

**Media:** Participants learn about the media’s influence on our lives; participants identify how the media influences their attitudes; participants brainstorm ways to combat the media’s negative influence.

Lesson plans:

- 1) Media
- 2) Media and My Body and Mind
- 3) My Media

Lesson: Media

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is media?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: **Participants define “media;” participants learn about different forms of media; participants discuss the purposes and uses of media.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Media is used to convey information. Mass media is used to communicate to large numbers of people. Media includes television, radio, music players, computers, billboard advertisements, magazines, books, and newspapers. Teaching young people about the purposes and uses of media empowers them to be able to use a variety of media sources, allowing them an outlet for expression.

MATERIALS:

- Television set—TV shows, movies on VHSs, DVDs, Laser Discs, BluRays
- Radio—talk shows, music
- Stereo—CDs, tapes, records, podcasts, music
- Computer—internet, email, social networking sites
- Magazines and Zines
- Books
- Newspapers
- Video games
- Camera—(digital, Polaroid, film, movie camera)
- Cell phones—text messaging

LENGTH OF LESSON: 45 minutes to 1 hour

PROCEDURE:

1. Display examples of all types of media on a table at the front of the room. Display pictures of **those you don’t have a real example of.**
2. Ask participants: What is media? If they are unsure, prompt them with further questions: How do you get the news? **How do you find out what’s going on in the world? What can be used to communicate a message?** List different forms of media as participants brainstorm.

3. After they give some answers, explain that media is anything used to convey a message and mass media, like newspapers and television, are used to reach a lot of people. Using several forms of media together is called multimedia and media is also used creatively as art.
4. **Demonstrate the use of each type of media. Show pictures of those you don't have. For each type of media, hold it up and ask the participants to name it. Ask them what it is used for. Ask them what it could be used for to encourage them to think outside the box and brainstorm how media can be used to challenge injustice. For example: "What is this?"—"A newspaper!"—"What is it used for?"—"To give the news! To advertise things you can buy! To share opinions! To give gossip about celebrities! To show comic strips! To share crossword puzzles and other games!"** or "What is this?"—"A laptop computer!"—"What is it used for?"—"To play games! To write stories! To write emails! To look up stuff on the internet! To do scientific research! To listen to music! To make music! To keep pictures! To make slideshows to educate people! To report the news! or "What is this?"—"A digital camera!"—"What is it used for?"—"To take pictures! To be artistic! To keep memories!
5. Pass around each type of media for participants to touch and hold.
6. Ask participants to share examples of the latest technological media advances that you may not even be aware of!

JOURNAL PROMPT: If you had your own TV show what would you show on it? If you had your own radio station what kind of music would you play? If you hosted your own podcast what would you talk about? If you had your own website what would be on it?

EVALUATION: Did participants define media? Did participants learn about different forms of media?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Participants can research the invention and development of different types of media. Invite a newspaper editor, a newscaster, a movie or TV producer, or book author to visit Girls Only. Take a field trip to a TV or movie studio or a newspaper publishing office.

### Lesson: Media and My Body and Mind

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How does the media influence your mind? How does the media influence your body?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants discuss the role of the media in their own lives; participants critically analyze and deconstruct images shown in the media; participants create posters demonstrating the stereotypical and damaging images portrayed in the media.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Influential media exposure infiltrates the minds of girls ages 8 to 12 at an alarmingly high degree. The inundation of media influences in our society such as television, movies, the internet, video games, music, and magazines has real effects on our **minds and bodies**. According to research, "the average North American girl will watch 5,000

hours of television, including 80,000 ads, before she starts kindergarten” (Baeza 1). Despite the incredible benefits the presence of advanced media technology has in our lives, especially the ever-increasing possibilities for communication and interconnection of people around the world, media can be dangerous. The majority of the images seen in advertisements and the media portray women (and men) in stereotypical roles: women are shown as sex objects and/or doing traditional female work. Many of the images we see have also been photo-shopped or altered to portray a different version of “reality” than we may believe. Women of color, when portrayed at all in the media, are often shown in negative and/or stereotypical roles; variation of body type, size, and ability in mainstream media imagery is rare; and variation of gender expression and sexuality in mainstream media imagery is rare. This media influence manifests in the minds and bodies of tween girls as unrealistic body expectations, stereotypic racial and gender ideas, and misguided notions of love, success, and career opportunities. Discussing the role of the media and critically analyzing and deconstructing images shown in the media helps young people understand the influence of media

#### MATERIALS:

- Computer with internet access
- Videos or online videos about ads, beauty, and the media
- Magazines
- Video games
- Newspapers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pens, pencils
- Poster boards or large paper

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

#### PROCEDURE:

1. Preparation: cut out images and ads from magazines that promote traditional gender roles or **stereotypical body images. Include sexualized images, women and men doing “feminine” tasks,** and models who look thin, light-skinned, and wealthy.
2. Remind participants what media is and what role it plays in their lives. Explain that it is okay to be susceptible to the influence of the media. It is all around us! Billboards, TVs, websites, magazines and other types of media send us messages all the time. These images and messages influence how we think and feel about our bodies and ourselves. Explain this may happen unconsciously: we may not be paying attention to what an ad is for or we may be thinking that **that picture looks silly, but the message of what is “beautiful” or “cool” gets transmitted to our brain anyways.** When this influence gets combined with trying to fit in with our friends and worrying about what other people think, we get caught up in trying to fit these unrealistic ideals instead of staying true to ourselves.
3. Divide participants into small groups. Pass out advertisement and magazine images to each group. Ask the groups to deconstruct or pick apart the image. Remind them to think about

colors, positions, lighting, and all elements of the image. Prompt them with questions: What product is being sold? Who is being portrayed in the picture? Who is the ad aimed at? Why is this the picture being used? What ideals are being promoted by the image? Are those ideals realistic? How does the image and/or words make you feel?

4. Have each group report out on their findings.

5. Pass out magazines, scissors, glue, poster paper, and pens and pencils.

6. Explain participants will create a poster of images from the media. Direct participants to cut out images and glue them to their poster with their group. The images should depict women in stereotypical roles. Remind them that stereotypes are beliefs or oversimplifications about groups or types of people—a stereotypical image of a woman might show her doing traditional **“feminine” tasks like laundry or cooking food. The images can also depict certain beauty ideals and ways of behaving.**

7. After cutting out images and gluing them on their poster, have participants write comments next to the images. Have them write what ideals the image is promoting, what makes them angry about the image, why it hurts their feelings, makes them feel bad about their body or how they look. For example, if there is an image of a thin, black woman advertising hair straightening spray, **a participant might write, “promotes thinness—makes me feel like I’m not skinny enough” or “promotes unnatural hair—makes me feel like my curly hair is ugly.”** Assist as necessary.

8. Have groups present their completed posters, describing the images depicted and their comments. Ask each group: who benefits from putting out images that make you feel like that? (ex: advertisers, cosmetics companies, weight loss companies, alcohol companies, modeling agencies, clothing companies, men). Ask each group for ideas to challenge the images they chose. Allow time for questions and comments.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What makes you angry about messages the media sends to you? Do you believe messages the media sends you about what you should look like? Which ones?

EVALUATION: Did participants critically analyze the role of the media in their lives? Did participants create a poster demonstrating the stereotypical and damaging images portrayed in the media and their feelings about the images?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite an employee of an advertising agency to come to Girls Only to speak about the intentions of ads. Have participants write letters to advertising companies telling them how their depictions make them feel.

## Lesson: My Media

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can I make my own media?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants create their own media messages that resist stereotypes, challenge standards of beauty, and encourage empowerment; participants create their own media display.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: Teaching girls how to create their own media through arts education and technology education provides opportunities for them to creatively challenge stereotypes and empower themselves. Teaching girls about technology and media is also important because those fields have historically been dominated by men. If more women create and control the images of themselves shown in the mainstream, hopefully there will be more of an inclusive representation of women of all colors, abilities, ages, and sizes.

### MATERIALS:

- My Media Worksheet
- Computer with internet access
- Sample websites depicting empowering images and words
- Video Cameras
- Recording devices
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Photos of Girls Only participants
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pens, pencils
- Poster boards or large paper

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

### PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by explaining that today participants will have the opportunity to answer the questions: If you had your own television station what would you show on it? If you had your own radio station what kind of music would you play? If you hosted your own podcast what would you talk about? If you had your own website what would be on it? If you made your own video game, what would it be about?
2. Remind participants what media is and what role it plays in their lives.
3. Explain they will be designing their own media to resist stereotypes, challenge standards of beauty, and empower girls and women. Explain that they will be making posters, laying out magazines, designing video games, writing movie scripts, or designing websites.
4. Pass out the My Media Worksheets. Work on it as a whole group, talking and sharing ideas together.

5. Have participants choose what type of media they would like to design: poster, song, radio show/podcast program, television show, movie, video game, website, magazine, newspaper, or book. They probably only have time to create one media design. This will be how they convey their message.

6. After they have chosen their type of media, have participants answer the essential question: what message do you want your media to convey? The messages should be general and succinct. Examples of media messages:

- Everyone is beautiful inside and out
- You do not need to wear make-up
- Women and girls have changed the world
- Be true to yourself
- Believe in yourself
- I love my body
- Your hair is naturally perfect
- Eat healthy food and get lots of exercise
- Appreciate nature and the outdoors
- Protect the environment
- Volunteer in your community
- **I don't need a prince or a knight to rescue me**
- Read lots of books

7. After deciding on their general media message, have participants decide who will be their audience. Is their media intended for girls their age? Parents? Teachers? Younger kids? Everyone? Ask them to decide who they specifically want to send their message to and why.

8. Next, have participants decide on their slogan/tagline or title, appropriate to their media type and targeting their intended audience. The slogan/tagline or title may be the same as the media message, it may be an addition to, or it may be completely different. For example, if they **are going to create a television show and the media message is "Women and girls have changed the world," the title of the show might be: "We are the World: Amazing women and girls who have changed the world."** Remind the participants that it is *their* media and they can make it however they want! Allow them to be creative.

9. Next, have participants draw or write an outline or layout of their media design. This is the content of their media project, or what supports their message. For example, if they are making **the television show "We are the World: Amazing women and girls who have changed the world," an outline might include names of amazing women** and girls who have made an impact on their communities, ideas for who will host the show, and what kinds of images the show will depict.

10. After participants have outlined their projects, have them create their project! If they are making a poster, laying out a magazine, laying out a newspaper, or designing a website/webpage they can cut out images and words from magazines and glue them to a poster. Remind them that if the images or words they are looking for are not there, they should write or draw their own! If a video camera is available, teach them to use it to shoot a short film in line with their television show or movie design. If internet access is available, teach them to create a webpage in line with their website design using free software such as [www.sites.google.com](http://www.sites.google.com). If they are creating a song, radio show, or podcast, have them write a short script of a show and record their performance into a voice recorder.

11. Have participants present or perform their media to the group, stating the type of media, the media message, the intended audience, the slogan/tagline or title, and the content of the media. Remind participants to be supportive of one another and leave time for questions.

12. **Display participants' media projects around the Girls Only space.**

JOURNAL PROMPT: If you created a superhero to be the star of a television show or a movie you were writing, what super powers would she have and why?

EVALUATION: **Did participants create their own media message? Did participant's media message and display resist stereotypes, challenge standards of beauty, and encourage empowerment?**

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Invite a web designer or technology expert to visit Girls Only to teach about creating websites and coding. Invite an artist to visit Girls Only to teach about using multimedia as creative expression. Invite a photographer or videographer to visit Girls Only to teach about using these technologies to create media; arrange for participants to create their own photo exhibits. Have participants design their own t-shirt or other clothing. Arrange

# My Media Worksheet

Type of media: \_\_\_\_\_

My media message:

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Who my media is for: \_\_\_\_\_

My slogan/tagline/title:

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Layout of my media:

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