

Activity: Organize a Demonstration



Suggested Levels: C S A

Objective: Learn about the types of peaceful demonstrations, and choose one or more types to raise awareness for your issue.

Leader Prep: Check your local library for materials on issues of protest and political dissent. Make sure girls and their parents fully support this endeavor before proceeding. Permits can be acquired at your city or council office, and often can be supported by a nonpartisan elected official like a city alder or council person.

Supplies:

- Books or research materials about types of demonstrations
- Signs
- Flyers or postcards
- Permits
- Tee shirts, stickers or buttons (optional)
- Permission slips

Ways to Include Supporters:

- Ask a local business to sponsor your event by contributing snacks or supplies or signage
- Ask local news to announce your event and show up to cover the event
- Ask a media specialist to hashtag your event and post about it on your website
- Ask supporters to join you for the demonstration

1. Before you decide to organize a demonstration, you'll need to identify and understand the types of demonstrations you may wish to organize. These are:
 - a. Marches – where people walk along a set route. Marches require support from the city where they will take place, which often comes in the form of a permit and sometimes security, as provided by law enforcement.
 - b. Rallies – where people gather in a specific area to listen to speakers or musicians. Rallies require a permit from your city, and may also require security.
 - c. Picketing – typically used during a work-related strike, picketing involves the surrounding of an area.
 - d. Sit-ins – where people gather in a single place and occupy that space by sitting for a period of time, usually until they feel they have been heard or they are forced to leave.
2. In all of these instances, nonviolence (peace) tactics have been used successfully and unsuccessfully. Because protests may occasionally attract large groups of people or groups of emotionally-charged people, some protests have historically turned into riots. As you work on this activity, connect with your local government and law enforcement bodies to discuss ways of preventing violence from occurring during a peaceful gathering.
3. Choose one type of demonstration to focus on for this exercise. To successfully organize a nonviolent demonstration, you will need to complete the following tasks.
 - a. Security: Follow the laws in your community regarding free assembly, including permits, police presence or law enforcement-provided security teams, appropriate signage in areas where traffic may be present, and any other requirements. Also, make sure all Girl Scouts have parent permission slips and that all families approve of the activity.
 - b. Supporters: To organize a successful demonstration, you'll need to gather people who support you on the day of the event by showing up and participating with you. You can mobilize them in any of the other ways suggested in Part 4 of the Advocacy Guide. Social media, websites, flyers, postcards, action days, elevator pitches, canvassing, and videos are all great ways to affect others and gain their support.
 - c. Visibility: Consider printing tee shirts, stickers, buttons or another easy-to-identify wearable item that can distinguish your crowd and help people notice you. Reach out to local news media to cover your story and share your movement with others. Create signs to hold during the event that demonstrate your cause and inspire others.

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- d. Momentum: Don't let the momentum you create during a large demonstration end after the experience has ended. Use this single event as a way to kickstart your movement toward Part 5 of the Advocacy Guide.



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