

DIGITAL LESSON GUIDE

AUTHENTICITY – SARAH GRIMKÉ



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Authenticity means the act of being genuine. Showing up as your authentic self can be hard sometimes. However, it is an important lesson to learn early on in life. This lesson gives the real-life example of a woman who decided to honor her values and beliefs. It helps girls understand the importance of authenticity and how to incorporate this character trait into their lives and relationships.



SECTION 1: PREPARATORY READING

I. INTRODUCTION FROM HEATHER: WHY SARAH GRIMKÉ?

In June 2016, we launched our first-ever Nominate Her Challenge. We asked girls to submit their videos about women who have inspired them. The video that was chosen would be our 10th Grace & Grit lady. The girl with the chosen submission would get to help us design the box, charm and accessory, write blogs and help us launch! The submission that was chosen: abolitionist and women’s-rights advocate Sarah Grimké.

Coincidentally, I had just read about Sarah in the book “The Invention of Wings” by Sue Monk Kidd. Although parts of the book were given dramatic license, I felt like I had learned a lot about Sarah, so when she was presented as a choice for our 10th woman, I considered it an honor to introduce her spirit to the Grace & Grit team. I felt like we were old friends. Sarah presents as a timid character in history, but the moral and ethical struggles she tackled in her lifetime refined and sharpened her authenticity.

Sarah was born in 1792 on a plantation in the South. Her family enslaved many people. Sarah realized early on in her life that slavery was wrong, and her opinion on this matter flew in the face of her family, friends and community. Every aspect of Sarah’s life—and the life she knew as a citizen of the South—was built on the backs of enslaved people, and it was something she could not tolerate.

She tried to change her sphere of influence. She tried to teach enslaved people to read, only to be punished by her father. She tried to free the maid her parents gave her in her pre-teen years, only to be told she could not do so. As she was trying to reconcile the horrors of slavery, she started to realize the limited rights she had as a woman. She was troubled by her parents’ refusal to let her learn math and science because it was not “womanly.” She was disappointed that her life would not be her own because she was a woman.

The older Sarah became, the more she realized she was different from the world around her. She was trying to fit in with the Southern way of life, and it made her uncomfortable. When she had the opportunity to visit Philadelphia as an adult, she realized the North was where she belonged. It was a moral battle for her to try to be a part of society in the South, in the depths of slavery—and she could truly belong in the North, where slavery was not tolerated and where she would have the freedom to advocate for the emancipation of slaves and equal rights for women.

Sarah realized she had a similar mindset to the Quakers. This religious group believed in the equality of races and genders. Sarah realized that a life filled with fancy dresses, extravagant parties and decadent food felt wrong. So she literally stripped her life down to what mattered to her the most. She became a Quaker, giving up her wealthy lifestyle to speak her truth and shed light on the story of enslaved people in the South.

Sarah’s story is an example of grace and grit because she stood up for those who couldn’t stand up for themselves; she followed her heart to lead the life she wanted.

If we take Sarah’s life and bring it into the 21st century, it remains the same story—the tale of a girl believing in her own worth and standing up for those who are bullied or made to feel less important. Sarah was a girl like you, who just followed her heart, tapped into her authenticity and helped others find the freedom to do the same.

SECTION 1: PREPARATORY READING

II. THE JOURNEY OF SARAH GRIMKÉ'S LIFE

Sarah's life was a simple one, but very rich in service to others. Her fight for genuine equality is a golden thread that can easily be traced throughout everything she did.

1792: Sarah was born on November 26th in Charleston, South Carolina. She grew up on a Southern plantation, where she witnessed both the injustices against slaves and the inequality between men and women. Sarah wanted to study law, as her brothers had; however, she was restricted to learning things like watercolor and embroidery.

1804: By the time she was 12 years old, Sarah was spending Sunday afternoons leading Bible study for her family's slaves. She was frustrated because she knew they yearned to be literate, but her parents forbade her to teach them to read and write.

1821: Sarah took permanent leave of her childhood home and moved to Philadelphia, where she focused on joining the Quakers' Society of Friends.

1837: Sarah and Angelina appeared at the anti-slavery convention in New York and began a public speaking tour. They would discuss their views on abolition, speaking to full audiences as often as six times a week.

1848: Sarah, her sister and her sister's husband established a boarding school out of their home. This first private venture led to the sisters' careers as educators and administrators.

1861: The controversy over slavery incited the Civil War. Sarah supported the Union cause, and eventually, her and Angelina's dream of abolition came true.

1868: Sarah became the Vice President of the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association.

1870: Even though it was illegal, Sarah led a group of women to Hyde Park in Boston to vote in a local election.

1873: Sarah died on December 23rd in Hyde Park, Massachusetts.

To live an authentic life is one thing. To live an authentic life for the benefit of others is quite another. It requires immeasurable grace and even more grit. As Sarah's life shows, adversity is hard to fight, but making space for your voice and the voice of the oppressed is always rewarding.

SECTION 1: PREPARATORY READING

III. CHARACTER TRAIT: AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity. It can be scary because it makes us vulnerable, and it can make others feel uncomfortable.

How many times a day do you hide your true self? Several times each day, the opportunity may arise to state your honest opinion about something, but you become concerned about hurting someone's feelings or worry that you won't fit in with the group. So, instead, you deny yourself the opportunity to be authentic and pick the popular choice, share the most accepted opinion, give the easy answer. You cover yourself with a mask that you mistakenly believe fits you perfectly.

And how many of your friends are secretly relieved that you chose the easy response?

When we choose to wear masks and give easy answers, we choose to stop honoring our true selves and authentic friendships. After all, how can you be good friends with someone who doesn't even know the true you?

Take off the mask and learn to become authentic.

Sometimes the world makes us believe that, for there to be harmony, we all must be the same. One color. Monochrome. If we are all the same, how can anyone judge us? Monochrome shelters us in our denial and gives power to the idea that judging the authenticity of others is acceptable behavior.

There is no texture to sameness; there is no focal point, nothing that is interesting or special. Life is boring. We are merely fitting in with each other. We tell ourselves we are free from the harsh judgment of others ... as long as we are the same.

What happened to being authentic?

What happened to honoring the person and not the opinion?

What happened to looking for meaningful friendships instead of settling for easy acquaintances?

When one girl takes off the mask of pretense and says, "I don't want to fit in here; I want to belong elsewhere. I want to become real," she frees herself and others.

Somewhere along the path, we forgot that being authentic means no longer feeling the awkward confines of fitting in because we are now looking for our tribe—our people who honor the authenticity of others. Vibrant colors, textures and uniqueness come with authenticity. When girls believe themselves important enough to show their true selves, they believe themselves important enough to have true friends.

Girls, you deserve to be able to give the hard answer, the unpopular opinion, the choice that will make others think. You have the right to be you—genuinely, truly, authentically you. And you deserve to have friends who will appreciate that girl. Give them a chance to make her acquaintance.

Here's the thing: When you free yourself to be authentic, you free yourself from judgment. Others' opinions no longer trap you. You have found a higher plane to live on; you are soaring above. You are free.

Living an authentic life is a courageous act. Get to that life as soon as possible, women leaders of tomorrow. The sooner you get there, the better life is going to be.

SECTION 1: PREPARATORY READING**IV. LESSON CONTENTS**

Below are descriptions of each item we offer as part of the Authenticity Theme. Depending on your purchase, some of these may not be applicable.

ILLUSTRATED PORTRAIT

Sarah is pictured as her younger self in her pre-Quaker period. This was likely the time in her life when she contemplated staying in the North and fully immersing herself in new beginnings. The books in her hands and the famed Liberty Bell in the background give life to the ideas of freedom and equality. Wearing a look of graceful peace, it almost seems as though she has finally found where she belongs and, for the first time in her life, has made that realization.

ACTIVITY BOOKLET

This condensed version of Sarah's story, questions and/or activities pulled from the Biography Workbook will be useful for small groups with a limited amount of time. The questions will deepen the reader's understanding of Sarah's life and why she was given the character trait of Authenticity.

BIOGRAPHY

From her roots as the daughter of a judge and plantation owner to the social justice advocate she became, we strove to give an honest retelling of Sarah's story. One that shines a light on her legacy that young girls can understand and strive for.

BIOGRAPHY WORKBOOK

This is where the reader breaks down the lessons Sarah's legacy teaches us and applies them to her life. The questions and/or activities will not only deepen the reader's understanding of Sarah's life and why she was given the character trait of Authenticity. But they ask girls to reflect on both Sarah's and their own lives and find the space where they intersect. In the workbook, the girls will understand what is required to live an authentic life.

TIMELINE POSTER

The timeline is an easy introduction to the life of each of our historical women. It is meant to be an overview of her accomplishments and impact on the world.

PLAY-IT-FORWARD CARDS

How do the girls of today let their authenticity shine? By receiving reinforcement and acknowledgment of those instances where they listen to their inner voices and "do the right thing." This set of Play-It-Forward Cards also provides an opportunity to give the gift of literacy to another girl—both activities Sarah would heartily approve.

BOOKMARK

The accessory personifying Sarah Grimké had to be a bookmark. It represents so much about Sarah's life: her yearning for an education, her escape to her father's library to read math and other books that were not considered necessary for girls, her disconnect with the Southern way of life to write and speak for her beliefs, her later career in teaching. And one cannot forget Sarah's attempt at teaching enslaved people to read—her own small way of trying to free them.

CHARM

Sarah's charm is symbolic of her breaking away from her family and Southern roots for a simpler, more authentic life. The G&G Charm is an outline of a heart attached to a disc that reads "Follow Your Heart." Sarah's life as a Quaker was much harder than her life on the plantation, where everything was done for her. She dressed in gray wool dresses, she didn't have a lot of money, her lodgings were plain. Nothing was fancy or easy. It definitely required grit. But it was the life that felt real to Sarah. Following her heart led her to a life where she no longer had to try to fit in, standing by while others suffered—and, in so doing, she set her spirit free.

SECTION 2: GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE**I. INSTRUCTIONS**

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Hand out the materials to the girls, allowing them to spend some time going through them independently. If you purchased the charm or accessory, invite them to try it on or talk about how they can use it or add the charm to a bracelet. Give them time to satisfy their curiosity so they can focus on the lesson once you begin. After a few minutes, bring their attention back to you and start the lesson.

The following sections provide you with guidance to get the girls thinking and discussing the topics related to the theme and lesson contents. Use the discussion questions to the extent time allows.

Consider using a whiteboard to note responses, comments and ideas from the group as you go along.

SECTION 2: GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE

II. TIMELINE POSTER

STATEMENT OR INSTRUCTIONS:

Direct the girls to the timeline. Take turns having the girls read each event on the poster.

QUESTIONS:

- What historical events are you aware of during the 1800s?
- After reading the timeline, what do you think is Sarah's greatest accomplishment?

GRACE & GRIT

with The
JOURNEY
OF
SARAH
GRIMKÉ

1792
SARAH WAS BORN ON NOVEMBER 28TH IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

1804
After witnessing the oppression and inequality shown toward enslaved people on her family's plantation, 12-year-old Sarah began reading Bible study to them.

EIGHTEEN TWENTY-ONE
SARAH TOOK PERMANENT LEAVE OF HER CHILDHOOD HOME AND MOVED TO PHILADELPHIA, WHERE SHE FOCUSED ON JOINING THE QUAKERS' SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

1837
Sarah and her sister, Angelina, appeared at the anti-slavery convention in New York and began a public speaking tour. They would discuss their views on abolition, speaking to full audiences as often as six times a week.

1848
Sarah, her sister and her sister's husband established a boarding school out of their home. This first private venture led to the sisters' careers as educators and administrators.

1861
THE CONTROVERSY OVER SLAVERY INTENSIFIED THE CIVIL WAR. SARAH SUPPORTED THE UNION CAUSE AND, ESPECIALLY, HER HUSBAND'S SISTERS' WORKING ON SOUTHERN CAUSE TOUR.

1868
SARAH BECAME THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION.

1870
Even though it was illegal, Sarah led a group of women to Hyde Park in Boston to vote in a local election.

EIGHTEEN SEVENTY-THREE
SARAH DIED ON DECEMBER 20, 1873 IN HYDE PARK, MASSACHUSETTS.

SECTION 2: GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE

III. ILLUSTRATED PORTRAIT

STATEMENT OR INSTRUCTIONS:

Direct the girls to the portrait.

QUESTIONS:

- Sarah Grimké is not a woman we read about in the history books. Have you ever heard of her?
- What do the books that she is carrying say?
- What do we call the bell in the background?
- When you consider both the books she is carrying and the bell in the background, what types of things might you infer about Sarah?



SECTION 2: GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE

IV. BIOGRAPHY

STATEMENT OR INSTRUCTIONS:

NOTE: If time is limited, group leaders may consider assigning the reading to be done independently before the group meets.

- If the group is reading the biography together, consider doing so during silent reading time, out loud by the facilitator, or by taking turns, each girl reading a paragraph or page.
- What is your favorite subject in school?
- What would it feel like if you were told you couldn't learn that subject because it was not womanly?
- Even though Sarah wanted to follow her heart, become a Quaker and move away from the South, do you think it was hard for her to leave home?
- Do you think you would make a good Quaker and be able to live a very simple life?
 - Sarah had to give up her fancy dresses. What things would be hard for you to give up?
- Do you think Sarah had a more fulfilling life as a Quaker?
 - Why or why not?

GUIDED QUESTIONS TO DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIOGRAPHY:

- Sarah enjoyed reading. What is your favorite type of book/genre to read?
- What is your favorite book?



SECTION 2: GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE

V. ACTIVITY BOOKLET READING SECTION

STATEMENT OR INSTRUCTIONS:

ASK THE GIRLS:

What do you think the quote on the cover of the booklet means?

Have the girls open up the activity booklets and invite them each to take turns reading a paragraph.

OPTIONS:

1. Read parts of the booklet and use the suggested questions below to deepen the discussion and check for understanding.
2. Read the booklets (up to the activity questions) and then use the suggested questions below to deepen the discussion and check for understanding.

GUIDED QUESTIONS TO DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING OF THE ACTIVITY BOOKLET READING:

- Sarah enjoyed reading. What is your favorite type of book/genre to read?
- What is your favorite book?
- What is your favorite subject in school?
- What would it feel like if you were told you couldn't learn that subject because it was not womanly?
- Even though Sarah wanted to follow her heart, become a Quaker and move away from the South, do you think it was hard for her to leave home?
- Do you think you would make a good Quaker and be able to live a very simple life?
 - Sarah had to give up her fancy dresses. What things would be hard for you to give up?
- Do you think Sarah had a more fulfilling life as a Quaker?
 - Why or why not?



SECTION 2: GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE

VI. ACTIVITY BOOKLET QUESTION SECTION OR BIOGRAPHY WORKBOOK

STATEMENT OR INSTRUCTIONS:

Invite the girls to complete the activities in the back of the booklet and discuss their answers. This is the heart of the lesson. While some girls may not want to share their answers, please allow time for discussion and processing their answers. The objective is for the girls (when applicable) to apply lessons about the woman's life and character trait to their own lives.

The following are the questions found in the Activity Booklet or Biography Workbook. They are meant to be answered independently by the girls in the booklet, but may be referenced as needed in the lesson.

ACTIVITY 1:

- Sarah's values and belief system were very different from the majority of her family and community members.
- Sometimes being authentic is really hard, especially when your choices are different from everyone else's.
- Do you sometimes pretend to be someone or something other than who you are? Why or why not?
- How do you feel when you pretend to be someone or something that you are not?

ACTIVITY 2:

- Sarah knew that as long as she stayed in the South, she wasn't living an authentic life. She wanted to find a place where she belonged.
- While standing up for your beliefs may not always be a popular choice, it often makes you feel better than just "fitting in" with the crowd.
- Describe a time when you stood by your beliefs. How did you feel?
- Was it easy or hard to be authentic? Why?

ACTIVITY 3:

- Sarah's parents did not agree with her choices and beliefs. Even the people in Sarah's town threatened her with arrest if she returned. However, Sarah didn't become angry at her parents or the people threatening her.
- Anger is a natural response when you feel hurt or when someone treats you unfairly. However, it is more effective to solve problems with calm wisdom rather than loud anger.
- Why do you think Sarah chose not to become angry?
- If you used grace instead of negativity when faced with those who think differently, what do you think would happen?



ACTIVITY 4:

- Sarah dedicated her life to speaking out against slavery and speaking up for women’s rights.
- Sarah lived a life of social justice and service.
- If you could help anyone in the world like Sarah, whom would you help? Why?

ACTIVITY 5:

- “I know nothing of man’s rights, or woman’s rights; human rights are all that I recognize.”
- Advocating for others who do not have a voice or are silenced is an act of service.
- Why is it important to advocate for those who can not advocate for themselves? How do we teach the world that everyone deserves acceptance and equality?

ACTIVITY 6:

- Sarah and her sister were very close. Part of the reason their relationship was so special was that they were like-minded.
- Which trusted adult woman in your life shares your same views and opinions? Invite her to read Sarah’s story.
- What did she learn from it?
- What did she think of Sarah’s journey into authenticity?
- How does she lead an authentic life?

**QUESTIONS TO DEEPEN DISCUSSION
[IF TIME ALLOWS]:**

- In your own words, describe what it means to be authentic.
- Who do you know that is an authentic person?
- Do you think it is hard to be authentic all the time? If yes, what is hard about being authentic?
- What good things could happen if everyone chose to be authentic all the time?

SECTION 2: GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE

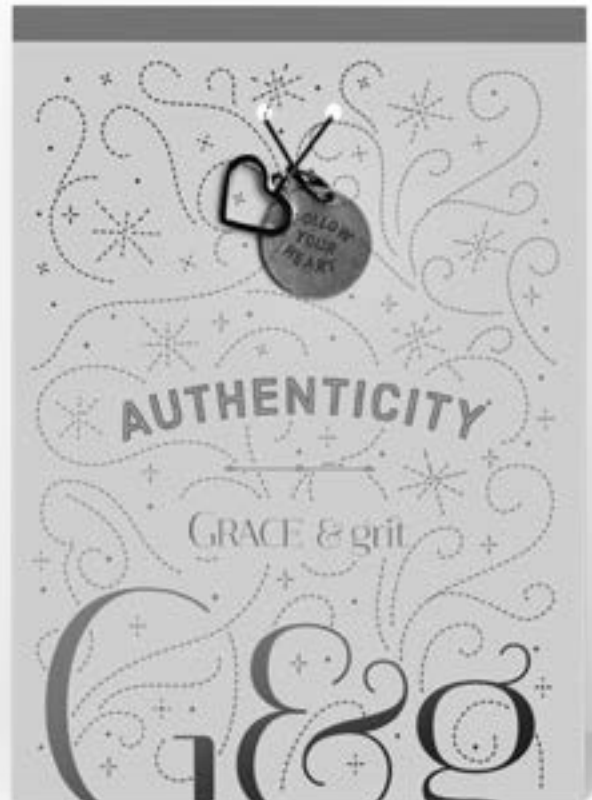
VII. CONTENT DISCOVERY

STATEMENT OR INSTRUCTIONS:

Have the girls take the bookmark and the G&G Charm from the box. Use each item as you discuss the following questions.

QUESTIONS:

- Why do you think a bookmark was chosen as the accessory for this box?
- What does the quote on the bookmark say?
- What does that quote mean to you?
- Why do you think the bookmark is gray? (The color symbolizes the gray dresses she wore during her years as a Quaker.)
- How do you interpret the quote on the charm?



SECTION 2: GROUP ACTIVITY GUIDE

VIII. PLAY-IT-FORWARD CARDS**STATEMENT OR INSTRUCTIONS:**

Tell the girls what the Play-It-Forward Cards are and how they are intended to be used with other girls in their daily lives. Have the girls take the Play-It-Forward Cards from the box and browse through them for a moment. Go around the group and have them read the front and back of one card aloud. Ask the girls what that card means to them and how they could use it in everyday life. (Depending on time, you may want to limit this exercise to 3 cards.) Remind them that, over time, as they choose to pass out a card to another girl with positive intent, their name will go into a drawing to get the tote bag.



SECTION 3

CLOSING DISCUSSION GUIDE

As you close the lesson, you are looking to spark a conversation among the girls about how they plan to use inspiration from Sarah Grimké to improve their own lives while also helping and supporting one another. The goal is to help them recognize how topics from the lesson apply to their own lives in a positive way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Optional: Use the Timeline Poster as a focal point for open discussion.

- What impresses you most about Sarah?
- What did you find most interesting?
- What are some ways in which you can practice authenticity in your life?
- How can you help someone else practice authenticity?
- How do you think this will help you become an authentic person?
- What ideas do you have for using the Play-It-Forward Cards?
- How did this lesson help you?