



Cadette, Senior, Ambassador Free Being Me Challenge

Do you want to improve body confidence and self-esteem? Free Being Me empowers girls to change the way they perceive and embrace beauty, and help them understand there's more than one way to be beautiful. This challenge is filled with positive messages and confidence building activities! Take time to stop and reflect on how the world around you influences how you think about yourself while learning to challenge the 'Image Myth'.

This year Girl Scouts of Maine is offering a FREE patch to all girls who complete this Challenge (while supplies last). By earning this patch, girls are empowered to challenge the idea that there is only one way to be beautiful, build their resilience and capacity to question and reject the limiting messages about beauty they will encounter growing up. We want girls everywhere to feel free to be themselves!

What is the Free Being Me Program?

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) partnered with the Dove Self Esteem Project in 2013 to create a program to make a real change in the way girls perceive and embrace beauty. Through the Free Being Me program, girls learn that body confidence and self-esteem come from valuing their bodies, standing up to social pressures, and supporting others to be more body confident.

Steps to Earn the Free Being Me Patch

- Girls earn the patch by completing ten unique activities from the Free Being Me Program and then submitting the online form.
- Contact info@gsgst.org about receiving your free patch.

Reminders:

- This is a patch, so it is worn on the back of the vest or sash.
- GSGST has a limited supply of Free Being Me patches available, and the patch will be distributed to girls/troops as supplies last.

Activities

Activity 1:

Create a “Treasure Inside Me” Journal. You can use anything as journal from a notebook or folder to a DIY journal. Be sure to decorate your journal in your style using markers, stickers, pictures or anything you choose. Here are some examples for making your own journal from a cereal box, a brown paper bag or an inexpensive composition notebook.

- Cereal Journal: <https://afewshortcuts.com/diy-handmade-journal/#sthash.VNBQmKqp.qjtu>
- Paper Bag: <http://thehousethatlarsbuilt.com/2014/04/5-minute-bookbinding.html/>
- Composition Notebook: <https://mycutandpastecreations.com/blogs/news/love-journals-the-easiest-diy-journal-youll-ever-make>

Throughout this challenge, you will add positive messages to your “Treasure Inside Me” journal, reminding you to challenge the ‘Image Myth’. Remember to add to your journal with each activity!

Activity 2:

Beauty Around the World. There is no one perfect way to look. Beauty ideals are always changing over time and around the world. If you lived in another country, or another century, you might be encouraged to define beauty in a totally different way. Different societies around the world have different ideas about what is beautiful. For example, girls in the USA like to get tan in the summer so their skin is darker but there are countries where lighter skin is more attractive.

So is there only way to look beautiful, when beauty is seen so different around the world? Let’s look at ideas about beauty that are different around the world and have changed over time.

For this activity, you will need someone to read the prompts in blue to you from Activity #2 sheet in the Appendix...Don’t look at the sheet. Each prompt will start with “Somewhere in the world...”

Think about what you just heard and answer True or False for each prompt. After you answer, have the individual read the corresponding statement below each prompt.

- Were you surprised by the statements?
- Which statements were the most surprising to you?

In your “Treasure Inside Me” journal, title a page: **‘Beauty Around the World’**. Select at least one of the prompts and its corresponding statement to add to your journal. Take a few minutes and add your thoughts about the prompt and its statement. How do you feel about this example of beauty?

As you learned from these statements, beauty is seen differently around the world. Cut out the globe picture from Activity #2 sheet in the Appendix and add it to your “Treasure Inside Me” journal. When you see the globe in your journal, be sure to remind yourself that you are beautiful!

Activities

Activity 3:

Defining the ‘Image Myth’. The ‘Image Myth’ is our society’s idea of the ‘perfect-looking’ girl. This is a myth (i.e. a false, made-up concept) because it’s impossible for anyone to achieve, and we know there is more than one way to look beautiful.

So imagine you are the event organizer for a brand new high-fashion magazine called **Gloss**. Your boss just asked you to organize a glitzy launch party and to come up with the ‘perfect-looking’ guest list. She wants all her guests to fit our society’s idea of the ‘perfect-look’ for a girl. So that you can describe the ‘perfect-looking’ guest to your boss, you must come up with a list of their appearance features (e.g. things about her hair, body, height and face...).

In your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal, title a page: **‘The “Perfect-Looking” Girl’**. Now start listing how you might describe the ‘perfect-looking’ guest to your boss. Be as specific and descriptive as possible. For example, instead of “good teeth”, try straight white teeth; and blemish-free skin is a better description than “flawless skin”. Here are a couple of features to get your list started:

- Clear skin with no blemishes
- Small hands and feet – but long, graceful fingers

Look over your list. So do you think these are the features of a ‘perfect-looking’ girl? Actually in reality there is no such thing as the ‘perfect-looking’ girl. Instead, this is the ‘Image Myth’. The ‘Image Myth’ is what society tells us the ‘perfect-looking’ girl should look like. But it’s a myth, because it’s impossible for anyone to look like this in reality. Nobody has all of these features naturally. Take a red pen or marker and cross out the title on the page – ‘The “Perfect-Looking” Girl’ and replace it with ‘The Image Myth’.

Activity 4:

Airbrushing – Spot the Difference. Even models and celebrities can’t fully match the ‘perfect-looking’ girl as in the ‘Image Myth’. Their images are frequently airbrushed in magazines and advertisements.

Let’s look at how media changes the images you see of models and celebrities in various publications. Here are two activities:

1. Use Activity #4 sheet in the Appendix. On this sheet are photos of two different women – an original photo and a retouched photo. Compare the original photos to the retouched photos. Find as many differences as you can by marking the differences on the retouched photos.
2. Watch the Dove Evolution video and note all the ways you see the model’s image change from start to finish. You may need to watch the video twice to see everything you didn’t spot the first time.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U>)

In your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal, title a page: ‘Airbrushing’ and write your thoughts to the following:

- How does it make you feel to know that even models and celebrities are airbrushed, because they aren’t considered beautiful enough?
- Is the ‘Image Myth’ really ideal, or are there other ways to be beautiful and special?
- Why do you think the ‘Image Myth’ is impossible to achieve?
- Where do you think the ‘Image Myth’ originated, and who is responsible for it’s ongoing promotion?

Activities

Activity 5:

Outside – Inside: Costs of the ‘Image Myth’. Activity 3 had you examine the ‘Image Myth’. Now let’s think about the costs for individuals who try to look like this ‘perfect-looking’ girl’. In other words, if individuals feel the social pressure and try to change the way they look to match the ‘Image Myth’, what negative effects can this have on them – both inside and outside?

Look at the first Activity #5 sheet in the Appendix. On this sheet is an outline of a girl. Think about the downsides for individuals of trying to look like the ‘Image Myth’. Are those inside costs or outside costs? Write the inside costs inside the outline and outside costs in the space surrounding the outline.

- *Inside Costs:* How might they feel? What might they miss out on, not do as well at or not enjoy as much? For example, they could have low self-esteem or lack of self-confidence to try a sport. Challenge yourself to come up with as many inside costs as possible.
- *Outside Costs:* Think about what the negative effects are for your local and global community if individuals try to look like the ‘Image Myth’. For example, how does it negatively affect how they treat each other at school and their confidence to take the lead to make the world a better place or speak out on issues that affect them? Challenge yourself to come up with as many outside costs as possible.

Now look at the second sheet for Activity #5 in the Appendix. How did you do coming up with costs? Did you have costs that are not in these examples? Title a page in your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal: ‘Outside-Inside Costs’. Cut-out these examples and add to your journal.

Looking at these examples, answer these questions in your journal:

- So who do you think benefits from the ‘Image Myth’?
- Looking at all of the costs on the Outside-Inside pictures, do you think you are personally benefitting from the ‘Image Myth’?

Remember, everybody should feel free to be themselves. When we feel free to be ourselves we can do the things we love and take care of ourselves and other people, enjoying our bodies for what they can do.

Activity 6:

Media Detective. Every day, you are bombarded with images and messages from the media, yes – even social media. TV shows, advertisements and magazines push the ‘Image Myth’ and contribute to the pressure everyone feels to follow it.

Time to become a media detective! Title a page in your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal: ‘Media Detective’. For this activity, you need to find three examples of the ‘Image Myth’ used in the media. For each example, do the following:

- If possible, cut each example out and put in your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal. If not, then describe the example in your journal
- Write down why the ‘Image Myth’ is fake in the example.
- Then complete the sentence “It’s not worth trying to look like this ‘Image Myth’ because...” for the example.

Remember the ‘Image Myth’ is everywhere in our society, but you can challenge it, by talking about why it’s impossible, and why it’s not worthwhile trying to look like it.

Activities

Activity 7:

Friendship Mission. Did you know that your everyday conversations with friends and family can keep the ‘Image Myth’ going too? This activity is all about practicing how you can take the lead to help people you know to be free of the ‘Image Myth’.

Friendship Mission: Connect. Your mission is to help a friend by convincing them it’s a bad idea to try to look like the ‘Image Myth’ and that it’s impossible! In the Appendix, find Activity #7 sheet for Friendship Mission: Connect. These are real text messages from real girls. Assume you got these messages from your friends. Your friends are telling you that the way they looks makes them feel bad because they don’t match up to the ‘Image Myth’ – you need to reply by challenging the ‘Image Myth’ and the idea that they should try to look different than themselves.

For example, your friend might text you: “I feel so fat today, I’m thinking about not going to my dance class today.” What might you say to show your friend that you don’t agree with the ‘Image Myth’. What might you say to tell her that you think she is great just the way she is and that the most important thing about dance class is having fun and learning to dance?

Example responses could be:

- “I think you’re great just the way you are. Dance class is about having fun and learning to dance, not the way you look”
- “It’s a waste of time worrying about how you look because you’ll miss out on having fun at dance.”

Title a page in your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal: **‘Friendship Mission: Connect’**. Pick at least two of the text messages and add them to your journal with your reply. Make sure you challenge the ‘Image Myth’ in your reply.

Friendship Mission: Quick Comeback. Your mission is to challenge the conversation statements with a quick comeback. Your comeback should stop someone talking in a way that supports the ‘Image Myth’ and make them think about what they were saying. In the Appendix, find Activity #7 sheet for **Friendship Mission: Quick Comeback**. These are pieces of real conversations between friends that continue to promote the ‘Image Myth’. Assume you are having these conversations with your friends.

For example, a friend might say said, “Don’t you think that girl looks too fat to be wearing a swimsuit?” What could you say to her to show that you don’t agree with the ‘Image Myth’? What could you say to tell her that you think she is great just the way she is and it’s not nice to criticize the way other people look?

Example quick comebacks could be:

- “I think she’s great just the way she is.”
- “Swimming is about having fun and enjoying the water, not the way you look.”
- “It’s a waste of time worrying about how other people look and I don’t agree with putting others down.”

Title a page in your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal: **‘Friendship Mission: Quick Comeback’**. Pick at least two of the conversation messages and add them to your journal with your reply. Each comeback you make should include something that shows you don’t agree with the ‘Image Myth’!

Now think about your responses on both these Friendship Mission activities. In your journal, answer the following:

- Mark your favorite text response. Why was it your favorite?
- Mark your favorite quick comeback. Why was it your favorite?
- What would help you take the arguments you’ve practiced into the real world?

Activities

Activity 8:

Mirror, Mirror. According to the ‘Image Myth’ the mirror is your enemy, the place where you look at all the bits that are wrong with the way you look. But we know now that the ‘Image Myth’ is actually impossible, and there are all sorts of reasons why it’s a bad idea to try to look like it.

With this activity, you are going to challenge the ‘Image Myth’ by looking at yourself and your amazing qualities. Grab Activity #8: Mirror, Mirror sheet from the Appendix. Complete Step 1 on the sheet with:

- Three things you like about your character.
- Three parts of your body that you like because of what they can do.
- Three parts of your body you like the look of.

For instance, you may like the shape of your arms, the strength of your legs, your curly dark hair, the sound of your laugh, or the fact that you are a good friend. This is a great way of building confidence in yourself!

Title a page in your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal: **‘Mirror, Mirror’**. Cut out the Mirror, Mirror sheet you just completed, and add it to your journal. Now complete Step 2 on the sheet. In your journal, answer the following:

- How did it feel to be positive about yourself?
- Why is it good to practice thinking about and saying what you like about yourself?

Remember, we don’t get many opportunities in society today to be positive about our bodies, and it really improves body confidence to practice this! It takes practice, but reminding yourself about the things you like about yourself and your body is a great way to help beat the ‘Image Myth’.

Activity 9:

The World We Want to See. Imagine a world where girls feel free to be themselves, where they don’t worry about the way they look, feel more confident about themselves and are not held back by the ‘Image Myth’. What would that world look like?

On Activity #9 sheet in the Appendix are a few comments about girls in The World We Want to See. Think about what you have learned doing the previous activities. What other comments would you add? Maybe something about complimenting friends on who they are, not how they look; or don’t compare yourself to others, being valued for skills and talents...

Add your comments in the empty spaces. Now cut out the The World We Want to See with your comments and add it to your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal. Remember, it takes small steps to change the world, but if we all work together we can make a huge difference.

Activities

Activity 10:

Free Being Me Pledge Card. Think about all you've learned about the 'Image Myth' while completing these activities.

Pledge #1: Spread the Word. How could you challenge the 'Image Myth' in your daily life? Think about what you could do to stop yourself from believing in the 'Image Myth', and what you could do for your friends, family and community. For example: You could...

- Go and do an activity you were not sure about doing because of worries about the way you look.
- Don't buy magazines or watch TV programs that keep the 'Image Myth' going.
- Tell a friend about the 'Image Myth' and why you don't believe in it.
- Practice giving compliments that have nothing to do with how people look.

Look at the first pledge card (Spread the Word) on Activity 9 - Pledge Cards Sheet in the Appendix. What two things could you do challenge the 'Image Myth' – one you and one for others? Write these on the card.

Pledge #2: Free Being Me. You have learned a lot from Free Being Me – worked out that there is an 'Image Myth' in our society, and defined what it looks like; examined why following the 'Image Myth' is a bad idea, because it is impossible to achieve, and makes people's lives really difficult. So, what is your pledge? What will you keep doing, or maybe start doing?

Look at the second pledge card (Free Being Me) on Activity #10 - Pledge Cards Sheet in the Appendix. Write a pledge to yourself about challenging the 'Image Myth' and how you are going to do it on the card.

Now cut out your Pledge Cards and put your pledge card in your "*Treasure Inside Me*" journal. When you see these pledge cards in your journal, remind yourself to continue challenging the 'Image Myth'.

Suggestions for those extra pages:

You probably have extra pages in your "*Treasure Inside Me*" journal. Remember this is your personal journal, so what you add to your journal is your choice. If needed, here are some suggestions:

- Inspirational Word Collage: Do a page spread of words that inspire you. These can be words you cut out from magazines, newspapers, write, draw or a combination of all. Decorate the page for additional inspiration.
- Travel Vision Board: Think of places you would like to see and experience before you graduate from high school. What is beautiful about these places, people, culture...? Find pictures of these places and create a page spread for your Travel Vision Board.
- Need additional inspiration? Check out Girl Scout Destinations at <http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/take-a-trip/destinations/> and why not even apply for a Destination to make your Travel Vision a reality?

Resources:

- World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
<https://www.wagggg.org/en/what-we-do/free-being-me/>
- Free Being Me Website: <https://free-being-me.com/>

Appendix:

Activity #2 – Beauty Around the World Sheet for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador

Activity #4 – Spotting the Difference for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador

Activity #5 – Outside – Inside: Costs of the ‘Image Myth’ for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador

Activity #7 – Friendship Mission for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador

Activity #8 – Mirror, Mirror for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador

Activity #9 – The World We Want to See Sheet for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador

Activity #10 – Pledge Cards for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador



Activity #2

Beauty Around the World

(Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador)

Have someone read the statements in bold to you, always starting with “**Somewhere in the world...**”. What do you think...True or False? Compare your answers with the comments below the statements in bold.

Somewhere in the world...

...it is considered that big women are beautiful.

In Mauritania and Nigeria in Africa, it's desirable for women to be as big as possible. Unfortunately sometimes girls are even force-fed to make them more attractive.

...people think it's beautiful to have a very long neck.

There are communities in Thailand and Myanmar where women and girls stretch their necks by adding neck rings to be considered beautiful and show they belong to their community.

...people with tanned skin are considered more beautiful.

In countries like Australia, the UK and the USA, many people want to look like they have been in the sun and have tanned skin, so they tan themselves with lotion or sunbeds or spend a long time in the sun. This can be dangerous and bad for your skin.

...tall is beautiful.

In some parts of Asia, such as South Korea, people have increased their height by having leg-lengthening surgery.

...having face tattoos are a sign of beauty.

Face tattooing is a sacred ritual to the Maori people of New Zealand. The swirling tattoos are called Ta-moko. Women with tattooed lips and chins and full, blue lips are considered the most beautiful.

...people have thought it beautiful for women to have very tiny feet.

In China, foot binding was very popular until the early 20th century. Girls had their feet bandaged to stop them growing. The way it made women walk was seen as attractive.

...a uni-brow – where both eyebrows join in the middle – is seen as beautiful for women.

In Tajikistan, women feel very lucky if their eyebrows grow across their foreheads. If they don't, they use a herbal mixture to draw a line and join their eyebrows together.

...having a plump curvy bottom is the most beautiful way to be.

In Jamaica, dancing is very important. Women with bigger bottoms can wiggle them a lot when they're dancing, which people find beautiful.

...died black teeth were thought to be very beautiful in women.

This is called Ohaguro, and was done generally by married women, and sometimes men, in Japan, until the 1900s. It followed an ancient tradition that pitch black things were seen as beautiful. The dye actually protected their teeth from decay!

...people feel it's more beautiful to have a lighter skin tone.

In many places in Asia, lighter skin is often considered more attractive, and will avoid going in the sun, even use a bleaching lotion to whiten their skin. Some people believe they will be more successful with whiter skin. For example, in Korea, being tanned means you are a poor peasant working outdoors as compared to pale skin people who represent luxury and wealth. And in India, being fair also means having wealth, luxury, and more importantly a status that commoners do not achieve in their lifetime.



Activity #4

Spotting the Difference

(Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador)

Below are two examples of an original photo and the retouched photo. Can you spot all the differences in the photos?



Original



Retouched



Original



Retouched

Activity #5

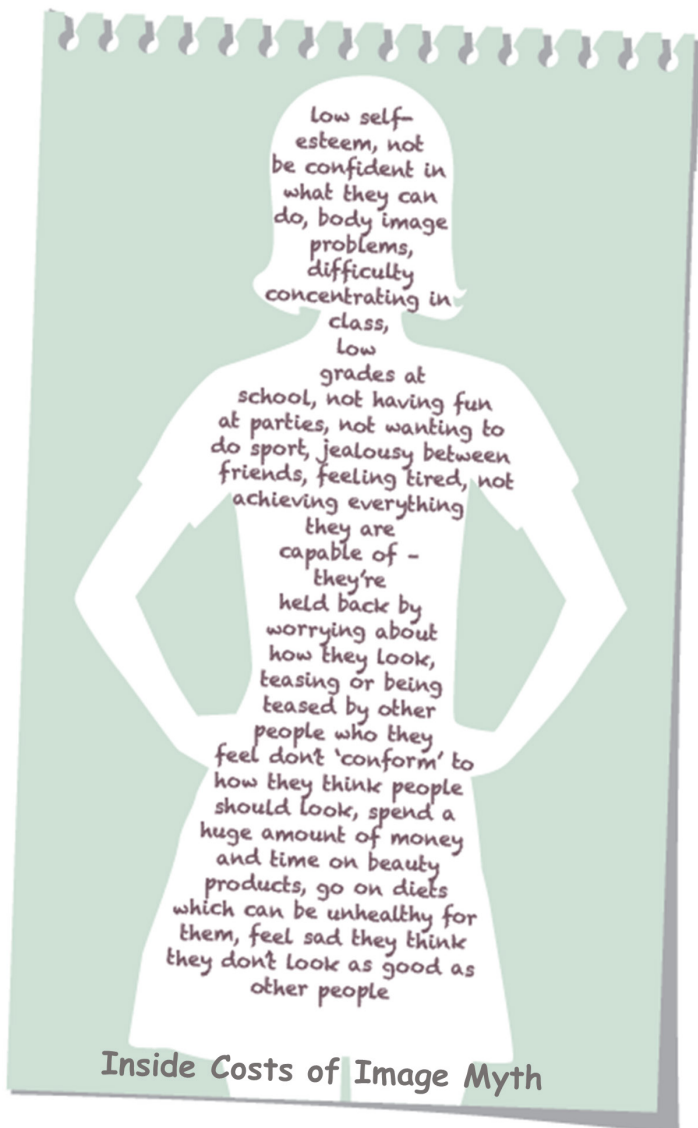
Outside – Inside: Costs of the Image Myth (Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador)

Consider all the costs to an individual who feels pressure from society and tries to conform to the 'Image Myth'. Place *inside* costs inside the figure below, and *outside* costs surrounding the figure below.



Activity #5 Continued (Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador)

Did you come up with some of these *Outside – Inside Costs*? Cut out these examples and include in your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal



Activity #7

Friendship Mission: Connect (Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador)

Below are real text messages from real girls about their appearances and how their looks don't match up to the 'Image Myth'! Pick **at least two** messages and come up with a reply that challenges the 'Image Myth' and the idea that they should try to look different from the 'Image Myth'.

Oh my goodness, I just saw pictures of me in that dress...I have completely the wrong body shape for it - what a mistake!!

I'm not going to go to the school dance, I'm feeling really fat today.

I feel so self-conscious about my massive ears, I wish I hadn't had my hair cut short.

Just got told I have to wear braces on my teeth...end of the world! See you in a year!

My feet are huge!! They look ridiculous in these shoes.

OMG I'm so flat-chested, there's no way I'm going to wear a bikini to the beach.

She could have the body of a supermodel if she really wanted it.

Nobody at school is going to like me if I can't get into these tight fit jeans, I better lose some weight.

OK I have to lose weight, and fast. I am never going to get a partner looking like this.

Summer's round the corner! Can't wait for the sun, CAN wait to get my horrible fat legs out.



Activity #7

Friendship Mission: Quick Comebacks (Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador)

Below are real conversations between friends that continue to promote the 'Image Myth'. Pick at least 2 messages and come up with a quick comeback that would stop someone talking in a way that supports the 'Image Myth' and make them think about what they were saying.

I wish I could look more like my friend Alina, she's got amazing long slim legs.

Oh, I love that dress, but it would look much better on you than me – my bottom is too big for it.

That celebrity has really let herself go, it's such a shame – she used to be so thin.

I feel sorry for her, I think she'd be really pretty if she didn't have those spots all over her face.

Did you see that person who walked past? She was so skinny you could almost see through her!

Her hair is so long and straight and smooth, I wish mine looked like that too.

All the photos of me at the party all show off the braces on my teeth – I just don't want anyone to see the pictures.

He will never get a girlfriend, he's far too short.

She needs to be careful – she's starting to get massive shoulders from all the swimming she does.



Activity #8

Mirror, Mirror

(Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador)

Time to look at yourself with the mirror. Write your answers to each prompt.

Step 1) I like...

Write down here:

Three things you like about your personality (e.g. kindness).

Three parts of your body that you like because of what they can do (e.g., legs because they let me run).

Three parts of your body you like the look of (e.g. arms or stomach).

(Can you name any more? Amazing! Keep going!)

Step 2) Look at me – I am fantastic!

- Stand in front of a mirror, smile at your reflection and say "I love my XXX" – using the list you've just come up with.

- How does it feel? Practise doing this as much as you can.

How many more things can you add to your list while looking in the mirror?

Activity #9

The World We Want to See

(Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador)

In the empty shapes, add your own comments needed to make a Free Being Me World. A world we want to see, based on what you have learned in the previous activities.

...girls will spend their money on things they need or enjoy, and not on things to change their appearance.

...girls will feel confident to stand up and speak in front of others.

...girls will be treated equally and there will be no teasing or bullying

THE WORLD WE WANT TO SEE!

...girls will be more confident to go out and take part in sport and games

...girls will

...girls will

...girls will

...girls will

...girls will

...girls will

Activity #10 Pledge Cards (Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador)

Cut the Pledge Cards out, complete both cards and add to your “*Treasure Inside Me*” journal.

One thing I will do to challenge
the Image Myth for other people is...

My
Spread the
Word pledge

Signed _____ Date _____

I will help create a world free of the Image Myth, where everyone
is confident in their bodies, and feels free to be themselves!

I will

Signed _____ Date _____

