

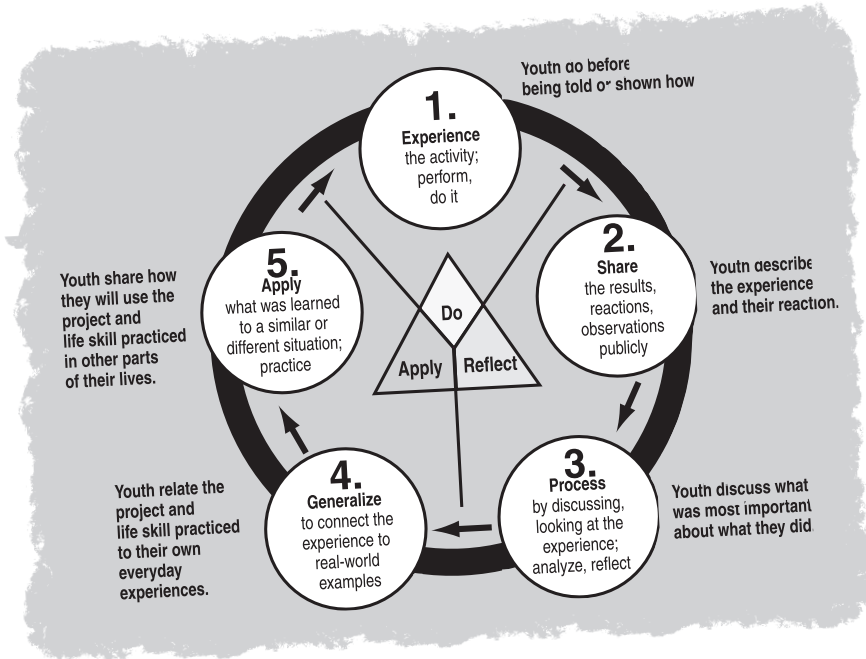


# Communication Activities

*For 4-H Clubs  
and other Youth Groups*

# Experiential Learning Model

"Experiential learning" is what distinguishes 4-H Youth Development Education from many formal education methods. It involves providing opportunities for youth to practice what they are learning by sharing the experience, reflecting on its importance, connecting it to real life examples, and applying the knowledge that results to other situations.



All of the activities and ideas in this manual have been designed with this model in mind. Your role is guide and support youth by providing directions about how to do the various activities, as well as by taking the time to talk over and discuss what's been learned. To help you with this step each activity includes discussion questions based on the experiential learning model. In addition, here are some other key questions you may want to consider using:

## Key Questions

Examples of **sharing** questions:  
(*What happened?*)

- What was this activity about?
- What were some things you remembered that people said or did during the activity?
- What did you like about the activity? What were the hardest things about it?

Examples of **processing** questions:  
(*What's important?*)

- What did you learn about communication from this activity?
- What's something important to remember?

Examples of **generalizing** questions:  
(*So what?*)

- What kinds of things did you learn about yourself through this activity?
- Why is it important to know these kinds of things?
- How does this fit into other things that are happening in your family or school?

Examples of **application** questions:  
(*Now what?*)

- Where are some other places in your life where it will be helpful to know these kinds of things?
- Describe a situation where the things you learned about communication will come in handy.
- What are some other things you might do in the future to use these skills?



# Communication Activities

*For 4-H Clubs  
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Youth Groups*

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## *A note to adults:*

**T***his manual is a part of the Building Bridges: Reaching People Through Communication program and contains games, activities and learning experiences designed to teach youth a variety of communication skills. The activities can be used in 4-H clubs and other group settings and are intended for youth of all ages.*

### **Communication as a Primary Life Skill**

These activities focus on the life skill of communication by teaching youth what's involved in getting along with other people, sharing thoughts and concerns, cooperating with others, and building strong friendships. Also included are learning experiences designed to teach public speaking skills.

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# Communication Activities

*For 4-H Clubs  
and other  
Youth Groups*

4-H can help youth learn to express themselves and listen to the needs, concerns and ideas of others. This is more important than ever because there is much about our contemporary culture that stifles individual expression and gets

in the way of genuine interaction between people. That's why there's value in helping youth learn what's involved in communicating effectively. This manual has been developed with that goal in mind.

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# Introduction

A quick review of the four H's—head, heart, hands, and health—has something worthwhile to say about why good communication skills are so important.

**Head:** It is important that as communicators we think about what we want to say and how we wish to behave. When considering our communication choices, we need to think about our goals for the relationship, the situation in which we find ourselves, and our knowledge of the other person. We need to consider when we should talk and when we should listen, when we should engage another in conversation and when we should walk away, and when we should stand up for those things in which we believe and when we should be silent.

**Heart:** Effective communicators are those who care about the relationship. We express caring toward others in a number of ways. We demonstrate that we care by spending time with a person, by expressing a willingness to listen carefully to another, and by using language that makes sense to the other person. We also demonstrate that we care about another by working to understand his or her thoughts and feelings, and by demonstrating an openness and willingness to change after listening to him or her.

**Hands:** Communication skills enable people to reach out and respond supportively to the needs and concerns of others in their families and communities. We need to be able to communicate effectively in order to deal constructively with problems and difficulties that are often a part of living together with others. Because communication is crucial in order to resolve conflict and manage anger effectively, it is an essential ingredient in efforts to deal with violence and related issues.

**Health:** Human communication is so important that its presence or absence affects our physical and emotional health. For example, researchers have found that a lack of social relationships jeopardizes coronary health and that people who feel socially isolated are two to three times more likely to die prematurely than those who have strong social ties. Not only are strong interpersonal communication skills linked to our physical well being, but they also play an important role in enriching the quality of our lives.

This short review of the four H's is a good overview of the kinds of activities and exercises found in this manual. It was developed for 4-H volunteers and others who work with groups of young people and contains a variety of activities, games, and learning experiences.

In addition to describing how to teach each activity and what materials are needed, directions also include a reference to the amount of time that's necessary to complete the activity, and an age appropriate recommendation.

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## *Section* **I**

# Reaching In

*A*n important first step in the communication process happens before anything at all is spoken or expressed. It begins with whatever it is we are hoping to share, and is shaped by who we are and the way we think about things.

*The activities in this section are intended to provide youth with simple, non-threatening opportunities to express things that are important to them verbally and in writing.*

### **Looking for more Ideas?**

There are several other pieces in the Building Bridges Series that address these concepts. Additional teaching activities and exercises can be found in *Teaching Resources for Youth Educators*.

In addition, the *Creative Wordworking Project*, as well as *Crazy About Books* are intended for youth who enjoy reading and writing.

# What's in a Name?

## Age

All ages

## Time needed

15–20 minutes (depending on group size)

## Description

This is an easy way for youth to share a little bit of information about themselves, and discover something they might not have known before about others.

## Advance preparation

If possible, encourage youth to find out some information about their names, prior to coming to the meeting.

## Directions

1. Form a large circle. Explain that there's a story behind each of our names and this activity will give us a chance to share some of that information.
2. Explain the following procedure and demonstrate it using your own name.  
Say your full name (first, middle and last name).  
Explain why you were given that name (for example, you may have been named after a family member, a famous movie star, etc.).  
Share any information about your name's ethnic origins.
3. Have youth take turns introducing themselves using the above procedure.

## Follow-up Discussion

After everyone has had a turn, ask what they learned about the importance of names and why names are so important to us.

## *Hint:*

This activity makes a great get-acquainted exercise.

Consider adapting the activity and using it to take roll call.

If you have time, it's fun to ask people what name they would choose for themselves if they had the chance and why.

## *Sum it up.*

End by reminding youth that names are important because they have to do with who we are as people. Asking others to give us their names is often the first step we take towards getting to know them better.



# Paper Plate Collages

**Age**

Cloverbud and early elementary

**Time needed**

35–45 minutes

**Materials needed**

- ☐ Sturdy paper plates
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue, glue sticks
- ☐ Lots of magazines
- ☐ Stickers
- ☐ Markers, crayons

**Description**

This “craft-style” activity encourages youngsters to describe some of their interests, talents and personal characteristics.

**Advance preparation**

1. Make a paper plate collage of your own and use it to illustrate this activity.
2. Assemble the materials and arrange them so youngsters will have easy access to them.

**Directions**

1. Explain that this project will give everyone a chance to make a paper plate collage to illustrate interesting things about themselves.
2. Point out the materials available to make the collages. Describe how to look through the magazines for pictures, cartoons, words, and other images youngsters can use to describe things about themselves.
3. Tell youngsters to look for things that have to do with the following:
  - People who are important to you
  - Places you like to go
  - Things you like to do
  - Foods you like
  - Things you are good at doing
  - Things you would like to be able to do
  - Other things you like
4. Hold up your own paper plate collage and tell youngsters what it says about you.
5. Encourage youngsters to be creative and decorate their collages with their own words and drawings.
6. As youngsters are working on their collages, interrupt occasionally to remind them of the kinds of things to be looking for in the magazines and to ask for any questions.
7. Keep track of the time and let youngsters know when there are only five more minutes remaining to put the finishing touches on their collages.
8. Have youngsters take turns saying one or two things about what the collages illustrate about who they are.

## Follow-up Discussion

Once everyone has had a chance to show their collage, ask them the following:

- How did they decide what pictures, images or words to include?
- Were there things they were looking for, but couldn't find, that they would have liked to add to their collages?
- What was it like describing your collage to the rest of the group?

### *Hints*

- Consider pairing youngsters with an older youth to work on this activity.
- Look for opportunities to display the completed collages, or encourage youngsters to keep them until county fair time.

### *Sum it up.*

Comment on how interesting it has been to see what the paper plates say about everyone in the room. Explain that making the collages is a little bit like telling other people some of the things we want them to know about ourselves—and that's the beginning of the communication process.

# Roll Call

**Age**

All ages

**Time needed**

5–10 minutes at the beginning and again at the end of the meeting

## Description

This activity uses roll call to give youth a chance to mention one or two things about themselves that might not otherwise get shared. It also insures that everyone gets a chance to express him or herself at least one time during the meeting.

## Advance preparation

1. Ask someone in the club to be in charge of preparing the roll call question in advance of the meeting. Here are some examples:
  - What is something you're thankful for?
  - What did you have for breakfast this morning?
  - What would you do tomorrow if you didn't have to go to school?
  - What is your favorite movie and why did you like it?
  - What is something nice that someone did for you recently?
  - Who is someone you admire and why?
  - Where would you like to live if you could live anywhere in the world?
  - Who is a famous person you would like to meet and why?
  - The next time you have a birthday, what would you like to get for a present?
  - If you won a million dollars in the lottery, what would you do with it?

## Directions

1. Tell members that instead of simply responding to roll call by saying, “Present,” “Here” or “Yo,” they will be expected to share a little more information about themselves.
2. As their names are called, members are to take a moment to respond briefly—but in a complete sentence—to the roll call question. (For example, “*This morning I had pancakes for breakfast.*”)
3. Before starting roll call, give everyone a moment or two to think about how they plan to respond to the question so that when it’s their turn they’ll be ready to answer.
4. Be prepared to encourage members to speak up so that they’ll be heard by everyone. Be sure to acknowledge what each person says with a thank you and a smile, or even applause!

### *Hint*

Keep in mind that youth learn to communicate well by having opportunities to share ideas, experiences, thoughts, opinions and other information about themselves in a variety of different public settings. The more accustomed they become to speaking up when others are listening to them, the easier it will be to develop confidence in what they have to say.

### *Sum it up.*

It might be worthwhile to remind youth that doing roll call like this strengthens communication skills. It’s a simple and easy way for everyone to practice expressing themselves in a public setting.

# "The Book"

**Age**

All ages

**Time needed**

It will vary

**Description**

This is a way to encourage youth to be creative about sharing their thoughts, opinions and experiences with one another.

**Advance preparation**

1. It would be a good idea to turn responsibility for introducing this activity over to your club's officers. Have them obtain a spiral bound notebook or artist's sketchbook.
2. Suggest that they make a title page on the inside of the book. Here's an idea that they may want to adapt: Simply print the name of your 4-H club vertically down the center of the page, and use each letter to describe something about your club.

Here's an example for a group called the Churdan Clovers:

**C**heerful      **l**u**C**ky  
**H**appy      **L**aughing  
**f**U**nn**y      **O**utrageous  
**t**R**ust**worthy      **i**n**V**entive  
**w**on**D**erful      **E**nergetic  
**L**oy**A**l      **f**R**i**ends  
**N**ice      **w**in**n**e**r****S**

## Directions

1. Ask the officers bring the book to the next 4-H club meeting and explain how it will be used.
2. Explain that the book will be available at every meeting for members to write down thoughts, ideas and 4-H experiences they'd like to share, or add drawings and other artwork to the book. (If necessary make sure everyone knows it's against the rules to use profanity or to write things about another person that are mean or insulting.)
3. Make it a rule that whoever writes in the book must sign his or her name and note the date.

### *Hint*

- Be sure everyone understands "The Book" won't take the place of having a club secretary or recorder. Those people are elected to keep special records and minutes of club meetings and other business. Writing in "The Book" is something different. It's a chance for everyone in the club to have a special place for writing about their experiences in 4-H.
- Make sure to remind whoever is in charge of "The Book" to make sure it's always available whenever the club meets.
- If it gets filled up with writing, simply get another book to take its place. Clubs that keep this up for a few years will have the fun of looking back to see what's been written as time goes by.

### *Sum it up.*

Remind youth that there are lots of ways to communicate. A good place to start is by writing down thoughts, feelings and other things that are important to us. "The Book" will be a fun way for everyone in the club to have a chance to do that.

# Club “Coffeehouse” Party

## Age

All ages

## Time needed

A fair amount of advance planning is required for this project, and will be most successful if the work is divided among a program committee and a refreshments committee.

## Description

This project encourages clubs to discover how much fun poetry and other kinds of writing can be when read aloud and shared with others.

## Advance preparation

1. Form a Program Committee to:
  - Plan the party—when, where, how long, etc.
  - Put together a schedule so everyone knows when it's their turn to read
  - Arrange tables and chairs in the room.
2. Form a Refreshments Committee to:
  - Be in charge of having coffee, tea, hot chocolate and other beverages available
  - Arrange to have people volunteer to bring cookies, snacks or other treats.

## Directions

1. When introducing this activity to the club, the Program Committee will want to point out:
  - This will be a new way for people to get together for a night of fun!
  - The more people who bring things to read, the better.
2. Encourage everyone in the club (including officers, adult leaders, and parents) to bring something to read at the Coffeehouse. Suggest the following as possibilities:
  - Favorite poem from childhood
  - Song lyrics
  - Limerick or other humorous verse
  - Original poem

## Looking for more Ideas?

Check out pages 10–12 in the *Creative Wordworking* manual for suggestions about how to make poetry writing fun.

### ***Additional ideas***

- Look for other places in your community to arrange for people to read to others. Some examples include nursing homes and libraries, as well as for special events like 4-H leader banquets, church suppers and other community gatherings.
- Ask your local librarian for other ideas about how to involve youth in reading and writing activities throughout the year.

### ***Hint***

- While everyone should be encouraged to participate, the quickest way to ruin this event is by making it a requirement.
- Suggest that youth be as creative as they want when sharing their poems. For example, someone might like to read with some special music playing in the background. Bringing along a prop or two is also fun, as is dressing up in a special costume that relates to the poem being read.
- Some things are fun to read aloud in unison by two or more people. So, if a youth is too shy to read alone, encourage him or her to find a partner.
- Encourage club members to share other talents if they would be more comfortable singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument or bringing along drawings or other artwork to put on display.
- Consider teaming up with one or two other clubs in your county for this activity. It would be an enjoyable way for people to get a little better acquainted.

### ***Sum it up.***

Look for opportunities to remind youth—and adults—that reading isn't just something you do at school. Poems and other kinds of writing use the beauty and sound of language to speak about feelings and experiences in a unique and creative way. Reading and writing opens up all sorts of opportunities for expressing thoughts about things that are important in our lives.



## Section II

# Reaching Out

One of the most important things 4-H can teach youth is how to get along with others. That's why the games and activities in this section have been developed to help youth learn what's involved in sharing ideas, feelings, opinions and concerns clearly, as well as to concentrate on listening to and respecting the things others have to say.

You'll also find several activities intended for use with 4-H clubs in order to foster empathy, understanding, cooperation and respect for the needs of others.

All of these activities have been designed to be fun as well as educational. Sometimes, however, it's easy to miss the point of the activity if youth aren't given an opportunity to process and discuss what they've been doing. That's why it is very important that the group facilitator take the time to involve youth in the "learning" part of the activity as well as the "doing."

### Looking for more Ideas?

*Teaching Resources for Youth Educators* contains a variety of teaching activities, exercises and handouts which focus on teaching youth how to cooperate with one another, form healthy relationships, and develop empathy, understanding, cooperation and respect.

# Extraterrestrial

**Age**

Elementary school and older

**Time needed**

15–20 minutes

## Description

This is an extremely entertaining way to demonstrate why it's important to listen carefully, provide feedback about what has been heard, and ask questions when confused.

## Advance preparation

1. Assemble the following materials:
  - Small cereal bowl and spoon
  - Individual size box of cereal
  - Individual serving carton of milk
  - Broom and mop (for cleaning up afterwards)
  - Table
  - Plenty of newspapers or an inexpensive plastic tablecloth
2. Consider involving older youth to present this activity and lead the follow-up discussion.
3. Make sure to dress appropriately. (Portions of this demonstration can get messy!)

## Directions

### Do the activity

1. Have youth sit on the floor in a semicircle around the table where you've arranged the cereal, milk, bowl and spoon.
2. Tell youth to pretend that you are an extraterrestrial—a creature from another planet—who doesn't know what to do with the four objects on the table. You are depending on the group to explain how to use the objects, but unfortunately you can't speak or understand human language. All you can do is make a beeping sound when you're confused.
3. Explain that each time you "beep" and point your finger at someone, he or she must tell you what to do next. But if you get confused, your extraterrestrial information circuit system will start to malfunction and you will shut down.

4. As you play the part of the Extraterrestrial, be sure to emphasize the fact that you don't understand what people are saying to you—especially if people are not being clear. For example, if someone says, "Pick up the spoon," pick up the bowl instead. Or pour the milk onto the spoon. On the other hand, if someone is giving you clear directions, you will want to begin to show signs that you are starting to understand. If everyone starts talking at once, or the noise level goes up, be sure to do a lot of "beeping" to indicate your circuits are starting to get jammed.
5. Make an effort to allow everyone in the group to try communicating with you, but don't let the game drag on too long. Pretend your circuits are overloaded by making lots of beeps. Then put your hands over your head and sit down.

## Follow-up Discussion

Ask youth why it was hard for the Extraterrestrial to follow the directions and what made it easier? Be sure to include the following:

- What happens when someone talks and the other person can't talk back or ask questions? (It's hard to be sure that what you hear is really what the talker intends you to hear.) What are some examples from your experience?
- What happens when people get carried away and start shouting at other people? (It just makes it harder to understand what's being said.) What are some examples from your experience?

### *Sum it up.*

Point out that we can learn about communication by thinking about this game. Remind youth that communication is a two-way process that means both people need to take turns doing the talking and the listening. End by stressing the following:

- When we have something important to say to another person we need to give him or her a chance to talk to us, too.
- When trying to understand what another person is trying to tell us we need to really concentrate on listening.
- Shouting and yelling doesn't help people communicate. In fact, it usually gets in the way.

# Creating Club Rules

## Age

All ages

## Time needed

This activity involves two separate procedures that work best if they are completed at different times:

- Part I, Brainstorming—approximately 30 minutes
- Part II, Voting—approximately 30 minutes

## Description

This two-part activity is intended to involve everyone in identifying rules and guidelines for how people are to be treated by others in the club.

## Advance preparation

1. Review this entire process carefully in order to decide how best to use it.
2. Make sure to have the following materials available:
  - Part I—packets of adhesive-backed, post-it notes (one packet per participant); flip chart and paper
  - Part II—flip chart and paper; five stickers of various shapes and sizes for each participant.

## Directions

### Part I—Brainstorming process

1. Remind youth that 4-H meetings run more smoothly when everyone—adults as well as youth—treats one another with courtesy and respect. One way to help make sure everyone feels good about coming to club meetings is to decide on specific rules about appropriate and inappropriate behavior.
2. Explain that the following activity will give everyone a chance to suggest ground rules and guidelines for the club: Everyone will get a packet of post-it notes. They'll have five minutes to write down suggestions for making sure people will treat each other with courtesy and respect at 4-H meetings. (Youth are to use a separate post-it note for each idea.)
3. Then everyone gets to take turns reading their notes out loud and attaching them, one by one, to the wall. (It's okay to say something that's already been said.)
4. Once all the notes have been posted, ask youth to help you sort them so similar ideas are arranged together. Then divide into small groups of four to six persons. Give each group five to 10 minutes to talk about all the different ideas and decide on four rules that they think are most important.
5. When time's up, have each group take turns sharing the rules they've identified. Make sure someone records each of these rules on a large piece of flip chart paper so it can be used for the next part of this process.
6. Explain that at the next meeting everyone will have a chance to have an equal voice in deciding what to do next with the guidelines and rules that have been suggested.

## Part II—Voting process

1. Prior to the meeting, copy each rule that was identified by the small groups during the preceding process onto a single piece of flip chart paper and tape it to the wall. (Note: You may want to combine rules that are very similar.)
2. Begin the meeting with a brief review of what happened during the previous part of this activity. (Everyone had a chance to share his or her suggestions for rules about appropriate and inappropriate 4-H behavior.) You may want to remind youth once again that these kinds of rules are important because 4-H meetings should be places where people are treated with courtesy and consideration so they feel comfortable and welcomed. That won't happen if they are being ignored or treated disrespectfully.
3. Explain that rules work best when everyone who will be expected to follow them has helped decide what they should be. It's also a good idea to avoid creating so many rules that it will be impossible to remember all of them. This part of the process will give everyone a chance to share the responsibility for choosing the five most important rules for appropriate behavior at 4-H meetings.
4. Ask someone (perhaps one of the club officers) to read what's listed on the flip chart. Allow a few minutes for questions or discussion.
5. Distribute five stickers to each member so they can vote by attaching a sticker to each of the five rules that they feel are most important. (Note: If fewer than five rules were identified, this step of the process can be eliminated.)
6. When everyone has voted, count the stickers to determine which ones got the most votes. Read them aloud and point out that it's usually easier to follow rules when they're stated positively rather than negatively. Ask youth to help rephrase any of the top five rules if necessary. (For example, change "Don't interrupt" to "Allow each person to speak without interruption.")
7. Consider asking for volunteers to copy the five rules onto a poster that can be put up at each club meeting.

### *Sum it up.*

**Congratulate the club on working together to come up with a good set of rules and guidelines for making sure people will feel comfortable and welcomed at 4-H meetings. End by pointing out how important it is to belong to a club where everyone shares the responsibility for treating one another with respect and courtesy.**

# 4-H DD's (Dynamic Duos)

**Age**

All ages

**Time needed**

It will vary.

## Description

Youth want to belong to groups that are important to them. That's one of the benefits of joining a 4-H club where everyone feels welcome and appreciated. On the other hand, youth who are ignored and left out of discussions and activities probably won't be eager to come back. This activity provides a way for 4-H'ers to make sure their club is the kind of warm and friendly place everyone needs it to be.

## Advance preparation

Pair up newer members with those who have had more experience in the club.

## Directions

1. Whenever newcomers join your club, arrange for them to become part of a "Dynamic Duo" prior to their first meeting. You might want to choose someone who's close to the same age as the newcomer or has something else in common with him or her. (On the other hand, there are advantages in providing an older youth member who can serve as a role model for the new member.)
2. Have veteran club members call their new DD partners, introduce themselves and then:
  - Welcome him or her to the club.
  - Tell him or her a little about yourself (how long you've been in 4-H, what kinds of projects you're taking, etc.).
  - Ask if there's anything else you can explain about your club.
  - Make plans to meet him or her at the next meeting.
3. Suggest that they can use the following partner questionnaire to find out some interesting things about their new DD partners so they can introduce new members at the next meeting.
4. Encourage them to meet their new DD partners at 4-H meetings and events to:
  - Introduce him or her to the club officers
  - Invite him or her to sit with you and your friends.
  - Introduce your new friend to the entire club during the meeting and mention some things you've learned about him or her.
  - Do whatever you can to make the newcomer feel welcome and at home whenever attending 4-H club meetings or events.

## ***Additional ideas***

### **Here are some things to encourage DD's to do together at 4-H club meetings:**

- Sit together.
- Participate in ice-breakers and other activities that require partners.
- Present a "team" demonstration.
- Lead a game.
- Be in charge of bringing a treat to the meeting.
- Sign up to work together on club projects or activities.

### **Here are some more ideas to do outside of club meetings:**

- Remind each other of dates and times for meetings and special 4-H activities.
- Help with projects.
- Enroll in the same project together.
- Work on record books.
- Send birthday cards to each other.
- Let the other person know if one person can't make it to the next meeting.
- Volunteer to work on a community service project together.
- Agree to contact one another (by phone, letter or e-mail) at least once between meetings.

### ***Hint:***

- Consider having your club officers and youth leaders take the responsibility for introducing the "Dynamic Duo" idea to the rest of the club. Suggest that they put together a presentation about how bad it feels to be excluded and why it's important for the club to be a friendly and welcoming place.
- Concerned that some youth aren't mature enough to follow through with the responsibility of being assigned to be DD partner? Asking youth to volunteer might be a better option.

## ***Sum it up.***

1. Everyone can be part of a Dynamic Duo! You don't have to wait until there are new members in the club to start having fun with this activity. In fact, there are some distinct advantages to making sure that everyone in the club belongs to a "Dynamic Duo." For one thing, it's a good way to break up any "cliques" that may be forming and get kids to branch out and spend some time with other people. Being part of a "Dynamic Duo" is a great way for youth to discover things that they have in common with someone they might not get to know otherwise.
2. One way to get "Dynamic Duos" going in a club where there are no new members is to have everyone draw someone else's name. Or you may prefer putting the pairs together yourself by matching youth with similar interests, experiences, hobbies or lifestyles. It's probably best to avoid having youth select their own "Dynamic Duo" partner because chances are they'll pick someone they already know quite well.

## 4-H Dynamic Duos Partner Profile

# Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did you find out about 4-H and why did you want to join the club?

2. What are some things you're looking forward to doing in this 4-H club?

3. What do you like to do in your spare time?

4. What do you like best about going to school?

5. What is something you'd like to change about school?

6. Who is someone you admire and why?



7. What is something that makes you really mad?

8. What kinds of chores do you have to do at home?

9. What is something most people are surprised to discover about you?

10. What are your future plans?

11. What are your favorite things?

Color \_\_\_\_\_

Sport \_\_\_\_\_

Food \_\_\_\_\_

Movie \_\_\_\_\_

TV show \_\_\_\_\_

Place to go \_\_\_\_\_

# Rainstorm

**Age**

All ages

**Time needed**

5–10 minutes

**Description**

This fun activity is a quick and easy way to demonstrate what can happen when people work together cooperatively.

**Advance preparation**

None

**Directions**

1. Ask for four volunteers. Assign each of them one of the following actions and ask them to demonstrate how to do it:
  - Snap fingers
  - Rub palms together
  - Slap hands against thighs
  - Stomp feet on the floor
2. Point out that by him/herself each of the volunteers wasn't able to do much with those sounds. But now, let's see what happens when everyone has a chance to get involved.
3. Divide the group into four sections, each of which will be led by one of the volunteers. Explain that once their group has been given the signal to start, they must keep up that action until given the signal to stop.
4. Signal the finger snappers to begin. A few seconds later give the signal for the palm rubbers to join in. Wait a few more seconds before signaling the thigh slappers to get started. Finally have the foot stompers begin. (What started out sounding like a gentle rain should by now have turned into quite a storm!)
5. Wait a few seconds and then reverse the action to make the rainstorm subside: Begin by signaling the foot stompers to stop. Then have the thigh slappers stop, followed a few seconds later by the palm rubbers until all that remains is the gentle sound of fingers snapping.

**Follow-up Discussion**

After completing the activity, find out what people thought about it. Ask if anyone can tell you what its "message" was. (It's a good example of what can happen when everyone cooperates and works together.) Ask the group if they'd like to try it again.

## *Sum it up.*

End by reminding youth that when we all work together, it's amazing what can happen. Point out that the same thing is true whenever there is work to be done or a problem needs to be solved.

# The Talking Circle

**Age**

All ages

**Time needed**

It will vary depending on the size of the group. Note: if you will be making individual talking pieces, allow 10–15 minutes for youth to complete the project.

**Description**

This simple procedure is a non-threatening way to give everyone a chance to speak and be listened to. Use it whenever you want to encourage everyone in the club to share an idea or experience.

**Advance preparation**

1. Consider introducing this procedure by allowing time for each youth to make his or her own “talking piece.” Provide an assortment of objects that can be easily held in the hand (sticks, stones, ping-pong balls, empty juice containers, etc.) from which to construct talking pieces. Have a supply of glue sticks, scissors, and an assortment of art supplies and materials available for youth to use in order to decorate their individual talking pieces.
2. If youth will not be making individual talking pieces, be sure to bring an item (such as a stone, stick, pine cone or other natural object) that can be easily passed from one person to the next.

**Directions****Explain the activity:**

1. Point out that sometimes there’s so much going on at 4-H club meetings that it can be hard to pay attention to what people have to say to each other.
2. Explain that in some Native American communities, people pass a “talking stick” (or other object) from person to person in order to listen respectfully to what each person has to say.
3. Have everyone sit in a circle to demonstrate how the “Talking Circle” works. If possible ask for someone to lend you the “talking piece” that he/she made earlier. Explain how it will be passed from person to person in order for each person to hold it and speak while everyone else listens.
4. Be sure to point out that the person who is speaking can say whatever he or she wants to say as long as it is said with respect. (It’s against the rules to interrupt a speaker, to insult another person or make fun of what someone has said.)
5. Let everyone know that it’s okay to pass when the talking piece is handed to you. (After the piece has made it all the way around the circle there will be a chance for those who passed to say something if they’ve changed their minds.)

### Do the activity:

1. Begin with a question or topic for each person to comment about.  
(For example, "We are each going to tell about something we like about being in 4-H.")
2. Take your place in the circle and demonstrate how to use the talking piece by holding it in your hands while you speak. Then pass it to the person on your left.
3. When the talking piece has made it all the way back to you, ask anyone who has passed if they would like another chance to speak.

### Hints

- If necessary, be sure to remind everyone that it's against the rules to interrupt a speaker, to insult another person or make fun of what someone has said. You may also need to remind youth not to speak until it's their turn to hold the talking piece.
- Consider having youth take turns providing "talking pieces" to be used whenever this activity is appropriate. The procedure is a good way to wrap up meetings or other events by giving youth a chance to summarize what they've learned or share other thoughts they've gained from the experience.
- The procedure can also be used anytime there's an issue or situation to be discussed by the entire group. It ensures that everyone will be given a chance to have his or her opinion heard.

### Sum it up.

1. Once each person has had a chance to speak, close the activity by reminding youth that it's always important for each person in a group to feel comfortable sharing thoughts and opinions. Listening to each other is a sign of respect.
2. Remind youth that the "Talking Circle" comes from the Native American tradition. It's a good example of something we can learn from Native Americans who believe it's important to respect and honor each person's right to speak and be heard.

## Section III

# Front & Center

**F**ormer 4-H'ers frequently cite their experiences with public speaking when asked to comment on what was most significant about belonging to 4-H.

*Learning to organize speeches and demonstrations and develop confidence in presenting them to others is a skill youth can use throughout life, regardless of the career paths they choose to pursue. The activities in this section are intended to provide simple, non-threatening opportunities for youth to practice some basic public speaking skills.*

### **Looking for more Ideas?**

*A Youth's Guide to Preparing and Presenting Speeches and Demonstrations* contains helpful hints and exercises to help youth develop public speaking skills.

*A Parent's Guide to Public Speaking* is full of information that comes in handy for anyone who wants to provide helpful advice and support to youth as they prepare and practice speeches and demonstrations.

# In the Spotlight

## Age

All ages

## Time needed

The interview will take 10 to 20 minutes outside of the club's regular meeting time. The introduction will take two to five minutes.

## Description

This activity can accomplish a variety of goals. On the one hand, it helps teach interviewing and listening skills. It also gives youth a chance to experience the value of expressing thoughts and feelings to another person. In addition, it's an effective way for youth to recognize and affirm their peers. Finally, it provides a quick and easy opportunity for speaking in front of a group.

## Advance preparation

1. Have your club's officers or youth leaders review this activity and share ideas for using it. One option is to ask for a different volunteer each month to be in charge of interviewing someone to be "on the spotlight" next month.
2. The club's officers or youth leaders will be in charge of:
  - Reviewing the interview tips on page 28 and the introduction form on page 29
  - Assigning people to do the interviews.
3. Make copies of pages 28 and 29 to provide the interviewers.

## Directions

1. Have the club's officers explain and demonstrate the activity to the club by pointing out that it's a way to:
  - Get to know everyone.
  - practice public speaking skills.
2. Explain how to include the In the Spotlight activity at monthly meetings.
  - Somebody volunteers to interview somebody else and introduce him or her at the next meeting.
  - Each month somebody's name will be drawn for the interview.
3. Have two officers or youth leaders demonstrate how easy it is to do the activity. (Note: Make sure they have prepared in advance.)

## *Tip*

A few “ground rules” might be necessary in order to make sure everyone is comfortable with this activity. For example:

- It's against the rules to ask embarrassing questions.
- It's against the rules to make fun of another person for what he or she says.
- If the interviewer asks a question the other person doesn't want to answer, it's okay to pass.

## *Sum it up.*

Remind youth that one of the reasons for belonging to a 4-H club is to make friends and get to know others. That's why it's always a good idea to find out as much as we can about things that make each person unique and special.

## In the Spotlight

# Interviewing Tips

**1** Set up a time and a place for the interview.

**2** Think of some questions to ask. You can use the ones on this page or make up your own (just be sure not to ask anything that would embarrass the other person.)

**3** During the interview, be sure to listen carefully so you can take good notes about the things the other person is saying.

**4** After the interview, use the Spotlight Introduction Form to write what you want to say about the person you interviewed.

### Listen Carefully!

☐ **Pay attention!**

Don't interrupt the other person with things you want to say about yourself.

☐ **Encourage the other person to keep talking.**

Let the other person know you're listening by saying things like, "Mm-hmmm," "Keep going," "That's interesting," etc.

☐ **Get more information**

If the other person doesn't have a lot to say, ask him or her for more details, or for an example.

☐ **Repeat the information.**

Find out if what you think you heard was actually what the other person was trying to say!

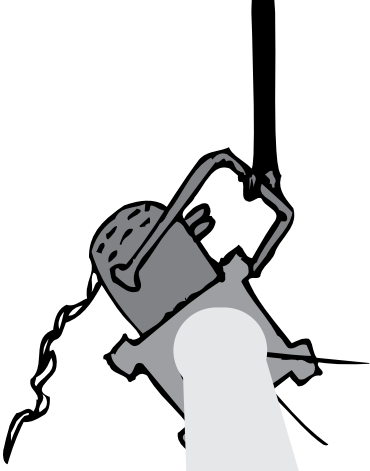
☐ **Be polite.**

Thank the other person for taking the time to talk to you.

### Sample questions:

- What are some things you would like people to know about you?
- What are some things you enjoy about 4-H?
- What are some things that make you happy?
- What is something you're looking forward to?
- If you have a pet, describe some of the things it does.
- If you could have whatever you want for supper tomorrow, what would it be?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- What was one of the nicest presents you ever gave another person?
- Who would you choose if you could spend an afternoon with a famous movie star or rock musician, and what would you want to tell that person?
- What is something you would like our 4-H club to do more often?





## In the Spotlight Introduction Form

*Use this form as a guide for introducing the  
person you've interviewed to the club:*

It's a pleasure to present \_\_\_\_\_ to you.  
Name

Something you might not have known about him/her is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

When I spoke with \_\_\_\_\_ I found out  
Name  
that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

One other thing I learned about him/her is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

We're lucky to have a person like \_\_\_\_\_ in our club  
because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Please join me in a round of applause for \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

Now, \_\_\_\_\_, is there anything you'd like to say?  
Name

# Silly Speeches

**Age**

Mixed ages

**Time needed**

30–40 minutes

## Description

This is an easy, non-stressful way for youth to become familiar with what's involved in giving a speech.

## Advance preparation

1. Assemble “prop boxes” filled with an assortment of common items found around the house (alarm clock, magazine, towel, measuring cup, road map, rubber band, pair of socks, etc.).
2. Make copies of the following Silly Speech Planning Worksheet.
3. Prepare an overhead transparency or poster listing the parts of a speech (page 32).

## Directions

1. Begin by reminding youth that one of the most important things they'll learn as a result of their 4-H experience is how to plan, organize and present a speech. And since it can be scary to do that for the first few times, this activity is intended to help club members get some practice by working as a team.
2. Refer to the overhead you've prepared to review the three main parts of a speech.
3. Divide youth into teams of three. Distribute a Silly Speech Planning Worksheet to each team. Explain that each team gets to pick one item from each of the prop boxes. Once everyone has selected their props, explain the following:
  - Teams must work together to decide how to plan a three-minute speech using the items they've chosen. Encourage them to be as creative as possible.
  - Teams must use their worksheet to plan and organize the speech. Each person on the team will be responsible for presenting one part of the speech—one person will give the introduction, another the body of the speech and the third person the conclusion.

4. Explain that teams will have about 15 minutes to plan their speeches and another 10 minutes to practice and revise their presentations. Make sure youth know that you'll be randomly selecting one or two teams to present their speeches as soon as they're ready. The remaining speeches will be presented at future club meetings.
5. Before giving the signal to begin, be sure to ask if there are any questions.

### *Hint:*

**Instead of having teams decide which persons to present each of the three sections of their speech, it may be easier to use the following process:**

- Introduction—by the youngest person on the team
- Body of the speech—by the oldest person on the team
- Conclusion—by the third person on the team

**Here are some fun ways of determining which teams to select to present their speeches:**

- The team with someone celebrating their birthday this month
- The team with the most rings on their fingers
- The team wearing the most green clothing (or another color)
- The team with the person who has the longest hair

### *Sum it up.*

After the speeches have been presented, congratulate everyone for all their hard work. Point out that even though these speeches were short and kind of silly, they demonstrated one very important thing: every speech needs to have an introduction, a body that explains at least one main point about the topic, and a conclusion.

# Parts of a Good Speech



**1** **Catchy Introduction**—to reveal the topic of the speech

- A short story or example
- A statistic or interesting fact
- A quotation or familiar saying
- A question for the audience
- A familiar experience or situation

**2** **Body**—to explain or describe at least one important thing about the topic

**3** **Conclusion**—to remind people about the most important ideas in the speech

- "Signal" the close of the speech
- Use a final story or example
- End with a quotation or verse that fits the topic
- Suggest something for the audience to do

# Speech Plan Worksheet



## I. Introduction

First, use one of these techniques to get everyone's attention and let them know what the speech is going to be about:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A short story or example        | <input type="checkbox"/> A question for the audience        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A statistic or interesting fact | <input type="checkbox"/> A familiar experience or situation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A quotation or familiar saying  |   |

Then, reveal the topic of the speech by saying: *"Today, I want to tell you about . . ."*

## II. Body of the speech

Explain or describe at least one important thing about the topic:

## III. Conclusion

Use one of these techniques to remind people about the important things in the speech:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summarize the main idea or ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> A quotation or verse that fits the topic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use a final story or example     | <input type="checkbox"/> Suggest something for the audience to do |

# Team Demonstrations

**Age**

All ages

**Time needed**

30–40 minutes

## Description

This is an easy and entertaining way for youth to find out some basic information about what's involved in giving a demonstration by teaming up to explain the steps involved in doing something.

## Advance preparation

1. If desired, make copies of the "Guidelines for 4-H Demonstrations" handout
2. Assemble the following materials:
  - 3 x 5 note cards
  - Large pieces of poster board (enough for each of the teams you'll be assembling to work on the activity)
  - Marking pens
3. Assemble the following props:
  - Garbage bag or trash can
  - Bottle of shampoo
  - Gift wrapping paper, ribbon and tape
  - Jar of peanut butter
  - Bag of marshmallows
  - Pair of mittens
  - Baby doll
  - Bicycle helmet
  - Balloons
4. Write the following on separate note cards (supplement the list with additional ideas of your own as needed):
  - How to take out the garbage
  - How to give a dog a bath
  - How to gift wrap a birthday present
  - How to make a peanut butter sandwich
  - How to roast marshmallows
  - How to build a snowman
  - How to put a baby to sleep
  - How to ride a bicycle
  - How to blow up a balloon

## Directions

1. Begin by briefly reviewing what's involved in giving a 4-H demonstration. (Refer to the *Guidelines for 4-H Demonstrations* handout on page 36 if desired.) Explain that the following activity will give members who have never given a demonstration a chance to find out how much fun it can be.
2. Divide into teams of three to five youth each. If possible try to make sure younger members are teamed with older ones.
3. Provide each team with a note card, matching prop and a piece of poster board (and felt tip marker). Explain that youth will have 10 minutes to work together to plan a two-minute demonstration about the subject they've been given.
4. Encourage teams to use the following process for planning their demonstration:
  - Brainstorm all the steps involved in doing the thing they'll be demonstrating.
  - Figure out how best to use the prop they've been given.
  - Practice how to give the demonstration.
  - Use the poster board to *neatly* list the steps they'll demonstrate.
5. After 10 minutes determine whether youth need a little more time to finalize their demonstrations. When time is up, have teams take turns presenting their demonstrations.

### *Sum it up.*

Wrap up the activity with a round of applause for all the teams and a positive comment about each of the demonstrations. Distribute the "guidelines for 4-H Demonstrations" handout and encourage youth to put together a demonstration of their own (or team up with a friend) for future 4-H meetings.

# Guidelines for 4-H Demonstrations

## **Q. What's the difference between a speech and a demonstration?**

**A.** Like speeches, demonstrations are intended to inform, entertain or persuade. The big difference is that a demonstration actually shows the audience how to do something or provides a chance to see what's involved in making something happen.

## **Q. How much detail should the demonstration provide?**

**A.** A demonstration should be built around one main idea or concept so the audience won't be overwhelmed with too many details. For example, instead of trying to show how to prepare an entire Thanksgiving dinner, it would be much better to demonstrate how to bake the pumpkin pie. That way key steps can be emphasized and described.

## **Organizing a Demonstration**

Most demonstrations are arranged chronologically in a time sequence or as a step-by-step process. Like a speech, a good demonstration needs the following major parts:

- An interesting introduction that captures the attention of the audience and introduces the subject to be demonstrated
- A well organized body that shows the audience how to do something or make something happen
- A brief summary that reviews the main points that were covered in the demonstration.

Demonstrators need to pay the same kind of attention to the way they deliver the demonstration as do other public speakers. That means speaking clearly and distinctly, looking directly at the audience, using appropriate gestures and making sure that they don't go too fast or too slow.

## **Using props**

Charts, posters, and props add a lot to a demonstration if they have been chosen carefully so they serve a purpose. Unnecessary props can be very distracting to an audience. Materials should always be neatly arranged and well organized. Here are some other things to keep in mind about using props:

- Use charts and posters to list key points or review the steps in a process. They should be covered or turned face down until the speaker is ready for them and removed when finished.
- Allow plenty of preparation time so that charts and posters look attractive.
- Use neat, easy-to-read lettering that can be seen from a distance. Lower case printing is easier to read than words written in all capital letters.
- Keep diagrams and charts as simple as possible, and trying to cram too much information on a poster.
- Choose poster and ink colors that provide good contrast, such as black and white, black and yellow, or red and white.
- Be sure to practice using charts, posters and props ahead of time instead of waiting until the last minute!



## Notes

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 28 horizontal blue or grey lines spaced evenly apart, typical of notebook paper. The lines extend across the entire width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical lines, text, or other markings on the page.

## This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 28 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a template for handwriting practice or general note-taking. The margins are consistent on all sides.





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