



LOVED.

1 JOHN 3:1

LARGE GROUP
RESOURCE BOOK

GEMIS Girls' Club



***LOVED. PERIOD.
THAT IS WHAT WE ARE!***

LARGE GROUP
RESOURCE BOOK

GEMIS Girls' Clubs

GEMSGC.ORG

LOVED. PERIOD. THAT IS WHAT WE ARE! LARGE GROUP RESOURCE BOOK



a division of Dynamic Youth Ministries
Bringing girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

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Printed in the USA

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HI FRIEND!

You are LOVED. Before you tell even one girl those three life-changing words, I want you to hear it in your own heart. You are LOVED. Not because you're a GEMS leader (*though I'm so grateful you are!*). Not because of anything you have or have not done. God simply places His love on you and says, "You are LOVED. Period. That is who you are!"

Girls need to hear this Truth more than ever! The statistics about girls in today's world are sobering. Girls as young as five are worried about their weight. A girl's self-esteem peaks at age nine and then takes a nosedive.¹ Recent studies suggest there has been a 50% increase in depression and suicidal feelings in girls ages 12-16,² and 70% of girls feel they don't measure up.³

Do these stats come as a surprise to you? Maybe? But perhaps you've already seen this in your life, or in the girls and women around you, feeling like they don't measure up in this media-driven, Pinterest-perfect culture.

As we know, our beliefs shape our behavior. Which creates an even greater sense of urgency when we hear George Barna report, "What you believe by your thirteenth birthday is generally what you die believing."⁴

Serving together,



Cindy Bultema
GEMS Executive Director

So when a girl believes she's not enough, her behavior is influenced. We see how her false beliefs can lead to insecurity, purposelessness, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, drug and alcohol use, sexual activity, and the list goes on.

But when a girl believes she is who God says she is, everything changes.

Can you imagine if every girl had a mentor who looked her in the eye week after week and said, "You matter. Your feelings matter. You are not alone. You are LOVED. Period."

Can you imagine if every girl had a welcoming, safe, and fun place to belong—where she was known, loved, served, and celebrated?

Can you imagine if every girl knew the capital 'T' Truth that she is accepted, beautiful, chosen, and enough?

Friend, you don't have to imagine. You just said "yes" to telling girls the Truth about God's love and their identity! I thank God for you!

As you speak the love and truth of Jesus into each heart, I'll be praying and cheering you on. And if there is any way I can serve you, please reach out anytime. That's what I'm here for!

Stats taken from:

1, 3: www.dove.com/us/en/stories/about-dove/our-research.html

2: www.todaysparent.com/kids/kids-health/adolescent-depression-rates-on-the-rise/

4: www.barna.com

MEET THE LOVED. CURRICULUM TEAM

Cindy Bultema is the Executive Director of GEMS Girls' Clubs. Prior to GEMS, Cindy served as the Children's Director at a West Michigan mega-church, as well as a children's curriculum writer for Zondervan Publishers, an international women's speaker, and author of the women's Bible studies *Red Hot Faith* and *Live Full Walk Free: Set Apart in a Sin-Soaked World*.

Cindy lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her husband and their four children. When she's not running a full household, you can find Cindy meeting a friend for coffee, walking her dogs, or attending one of her kids' sporting events.

Lenae Bulthuis has served as Training and Club Development Manager for GEMS Girls' Clubs since 2003. For over 15 years, Lenae has written life-changing curriculum for GEMS. She was eight years old when she stepped into a GEMS club for the first time. Today she counts it grace to write curriculum and train leaders within a ministry that has radically changed her life.

Lenae lives with her husband, Mike, on a Minnesota grain and livestock farm. She enjoys reading, watching grandlittles, and early-morning runs on gravel roads.

Serena Ellens is the Managing Editor and Content Manager for GEMS Girls' Clubs. Serena graduated from Anderson University with a degree in English and Writing, and a focus in Young Adult Literature. She loves spending time with girls and learning about their interests. Serena was a GEM and is amazed how God brought her to serve at the ministry that blessed her as a girl.

Serena lives in her hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is having the best time exploring this growing and developing city. She also loves to travel, and can't wait for her next adventure.

Amelia Rhodes is the Senior Editor for the *LOVED.* curriculum. She has served with the GEMS staff since 2015 in a variety of capacities. Amelia authored *Pray A to Z: A Practical Guide to Pray for Your Community* and serves as a national women's speaker. She also works as an Administrative Assistant at her local mega-church as well as a children's ministry Bible teacher at a community Bible study.

Amelia lives in Michigan with her husband and their two children. She loves hanging out with friends and family in her small town coffee shop.

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INTRODUCTION TO LOVED.

PURPOSE

The *LOVED.* curriculum was developed to help girls understand they are *LOVED.* *Period.* *That is what they are!* Because when girls believe that God deeply loves them, no matter what, everything changes. From the fullness of God's love, girls discover their true identity and can fully love Him, themselves, and others.

THEME VERSE

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! 1 John 3:1.

OVERVIEW

Our greatest desire is to be loved (Proverbs 19:22). No matter who you are or where you are in your story, we share the same insatiable desire. We desire love. We need to know that we are loved and seen. That we matter!

And if we miss the glorious truth that we are fully and unconditionally loved by Jesus, we'll hold our emptiness up to something or someone else to fill us.

Think about where we look for love, worth, and acceptance:

- Appearances—I am how I look.
- Emotions—I am what I feel.
- Experiences—I am what I've done or what's been done to me.
- Performance—I am what I do.
- Personality—I am too much or not enough.
- Possessions—I am what I have.
- Popularity—I am what people think and say about me.
- Social Media—I am what I show you.

But if we discover our "I am" within the great I AM, it changes everything. Our true identity is not in who we are, but in who God is. He is the One who made us, named us, and calls us His own. He loves us.

And though the enemy is relentless in speaking lies with question marks—do you really think you are loved? Accepted? Seen? Valued? God's Word is Truth, and His love is steadfast, unshakeable, and sure. *Period.*

The *LOVED.* curriculum is written and designed to bring healing and hope to girls and women who put question marks where God places a period. In understanding who they really are, they will live *LOVED.* And others will come to know that Jesus loves them, too!

HOW TO USE LOVED.: 3 OPTIONS

GEMS Girls' Clubs come in all shapes and sizes—from big clubs to small clubs, from city clubs to rural clubs. There is no one size fits all! However, the one consistent thing among all GEMS Clubs is they use GEMS curriculum. Based on how frequently your club meets, you'll want to select one of the options below for using the *LOVED.* resources. Once you've selected the option that best fits your club, set your schedule for the year and begin praying, planning, and preparing.

OPTION 1:

LOVED. ALONE

Works great for clubs that meet 2-4 times a month.

Use *LOVED.* as a stand-alone curriculum. Everything you need for a full club gathering is included! See a sample schedule on page 6 (*LOVED.* Guide)

OPTION 2:

LOVED. + BADGES

Works great for clubs that meet 2-4 times a month.

Use *LOVED.* with GEMS Girls' Clubs badges. Simply replace your craft time once or twice a month with badge work. See www.gemsgc.org for more information on our wide variety of girl-friendly badges.

OPTION 3:

LOVED. + BADGES + OTHER GEMS CURRICULUM

Works great for clubs that meet weekly.

Use *LOVED.* with badges and/or other GEMS curriculum. GEMS offers a variety of curriculum options. Clubs who met 4 times a month can use the *LOVED.* lessons twice a month and then add in other GEMS curriculum and/or badges during the other weeks of the month.

LOVED. PERIOD. THAT IS WHAT WE ARE!

LOVED. GUIDE

Use this guide to plan your season! If you meet four times a month, most months contain two Bible lessons, one LOVED. Challenge, and one Monthly Fun Night. If you only meet twice a month, choose one Bible lesson and one LOVED. Challenge per month, do Fun Nights quarterly, instead of monthly, or another combination that works best for you. If you have questions, please contact the GEMS Global Office.

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WHAT YOU NEED

The *LOVED.* curriculum includes all the necessary components to lead your girls into a deeper understanding of God's love and their true identity in Him.

Large Group Resource Book—Sixteen lessons with overview, Large Group arrival activities, scripted lesson openers and Bible teachings, craft activities and meaningful dismissals. Eight *LOVED.* Challenges with corresponding devotionals and service project ideas, seven Fun Nights with corresponding devotionals and event ideas, plus more.

Small Group Leader's Guide—Sixteen Small Group welcomes, memory verse games, *GEMS Journals* leader's helps, prayer prompts, and craft instructions for three program levels: Grades 1-3, Grades 4-6, and Grades 7-8.

GEMS Journals—Sixteen take-home sheets for girls with lesson review and full-color posters for three program levels: Grades 1-3, Grades 4-6, and Grades 7-8.

***LOVED.* theme song**, "Live Like You're Loved" by Hawk Nelson, and creative movement video downloads.

Real Talk Videos—Sixteen short video encouragements from a diverse group of young women to your *GEMS* girls. Close each lesson with these fun challenges to help your girls live out what they learned in club. Links to each week's video are included in the *GEMS Journals* and all videos are available in the *LOVED.* Online Resources.

OPTIONAL RESOURCES

You may purchase these additional resources from gemsgc.org or by calling 616.241.5616 ext. 3032.

GEMS Gospel Treasure Box—Use to share the Gospel Message with your *GEMS* girls! See *The Joy of Sharing Jesus: Leading a Child to Christ* on page 11 for more information.

A to Z Identity Cards—Each beautiful card contains an A to Z name of who God says we are—Accepted, Beautiful, Chosen—and a corresponding Scripture verse.

***LOVED.* The Truth Is...** sticky note pad. Remind yourself and others of the Truth of God's Word. Never underestimate the power of a sticky note! Use in Lesson 1's craft and Lesson 3's Lesson Opener

***LOVED.* A to Z bookmark**—Lists the names God gives us from Accepted to Zealous.

***LOVED.* heart sunglasses**—Use for the Bible teaching in Lesson Six and for the Family Celebration Fun Night presentation for Grades 1-3.

You may also want to incorporate badges from the ***Discovery Place Badge Book***. Simply replace craft time with badge work.

And more! Find more resources at gemsgc.org/store.

***LOVED.* ONLINE RESOURCES**

If you purchased a *LOVED.* Curriculum Starter Kit, you received access to a digital library that contains items such as printables, videos, and presentation slides. If you did not purchase a Curriculum Starter Kit, these digital resources are available for purchase at gemsgc.org/store or by calling 616.241.5616 ext. 3032.

NOTE: All *LOVED.* curriculum materials are protected under copyright. Photocopying is not allowed with the exception of the printables in the online resources.

LEADER GUIDE

The *LOVED.* curriculum is designed to reduce lesson planning and prep time so leaders have more time to pray and focus on building relationships with girls. It contains everything needed to guide girls into the Truth of God's love and their identity. Here is the structure of what is included in each lesson:

LESSON OVERVIEW

Purpose—Each lesson starts with a short statement with the primary focus of the lesson.

Bible Verse—This is the Bible verse that will be studied throughout the lesson and memorized by girls and leaders. Additional Scripture passages and Bible teachings are woven into each lesson.

PREPARATION

At the beginning of each lesson is a chart that lists the materials you need to prepare for each club meeting. Advance preparation includes praying for your girls, gathering needed supplies, and if needed, printing the downloadable materials from the *LOVED.* resources.

LESSON ELEMENTS

The lessons are broken into four elements to make it easy for you to lead your girls. While some clubs have the luxury of two-hour meetings, this curriculum is structured for a 1 ½-hour club meeting.

Arrival—Girls matter. Arrival is the timeframe between when girls arrive until club officially starts. When girls open the club doors, the first people they should meet are their leaders. The whole team is waiting for them, welcoming them, and letting them know they matter!

During Arrival warmly welcome girls by name. As you distribute nametags look each girl in the eye and say, “_____ [girl's name], you are LOVED. Period. That is who you are!” And then direct girls into the large group space to play the Arrival activity.

Large Group—God's Word matters. Large Group is the 20-30-minute timeframe when you gather all girls and leaders into one space. Begin with a warm welcome and prayer. Recite the GEMS Girls' Clubs Aim. Then worship together—sing praise to God!

After worship, you'll open God's Word. You'll teach girls this is God's Word of Truth. It tells them who God is, all He says about them, and how much they are LOVED. Because here's the good news: Lies can't stick to Truth-filled girls. When girls know who Jesus is and are armed with the Truth of all He says about them, they can battle the enemy's lies. They can live LOVED.

Small Group—Relationships matter. Small Group is a 60-minute timeframe when 6-8 girls meet with their small group leader. GEMS is a relationship-building ministry, and it's within Small Groups that relationships are built and lives are transformed.

During the first 30 minutes of Small Group use your *GEMS Journals* to help girls apply His Truth to their lives. This time includes application of God's Word, intentional prayer, and memorizing Scripture—including the A to Z List of their True Identity (see page 12). During the last 30 minutes of Small Group, grow relationships with hands-on activities. This is the timeframe to craft, participate in service projects, or earn badges.

Dismissal—Leaving LOVED. matters. Dismissal is the last 5-10 minutes of club. Dismissal is where you bring Jesus home—home in their hearts and home to their homes!

Gather all girls and leaders into a large group space. Speak a sentence or two that summarizes the focus of the night. Show a Real Talk Video from the *LOVED.* resources. Then speak life-giving words of peace, blessing, and love. And when they leave club, may they remember those last words and how being together made them feel. They are LOVED.

GEMS JOURNALS

Each lesson includes a full-color, four-page *GEMS Journal* for girls to take home. The *GEMS Journals* are designed to be a beautiful, tangible reminder of Truth. Girls can show their grown-ups what they learned at club, and then hang the poster in their bedroom or hangout space.

LEADERS NEEDED

In addition to the Club Coordinator, you will need one leader for each small group of six to eight girls. The leader should stay with her small group throughout the year. You may also choose to have additional helpers for sound and video, worship, snacks, and crafts.

SPACE NEEDED

You will need one space to host the large group activities for each lesson and separate spaces for small group activities and crafts.

DÉCOR (OPTIONAL)

Large Group Space. Decorate with anything that makes girls want to settle in and hang out. Decorate with throw pillows of all sizes and colors, heart garland or heart decor anything, comfy chairs, couches, bean bags, cool lighting like stringed lights or fun lamps, and fuzzy rugs. If possible, keep décor up all season! For more fun decorating ideas, visit gemsgc.org to find the *GEMS LOVED*. Pinterest board.

Small Group Space. Create a small group space that invites girls to hangout. Use colorful tablecloths or anything bright, light, and fun to cover your table.

Centerpiece options:

- Vase filled with twigs (painted or natural). Attach cut out hearts.
- Jar with thin dowel sticks that have a heart attached to the top of each stick. Have one for each girl in your small group. Add her name to the middle of each heart. (Keep extra, blank hearts on dowel sticks on hand in case there are guests!)
- Hearts anything! Heart-shaped tins, baskets, or containers that hold pencils, crayons, scissors, etc.
- A jar filled with hearts that have been cut from scrapbook paper. Girls can add prayer requests to the back of each heart or leaders can add conversation starter questions to the back of hearts to engage girls who come to club early or stay late.

- Anything you may already have that would be seen in a girl's bedroom or hangout spot. Think signs, pillows, stuffed animals, decorative trinkets, etc.

If possible, keep décor up all season! For more fun decorating ideas, visit gemsgc.org to find the *GEMS LOVED*. Pinterest board.

LEADER TRAINING

GEMS Girls' Clubs is committed to organize, plan, and provide training opportunities for GEMS leaders to fully equip them to lead. Training includes:

ReFresh. GEMS ReFresh is an exciting, online training program for all your GEMS leaders. This library of resources is filled with relevant, Biblically-sound teaching, inspiration, and encouragement. Once purchased, ReFresh is accessible to you and your GEMS team whenever you need it. Watch and re-watch messages at your convenience. Your club's membership also allows the materials to be viewed by anyone in your church, and since the topics covered are not all GEMS specific, it could benefit other ministry leaders and the women's ministry at your church. Learn more at gemsrefresh.org.

Conference. GEMS Conference is an annual event designed to strengthen and equip women to mentor the next generation of girls. Leaders discover how to respond to challenging life situations of girls today, engage in powerful worship, connect with well-known speakers, leave with a fresh vision for mentoring girls, and network with like-minded women of faith. Learn more at gemsgc.org/conference.

Follow Us! Exciting developments are always happening at GEMS! To stay up-to-date, please follow us on social media and read your monthly e-news. You can also check out the gemsgc.org website, too.

HOW LOVED. WORKS

ARRIVAL

Icebreaker Activity

LARGE GROUP

Praise & Worship

Lesson Opener

Bible Teaching

Closing Prayer

SMALL GROUP

Welcome Activity

Memory Verse Work

Bible Lesson
(GEMS Journals)

Craft or Badge Work

DISMISSAL

Return to Large Group

Real Talk Video

Closing Prayer

Watch the ReFresh Message **Four Essential Pieces to Structuring Your Club Meeting** at gemsrefresh.org for more details about each part of your club meeting.

GEMS ReFresh

Equip • Encourage • Engage

THE JOY OF SHARING JESUS

At GEMS, we are on a mission to help bring girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. It's the heart of our name and the GEMS acronym—Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior. GEMS is committed to exemplifying and speaking the life-changing Truth that girls are loved by God, known by God, and matter to Him.

Think about this generation of girls. Think about the girls in your sphere of influence. You may notice:

Girls have questions about God. Who is God? Do I have to be good for God to love me? Does He love me when I'm bad? Is He *really* all I need?

Girls have questions about themselves. Who am I, anyway? Why am I here? Do I matter? Am I worth it?

Friend, you know the Truth. You know the good news their questioning hearts need to hear. His name is Jesus! His love is unending and unstoppable. In Jesus is life, forgiveness, meaning, and our true identity. Let's go change the world by sharing His amazing, life-changing Truth!

Jesus made our mission clear. *Go and make disciples* Matthew 28:19. You get to tell this generation of girls about Jesus and His love. You get to help them discover who Jesus is and all He says about them. It's why you're holding this resource.

The time is now. Girls must know they are LOVED. Period. A survey by the International Bible Society reported that 83 percent of Americans make their commitment to follow Jesus between the ages of four and fourteen.* And George Barna reports, "What you believe by your thirteenth birthday is generally what you die believing."**

As you experience the joy of sharing Jesus, remember that you don't go alone. You're part of a growing sisterhood who is on mission to bring girls to Jesus. And above all else, God is our Guide who calls and equips us to lead girls to Christ.

SHARING THE GOSPEL REMINDERS

- Sharing Jesus is not a one-time conversation. Every time you meet, share more about who Jesus is and all that He says about them.

* home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ages.htm

** www.barna.com

- Sharing Jesus is more often caught than taught! Children are observing your life and relationship with Jesus.
- Sharing Jesus happens best as we listen to the Holy Spirit and to the child. What do they need to hear about Jesus first?
 - The lonely need to hear that God is a Friend who chooses them.
 - The sad need to hear that God is their Comforter.
 - The anxious need to hear that God is with them. They need not fear!
 - The self-conscious need to hear that God accepts them just as they are.
- Sharing Jesus requires heart prep. Always be prepared to share your faith story within the context of His. And pray that He would prepare the hearts of the children to receive His good news.
- Sharing Jesus is not one size fits all. There is no one right way to communicate the Gospel. There are different methods, but one message: Jesus.

RESOURCES

GEMS has a number of resources to help you share the Gospel with the child/children in your care.

The Gospel Lesson. Lesson 4 (*page 37*) of this *LOVED*. curriculum guides leaders as they share the Gospel message. Leaders teach John 3:16 using the visuals found within the Gospel Treasure Box.

GEMS Gospel Treasure Box. This box is a beautiful, tangible resource that aids leaders in walking girls through the Gospel message. The leader's helps are found in Lesson 4: The Gospel: John 3:16 of this *LOVED*. curriculum (*page 37*). The box can be used in large group, small group, or one-on-one settings throughout the season. To order, go to gemsgc.org or call the GEMS Global Office at 616.241.5616 ext. 3032.

Gospel Message Series. Watch the three-part **Gospel Message Series** videos on the GEMS website for specific training and equipping for sharing the life-changing Good News of Jesus.

A TO Z TRUE IDENTITY LIST

During *LOVED*, GEMS will learn their true identity in Christ. Challenge girls to memorize 1 John 3:1 and this A to Z List. For extra heart-strengthening have girls memorize some or all of the corresponding Bible verses for each true-identity name.

GOD'S WORD SAYS I AM...

Accepted. *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.* Romans 15:7

Beautiful. *You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you.* Song of Songs 4:7

Chosen. *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.* John 15:16

Delighted in. *He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.* Psalm 18:19

Enough. *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.* 2 Peter 1:3

Free. *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.* Galatians 5:1

Gifted. *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.* 1 Peter 4:10

Heaven-bound. *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.* Philippians 3:20

Important. *And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.* Matthew 10:30-31

Jewel. *They will sparkle in his land, like jewels in a crown.* Zechariah 9:16

Known. *You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.* Psalm 139:1-2

LOVED. *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!* 1 John 3:1

Masterpiece. *For we are God's masterpiece.* Ephesians 2:10, NLT

New creation. *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!* 2 Corinthians 5:17

Overcomer. *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.* 1 John 4:4

Protected. *But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.* 2 Thessalonians 3:3

Qualified. *And giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.* Colossians 1:12

Rescued. *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.* Colossians 1:13-14

Strong. *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.* Joshua 1:9

Temple. *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Unique. *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.* Psalm 139:13

Victorious. *But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Corinthians 15:57

Washed. *Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.* Psalm 51:7

eXample. *In everything set them an example by doing what is good.* Titus 2:7

Young but able. *Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.* 1 Timothy 4:12

Zealous. *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.* Romans 12:11

NOTE: All rights reserved. Do not photocopy. Posters and bookmarks of this A to Z identity list available at gemsgc.org/store.



LESSON NINE

YOU ARE ACCEPTED

Date of Lesson: _____

PURPOSE: To teach girls they are accepted in Christ and to accept one another, just as they have been accepted by God.

BIBLE VERSE: *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.* Romans 15:7

ARRIVAL

- Nametags—Download from the *LOVED.* resources
- Unique Greeting Icebreaker (No supplies needed)

LARGE GROUP

- Select Worship songs and provide the means to play them, including the *LOVED.* theme song “Live Like You’re Loved.” Suggested songs and lyrics can be found at <http://bit.ly/LOVEDSongs>
- Micah 6:8 Presentation slide—Download from the *LOVED.* resources or display GEMS Girls’ Clubs Aim in some other way

Lesson Opener:

- A limbo stick (or broomstick)
- Lively music

Bible Teaching:

- Accepted nametag
- Optional: Distribute an Accepted nametag to all girls when they are dismissed from Large Group

SMALL GROUP

For each small group:

- Lesson Nine *GEMS Journals*—*GEMS Journals* are available for three program levels: Grades 1-3, Grades 4-6, and Grades 7-8 (includes link to this lesson’s Real Talk video)
- A Small Group Leader’s Guide for each leader—Leader’s Guides are available for three program levels: Grades 1-3, Grades 4-6, and Grades 7-8
- Small Group Welcome: One Word (No supplies needed)
- Memory Verse Game: Memory Verse Scramble
Supplies: Index cards—Write one word of the memory verse on each card. Or use the same number of index cards as you have girls in your small group. Instead of writing one word per card, use phrases.
- Bibles
- Pencils or pens

CRAFT SUPPLIES

Door Hanger of Truth

- Bristol board (cut into 6” [152.4 mm] wide strips)
- Circle approximately 3” [72.6 mm] for tracing
- Markers/pens
- Scissors
- Decorations
- The A to Z list on page 12

DISMISSAL

- Video: Lesson Nine Real Talk and the means to play it—Download from the *LOVED.* resources



ARRIVAL

[Time: When girls arrive until club begins]

Greet girls at the door. Warmly welcome them by name. As you distribute nametags look each girl in the eye and **SAY**, “_____ [girl’s name], you are LOVED. Period. That is who you are!”

Until club starts, direct girls into the large group space to play the Icebreaker: Unique Greeting Icebreaker.

UNIQUE GREETING

SUPPLIES: None

1. As girls arrive have each girl make up a unique or fun way to say hello. Encourage them to be creative!
2. Then have them all demonstrate their greeting, with the girls repeating the greeting back.
3. You can have them compete to see which greeting wins the most votes, or you can just watch them greet each other in some pretty funny ways

(When it’s time for club to begin, start Large Group.)



LARGE GROUP

WELCOME & PRAYER

[Time: 2 minutes]

SAY Welcome to [name of your club] GEMS Girls’ Club!

PRAY (Have everyone stand for an opening prayer.)

GEMS GIRLS’ CLUBS AIM

SAY Who knows what the word “aim” means?

(Listen.)

Very good! An aim is your intent or purpose. If your aim is to win a race, you give your very best to coming in first!

Every time we come to club, we say our GEMS Girls’ Clubs Aim. This is our intent and purpose. We’re joining GEMS girls and leaders across Canada, the United States, and around the world in doing what we say we will do!

Let’s recite our GEMS Girls’ Clubs Aim together.

MICAH 6:8 PRESENTATION SLIDE: Or display the GEMS Girls’ Clubs Aim in another way for girls/leaders who may not know it.

ASK _____ [name of your club] GEMS and GEMS leaders, what does the Lord require of us?

(Leaders and girls respond): To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God Micah 6:8.

PRAISE & WORSHIP

[Time: You decide! About 4 minutes per song]



SAY God invites and welcomes each one of us into this place just as we are. Whether you love to sing or not so much, whether you feel crabby or cheerful, amped up or let down, you are accepted. To be accepted means you have a place here. Picture this group holding your hand, welcoming you, and calling you friend. You are LOVED. Period. Let’s thank and praise God in song.

SING one or more songs as a whole group.

SAY Girls, we are so glad you are here! Today, we will be talking about how we are all accepted. That means you don’t have to pretend you are someone you’re not. You are welcome just as you are. You have a place here today and always. You matter and are so LOVED.

LESSON OPENER: ACCEPTED

[Time: 5 minutes]



SUPPLIES: You will need a limbo stick (or broomstick) and lively music.

LEADER TIP:

The limbo involves bending the body backward from the knees and moving under a horizontal bar or rope that is put into progressively lower positions. Ask two leaders to hold a limbo pole/ broomstick at a level that every girl will be able to arch her back and walk under. If girls are unable to make it under the limbo pole, they are “out” and get to stand along the sidelines and cheer the rest of the girls on. Play the music and keep having the leaders move the pole down at increments until you have a limbo winner.

(After the activity ...) **SAY** When you were no longer able to stoop under the bar, what happened? (Listen.)

That's right. You were out! What are other games where people are eliminated or called out? (*Listen.*)

Great examples, girls. And while games are meant to be fun, when we're left out in real life it's not fun. It hurts when someone is our friend one day, and rejects us the next. It's painful when no one wants to come to our party or will invite us to theirs. And when you've been left out, maybe you even wondered, "What's wrong with me? Why doesn't anyone like me? Where do I fit in?"

(*Open your Bible to Romans 15:7.*) Whenever we have a question about our life, we can open our Bible. And what is the Bible? (*Listen.*)

Yes! The Bible is God's Word. It is Truth! And in the book of Romans, God tells us the Capital 'T' Truth about Acceptance. (*Read from the Bible.*) Romans 15:7 says, *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*

How would you describe what it looks like when you accept one another? (*Listen.*)

Very good! Another way of saying this is, *So reach out and welcome one another to God's glory. Jesus did it; now you can do it!* Romans 15:7, MSG. Those who know they are accepted and welcomed, accept and welcome others!

Listen again to Romans 15:7. *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*

Who does the Bible tell us accepted you? (*Listen.*)

That's right. It's Christ. It's Jesus! Jesus is a faithful Friend. He will not change His mind about how much He loves you. He never uninvites you, ignores you, or says there's no place for you here. His arms are always wide open to you! No matter who you are, what you look like, where you live, or what people think about you or what you even think about yourself, He invites you to come close. He says, "You are accepted. You are wanted. You are LOVED. Period."

BIBLE TEACHING: RUTH

[Time: 6 minutes]



SUPPLIES: Accepted nametag. (*Optional: Distribute an Accepted nametag to all girls when they are dismissed from Large Group.*)

SAY In the Bible there are two books named after women. One is Esther. The other is Ruth. They are both found in the Old Testament, the first part of the Bible. And in the book of Ruth we meet Ruth—a girl who doesn't always feel accepted.

(*Open Bible to Ruth.*) Before I tell you about Ruth, let me introduce you to Naomi. Naomi was Ruth's mother-in-law. Ruth was married to one of Naomi's sons. But they were more than family. They were also friends. Friends who experienced something very, very sad.

Naomi's life had fallen apart. Her husband had died and so had both of her sons. Wow. Can you even imagine? How do you think Naomi felt? (*Listen.*) Right! She was sad and hurting. And in the middle of all her pain, she felt rejected by God. Naomi couldn't see how much God loved her.

So Naomi decided to move back home to the town of Bethlehem. Which meant saying goodbye to her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. It was one more painful goodbye in their family. A goodbye that especially hurt Ruth. Because Ruth wanted to go with Naomi. Ruth wanted to move to Bethlehem with Naomi.

But Naomi said no. She rejected Ruth and pushed her away! Naomi thought Ruth would be better off without her.

I wonder if you've ever felt rejected or pushed away? Maybe you wanted to join a group who was sitting at a lunch table or playing a game and they said there's no room for you. Or you wanted to go to a party and you were told you're not invited. It hurts when we're not accepted. Raise your hand if you agree. (*Pause. Leader raise hand.*) Same here.

And with Naomi pushing Ruth away, it definitely would have been easier for Ruth to leave Naomi. Plus, if Ruth went with Naomi, she could face even more rejection. Bethlehem was Naomi's hometown, not Ruth's, so it would be risky for Ruth to move there. She

would be an outsider, a nobody—someone who would not be welcomed in the place Naomi called home.

But Ruth told Naomi she would stay with her, no matter what. Even though Naomi rejected her, Ruth stuck close. Listen to what Ruth told Naomi in Ruth 1:16. (*Read Ruth 1:16 from your Bible.*) Ruth said, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.”

Which is an amazing promise! Ruth told Naomi she would never reject her, no matter what. She would be a friend who stuck close in good times and the hard times. What would you say if a friend made that amazing promise to you? (*Listen to responses.*)

Do you know what Naomi said? She said nothing. Can you believe it? Naomi didn’t say thank you for being a good friend or I’m so glad you will stay with me. And though Naomi’s silence must’ve hurt, Ruth kept her promise. She stayed with Naomi. Ruth accepted and loved her.

Ruth’s story is a picture of how God accepts you, and me too. Even if we blame God for our problems and pain, He never rejects us. Instead of pulling away, God stays near. He walks with us and loves us. And on the really hard days when we wonder if and where we fit in, God sticks close. He reminds us the Truth of who we really are. We are accepted, we are welcomed, we belong, and are so, very LOVED.

Girls, God will never give up, walk out, or turn His back on you. Promise! And when Ruth remembered that God accepted and LOVED her, she could do the same for her friend, Naomi.

You can do the same for your friends. We show others God’s love and acceptance when we are friends who stick close. Even when our friends are sad or grumpy or having a really bad day, we walk with them instead of walking away.

And when we’re the ones who have been rejected and need a friend, we remember God’s capital ‘T’ Truth. Whisper Truth in your head: I am accepted. Write it on your mirror and notebooks: I am accepted. And remind yourself when you feel all alone: I am accepted, I am accepted, and so very LOVED.

Will you look at your neighbor and say, “You are accepted!” (*Girls repeat.*)

Now say, “I am accepted.” (*Girls repeat.*)

(**PUT** on an Accepted name tag.) And when we believe Accepted is who we really are, we will pull up a chair and say, “Come sit with me.”

Like Ruth, once we know we are LOVED. and accepted, we accept others. Just like Jesus accepts us!



WRAP-UP & PRAYER

[Time: 1 minute]

SAY Girls, you will always have a place to belong in this GEMS Club. And if you’d like to know more about belonging to God’s family, let’s talk. After I pray, please stay and meet with *me [*or say the name of another leader*] or talk to your small group leader. It would be our joy to talk to you.

(**PRAY** your own prayer or conclude with this one...)

PRAY Dear God, thank You for Your great love. When we are rejected, remind us of Your acceptance. When we wonder where we fit, remind us that You are near. Because of Jesus we are accepted, welcomed, and wanted. We are LOVED. Teach us to accept others the way You accept us. In the name of Jesus, amen.

***LISTEN** carefully to each girl. Acknowledge her feelings. Answer her questions, as you are able. If she asks questions you don’t have answers for, let her know you don’t know but will look for answers. Ask your pastor or Club Coordinator for help if you need. Share your faith story as appropriate, and pray. Pray with hurting girls who need to know they are LOVED. Pray with girls who want to have a relationship with Jesus.

Need resources to help you lead a child to Christ? See page 11 and watch **the Gospel Message Series** videos on the GEMS website.

Optional: Distribute an Accepted nametag to girls as they are dismissed to Small Group.

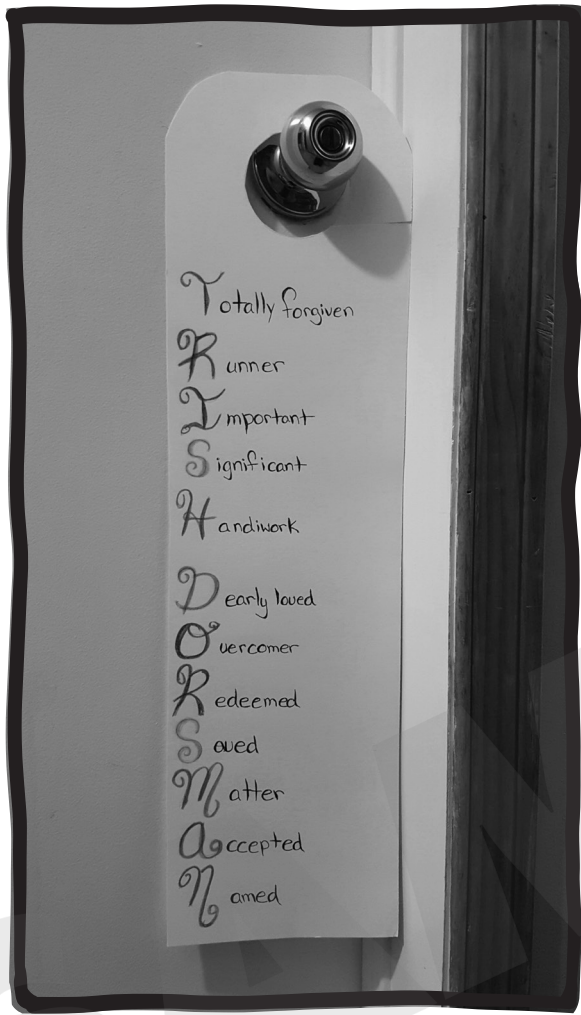
(Dismiss to Small Groups.)



CRAFT

DOOR HANGER OF TRUTH

[Time: 30 minutes]



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Trace the circle approximately 2" [50.80 mm] from the top of the paper. Cut this by cutting one straight line from the long side to the circle and cutting out the circle. This will allow it to be hung on a door.
2. Have girls write their names down the left side of the board.
3. Using the letters, help girls think words of Truth about who God says they are. Reference the A to Z list on page 12.
4. Have girls decorate the door hanger.
5. When they are finished have girls pass around the hangers and speak the words of their name to each girl.
6. Encourage girls to take home and hang on their door as a reminder of who God says they are.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

CRAFT & CHAT QUESTIONS:

- What are things you like about yourself?
- Is there something about you that you wish were different?
- What do you want people to know about the real you?
- Besides "Accepted" what are some other names God gives you?



LEADER TIP: Time required for any craft depends upon how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, a girl's age and individual abilities.

(Dismiss to Large Group space for dismissal.)

SUPPLIES

- Bristol board (cut into 6" [152.4 mm] wide strips)
- Circle approximately 3" [72.6 mm] for tracing
- Markers/Pens
- Scissors
- Decorations



DISMISSAL

[Time: 3 minutes]

LEADER NOTE: Have music playing as girls return to the large group room. Once everyone is in the room, close with Real Talk. Then wrap up your meeting and close in prayer. Remind them when you're going to meet again. Use your own words or follow the guide below.



REAL TALK

SUPPLIES: Video: Lesson Nine Real Talk. Download from the *LOVED.* resources.

SAY It's time for Real Talk. Listen to what we want you to know about you! Please turn your attention to the screen.

LEADER TIP: If there are technical difficulties, please use the script below.

LESSON NINE REAL TALK TEXT

Hi everyone! My name is Serena. I hope you all are feeling very welcome and accepted at your GEMS Club. But have you ever felt like you weren't accepted? I'm sorry to say that I once made a friend feel like she wasn't welcome to eat lunch with me and our other friends, and it really hurt our friendship. I was mad at her because she was reading a book I didn't like and told her not to read. It was a book my mom didn't want me to read, and one I thought would be a bad influence on my friend. When my friend didn't listen to me, I decided that meant I could exclude her from our lunch table. She felt very left out and alone, and we never really were friends after that. I'm so sad I made the wrong choice, and it meant losing a friendship. If I could go back, I would welcome her to the lunch table, even if I didn't like the book she was reading. At least if we sat together, I could talk to her about it, instead of shutting her out. This week, I challenge you to find someone who looks left out, or lonely. Who needs to know she's accepted by you, and by God? Ask her to join your lunch table, or come hang out with you. And most importantly, remind her that God has already welcomed both of you into His family. The welcome mat is ready—who else can you help welcome today?

SAY Girls, we are so grateful for each one of you and are glad you are part of our club. God tells us in the Bible who He is and who we really are. We can list the names He gives us from A to Z. And during this GEMS Club meeting we learned that A is for what? (*Listen.*) That's right! Accepted!

Look at the girl to your right and to your left and say, "You are accepted." (*Girls repeat.*)

Form a heart with your hands and say, "I am accepted." (*Girls repeat.*)

As we talk to Jesus, remember that He is near. He accepts you and loves you so much. Let's pray.

(PRAY *your own prayer or use the one below.*)



PRAY Dear Jesus, thank You for accepting us. Thank You for delighting in us. As we leave this place, thank You that You never leave us or walk out on us. You are near. Teach us to remember that no matter what, we are LOVED. And use us to remind others they are accepted and LOVED., too. In Your name we pray together. And all God's girls said, amen!

Give high fives, hugs, and words of encouragement.

I am accepted!

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:7



Feeling Invited

You're invited to Riley's house for a birthday party! She wants to make sure you feel welcome at her party. And she needs your help! Pick the choices below that will make you feel more welcome and wanted at Riley's party.

You hear about Riley's party from a friend.

OR

You get a real invitation in the mail.



You ask Riley if you can come to her party.

OR

Riley asks if you can come to her party.

Riley welcomes you at the door and says, "Thanks for coming!"

OR

You have to go find Riley to thank her for letting you come to her party.

You think it's a costume party, but it's not, and you feel embarrassed the whole time.

OR

You wear pajamas because you know for sure that it's a pajama party!

Riley helps you meet the rest of her friends.

OR

You spend the whole time alone because you don't know any of Riley's friends.



God's Word is Truth

Today's lesson is found in Romans 15:7 and Ruth 1:16-17.

Draw one thing you want to remember from today's lesson.

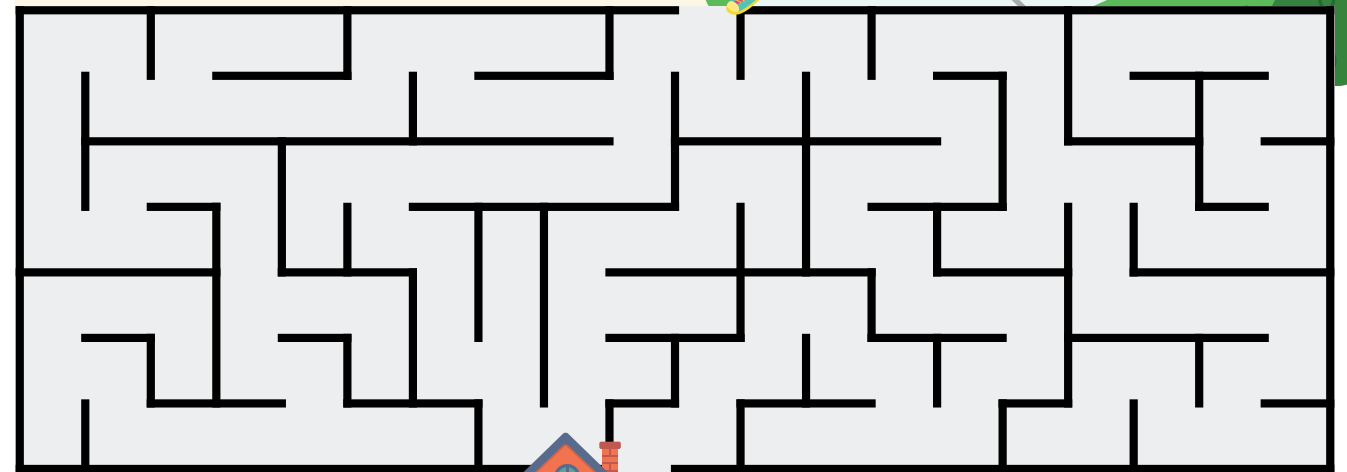
Today we learned that when Ruth knew she was accepted by God she was able to accept Naomi. Ruth was able to show Naomi that God accepted her, too! Good news! God also accepts you!

Conversation Hearts

- ♥ Does God accept you?
- ♥ What are ways you can show others they are loved and accepted?
- ♥ When do you most need to remember that you are accepted?

Welcome Home

You invited Olivia over to your house, but she's gotten a little lost. Help Olivia through the maze, and think about how you could welcome her!





Design a Welcome Mat

When people come to your house or your room, you want them to feel welcome. That's why we have welcome mats at our front doors! In the space below, draw your own welcome mat and door. What signs would you have to make people feel happy and comfortable? What would your mat say? What color would it be?

Jesus welcomes you into the best home of all time: Heaven! He accepts you just as you are, and wants you to be a part of His family. Who can you welcome into your life this week?

Prayer Requests Write your prayer requests on the lines below.

Memory Verse What memory verse did you learn this week? Write it down to help you remember it!

We need to accept others because God first accepted us. Do you have someone you need to accept this week? Hear Serena's story about acceptance in this week's Real Talk video at bit.ly/LOVEDRealTalk9.

REAL TALK
with **Serena**



Talking Together (to help you share about what you learned at GEMS)



The Theme for this week is for you to know you are accepted by God, and that means you need to accept and welcome other people, too!



Tell your grown-up about **Ruth's** story and how Naomi pushed her away, but then learned to accept Ruth, just as God accepted her into His family.



Try it yourself this week: **who do you need to accept and welcome?** Invite someone new to come over, or ask her to join your lunch table. Tell her about how she's accepted into God's family, too!



LOVED.

1 JOHN 3:1

**Grades 1-3
Small Group
Leader's Guide**

GEMIS
GIVE OUT



LESSON NINE

YOU ARE ACCEPTED

Date of Lesson: _____

PURPOSE: To teach girls they are accepted in Christ and to accept one another, just as they have been accepted by God.

BIBLE VERSE: *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.* Romans 15:7

SMALL GROUP

For each small group:

- Lesson Nine *GEMS Journals* for Grades 1-3 (includes link to this lesson's Real Talk video)
- Small Group Welcome: One Word (No supplies needed)
- Memory Verse Game: Memory Verse Scramble
Supplies: Index cards—Write one word of the memory verse on each card. Or use the same number of index cards as you have girls in your small group. Instead of writing one word per card, use phrases.
- Bibles
- Pencils or pens

CRAFT SUPPLIES

Door Hanger of Truth

- Bristol board (cut into 6" [152.4 mm] wide strips)
- Circle approximately 3" [72.6 mm] for tracing
- Markers/pens
- Scissors
- Decorations
- The A to Z list on page 10

Small Group Welcome

[Time: 5 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Welcome each girl by name. Look her in the eye and make sure she feels seen. A warm welcome reflects the welcome God gives us. And checking in ensures each girl feels valued and knows her presence matters in this place.

SAY Real friends care about one another. I care about you! It's why we begin by chatting and checking in with each other. I wonder how you're doing today? To share how you're doing today, we're going to use one word.

When I call your name, give the group one word that best describes how you are feeling right now. Who would like to begin?

ONE WORD

SUPPLIES: None

1. Ask each girl to share her name and one word to describe how she is feeling right now and why.
2. Continue until each girl and leader has participated.

LEADER TIP: Have each girl share. Ask a follow-up question for each girl. This shows girls you are really listening! And be sure to share your one word, too.

SAY Thank you for sharing. Whether you feel happy, tired, excited, worried, or upside down, this is true for all. You are LOVED. Period. That is who you are! And I love that I get to sit alongside of you to discover more about who God is and how much He loves us.

Memory Verse

[Time: 5 minutes]

Memorize/review Romans 15:7 by playing the Memory Verse Game, Memory Verse Scramble.



MEMORY VERSE SCRAMBLE

SUPPLIES: Index cards. On a set of index cards write one word of the memory verse on each card. Or use the same number of index cards as you have girls in your small group. Instead of writing one word per card, use phrases.

1. Memorize/review Romans 15:7. Use your Bibles or the verse printed within the Lesson 9 *GEMS Journals*.
2. Scramble the index cards.
3. Girls work together to place cards in the correct order.
4. Option: Tape a card to each girl's back and have them work together to line up correctly.

MEMORIZATION GOALS: Continue to encourage each girl to memorize 1 John 3:1. Check in and see how they're doing. Ask about a time they remembered this verse last week. What were they doing? Did it change their thinking or choices? If so, how? If girls have already memorized the verse, encourage them to begin memorizing the A to Z identity list on page 10.

GEMS Journals

[Time: 15 minutes]

The *GEMS Journals* will guide your discussion time for small group time, and will give every girl something she can take home with her. Make sure you encourage girls to share their *GEMS Journals* with their grown-ups, so they can bring the lesson home. Content contained in the *GEMS Journals* is outlined in boxes for you to review.

LEADER NOTE: Play the *Feeling Invited* game with your girls. To make it more interactive, have your girls run to one side of the room or the other to show the answer they choose. Then, talk about the options they chose. Which ones make them feel most welcome?

FEELING INVITED

You're invited to Riley's house for a birthday party! She wants to make sure you feel welcome at her party. And she needs your help! Pick the choices below that will make you feel more welcome and wanted at Riley's party.

You hear about Riley's party from a friend. OR
You get a real invitation in the mail.

You ask Riley if you can come to her party. OR
Riley asks if you can come to her party.

Riley welcomes you at the door and says "Thanks for coming!" OR
You have to go find Riley to thank her for letting you come to her party.

You think it's a costume party, but it's not, and you feel embarrassed the whole time. OR
You wear pajamas because you know for sure that it's a pajama party!

Riley helps you meet the rest of her friends. OR
You spend the whole time alone because you don't know any of Riley's friends.

LEADER NOTE: Go through the God's Word is Truth section with your girls, and make sure you start by reading the verses listed at the top. Then talk about the Conversation Hearts together. For your reference, each question and suggested answer is listed below, including a few bonus questions if you have time. Note that the questions get deeper as you go.

The bulleted questions are in the girls' *GEMS Journals*. The starred questions are bonus questions that are only included in the Small Group Leader's Guide.

Today's lesson is found in Romans 15:7 and Ruth 1:16-17.

Today we learned that when Ruth knew she was accepted by God she was able to accept Naomi. Ruth was able to show Naomi that God accepted her, too! Good news! God also accepts you!

- ★ Does God accept you? *Yes! God accepts and loves you!*
- What does it mean to be accepted? *To be accepted means you have a place. You don't have to pretend to be someone you are not. You are welcomed just as you are and you belong.*
- How do you feel when you're left out or ignored? *Personal responses may include that it hurts when we're excluded. We feel lonely and unloved.*
- ★ What are ways you can show others they are loved and accepted? *Personal responses may include that we can show others they are loved and accepted by being a good friend, inviting everyone (not just a few!) to play with us or sit next to us, and always using kind words.*

Let's Pray About It

[Time: 5 minutes]



SAY Today we learned that when Ruth knew she was accepted by God she was able to accept Naomi. Ruth was able to show Naomi that God accepted her too! When do you most need to remember you are accepted? Is there something you'd like this group to pray for you?

Direct the girls to the topics you talked about together. Maybe they need God's help to accept themselves or to accept others. Or maybe they long for a place to belong when they are not at GEMS Club. Invite them to pray specific about the conversations shared during your small group time. Ask one girl to begin the prayer, others can join in if they choose, you conclude the prayer. **PRAY** your own prayer or use the one below.

PRAY Dear Jesus, thank You for accepting us just as we are. Thank You for loving us and giving us a place to belong. Forgive us when we don't accept others the way You accept us. Help us to always open our arms and pull out a chair for others. May our small group and club always welcome, love, and accept one another. In the name of Jesus who loved us first, amen.

★ When do you most need to remember you are accepted? *Personal responses.*

Draw one thing you want to remember from today's lesson.

LEADER NOTE: Complete this maze with your girls, and ask them how they would make Olivia feel welcome. What would they want Olivia to do if the roles were reversed?

WELCOME HOME

You invited Olivia over to your house, but she's gotten a little lost. Help Olivia through the maze, and then draw you at your house. You might want to be holding some snacks so you can welcome her!

LEADER NOTE: Read the doodle prompt for your girls, and give them time to doodle their response. Then have them share their doodles with the group. How do they welcome others with their welcome mat? Who could they welcome into their lives this week?

DESIGN A WELCOME MAT

When people come to your house or your room, you want them to feel welcome. That's why we have welcome mats at our front doors! In the space below, draw your own welcome mat and door. What signs would you have to make people feel happy and comfortable? What would your mat say? What color would it be?

Jesus welcomes you into the best home of all time: Heaven! He accepts you just as you are, and wants you to be a part of His family. Who can you welcome into your life today?

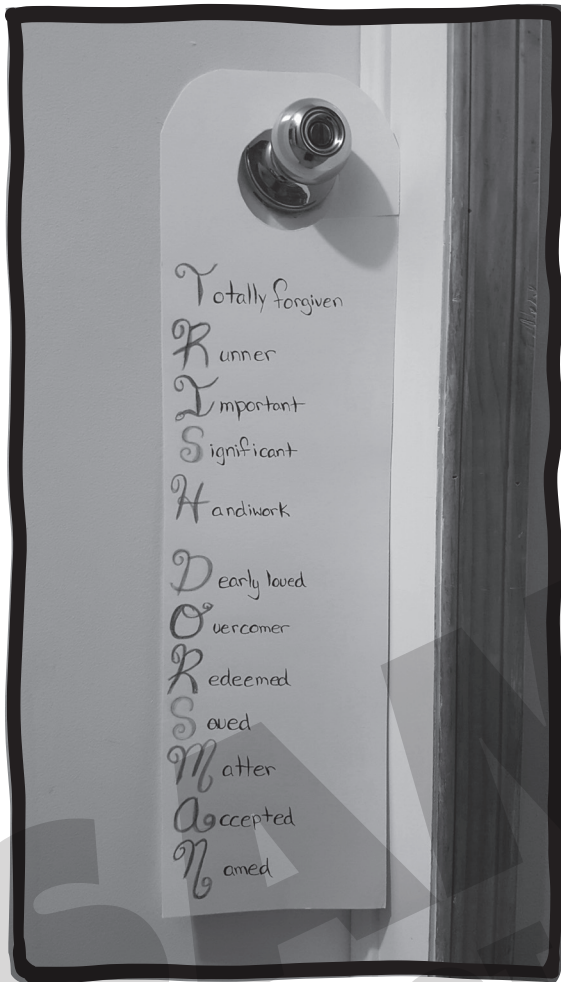
LEADER NOTE: Encourage girls to write their prayer requests and memory verse on the lines provided. Review the *Talking Together* box with your girls, and remind them to share these talking points with their grown-ups. This is what you want your girls to remember when they leave club, so make sure you cover this section right before they go!



CRAFT

DOOR HANGER OF TRUTH

[Time: 30 minutes]



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Trace the circle approximately 2" [50.80 mm] from the top of the paper. Cut this by cutting one straight line from the long side to the circle and cutting out the circle. This will allow it to be hung on a door.
2. Have girls write their names down the left side of the board.
3. Using the letters, help girls think words of Truth about who God says they are. Reference the A to Z list on page 10.
4. Have girls decorate the door hanger.
5. When they are finished have girls pass around the hangers and speak the words of their name to each girl.
6. Encourage girls to take home and hang on their door as a reminder of who God says they are.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

CRAFT & CHAT QUESTIONS:

- What are things you like about yourself?
- Is there something about you that you wish were different?
- What do you want people to know about the real you?
- Besides "Accepted" what are some other names God gives you?



(Dismiss to Large Group space for dismissal.)

LEADER TIP: Time required for any craft depends upon how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, a girl's age and individual abilities.

SUPPLIES

- Bristol board (cut into 6" [152.4 mm] wide strips)
- Circle approximately 3" [72.6 mm] for tracing
- Markers/Pens
- Scissors
- Decorations

I AM ACCEPTED

Accept one another, then, just
as Christ accepted you, in order
to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:7

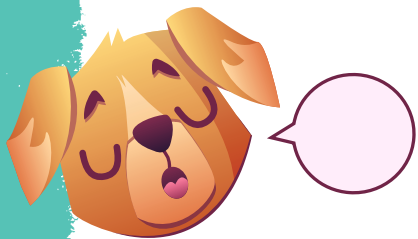
JUST AS YOU ARE

It's hard to be nice to someone who's mean. It's even harder to love that person. How good are you at loving people for who God made them to be, even when they annoy you? Take this quiz to find out! Answer true or false for each question below. Then check your answers with the descriptions at the end of the quiz.

1 When your sister or brother is driving you crazy, you help them find something to do until you're free to hang out with them more.
A. True B. False



2 Your friend cuts her hair really short, and you don't really like it. You tell her you don't think it looks good, because she should know.
A. True B. False



3 You find out that your cousin has to wear pull-ups to bed because she still sometimes has accidents at night. You could tell the rest of your siblings to make them laugh, but you don't.
A. True B. False



4 One of your good friends makes a bad choice and it upsets you. You could ghost her until you aren't friends anymore, or you could tell her how you feel and ask her to explain her side of the story. You decide to ghost her and pretend she doesn't exist.
A. True B. False



5 Your friend from summer camp comes to visit you, and even though she's a little odd, you introduce her to all of your friends at school. You really like her, and you hope your friends will like her, too!
A. True B. False



Points: Q1: A=2, B=1 | Q2: A=1, B=2 | Q3: A=2, B=1 | Q4: A=1, B=2 | Q5: A=2, B=1

5-7 Points: A Few Fixes...

You sometimes have a hard time accepting people for who they are. Maybe you're just joking around with their flaws, or maybe you want them to be the best they can be. Whatever the reason, remember that God created everyone on earth with a special plan in mind, and it isn't your job to fix them. Just to love them for who they are.

8-10 Points: Warts and All

You try to love people for who they are, even when it's hard. That means having tough conversations, or choosing to give up being cool so you can be kind. It can be hard loving people for who they are, warts and all, but it honors God. Keep going!



GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH

Read Romans 15:7 and Ruth 1:6-9, 15-18.

Write or draw one thing you want to remember from today's lesson.

Today we learned that when Ruth knew she was accepted by God she was able to accept Naomi. Ruth was able to show Naomi that God accepted her, too. God also accepts you just as you are!

Conversation Hearts

- ♥ What do these verses teach us about God?
- ♥ Naomi pushed Ruth away. How did Ruth respond? Would you have made that choice? Why or why not? When we exclude others, how do you think they feel?
- ♥ Sometimes you're the one who needs a friend most. When you've been rejected, how will you remember what God says about you?

THE GIFT

Write down a list of the last few gifts you've received. Maybe they were birthday presents, gifts from your friends, Christmas presents, etc.



Now go back through and check off the gifts that you wanted to get. Maybe you actually wanted all those gifts, or maybe one was an ugly sweater from your Aunt Marge that you really didn't like. We've all been there!

Accepting another person is like accepting a present from God. God made a world full of beautiful, crazy, unique people. Every person's life is a gift, and that includes you. God welcomes you with open arms, even if you're not perfect. Who can you accept with joy today?

YOU'RE INVITED...



Imagine that you need to make a really cool invitation for a sleepover or birthday party. Design your invite (or evite!) below. Then, as you write your invitation, think about what you could write to make each guest feel special. How would you welcome them to your party and make them feel loved, just as they are?

Remember, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was an invitation just for you. It was the most personal, inviting offer anyone could ever give, and it welcomes you to be with Him in Heaven forever. No invitation on earth can compare to that!

PRAYER REQUESTS Write your prayer requests on the lines below.

MEMORY VERSE What memory verse did you learn this week? Write it down to help you remember it!

We need to accept others because God first accepted us. Do you have someone you need to accept this week? Hear Serena's story about acceptance in this week's Real Talk video at bit.ly/LOVEDRealTalk9.

REAL TALK
with **Serena**



JUST FOR YOU!



REPEAT this week's theme: God accepts you into His family, so you need to accept others, too!



REVIEW the story of **Ruth**, and remember how God accepted Ruth into His family, even though she was an outsider and wasn't even accepted by Naomi at first.



RETURN with a story about how you accepted someone into your life, and made her feel welcome and loved.



LOVED.

1 JOHN 3:1

GRADES 4-6
SMALL GROUP
LEADER'S GUIDE

GEMIS GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT



LESSON NINE

YOU ARE ACCEPTED

Date of Lesson: _____

PURPOSE: To teach girls they are accepted in Christ and to accept one another, just as they have been accepted by God.

BIBLE VERSE: *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.* Romans 15:7

SMALL GROUP

For each small group:

- Lesson Nine *GEMS Journals* for Grades 4-6 (includes link to this lesson's Real Talk video)
- Small Group Welcome: One Word (No supplies needed)
- Memory Verse Game: Memory Verse Scramble
Supplies: Index cards—Write one word of the memory verse on each card. Or use the same number of index cards as you have girls in your small group. Instead of writing one word per card, use phrases.
- Bibles
- Pencils or pens

CRAFT SUPPLIES

Door Hanger of Truth

- Bristol board (cut into 6" [152.4 mm] wide strips)
- Circle approximately 3" [72.6 mm] for tracing
- Markers/pens
- Scissors
- Decorations
- The A to Z list on page 10

SMALL GROUP WELCOME



[Time: 5 minutes]

LEADER TIP: Welcome each girl by name. Look her in the eye and make sure she feels seen. A warm welcome reflects the welcome God gives us. And checking in ensures each girl feels valued and knows her presence matters in this place.

SAY Real friends care about one another. I care about you! It's why we begin by chatting and checking in with each other. I wonder how you're doing today? To share how you're doing today, we're going to use one word.

When I call your name, give the group one word that best describes how you are feeling right now. Who would like to begin?

ONE WORD

SUPPLIES: None

1. Ask each girl to share her name and one word to describe how she is feeling right now and why.
2. Continue until each girl and leader has participated.

LEADER TIP: Have each girl share. Ask a follow-up question for each girl. This shows girls you are really listening! And be sure to share your one word, too.

SAY Thank you for sharing. Whether you feel happy, tired, excited, worried, or upside down, this is true for all. You are LOVED. Period. That is who you are! And I love that I get to sit alongside of you to discover more about who God is and how much He loves us.

MEMORY VERSE

[Time: 5 minutes]

Memorize/review Romans 15:7 by playing the Memory Verse Game, Memory Verse Scramble.



MEMORY VERSE SCRAMBLE

SUPPLIES: Index cards. On a set of index cards write one word of the memory verse on each card. Or use the same number of index cards as you have girls in your small group. Instead of writing one word per card, use phrases.

1. Memorize/review Romans 15:7. Use your Bibles or the verse printed within the Lesson 9 *GEMS Journals*.
2. Scramble the index cards.
3. Girls work together to place cards in the correct order.
4. Option: Tape a card to each girl's back and have them work together to line up correctly.

MEMORIZATION GOALS: Continue to encourage each girl to memorize 1 John 3:1. Check in and see how they're doing. Ask about a time they remembered this verse last week. What were they doing? Did it change their thinking or choices? If so, how? If girls have already memorized the verse, encourage them to begin memorizing the A to Z identity list on page 10.

GEMS JOURNALS

[Time: 15 minutes]

The *GEMS Journals* will guide your discussion time for small group time, and will give every girl something she can take home with her. Make sure you encourage girls to share their *GEMS Journals* with their grown-ups, so they can bring the lesson home. Content contained in the *GEMS Journals* is outlined in boxes for you to review.

LEADER NOTE: Take the *Just As You Are* quiz together with your girls, and make sure each girl gets the chance to share her results at the end. For a more active version, make one wall "true" and one wall "false" and have your girls run to the side they choose for each question.

JUST AS YOU ARE QUIZ

It's hard to be nice to someone who's mean. It's even harder to love that person. How good are you at loving people for who God made them to be, even when they annoy you? Take this quiz to find out! Answer true or false for each question below. Then check your answers with the descriptions at the end of the quiz.



When your sister or brother is driving you crazy, you help them find something to do until you're free to hang out with them more.

- A. True B. False

Your friend cuts her hair really short, and you don't really like it. You tell her you don't think it looks good, because she should know.

- A. True B. False

You find out that your cousin has to wear pull-ups to bed because she still sometimes has accidents at night. You could tell the rest of your siblings to make them laugh, but you don't.

- A. True B. False

One of your good friends makes a bad choice and it upsets you. You could ghost her until you aren't friends anymore, or you could tell her how you feel and ask her to explain her side of the story. You decide to ghost her and pretend she doesn't exist.

- A. True B. False

Your friend from summer camp comes to visit you, and even though she's a little odd, you introduce her to all of your friends at school. You really like her, and you hope your friends will like her, too!

- A. True B. False

Points: Q. 1: A=2, B=1, Q. 2: A=1, B=2; Q. 3: A=2, B=1; Q. 4: A=1, B=2; Q. 5: A=2, B=1

5-7 POINTS: A FEW FIXES...

You sometimes have a hard time accepting people for who they are. Maybe you're just joking around with their flaws, or maybe you want them to be the best they can be. Whatever the reason, remember that God created everyone on earth with a special plan in mind, and it isn't your job to fix them. Just to love them for who they are.

8-10 POINTS: WARTS AND ALL

You try to love people for who they are, even when it's hard. That means having tough conversations, or choosing to give up being cool so you can be kind. It can be hard loving people for who they are, warts and all, but it honors God. Keep going!

LEADER NOTE: Read through the *God's Word is Truth* section together with your girls. Make sure you read the verses included at the beginning before moving on to the Conversation Hearts. Review these

questions and suggested answers below, as well as the bonus questions added if you have time. Note that the order of these questions is important because they get deeper as you go.

Read 1 John 3:1 and 1 John 4:7-12.

Today we learned that out of all the names John the Disciple was called, the name that changed everything was the name God gave him. God said John was LOVED. And God says you are LOVED., too.

- ★ What do these verses teach us about God? *These verses teach us that God accepts us! He never rejects us. Instead of pulling away, God stays near. He walks with us and loves us. We don't have to change, measure up, or earn His love and acceptance. In Jesus, He gives us the name Accepted. That is who we are!*
- ★ Naomi pushed Ruth away. How did Ruth respond? Would you have made that choice? Why or why not? *Even though Naomi pushed Ruth away, Ruth stayed. She knew she was accepted by God so she was able to accept Naomi. Personal responses in what the girls would have done if they were Ruth.*
- When we exclude others, how do you think they feel? How does it feel when you are the one who is uninvited or rejected? Share your story. *Personal responses.*
- What are ways we can make all girls feel accepted and welcomed? List as many ways you can! *Personal responses may include inviting everyone to your party, making sure every girl has a place to sit at the table or is included in the conversation or games. Look for girls who are standing alone, and ask them to join you. Use their names. Ask thoughtful questions.*
- ★ Sometimes you're the one who needs a friend most. When you've been rejected, how will you remember what God says about you? *Personal responses may include girls will whisper Truth in their minds, "I am accepted!" Or write it on their mirror or notebooks. They can pray and ask God to help them remember Truth and talk to a trusted grown-up who can help them.*

Write or draw one thing you want to remember from today's lesson.

LEADER NOTE: Read *The Gift* with your girls and write down a few gifts you've received recently. Then ask your girls to share about the gifts they've received,

and if they wanted to receive that gift. Use this time to share a personal story about a gift you received that you didn't want, or about a situation when you did or did not accept someone. Ask your girls if they can think of someone who they need to accept this week.

THE GIFT

Write down a list of the last few gifts you've received. Maybe they were birthday presents, gifts from your friends, Christmas presents, etc.

Now go back through and check off the gifts that you wanted to get. Maybe you actually wanted all those gifts, or maybe one was an ugly sweater from your Aunt Marge that you really didn't like. We've all been there!

Accepting another person is like accepting a present from God. God made a world full of beautiful, crazy, unique people. Every person's life is a gift, and that includes you. God welcomes you with open arms, even if you're not perfect. Who can you accept with joy today?

LEADER NOTE: Read the doodle prompt together, and give your girls time to doodle their invitations. Make sure every girl gets a chance to share her invitation, and encourage girls to find ways they can put their invitation to good use.

YOU'RE INVITED...

Imagine that you need to make a really cool invitation for a sleepover or birthday party. Design your invite (or evite!) below. Then, as you write your invitation, think about what you could write to make each guest feel special. How would you welcome them to your party and make them feel loved, just as they are?

Remember, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was an invitation just for you. It was the most personal, inviting offer anyone could ever give, and it welcomes you to be with Him in Heaven forever. No invitation on earth can compare to that!

LEADER NOTE: Encourage girls to write their prayer requests and memory verse on the lines provided. Remind your girls to share the *Just For You* box on the back cover with their grown-ups, and read some of the lesson reminders together before they leave small group. These are the things you want to make sure your girls remember, so don't forget to point them out at the end of your time together!

LET'S PRAY ABOUT IT

[Time: 5 minutes]



SAY Today we learned that when Ruth knew she was accepted by God she was able to accept Naomi. Ruth was able to show Naomi that God accepted her too! When do you most need to remember you are accepted? Is there something you'd like this group to pray for you?

Direct the girls to the topics you talked about together. Maybe they need God's help to accept themselves or to accept others. Or maybe they long for a place to belong when they are not at GEMS Club. Invite them to pray specific about the conversations shared during your small group time. Ask one girl to begin the prayer, others can join in if they choose, you conclude the prayer. **PRAY** your own prayer or use the one below.

PRAY Dear Jesus, thank You for accepting us just as we are. Thank You for loving us and giving us a place to belong. Forgive us when we don't accept others the way You accept us. Help us to always open our arms and pull out a chair for others. May our small group and club always welcome, love, and accept one another. In the name of Jesus who loved us first, amen.

2. Have girls write their names down the left side of the board.
3. Using the letters, help girls think words of Truth about who God says they are. Reference the A to Z list on page 10.
4. Have girls decorate the door hanger.
5. When they are finished have girls pass around the hangers and speak the words of their name to each girl.
6. Encourage girls to take home and hang on their door as a reminder of who God says they are.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

CRAFT & CHAT QUESTIONS:

- What are things you like about yourself?
- Is there something about you that you wish were different?
- What do you want people to know about the real you?
- Besides "Accepted" what are some other names God gives you?



(Dismiss to Large Group space for dismissal.)



CRAFT

DOOR HANGER OF TRUTH

[Time: 30 minutes]

LEADER TIP: Time required for any craft depends upon how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, a girl's age and individual abilities.

SUPPLIES

- Bristol board (cut into 6" [152.4 mm] wide strips)
- Circle approximately 3" [72.6 mm] for tracing
- Markers/Pens
- Scissors
- Decorations

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Trace the circle approximately 2" [50.80 mm] from the top of the paper. Cut this by cutting one straight line from the long side to the circle and cutting out the circle. This will allow it to be hung on a door.





LEADER NOTES

Use this space to reflect on your club gathering. What went well? What could be improved?
Where did you see the Lord working?

Lined writing area for leader notes.

PRAYER REQUESTS _____
Lined writing area for prayer requests.

I AM accepted.

Accept one another, then, just
as Christ accepted you, in
order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:7



What Kind of Host Are You?

How willing are you to welcome others in? Take this quiz to find out!

When your soccer team asks you to bring treats for your game on Saturday, you...



- a. Tell your mom that it's your turn to bring treats, and let her handle it.
- b. Forget immediately and show up on Saturday without any treats.
- c. Ask your mom to help you make homemade treats for everyone.
- d. Roll your eyes and spend as little money on treats as possible.

Your great-aunt is coming over for dinner. You...

- a. Sit quietly at the dinner table until you are excused.
- b. Eat quickly and then ask to be excused. It's easier that way.
- c. Help your mom make a nice dinner and listen to your great-aunt's stories over dinner.
- d. Pretend to be sick so you can skip dinner. Your great-aunt is annoying.



Your friends want to go shopping, and your little sister is begging to go with you. You...



- a. Let your sister come along, but only because your mom says she has to come.
- b. Leave with your friend's mom before anyone can notice you're already gone.
- c. Make plans to go shopping just with your sister next week. Then you can give her your full attention.
- d. Whine and complain about your sister coming along until your mom caves and agrees to take her shopping.

It's your birthday next week, and you're planning your party. You...



- a. Invite some people, and tell everyone else that they can come if they want to.
- b. Don't have a party. Too much work.
- c. Personally welcome everyone in class to your party. Even the mean girls.
- d. Fight with your mom about the party until she makes you invite everyone.



Your mom is having a friend over, and asks you to hang out with her friend's daughter for a while. You...

- a. Introduce yourself, then spend the rest of the time doing your own thing.
- b. Tell her you can't because you have too much homework to do.
- c. Plan a fun craft to do with this girl. Who knows? She might be a new friend!
- d. Roll your eyes and agree, but only once your mom promises to take you shopping as a reward.

God's Word is Truth



Read Romans 15:7 and Ruth 1:6-18.

Today we learned that when Ruth knew she was accepted by God she was able to accept Naomi. Ruth was able to show Naomi that God accepted her, too. God also accepts you just as you are!

Conversation Hearts

- ♥ What do these verses teach us about God?
- ♥ How did Ruth live out the Truth of Romans 15:7?
- ♥ Sometimes you're the one who needs a friend most. What will you do the next time you feel rejected?

Write one thing you want to remember from today's lesson and make up a hashtag for it to help you remember all week long.

#

Quiz Results

most 15 A's
The door's open!

You don't have anything against accepting others, but you leave it up to them to invite themselves. They can figure it out, right?

most 15 B's
Who's there?

You'd rather not have to welcome people into your life because it's a lot of work. But if they figure out a way in, then you suppose they can stay.

most 15 C's
I'm so glad you're here!

You are an arms-wide-open, come-on-in type who loves making people feel comfortable. It's so important to you that everyone feels accepted!

most 15 D's
Whatever, come in if you want, I guess.

You struggle with accepting people and welcoming them into your life. You try to pick and choose who you welcome, and you definitely have people you don't.

Are You Acceptable?

Have you ever written down a list of things you look for in a friend? Things like a good sense of humor, nice hair, a fun family, kind parents, etc.?

Take a minute to write down some things you look for in a friend on the lines below.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Now go back through and check off all the things on the list that are true about you. How many items on your list do you meet?

We sometimes have a hard time accepting people when they don't meet our standards. But the reality is that we don't even meet all our own standards most of the time.

Now make a new list. This time, write down the things that Jesus asks of you before He's willing to accept you.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What's the difference between the two lists? Which list has more items on it that you meet?

Prayer Requests Write your prayer requests on the lines below.

Memory Verse What memory verse did you learn this week? Write it down to help you remember it!

We need to accept others because God first accepted us. Do you have someone you need to accept this week? Hear Serena's story about acceptance in this week's Real Talk video at bit.ly/LOVEDRealTalk9.

REAL TALK
with **Sereha**



#YourLOVEDHighlights (highlights from today in 260 characters or less)

You left knowing this week's theme: **God accepts you, and you need to accept others.** Ruth's story shared about how God accepted her even when Naomi didn't at first. You're challenged to **accept one person this week** and make her feel welcome. #comeonin



LOVED.

1 JOHN 3:1

Grades 7-8
Small Group
Leader's Guide

GEMIS Girls' Club



LESSON NINE

YOU ARE ACCEPTED

Date of Lesson: _____

PURPOSE: To teach girls they are accepted in Christ and to accept one another, just as they have been accepted by God.

BIBLE VERSE: *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.* Romans 15:7

SMALL GROUP

For each small group:

- Lesson Nine *GEMS Journals* for Grades 7-8 (includes link to this lesson's Real Talk video)
- Small Group Welcome: One Word (No supplies needed)
- Memory Verse Game: Memory Verse Scramble
Supplies: Index cards—Write one word of the memory verse on each card. Or use the same number of index cards as you have girls in your small group. Instead of writing one word per card, use phrases.
- Bibles
- Pencils or pens

CRAFT SUPPLIES

Door Hanger of Truth

- Bristol board (cut into 6" [152.4 mm] wide strips)
- Circle approximately 3" [72.6 mm] for tracing
- Markers/pens
- Scissors
- Decorations
- The A to Z list on page 10

SMALL GROUP WELCOME

[Time: 5 minutes]



LEADER TIP: Welcome each girl by name. Look her in the eye and make sure she feels seen. A warm welcome reflects the welcome God gives us. And checking in ensures each girl feels valued and knows her presence matters in this place.

SAY Real friends care about one another. I care about you! It's why we begin by chatting and checking in with each other. I wonder how you're doing today? To share how you're doing today, we're going to use one word.

When I call your name, give the group one word that best describes how you are feeling right now. Who would like to begin?

ONE WORD

SUPPLIES: None

1. Ask each girl to share her name and one word to describe how she is feeling right now and why.
2. Continue until each girl and leader has participated.

LEADER TIP: Have each girl share. Ask a follow-up question for each girl. This shows girls you are really listening! And be sure to share your one word, too.

SAY Thank you for sharing. Whether you feel happy, tired, excited, worried, or upside down, this is true for all. You are LOVED. Period. That is who you are! And I love that I get to sit alongside of you to discover more about who God is and how much He loves us.

MEMORY VERSE

[Time: 5 minutes]

Memorize/review Romans 15:7 by playing the Memory Verse Game, Memory Verse Scramble.



MEMORY VERSE SCRAMBLE

SUPPLIES: Index cards. On a set of index cards write one word of the memory verse on each card. Or use the same number of index cards as you have girls in your small group. Instead of writing one word per card, use phrases.

1. Memorize/review Romans 15:7. Use your Bibles or the verse printed within the Lesson 9 *GEMS Journals*.
2. Scramble the index cards.
3. Girls work together to place cards in the correct order.
4. Option: Tape a card to each girl's back and have them work together to line up correctly.

MEMORIZATION GOALS: Continue to encourage each girl to memorize 1 John 3:1. Check in and see how they're doing. Ask about a time they remembered this verse last week. What were they doing? Did it change their thinking or choices? If so, how? If girls have already memorized the verse, encourage them to begin memorizing the A to Z identity list on page 10.

GEMS Journals

[Time: 15 minutes]



The *GEMS Journals* will guide your discussion time for small group time, and will give every girl something she can take home with her. Make sure you encourage girls to share their *GEMS Journals* with their grown-ups, so they can bring the lesson home. Content contained in the *GEMS Journals* is outlined in boxes for you to review.

LEADER NOTE: Take the *What Kind of Host Are You?* quiz with your girls, and then make sure each girl gets the chance to share her results. Do they think their results sound accurate, or not? Talk about the different options for each question, and ask your girls how they could best make others feel welcome and accepted.

WHAT KIND OF HOST ARE YOU? QUIZ

How willing are you to welcome others in? Take this quiz to find out!

1. When your soccer team asks you to bring treats for your game on Saturday, you...
 - A. Tell your mom that it's your turn to bring treats, and let her handle it.
 - B. Forget immediately and show up on Saturday without any treats.
 - C. Ask your mom to help you make homemade treats for everyone.
 - D. Roll your eyes and spend as little money on treats as possible.
2. Your great-aunt is coming over for dinner. You...
 - A. Sit quietly at the dinner table until you are excused.
 - B. Eat quickly and then ask to be excused. It's easier that way.
 - C. Help your mom make a nice dinner and listen to your great-aunt's stories over dinner.
 - D. Pretend to be sick so you can skip dinner. Your great-aunt is annoying.
3. Your friends want to go shopping, and your little sister is begging to go with you. You...
 - A. Let your sister come along, but only because your mom says she has to come.
 - B. Leave with your friend's mom before anyone can notice you're already gone.
 - C. Make plans to go shopping just with your sister next week. Then you can give her your full attention.
 - D. Whine and complain about your sister coming along until your mom caves and agrees to take her shopping.
4. It's your birthday next week, and you're planning your party. You...
 - A. Invite some people, and tell everyone else that they can come if they want to.
 - B. Don't have a party. Too much work.
 - C. Personally welcome everyone in class to your party. Even the mean girls.
 - D. Fight with your mom about the party until she makes you invite everyone.
5. Your mom is having a friend over, and asks you to hang out with her friend's daughter for a while. You...
 - A. Introduce yourself, then spend the rest of the time doing your own thing.
 - B. Tell her you can't because you have too much homework to do.
 - C. Plan a fun craft to do with this girl. Who knows? She might be a new friend!
 - D. Roll your eyes and agree, but only once your mom promises to take you shopping as a reward.

Mostly A's: The door's open! You don't have anything against accepting others, but you leave it up to them to invite themselves. They can figure it out, right?

Mostly B's: Who's there? You'd rather not have to welcome people into your life because it's a lot of work. But if they figure out a way in, then you suppose they can stay.

Mostly C's: I'm so glad you're here! You are an arms-wide-open, come-on-in type who loves making people feel comfortable. It's so important to you that everyone feels accepted!

Mostly D's: Whatever, come in if you want, I guess. You struggle with accepting people and welcoming them into your life. You try to pick and choose who you welcome, and you definitely have people you don't accept.

LEADER NOTE: Read through the *God's Word is Truth* section with your girls. Make sure you start by reading the verses listed at the top. Then, talk about the Conversation Hearts with your girls. Review these questions and suggested answers below, as well as a few bonus questions if you have time. Note that the order is important, because the questions get deeper as you go.

Read 1 John 3:1 and 1 John 4:7-12.

Today we learned that out of all the names John the Disciple was called, the name that changed everything was the name God gave him. God said John was LOVED. And God says you are LOVED., too.

- ★ What do these verses teach us about God? *These verses teach us that God accepts us! He never rejects us. Instead of pulling away, God stays near. He walks with us and loves us. We don't have to change, measure up, or earn His love and acceptance. In Jesus, He gives us the name Accepted. That is who we are!*
- Naomi pushed Ruth away. Have you ever been pushed away or uninvited? How did you feel? What did you do? Share your story. *Personal responses.*
- ★ How did Ruth live out the Truth of Romans 15:7? *Even though Naomi pushed Ruth away, Ruth stayed. She accepted Naomi, then, just as God accepted her.*
- We all want to be accepted. We all want to fit in and have a place to belong. When do you find it most difficult to include others? Share your story. *Personal responses.*

- ★ Sometimes you're the one who needs a friend most. What will you do the next time you feel rejected? *Personal responses may include girls will whisper Truth in their minds, "I am accepted!" Or write it on their mirror or notebooks. They will pray and ask God to help them remember Truth, talk to a trusted grown-up, and look for ways they can be a good friend to others.*

Write one thing you want to remember from today's lesson and make up a hashtag for it to help you remember all week long.

LEADER NOTE: Read *Are You Acceptable?* with your girls and encourage them to write down their responses. Then have them share their responses with the group. Which list is shorter, and which list is more achievable? Talk about the expectations we set for our friends, versus the total acceptance God offers. Who can your girls accept and invite into their lives this week?

ARE YOU ACCEPTABLE?

Have you ever written down a list of things you look for in a friend? Things like a good sense of humor, nice hair, a fun family, kind parents, etc.?

Take a minute to write down some things you look for in a friend on the lines below.

Now go back through and check off all the things on the list that are true about you. How many items on your list do you meet?

We sometimes have a hard time accepting people when they don't meet our standards. But the reality is that we don't even meet all our own standards most of the time.

Now make a new list. This time, write down the things that Jesus requires of you before He's willing to accept you.

What's the difference between the two lists? Which list has more items on it that you meet?

LEADER NOTE: Encourage girls to write their prayer requests and memory verse on the lines provided. Review #YourLOVEDHighlights with your girls before they leave small group. These are the things you'll want to make sure they remember and share with their grown-ups when they go home, so make sure you cover these talking points at the end of your time together!

LET'S PRAY ABOUT IT

[Time: 5 minutes]



SAY Today we learned that when Ruth knew she was accepted by God she was able to accept Naomi. Ruth was able to show Naomi that God accepted her too! When do you most need to remember you are accepted? Is there something you'd like this group to pray for you?

Direct the girls to the topics you talked about together. Maybe they need God's help to accept themselves or to accept others. Or maybe they long for a place to belong when they are not at GEMS Club. Invite them to pray specific about the conversations shared during your small group time. Ask one girl to begin the prayer, others can join in if they choose, you conclude the prayer. **PRAY** your own prayer or use the one below.

PRAY Dear Jesus, thank You for accepting us just as we are. Thank You for loving us and giving us a place to belong. Forgive us when we don't accept others the way You accept us. Help us to always open our arms and pull out a chair for others. May our small group and club always welcome, love, and accept one another. In the name of Jesus who loved us first, amen.



CRAFT DOOR HANGER OF TRUTH

[Time: 30 minutes]

LEADER TIP: Time required for any craft depends upon how much prep work is done in advance, how many helping hands are available to the girls, a girl's age and individual abilities.

SUPPLIES

- Bristol board (cut into 6" [152.4 mm] wide strips)
- Circle approximately 3" [72.6 mm] for tracing
- Markers/Pens
- Scissors
- Decorations

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Trace the circle approximately 2" [50.80 mm] from the top of the paper. Cut this by cutting one straight line from the long side to the circle and cutting out the circle. This will allow it to be hung on a door.

2. Have girls write their names down the left side of the board.
3. Using the letters, help girls think words of Truth about who God says they are. Reference the A to Z list on page 10.
4. Have girls decorate the door hanger.
5. When they are finished have girls pass around the hangers and speak the words of their name to each girl.
6. Encourage girls to take home and hang on their door as a reminder of who God says they are.

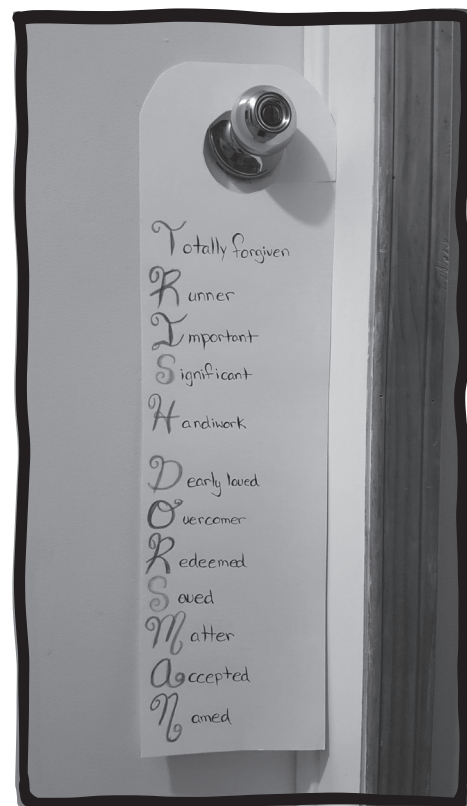
LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

CRAFT & CHAT QUESTIONS:

- What are things you like about yourself?
- Is there something about you that you wish were different?
- What do you want people to know about the real you?
- Besides "Accepted" what are some other names God gives you?



(Dismiss to Large Group space for dismissal.)





Leader Notes

Use this space to reflect on your club gathering. What went well? What could be improved?

Where did you see the Lord working?

Prayer requests _____
