

Conformity vs. Community: Session 3

Overview:

During this session it is important to talk to the girls about what happens when they conform to a group just to fit in or be accepted. It is also important to talk about how community works in a friendship. The girls need to recognize that when they are going along with a group they are losing a part of themselves.

Scenario:

Discuss a situation where two friends have similar tastes in some things, but differ in others. For example, both love to play volleyball and watch *The Hills*; however, these same two friends totally disagree on their style of dress. Ask the girls how it is possible for these girls to be friends if they don't like the same style of clothing. Have them think of another situation where friends may differ or disagree on certain points. Ask the girls if friendships can work when people have different opinions or hobbies.

Discussion:

Talk to the girls about conforming and what that means. Try to get them to come up with examples of conformity. Also, ask the girls how they might define a community. You can use the example of a GEMS group: different girls, with different groups of friends united by GEMS to try to eliminate relational aggression. Who makes up such a group? How does it work? Use the following questions to help them.

- 1.) Are you conforming when you don't stick up for a girl who your friends are talking about?
- 2.) Do you think it is okay for friends to have arguments or disagree? Why? Why not?
- 3.) Can you remain friends with someone and still be totally honest with her? How do you avoid hurting her feelings when you don't agree?
- 4.) Do you think it is okay to have different groups of friends? Why? Why not?
- 5.) In a community, how can people celebrate each other's differences?

Notes:

Next, the girls take notes on the differences between conformity and community (p. 19). You can print out the notes or use an LCD projector to show them. Or, you may want the girls to come up with the differences on their own or in pairs and then compare notes. Afterwards, discuss examples of each or have the girls come up with examples of each on their own. It is important to help the girls realize that they can appreciate the differences and things they have in common with their friends.

Activity:

Give the girls a piece of construction paper to fold in half. On one side they need to draw a picture or symbols to represent conformity and on the other side they need to draw a picture or symbols to represent community. Then share these drawings and discuss the symbols.

Tangle-Hands Activity:

Don't forget that this and every GEMS session should end with the tangle-hands activity!

SAMPLE