**Community:** Participants articulate a conception of community including various family structures, habitation, and acceptance and inclusion of differences and commonalities within a group; participants discuss ways to value all roles and voices of individuals in a group, responsibly help others and each other, and share resources.

**Lesson plans:**
1) Community is...
2) Spider-Web

**Lesson: Community is...**
**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** What is community? What can community look like?

**OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:** Participants define community; participants brainstorm ways to value all roles and voices in a group, responsibly help others and each other, and share resources.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Communities can be thought of as physical spaces (ex: neighborhoods, cities, states) and as groups of people. Communities are made up of individuals, familial units, services, organizations, and institutions. The various communities to which we belong influence who we are socially and psychologically. A social-justice oriented teaching of community aims to build a community that values all members equally, listens to all voices, acknowledges differences among community members and nonmembers, recognizes commonalities among community members and nonmembers, shares resources equally, members of a community help each other, and collectively seeks to remedy injustices. Teaching young people to value, build, and actively participate in community connects them with others, helps them build and maintain friendships, and empowers them to be responsible and contributing citizens.

**MATERIALS:**
- Board or large paper
- Seed packages—1 per participant
- Food items—1 per participant
- Bottles of water—1 per participant
- Blankets—1 per participant
- Band-Aids—1 per participant
- Nametags with job titles on them—1 per participant
- Money or paper money—$5 per participant
- Paper representing laws

**LENGTH OF LESSON:** 45 minutes to 1 hour
PROCEDURE:
1. Have participants sit in a circle. Begin a discussion of the idea of community. Explain that communities are groups of people who live in the same place and/or share similar beliefs. Explain to participants that their community is in a certain neighborhood, city/town, state, country, and planet. Explain that there are various versions of communities (ex: classroom, school, neighborhood, city, online community, global community).
2. Begin a discussion about elements of a community. Explain that communities are made up of individuals, families, resources, services, and institutions. Write the five elements on the board. Have participants contribute to the descriptions of the elements of community by asking questions such as: What organizations/establishments are parts of your life (ex: school, recreation, sports teams, church, etc)? Who is important in your life (ex: family, friends, etc)? What kinds of jobs do these people have (ex: teacher, truck driver, waiter, etc)? What kinds of things do your family, your friends, and you need to live (ex: water, food, shelter, health, etc)? Record participant’s ideas as they give them. How do you think all of the elements of a community should interact (ex: share things, work together, fight)?
3. Participants will now have a chance to create their own community and decide how it will operate. Explain that participants can use experiences from their own lives, they can think of new ways of doing things, or they can organize their community how they wish a community would operate.
4. Place all the seed packages (representing food), food items (representing food), water, money, blankets (representing shelter), Band-Aids (representing health care), nametags with job titles (representing community roles and jobs), and laws (representing laws that protect everyone) on the floor or on a table in the center of the circle. Explain each element or what it represents. Job titles include:
   - Teacher
   - Spiritual leader
   - Law enforcement
   - Student
   - Waiter
   - Entertainer
   - Mayor
   - Lawyer
   - Doctor
   - Librarian
   - Scientist
   - Athlete
   - Computer tech
   - Mechanic
   - Accountant
   - Cook/chef
   - Farmer
   - Firefighter
   - Musician
   - News reporter
   - Custodian
5. Explain that the circle is now a community and participants will need to decide how to operate the community. Prompt them with questions such as: What would be your role(s) in the community? What would your community look like? What would it feel like? How will you distribute these resources? How will you come to a consensus on how the community will be organized? What are characteristics that community members should have (ex: responsibility, helping others, sharing, being kind, etc)?
6. Allow participants time to work out their community. Assist as necessary. Ideally participants will choose to be inclusive of all members of the community and distribute resources equally.
7. After the community has been established and resources distributed, lead a debrief discussion. Ask participants to think about: How did you distribute the resources? How did you decide to do it that way? Did everyone agree? What did you do when there was disagreement?
8. Congratulate participants on their hard work building community. Remind them that building community is difficult and takes work. Remind them that successful communities share resources and services equally, value all members, and work together. Remind participants they each play an important role in each community they are part of and they should work towards building communities everywhere they go.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What communities do you belong to? Why is each community important to you?

EVALUATION: Did participants discuss elements of a community? Did participants share resources and services during the activity?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a community leader or local government representative to speak to Girls Only. Arrange a neighborhood walk where participants can identify elements of the community and institutions such schools, churches, government buildings. Arrange for field trips to community farms, farmer’s markets, colleges, museums, and theater performances to expose participants to various parts of their community, to facilitate connections between participants and others, and help participants understand themselves as members of their local community.

Lesson: Spider Web
ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How are we all connected?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants work together to create a spider web out of string; participants get a visual reminder of how we are all connected.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: A simple and creative way to help participants recognize that everyone contributes something valuable as individuals to a community.

MATERIALS:
- Thick string (at least a yard long per participant)
- Scissors

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

PROCEDURE:
1. Begin by explaining this activity will help us see that we are all connected. Individuals make up a community and everyone plays a unique role in that community. Remind participants that even though we are all different, when we appreciate those differences, recognize our similarities, and work together, we can make something beautiful. Give examples of ways individuals contribute to communities: sharing resources, respecting others, helping others, sharing their expertise, challenging inequality and injustice, and working together.
2. Have participants sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs.
3. Explain the activity. In this activity participants will create a spider-web out of string. When the ball of string is passed to them, they will pinch a piece of the string and hold onto it. As the facilitator, start the activity by pinching the end of the string, stating your name, stating how you contribute to the Girls Only community, and how you contribute to your family, neighborhood, or world. For example: “My name is Miss Gonzalez. I contribute to the Girls Only community by preparing activities for you all because you are so special to me. I contribute to my family by helping to cook dinner on special occasions.” Then continue to hold onto the end of the string and pass the ball of string to a participant across from you.

4. When someone has the ball of string in their hands they will state 1) their name, 2) how they contribute to/play a part in the Girls Only community, 3) how they contribute to/play a part in their family, school, neighborhood, or world. For example: “My name is Gina. I contribute to the Girls Only community by sharing my experiences with the group. I contribute to my neighborhood community by picking up trash on the sidewalk” or “My name is Rose. I contribute to the Girls Only community by helping the teacher pass out papers. I contribute to my school community by volunteering as a reading tutor to younger students.”

5. After they have shared, the participant will keep pinching their section of string and pass the roll of string to someone across from them. As the spider-web gets formed, participants will have to throw the ball of string, walk it over or under other parts of the web. It is ok if the web gets tangled, allow participants to figure out the best way to communicate to create the web. Assist as necessary.

6. After all participants have shared, pass the ball of string back to the facilitator.

7. Each participant should be holding a piece of string and the effect should look like a spider-web. Encourage participants to look at the beautiful piece of art they have created by working together. They each played a part as individuals to create a communal piece of art.

8. Ask participants to share what they learned from the spider-web activity.

9. To finish the activity, have each participant place their piece of the spider-web gently down so that the shape remains even as it is set on the floor.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What are three ways you can be an active member of the community in your school, neighborhood, or world?

EVALUATION: Did participants work together to create the spider-web? Did participants create a spider-web?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have each participant wrap a small section of string around their wrist as an intention bracelet. Have each participant set an intention such as “I will always tell the truth,” “I will keep myself safe,” “I will help others when I can,” “I will think before I speak,” and explain that they can look at their bracelets and be reminded of their intention. Use this activity as a starting point for a lesson about respecting spiders and other animals.