



Problem Solving with G.I.R.L.

Recommended
for girls 7
and up

Problem Solving with G.I.R.L.

Adapted from the national nonprofit, Girls Leadership, this activity cultivates the skills girls need for effective problem solving. It's designed for role models to use with individual or groups of girls seven-years-old and up.

Girls are introduced to a problem-solving sequence called G.I.R.L. to help them organize their thoughts, weight their options, and strategize effectively. Knowing how to navigate life's challenges will help girls build resilience—a crucial leadership skill.

GOALS FOR GIRLS:

- Learn and practice a problem-solving sequence
- Reflect on what is gained from a failed problem-solving attempt

MATERIALS:

- Step-by-step instructions
- Sample talking points (but feel free to use your own words!)
- G.I.R.L. handout

ESTIMATED TIME: 20-25 minutes



Introduction to G.I.R.L.

G.I.R.L. is a problem-solving sequence that helps girls generate multiple strategies to address a problem and feel more in control. It also pushes girls to think two moves ahead and be strategic about the outcome they want. When they explain why they're making a certain choice, girls become more accountable for their decisions. Best of all, when they imagine the end result of a strategy before choosing it, they get the chance to change their minds before doing something they regret.

We encourage you to use G.I.R.L. every time a girl in your life faces a challenge. Through repetition and practice, she will eventually learn to do the steps in her head—and even in the moment itself!

Step 1:

Discuss conflict in relationships

ESTIMATED TIME: 3-5 minutes

When a girl is facing a challenge, take a moment to recognize her feelings by empathizing.

For example, you can say:

- “ • *I know this must be really hard...*
• *I'm sorry you're hurting...*
• *You must feel so [insert emotion]...* ”

Find out how she wants to handle the problem by asking,

“ *What do you want to do about this?* ”

If she says, “I don't know,” explain why you're asking by saying something like:

“ *I know you're having a hard time right now, and I know you feel confused about what to do. In the long run, it won't help you if I just give you the answer or tell you what to do. The only way we learn to solve our own problems is through practice. That's why we're going to work on this together—you and me.* ”

We all face challenges but with good problem-solving skills they don't seem as hard.

Step 2:

Practice the G.I.R.L. problem-solving protocol

ESTIMATED TIME: 15 minutes

Start by introducing G.I.R.L. You can use the attached handout or just list out G.I.R.L. on a piece of paper.

Here's some language to help you describe G.I.R.L. and how it works:

“ *When you have a problem and don't know what to do, it helps to map out all your choices so you can come up with the best strategy. We're going to practice a special way of doing that right now.*

It starts with the word girl—G.I.R.L.

G: Gather Your Choices

Write about all the possible choices you could make.

I: I Choose

Pick one choice out of all the possibilities you just listed and decide what you want to do.

R: Reasons Are

Write in the reasons why you made your choice.

L: List the Outcomes

List all the things that could happen if you make this choice. **”**

Now, complete G.I.R.L. together. You can use a problem she is currently facing or try the sample.

QUICK TIP:

When she makes a decision about what to do, brainstorm together about a day, time, and place she can try it.

SAMPLE PROBLEM:

Ask her to imagine this situation:

You keep hearing that one of your friends is talking about you behind your back.

Then walk her through the sample responses:

G: Gather Your Choices

- Stop speaking to her
- Tell her to stop
- Ask her if she's mad at me
- Ask her why she's doing it
- Ask my friends if they know what's going on
- Talk to an adult
- Talk about her behind her back

I: I Choose

Ask her why she's doing it

R: Reasons Are

Because I want to give her a chance to tell me how she's feeling

L: List the Outcomes

- She might apologize and stop
- She might deny it
- She might get mad at me
- She might apologize and keep doing it

Step 3:

After she tries her strategy, talk about how it went

ESTIMATED TIME: 3–5 minutes

Start by giving her lots of praise for taking a risk and going for it! Then talk together about what happened. Avoid passing judgment about the end result. Instead, ask her to consider what worked well and what could have gone better—both with the approach she chose to take and the G.I.R.L. process as a whole.

If the outcome didn't turn out as well as she had hoped, acknowledge her disappointment, then ask her what she learned. For example, you might say:

“ I know you're disappointed, and I would be too. But even when things don't go your way, you still learn new things that will help you the next time you're in a jam. Let's think together about what you got out of this experience and how it might help you in the future. ”

It pays for
girls to be gritty:
one of the most
common attributes
of successful women
is resilience.





About “Together Women Can”

“Together Women Can” is a public awareness campaign from LeanIn.Org celebrating the power of women supporting each other—and the amazing things we accomplish when we do. Visit leanin.org/together for more information and celebrate the women who **#LeanInTogether** with you on social media.

About Girls Leadership

Girls Leadership teaches girls the skills to know who they are, what they believe, and how to express it, empowering them to create change in their world. Girls Leadership works not only with girls, but also with their primary influencers—parents, teachers, and caregivers—to create sustainable impact.

girlsleadership.org

G.I.R.L.: Your Secret Weapon for Solving Problems

Write down your problem:



Now use G.I.R.L. to help solve it:

G

Gather Your Choices

I

I Choose

L

List the Outcomes

R

Reasons Are
