

Torn Heart Story Instructions

This is a variation on a familiar empathy lesson, modified to relate to Girl Scouts of all ages. This can be used as an ice-breaker activity, a discussion starter, a way to introduce topics of tolerance/self-esteem/empathy/inclusion, or to respond to situations of bullying or gossip.

Instructions:

- 1** Give each girl a heart, markers/crayons, various art supplies for decorating and glue or tape. Ask the girls to write their name on the heart and decorate it to show some of their interests, talents or special characteristics. For younger girls, you may use the phrases “things you are good at” and/or “things you like to do” in place of interests, talents and characteristics when giving instructions.
- 2** After the girls are done decorating their heart, ask each girl to share a little bit about her heart and why she chose to decorate it in the way she did. This can also be used as a chance to make introductions if the girls do not know each other.
- 3** When each girl has had a chance to share/show her heart, read the attached story. As the story prompts, demonstrate and ask each girl to crumple or rip off a small piece of the heart.
- 4** By the end of the story the heart should be torn apart or crumpled completely. Ask the girls the following questions:
 - a.** How do you think Jordan feels right now?
 - b.** Why does she feel this way? (ask for specific actions in the story that made her feel this way).
 - c.** What are some of the reasons people may have treated Jordan in a mean or hurtful way?
 - d.** Invite them to look at their torn or crumpled heart and ask whether they think this is the way they feel inside when they have a bad day like Jordan has had.
 - e.** What are some things that we could do or say to make Jordan feel better? What are some things that make us feel better? During this part of the discussion, you can ask each girl to share one idea and as each idea is shared the girls can either smooth out or tape together one small piece of their heart.
- 5** Once the hearts are completely smoothed out or taped together, ask the girls to share what they think of their heart. Invite them to keep their heart at home in a safe place to always remind them that hurtful words and actions can affect people for a long time, but kind words and actions can help to make it better. Tell them that people have the power to tear each other down or build each other up. As Girl Scouts, we always build each other up and we make the world a better place by using our kind words and actions to heal people’s hurting hearts.
- 6** If there is time, the girls may want to re-write the story or write another part to the story, showing how Jordan’s day would have gone better if people were nicer to her, or how much better the next day would be if people were nicer then and apologized for being mean to her the day before.

Supplies: 1 tag board heart-cut for each girl, markers/crayons, stickers and other art supplies, tape

Torn Heart Story

It was the first day of Girl Scout Journey Daycamp and Jordan was excited to go swimming, hiking, and toast marshmallows by the campfire with her best friend Angie. She quickly got dressed and headed to the kitchen to eat breakfast. "Will you hurry up! You're making us late!" Jordan's sister Jessie yelled. Jordan sighed. She looked up to her older sister and she felt sad when Jessie yelled at her. (Rip/crumple the heart). Jessie hung her head and walked outside to the car.

As Jordan's dad pulled the car out of the driveway, Jordan realized she'd forgotten her favorite beach towel. "Dad, stop. I need to go back in and get my beach towel."

"We don't have time to stop now. You'll just have to borrow a towel at the pool. You need to start doing a better job of remembering your things," Jordan's dad said. Jordan was so disappointed, she didn't want to use the ugly old towels at the pool (rip/crumple heart).

As soon as they got to camp, Jordan saw her best friend Angie talking with some older girls. "Hey, Angie-I'll race you to the hiking trails! Do you wanna be my hiking partner?" Jordan shouted with a big smile. Angie rolled her eyes at Jordan, "Ummm...Jordan, can't you see I'm busy? Besides, we're going to archery now and I already have a hiking partner. Jordan's smile faded. She knew Angie had other friends at camp, but she never imagined that Angie would choose someone else as her hiking partner (rip/crumple heart).

At lunch, Angie was too busy eating and talking with her new friends to even notice Jordan sitting alone. Jordan tried to sit at a table with girls from another troop but everyone look at her strangely when she sat down. "Excuse me," said one of the girls, "but this table is for Troop 888 only. You'll have to go sit somewhere else." Jordan felt so lonely eating lunch all by herself (rip/crumple heart).

Later on, during swimming time, Jordan thought her day would get better for sure. She was getting better at swimming and she looked forward to playing in the Girl Scout pool all year. But all the girls laughed at her when she had to ask the lifeguard for an ugly old pool towel and one girl teased Jordan because she was afraid to jump off the diving board (rip/crumple heart).

At the end of the day, Jordan couldn't wait to leave camp. She knew tonight would be much better than daycamp because she had a Troop Meeting and that was always fun. Jordan was so excited to get to the meeting, that she forgot to remind her mom that today was her day to bring snack. "Jordan, what did you bring for snack today?" her troop leader asked.

Jordan frowned, "I'm sorry. I forgot."

"That's ok Jordan," her troop leader said, "I keep some pretzels in my bag just in case someone forgets." All the girls groaned. "Pretzels? Yuck," said one girl. "Yeah, thanks a lot Jordan," said another. Jordan wanted to cry (rip/crumple heart).