

Girls Only

Managing Stress

Additional Project Ideas

Relax together. Have a spa night. Create a spa-like atmosphere by lighting candles and playing soft music. Have plenty of comfortable places to sit ready before the girls arrive. Provide manicure, pedicure, and facial supplies for the girls. Have the girls give each other manicures and pedicures and encourage the girls to bring their own nail polish if they want.

Go outside. Take the girls on a nature hike. Visit a local park or nature reserve. Talk with the girls about the importance of exercising and getting outside in relieving stress.

Invite a guest. Invite a healthcare professional (doctor, nurse, or psychologist) from your church to come in and talk to the girls about the causes, effects, and symptoms of stress. Encourage the speaker to talk about how reduce or avoid stress. Allow plenty of time for questions.

Be constructive. Have the girls brainstorm different ways to relieve stress (exercise, art, etc.). Assign each girl a different method to try throughout the unit. Have each girl keep a journal of her stress level before and after trying the stress relief method. Each week, have the girls share about their progress, and at the end of the unit, discuss the findings.

Get creative. Have the girls create a piece of art depicting stress and a complimentary piece of art depicting peace. Encourage girls to be creative about their medium (sculpture, paint, graphic art, drawing, etc.). Have the girls share their art with the group and talk about their piece.

Write about it. Have the girls write a short story about a girl who experiences stress and how she handles it. The story could be fictional or from personal experience. The stories could illustrate healthy ways to handle stress as well as unhealthy ways. Have the girls share their stories with the group.

Take note. Have the girls keep a record of the stress levels they observe around them. If someone has a lot of stress, how do they handle it? If they handle it in a healthy way, how does that affect their attitude? If they handle it in an unhealthy way, how does that affect the way they react to people? From what they observe, how does the way a person handles stress affect them? (School is a great place for this kind of observation!)

Think good thoughts. Have the girls brainstorm their favorite Scriptures to think about during tough times. Have the girls choose a few verses to memorize from the list they create or choose any of the following:

Galatians 5:22,23
Ephesians 4:22-24
Ephesians 5:1,2
Philippians 2:5-11

Philippians 4:4-7
Philippians 4:8
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
James 3:17,18

Resource Ideas

- *Fighting Invisible Tigers: A Stress Management Guide* by Earl Hipp, Michael Fleishman, and Pamela Espeland, Free Spirit Publishing, 1995.
- *Inside a Cutter's Mind: Understanding and Helping Those Who Self-Injure* by Jerusha Clark and Dr. Earl Henslin, NAV Press, 2007.
- *Stressed or Depressed: A Practical and Inspirational Guide for Parents of Hurting Teens* by Dr. Archibald D. Hart and Dr. Catherine Hart Weber, Thomas Nelson, 2005.

Additional Discussion Questions

Discovery #1

- What is stress?
- What stresses you out? Do you have a lot of stress in your life?
- How do you handle stress? What do you do well when you handle stress? What could you do better?

Discovery #2

- What causes stress in your life? What could you do to avoid stress in your life?
- Have you experienced anything lately that's caused you to feel threatened? How did you handle it?
- Have you experienced any big changes lately? Did any of that cause you stress? How did you handle it?
- What kinds of expectations cause you stress? How do you handle those expectations?

Discovery #3

- What are some of the most common ways you handle stress? How could your reaction be better? What do you do when you realize you're reacting to stress?
- Are you flexible? How can you become more flexible?
- Do you ever have trouble trusting God for big things in your life?

Discovery #4

- What can you do to reduce stress in your life?
- How do you think about yourself? How can you learn to think more positively about yourself?
- How does the way you think about yourself affect the way you think about others?
- What are some ways you can develop a more positive attitude?

Discovery #5

- How can you set good priorities?
- What are some things that you consider important? Does the way you spend your time reflect the way you feel?
- Are there any things that God prioritizes that you need to prioritize more?

Discovery #6

- How can you improve your self-esteem?
- How can you help those around you improve their self-esteem?
- How can having a low self-esteem increase stress in your life?