

# Little Ladies Circle



## Welcome and Congratulations!

Dear Sister,

Thank you for your interest in starting a Little Ladies Circle (LLC) in your branch! This leader's guide will show you, with the Lord's help, how to do just that.

LLC is a program that helps the Ladies' Circle mentor young girls. It's a new program that's still evolving. There isn't *one correct* way to do LLC. These guidelines will help you develop a program that is ideal for your branch and your group of girls.

Lots of flexibility means there may not be much continuity between the LLCs across the church. But that's good! Since no two groups of girls are alike, no two LLCs should be exactly alike, either. Plus, as older girls outgrow the program and younger girls enter, you'll need to modify your LLC format as your group changes.

While the specifics of each LLC group may vary, the "spirit" and the overarching goals of LLC should remain the same. How you fulfill those goals will be up to you. That's why we've provided this guide to help you get started and stay the course.

Again, thank you for caring enough about your young girls to take the first step in the journey toward starting LLC. May God richly bless you and your little ladies in the process!

Our love and prayers are with you,

Sister Karen Progar  
General Ladies' Uplift Circle President

Sister Lisa Champine  
General Ladies' Uplift Circle Vice-President

LLC Committee  
Sister Wendy Giannetti  
Sister Tawnya Hood  
Sister Michelle Watson



Throughout this Leader's Guide, you'll see us reference the Mesa Branch LLC a lot. That's because Sister Tawnya Hood of the Mesa Branch conceived of and started the first LLC in the winter of 2009. We've used a lot of the Mesa Branch's ideas and experiences when writing these guidelines. We look forward to enriching and supplementing this Leader's Guide with ideas from other branches and missions that implement LLCs in the future!

# Mission & Purpose



## What is Little Ladies Circle?

It's a program that provides life- and spiritual-enrichment activities for young girls, generally between the ages of 5 and 12.

## LLC Mission Statement

The LLC is a program that allows the Ladies' Circle to focus on the spiritual and natural development of young girls in the church. The local Ladies' Circle does this by organizing activities that teach young girls about life skills, hobbies and service.

## What is the purpose of LLC?

There are four main goals:

### 1. Provide an informal setting where girls can have fun together

- What does informal mean? It means that LLC isn't a class where girls listen to a lesson. (Save your valuable lesson plans for Sunday school.) During an LLC meeting, girls will participate in hands-on activities.
- Why do the girls need to have fun together? So they can build close friendships that will last the rest of their lives. So they can coexist harmoniously when they become teenagers. So they can interact with church girls in a social setting, not just in church classes.

### 2. Teach girls new skills

- What kind of skills? Basic life skills, like cooking, and fun skills, like how to do crafts.
- Some girls aren't taught practical life skills, such as cooking, cleaning or mending, at home or in school. These skills will help them grow into self-sufficient women.
- Girls may discover that they have a passion or a knack for a particular hobby. By facilitating these discoveries, we're helping them find out who they are and where their interests lie.

### 3. Teach girls how to serve others

- Girls need to understand that life isn't about getting but *giving*. At LLC, they aren't always just hanging out with their friends, they're often working together for a purpose — and having fun at the same time!
- LLC gives them firsthand exposure to helping others in the branch and in the community.

### 4. Form relationships between girls and women in the branch

- LLC gives older sisters (by older, we mean 15 years and up!) the chance to share their God-given talents with the next generation.
- Many young girls only interact with the women who teach their Sunday school classes. LLC allows the young girls to get to know sisters that they wouldn't normally have interaction with.



# LLC Meetings

What should a LLC meeting look like? How should you spend the time? This is completely up to you, and it will depend upon the kind of activity that you're doing at a given meeting. Here's a general guideline for a standard LLC meeting:

## **Suggested Meeting Format – 1 hour total**

Open in prayer (ask one of the girls to do this), and maybe sing a song.

Briefly introduce the activity (5 minutes)

- Tell girls what they're going to be doing, and briefly explain why it's important or interesting.

Do the activity (45 minutes)

- This is hands-on time when the girls are actually doing something. Explain a step in the activity, and let girls try it. Then explain the next step and let girls try it. This will keep them engaged.
- While you're doing the activity, talk with the girls in depth about the importance of what you're doing, how it will help them in life, or what they think is fun about it. Get to know the girls' personalities and share stories about when you were their age. Always ask questions and make sure they doing most of the talking.

Recap the activity (5 minutes)

- Explain the point and purpose of why they learned or practiced the activity. Praise them for specific things they did well.

Sing a song and close in prayer (again, ask a girl to do it).

The little ladies from the Mesa Branch chose one particular song as their "theme song." They love singing it!



### Tone & Feel

LLC is meant to be very relaxed and informal. Girls shouldn't view it as a classroom environment, like Sunday school. It should be a place where they can let their hair down and have fun. *This is essential.* Here are a few of the other essential elements of a good LLC:

- **Student-oriented:** Not teacher-oriented. The bulk of the meeting should be spent doing an activity, not listening to the teacher lecture or tell stories.
- **Guilt-free:** Don't take attendance or penalize girls for not coming. (Whether they come or not isn't always in their control.) Don't ever make a girl feel bad for not coming to LLC.
- **Back to the basics:** We're not teaching girls cutting-edge new things. We're teaching them lost arts, like homemaking and serving others. Focus on practical life skills that girls should know but don't.
- **Orderly:** While LLC should be a fun environment, it's very important that the girls show respect for one another as well as the teacher by listening and not interrupting. Fun doesn't mean chaotic.
- **Spiritual:** Although the girls won't be learning traditional Sunday-school-style lessons, each activity should have a spiritual aspect. For example, if the girls are learning how to cook, simply ask, "How can we honor or serve the Lord by cooking?" If they're making a craft, ask, "How could we possibly use this craft to make someone else happy or brighten their day?" We want the girls to understand how to incorporate the Lord into everyday activities.
- **Drama-free:** LLC should be a "socially safe" environment. Don't let girls form cliques or treat any member poorly.

### How to Do Drama-Free

We all know girls can mistreat each other sometimes. Here are some tips that will ensure your group is cohesive and no one gets left out. Remember, it's supposed to be a safe environment where girls can try new things without fear of ridicule.

- Don't tolerate teasing. No one should be made fun of at LLC.
- If you see cliques form, break them up. One way to do this is to pair unlikely girls together for activities or tasks. (Think *The Parent Trap*.)
- During group discussion, give each girl a chance to talk. Kindly cut off girls who are talking too long and call on girls who never take the chance to speak.
- LLC should be a place where girls are pushed to get out of their comfort zone and try new things, but they should also never feel like they're going to get put on the spot.

### Chore or Bore?

LLC should be something that the girls and the leaders *want* to do. If going feels like a chore or if the meetings are a bore, then try and change that mindset by drumming up enthusiasm. If all your best efforts don't work, maybe it's not the right time to start a LLC in your branch.



# Logistics Other Nitty-Gritties

Let's start thinking about the specifics of your LLC. Here are the five major aspects of your program to consider:

## 1. Location

Where will LLC be regularly held? There are a few options:

- Church building
- Someone's home (or a regular rotation of homes)
- Offsite location, like a school multi-purpose room

How to decide? Ask yourself these questions:

- Is it centrally located? Will it be easy for all the girls to get a ride?
- Is there sufficient space?
- If meeting in homes, will it put a burden on the homeowner?

There should be a regular meeting place to provide consistency, but you can move the location occasionally. For example, if the church building doesn't have a kitchen, do cooking activities at someone's home.

## 2. Day & Time

What day and time will LLC be regularly held? Try and stick to a consistent schedule as much as possible. Here are a few ideas to consider, along with some potential pros and cons:

- A weekday directly after school
  - **PRO** Special time dedicated just for LLC; convenient overall
  - **CON** Women who work may not be able to volunteer to teach; may conflict with kids' extra-curricular activities
- A weekday after dinner
  - **PRO** A special time dedicated just for LLC
  - **CON** May conflict with bedtimes; may compete with mid-week service; people may not make the effort after they've "settled in" at home
- Weekends
  - **PRO** A special time dedicated just for LLC, may work better than a busy weekday
  - **CON** Many people are busy or unwilling to give up time on weekends, limiting the number of girls who can attend and teachers who can volunteer
- During regular Ladies' Circle meetings or other church meetings
  - **PRO** Convenient
  - **CON** Someone must miss Ladies' Circle to teach; not a time solely dedicated to LLC; may also conflict with bedtimes if meeting is held at night

### Why a "Special Time?"

We encourage you to dedicate a special time solely for LLC. Try not to have it in conjunction with another church event. We find that when you schedule a special time for LLC, it makes a big difference for the girls. They *know* that the adults are making a special effort for them. Plus, it may be more difficult to find volunteers if someone has to miss a meeting or event in order to teach. Additionally, some people may have a problem with the young girls doing "fun" things while everyone else is doing "spiritual" things at a mid-week service or conference.

### 3. Frequency of Meetings

How often will you have LLC? It depends on how you want the girls to view LLC.

- If you want them to view it as a “treat” that only happens once in a while, then hold it once monthly or quarterly.
- If you want the girls to view LLC as a regular occurrence with a good momentum, then hold it once every two weeks or even once every week.

What you decide really depends on your specific situation and how many volunteers you have helping with LLC. The more volunteers, the more often you can hold meetings.

Our recommendation is to start by having LLC once every two weeks (on the first and third or second and fourth weeks of each month), and go from there, increasing or decreasing the frequency according to how people feel.

### 4. Length

How long will a LLC meeting last? One hour is sufficient for most activities.

If you find it difficult to finish activities in one hour, try extending the time to an hour and a half. If you anticipate the activity taking more than two hours, split it into two sessions.

### 5. Age Range

What ages should be allowed in LLC? This totally depends on your group, but we suggest keeping it to anywhere between 5 and 12 years. We know that’s a *huge* age span, and we recommend you tighten it based on how many girls you have in this age range, without hurting anyone’s feelings.

If you have a wide age disparity, such as 5-year-olds with 12-year-olds, ask the older ones to be your helpers. They’ll benefit from the activities, but they’ll also feel like they have a more adult role. Assign an older girl to help a younger girl.

Tell the girls to invite their friends! It’s a great form of outreach for the church, and it teaches girls to be comfortable inviting people to church services and activities.

This may sound silly, but don’t let boys come to LLC. You may be tempted, especially when you can’t find a sitter for your male kids during a LLC meeting. Boys can be disruptive and chances are they won’t want to do “girl” activities anyway. Plus, it takes away from your mission of reaching out especially to the girls.

The Mesa Arizona Branch LLC, which launched in the winter of 2009, meets in the church fellowship hall or Sister Tawnya Hood’s home on the first and third Mondays of the month from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. And they take the summers off.



### A Few More Things to Consider...

#### Field Trips & Special Meetings

As your LLC gains steam, you may want to start having a few field trips or special meetings *outside of your regular routine*. Girls will love this! Go to an animal shelter, visit a nearby campsite or host a sleepover. It keeps things interesting for you and your group.

#### Wild Card Summers

It's easy to fall into a regular LLC schedule when girls are in school because they're following a daily routine. But when summer rolls around, all bets are off. Kids have the mornings free. Families go on vacation and schedules are harder to predict. If you know attendance will be very sporadic, consider taking the summer off.

#### Get Parent Feedback!

It's critical that you get feedback from parents on LLC logistics. That's why we've created a handy tool to help you, the **Parent Feedback Sheet**. Look for it in the Appendix. Simply copy the text into the body of an e-mail, and send it to parents.

### But We've Only Got 1 Girl

If you only have a few girls in your branch — or if everyone lives far apart — you may not be able to do LLC as described in these guidelines. But there are still ways you can make the girls feel special when they come to regular Ladies' Circle meetings or events. Here are some ideas:

- Give the girls a simple Ladies' Circle office, like the word giver. Or invent a fun job for them to do, such as "snack distributor" or "greeting card decorator." This idea has worked well for the Imperial Branch, where there's only one little lady.
- Ask older girls to participate in the lesson by reading scripture aloud or answering a question. Ask something like, "What do young girls like you think about this issue? Is it the same today as it was when we were young?"
- Prepare a coloring or activity sheet that very young girls can do during the Circle meeting. Just getting them in the habit of attending Circle, even if they don't fully understand what's going on, is invaluable. They aren't oblivious to the blessings the women have in the meetings. Let's cultivate their desire early!
- At Ladies' Circle events, give girls kid-friendly versions of the things you distribute to the women — food, prizes, gifts, favors, etc. If you're throwing a party or social, set up a kid table where the girls can sit together.
- Make T-shirts, bracelets or buttons for them to wear to Circle meetings. Even if they're not doing LLC stuff, they'll strongly identify themselves as part of Circle.
- Encourage older girls to teach a Circle class. Yes, *teach*. The Irvine Branch has done this successfully with 10 and 12-year-olds. Don't put a lot of pressure on them or give them a ton of rules. Just give them support and see what they come up with.

# Recruiting Volunteers



One of the LLC goals is to form intergenerational relationships between young and old. (Again, when we say “old” we mean anyone older than a LLC member. To a 9-year-old, a 15-year-old is old.)

These relationships won’t happen if no one volunteers to teach!

## Who Can Volunteer?

- Anybody! Ideally, volunteers will be women, but you can certainly have an occasional male volunteer to teach girls “boy things” like how to tie knots.
- Some women think that they have to be a mom or they have to have daughters to volunteer. Make sure they know *anyone* can teach!

## Tips for Recruiting Volunteers

- **Ask them directly:** Yep, this means actually walking up to a specific person and asking her to her face if she want to teach. If you know of a talent the person possesses, such as knitting or singing, give her a little compliment acknowledging her skill ... and then ask her to teach a LLC class.
- **Sign-Up Sheet:** The only problem with sign-up sheets is that they don’t work unless you pass them around during a Ladies’ Circle meeting or a regular church service. If it just hangs on the wall, fewer people tend to sign up. Check out our **Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet** in the Appendix.
- **Plugs:** If your Ladies’ Circle meets once a month or less, plug the need for LLC volunteers through other avenues. Ask the presiding elder to make an announcement at church. Send out an e-mail requesting volunteers. The more people hear about it, the more top-of-mind it will be.
- **Modify the schedule:** If someone wants to teach, but they can’t do it during regular LLC hours, consider altering the day or time or scheduling a special meeting for this person’s class.

### Tips for the Teacher

Make teaching LLC easy for your volunteers. Give them the **Teaching Tips** handout from the Appendix to use as a guide.

# Activity Ideas

We've finally come to the fun part! Here, we share ideas for activities you can do with your little ladies. But before we do, we need to reiterate this important idea: LLC meetings should *not* be traditional Sunday school lessons where the girls sit and listen to the teacher present material. The meetings should revolve around fun hands-on activities.

**There are three main (or core) categories of activities**



Of course, these three categories overlap quite a bit. Don't worry about clearly distinguishing between them, but rather emphasize how one activity can serve multiple purposes — for example, learning how to sing is a hobby, but preparing a song to sing at a nursing home is an act of service.

One more thing! As you read the activity summaries, you may come across materials or crafting techniques that you aren't familiar with. To save time and space, we decided not to go into detailed explanations. Just key those unfamiliar words into your favorite Internet search engine, and voila!

## Core Activity Ideas

In the following pages, we'll explain these three main categories of activities in more detail. We'll also give specific examples of possible activities. These ideas are to offer inspiration. Please don't consider this a curriculum or a set of required activities. Hopefully you will think of many more creative ideas beyond what we offer here.

### CORE ACTIVITY 1: Life-Skill Activities

LLC focuses on teaching girls the lost art of homemaking. Life-skill activities can include anything that qualifies as an adult household responsibility.

Are we reinforcing gender stereotypes by teaching girls how to cook and do laundry? Of course not. We're teaching them how to take care of themselves and be self-sufficient, confident women. When you do these activities with your girls, try not to say, "You'll need to know this when you're a wife and mommy someday." Simply say, "These are things that grownups should know how to do to take care of themselves and others."

- **Cooking & Baking:** Make food items, like bread, pizza, soft pretzels, cakes, pies and cookies. Or, cook a whole meal, complete with a main course and side dishes. Let girls measure ingredients, mix them together and keep track of time. Introduce them to basic kitchen gadgets and appliances. Teach them timesaving tips. Let them eat the food or take a portion home to share with their families.
- **Table Setting:** Teach girls how to set a proper table for a fancy meal. Have someone bring in a dainty china set, or use plastic-ware for younger girls. Use tablecloths and cloth napkins. Let the girls set the table, and then serve them tea and finger sandwiches.
- **Meal Planning & Budgeting:** Teach girls how to make a grocery-shopping list. Challenge them to make a list of groceries that will feed a family of four for one week, and give them a budget to work with. Let them cut coupons from the local paper in order to stretch every dollar.
- **Grocery Shopping:** After the girls have made grocery lists, take them to a grocery store, and show them where to find the food. Explain the layout of a typical grocery store. Give them a list of hard-to-find items, and send them on a scavenger hunt.
- **Laundry:** Make a game out of sorting laundry. Let girls measure the detergent and fabric softener. Show them how to set the correct temperature on an iron and press clothing with starch.
- **Sewing:** Teach girls how to use a sewing machine and how to hand-stitch with a needle and thread. Make easy projects on the sewing machine, such as cloth napkins or beanbags. Practice hand-sewing skills by mending holes in clothing. (You can also incorporate sewing skills into *many* crafts.)
- **Letter Writing:** Teach girls the importance of writing letters and cards by hand. Write thank-you, sympathy, encouragement and congratulations cards. Start a pen-pal relationship with girls at another LLC or at a local youth home.



### CORE ACTIVITY 2: Crafts & Hobbies

By exposing girls to different crafts and hobbies, they may realize they have an interest in a particular activity or that they have a special talent for a specific pursuit. This gives girls the opportunity for self-discovery.

The group will most likely be divided on an activity, some liking it and some not. Tell girls that the point isn't to be *good* at everything they do but to simply *try* it. It's not like school where they have to master everything the teacher presents in order to get a good grade. LLC is a place where they simply get exposure to different pastimes and occupations. Whether or not they're good at them or they like them is irrelevant.

- **Scrapbooking:** Show girls how to archive pictures. Teach them how to create an attractive page by coordinating the colors of the paper and stickers with the colors in the photos. Show them how to theme a page for a particular event or holiday. Bring sample scrapbooks that girls can look through. Create a LLC scrapbook by taking pictures at each of your meetings. Develop the pictures, and let girls make a memoir book. Make one scrapbook for the whole group or let each girl make her own mini scrapbook.
- **Card Making & Stamping:** Teach girls different stamping methods and how to use stamps to make greeting cards. Brainstorm the different occasions where people usually send cards, and let them pick out stamps that go along with those occasions. Incorporate creative stamping techniques such as embossing, watermarking, etc...
- **Knitting & Crocheting:** Teach girls the basics of how to knit and crochet. Start slow. For crochet, simply teach them how to chain. For knitting, you may want to cast on the stitches beforehand. Bring enough needles and hooks so no one has to share, and provide pictures that describe each step. Bring finished products or pattern books so girls can see what an advanced crocheter or knitter can potentially make.
- **Beading & Jewelry-Making:** Girls will love making and wearing jewelry. Introduce them to jewelry tools, such as craft wire, pliers and elastic. Simple elastic bracelets are great for beginners. Use large pony beads and plastic lace to make chunky key chains, or simply braid plastic lace or embroidery floss to make friendship bracelets.
- **No-Sew Fabric Crafts:** There are plenty of no-sew fabric crafts, such as knotted fleece blankets. Any seamless fabric, such as fleece or felt can be attached with hot glue. You can also make fabric flowers, turning them into hair clips or clothing embellishments.
- **Origami & Pop-Ups:** Teach the traditional Japanese art of paper folding. Show girls what origami paper is, and make simple projects, such as frogs and cranes. You can also try making toys, such as magic stars and kaleidoscope flowers. Girls will like making pop-up cards or books.
- **Nature Crafts:** Go on a nature walk and collect rocks, pinecones, leaves, flowers and acorns. Use them to make crafts. Let girls make nature-related crafts like bird feeders and sundials. You can also teach girls to appreciate nature by making crafts from recycled or reused items, like food containers and boxes.



- **Vocal Lessons:** Have a talented singer teach the girls how to read music notes and sing in harmony. Introduce them to various music symbols commonly seen in hymnals. Teach the girls a song they can sing in church or while visiting someone in need of upliftment.
- **Gardening:** Show the girls how to plant flowers or a vegetable garden. Give them tips for planting and caring for flowers and food. Discuss the benefits of having a home garden. Teach them to identify different types of flowers.
- **Physical Activity:** Teach girls how to play a sport or play other active games. Give them swimming or diving lessons. Practice dribbling soccer balls or shooting basketballs. Play homerun derby. Plan a scavenger hunt that will require girls to run all over a park.



### CORE ACTIVITY 3: Service Projects

It's important that the girls know LLC isn't just about having fun for fun's sake. It's also about serving others. Sometimes we think that service projects will bore the girls, so we focus on planning entertaining activities to keep their interest. This is a mistake. Girls will love serving others, especially if you plan authentic and meaningful experiences.

You can incorporate an element of service into any of the life-skill or craft activities discussed so far by simply asking "How can we help someone (or make someone happy) with this?" In this section, we describe two primary forms that service can take:

- Serving the church
- Serving the community

We'll also talk about how girls can make crafts as an act of service.



#### Service Projects for the Church

Scripture urges the church to care for its members when they're in need. It's important that girls develop a desire to help the body of Christ.

- **Preparing Meals:** Cook a meal and deliver it to someone who is sick or housebound. New moms also appreciate meals. Don't stress about whether or not the person will like the food. Chances are, they'll be touched more by the gesture when they see a group of little girls on their doorstep holding Tupperware. If your group can't prepare a meal, offer to pick up groceries instead.
- **Housework:** Clean out someone's garage, and take unwanted items to Goodwill. Vacuum someone's house. Plant flowers in someone's garden. Wash someone's car. Pull weeds or rake leaves in someone's yard. Girls will not only help others but also learn how to do these household chores properly.
- **Fundraising for Church Efforts:** Join forces with another auxiliary in a fundraising effort, or simply pick a special project. Make crafts or bake items to sell. Charge for doing housework or other chores. Girls can also organize donation drives. For example, collect shoebox gifts that can be donated or distributed to branches and missions in poor areas.



#### Service Projects for the Community

It's important that girls realize the church is here to help not only itself but the local and national community as well.

- **Fundraising for a Local Cause:** If a respected local charity or nonprofit is sponsoring an event or asking for donations, lend a hand! Contact the organization and ask how you can help. When large-scale tragedies occur, such as tsunamis or earthquakes, raise money to send to the Red Cross or other trusted organizations. For example, the Mesa Arizona LLC sold heart-shaped pins and magnets to raise money for earthquake relief in Haiti. The event was called "Hearts for Haiti."
- **Volunteer:** Visit a site like [volunteermatch.org](http://volunteermatch.org), where you can find local volunteer opportunities that allow young children to participate. Many organizations require kids to be of a certain age in order to volunteer, so be sure to check. Try volunteering at a soup kitchen, food bank or animal shelter. Read books to toddlers or help with a community cleanup.

- **Contact Non-Profits Directly:** Instead of signing up to do pre-established volunteer projects, contact the volunteer coordinator at a local nonprofit you respect and ask what your LLC can do to help. Ask if the girls can play board games or sing songs with residents at a rehabilitation center or retirement home. Ask if they can bring flowers to a women's shelter on Mother's Day. You never know what a nonprofit may need outside of their established volunteer programs.
- **Random Acts of Kindness:** You can also bypass nonprofits and charities altogether! Make sack lunches or blankets and distribute them to the homeless. Make cards of appreciation for every teacher at a local school. Stand outside a doctor's office or hospital and open the doors for patients and visitors. Collect the shopping carts in a parking lot or pick up trash in a park. Find more ideas at [randomactsofkindness.org](http://randomactsofkindness.org).

### Craft-Making as Service

Any of the previously mentioned craft ideas can be turned into service projects if you give the craft away to someone who either needs it or would appreciate it.

Websites like [crafthope.com](http://crafthope.com) collect specific crafts for specific causes. For example, they've collected handmade bracelets for orphans in Russia and blankets for tornado survivors in the Midwest. Make the crafts as a group and send them to the address provided. Include a picture of your LLC, also.



The girls sell handmade accessories as a fundraiser

### Other Activity Ideas

While you'll devote most of your LLC sessions to the core activities, teaching girls life skills, crafts, hobbies and acts of service, we've got a few other ideas you can throw in every so often in order to mix things up.

#### Holiday-Related

Girls love celebrating holidays. Use special events as a springboard for your activities. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Valentine's Day:** Make special valentines for the widows in your branch.
- **Easter:** Prepare a song or skit for the congregation on Easter Sunday.
- **Mother's Day:** Make real or artificial corsages or flower pins for each mother in the branch.
- **Father's Day:** Let LLC decorate for the Father's Day breakfast.
- **Thanksgiving:** Organize Thanksgiving meal boxes for needy families.
- **Christmas:** One year, the Mesa LLC made ornaments for every family in the branch. They set them up on a little tree in the foyer, and each family took one home as a memento.

#### Pure Fun Days

Sometimes you'll run out of volunteers or you'll just be too dog-tired or crazy-busy to plan an activity. When this happens, let the girls have a fun day in which they don't really learn anything new, they simply enjoy playing together and being friends. Here are some "fun day" ideas:

- Play board games. Combine the pieces of several different games and let the girls invent a new game using the pieces.
- Play classic playground games like handball, jump rope, foursquare and capture the flag. Let girls teach each other rhythmic hand clapping patterns and chant the accompanying rhymes.
- Sing VBS songs from previous years or old Sunday school songs, and see who remembers the hand motions.
- Let girls do each other's nails. Bring a few stick-on gems or nail embellishments, and let them go crazy.

#### Boy Skills

Girls will think it's a novelty to learn how to do "boy" things every once in a while. If you ask a man to teach the lesson, remember to have a woman present, too. It may also impact girls more to see a woman teach the lesson. Here are some ideas:

- Change a tire on a car
- Build something from wood using a hammer and nails
- Fix something that's broken
- Go fishing at a nearby lake
- Learn how to tie different types of knots

#### Spiritual Lessons

Yes, we know that we said no lessons, but it's appropriate to sometimes use LLC as a forum to teach girls about female-related scriptures or responsibilities. Here are some ideas:

- Discuss church ordinances where women play a central role, such as setting the communion table, facilitating feet washing and preparing linens for baptisms. Show the girls where the items are stored, how the deaconesses care for the items and why the ordinances are performed.
- Discuss special women in scripture, and do activities related to them. For example, talk about Sarah in the Bible (Abraham's wife) and in the Book of Mormon (Lehi's wife) and how they both had to leave their homeland to travel to an unknown country. Discuss this story, and then teach the girls how to properly pack a suitcase.
- You can incorporate a spiritual tie-in to any of the previously mentioned activity ideas. For example, in the Mesa Branch, a deaconess taught the girls how to set a proper dinner table, and then she showed them how the communion table is set. For a more detailed explanation of this lesson, see **Setting a 'Spiritual and Natural' Table** in the Appendix.

### Special Outings

There will be times when you'll want to take the girls on special outings *outside of the regular LLC meetings*. Plan enriching activities that will expose girls to things they wouldn't normally see or do, such as cultural events. You can also plan activities that simply give girls the chance to spend more time together and show them that you love them. Here are some ideas:

#### Show them the world:

- Go cycling around a large city park
- Visit a science museum
- Go to an art gallery
- See a play or other live children's production
- Ride a train or tram
- Go to the zoo or take a tour of a farm
- Arrange for the girls to take a professional lesson, such as pottery, surfing or painting.

#### Show them you love them:

- Plan a sleepover where girls can have snacks, paint nails and watch a movie. Have them each bring costumes, and have a fashion show.
- Plan a spa day where the older women do the girls' hair, nails and show them how to properly use makeup. Talk with the girls about self-image.
- Plan a fashion show in which the girls model clothing that is appropriate and godly. As each girl models clothing, let her parents briefly talk about her good qualities and talents (inner beauty).



Funny fashion show at an LLC sleepover

### Mesa Branch Case Study

The Mesa Branch launched the first LLC in the winter of 2009, and it's still going strong. We've already shared a ton of ideas that the Mesa Branch has come up with, but if you're want to get an idea of *all* the activities the Mesa Branch LLC has done since it's inception, here's a quick snapshot. These activities are "tried and true."

#### Life Skills

- Made pizzas
- Made soft pretzels
- Learned to set a proper table

#### Crafts/Hobbies

- Made LLC scrapbook
- Made book bags to carry scriptures. Decorated canvas tote bags
- Learned crocheting basics
- Went to a sister's home and she gave them diving lessons in her swimming pool
- Pure fun day: played board games

#### Service/Fundraising Crafts

- Made cards for church members in need
- Made thank-you cards for people who have helped with LLC
- Crafter.com projects: sewing beanbags, making bracelets for kids in need
- Hearts for Haiti: Made heart pins and magnets to raise money for Haiti earthquake relief. Sent money to Doctors Without Borders
- Made Christmas ornaments for each family in the branch. Constructed a cute tabletop Christmas tree, and hung the ornaments on it. Displayed tree in lobby at Church, letting each family take an ornament home
- Made Mother's Day flower pins. Sold them as a fundraiser

#### Service Activities

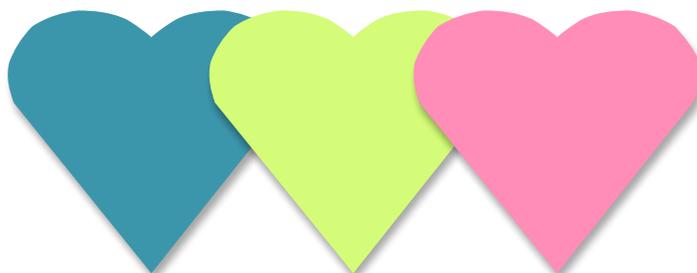
- Made a complete dinner for church member in need
- Delivered potted flowers to someone in need

#### Spiritual Lessons

- Table setting/communion table setting: See the outline in the Appendix

#### Special Activities

- Sleepover/Makeover: Girls painted nails, dressed up and put on a fashion show
- Women treated girls to a Spa Day. They did their hair and nails



# Rewards & Recognition

It's up to you whether or not to reward or recognize the girls in LLC. Overall, we think it's a good idea to remind girls how much they've learned in LLC and also how much the branch and the Ladies' Circle appreciates them. Below we've listed a few ideas for ways you can do that, but don't let this list limit you. If you have a creative idea for how to recognize the girls, go for it!

- **Charm Bracelets:** Every time the girls try a new skill, let them add a charm or a colored bead to a bracelet or necklace. Instead of using charms to promote competition among the girls, use them as a "remembrance" or record of the new things the girls have learned in LLC.
- **T-Shirts:** Give your group a sense of identity by making T-shirts for the girls to wear. Have the LLC logo printed on T-shirts, or ask the girls to draw a custom design. Don't require them to wear their shirts to each session, but encourage them to wear the shirts on outings, as it will make them easier to spot in a crowd!
- **Feature Them in Meetings:** Let the LLC sing at your area Ladies' Circle business meetings. Ask them to sing or give testimonies during branch services.
- **Graduation:** If you have girls who age out of LLC, consider hosting a special graduation celebration for them. You can do this by having a party during a regular LLC meeting, publicly recognizing them during a church service or planning a special dinner event.

## The One Thing to Avoid

Competition! Don't make LLC a competition. Girls get enough of that in school. Don't take attendance or give awards for best behaved or most improved. Try not to let girls compare themselves with each other. Instead, teach them that they're all special in their own way, and it's the group that matters more than individuals. If you distribute charms, give them to each girl regardless of whether she truly "mastered" the skill. A girl shouldn't have to stress because she has fewer charms than the others.

## A Quick Note About Girl Scouts

LLC is very similar to the American Girl Scouts. If you have girls in your LLC who are also involved in a Girl Scouts troop, you may encounter this question: "Can I earn a Girl Scout badge for something I learn in LLC?" The Ladies' Circle has absolutely no problem with this. We'd love for the girl's LLC experiences to enrich her involvement with the Girl Scouts. But we're not quite sure how earning Girl Scout badges works. The girl would have to check with her troop leader to see if a LLC experience or activity would meet the requirement for earning a particular badge.



# Appendix



**Resources that you can customize,  
print and use tomorrow!**





# Parent Feedback Sheet

Hello parents!

You're receiving this message because we're starting Little Ladies Circle (LLC) in our branch. It's a program for young girls that teaches them new skills and how to serve others.

We want to have regular Little Ladies Circle meetings. We'd like to start by having [a one 1-hour meeting once every two weeks].

Beyond that, we need your feedback to ensure that the day, time and location are as convenient as possible for everyone. Please take the time to answer a few questions so we can make the best decisions for everyone.

1. Which of the following would work best for your family?
  - A weekday. Which one? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Saturday or Sunday. Which one? \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If we hold LLC on a weekday, which time would you prefer?
  - Right after school – 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.
  - After dinner – 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
  
3. If we hold LLC on a weekend, which would you prefer?
  - Sometime on Saturday. Suggest a time? \_\_\_\_\_
  - On Sunday directly after church.
  - Sunday evening. Suggest a time? \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. We need to decide where LLC will be held. Which of the following locations would you prefer?
  - The Church
  - [Name's] house
  - Your suggestion?
  
5. Is there any other feedback you have that will help us plan the logistics? Do you have any questions or concerns about LLC?

## LLC Teaching Tips

Thank you for volunteering to teach Little Ladies Circle! Without you, we wouldn't have this program to offer to our girls.

We want you to have a pleasant teaching experience. Here are some tips to help things go smoothly:

- Prepare everything ahead of time. Consider doing difficult or time-consuming components of the activity ahead of time.
- Start the session by introducing yourself and what you'll be teaching. You can ask the girls a little about themselves, too.
- Get into the activity right away. While you're working, talk to the girls about why the activity is important or why it is worth knowing. Ask them what they like or don't like about it. Ask them what they find easy or difficult. Also, ask the girls questions about themselves so you can get to know them.
- *Talk to* the girls like they're adults, but don't expect them to *act or perform* like adults.
- End the session by recapping the activity and asking for the girls' opinions. Don't worry if they didn't really enjoy it or get the hang of it. It's the experience that counts. Congratulate them on trying something new!
- Even though LLC is very informal, the girls still need to show respect for you and one another. Don't tolerate any type of disrespect.

# Web Resources

Here are websites that will help you plan activities.

## **VolunteerMatch.org**

Search for volunteer opportunities in your community.

## **Crafthope.com**

Make crafts that to send to needy people throughout the world.

## **RandomActofKindness.org**

Think of simple things you can do to brighten someone else's day.

## **Kaboose.com**

Great craft and activity ideas for kids.

## **FamilyFun.go.com**

Disney *Family Fun* magazine has great craft ideas and tutorials for kids.

## **ArtistsHelpingChildren.org**

This website catalogues kid-oriented crafts from all over the web. It's a great one-stop search for anything related to a particular craft idea or material. You can filter the crafts to get specific results.

## **CraftsforKids.com**

They have a public television show with a ton of educational projects for kids that use crafts to teach children about various topics like history, cultures, animals, etc...

## **MakingFriends.com**

This site has useful filters at the top of the page, so you can sort craft results based on what material you want to use or what special event the craft is associated with.

# Setting a “Natural and Spiritual” Table

This is a sample lesson prepared by Sister Wendy Giannetti from the Mesa Branch LLC. This is a good example of a “Spiritual Lesson” activity, which incorporates teaching the girls a new skill (setting a table for a meal) and an important spiritual concept (setting the communion table). We hope you enjoy this sample lesson!

## **Part 1: Show the girls how to set a proper dinner table**

- a) Set a sample place setting.
- b) Explain the different uses of silverware, plates, cups, etc...
- c) Cover the sample place setting so the girls can't see it.
- d) Provide each girl with the utensils she needs to set her own place setting. (You can use paper/plastic or real dishes.)
- e) Have the girls assemble their own place setting my memory. Have all the girls do this at the same time. (This was very fun for them!)

## **Part 2: Explain the communion table**

- a) Talk to the girls about communion. Why do we have it? Who can partake?
- b) Explain the symbolism. Bread = body of Christ. Wine = blood of Christ.  
Communion as a whole = remembering Christ's sacrifice on the cross
- c) Explain that it's a sacred ordinance and why we're quiet and reverent when the table is being set and sacrament is being passed.
- d) Show them where the cloths and dishes are stored. Explain that these items have all been consecrated for use in communion.
  - i. What does “consecrate” mean? To devote solely for a purpose; to make or declare sacred.
  - ii. Because these articles are consecrated, they can't be used for anything else. When the cloths are worn or the glasses become chipped or broken, they must be discarded.
- e) Explain the meaning of the items used in communion.
  - i. White cloths symbolize righteousness and purity of Christ. There are two cloths, bottom and top.
  - ii. White cloth napkins. Ministry uses to wipe hands before breaking the bread.
  - iii. Wine decanter and glasses. We use a common cup.
  - iv. Bread. What kind of bread? Why do we cut the crusts off?
  - v. What is done with the leftover bread and wine?
- f) Who can set the table? A deaconess or minister.
- g) Share any experiences you've had or know regarding setting the table or communion.