

# Because I Have a Brain

**Created By:** Kathryn Van Wagoner

**Audience:** LDS audience, girls, ages 8-10

**Activity:** Activity Days Girls Day Camp

**General Description:** The entire program follows a Wizard of Oz theme. An opening session introduces the theme, with a story telling up to the point of the tornado. Large fans are turned on, a pianist makes tornado-like sounds on the piano and the girls are “blown” out of the cultural hall to one of four rooms. Each room follows a theme: Dorothy/home (celestial home), Tinman/love (service activity decorating cookies), Lion/courage (choose the right), and scarecrow/brain (education and learning). The following description is for the scarecrow/brain room.

**Objective:** The purpose of the presentation is to help young girls understand the importance of getting a college education and to realize they have the ability to do so. The idea of learning is introduced by asking the girls to share something they have learned to do. Hopefully the responses will cover many aspects of learning such as academics, hobbies, or sports.

**Time Needed:** The following activity can be done in 20 minutes over 4 rotations.

**Materials Needed:** Decorations for the room following a scarecrow and academics theme, such as displays of a variety of books, (textbooks, classic literature, how-to books, scriptures); a globe; corn stalks; bulletin board items such as apples, fall leaves, scarecrow; posters with academic or religious themes. Other materials and descriptions are listed below:

- Graduation robe (for presenter) or a scarecrow
- Copies of the words to the song
- A goal setting paper (described below)
- Brain origami found at <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/pdf/bori.pdf>
- Fill in empty squares with important messages like: I am naturally smart. My brain knows how to learn. I love math! Leave a few squares for girls to fill in their own messages.
- President Hinckley Message: “Get all the education you can” found at <http://yountprogram.org/hinckley-education.php>
- Video/Broadcast of Mary N. Cook “Bless your children and your future home by learning all you can now.” April 2012 General Young Women Meeting found at <http://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/general-young-women-meeting/2012/03/seek-learning-you-have-a-work-to-do?lang=eng>
- Excerpts from: *We’re Born to Learn: Using the Brain’s Natural Human Learning Process to Write Today’s Curriculum* by Rita Smilkstien (2011). Found at [Smilkstein, Rita, \(2011\). \*We’re Born to Learn: Using the Brain’s Natural Human Learning Process to Write Today’s Curriculum\*](#)
- PDF document regarding the brain and math found at <http://www.wtc.edu/mathhelp/docs/BrainPPpdf.pdf>

**Specific Description:** Share both the importance of learning as taught by church leaders: President Hinckley “Get all the education you can” and “Bless your children and your future home by learning all you can now.” from Mary N. Cook, April 2012 General Young Women Meeting found.

The idea of learning is introduced by asking the girls to share something they have learned to do. Hopefully the responses will cover many aspects of learning such as academics, hobbies, or sports. Then move the discussion about the importance of getting a college degree.

If the presenter is wearing a graduation robe it makes a good object lesson to teach girls about the levels of degrees available in college: bachelors, masters, and doctorate.

Provide the goal setting paper: “Seek learning even by study and also by faith” at the top, followed by “I will improve my learning by:” followed by lines on which to write a learning goal and the girl’s signature. Discuss what the scripture means. Help girls choose and write a learning goal. Provide some ideas for possible learning goals: get good grades and go to college, do my homework every day, graduate from college, etc. This fulfills a Faith in God requirement.

Teach a very brief explanation of how the brain grows dendrites when learning something new. If you can’t do something you just need to grow the dendrites to do it. (See Smilkstein, Rita, (2011). *We’re Born to Learn: Using the Brain’s Natural Human Learning Process to Write Today’s Curriculum* or <http://www.wtc.edu/mathhelp/docs/BrainPPpdf.pdf>

Help girls fold their origami.

Sing the following song:

**Because I have a Brain**  
(tune: If I only had a brain)

I know history, math and science  
I’ve built my self-reliance --  
learned all I could obtain.  
I will graduate from college,  
so I’ll have a lot of knowledge  
Just because I have a brain.

I can teach my children better,  
and help them learn their letters  
and serve without complain.  
I will help in my community  
and have more opportunity,  
Because I have a brain.

Scripture study is the answer  
to questions that I ponder,  
through praying and by faith.  
I will have a testimony  
and know Nephi and Moroni,  
Just because I have a brain.

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