DESIRE TO ASPIRE
Mentoring Program
The only way to move forward is to give back

DESIRE TO ASPIRE MENTORING PROGRAM

Administrative Curriculum Guide

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>“I Pledge…”</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>Sister, Sister: Sisterhood</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>Etiquette and Culture</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>Self-esteem and Character</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 6</td>
<td>“The Real World”</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 7</td>
<td>Good Decision-Making Skills</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 8</td>
<td>Avoiding Risky Behavior: Drugs, Alcohol and Violence</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 9</td>
<td>“Cyberbully”</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 10</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Letter from the Officer

Dear Partnering School/Afterschool Program,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to our third school year of programming. Since our establishment in February 2012, the Desire to Aspire Mentoring Program has served the Columbia community by impacting the lives of underprivileged and minority girls.

We couldn’t have touched this many lives without you.

I am working diligently with my staff to ensure that there is constant communication and continued cooperation while on your campus. To start this journey, I would like to give you a look into what we have planned for your girls this school year. From September to May, we are determined to get your girls out of their comfort zones by further developing their critical thinking skills, all while promoting a safe and empowering environment.

Our staff has worked hard to create a curriculum that will meet your girls’ needs. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time if you have questions or concerns regarding our programming. I can be reached by email at alexis@desire2aspire.org or by phone at (618) 698-9213.

Again, thank you for the continued support throughout the years. We look forward to changing your girls’ lives, one lesson at a time.

Best,

Alexis N. Johnson

Alexis N. Johnson
Executive Officer, Desire to Aspire Mentoring Program
Dress Code/Conduct Checklist

☑️ Desire to Aspire T-Shirt

☑️ Shorts/Skirts
  • Bottoms should reach your fingertips when arms are at sides
  • Shorts/skirts are not permitted at the Boys and Girls Club of Columbia
  • Jeans/pants are acceptable

☑️ DO buzz into the school building/get clearance through office before entry

☑️ DO greet your guidance counselor/point of contact before each session

☒ NO alcoholic paraphernalia/Greek letters

☒ NO cell phone usage during session

☒ NO swearing, inappropriate conversation

☒ NO alcohol is allowed on premises (Regardless if you are of legal drinking age or not)

☑️ DO report any illegal/inappropriate behavior among the girls

☑️ DO engage in the day’s activities and have fun
Introduction to the Program and Yourselves

What is Desire to Aspire? How will it help me?

The purpose of having an introductory session is to develop a sense of what the girls of your site need and how this curriculum can satisfy those needs. Take the opportunity to get to know your location’s interests while allowing yourself to be a resource to the girls. For example, if your group does not like the idea of ballet dance, then it might not be advantageous for their development to have a ballet instructor lead a session.

Introduce Yourself

A site manager will give the girls a quick spiel of what the Desire to Aspire Mentoring Program is and what you plan to do with them this semester (nothing too detailed). For example, you’d say, “Welcome to the Desire to Aspire Mentoring Program, girls! We’re here to be a friend and help you figure out your way through some of the things you’ll come across in elementary/middle school. We’ll be doing a lot of fun activities to help everyone get to know each other.”

The easiest way to get the girls out their shells is by doing a series of icebreakers. Initially, the girls will be cliqued up in terms of friends they have outside the program. To eliminate an uninviting environment, it is your job to separate these cliques before they become habit.

Activities

1. Mentor Icebreaker – You’ll each go around and quickly share your name and what you want to be ‘when you grow up.’ Challenge the girls to remember your names. The girl who can remember every mentor’s name can help lead the first group icebreaker

2. How Are We Similar/Different? – Everyone will create a large circle. The girl who guessed every mentor’s name (or to the best of her ability) will stand in the middle of the circle with her hand straight up.
A site manager will call out a statement that people either agree or disagree with. For example, “I like riding bikes.” If you like riding bikes, you would step in and form a smaller circle around the girl leader and high-five her.

Continue these steps while incorporating statements of dislike. For example, “I don’t like broccoli.”

3. **“Kid-Friendly Speed Dating”** – Mentors will spread out around the room and serve as a table. Each table has a topic. These topics can be anything from favorite color, least favorite subject, favorite food, or “would you rather be in school for 100 years or only stay home and eat cookies for 100 years?” This is a challenge for mentors to efficiently keep the conversation going among the group.

You have 3 minutes at each table.

4. **Roses and Thorns** – This will be done at the beginning of every mentor session, however you are simply demonstrating it at the end for today. Each girl (and mentor) will go around and say their rose (positive thing/experience) of the week and a thorn (a bad thing that happened/something they didn’t like).

**Note:** If your site meets on Mondays, have the girls give their rose and thorn from the week prior.

**Debrief**

Recap of the day’s events. Highlight certain girls whose interesting facts you remember.

Ask the girls question such as “*What do you look forward to learning this year?*” “*What kinds of things do you guys want to do?*” “*Are you excited to be here?*”
“I Pledge…”

_A modern take on goal boards._

In the past, we created goal boards to help the girls visualize their aspirations in life. Today, we’re going to attempt to make a sleeker version of this activity titled “I Pledge.” The purpose of this activity is to help the girls identify the everyday things they stand for in life. Everyone has something they believe in, even if they don’t know it!

**Supplies**

- Construction paper/scissors
- Markers/colored pencils/pens
- Miscellaneous decorating materials

**Activity**

The girls (and mentors) will have a brief conversation about what it means to take a pledge. Site managers will give examples of the kinds of pledges people take across the world and what it means to stand up for what you believe in.

Everyone will decide on their own two (2) pledges and trace their hand on a piece of paper. The first pledge will be for their goals in our program, and the other pledge will apply to their everyday life. Write the pledge in the middle of the handprint then decorate around it. Cut out the tracing when finished.

**Debrief**

Each girl will present her pledges in front of the group. _Why do you think we did this activity? Do you think that you can keep this pledge? For how long? What other pledges do you plan to take when you leave this room?_
Sister, Sister: Sisterhood

“How can someone be my sister if she’s not related to me?”

We promote sisterhood throughout this program to demonstrate the importance of women empowerment. The purpose of this activity is to help the girls look at sisterhood beyond blood relations.

**Supplies**
- Magazines/newspapers for clipping
- Scissors, markers, glue, other decoration
- Large poster board

**Activity**

**Part One** – The girls will cut out words that they like from magazines and newspapers and glue them to the board. These will be words that are uplifting and encouraging, qualities they want to see in themselves as they grow and within each other as sisters.

This activity will rely on the girls to share and take turns, all while allowing them to find commonalities within one another.

**Part Two (Time Permitting) – “Fear in a Hat”**

Each girl is given a slip of paper and pencil to anonymously write down their fears about anything, especially inside the Desire to Aspire group. For example, she would write, “I am (most) afraid that…” or “In this program the worst thing that could happen to me would be…” and finish the sentence.

Then, a site manager will put the slips into the hat. Each girl will draw a slip from the hat and read it aloud. For each fear, the girls will discuss good ways to address it together. No one has to reveal their fear, and it will give each girl confidence in her abilities and in the girls around her.
Debrief

Is working together better than working alone? If so, how?

What kinds of qualities do you think make a great sister?

What does it mean to have a sister that’s not blood-related?
Etiquette and Culture

What is etiquette and how will I use this everyday?

Believe it or not, etiquette is something we practice throughout our everyday lives. It’s not just table manners nowadays. There’s etiquette for classrooms, churches—there’s even text message etiquette! The purpose of this activity is to expose the girls to forms of etiquette that they’ll practice more often.

Supplies

- Telephone scripts/scenarios
- 4 Sets of: Napkins, paper plates (and saucer), plastic forks, spoons, knives and plastic cups

Activity

This activity will be broken into four parts. Feel free to have a different mentor lead each part.

1. Restaurant Manners – This activity will delve into how to set a ‘proper’ table. Please label forks and spoons appropriately, as we will be using plastic ones that are all the same size.

   Mentor will demonstrate how to set a table and explain how to act at a restaurant (no yelling, no running around without an adult, etc.) Mentor will then undo the table and encourage girls to reassemble the table properly. (Get creative in how you teach the girls how to set the table. Create a song, a dance, etc.)

2. Table Manners – The next mentor will lead this activity. She will first ask the girls what they think good table manners are. Then, she will go through and explain things such as “it’s not proper to chew with your mouth open,” “don’t yell across the table,” “don’t play with your food/utensils,” etc.

3. Telephone/Texting Etiquette – The next mentor will lead this activity. She will first ask the girls what they think good telephone/texting etiquette is. Create a list of standards that you all agree on are good phone manners. Then, do a role-play with the girls while pretending to be different figures (authoritative, a friend, a grandparent, etc.) This will help them decide what is proper etiquette depending on who they’re talking to.
4. **Social Etiquette** – This activity will explore the ways we should interact when meeting someone for the first time (for example, smile, say “hello,” shake hands, etc.) You will decide as a group what is bad social etiquette (talking over each other, blurting out an answer in class without raising your hand, etc.) and role-play scenarios of this bad social etiquette. The girls will then critique the conversations and give suggestions on how to correct them to be more polite.

**Debrief**

*Why is etiquette important everyday? Do you eat the same way at the school lunch table as you do at home?*

*Do you know anyone who has good etiquette? Who is it and what makes their etiquette good?*
Self-esteem and Character

Do I have high self-esteem? What kind of characteristics do I have?

The purpose of this activity is to draw awareness to the issue of low self-esteem in young girls. We aim to boost their confidence and have them walk out the school with their head held high.

Supplies

- Index Cards/Ink pens
- Large headshots of celebrities Kim Kardashian, Ariana Grande, Beyonce, Michelle Obama

Introduction to activity

A site manager will hold up a celebrity photo and ask, “What words do you think of when you see this woman?” The girls will respond (appropriately).

Then the site manager will ask what made them choose those words.

Activity

Each girl will receive an index card and anonymously write down things that make them feel bad about themselves and cause them to have low self-esteem. A mentor will come around to collect the cards and stick/tape them to a wall. Everyone will come by and look at all the bad thoughts.

Continued…
Then, on another card, the girls will anonymously write down things that make them feel good about themselves. These cards will also be collected and placed on a different wall (if possible). Everyone will examine the ratio of bad to good and discuss why one side had more than another.

**Debrief**

*How do celebrities make you feel about yourself? Do you care about celebrities? What does a person with low self-esteem look like? What does a person with high self-esteem look like?*

*What things can we do to feel good about ourselves?*
“The only way to move forward is to give back!”

Giving back to others inspires self-awareness and gratitude in a young woman. The purpose of this service activity is to guide our girls to think about those less fortunate.

Activity
All Desire to Aspire locations will be participating in a canned food drive. During this session, the girls will come up with a short slogan to put on a poster. Everyone will create different marketing materials to advertise (posters, scripts to recite during morning announcements, etc.).

Site managers will have talked to the guidance counselor/point of contact to get clearance for the drive.

The drive will run for one full week (Monday through Friday) and site managers will contact the school/afterschool program to find out final results.

The winning school/afterschool program will win a prize as collectively determined by the site managers.

Note: Food will be donated to Columbia’s local food bank.

Debrief
Participating in this activity also helps promote the idea of healthy competition.

How would you describe ‘healthy competition?’ How do you plan on getting your peers involved in this drive?

How does this service activity benefit the people around you?

What are some service activities that you would like to do in the future?
“The Real World”

What is “the real world” like? What does it mean to be a professional?

The real world can be scary. Regardless of your age, no one can fully predict what the real world is like. What we can do is educate ourselves on the cultural norms of the workforce. The focus of today’s activity is introduce and practice good job interviewing etiquette, as well as highlight the individuality of how different jobs can be in terms of an employee’s physical appearance.

Supplies

- Interview Outfits
  - 1 bad example
  - 1 good example
- Career Outfits
  - Casual outfit (i.e., a graphic designer)
  - Professional dress (i.e., secretary for a college)

Activity

Part One – The mentors participating in the interview outfit modeling will come into the room, dressed, one at a time. The first mentor will model the “bad” interview outfit. (Determine how many violations your outfit has and what they are before entering the runway.) Embrace your inner ‘sassy’ for this role.

Next, the activity’s facilitator (a non-participating site leader) will ask the group what is wrong with the outfit and why. (If they can’t guess all the violations, the model will reveal what was missed.)

Repeat these instructions for the “good” interview outfit.
Part Two – Mentors dressed as a graphic designer and a law firm’s secretary will enter the room. In preparing for this activity, please get two (2) index cards and write the following:

**Index Card 1** (Graphic Designer):
- $70,000 per year
- Average of 60 hours of work per week
- 4 years of schooling
- Senior level professional

**Index Card 2** (Secretary):
- $35,000 per year
- 40 hours of work per week
- 2 years of schooling
- Below entry level professional

The site manager will then have the group guess which identity matches which employees based on how they are dressed. For example you will ask, “Which person makes almost $70,000 per year?” “Who sometimes works over 60 hours per week?”… and so on.

After the group labels the employees, regardless if they’re right or not, give the correct answers and explain that different jobs require different dress codes.

This activity is to debunk stereotypes of what it means to be a “working woman” in America and to shed light on why it’s not okay to judge a book by its cover.

Part Three (Time-permitting) – Create a mock interview setup in the middle of the room. Have one mentor pretend to be the interviewer and the other is an interviewee. (Compile a list of questions for a job of your choice before the session.)

After the interview is over, have the girls critique what they believe was good about the interview and provide suggestions as to how the interviewee can improve on their skills.

If time permits, have a pair of girls reenact this exercise.

**Debrief**

*What did you learn from today’s activity? Do you make stereotypes in your everyday life?*

*What kind of things can you do to make sure that you don’t assume things about people?*
Good Decision-Making Skills

Bad decisions create bad outcomes while good decisions produce good outcomes.

In life, we will find ourselves in situations where we don’t know necessarily know what to do. While the goal is to always choose the right decision, the reality is that we won’t always do so. Sometimes, we will do the wrong thing and face a consequence, either big or small. The purpose of this activity is to help get our critical thinking skills going.

Supplies

- 3 C’s Worksheet

Part One – The girls (and mentors) will complete the worksheet then discuss what they have written. This is intended to lead into a deeper conversation about how difficult it can be to make decisions. (Facilitate appropriately.)

Part Two – The girls will get into groups of two or three (separate them from their cliques). From there, you will give the girls a scenario to act out in front of the group using their own personal decision-making skills.

The rest of the group will then volunteer to say how they would (appropriately) handle that same scenario using the ICED approach.

Identify the problem: (e.g.,
disagreeing with a friend)

Create constructive alternatives: (e.g., 1. never talk to friend again, 2. yell at friend, 3. talk about problem with friend)

Evaluate the alternatives: (e.g., 1. lose the friendship, more free time; 2. disagreement gets worse, you win disagreement, but friend’s feeling may be hurt (or vice versa); 3. you and your friend gain a better understanding of each other – may lead to a better friendship, may not).

Decide on the best alternative to do: (e.g., alternative 3 – has best chance of saving and possibly strengthening friendship)

Debrief

*Why is it good to be positive when you’re in a bad situation? Where can you improve in your decision-making?*

*Can you think of a situation in your life when you could’ve reacted with a better alternative?*

*How do you plan to make good decisions after today?*
Avoiding Risky Behaviors: Drugs, Alcohol and Violence

Drugs—just don’t do them.

The purpose of this session is not to ‘scare [our girls] straight,’ but rather to raise awareness to drug and alcohol usage in kids.

Supplies

- “Young and on drugs: Three recovering addicts share their stories of teen drug abuse” article printout

Activity

A site manager will introduce the day’s activity by creating a safe space and asking a few questions:

1. Do you, or someone you know, do drugs or drink alcohol?
2. Have you ever considered doing drugs or drinking alcohol?
3. What do you know about drugs/alcohol?

(There will be no discussion of this, so please do not encourage laughter or further conversation. The girls are to simply raise their hands if their answer is ‘yes.’)

Next, the mentors will each read one of the three stories from the “Young and on drugs” article (prescription drugs, marijuana, alcohol.) At the end of each story, the facilitator will ask for feedback on the story and encourage the mentees to express their feelings about it.
Debrief/Discussion Topics

The goal of this activity is to raise awareness of how underage alcohol consumption and drug usage affects kids everyday.

In the United States, the legal drinking age is 21. Discuss why you think the government set this age and explain why this is important.

Although most kids know that alcohol is dangerous and can be bad for their health, some might be tempted to try it anyway. Why do you think this is? Have you ever been tempted to do something you know is dangerous? Explain.

Brainstorm a list of some of the negative things that can happen to a person if he or she starts drinking.
“Cyberbully”

What is cyberbullying and what role do you play in it?

According to stopbullying.gov, cyberbullying happens when kids bully each other through technology. Sending text messages about people, implying things about people in tweets and Facebook posts are but a few examples of what cyber bullying looks like in the real world. You don’t have to be anonymous to be considered a cyberbully, and most of the times, the bullies are kids from school or even your neighborhood.

Supplies

• ABC’s “Cyberbully” movie

Activity

Site managers will secure a location/technology (before the session) to show the movie (either on DVD or stream it online). Site managers will have seen the movie before the session and can identify important moments to pause for healthy discussion.

The group will then watch the movie and participate in discussion as facilitated by a site manager.

Note: This activity will run the full duration of the session. (You won’t finish the movie but can encourage the girls to go rent the DVD!)

Example Discussion Topics

Have you gone behind your parents’ back to have a social media page? Why didn’t you feel comfortable telling them?

Do you think you could handle bullying alone? Who would you turn to for help if you were bullied?

Why did Taylor feel the need to say mean things back to the bullies online? Is this bullying, too?
Higher Education

What does it mean to have a college degree?

Throughout the course of the semester, the Desire to Aspire mentors had the opportunity to get to know the girls on their turf. Now, it’s time for them to get a taste of the college life. For this experience, the girls will be visiting the University of Missouri campus to learn what it means to be in college.

Supplies

- None

Activity

The girls will come to the University of Missouri’s campus on a bus (reserved in advance by the executive officer) with the guidance counselor/point of contact as the chaperone.

Note: Boys and Girls Club of Columbia and the Moving Ahead Program have their own busing.

Dates are currently TBD, however the groups will visit campus on the following days during normal scheduled program time:

- Monday – Lange and Jefferson Middle
- Tuesday – Moving Ahead Program
- Wednesday – Blue Ridge Elementary
- Thursday – Boys and Girls Club

Debrief

At the end of the tour… What did you learn? Who paid attention? Would you come to Mizzou?
THE END

You've reached the end of the activities. If you still have time in the semester, circle back through the activities that you felt delivered good results among your group.

Understand that group is different and won’t receive the lesson as quickly. Always seek to modify these activities to better fit the needs of the individuals in your group.

Thank you for helping us impact lives.

Always remember – the only way to move forward is to give back!