

Uniquely a Woman, Uniquely Different!

POWER SERIES

Session 1

The purpose of this session is to examine the uniqueness each of us possesses as a woman. Our similarity of gender brings us together, but each young lady retains unique qualities that identify and separate her from everyone else.

What I Need?

- Poster Paper
- Markers (enough for everyone)
- “Uniquely a Woman” Fact Sheet (handout)
- “Who’s Who?” Game List
- 3x5 index cards (2 colors)
- Sheets of 8 ½ X 11 paper (enough for everyone)
- Footprints (you can find these at a teacher’s store or you can create them)
- Adhesive spray

Prep Time:

It is imperative that each participant understand her value as a woman and as an individual. Many of the poor choices made by girls is a result of their low self-esteem. In this session girls will learn some of the unique characteristics of women but also the value of their own qualities that make them a special gift to the world. Read through the following activities: “Superwoman,” “Who’s Who,” and “One in Two Million!” Prepare easel paper with the appropriate headings for each. If you purchase the self-adhesive easel paper, you can prepare the sheets, set them aside on a wall, and retrieve them as you proceed. When conducting the “Who’s Who?” activity, its best to use a can of adhesive spray and spray it lightly on the easel paper. This way you don’t have to put tape on each activity card because the cards will stick to the paper. A little spray goes a long way. To prepare the cards, use the “Who’s Who?” activity list provided with this session. Follow the instructions on the sheet. For the “One in Two Million” discussion, it is best to make all of your marks on the paper in advance, because it takes a few minutes to create all the dots.

If you have extensive experience working with adolescent females, you have probably heard a young lady say, "I don't get along with females I only hang with guys!" This statement gets under my skin, because how can we teach young ladies to be conscious of themselves if they cannot successfully build relationships with those who are like them? My usual response to a young lady who says this is, "You have not learned to get along with females because you have not learned to get along with yourself. Friendship with males does not require as much effort as befriending a female. So stop being lazy!" How do they respond? Some say, "Ok Ms. Sherida, is it all that?" Others admit, "That's probably true." My reaction may seem harsh, but the reality it expresses is true. If we are of the same gender and experience some of the same issues, why do many young ladies find it hard to develop relationships with other girls? As we continue this session we will discuss this question and many others.

Opening Discussion Questions:

- How do you know that you are a woman/girl/young lady?
- What are some of the similarities that all women share, regardless of color, culture, country, or class?
- Tell me, in your opinion, what are the perks/advantages of being a woman? In other words, what makes you happy about being a woman?
- Are there any disadvantages? If so, what are they?
- In spite of these disadvantages, why are women important?
- Why does the world need women?

In just a matter of minutes you have identified various pieces of the fabric that connects us to **all** the women of the world. Consider the idea that, although some of us may have problems or issues with other young ladies or even with adult women (teachers, family members, mentors) during our teenage years; we should never exclude ourselves from developing positive relationships with women. **REVIEW THE "UNIQUELY A WOMAN" FACT SHEET AND DISCUSS.**

Activity: Superwoman

After examining the unique qualities and experiences that women share, take time to consider a woman who stands out from everyone you know. For today we'll call her your "Superwoman." Who is she? What are her characteristics? What makes her so special? As students begin shouting their responses, let's record them. Hang up a sheet of easel paper and write at the top of the page "Superwomen." Divide the page into two columns. Label one column "Who" and the other "Why?" Ask each participant who she has selected as her "Superwoman" and why. Do not use personal names. Write the relationship to the participant. Every time a student repeats a word (i.e., giving, loving, kind) or person (i.e., mom, grandmother, aunt) place a check by the word to represent the repetition. Allow each young lady to choose about three traits to describe her Superwoman.

"Superwomen"

<u>Who?</u>	<u>Why?</u>
Mother vvvv	Loving
Teacher	Caring vv
Aunt	Responsiblev

We can tell by looking at the example that 5 young ladies said their mothers and 4 stated caring as one of the traits of their Superwoman.

"Superwoman" Discussion Questions/Points

After completing the "Superwoman" activity discuss the following:

- The women you all have identified can be considered role models; meaning they demonstrate model behavior or behavior that offers an example of how a woman can function successfully in that role.
- How could your relationships at school, with teachers, girls in this group or even in the community be different if you modeled some of the attributes you described for your superwoman?

Discussion Questions/Points cont'd

- What will it take for you to become a Superwoman? What changes will you have to make?
- Why is it important that women have relationships with women?
- Why is it sometimes more difficult to maintain a friendship with a girl than with a guy?
- How can we develop a strong support system with the young ladies who are part of this group, despite our opinions about female relationships?

We have identified many similarities in women. Now what about our similarities to and differences from men? We've heard that men are from Mars and women are from Venus, but what makes us different from men? This is not a competition or a matter of which sex is better because both men and women have their own unique purposes and functions.

Question: What are some of the differences between men and women? (take responses)

So you think you know something about how men and women differ? Let's try an activity to determine how much you really know.

Activity: Who's Who?

In your prep time, you have prepared two sheets of easel paper. One is labeled "Males" and the other "Females." Follow the instructions on the enclosed "Who's Who?" sheet. To complete this activity, you can separate participants into teams or groups, or you can choose two people to compete. In either case, separate the stack of "Who's Who?" cards and turn them face down on a table/desk. The stacks for each team should be a particular color (e.g., one pink stack and one blue). Tell each player (or team) to read a card and decide whether it applies to men or to women. Limit the time to about a minute.

"Who's Who?" Discussion Questions/Points

Review the answers and facts concerning each sex and discuss the questions below .

- Are you surprised by any differences between men and women?
- How can learning about our differences from men demonstrate our uniqueness as women?
- What do you feel is the most valuable asset to a male and female relationship?
- Why is it beneficial to have friendships and not just intimate relationships with males?

Uniquely You!

We greatly benefit when we can develop successful friendships with males and females. We find similarities in males and females because we are all human. We also have similarities with all women. But, in the midst of these similarities with both men and women, you are uniquely different from everyone else in the world. Your DNA is different (unless you're an identical twin); your fingerprint is different (even if you are an identical twin). You are uniquely you!

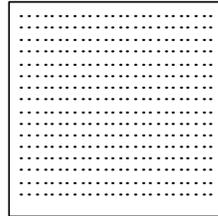
- You were a single immature egg/follicle among millions in your mother's body from the time that she was born! If you don't think you're special think about why you were chosen to be one of the 400,000 eggs that remained in her body after puberty.¹
- Just in case you still don't consider yourself special, consider why your egg was chosen as the one to be fertilized at the time of conception. You were chosen out of 2 million possible choices.²

Activity: "One in Two Million"

It is best to prepare this before the workshop session. On a sheet of easel paper take a black marker and place as many dots on the page as you possibly can. Just tap the marker all over the page. Place the page in front of the group and proceed with the "One in Two Million" activity.

Activity: "One in 2 Million" cont'd

View sample below: Don't ever try to make it this neat!



- Let's pretend this paper represents all the eggs that were in your mother's womb at birth. Remember, a woman has all the eggs she will ever have when she is born. This is not nearly 2 million dots, but let's pretend. Now, by the time she reached puberty, she had lost 80% of the immature eggs/follicles, leaving about 400,000. ³
- The odds decreased even further, because at the time of conception only one egg was fertilized by one sperm. OK, this is a little graphic, but it's a beautiful thing. Did you know that over 200 million sperm were released and traveled at the speed of 1 to 4 millimeters per second, all trying to be the first to introduce itself to your egg cell? ⁴ This sperm carried specific genetic information concerning you, including whether you would be male or female.
- So, basically you were handpicked just like this (look at the paper and circle one egg cell). Now if that's not unique, I don't know what is! There is no such thing as an accident! It doesn't matter if you've been told you were a mistake or if your parent was a substance abuser. Your egg cell was preserved to be fertilized at that particular time, so the world would be blessed with the unique creation of you!
- It is each of your unique differences which will bring excitement, challenges, creativity, and even sometimes disagreement to our group this year. We need you here, and you need to be here! Everyone adds her own unique traits to this group. If you don't believe me, let's create a picture.

Activity: Uniquely You!

Disperse sheets of paper and markers. Tell the students to write their name in the top right corner of the paper and then flip the paper over. Instruct each participant to create a picture of something beautiful. After about 30 seconds tell them to stop (even if they haven't drawn anything) and pass their papers to the right. Inform them that from now on when you say "switch," they must pass their papers to the right and begin drawing on the paper that is now in front of them. Give them 10 seconds per drawing and say "switch." This process will continue until they receive their own papers back. Once their paper has been returned to them, they cannot draw anything on it. Note: If you have a large group and participants sit at tables, have them switch only with the people at their table. If you have a group circle, have them pass the papers to the right so that everyone draws on each other's paper. Use this same process if you have a small group.

After everyone has received her paper, discuss the following:

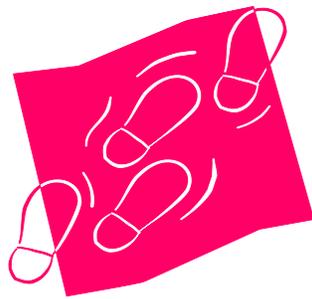
- Does your picture look the way you imagined it in the beginning? How is it different?
- How hard is it to finish someone else's vision? Why is it difficult?

The main purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate that each of us is different and our vision, foresight, and knowledge are special and unique. No one can contribute to the world what you were created and assigned to do!

Closing:

There is a purpose that has been designed specifically for you! There is a plan for your future and a plan for you to have an impact on this world. Your footsteps cannot be replaced by anyone else. Think about the mark you would like to leave in your family, community, nation, and the world. Think about the footsteps you want to fulfill in the future. These footprints will lead you to success and make you a superwoman!

- Distribute the footprints (each person should have at least four)
- Instruct the participants to write on the footprints what they need to do to become a future superwoman. They should write something on each footprint. For example, "I will have a positive attitude", "I will perform better in school", "I will choose better friends," etc.
- After everyone has completed their footprints, have them lay the footprints (spaced for walking) on the floor. Allow each person (individually) to share with the group what they wrote as they step on each footprint.



- After the young ladies have completed the exercise encourage them to follow the path they have set before them. Allow each young lady to take the footprints with her.

Additional Activities (optional):

- Instead of purchasing footprints, you can have the students create them by using construction paper and measuring their own feet. They can cut them out and decorate them before they write on them. Proceed with the activity described above. *Afterward you can:*
- Hang them around your meeting room.
- Take each girl's set of footprints and hole punch them at the heel. Place a spin pin at the top so that she can spread them out and keep them.
- Make a collage that includes all of the young ladies' footprints, and place them on a large sheet. You can create a title like "The Pathway to Success," and have all the footprints leading to the word "SUCCESS." These displays serve as reminders to the young ladies, every time they enter the room for a workshop session, that they are headed toward success.