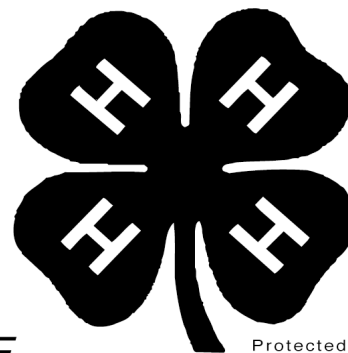


THE 4-H MEETING



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INDIANA 4-H LEADER GUIDE

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service • West Lafayette, IN

The 4-H club meetings are utilized as a basis for group activity and learning. Meetings should be planned to educate and entertain. As a new leader, acquaint yourself with meeting procedures. There are experienced leaders and junior leaders available to assist you in understanding how 4-H club meetings work. Here are some suggestions to make club meetings more productive and fun for everyone, including you.

Know Your 4-H Group

Getting to know your 4-H members consists of more than just writing their names on the “Club Roll” of 4-H 195 *Leader’s Record Book*. It consists of knowing their ages, home environment, long- and short-range goals, and interest in 4-H. As you get to know them, you will be better able to meet their needs.

The 4-H club secretary can assist you in this area by keeping accurate records of club membership (name, address, attendance, projects carried, and 4-H activities) in 4-H 217 *Secretary’s Record Book*, available from your Extension office.

Look for Additional Help; Listen to Suggestions

Determine who will make up your club team. There are parents who are willing to share their talents with your 4-H group (see the Indiana 4-H Leader Guide on Parents).

Consider others in your community who may be willing to share their time and talents with youth. There may be older 4-H’ers who would also make good Junior Leaders. Consider 4-H alumni as a source for your club team, and don’t forget about experienced leaders who are in your vicinity. They may not be able to help directly with your meetings, but their “know-how” can save you much time and effort.

Attend as many county 4-H leader meetings and other training opportunities as possible. These experiences will provide new information, methods, and techniques, as well as an opportunity to share and learn from other 4-H leaders.

Your consumer and family sciences, agriculture, and youth educators are also interested and willing to give all the assistance they can. Call and arrange a time when you

can talk with one of them about your club and the 4-H program in your county. They have ideas, know-how, and resource materials they will gladly share. They are just like you thought: busy people doing many worthwhile jobs.

Set the Stage for Teaching and Learning

Your 4-H’ers want to be active and take part in the club’s program. They want to feel it is their meeting. You may assure this by having:

1. A pleasant meeting place.

Every 4-H club member should be able to see and hear other club members during group discussion. If project or recreation work is to be performed, space and facilities must be accommodating. Meetings may be held at a member’s home or you may choose a central meeting place. Where you meet is not nearly as important as whether it accommodates the needs of your group.

2. A comfortable atmosphere.

Establish an atmosphere conducive to talking together and getting to know one another. Everyone feels best and gains most when he/she is at ease. Create a positive situation where members feel free to “join in” and express themselves. Welcome and listen to all ideas and thoughts expressed.

3. A feeling of belonging and acceptance.

Each person wants to be an active part of a group but sometimes he/she needs help. Discover ways to involve individuals, learn their strengths and weaknesses, then provide a chance for each individual to be successful before the whole group. Here is where you can inspire others to try new things, to work cooperatively, and to care about group members.

4. An executive board.

Plan an executive board meeting 10 to 20 minutes before each meeting to discuss the club’s agenda. Setting up a table and chairs for officers has been known to give support and confidence. A flip chart or a small blackboard may be good for recording “thinking” or in showing how and telling why. Your

job is to guide the group in the right direction. Let ideas and experiences of members have an important place. Sometimes you'll be leading; other times they will have the leadership role. You will have to know your group and be sensitive to them if your club is to move in a "growing" direction.

Have Members – Do Meet

Your club is all set to go. You have members ready for the first sign of action. Don't keep them waiting too long – do meet! "But what will I do with them all at the same time, and with so much enthusiasm?" A well-planned meeting consists of four main parts:

1. **Opening** - 3 to 5 minutes
2. **Business** - 10 to 15 minutes
3. **Program** - 20 to 30 minutes, educational activity, project work, member participation
4. **Recreation/Refreshments** - 10 to 15 minutes

Each of the four main parts of a well planned meeting is important. Each contributes a different kind of learning to those participating. Sometimes your members may want to "mix things up." Perhaps an outing, a picnic, or a special fun activity will take one entire meeting. They may "make up" project work by having an all day workshop at a later date. A longer business meeting may let other "specialized" parts fit in another meeting. It is the balance that counts.

Let the suggested four areas and the time for each be a guide only. You and your members can work that out during your club season. There is no certain set pattern for every meeting. As you and your club members gain experience, you may want to add other educational and service programs, but don't rush it. You don't have to do everything the first year!

Let's focus on the various parts of a 4-H meeting and what goes on in each:

Opening - 3 to 5 minutes

The opening calls your 4-H'ers attention to the business at hand. The meeting may be called to order by tapping a gavel on a table top or saying an opening word. This establishes formality, promotes cooperation, and teaches respect. During this five-minute period, the following may be performed:

1. Call to order
2. Club songs, pledge, creed, the pledge of allegiance, other opening thoughts
3. Roll call

Business Meeting - 10 to 15 minutes

The business session can be democracy in action.

Members learn how to express themselves in a group, listen to the views of others, take individual responsibility in reaching a decision, and abide by majority rule. Your agenda may include:

1. Minutes of the previous meeting
2. Treasurer's report
3. Committee reports
4. Unfinished business
5. New business
6. Announcements
7. Adjournment

Your first meeting may be informal with various members doing various jobs. As your members gain experience they may want to elect officers and begin to follow parliamentary procedure.

Program and Project Work - 20 to 30 minutes

The program should include some sort of educational activity as well as time for project work. Member participation in this process is very important.

Project work may include actual "doing" of the project by the members with guidance and instruction from project leaders (or others knowledgeable). Here's the place for members to give demonstrations and illustrated talks or work on project books, and all sorts of activities that result in project learning. Other educational activities might include an informative speaker, audiovisual presentation, or educational tour. "Learning by doing" is one of 4-H's unique strengths. Use your ingenuity and creativity to make this section of your meeting one that is packed with interest and action as members learn.

Recreation and Refreshments - 10 to 15 minutes

A variety of fun activities add enthusiasm and enjoyment to your meetings. Some clubs have a different recreational committee for each meeting. Some elect leaders for the year. Having someone responsible for the job each time makes it more fun. Possible activities include: small group games, charades, relays, active sports, quiet games, puzzles, folk games, parties for parents, picnics, hikes, swimming parties, talent numbers, and singing. Refreshments can be a part of the recreation and social activities if desired. Keep them simple, eye appealing, and nutritious and easy to prepare, serve, and clean up.

Other Educational and Service Programs

When the club is first starting you will want to concentrate on the four main parts of a well planned meeting. As you and your group learn more about 4-H, you may want to expand your interest and go beyond the basics of a well planned meeting. Ideas for other educational and service programs are numerous. A few

possibilities from the infinite list include health, safety, citizenship, community service, and international understanding.

Examples of educational and service programs might include:

HEALTH: physical and dental checkups, drives for funds, testing programs (TB, diabetes, etc.), speakers, tours of health department or hospitals, nutrition programs, exercise and fitness, first aid and home nursing activities, and immunization programs.

SAFETY: hazard hunts, safety speaking activities, accident studies, safety skit, safety slogan contest, special programs, highway safety, lawn mower safety, slow moving vehicles.

CITIZENSHIP: visits to local government offices, public officials speak to club, tours to local historic sites, learn and practice correct respect for flag, mock elections.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: cleanup campaigns—roadsides, parks, or community buildings. Program for hospitals, nursing homes, children’s homes. Donate articles for hospitals and children’s homes (relate to project work). Community drives, funds, distribute or collect information.

INTERNATIONAL: 4-H “LABO” Japanese Exchange, for high school students, IFYE hosts or sponsor, 4-H Care programs, pen pals, sister clubs overseas.



Officers

Qualified officers can be the difference between a successful 4-H club that offers meaningful experiences for its members and a mediocre club. Officers can also be a tremendous help to the 4-H leader. Each officer has a booklet, available through the county Extension office, that describes the duties and offers suggestions.

Election of club officers should not be held at the first meeting. Time is needed for members to become acquainted with potential officers. The election should be based upon what contributions the potential officer can make, and not on a popularity basis.

Good officers provide leadership without dominating. Through their leadership, club members help decide what

the club will do. Pride in their office can be seen by job performance. They are eager to work with the 4-H club leader to plan and carry out the club program. They should work with all youth and give everyone an opportunity to participate. Officials should: share leadership with many; give others an opportunity to speak; represent the best interest of the club in outside contacts, be dependable; help plan a program that the club can support wholeheartedly; work well with the other officers, executive committee members, and leaders; and try to make the meetings worthwhile and interesting.

Some of the important duties of all officers are to secure new participants and organize the club; plan the program, month by month for the year; arrange for meeting places and their proper care; conduct and take part in the meetings; keep records and submit them as required; serve on committees, as chairperson or as a member; keep other people informed about the club; maintain good spirit and interest in the club; help every 4-H'er find a place in the club and an opportunity to contribute; maintain contact with the county Extension office; and attend 4-H officers training program, if it is offered in your county.

Specific program duties of each office include:

President

1. Checks meeting arrangements.
2. Presides and calls meetings to order and directs the business meetings.
3. Appoints committees and checks frequently on progress, asks for reports.
4. Casts deciding vote in case of a tie.
5. Conducts meetings according to parliamentary procedure.
6. Is familiar with the duties of other officers and helps them when needed.
7. Guides meetings, encourages all members to take an active part.
8. Shows courtesy to guests and has them properly introduced to the club.

Vice President

1. Is acquainted with duties of the president and rules of parliamentary procedure.
2. Presides at meetings in temporary absence of the president.
3. Works closely with parents, leader, and other officers on all activities.
4. Serves as chairperson of the program committee.

Secretary

1. Keeps accurate minutes of all meetings and presents minutes at next meeting.
2. Calls roll and keeps records of attendance.
3. Handles all club correspondence.

4. Collects new items and clippings about the 4-H activities of the club and individual members.

Treasurer

1. Receives and is responsible for all money.
2. Keeps an accurate record of: all money received and its source; all money paid, to who, and for what.
3. Reports at club meetings on money received, money paid out, and the amount on hand.
4. Pays out money only when approved by the club.
5. Gives the new treasurer complete and accurate records when he/she takes office.

News Reporter

1. Writes articles about club meetings and special events for the local newspaper.
2. Sends news item in immediately after each meeting or event.
3. Makes sure all articles tell who, what, when, where, why, and how.
4. Keeps all newspaper items referring to the club in a scrapbook.

Recreation Leader

1. Plans games and other recreation for the club suitable for age, desire, space, and time available.
2. Leads recreation at 4-H meeting.
3. Keeps necessary equipment on hand.
4. Makes notebook of recreation ideas and gives them to the next recreation leader.

Singing Coordinator

1. Plans and conducts singing activities suitable for age, interest, and time available.
2. Makes a notebook of songs to give to the next singing coordinator.

Health and Safety Leader

1. Plans and gives a brief talk or presentation at the club meeting on a health and safety topic.
2. Plans other health and safety activities for the 4-H club with directions from the program committee.

More Hints for Good Meetings

- **Start and Stop on Time.**

Your example and that of club officers set a standard for group participation. Time is valuable. Well planned meetings can maintain interest, accomplish worthwhile things, and be fun. Habits, good or bad, are formed by practice. You can teach your members to make the best use of the resources they have. Parents appreciate punctuality.

- **Give Officers Responsibility and Let Them Act.**

Be sure the president calls the meeting to order and is in charge. Let other officers and the committee



chairperson do the job given to them. You will need to guide, but stay in the background, giving them confidence in their abilities. Another technique that many leaders use with great success is getting the officers together 15 to 20 minutes preceding the total 4-H club meeting. In some cases leaders will meet with officers following a meeting to plan what needs to be done the next time. Regardless of when it is done, it is important that officers know the items of business that should be brought up and have these written down to speed up the business process.

- **Encourage Parliamentary Procedure.**

Democratic participation takes place when each member has a chance to express him/herself. Parliamentary procedure is an orderly way of making this possible. It is really a set of good manners for respecting the views of others. Be sure it is used to give freedom, and not to force fast action before everyone has a chance to speak. Explain the procedure to all members so that they know how to make a motion, to address the group, to express themselves, and to make decisions.

- **Plan Ahead.**

Know where you want to go and what you want to accomplish. Then set up a plan of action to attain your goals. This can save time, promote progress, and be fun. Sometimes this is hard in the very beginning. Until you and your club members get to know each other and learn to work together, you may find that taking one meeting at a time is better. Planning takes practice, but results are gratifying in terms of goals attained, progress made, and time used effectively for members and leaders! Your club has meetings. Some are good and some are not so good. Which way will you influence yours to go?

s(Reviewed 06/01)

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