumours. If you hate dealing with gossip and don't want your private stuff blasted out on social media, be careful you're not in a clique.

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THE 'IN-BOX' GIRL (cont.)

NO COMPARISONS

The boring part about a clique is that they often seem consumed with being the most popular girls on the planet! They get hurtful too; they might smile to your face while they're talking about you behind your back. If you know that you're your own person and don't need to be pulled down to their world or petty comparisons, don't join a clique.

REAL FRIENDS

A clique isn't going to give you the friends you really want. Instead these girls will just make you feel worse about yourself and your life. Look around you for the real friends you have. There might be less drama in a real friendship, but who needs the stress of that kind of drama when you could be having real laughs with true friends?

3. EMPOWER

- Being assertive in friendships.
- Handling conflict.

Check out the Volumise section (within the GB website's Go leader zone) for a video clip from Rachel equipping you to think about how we can **empower** girls to be assertive in friendships. Plus a resource of discussion questions/activities which you can use in your group, district network or region to help equip other leaders.

ANIMAL ACTION

'I think the best way to have confidence is not to allow everyone else's insecurities to be your own,' says singer Jessie J.

It takes a lot of confidence to be able to handle conflict and dramas in friendships. We respond to conflict in different ways. This activity divides responses into five different animals. Print off pictures of these animals and put them round the room. Explain how the 'animals' respond to conflict...

1. **OWL** – steps back from the situation and thinks through all their choices before acting.
2. **BOMBADIER BEETLE** – scuttles away from conflict.
3. **KOALA** – seems soft and cuddly on the surface but can bite/snap when pushed too far.
4. **OSTRICH** – digs its head into the sand to avoid conflict.
5. **BULL** – charges in ranting and raving.

Tell the girls that you'll read out different conflict situations and they need to go and stand by the animal they think best represents how they would respond.

1. Your best friend isn't talking to you because she thinks you've been saying bad things about her boyfriend.
2. Two of your friends have fallen out and won't talk to each other. They both want you to take sides with them and it's making you feel upset.
3. A friend has posted on Facebook something that you shared with her in the understanding that she'd keep it to herself.

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ANIMAL ACTION (cont.)

4. Your best friend wants to copy your Maths homework and is putting pressure on you saying you'd let her if you were a true friend.
5. A friend has told the person that you fancy that you like them, without getting your permission first.
6. Your best friend borrowed one of your tops and says she's returned it even though she hasn't.
7. Your friend appears to have a new best friend and won't include you in their conversations.

FIZZING OVER

Show the girls two bottles of fizzy drink. Tell a story about a friendship conflict, you could use one of the scenarios from the previous activity, and shake one of the bottles as you do so. Leave the other bottle sitting on the table.

Explain that reacting to a situation straight away means it can explode – and open (somewhere like a sink!) the bottle that you've been shaking. Whereas waiting and thinking about how to best deal with a situation means you stay calmer – open the second bottle and let everyone have a drink.

This simple activity shows the importance of taking a step back to get a wider perspective to understand what is happening and to think through a positive response rather than getting your own back.

4. ENJOY

- Celebrating the great things good friendships bring.
- Valuing our strengths as friends.

Check out the Volumise section (within the GB website's Go leader zone) for a video clip from Rachel equipping you to think about how we can encourage girls to **enjoy** their friendships. Plus a resource of discussion questions/activities which you can use in your group, district network or region to help equip other leaders.

LOVE WRAP

1. Either buy self-sticking paper chains or cut out your own.
2. Give five 'chains' to each girl that they spread out in front of them on the floor.
3. Play some gentle music and invite the girls to write one positive thing about the kind of friend they are on one of their own chains.
4. Then ask them to shut their eyes and you as leaders go and take one 'chain' from each girl to write something positive about the kind of friend you leaders see them as being. Once the leader has done this they replace it. Girl still has her eyes shut!
5. The remaining three are for the girls to write something positive on for each other.
6. End with the girls reading all the comments on the five 'chains' and then sticking them into one paper chain bracelet as a sign of accepting their value and unique contribution as a friend to many people.

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THE GREAT GIVE AWAY

Great friends not only love crazy times together, they also love giving themselves away in the service of others. Here's a chance to pick something relevant for your group to try, such as:

- Who could you be a better friend to? Could the girls send encouraging messages to their friends on social media, ask someone lonely at school/college to sit with them at lunch, or say something encouraging to a family member?
- Could your group cook food for a local homeless project or support a local charity in another way?
- Encourage the girls to join an advocacy campaign, such as those run by Girls' Brigade, so they can be a support for people without a voice.
- Get crafty – could the girls make a handmade present for someone.