

**Graduation: Celebrate participants' successful completion of the program!**

Lesson plans:

1) Graduation Ceremony

### Lesson: Graduation Ceremony

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How far have you come since we began Girls Only? What have you learned in Girls Only?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants celebrate and are recognized for their completion of the Girls Only program.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: A graduation ceremony is a celebration that marks the completion of an education or vocational program. Celebrating the achievements of participants with a ceremony, certificates, and potentially a party, demonstrates that their hard work is recognized and valued. Graduation ceremonies are a time to honor progress, to be proud, and to be a launching point for next steps. Graduation eligibility may be determined at your discretion; it is recommended that girls who have attended a majority of the Girls Only classes during that session should be allowed to attend the ceremony and receive a certificate.

MATERIALS:

- Certificates
- Powerpoint slide show or poster display
- Party food, decorations, and supplies

LENGTH OF LESSON: 1 to 2 hours

PROCEDURE:

1. **Prepare graduation certificates for each participant. Put the participant's name in large print.** Sign and date the certificate.
2. Prepare a powerpoint slide show or a poster display showing photos or depictions of **activities from the session of Girls Only. Include every participant's name and picture at least once.**
3. Invite parents/guardians to attend graduation ceremony.
4. Prepare and set up party food, decorations, and seating as desired.
5. Begin the day of graduation with journaling. As participants finish their entries, allow them to get party food and whatever other graduation treats you have prepared.
6. When all participants have finished journaling and have received their food, bring the attention to you at the front of the room. Congratulate all the participants on completing the session of Girls Only and tell them how proud you are of them, how much you have enjoyed watching each of them grow, and how much you look forward to seeing where their futures take them.
7. Have all staff, volunteers, and mentors stand at the front of the room and take turns saying something encouraging to the participants: progress they have seen, favorite memories from

the past weeks, or kind words. Have staff, volunteers, and mentors remain at the front of the room.

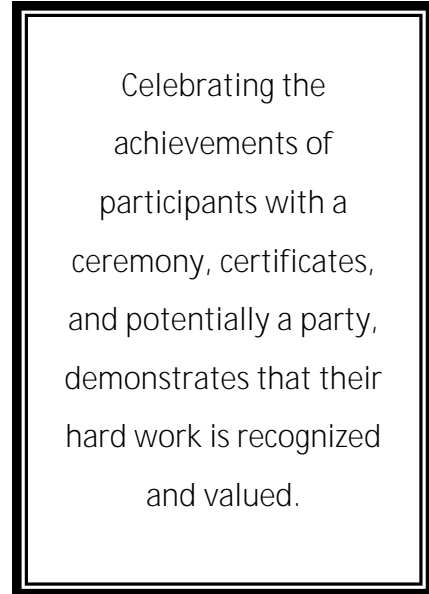
8. Invite participants to share, one at a time, something they learned from Girls Only, something they will take away from Girls Only, or favorite memories from the past weeks.

9. When sharing is finished explain that you will now distribute the graduation certificates. Call the first participant by name and have them stand and come to the front of the room. Direct everyone to applaud! Have them shake hands with each staff, volunteer, and mentor and then receive their certificate and return to their seat. After all participants have received their certificate, lead the group in a big round of applause for all of the graduates.

10. Have participants take their journals home. Encourage them to continue writing in them!

11. Remind participants you are always there for them and they are welcome back anytime!

JOURNAL PROMPT: How has Girls Only changed you?  
What did you learn in Girls Only?



EVALUATION: Did participants attend graduation? Did the participants seem excited about graduating? Were the participants engaged and participating during the various activities during the lesson? Did the journal responses indicate that the participants benefited from participating in Girls Only?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants prepare end-of-the-session gifts such as crafts or cards for each other. Bring in a special guest such as a singer or dancer to perform at the graduation ceremony.