

Empowering **BOYS** and **GIRLS**
to **Change Gender Norms**



CHOICES

A curriculum for
10 to 14 year olds in Nepal



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Save the Children

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INTRODUCTION

Current Situation: Gender Norms in Nepal

Nepal has a rich cultural heritage that blends religions, rituals, beliefs, traditions and languages. Despite the vibrancy of the Nepal culture, many girls and women do not have the same life opportunities as boys and men. Girls' social roles in Nepal are strictly prescribed. Young girls perform more household chores than young boys, are less likely to stay in school and sometimes brokered into marriage at a young age. Since a girl will move in with her husband's family after marriage, families do not typically invest resources in a girl's well-being and health. As she grows, a Nepali girls mobility decreases and gender inequality continues as they mature into women. Women continue to be more responsible than men for chores, are often confined to the home, and are often subject to domestic abuse.

Save the Children's Response

Save the Children believes that changing the gender related attitudes and behavior of adolescent boys can ultimately change the way girls and women are treated in Nepali society, and lead to improved health and more joyful lives for both men and women. More over, Save the Children believes that children can be engaged in discussions that critically reflect on gender norms in an age appropriate way. Changing well-established gender-related attitudes and behaviors is challenging, especially when Nepali culture supports more restrictive gender roles for women and girls. Save the Children Nepal seeks to change gender attitudes and behaviors in younger adolescents, aged 10 to 14 year old, before they become firmly entrenched by intervening with young boys and girls participating in Child Clubs.

Curriculum Goals

If this intervention is successful, the lives of young girls and women will improve. Girls will feel more respected and empowered to achieve their dreams. Measurable outcomes could include:

Behavioral

- The uptake of chores by boys
- Helping sisters with school work (for school going sisters)
- Teaching sister educational skills by including her in their homework (for non-school going sisters)
- Increased advocacy within a household to keep girls in school and delay marriage

Attitudinal

- Girls' lives have equal value as boys
- Girls should go to school and can succeed
- Girls can achieve their hopes and dreams
- Boys can help around the house so girls have more time to do school work
- Boys and girls can change gender norms by simple actions
- Boys can show their love to their sisters through action
- Boys can enrich the lives of girls by caring actions

RESULTS OF CHOICES EVALUATION

Prior to the scaling up the use of the CHOICES curriculum Save the Children a pilot test was conducted to evaluate the short term effects on children’s attitudes and behaviors about gender norms. Save the Children partnered with The Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) at Georgetown University which has experience using innovative and developmentally appropriate evaluation methods and tools for very young adolescents.

The results of IRH’s evaluation clearly show that CHOICES was effective in contributing to more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors among boys and girls. Differences between baseline and endline quantitative measures were statistically significant in scales measuring gender norms and behavior between the experimental and control groups. For example, significantly fewer CHOICES participants felt it was acceptable for a man to beat his wife if she disagrees with him and significantly more participants felt that daughters should have the same chance to go to school or work outside the home as sons. The smaller sample of paired siblings showed a clear trend among boy participants to adopt more gender-equitable behaviors.

The qualitative results reinforce those findings, showing that most children in the experimental group recognized that gender inequity was normal but felt that it is unfair and should be changed. They believed that CHOICES, or similar programs, can help promote more gender-equitable norms. More boys in the experimental group said they were making small changes in their own behavior—helping their sisters and mothers with household chores, advocating for their sisters’ education and against early marriage and encouraging family members, friends and neighbors to do the same. More girls in the experimental group also stated that their brothers and other boys in their communities were making small changes toward gender equality. Photovoice results show young people in the experimental group tended to take more images of gender-equitable actions, while the control group photographed more traditional gender roles. In FGDs, parents in the experimental area reported that their sons had started to help their daughters with schoolwork and chores, and their households were more peaceful and harmonious as a result. Parents from the experimental group specifically mentioned CHOICES by name and suggested expanding the program.

For more information, the full evaluation report, “Utilizing Participatory Data Collection Methods to Evaluate Programs for Very Young Adolescents: An Evaluation of Save the Children’s Choices Curriculum in Nepal” can be accessed at www.irh.org.

ACTIVITY I

BLUE VERSUS GREEN

Opening Discussion

As boys and girls arrive to the Child Club, separate them into two groups based on the color of their clothes. For example, children wearing clothes that are green (any variation) will be in one group and those wearing blue (any variation) will be in another group. Each group should include both boys and girls and every child should be assigned to a group. Ask the blue and green group to sit on opposite sides of the room. (Assign boys or girls who aren't wearing blue or green to either group, striving to keep the numbers in the groups about equal with a mix of both boys and girls in each group.)

Ask students the following questions:

- What differences do you see in the two groups we have created?
- Does one group seem special or better?

Allow about 5-10 minutes for discussion

Activity

Tell the boys and girls that the children in the blue group are superior in intelligence, beauty and personality and are deserving of more respect and an easier life than the children in the green group. In addition, tell them the children in the green group will be asked to do many tasks to make life better for the children in the blue group. Children in the green group may not be able to attend school for as long because they need to be home doing work for the children in the blue group.

Discussion

Ask the children in the green group these questions: (Especially encourage responses from boys.)

- How do you feel about being told you are less deserving of respect based on the color of your clothes?
- How do you feel about being assigned to a more difficult life?
- Do you feel it is fair to assign respect and life quality based on the color of your clothes?

Next, ask the boys and girls assigned to the blue group to answer these questions:

- How do you feel about being told you are more deserving of respect based on the color of your clothes?
- How do you feel about being assigned to an easier life?
- Do you feel it is fair to assign respect and life quality based on the color of your clothes?
- How would you feel when you saw green group children being treated differently than you?

Next, repeat the activity by switching roles, assigning children in the green group more respect and privilege. Repeat the questions above so that children in both groups can experience and express how inequality feels.

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Activity I

Blue Versus Green

Making Choices

Ask all children:

- Suppose you had a choice. Which would you choose:
 - Choose to keep two groups where the children in the blue group have a better and easier life and children in the green group don't enjoy the same respect and life as those children in the blue group.
 - Choose to create one group where everyone has the same respect and children work together to have a good and fair life.

REFLECTION

- In many Nepali communities, the “blue” group consists of all boys and the “green” group consists of all girls. Boys tend to enjoy more respect and an easier life than girls.
- For the next few weeks, we are going to talk about choices. We will explore ways we can unite the “green” group—girls—and the “blue” group—boys—in ways that lead to happy, better lives for all.
- We are going to talk about choices. Everyday both boys and girls have opportunities to keep the “blue” and “green” groups separate or work to bring them together for happier lives.

This week, discuss with your friends and family how life in your community is different for boys and girls and how they feel about these differences.

ACTIVITY 2

JOURNEY OF RESPECT

Opening Discussion

Ask students the following questions:

- Does one earn respect or is respect given to you?
- Does respect remain the same or change over time?
- Can people earn respect by their actions and choices?

Allow about 5-10 minutes for discussion

Activity

Ask girls and boys to sit on opposite sides of the room. The facilitator should read each of the statements below in the “Which boy is more respected” and “Which girl is more respected” sections. After asking each of the questions below, ask the boys and girls to “vote” on each response within their group with a show of hands. If all girls or all boys don’t agree with each other, ask the boys and girls to discuss the question until everyone agrees.

Alternately, ask the boys and girls to answer, noting and discussing any differences in their “vote.” It is likely that both girls and boys will agree on key issues, so summarize the key point:

Respect is earned one action at a time.

Facilitators note:

The questions below are intended to connect respect and the desired behaviors in an interactive way and are not intended to generate considerable discussion. The show of hands for each vote is important so children recognize that the connection between respect and behaviors is strong, a key influence strategy in changing behaviors.

Use these questions to explore “respect”:

- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who bullies and teases girls
 - Choice 2:** The boy who protects girls from bullies?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who helps his sisters with chores
 - Choice 2:** The boy who teases other boys who help their sisters with chores?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who protects his sister from advances from men
 - Choice 2:** The boy who does not say anything to men making advances on his sisters?

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Activity 2

Journey of Respect

- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who helps his sister with chores like gathering firewood and water
 - Choice 2:** The boy who continues to play and relax while his sister works?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who advocates for his sister, asking his parents to allow her to stay in school
 - Choice 2:** The boy who says nothing when his parents take his sister out of school?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who reads to his sister and helps her with schoolwork
 - Choice 2:** The boy who focuses only on his own schoolwork while his sister does chores?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The brother who insists on cleaning up after himself after meals and cleaning his own sleeping area
 - Choice 2:** The boy who allows his sister to clean up after him, saying “I am a man. I don’t do domestic work.”?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who talks often with his mother, telling her how much he loves and respects her
 - Choice 2:** The boy who speaks only to his father and does not share his feelings with his mother?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who looks for opportunities to guide his sister to a bright future
 - Choice 2:** The boy who focuses only on his own life and what’s best for him?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who protects his sister’s safety, insisting he accompany her to school and on errands like collecting firewood
 - Choice 2:** The boy who does not accompany his sister?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who offers to help with family chores so his sister can stay in school
 - Choice 2:** The boy who does not help with family chores and leaves it all for his sister to do?
- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who talks to his sister about her future, hopes and dreams, encouraging her to stay in school
 - Choice 2:** The boy who does not ask his sister about her future, hopes and dreams?

- **Which boy is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The boy who wants to marry and protect his wife when he is older, working together so both husband and wife can be happy
 - Choice 2:** The boy who wants a wife to do work for him so he can be happy?
- **Which girl is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The girl who recognizes her brother respectful actions by smiling and thanking him
 - Choice 2:** The girl who does not show gratitude to brothers, accepting his kindness and respect without acknowledging it?
- **Which girl is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The girl who takes pride in her school work, always striving to do her best.
 - Choice 2:** The girl who does not care about the quality of her school work?
- **Which girl is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** Recognizes that she has value and respectfully asks for what she needs
 - Choice 2:** Does what she is told, even when she doesn't want to do it?
- **Which girl is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** Asks brothers for his help with homework and chores
 - Choice 2:** Does work for brother and families and resents doing so?
- **Which girl is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The girl who never gives up on her hopes and dreams, despite setbacks and challenges
 - Choice 2:** The girl who gives up easily when life challenges arise?
- **Which girl is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The girl who works hard to read and write
 - Choice 2:** The girl who doesn't care about reading and writing, choosing to rely on others for these tasks?
- **Which girl is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The girl who respectfully talks to her parents about staying in school
 - Choice 2:** The girl who stops going to school because it requires too much work?
- **Which girl is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The girl who respectfully and consistently works for change in her family and community
 - Choice 2:** The girl who accepts the choices of others for her without question?
- **Which girl is more respected:**
 - Choice 1:** The girl who believes in herself and doesn't allow others to put her down or dictate life choices
 - Choice 2:** The girl who accepts the opinions and perceptions of others, even when they are not true?

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Activity 2

Journey of Respect

Discussion

Ask all children: Which of these actions will allow the “green” and “blue” group to unite for a happier life? Which actions will earn respect from family and friends? Which actions can boys and girls have control over? Who influences boys and girls choices?

Making Choices

Ask all children:

- Suppose you had a choice. Which would you choose:
 - Choose actions that will benefit the lives of both boys and girls?
 - Choose actions that benefit your life but not that of the opposite sex?

REFLECTION:

- Respect is earned, one kind action at a time.
- All children have choices. The choices you make today can change your life and the lives of others.

This week, discuss with your friends and family what choices you will take this week that will show and earn you respect?

ACTIVITY 3

THE INVISIBLE WALL

Opening Discussion

Ask children to discuss the following questions:

- What are the purpose of walls and fences?
- Have you ever seen an invisible wall or fence?
- Do you think invisible walls exist?

Facilitators note:

The purpose of these questions is to engage students and capture attention, not to elicit logical answers. It is fine for children to respond “no” to the last two questions. Don’t expect an in-depth conversation to these questions. The answers will become more evident as the activity continues.

Allow about 5-10 minutes for discussion.

Activity:

Although we can’t see invisible walls, they do exist and can be felt. Maybe you have felt an “invisible wall” before. Here are examples of “invisible walls”:

These following scenarios can be uses as role play if culturally appropriate and fun for children.

- A boy is playing volleyball with his friends after school. While chasing the ball, he sees his sister struggling with pails of heavy water. The young boy and his friends are having a great time, but they stop for a rest. While resting, he sees his sister carrying a heavy load of fire wood, and really wants to help her because he feels guilt having all the fun while his sister works. He is tempted to stop playing and help his sister, but he feels the “invisible wall” between what he feels is right and what others may think is right, and he continues playing while his sister works. Has anyone ever felt this way? What makes us feel this way? What can we do to change these feelings?
- A boy is working on his school work at home. He is proud of the praise he receives from his teachers and parents for his scholarly work and good grades. His sister does not receive praise for her good school work because she rarely has time to do homework. While the young man does his homework, he notices that his sister is still doing housework and cleaning up after his meal. He knows that his sister also has homework and he is tempted to help her with the housework so she can do her homework, but he feels the “invisible wall.” He knows that crossing the “invisible wall” to help his sister may result in scorn and teasing from his family and friends, so he continues his homework and his sister continues with chores. Has anyone ever felt this way? What makes us feel this way? What can we do to change these feelings?



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Activity 3

The Invisible Wall

- A boy finishes his evening meal. Mother asks if he has had enough to eat, and then asks his sister to clean his dishes. The young man notices that his mother does not ask his sister if she received enough food. He wants to ask his sister if she had enough to eat and help her with the dishes but he feels the “invisible wall” that says boys should not clean up after themselves. He feels silly, even sad, that his sister has to wait on him when he is fully capable to do so himself, but the “invisible wall” keeps him from changing this situation. Has anyone ever felt this way? What makes us feel this way? What can we do to change these feelings?
- One day, a young boy overhears his parents talking about his sister. The parents feel that his sister should not continue in school, focusing instead on household chores and preparing for marriage. The young man feels sad because he knows his sister’s life will be happier if she can continue going to school. He feels an “invisible wall.” He wants to respectfully talk to his parents about his sister, saying he will help more around the home so that his sister can continue in school. But he wonders what his parents will say if he approaches them with this topic. The “invisible wall” keeps him from advocating for his sister. Has anyone ever felt this way? What makes us feel this way? What can we do to change these feelings?

Discussion

Ask children to share other “invisible walls” that exist in their community.

After sharing examples of “invisible walls,” ask the same opening question again:

- What is the purpose of walls and fences? (Sample answers: To keep animals and people in their place. To exert control over animals and people.)
- Have you ever seen an invisible wall or fence? (Sample answers: We don’t see invisible walls, but we can feel them. We see the impact of the walls and fences on lives every day. Invisible walls keep boys and girls in different roles in the same community. Some invisible walls lead boys to happier lives than girls. Some invisible walls keep boys and girls in traditional roles.)
- Do you think invisible walls exist? (Sample answers: Invisible walls can form powerful fortresses that seem impossible to remove. Although the invisible walls appear strong and indestructible, they are just a façade. The invisible walls can be taken down by discussion and respectful action over time. These activities are providing you with the tools to take down invisible walls.)

In addition, ask these questions:

- How are walls and fences taken down? (Sample answers: Walls and fences are taken down one stone or post at a time. It takes patience and time to take invisible walls down.)
- What actions can you take to remove “invisible walls” in your life?

- What will you do when friends or family try to keep the “invisible wall” in place by their actions or words?
- What can boys say to parents who don’t want you to help your sister, who want the “invisible wall” to remain?
- How will **your** life be better if you remove some of the “invisible walls” that exist in your lives?
- How will the lives of your family and friends be better if you remove “invisible walls,” one action at a time?
- How will others view children who choose to remove “invisible walls” so their lives and the lives of their family and friends can be better?

Making Choices

Ask all children:

- Suppose you had a choice. Which would you choose:
 - Choose to take down the “invisible walls” that exists between boys and girls so that both girls and boys can live full, equal and happy lives.
 - Choose to ignore or support the “invisible walls” that keep girls and boys from being respectfully treated.

REFLECTION

- “Invisible walls” are taken down the same way visible walls and fences are removed: One stone or post at a time.
- Patiently and deliberately, children can remove “invisible walls” by taking small actions.
- Actions may be small but impact on others is huge when “invisible walls” are scaled and demolished.
- Fear of what others might say keeps some people from removing “invisible walls.”
- Removing walls—invisible or visible—requires strength and determination.
- Children have choices. They can choose to remove “invisible walls”, one action at a time, or hide in fear behind “invisible walls.”

This week, discuss with your friends and family what types of invisible walls exist within your community. Explain what an “invisible wall” is and discuss how it can be removed.

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ACTIVITY 4

SHOWING YOU CARE...LOUDLY!

Opening Discussion

Ask children to discuss the following questions:

- How do you know when someone cares about you?
- What tells you most that someone cares about you: their words or their actions?

Allow about 5-10 minutes for discussion.

Activity

Ask children to identify if the following situations show they care “silently” or “loudly”:

- Sister makes her brother’s bed and prepares his food. She cleans up after he eats. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?
- Brother helps his sister with the evening meal so she has time to do homework. He asks his sister questions on the way to school so she is prepared for the daily test. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?
- Brother notices an older boy staring at his sister. He makes sure he walks with his sister in the community so she is safe. He also helps his sister with outside chores so she is protected. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?
- Brother plays after school with friends while his sisters get firewood, carries water, cleans the house and prepares food. Brother loves his sister and feels bad but doesn’t want to help because house work is his sister’s job. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?
- Sister tells her friends about how her brother helps with chores. Her friends respect and admire his devotion to his sister and family. Sister tells her brother thank you for his love and shares the kind words that her friends said about her brother. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?
- Brother hears his parents talking about marriage for his younger sister. He is proud of his sister and knows that she dreams of finishing school. He talks to his father and asks if his sister can stay in school, offering to help with the chores so his sister can do both school and household tasks. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?
- Sister and brother talk about the hopes and dreams they have for their lives. Both listen with respect and promise to support and encourage each other. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?

Discussion

Most people know when people care about them. Caring and loving words are wonderful, but actions show that one cares much more.

Ask children to draw a picture of each of the following: (if there is no paper or pencils, these questions can just be discussed)

- One thing you did in the past day that let your sister/brother know you care for them?
- One thing did you do in the past day that let your friends or parents know you care for them?

Allow children to explain their drawing to the group and discuss their caring actions.

Facilitators note:

This is an appropriate place to use roles plays if paper is not available for drawing.

Making Choices

Ask all children:

- Children have choices. They can choose to care for others “silently” or “loudly”.
Suppose you had a choice. Which would you choose:
 - Choose to *express* how you feel about people “silently”?
 - Choose to *show* how you feel about people “loudly”?

REFLECTION

- “Silent” love—love with no caring actions—is difficult to see or feel.
- “Loud” love—love with caring actions—feels warm and wonderful and is easy to see.

This week, discuss with your friends and family how your life will be better if you choose to care out loud? Discuss with family and friends how they feel when you care out loud.

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ACTIVITY 5

THE FUEL OF DREAMS

Opening Discussion:

Ask children to answer these questions as a group:

- What provides “fuel” to a rickshaw? (What makes it go?)
- What provides “fuel” to a plow? (What makes it go in the field?)
- What provides “fuel” to a lantern? (What makes it light up?)

The answers are straightforward and easy. Follow up by asking the children:

- What provides “fuel” to dreams?

Allow about 5-10 minutes for this discussion.

Activity

Ask one boy to volunteer for a group game, asking him to stand in the center of a circle.

Next, ask another boy to come forward and try to lift the first volunteer. (It will be unlikely that the young boy can do this alone, or will be able to do it only with great effort.)

Continue to ask children (both boys and girls) to come forward to help lift the first volunteer. Children should work together in lifting him, not try to do it individually. Continue asking children to come forward until all children are working together to lift the young boy.

Discussion

Tell the group that we “lift” people daily with our actions, just as they lifted the young boy who volunteered for the activity. When we “lift” others, we provide the fuel for their dreams.

Ask the children to discuss these questions:

- Would it have been possible to lift the boy by thinking kind things about him but not taking action?
- Was it easier to lift the boy when all the children worked together? How can children work together to “lift” each other and provide “fuel” to dreams?
- Ask this question of the first volunteer: What did you feel like when your friends lifted you high? What could you say to them to acknowledge their efforts to support you that conveyed your feelings?
- Ask this question of the rest of the children: How would you feel if your friend thanked you the support and encouragement to fuel your dreams? Would you be more tempted to provide ongoing “fuel” if you knew it made a difference to him?
- Ask the girls to answer this question: In what ways can brothers, friends and family lift you up and “fuel” your dreams?

- Ask the boys to answer this question: In what ways can sisters, friends and family lift you up and “fuel” your dreams?
- What are encouraging actions you can offer to sisters, brothers and friends who need “fuel” to keep believing in his/her hopes and dreams?

Sample answers:

Brothers: Help sisters with chores so they have time to study and play. Protect sisters from bullies. Talk to parents about allowing sisters to stay in school. Talk to parents about delaying weddings so sister can stay in school. Encourage sister to do homework. Protect sisters from older boys who don’t respect them. Share food with sisters.

Sisters: Help brothers with school work. Thank their brothers for helping with chores. Tell friends about their brother’s kindness so others respect and love them more. Tell brothers they admire and respect them for helping them. Tell their brothers they love them. Tell their brothers that their actions make a difference in their lives.

Making Choices

Ask all children:

- Suppose you had a choice. Which would you choose:
 - Choose to lift up and “fuel” all boys and girls so they can achieve their hopes and dreams
 - Choose to keep traditional roles that allow only boys to achieve their hopes and dreams.

REFLECTION

All people have hopes and dreams. Sometimes our hopes and dreams come true and we feel happy and fulfilled. Sometimes hopes and dreams fade away or seem impossible, but dreams continue to live. But sometimes hopes and dreams don’t come true, and then we have a choice:

- Give up on our hopes and dreams
- Keep trying to achieve our hopes and dreams
- Create new hopes and dreams

Children have great power. Children can be the “fuel” behind their own hopes and dreams as well as the dreams of others. Sometimes words have power. Saying the right thing at the right time can “lift,” encourage and support someone when they need dream “fuel.”

End the activity with these statements:

- Keeping hopes and dreams alive is a gift that lasts a lifetime.

This week, discuss with your friends and family how your actions can “fuel” and “lift” the hopes and dreams of others. Share your hopes and dreams with your family.

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ACTIVITY 6

THE COLOR OF HOPE

Opening Discussion

Ask children to discuss this question:

- What is the color of wind?

Allow 3-5 minutes for the discussion.

Activity

We can feel the wind. We can see what happens when wind blows through grass and hair. We can benefit from wind that dries clothes quickly. We can enjoy the cool breezes of wind on a hot day. But we can't identify the color of wind.

Hope is like wind. Like wind, hope is always around us. We can feel hope. We can see the flicker of hope in the eyes of people. We can see what hope can do in lives. People with hope can endure hardship yet keep going. We can enjoy hopeful days that carry us through life. But we can't identify the color of hope.

We can not describe what hope is by color or size, but we all know what it feels like.

Ask students to answer these questions with a partner or in a small group:

- How do you feel when you have hope?
- How do you feel when hope is gone?
- Can people give you hope?
- How can hope make your life better?

Allow 10 minutes for the discussion for group work and 15 minutes for discussion.

Discussion

Ask the questions below. Read the responses, as needed, to reinforce or add to the children's comments.

Question: What can brothers do for sisters to encourage hope?

Possible Answers:

- Help sisters with chores so they can feel respected and loved
- Assist sisters with homework so they can feel successful and proud
- Play with sisters so they can enjoy stress-free play time
- Talk to parents about allowing sisters to stay in school so they can feel hopeful about their future
- Protect their sisters from bullies

Question: What can sisters do for brothers to encourage hope?

Possible Answers:

- Say nice things about their brothers to parents and friends
- Thank their brother for his kind actions with a smile
- Let her brother know she appreciates his kind actions by saying thank you
- Tell friends and family how thankful she is to have a loving and kind brother

Separate boys and girls to discuss the next set of questions:

Ask boys to discuss these questions:

- A hope provider is someone who encourages hope in another person. A hope provider honors the dreams of others. A hope provider believes in the dreams of others even when they seem distant or impossible. A hope provider reminds others that small steps lead to big dreams and is always there to help along the journey. How can helping sisters with chores or homework make brothers a hope provider? (Sample answers: My sister's life will be easier and happier, and that will make her more hopeful about her future. My sister will have more time for homework, and that will allow her to be more successful and be more hopeful about her future.)
- How will a brother's life be better if his sister's life is better? (Sample answers: I will feel proud that I show love and respect to my sister. Others will notice that I am kind to my sister and think more highly of me. Friends will respect me more because they know my heart is good and kind. Community people will have higher regard from my family because they can see we love and support each other. I will earn the love and respect of my sister. I will be proud that I am a man of action rather than just words. I will feel my life makes a difference.)

Ask girls to discuss these questions:

- What can get in the way of you having hope? (Sample Answer: I am too busy with house work and no one cares about my needs and what I want to achieve in life. Seeing so many barriers to achieving my dreams that I give up trying. Not believing that my dreams can come true for me—dreams are for others, but not me).
- What can you say and do for your friends to encourage them and give them hope? (Sample Answer: Your dreams may seem impossible, but time changes everything. Keep trying and believing and your dreams can come true. Your dreams may not come true exactly as you planned and hoped, but perhaps better things will come your way. We can't see the future but we can choose to believe it will be good.) No dreams are easily achieved. You have chosen your dreams wisely and I believe you will achieve them. I will always support you and your dreams. I believe in you. Having someone believe that you are a special person is an important dream and one that has already come true for you. To be loved and cared for is a dream for many. I love and care for you now, so your dreams are coming true already.

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Activity 6

The Color of Hope

- How can your brother help you have hope? (Sample Answer: By protecting my safety, showing he cares out load, “lifting” her up with an encouraging word and smile. By helping me with the small steps that lead to my dreams, like assisting me with homework and chores, protecting me when I go to get firewood, asking our parents to allow me to stay in school, protecting me from bullies on the playground, feeling proud of me and my accomplishments, smiling at me and saying nice things about me to my family and friends, treating me as a sister AND friend.)
- What can you do to return your brother’s kindness? (Sample Answer: Telling him how much I appreciate him looking after my hopes and dreams. Tell him that he makes a difference in my life. Tell him that his actions warm my heart and make me love him even more. Tell my parents, family and friends of my brother’s kindness. Feel proud that I have a caring brother. Tell him I will never forget his kindness and will always strive to duplicate his caring ways with others as a way to honor him. Telling him that I will never forget him.)

Poetry and journalism are also common activities in the child clubs in Nepal. This is a good session to allow boys and girls to develop poems that show how boys and girls are “hope providers”. Journalism articles can also be written to better explore why some boys and girls have hope and other don’t. Children could also write an article about what their parents hoped and dreamed about as young children, how they worked to accomplish their dreams and what hopes and dreams they had for their children now. Or they could anonymously post their hopes and dreams on a wall, allowing others to see what they hold in their heart but are hesitant to share.

Making Choices

Ask all children:

- Suppose you had a choice. Which would you choose:
 - Choose to be a hope provider to sisters/brothers and friends
 - Choose to ignore, discourage or destroy the hopes and dreams of others
 - Choose to focus only on my own hopes and dreams?

REFLECTION

State these key points:

- Hope is a force, just like the wind.
- Hope is essential to a happy life.
- Hope helps us focus on happier days when times are tough.
- Sisters and brothers can be hope providers.
- Every person needs and wants hope.
- Every person can inspire hope.
- We cannot see hope, but we can see what hope does: it changes lives.
- Children have choices. They can choose to act in ways that inspire hope or ways that kill hope.

This week, discuss with your friends and family how your life can be better if you are a person who inspires hope through your actions.

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ACTIVITY 7

ASKING FOR ADVICE

Opening Discussion

Ask children to discuss this question:

- Have you ever asked a friend or family member for advice?
- What makes advice helpful?
- Who do children go to for advice in your community?

Allow 5-10 minutes for the discussion.

Activity:

Tell students that you have received letters from other children asking for advice, but you don't know how to respond to the letters. Ask children if they would be willing to help the letter writer by suggesting solutions to their problem.

Read each of the following letters, pausing after each for children to respond with advice to the questions:

Dear Wise friend:

I am a 12 year old girl who needs your help. I try very hard to be a good person. No matter how hard I try, it seems I am not loved as much as my brother. After each meal, my parents ask him if he had enough to eat—but they never ask me. I am expected to serve and clean up after my brother—but he never helps me or even thanks me. I work hard at home—while my brother plays with his friends.

I have hopes and dreams too. But my greatest hope and dream now is to be respected and valued as much as my brother. What can I do?

*From,
"Sad in Lumbini"*

Use these questions to spur discussion:

- Does "Sad in Lumbini" have a right to feel sad, or is she just a complaining?
- What can "Sad in Lumbini" do to change her situation?
- If you were "Sad in Lumbini's" brother, how would you feel?
- If you were "Sad in Lumbini's" brother, what could you do to make "Sad's" life better?
- How will "Sad in Lumbini's" brother's life be different if he made changes to help his sister?
- If you were a friend to "Sad's" brother, what would you tell him to do to change the situation?
- How should "Sad in Lumbini" react if her brother changed and started helping her with chores and homework?

Dear Wise Friend,

I am a 14 year old girl who believes in that marriage should be based on trust and love. I want a marriage with someone I respect and love—and someone who respects and loves me. I want us both to be happy. I want my children to grow up in a home with love and respect instead of beatings, anger and silence. Is that possible?

I have been watching the marriages in my neighborhood and I know some are happy. When I get older, I want a happy marriage too. How can you tell if a boy will be caring and respectful to me after marriage?

Signed,
"I have a dream"

Use these questions to spur discussion:

- Does "I have a dream" have a right to a happy marriage based on love and respect or is she just a dreamer who needs to accept life as it is?
- Is it possible to have a marriage based on love and respect—and no beatings?
- What clues (actions) should "I have a dream" look for to determine if a boy will be a kind, loving and caring husband in the future?

Dear Wise Friend,

Hi. I am a 13 year old boy who has a very good life. I do well in school, because I study hard every night. I have many friends. We enjoy playing volleyball and sharing stories together. My father always takes time to talk and listen to me.

You may be wondering why I am writing to you if my life is so good. I feel sad because my sister's life is just the opposite. She is not doing well in school because she does chores at night and has no time to study. She has only a few friends at school because she works before and after school getting water and firewood. I see her working very hard while I play volleyball. That makes me feel bad. My parents are nice to my sister, but much nicer to me.

How can I be happy when I see the sadness in my sister's eyes?

Signed,
"Why is my life better than my sisters?"

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Activity 7

Asking for Advice

Use these questions to spur discussion:

- Should “Why is my life better than my sisters?” be sad because his sister’s life isn’t as easy or good as his—or should he just ignore his sister and enjoy his life?
- Is it possible for “Why is my life better than my sisters? of” to improve his sister’s life?
- How would “Why is my life better than my sisters?” life be better if he took action to help his sister?
- Who is more respected: Boys who “live the good life” and ignore the lives of those around them or boys who “live the good life” but take action to help others live good lives too?
- What could “Why is my life better than my sisters” do tomorrow to make his sister’s life better?

Dear Wise Friend:

I love my mother very much. I cry inside when I see my father hit her. One time he hit her so hard I heard her bones crack. Is it OK to hit women?

I want my marriage to be different. I don’t want to hit my wife if she burns food or goes out without my permission. What can I do so my marriage is based on love and respect instead of fear? Will my wife still respect me if I don’t hit her?

Signed,
“Hoping I can be different”

Use these questions to spur discussion:

- Does “Hoping I can be different” have a right to change how marriages sometimes are, or does he need to just accept life as it is?
- What, if anything, can “Hoping I can be different” do to change his situation?
- Is it possible to have a marriage based on love and respect—and no beatings?
- What can “Hoping I can be different” do now to increase his chance of a happy marriage?
- “Hoping I can be different” wonders if his wife will respect him if he doesn’t hit her. What’s the difference between respect and fear? What actions encourage respect? What actions lead to fear? Is a happy marriage built on respect or fear?

Dear Wise Friend,

I never bully girls. I help my sister with chores and accompany her to get firewood. I encourage my sister to do her best in school and we work on home work together. I always clean my own room. So what's my problem? My father and mother don't like these actions. They tell me that I should act like a boy and not be kind or helpful to my sister. I feel confused. Should I do what I feel is right or listen to my parents?

Signed,
"Dealing with Decisions"

Use these questions to spur discussion:

- What may happen if "Dealing with decisions" decides to listen to parents instead of his heart?
- What may happen if "Dealing with decisions" decides to listen to his heart instead of his parents?
- Is it possible for "Dealing with decisions" to listen to his heart and parents?
- What could "Dealing with decisions" say to his parents when they encourage him to "act like a boy."
- What, if anything, can "Dealing with Decisions" do to change his situation?

Making Choices

Ask all children:

- Suppose you had a choice. Which would you choose:
 - Choose to follow your heart and take actions that lead to respect and dreams
 - Choose to follow traditions that don't require me to think or change.

REFLECTION

- Everyone has choices. Your choices can impact your life and the people you love.
- Often we just "go with the flow" or just do what is expected of us. We forget that we can make up our own decisions with our own values.

This week, discuss with your friends and family some choices you want to make to show that boys and girls can both live fulfilling lives.

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ACTIVITY 8

A SINGLE STEP

Opening Discussion

Read this statement to students:

“The longest journey begins with a single step.”

Ask students to share what this statement means to them.

Allow 5-10 minutes for this discussion.

Activity

Ask girls and boys to stand in a large circle. Read the list of actions below. Ask each student to step forward one step if they have taken the action you just read from the list below. Ask those who stepped forward to share responses to these questions:

- How did you feel when you took this brave action?
- What was the reaction of others to your action?
- Did you encounter any resistance from anyone when you took action?

Actions:

- **Girls and boys:** Listened and talked to mother in a kind and respectful way
- **Boys:** Helped my sister (or other girl) with carrying water.
- **Girls:** Thanked my brother (or other boy) for helping me with chores
- **Boys:** Protected my sister (or other girl) by going with her to get firewood—or got firewood on my own.
- **Boys:** Talked to parents about my sister and what was best for her future
- **Girls:** Asked brother or other family member for help with chores so I could study
- **Boys:** Protected sister and other girls from teasing and bullies
- **Girls:** Prayed for a happy and long life for my brother
- **Boys:** Supported other boys who have decided they want their life to have more worth by helping their sisters have a better life
- **Boys:** Talked to other boys about bullying girls, telling them that it was not an acceptable way to act
- **Girls:** Thanked your brother or other boy for stopping boys from bullying you or your friends

Making Choices

Ask all children:

- Suppose you had a choice. Which would you choose:
 - Choose to change your life and the lives of those you care for
 - Choose to remain in traditional patterns.

REFLECTION

The longest journey always begins with a single step. And each step is important. Together, you will lead all children to break down barriers to hopes and dreams. Together, you will work together to assure boys and girls have the same opportunities in life. Together, you will work in your community to ensure girls benefit from school and education. Together you will work in your immunity to eliminate bullying. Together, you will work to help girls and boys to have a joyful life by sharing household chores between both boys and girls. Together, you will lead all children to see the benefits of equality, where boys and girls are treated as equals. Together, you will live a life filled with hopes and dreams that really do come true. Together you will lead all children to a more secure and happier tomorrow.

This week, discuss with your friends and family the simple first steps you are going to take so all boys and girls achieve their hopes and dreams and there is equality between boys and girls.

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ACTIVITY 9

THE BOND OF PROTECTION

Note:

Implement this activity during the Rakchhya Bandhan festival, if possible. This is a Hindu festival only celebrated by Hindu's mostly living in the Terai region of Nepal. This activity can be skipped if not applicable. It can also be done anywhere in the curriculum, close to the time of Rakchaya Bandhan.

Opening activity:

- Give each girl a Rakhhi (holy thread) as she enters child club.
- Ask each girl to give her Rakhhi to her brother or male friend.

Without separating girls and boys into different groups, ask girls to discuss the following questions:

- All people have hopes and dreams. What hopes and dreams do you hope your brother will help you protect?
- How will you feel about your brother or friend if they protect you from bullies?
- The Rakhhi represents love and protection. How will you show your love and appreciation to your brother or friend for protecting you and your hopes and dreams?

Without separating the girls and boys into different groups, ask boys to discuss the following questions:

- How do you feel when you receive the Rakhhi from your sister or friend?
- What does protecting your sister or friend mean to you?
- Does protecting your sister or friend include protection from bullies? From having your sister stop attending school to stay home and do chores? From having your sister work long hours on chores while others play and enjoy life?
- How do you want your sister or friend to react when you protect her hopes and dreams?

Connect opening activity with topic:

- Raksha Bandham means the “bond of protection.” Which is more difficult to protect—a person’s heart, mind or body?
- Ask boys to respond to this question: How can brothers protect their sisters’ mind? (Sample answers: Help sister with chores so she has time to do homework. Advocate with parents so sister can stay in school.)
- Ask girls to respond to this question: How would you feel about your brother if he acted in these ways to protect your mind?

- Ask both girls and boys to respond to this question: How can brothers protect their sisters' heart? (Sample answers: Help with chores so sister knows and feels loved and respected. Encourage sister by helping with homework. Show love and respect for sister by taking responsibility for cleaning own room and after meals rather than expect sister to do this.)
- Ask girls to respond to this question: How would these actions make a difference in your life? How would you feel about a brother or boy who took these actions?
- Ask boys to respond to this question: How can brothers protect their sisters' body? (Sample answers: Offer to get firewood so the sister is not vulnerable to attack or danger. Tell bullies to leave their sister alone.)
- Ask girls to respond to this question: How can you show your appreciation to your brother (and other boys) that protects your body?

REFLECTION

- It is easy to talk about the “bond of protection.” Translating talk into action shows true love.
- Boys who take action to protect their sisters' heart, mind and body are loved and appreciated. Their actions make a difference in the lives of their sisters that goes way beyond bracelets and sweets.
- Everyone wants to be validated and appreciated. Sisters need to tell their brothers that their actions make a difference to them so brothers can feel appreciated and loved.
- Children have choices. They can choose to express their love with words, bracelets and sweet—all good things. But brothers can also choose to express their love by protecting the heart, mind and body of their sisters. And sisters can choose to express their thanks to their brothers for their actions, letting them know that their actions make a difference to their lives.
- The longest journey always begins with a single step. And each step is important. Over the past eight weeks, we have discussed small actions that greatly impact lives. Together, you will lead all children to break down barriers to hopes and dreams. Together, you will work together to assure boys and girls the opportunity to learn about the world at school. Together, you will work in your community to eliminate bullying. Together, you will work to help girls as well as boys have a joyful life by spreading chores between both boys and girls. Together, you will live a life filled with hopes and dreams really do come true.

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RAKSHA BANDHAN

A sample of **RAKHIS**, tied by sisters on the wrists of brothers in celebration of Raksha Bandhan

RAKSHA BANDHAN (*the bond of protection in Hindi*) is a Hindu festival, Rakhi is a traditional Hindu festival symbolizing the love and affection between a brother and a sister. This is a festival wherein the sister pray for the safety and happiness of her brother. It is also known as 'Raksha Bandhan' that means a 'knot of protection'. Every year, this festival is celebrated on shraavan poornima as per the Hindu calendar.

The festival is marked by the tying of a rakhi, or holy thread by the sister on the wrist of her brother. The elder brother in return offers a gift to his sister and vows to look after her same while an elder sister returns offers to her younger brother. The brother and sister traditionally feed each other sweets. It is not necessary that the rakhi can be given only to a brother by birth; any male can be "adopted" as a brother by tying a rakhi on the person, that is "blood brothers and sisters", whether they are cousins or a good friend. Indian history is replete with women asking for protection, through rakhi, from men who were neither their brothers, nor Hindus themselves.

The rakhi may also be tied on other special occasions to show solidarity and kinship (not necessarily only among brothers and sisters), as was done during the Indian independence movement.

Adapted and picture from:

<http://www.raksha-bandhan.com/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raksha_Bandhan





Save the Children