

How to Offer aMAZE! as a Event for Middle-Schoolers



First, attract girls by promoting the weekend with a fun title and something like:

An Insider's Guide to Middle School: An aMAZEing Weekend Adventure, or Acing Middle School: An aMAZEing Weekend Adventure

Find out how to navigate the twists and turns of getting along in middle school and in your life—by being a leader! Have fun exploring everything from making good first impressions to making genuine, long-lasting friendships, from peer pressure to no pressure to passing it forward. It's all here in one fun-filled weekend!

Next, plan your schedule for the full weekend. Here's a sample schedule to use in full or adapt as you see fit.

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SAMPLE SCHEDULE

MATERIALS

Beneath the Surface:

inflatable beach ball marked with "Beneath the Surface" questions (page 31, adult guide)

What's in Your Maze:

paper and markers

Peacemaker Kits:

an assortment of small empty containers (tins from mints, jewelry-size boxes, even small take-out food containers); odds and ends for decorating the containers (beads, buttons, stickers, wrapping paper) and glue; CDs and player

Going for Goals:

paper, pens, and envelopes

FRIDAY NIGHT (activities relate to Girl Scout Discover leadership outcomes)

Total time: Two hours

Opening Ceremony 10 minutes (page 31, aMAZE! adult guide): Icebreaker that uses "Beneath the Surface" activity with beach ball. Girls start off by introducing themselves, then peel masking tape off the ball to uncover a question, answer the question, and toss the ball to another girl. Then move on to Beneath the Surface/First Impressions discussion for 15 minutes (page 36, adult guide).

What's in Your Maze? 30–45 minutes (page 32, adult guide): Introduce the theme and the idea that transitioning to middle school is like entering a brand new maze full of twists and turns, and they'll be learning new skills and strategies to bring more confidence to their relationships and create better relationships that can actually improve the world around them.

Peacemaker Kits 30–45 minutes (pages 39–40, adult guide): Girls decorate empty containers, which become their "scrapbooks." If the girls want some music, they can suggest songs that inspire them (page 95, girls' book) or play songs about friendship such as "Umbrella" by Rihanna, "You've Got a Friend" by James Taylor, or "With a Little Help from My Friends" by The Beatles, or others of their choice.

Closing Ceremony 15 minutes: In Going for Goals (page 37, adult guide), girls brainstorm the relationship issues that most affect them; each girl chooses which issue (or two) she wants to solve for herself and writes it on her sheet of paper and seals it in an envelope addressed to herself. (They'll unseal the envelopes at the end of the weekend.)

MATERIALS

Circle of Friends and

Peacemaker Kits: paper, markers, pens

Design-your-own

note cards: paper, envelopes, assorted craft materials (stickers, stamps, ink pads, colored paper, etc.)

Cliquish?: large paper and marker

SATURDAY MORNING (activities relate to Girl Scout Connect leadership outcomes)

Total time: Two hours and 30 minutes

Opening Ceremony 10 minutes: Girls' choice, or girls can go around the circle and name one quality they look for in their friends.

Circle of Friends 20 minutes (page 44, adult guide): Girls recognize the characteristics they look for in a friend, and identify the qualities they bring to a friendship.

Craft time 40 minutes: Girls create design-your-own note cards, then write notes to three friends, telling them a few specific qualities the girls enjoy about them and their friendship, and encouraging the friends to pass the gesture forward (pages 31–21, girls' book). Note: This fulfills one of the Interact Challenge requirements.

Cliquish? 20 minutes (page 54, adult guide): Activity and discussion about cliques and circles of belonging; then practice I-Statements: The Key to Resolving Conflicts for 30–45 minutes (page 55, adult guide). During this activity, girls gain confidence in communicating difficult feelings with sensitivity and respect.

Closing Ceremony 15 minutes: In the For Peacemaker Kits activity (page 47, adult guide), girls share skills or tips they thought about today that they can use in their lives and pass on to others. Once written down, the girls put the tips in their peacemaker kits.

SATURDAY LUNCH

Total time: About an hour

“Twists and Turns” food ideas: Spaghetti (twirled and twisted on a fork!); fusilli, gemelli, or corkscrew pasta dish; tossed green salad; cheese sticks made from frozen puff pastry dough and grated parmesan cheese.

Snack idea: whole-wheat pretzels.

After lunch, the girls can get up and moving with Friendship Games (page 51, adult guide), a hike, or maze-like obstacle course.

MATERIALS

Movie
DVD player
TV or screen to view movie

SATURDAY EVENING

Total time: Three hours and 45 minutes

Opening Ceremony 10 minutes: Girls’ choice, or girls name a quality they value or admire in a new friend they’ve met during the weekend.

Definitions, Please 15 minutes (page 60, adult guide): Girls explore bullying behavior, and then spend 30 minutes on Take Back the Power (page 62, adult guide). They discuss ways to respond to bullying behavior, and then Flip the Script for 45 minutes (page 63, adult guide) and role-play bullying scenarios (pages 85–87, girls’ book).

Movie 90 minutes–2 hours: Girls view a movie that features cliques, then discuss how the cliques resemble (or not) those they know at school. They see if they can think of even one small thing to do to try to shift a real-life dynamic they dislike. (Movies to consider: *Mean Girls*, *Clueless*, *The Princess Diaries*, *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*, and *Bratz*. Note: This fulfills another Interact Challenge.)

Closing 10 minutes: Girls sing a round or two of “Make New Friends, But Keep the Old.”

MATERIALS

For Peacemaker Kits: paper and pens
Where Do You Stand?: masking tape, paper, marker
Life is a Maze: paper and pens, assorted art materials

SUNDAY MORNING

Total time: Two hours and 30 minutes

Opening Ceremony 15 minutes: Using Take a Peace Break (page 94, girls’ book) as a guide, engage in a simple yoga session or spiral maze meditation (walking along a spiral path or viewing a spiral painted on canvas or a drawn on a blackboard).

Peacemaker Kits 15 minutes: Girls reflect on what they’ve learned so far, and add to their Peacemaker Kits.

Where Do You Stand? 40 minutes (page 52, adult guide): Girls take a stance on peer pressure. Move on to How Do Relationship Skills Impact the World? for 15 minutes (page 72, adult guide), and spend 20 minutes on Who Is a Real Leader? (page 72, adult guide). During this time, girls get involved in thinking big about linking the relationship skills they’ve explored to examples of leadership skills to make the world better.

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Craft/art activity 40 minutes (page 33 sidebar, adult guide): Girls create "Life is a maze" poems, drawings, or song lyrics on their own or in small teams.

Closing Ceremony 10 minutes: Girls share their creations and say what they mean, what their inspiration was, or how they hope to use the meaning behind their creations in middle school and/or beyond.

MATERIALS

Going for Goals:
envelopes from Friday
night

Closing: Interact and
Peacemaker awards

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Total time: 1 hour and 15 minutes

Going for Goals 15 minutes: Girls gather in a circle, receive the Going for Goals envelopes from Friday night, and have a moment to review what they'd written and how they've progressed toward their goal. They can share their goals with the group if they like.

Girls' choice of Interact Challenges 30 minutes: Girls pick one of the challenges and complete it. Note: This fulfills the third Interact Challenge.

Closing 30 minutes: Invite girls to create a little ceremony to share some of the ideas they have put in their Peacemaker Kits, and how they might use those ideas going forward. The girls earn their Peacemaker and Interact awards.

Don't have a whole weekend? Here's an easy way to spread the activities over six afternoon sessions:

Session 1: Beneath the Surface; First Impressions; What's in Your Maze?; Going for Goals

Session 2: For Peacemaker Kits; Circle of Friends

Session 3: Cliquish?; I-Statements

Session 4: Definitions, Please; Take Back the Power; Flip the Script

Session 5: Where Do You Stand?; How Do Relationship Skills Impact the World?; Who Is a Real Leader?

Session 6: Going for Goals; award ceremony of girls' choice.

Keep it all girl led by asking the girls to create their own opening and closing ceremonies. Invite them to add to their Peacemaker Kits and complete Interact Challenges as time allows or on their own.