



4-H Activities

4-H activities offer young people many exciting opportunities for personal development. These activities often are a part of their projects. For example, a community beautification project group might tour a local nursery to learn more about planting and taking care of shrubs. However, a 4-H club will also plan many activities not related to a project. For example, a club may tour an area of historic interest. To add spice to your 4-H program consider offering demonstrations and illustrated talks, judging activities, community service projects, exhibits, tours, National 4-H Week observances, recreational activities and camping trips.

Demonstrations and illustrated talks

"Show me how," "Let me see you do it" and "I'll show you" are heard often when 4-H members work and learn together. Preparing and presenting demonstrations and illustrated talks help 4-H members gain additional knowledge and learn new skills and practices. Younger members start with easy-to-do "show and tell" presentations.

Members often need help from their leader in choosing a topic and a suitable way to present it. The topic should be of interest to the member, simple to do and something the member can do or learn to do well.

Once the topic is chosen the 4-H'er next must decide whether to plan a demonstration or an illustrated talk. If the topic is one that can be explained best by making or doing something and results in a finished product, the member should prepare a demonstration. However, if he can best show and tell how to do something with drawings, maps, models or pictures, a better choice of presentation method may be an illustrated talk. By giving demonstrations and illustrated talks, youths learn to

- Develop or improve skills
- Increase their knowledge and express themselves well
- Develop poise and confidence
- Develop initiative
- Earn recognition.



Regular 4-H meetings or project meetings are good settings for demonstrations. Service and civic clubs, community groups and other organizations offer additional opportunities for giving demonstrations.

Judging

Judging is an effective way to teach. It can be as simple as deciding between two items and choosing the best. All 4-H projects and activities provide possible judging situations. All youth should have an opportunity to learn to recognize quality and why one item is superior to another. Through learning to judge, 4-H'ers develop skills in decision making, a process they will use throughout life. The objectives of judging are to teach individuals to:

- Think when making decisions.
- Compare one object to another to determine which one more nearly approaches the ideal.
- Recognize objects that meet tested standards.
- Organize thoughts and express decisions verbally.
- Tolerant of other's decisions.
- Use group activities to increase their interest in 4-H club work.
- Apply what was learned through judging in everyday living.

Community Service

Community service activities enable 4-H members to help make their community a better place in which to live. Every 4-H group and member should strive to make worthy contributions to the community by working as a group or in cooperation with other organizations or groups. This activity is important not only for developing each 4-H'er but also for improving the community and contributing to the club's success. The group should choose an activity that meets a real need in the community and can be completed. The needs might relate to health, safety, recreation or other areas. Examples of community service activities include caring for public property and buildings, assisting with health drives and contributing to worthy charities.

Exhibits

4-H group and individual members have many opportunities to create their exhibits, to showcase their skills and achievements. An exhibit may be related to a 4-H project or it may concern a more general topic. Good exhibits arouse interest and stimulate a desire or determination to try new things and adopt new practices.

Often, 4-H'ers exhibit items they have made as part of their 4-H project work. For example, 4-H'ers enrolled in the electric project may exhibit lamps they have made. Or members enrolled in clothing could display garments they have sewn. Individual items often are exhibited at 4-H club meetings, achievement programs, fairs and similar programs.

Other exhibits may be more educational in nature in that they explain how to do something or why a new idea is good. For example, 4-H'ers enrolled in the electric project could design an exhibit that shows what to look for when buying a study lamp. Educational exhibits:

- Should be limited to one main idea of subject
- Should be original, interesting, and cause people to stop, look and learn.
- Can be displayed in store windows, at schools,...

Tours

Youth like "to go places and see things." A well-planned tour offers 4-H members an opportunity to satisfy this desire and to learn.

Tours to club members' homes to see their project work can boost the enthusiasm of the member and his parents. The group also is given a chance to compare methods and see the progress each is making. A project tour can be planned so that each person visited has time to tell his experiences, show results of his work and even give a short demonstration.

Another type of tour can be made to places that relate to 4-H projects, such as a bakery, furniture store, yard goods department, stockyard, dairy or electric plant. 4-H'ers can learn valuable lessons by visiting the county courthouse, a newspaper office, banks, hotels, fire departments,

museums, radio stations and similar places. Allow time for discussion, questions or some type of group participation.

National 4-H Week

During the first full week on October, 4-H members throughout the nation celebrate National 4-H Week. This event provides a chance to increase public understanding of 4-H and to gain support for year-round activities. It is a good time to express appreciation to friends of 4-H and recognize the contribution they make to the program.

Recreation

An important part of the 4-H program is recreation. It contributes to the fourfold development of youth. It also helps to maintain member interest and adds variety to the program.

Good recreational activities require as much careful planning as a 4-H project. Consider planning club recreation activities along with the rest of the club program rather than separately. There are three parts to a recreation program: member, family and club recreation.

In addition to song and game leadership, recreation can include arts and crafts, woodwork, leatherwork, metalwork, native materials, music and dramatics, nature study and reading.

4-H camping

Camping is a significant part of some 4-H programs. Some 4-H groups plan and conduct overnight or weekend camping trips. Many 4-H members also attend a county or District 4-H camp during the summer. These are held at various locations throughout the state. Ask your Extension agent for information concerning 4-H camping opportunities.

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook."

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