



Intended Audience:

- 4-H Club members, leaders and parents

Learning Objectives:

4-H Club members, leaders and parents will:

- Discover the value of improving communication skills for members and club operations
- Consider ways to improve communications in their club
- Practice methods to enhance club communications

Target Essential Elements:

Communication skills are an important mastery skill and contribute to members' sense of *belonging* in their 4-H club.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Supplies Needed:

Listen & Repeat 4-H Messages Activity

- Handouts
- Pencils or pens

Handouts

- Listen and Repeat 4-H Messages A
- Listen and Repeat 4-H Messages B
- Evaluation

Do Ahead:

- Have supplies and handouts ready.
- Cut handout into Messages A and B.
- Recruit someone to record the reflection discussion to use as an evaluation (optional).

BACKGROUND

Communication happens in many ways: what we say, what we do, writing, singing, art and more. We've all experienced both good and poor communication. We're going to focus on communication within our club through listening, talking and staying in touch.

WHAT TO DO

Activity: Listen and Repeat 4-H Messages

(Hand out Message "A.") Select a partner. Each of you will take turns giving and repeating a message. The first person giving the message will be the youngest member of the pair. If you're the youngest, raise your hand and you'll get Message "A." Read Message "A" to your partner only once. Ask your partner to repeat the message back to you. Put a check by each item that your partner remembered. Did they remember the who, what, when and where of the announcement?



(Hand out Message "B" to the oldest member of each team.) Now, the oldest member of the pair will read Message "B" to their partner. You are to read Message "B" to your partner only once. Ask your partner to repeat the message back to you. Put a check by each item that your partner remembered.

- Did they remember the who, what, when and where of the announcement?
- What got in the way of really listening?
- Was it easier to do the second listen-and-repeat exercise? Why?

Listening at 4-H Meetings

These messages are examples of new happenings that are talked about at 4-H meetings. Are we hearing decisions? Are we doing things to remember what's been said? It is important for everyone to be listening during club meetings, project meetings and activities. What are some things we can do to improve our listening?

- Be quiet when someone is speaking.
- Only one person talks at a time.
- If we don't hear the message or understand what's been said, ask a question.
- Listen for the four W's: Who, What, When, Where.

Sometimes, people are whispering to another person at 4-H club meetings. What might the President do to get their attention? What kinds of things are done at camp or field trips to get attention?

- Raise hand: When hand goes up, mouth goes closed.
- Clap: If you can hear me, clap once; if you can hear me, clap twice. Continue in this pattern until the room is quiet.

Talking at Club Meetings

You might feel that you should only be listening at club meetings. Throughout the meeting, there are times when it's important for members to talk. It's your club and your thoughts are needed to help the club make decisions, plan fun activities and improve understanding of what's happening.

Sources:

- Created by Linda Kustka, Professor Emeritus, Department of Youth Development, UW-Extension.
- Trisha Day and Greg Lampe, “4-H DD’s (Dynamic Duos)” in “Communication Activities for 4-H Clubs and Other Youth Groups,” COMMO7, and “Teaching Resources for Youth Educators,” COMM08, *4-H Youth Development Building Bridges Curriculum*, Department of 4-H Youth Development, UW-Extension.
- Jeanne Baum, “Successful Functioning of Committees & Meetings,” 4-H Youth Development Programs, UW-Extension, 1988.

Activity: Give an Opinion or Question

All members will either need to ask a question or state their opinion about the situation that I’ll read. If you are stating your opinion, you might say something like “I think we need more money because the treasury has \$5.”

The Situation: The club is thinking about doing a field trip to Chicago for one day. They have \$300 in the treasury. The ideas are to go shopping there, go to the Museum of Science & Industry, see a touring Broadway play, watch a Cubs baseball game, and to go to Navy Pier. This is too much to do in one day. What do you think? Everyone in the room needs to ask a question or state their opinion.

You did a great job of stating opinions and asking questions! What benefits or good do you see when everyone shares their thoughts? How can we get more members sharing their ideas during meetings?

- Tell parents they can only talk after members have said everything “on their minds.”
- Don’t let anyone dominate the discussion.
- President can call upon different people for their ideas.
- Talk about important things in small groups and report group thinking back to total group.
- Ask people to write down their opinions and read their thoughts.

Club Communications Between Meetings

There are often reasons for members, leaders and families to talk or send messages between meetings. Bad weather, schedule changes and other situations can mean that plans need to change. Sometimes people forget what’s planned.

How do people communicate between meetings? Does the present system work or are there things that we could do to make communications smoother? Does everyone use e-mail and read it frequently? Do we need a phone calling system or tree? What works well for us? Are there times when we should communicate in a different way? Are there bad times to phone each other? Should we suggest no phones after a certain time?

Some things that 4-H clubs do to help communicate between meetings include:

- Families have a club calendar with dates, times and places.
- Families have a list of club members, volunteers with addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- Use a phone-calling system for last minute changes.
- Have a club newsletter.

Closing

The most important thing about communication is that we continue to talk and listen to each other in a respectful way. Communication is the key to understanding each other, doing things and having fun.

Your reactions to this session help us evaluate its effectiveness. Please take the time now to complete this short evaluation.

TALK IT OVER**Reflect:**

- What is the value or importance of improving communications?
- When during a club meeting should members not state their opinion or ask a question?

Apply:

- How can we use any of these communication ideas in our club?

ENHANCE/SIMPLIFY

Enhance:

- There are lots of communication ideas in the guides: “Communication Activities for 4-H Clubs and Other Youth Groups,” COMMO7, and “Teaching Resources for Youth Educators,” COMM08, *4-H Youth Development Building Bridges Curriculum*, Department of 4-H Youth Development, available from county UW-Extension offices. You’ll find teaching plans on listening, giving “I” messages, direction giving, public speaking and more.
- Provide a deeper focus on listening or talking by teaching each topic at different meetings. Add more activity or discussion to listening, talking and/or communication between meetings.
- This is a time for the club organizational leaders to share their past frustrations with communications and their ideas on how to overcome any past difficulties. Make sure this is done without blaming anyone. Talk about general situations.

Simplify:

- To save time, ask for only a few questions and opinions in the “Give an Opinion or Question” activity.

EVALUATION

It is important to use an evaluation that is consistent with your teaching objectives. The short evaluation in the handouts can be modified to meet your needs. An alternative to a written evaluation is to record the Reflection discussion under “Talk It Over.” Recruit someone ahead of time to take notes while you are leading the discussion. Remember to share the evaluation results with 4-H Youth Development Extension staff in your county.

ADDITIONAL WEB LINKS

- The Wisconsin State 4-H web site has “How to Join” information, “Frequently Asked Questions About 4-H” (BRO40) and a “Welcome to Wisconsin 4-H,” BRO42, family brochure in both English and Spanish available at www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/pubs/pubdetails.cfm?publicationid=33.
- You can find communication activity web links at The Ohio State University Leadership Center web site: www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~bdg/.

***Finalized by the Strengthening 4-H Club Leadership Work Team:
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Listen and Repeat 4-H Messages

Message A

Circle each fact that your partner is able to remember. Read this message once.

The 4-H Association is sponsoring a fun afternoon and evening of skating, pizza, and a hockey game on Saturday, March 9, starting at the Riverside County Extension Office.

Bring your friends and plan for a good time. Families of 4-H members are invited.

Did your partner remember the:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?

Listen and Repeat 4-H Messages

Message B

Circle each fact that your partner is able to remember. Read this message once.

The Happy Valley 4-H Club is sponsoring a county “lock-in” at the YMCA on Feb. 29.

All 4-H members, age 13 and over, are invited to bring their friends to this event which

starts at 9 p.m. and ends at 7 a.m. There will be movies, food, swimming, games and 4-H projects.

Did your partner remember the:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?

Helping Clubs Communicate

Evaluation

1. How useful is this information in improving club communication? (Circle one response.)

Very Useful Somewhat Useful Not Sure Not Useful

2. Do you feel more comfortable stating your opinion and asking questions?

Yes No

3. What will you do as a result of this program?