

Activities for Role Models for Girls

Together we can raise a generation of female leaders. Whether you're a mother, older sister, or mentor, model leadership and teach girls to speak up and step outside their comfort zone. This guide includes two activities you can use to role model leadership to the girls in your life.

SETTING & ACHIEVING GOALS


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- This activity helps girls break their goals down into achievable steps, so they can see a path from where they are to where they want to go.
- It is recommended for girls ten-years-old and up.

PROBLEM SOLVING WITH G.I.R.L.

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- This activity cultivates the skills girls need for effective problem solving.
- It is recommended for girls seven-years-old and up.



Research shows that the confidence gap starts young: between elementary school and high school, girls' self-esteem drops 3.5 times more than boys'. Women can counteract this trend by role modeling leadership and encouraging girls to step outside their comfort zone.

For practical everyday tips for supporting the girls in your life, visit **leanin.org/rolemodel**.



Setting & Achieving Goals

Recommended
for girls 10
and up

Setting & Achieving Goals

Because girls often struggle with confidence and fear making mistakes, they are less likely to take risks. Adapted from the national nonprofit, Girls Leadership, this activity is a great tool to help girls break their goals down into achievable steps, so they can see a path from where they are to where they want to go. It's designed to use with individual or groups of girls ten-years-old and up.

GOALS FOR GIRLS:

- Learn the qualities of an effective goal
- Practice setting goals and identifying the steps to achieving those goals

MATERIALS:

- Step-by-step instructions
- Sample talking points (but feel free to use your own words!)
- Activity handout

ESTIMATED TIME: 30-40 minutes



Step 1:

Introduce the topic of goals

ESTIMATED TIME: 5 minutes

Engage the girl in your life in a lively discussion about goals. You can use these questions as conversation starters:

- “ • *Why is it important to have goals in our lives?*
- *Agree or disagree: To be a good leader, you must have goals.*
 - *What is a goal you have for this year? Or what is an example of a goal someone your age might have for this year?* ”

Take a moment and explain why goals are important. Here's some language to use as a starting point:

“ *Being a leader is about having a vision for change—and encouraging ourselves, and the people around us, to work hard to bring that vision to life. By setting goals for ourselves, with a timeline and steps to get there, we get closer to creating the change we want.*

Goal setting is an important life and leadership skill. When you know how to set goals, you get much closer to making them a reality. ”

Goal setting matters. When we set specific goals, we're more likely to achieve them.

Step 2:

Explain how to translate dreams into goals

ESTIMATED TIME: 5-10 minutes

Start by asking her a question:

“How are goals different from dreams?”

Let her contribute several responses, then explain the difference between goals and dreams:

“Goals help us realize our dreams—they are the steps between us and what you imagine could be possible. Goals are different from dreams because they are more concrete and achievable. While I might dream of going to the moon someday, my goal would be to get an A in Physics.

A good goal is specific and objective, so it's easy to see the results, and I recommend we focus on short-term goals that can be accomplished in one year.”

Push girls to
dream big but set
realistic goals for
themselves.

QUICK TIP:

Share a dream you had when you were a girl. Then ask the girl you're working with to share her dream and applaud her courage when she does.

EXAMPLES OF DREAMS VS. GOALS

Dream

I want to run in the Olympics

Goal

I want to run JV track this spring

Dream

I want to be a great teacher

Goal

I want to be a mentor to younger students

Step 3:

Explain how to set personal goals

ESTIMATED TIME: 5-10 minutes

Now that she understands the difference between dreams and goals, explain how to break goals down into smaller, attainable steps. **For example, you can say:**

“ Sometimes goals seem so big that it’s almost impossible to imagine how you’ll accomplish them. By breaking a goal down into smaller steps, we can take on new and sometimes scary things in smaller pieces. This allows us to feel a little braver, and makes it more likely that we won’t give up. ”

Distribute the attached handout and introduce the activity to her. For example, you can say:

“ We’re going to practice breaking down our goals into smaller steps. The steps to a goal can be any size—small and easy, or large and difficult. We’re going to organize the steps into three groups—which we’ll call risk zones—based on how nervous they make us. Then we’ll each pick the first step we’re going to take! ”

The concept of risk zones may be new to her, so spend time walking her through each zone. Start with the definitions below and then use the examples on the sidebar or others you create together.

- **Your Comfort Zone:** Feels easy to do—no problem!
- **Your Low Risk Zone:** Makes you feel a little nervous—but not terrified!
- **Your High Risk Zone:** Makes you so nervous now that it’s hard to imagine trying—but maybe you can!

EXAMPLE OF BREAKING A GOAL INTO RISK ZONES

Goal

Be in a school play

Comfort Zone

Talk to members of drama club and find out what it’s like

Low Risk Zone

Talk to drama teacher about what it takes to audition

High Risk Zone

Audition for play

Make sure she understands that we all have different comfort zones. She—and only she—should decide what feels right to her.

Step 4:

Complete the handout & debrief

ESTIMATED TIME: 15-20 minutes

Ask her to complete the handout, which prompts her to fill in four things:

- 1. Her dream:** What she imagines is possible—a big, bold vision
- 2. Her goal:** What she can do in the next year on her way to her dream
- 3. Her steps:** The steps she can take to reach her goal, organized by how risky each step feels
- 4. Her first step:** The first step she is comfortable taking toward her goal

Sit beside her while she works and push her to be as specific and realistic as possible with her goals—and her tolerance for risk.

When she's done, ask her to share her goal and the first step she's going to take toward reaching it. Thank her for sharing and celebrate her commitment to try something new. **Wrap up the activity with some additional words of encouragement:**

“*Having dreams is a thrilling part of growing up and imagining your future. Making them a reality takes hard work and practice. When you have the skills to break your dream down into goals, and break your goals down into smaller steps, you create your own road map for success!*”

Every journey begins with a single step! By breaking goals into small steps, girls build confidence and get closer to reaching their goals...and their dreams.

QUICK TIP:

Highlight a few famous women and men who realized their dreams to inspire her and emphasize all the hard work and smaller achievements it took to get them there.



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

Ready, Set, Goal!

1. Fill in your dream

What you imagine is possible—a big, bold vision

**Dream big
but set a
realistic goal
for yourself.**

2. Fill in your goal

What you can do in the next year
on your way to the dream

3. Fill in your steps

Break your goal into steps and organize them into these three risk zones.

Steps in My Low Risk Zone

Makes you feel a little nervous—but not terrified!

Steps in My Comfort Zone

Feels easy to do—no problem!

Steps in My High Risk Zone

Makes you so nervous now that it's hard to imagine trying—but maybe you can!

4. Circle Your First Step

Read through the steps in all three risk zones and circle the one you feel comfortable doing first.



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.





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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
