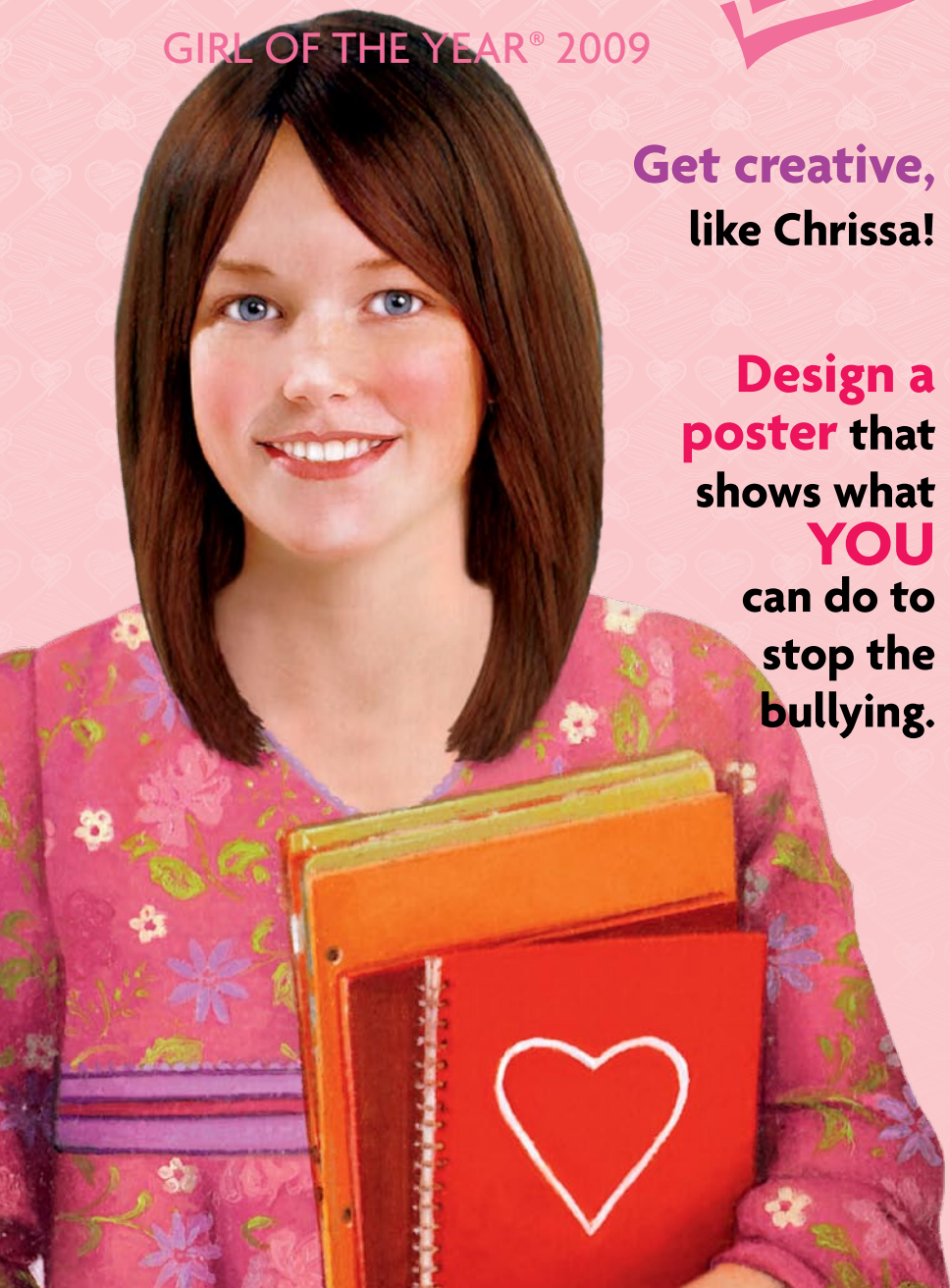


Chrissa™

GIRL OF THE YEAR® 2009

**Get creative,
like Chrissa!**

**Design a
poster that
shows what
YOU
can do to
stop the
bullying.**



Meet Chrissa, a friendly, creative girl who finds the courage to stand up for herself and others.

Ten-year old Chrissa Maxwell and her family have just moved to Edgewater, Minnesota, to live with her grandma (“Nana”), who’s lonely after the death of Chrissa’s grandfather. Nana has a big, beautiful old house right on the lake, but Chrissa’s having trouble feeling at home there. Worse, she’s worried about going to a new school mid-year, when everyone else has already made friends.

On Chrissa’s first day at Edgewater Elementary, Chrissa tries to make friends—but is greeted with icy silence by the three girls she sits with in Cluster Four. This is just the beginning of the bullying from the “Mean Bees,” who set out to make Chrissa’s life miserable. They try to get her into trouble at school, make her do less than her best on the swim team, harass her online, and even play a prank that puts Chrissa’s eleven-year-old brother, Tyler, in danger.

Chrissa dreams of home-schooling or, better yet, of returning to her old school. But when the teasing turns into serious bullying, Chrissa must find the courage to stand strong and speak out.

We hope that Chrissa’s story will inspire you as you look for ways to show kindness and stand up for yourself and others. One girl *can* make a difference. Pass it on!

Your friends at American Girl



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If You Want a Friend, Be a Friend

That’s the advice Nana gives Chrissa on her first day of school. How do you show friendship to others? And what qualities do you look for in a friend? Find friendship words in the puzzle below, and then use them to mix up the perfect recipe for friendship.

Y T K S D Y Z B D H S I
 T R I Q W T T O L S U L
 L U N S X E T S E R A P
 A S D D U C E N E U P N
 Y T N Q E P E T G N F K
 O W E P Q V P H N U O P
 L V S B I Y T O N E H H
 D E S G A E S L R S S Q
 R X R P R Y W T Y T X S
 P O E C N E I T A P H Q
 F C O M P A S S I O N E
 A P B S H A R I N G A I

COMPASSION	HONESTY	LOYALTY	SHARING
FORGIVENESS	KINDNESS	PATIENCE	SUPPORT
FUN	LAUGHTER	RESPECT	TRUST

Now use those words to fill in this recipe for friendship. How much of each “ingredient” do you need to form a friendship that’s healthy and strong?

A Recipe for Friendship

Ingredients

An armful of _____

Two handfuls of _____

and _____

A sprinkling of _____

A dash of _____


Just enough _____

to spice things up!

Mix ingredients over time, and serve with a smile.

What Do You Stand For?

It's easier to stand up for yourself and others when you know what you believe. Read each statement below and decide whether you agree or disagree. Check off your choice.

- 
1. One student like me can't really make my school a better place.
 agree disagree
 2. If I try hard enough, I can keep everyone happy.
 agree disagree
 3. When someone makes me angry, it's O.K. for me to be mean.
 agree disagree
 4. It's easiest to go along with my friends, even when something they're doing doesn't feel quite right.
 agree disagree
 5. People who act "different" are sort of asking to be bullied.
 agree disagree
 6. If I'm upset with a friend, it's probably time to end the friendship.
 agree disagree

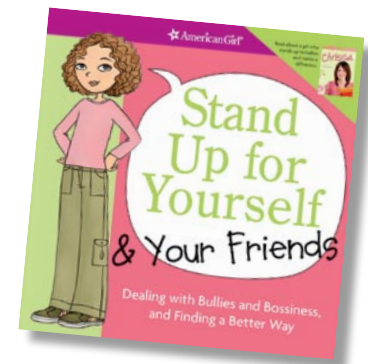
Visit americangirl.com/girloftheyear for more quizzes, friendship activities, crafts, printable notes of kindness, and a pledge you can take to speak out against bullying.

Answers

Did you check "disagree" most often? If so, you know how to stand up for your beliefs—and how to respect other people's points of view. It's not easy to do both. These tips should help:

1. Every time you give a kind smile or help someone out, you make your school a better place. One person can make a difference, and you're just the one to do it.
2. It's impossible to keep everyone happy all the time. If you tried, you'd never sleep (and it wouldn't work!). What matters is staying true to yourself so that you can be proud of who you are.
3. It's O.K. to be angry. You can't control how you feel, but you can control how you respond. Being mean almost always makes things worse. Next time you feel angry, slow down and think about why you feel that way. Then figure out the best way to deal with it.
4. It may seem easiest to give in to peer pressure. But you have to live with your decisions, and there's nothing easy about knowing that you did something you knew was wrong. Listen to the voice inside of you before doing something you'll regret.
5. No one should be bullied for being different. In some ways, we are *all* different. And it's our differences that make us interesting! Stand up for those who are different, because the world would be a boring place without them.
6. Nobody's perfect. Making mistakes is part of being human, so try to give friends a chance to make things right. But if a friend keeps doing things that are hurtful, it's time to set some limits.

From the book
*Stand Up for Yourself
& Your Friends*,
by Patti Kelley Criswell



Get Creative, Like Chrissa

To show support for her friends, Chrissa sews matching headbands for them to wear in friendship and solidarity. Tap into your own creativity with a few of these ideas.

- ✿ Write “stand strong” (or another phrase that inspires you) on a small, smooth rock. Tuck it into a friend’s hand when she needs support.
- ✿ Look through your music collection for feel-good songs, and put them together on a playlist or a CD to loan to a friend.
- ✿ Wear a color that makes you and your friends feel strong. Paint your toenails red or slip on matching purple bracelets.
- ✿ Give a friend a shoebox filled with notes, poems, and quotes that will help her feel confident and loved.



Say, “That’s Enough”

When Chrissa tells her mom the truth about the bullying, her mom shares her own stories about bullying she faced as a girl. She helps Chrissa find the courage to say, “That’s enough.”

What can you learn by talking with your own parents or other adults? Ask questions like these:

- ✿ Were you ever teased or bullied? If so, how did you handle it?
- ✿ Did you talk with your parents about it? Why or why not?
- ✿ Was there a time when you stood up for someone else—or wished you had?

Now ask yourself, *Is there something adults can do to make it easier for me to talk with them about bullying?* If you think of anything, let them know!

Visit americangirl.com/girloftheyear for more tips for you and your parents, plus information about how to take part in the “Stop the Bullying” event on May 1, 2009.

Find a friend in Chrissa

Our new Girl of the Year comes with books, a DVD—and plenty of accessories!

Chrissa and Chrissa Stands Strong Books

by Mary Casanova

Chrissa is stung by the Mean Bees on her first day at school and must find a way to stand up for herself and her friends. Then, just as fifth grade is about to start, more mean tricks put someone in danger—and remind Chrissa that to stop the bullying, she must stand strong and speak out.



An American Girl: Chrissa Stands Strong DVD

For the first time ever, our girl of the year stars in a full-length movie! Adapted from her books, this film captures Chrissa’s struggle with the mean girls at school as she learns to stand strong and speak out.



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Bring Chrissa’s stories to life with dolls, outfits, accessories, and more!