Meeting-in-a-Box: Gender and Sexuality

This meeting is aimed at Guides and Pathfinders and covers many program areas rather than particular badges. There are enough elements for about 3.25 hours’ worth of activities. You can pick and choose the ones you like or run more than one meeting with this theme.

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Learning Objectives
- To get girls thinking about what it means to be a girl or woman.
- To introduce girls to the non-binary nature of gender and sexuality.
- To give girls the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about gender and sexuality.
- To introduce the concept of consent and the idea that girls can decide what feels appropriate for their bodies.

Learning Outcomes
- Girls will become aware of heteronormativity in our culture.
- Girls will gain the proper vocabulary to discuss topics relating to gender and sexuality.
- Girls will gain an appreciation of how people who don't identify as cisgender might feel in various situations and how to be an ally.
- Girls will get the opportunity to talk about important issues and topics in a comfortable and non-judgemental environment.

Note to Guiders
This Meeting-in-a-box touches on some subjects that parents might be more comfortable discussing on their own with their daughters. Consider sending a note home before running this meeting to give them a heads-up.

Supplies
- Paper
- Scissors
- Pens or pencils
- Glue sticks
- Magazines to cut up
- Printout of Appendix 2
- Markers
- Various pieces of clothing (ideally some more stereotypically feminine and some more stereotypically masculine)
Activity 1: Intro
(15 minutes)

Learning about what it truly means to be a girl or a woman is an important part of finding your identity. It is important to be accepting not only of others, but also of who you are.

Start by reminding your unit of the Code of Conduct and guidelines regarding respect in order to help everyone feel comfortable and open while participating in this meeting. Have the girls brainstorm appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and reactions to topics that might come up during the meeting. Emphasize that no question is silly or stupid and that everyone has a right to share. This will help set the tone as you get started.

Activity 2: Changing Bodies, Changing Minds
(20 minutes)

At this time in their life, girl are close to or are in the process of becoming young women, and the boys in their grades are becoming young men. A lot of changes will happen not only to their bodies, but also to the way they think about the world and others around them.

Have the girls individually make a list of everything they think will change in their lives (both physically and mentally) by dividing a piece of paper into three columns: positive, negative and neutral.

Then, have them compare their list with someone else’s. Do they match? What did one girl think of that another didn’t? Were some changes seen as positive by some girls and negative by others? Discuss these changes in patrols or with the whole group.

Next, discuss the changes that boys go through. What’s the same? What’s different? Boys go through many changes too. They may not always understand what girls are experiencing, but girls may not always understand what they are going through either. It’s important to learn to respect each other.
Activity 3: Being a Woman Collage  
(25 minutes)

Being a girl means a lot of things to different people. Have the girls create a collage of what it means to be a girl or woman. This can include what they would typically thing of as girly, but also what they think of as representing a girl, or themselves. Use pictures, words and/or letters to make the collage.

Discuss the images and words they chose for their collage. Why do these represent girlhood or womanhood? Are there some things missing that they couldn't find? Are the images and words they chose the only representations of girlhood? Note that being a girl has many different meanings. So, if everyone thinks about it differently, is there a true definition?

Activity 4: Comfort Zones  
(10 minutes)

Explain to the girls that their bodies belong to them and only them. That means that they need to learn to take care of them. That doesn't just mean eating well and exercising, but knowing what is appropriate when it comes to other people and one's body.

Have the girls find a partner and stand a meter apart facing each other. Have the partner take a few steps forward until the first girl start to feel that her partner is too close to her.

Repeat the exercise pretending that the partner is the following: a girl you aren’t friends with, a parent/guardian, an extended family member, a boy, a teacher/educator, a stranger. Why did the distance change based on the person?

The comfort you feel with each of these people is referred to as your Comfort Zone or Personal Space. If someone invades your Personal Space, trust yourself to know that your feelings are your best indicators to know what is right or wrong. You should speak to a trusted adult to tell them if someone has made you uncomfortable.

Guiding is often an environment where girls feel safe to talk about topics they might not otherwise. This can lead to great open conversations, but may also lead to them sharing information you need to report. Take a look at Member Zone – Girl Protection and Self-Harm if a girl discloses a situation that has made her feel uncomfortable.
Activity 5: Gender Roles
(15 minutes)

In our society, it is sometimes seen as the norm that mothers take care of children and fathers work. These are called gender roles, or roles that a person takes on based on whether they are a man or a woman. However, if women and men don't do their “set” roles, does this change anything? In some people’s homes, their mom does the housework, and their dad works. Or, their mom will do the cleaning, while their dad cooks, and they both work full time. Sometimes the dad stays home while the mom works. Every family is different in the way they divide tasks.

Many jobs can be also be connected to gender roles. For example, many men work in construction or as truck drivers, and many women work as educators or secretaries. However, if both genders can do the same work, why are some jobs seen as jobs for women or men?

Have the girls stand up and indicate one side of the room as the “man” side and one side as the “woman” side. List a set of jobs and have them move between the two sides of the room depending on how they think the job is seen in society. You can insist that the girls choose one side or the other or give them the possibility to stand somewhere between the two. Emphasize that they aren’t representing who they think could/should do the job but rather how it is seen in society.

After each job, give a couple of girls the opportunity to explain why they chose to stand where they did.

These are some examples of jobs you could use but there are many more: Teacher, doctor, nurse, farmer, paramedic, engineer, firefighter, mail carrier, chef, secretary, pilot, cashier, accountant, construction worker, principal, translator, dentist, travel agent, police officer.

Activity 6: Family Ties
(20 minutes)

**Note that this activity may not be appropriate for all groups. If you know that a girl’s family has recently gone through a divorce or a death, it may be better to pick a different activity so as not to cause unnecessary emotional stress.

There are many different types of families. Some people have two parents, one parent, two families, live with another family member or guardian, etc.
Have the girls draw a picture or diagram of what their family looks like. Have them include all the people they think of as their immediate family. Have them use colours to represent their personalities. Beside each family member, have them write their relationship to them (such as mom, dad, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, etc.).

Have the girls compare their drawings to those of other girls in your unit. What is different about each family? Discuss why family is important, and why all families can be equally loving and caring, regardless of how many people are in a family, or how a family is made up. You can also discuss why Guiding is a family, and why we all have to respect and care for each other regardless of our differences.

**Activity 6: The Genderbread Person**

(20 minutes)

Start this activity off by asking questions. Use the vocabulary in Appendix 1 to help you out as needed.

- Do you know what the difference is between gender and sexuality? Did you know that labels get even further subdivided?
- Have you ever heard of the acronym LGBT? Do you know what the letters stand for? How about a longer version: LGBTTIQ2SA? (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex, questioning, queer, two-spirited and allies)
- Did you know that not everyone identifies as a “he” or “she?” Have you ever heard of any other pronouns that people might use? Some examples are “they,” “zie,” “ze,” and “xie.”

Use a large piece of paper or blackboard to draw out a genderbread person (developed by Sam Killerman). Label its heart, brain, body and genitals as in the image below (see more in Appendix 2).
For each of the following body part there are two continua. People can combine the two in many different ways to create their own identity.

Depending on your girls, you can print out the labels from Appendix 2 to help with vocabulary. During the following conversation, have the girls help you decide where each word should go – what part of your identity does it relate to? If you don’t feel that your girls need the labels, see what they can come up with on their own.

**Background:**

Explain that the label on the genitals represents how you were born and labelled at birth. The two continua here are **female-ness** and **male-ness**. However some people aren’t born distinctly male or female. We call them **intersex**. You or the girls may have previously heard the term hermaphrodite, but it is outdated and should no longer be used.

The brain represents how you feel about who you are. You can have male genitals but identify as a girl, for example. We can label the continua as **man-ness** and **woman-ness**. They get combined to create identities like **two-spirit** and **genderqueer**.

The heart represents who you are attracted to. Women who are attracted to women are known as **lesbian** or **gay**. The continua can be combined to create identities like **bisexual** or **asexual**.

Lastly, the whole genderbread person represents how you outwardly display your gender. This is displayed through clothing, grooming, speech, actions, demeanor, etc. This is where we can bring in words like **butch**, **femme**, **androgy nous**, and **gender neutral**.

Some terms like **cisgender**, **transgender** and **questioning** apply to more than one area. Here you may wish to discuss with the girls how everything overlaps to create who you are.

**Activity 7: Q&A**

(5 and 20 minutes, split over two periods of time)

If you know that you have some very quiet girls in your unit who might not be inclined to openly ask questions or share in the discussion, consider an anonymous question and answer period. Give everyone a piece of paper and have them write down a question they might have. Encourage most of the group to write something down so it isn’t obvious who the questions came from.
While someone else is running another activity, take the time to sort through the questions and read them so you aren’t surprised or unsure about how to answer a question while doing so with the group.

When you are ready, go through the questions and do your best to answer them. You can ask for help from the girls as well. If there is a question you need to do more research about, there is nothing wrong with taking it home and promising to answer the following week. Just make sure to follow through and let the girls know that there are still one or more outstanding questions.

**Activity 8: All Love**
(25 minutes)

Love takes many forms. There is love between friends and family members, and love between two people. Sometimes, a woman and a man love each other. This is called heterosexuality. Sometimes, two women love each other, or two men love each other. This is called homosexuality. While this love is just as natural as a man and woman loving each other, people can sometimes be very mean to people who are gay/lesbian (two men or women who love each other). This is called homophobia.

Have the girls act out skits about homophobic bullying and how they can stop it. You can introduce the term “ally” here and why allies are important. Some examples of scenarios can include: you see someone being rude to a gay couple, someone on the playground calls someone a “fag”, someone describes something as being “so gay”, etc.

**Activity 9: Dress to Be You**
(20 minutes)

Sometimes, the gender that is assigned to someone at birth (meaning whether someone is born as a girl or boy) doesn’t always fit with how the person feels. These people are known as transgendered.

Get a box of dress up clothes with a wide selection of items including ones that are stereotypically girls’ clothes or boys’ clothes, and costume clothing. Everyone should choose their favorite articles and put them on.

Talk to the group about how the clothes make you feel. Do they make you feel happy? Pretty? Special? Are the clothes interesting? Or something you would wear
on an average day? Would you describe them as girly clothes, boyish clothes, or neither?

Next, pick an outfit or pieces of clothing that you wouldn’t normally wear. How do they make you feel? Do you feel uncomfortable? Awkward? Interesting? Are these clothes girly, boyish, or neither? Imagine wearing these clothes all the time and constantly feeling uncomfortable. This is an example of how transgendered people feel when they aren’t being true to who they really are.

**Alternate activity**: If there are too many girls in your unit for them all to get dressed up, have a few pick an outfit that they think is distinctly male or female and discuss with the group why they think that.

**Further Resources:**
- familieslgbt.org
- gendercreativekids.ca
- kidshelpphone.ca
- itspronouncedmetrosexual.com

**Program work completed**

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<thead>
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<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>Follow that Woman! #2</td>
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<td>All Love</td>
<td>You in Guiding – Be Involved #1</td>
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<td>Be Glad You’re You #6</td>
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*Meeting created by Nikki Di Milo and Lizzie Knowles in July 2016.*
Appendix 1: Vocabulary

A selection from itspronouncedmetrosexual.com

**Ally** – (noun) a (typically straight- or cis-identified) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. While the word doesn’t necessitate action, we consider people to be active allies who take action upon this support and respect, this also indicates to others that you are an ally.

**Asexual** – (adj) having a lack of (or low level of) sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest or desire for sex or sexual partners. Asexuality exists on a spectrum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex to those who experience low levels and only after significant amounts of time, many of these different places on the spectrum have their own identity labels. Another term used within the asexual community is “ace,” meaning someone who is asexual.

**Biological Sex** – (noun) a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” “anatomical sex,” or specifically as “sex assigned [or designated] at birth.”

**Biphobia** – (noun) a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express towards bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the queer community as well as straight society. **Biphobic** – (adj) a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards bisexual people.

**Bisexual** – (adj) a person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. Other individuals may use this to indicate an attraction to individuals who identify outside of the gender binary as well and may use bisexual as a way to indicate an interest in more than one gender or sex (i.e. men and gender queer people). This attraction does not have to be equally split or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders or sexes an individual may be attracted to.

**Cisgender** – (adj; pronounced “siss-jendur”) a person whose gender identity and biological sex assigned at birth align (e.g., man and male-assigned). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not trans*, they are cisgender.

**Coming Out** – (1) the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). (2) The process by which one shares one’s sexuality or gender identity with others (to “come out” to friends, etc.).
Gay – (adj) (1) a term used to describe individuals who are primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and/or gender. More commonly used when referring to males/men-identified ppl who are attracted to males/men-identified people, but can be applied to females/women-identified people as well. (2) An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

Gender Expression – (noun) the external display of one’s gender, through a combination of dress, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally measured on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as “gender presentation.”

Gender Identity – (noun) the internal perception of an one’s gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don’t align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, trans, and more.

Genderqueer - (adj) a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; or as an umbrella term for many gender nonconforming or nonbinary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid). Genderqueer people may think of themselves as one or more of the following, and they may define these terms differently:
• may combine aspects man and woman and other identities (bigender, pangender);
• not having a gender or identifying with a gender (genderless, agender);
• moving between genders (genderfluid);
• third gender or other-gendered; includes those who do not place a name to their gender
• having an overlap of, or blurred lines between, gender identity and sexual and romantic orientation.

Heteronormativity – (noun) the assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities. Often included in this concept is a level of gender normativity and gender roles, the assumption that individuals should identify as men and women, and be masculine men and feminine women, and finally that men and women are a complimentary pair.

Homophobia – (noun) an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have towards members of LGBTQ community. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ. The term is extended to bisexual and transgender people as well; however, the terms biphobia and transphobia are used to emphasize the specific biases against individuals of bisexual and transgender communities.
**Homosexual** – (adj) a [medical] term used to describe a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This term is considered stigmatizing due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

**Intersex** – (adj) someone whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. In the medical care of infants the initialism DSD (“Differences of Sex Development”). Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now considered outdated and derogatory.

**Lesbian** – (noun/adj) a term used to describe females/women-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other females/women-identified people.

**LGBTQ / GSM / DSG / +** – (adj) initialisms used as shorthand or umbrella terms for all folks who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initialisms people prefer.

**LGBTQ** is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people at a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive); **GSM** is Gender and Sexual Minorities; **DSG** is Diverse Sexualities and Genders. Other popular options include the initialism GLBT and the acronym QUILTBAG (Queer [or Questioning] Undecided Intersex Lesbian Trans* Bisexual Asexual [or Allied] and Gay [or Genderqueer]).

**Pansexual** – (adj) a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions.

**Passing** – (verb) (1) a term for trans* people being accepted as, or able to “pass for,” a member of their self-identified gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans*. (2) An LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

**Queer** – (adj) used as an umbrella term to describe individuals who don’t identify as straight. Also used to describe people who have non-normative gender identity or as a political affiliation. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ community. The term queer can often be use interchangeably with LGBTQ.

**Questioning** (verb & adjective) an individual who or when someone is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.
**Romantic Attraction** - (noun) an affinity for someone that evokes the want to engage in relational intimate behavior (e.g., flirting, dating, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-non, to intense). Often conflated with **sexual attraction or emotional/spiritual attraction**.

**Sexual Attraction** - (noun) an affinity for someone that evokes the want to engage in physical intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-non, to intense). Often conflated with **romantic attraction or emotional/spiritual attraction**.

**Sexual Orientation** – (noun) the type of **sexual, romantic, emotional / spiritual attraction** one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to (often mistakenly referred to as sexual preference)

**Straight** – (adj) a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word **heterosexual**.

**Trans* /Transgender** – (adj) (1) An umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially defined gender norms. Trans with an * is often used to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term. (2) A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex.

**Transphobia** – (noun) the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans* people, the trans* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society. Transphobia is often manifested in violent and deadly means. While the exact numbers and percentages aren’t incredibly solid on this, it’s safe to say that trans* people are far more likely than their cisgender peers (including LGB people) to be the victims of violent crimes and murder.
### Appendix 2: Genderbread Person

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<th>Man</th>
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The Genderbread Person v3.3

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don’t. Like intersection, Gender isn’t binary. It’s not either/or. In many cases it’s both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It’s okay if you’re hungry for more. In fact, that’s the idea.

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**Identity**
- Woman-ness
- Man-ness

**Gender Expression**
- Feminine
- Masculine

**Biological Sex**
- Female-ness
- Male-ness

**Sexually Attracted to**
- Nobody
- Women/Females/Femininity
- Men/Males/Masculinity

**Romantically Attracted to**
- Nobody
- Women/Females/Femininity
- Men/Males/Masculinity

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For a bigger bite, read more at http://bit.ly/genderbread