Do You Get the Message?

Skill Builders

1. Learn some words in another language. Be able to communicate at least five short phrases in your new language. For example, try Braille, sign language, Morse code, or a foreign language.

2. Develop your debating skills. With a group of at least four people, form two teams and take opposite sides of an issue. For example, consider the pros and cons of "free speech." Prepare for it and then debate the issue before an audience.

3. How does someone's appearance or clothing influence your impression of that person? Observe current fashion trends in magazines and catalogs. Make a collage or display board with advertisements for clothing that send a message without words. Do these ads send biased or sexist messages? What messages are they sending?

4. Which is more important, what you say or how you say it? What effect do tone of voice and mannerisms have on verbal messages? Do the following with a group. Choose a neutral sentence, such as "I'll see you on Friday," and say it in five different ways with anger, sadness, nervousness, love, and impatience. Include body language, facial expressions, hand motions, etc., that will help convey the emotion. Ask others for their reactions. Then, over the next week, analyze your messages. Are you "saying" what you mean?

5. Use humor to convey a message. For example, write a funny caption for a picture or poster, create a cartoon, or tell a joke or a funny story to a group.

6. Something that may be acceptable in one culture may be considered offensive in another. For instance, in some cultures, it is considered respectful to look down or away from a person when speaking with her. In other cultures, failure to maintain eye contact might indicate that you're lying or something is wrong. Discuss regional and cultural differences in communication in a meeting of your troop or group, at your club, or in another public forum.

7. How does a particular physical environment affect you? Analyze the surroundings in several places: for example, your dentist's or doctor's office, a hair salon, or a bookstore. What do the colors, textures, and furnishings in these places tell you? Share your observations with friends or family members.

Technology

1. Design a costume display to communicate each of the following messages: "I want to be noticed," "I want to blend in and be left alone," "I want to impress someone." The costumes may include illustrations or actual garments.

2. Develop an advertising campaign targeted for a specific group of people. Look at print, television, and radio advertising. Create an ad campaign for one product or service.

3. Technology plays an important role in creating a model's "look." Learn about some of the techniques that can be used to improve or enhance a model's appearance. You might want to investigate airbrushing photographs, the use of special lenses when taking pictures, and the ways in which computers can be used to modify photographs. If possible, go to a photo-finishing store that offers computer enhancement and make a recent school picture of yourself "picture perfect."

4. Listen to the lyrics of several popular songs and watch several music videos. How are girls or women represented? Select female recording artists of different ages and from different ethnic groups. Share your observations with others.

Service Projects

1. Develop and administer a survey to girls in your school or council related to the way females are portrayed in the media. Here are two sample survey questions. Check the box that best represents your feelings.

2. How concerned are you about the way women and girls are portrayed in the media?
   - Very concerned
   - Fairly concerned
   - Not very concerned
   - Not at all concerned

3. The amount of violence shown in movies, television shows, and popular music is a serious problem.
   - Strongly agree
   - Somewhat agree
   - Somewhat disagree
   - Strongly disagree

Come up with three or more of your own questions, and try your survey out on a group of girls. Then analyze and share your results.

Career Exploration

1. Interview someone older than you about significant school or work experiences that that person experienced at your age.

2. Find out the differences between a speech pathologist, a speech coach, and a speech teacher. Read about one of the above. Share what you have learned with your Girl Scout Friends.

3. List three careers in which language skills are particularly important: for example, a customer service representative, a salesperson, or a politician. Describe the language skills they need to be successful.

4. Write a resume that accurately describes your education and work experience. Do a practice job interview with a friend.

5. Design your own business cards. Include your name, your title, and the name, address, and phone number of your business.

And Beyond

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT, SO PRACTICE "getting the message" every day with any of these related interest projects:

- Public Relations
- Law and Order
- Your Best Defense
- Leadership
- Conflict Resolution
- Understanding Yourself and Others
- Family Living
- Media Savvy
- From A to Z: Audiovisual Production
- Once Upon a Story
- Writing for Real

Talk to the animals in Pets. All About Birds, and Wildlife. Communicate with nature in From Here to Sea, and beyond your own backyard in A World of Understanding. The lure of Language, and Travel.