

Planning and Conducting 4-H Club Meetings

Key ideas

- Setting goals with your 4-H club
- Planning a yearly 4-H club calendar
- Club officers and committees
- Teaching the 4-H pledge, motto, symbols
- Possible agenda items for a 4-H club meeting
- Involving parents with your club
- Tours, activity days, etc.

You may have questions about planning and conducting your 4-H club meetings. Information about the basic, everyday ingredients of a successful 4-H meeting are included here.

Setting goals with your 4-H club

It's helpful for you and your 4-H members together to set a few basic goals for your club's first year. (Not too many or you may get discouraged!) Based on the number of members and their age range, you will want to consider different needs as you plan your activities together. Please refer to the listed references for guidelines and specific help. Also, you'll find your project leader guide has valuable information on setting club goals. Be sure to read the project leader guide carefully! Again, you may not be able to include everything in the guide in your club meetings, but you can pick out some of the most basic and important project skills to emphasize.

Encourage 4-H members to set personal goals. You will want to do this for yourself also. You've heard the saying, "How do you know if you've gotten there if you don't know where you're going?"

Planning a 4-H club calendar

As soon as your club has selected goals, it's really helpful to plan a yearly calendar of activities. If a year seems overwhelming, try to plan for at least two to four meetings in advance. Or plan for the broad general topics to reach the goals for the club year, and periodically fill in the specifics for a couple of meetings in advance. Be sure to involve your 4-H members and their parents in developing this plan. There are many excellent club program ideas in the references listed at the end of this publication. You and your club will want to refer to these while developing your plan. Your project leader's guide also has some excellent suggestions.

Have each member bring a calendar with space to write in the information from your planning session. This calendar also can be used as the club's plan is developed, writing in notes on the dates for time, place, and other specifics. Members can take their calendar home, and this helps parents plan, too. Another way is to make a list of dates and significant specifics, then duplicate the list for each member to take home and post.

Ask your local Extension staff for 4-H calendar specifics, especially the dates of events, contests, fairs, etc. designed primarily for your project area. Offices often have a newsletter for 4-H leaders listing all activities. Be sure you are on the mailing list, and then share this information with your members.



Club officers and committees

Election of officers gives the members an opportunity to develop leadership skills and responsibility. Suggested 4-H club officers are:

- President
- Vice-president
- Secretary
- Treasurer (if needed)
- Club reporter (for publicity reports)

Other possible officers or committees are recreation leader, sergeant at arms, scrapbook keeper, telephone committee, meeting host or hostess coordinator, field trip committee, entertainment committee, cleanup committee, etc.

The *4-H Club Officer Handbook* (4-H 035) is available at your local Extension office. This publication describes the duties of each officer, how to plan meetings, basic parliamentary procedure and a problem-solving approach, electing officers, working with committees, planning a budget, and presenting a financial report.

Other club officer materials available are:

- *4-H Secretary's Book* (4-H 036)
- *4-H Reporter* (4-H 037)
- *Parliamentary Procedure—Teach Yourself* (4-H 034)
- *4-H Club Treasurer's Book* (4-H 0361)

Many leaders like to have each member be an officer or a committee chairperson. The officers and committee chairperson then become a planning

committee to develop the yearly calendar of activities for your club.

If your club decides it's necessary to collect dues or have a fundraising activity to establish a treasury, be sure to check with your local Extension staff about guidelines and policies. In setting up a club bank account, you should not use a personal name or individual social security number.

Teaching the 4-H pledge, motto, and symbols

It helps members and adults to better understand 4-H if the leader presents the 4-H pledge, motto, and symbols to the group early in the club year. They are described on the last two pages of the publication *Facts About 4-H* (4-H 0244L). The hand motions to use with the pledges are explained there. They also are listed on the back of *My 4-H Records* (4-H 0381) folders, which each member should have.

The leader may find it helpful to make a poster to use at each meeting, showing the 4-H pledge and the 4-H motto, so members can read it while memorizing it. After the first meeting, each member can take turns leading the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance and the 4-H pledge. Some members also may want to give a short talk on the meaning of the 4-H symbols. The local Extension office may provide small 4-H flag sets for new clubs. If none is available, ask for a copy of the *National 4-H Source Book* so you can order a set for a small charge. Other club meeting aids also are available in this catalog.

Members learn from meetings

Well-planned meetings give members an opportunity to:

- Share ideas
- Acquire new knowledge
- Enjoy recreational activities
- Develop self-confidence and leadership
- Participate in decision making
- Organize a meeting in a way that seems best to them

Officers conduct the meeting but need your guidance in advance. Arrange time to meet with them so they are prepared and can assume complete responsibility.

Possible agenda items for a 4-H club meeting

Following is a suggested agenda for a 4-H club meeting. There is a list of agenda suggestions in the *4-H Club Officer Handbook* (4-H 035).

1. Call to order
2. U.S. Pledge of Allegiance
3. 4-H pledge
4. Roll call
5. Minutes of last meeting (if any)
6. Unfinished business (if any)
7. New business
8. Recreation, songs, or other social activity (also could be at the beginning or end of the meeting)
9. Special feature, project learning, or member presentations
10. Refreshments (if appropriate or provided; also could be available before the meeting when members arrive; depends on the time of day the meeting is held)
11. Meeting adjourned

There are endless variations of this agenda—and variety certainly helps to make the meeting more interesting and lively. Your county Extension staff or other volunteers may have suggestions for learning games or other fun activities.

Some clubs prefer to alternate business meetings with project meetings, or simply to have short, informal business sessions at some point during a project meeting. You might consider trying out a variety of methods to determine which works best with your age group, the size of your club, and your project area.

Parliamentary Procedure— Teach Yourself (4-H 034) is a useful publication, if you want to teach your members parliamentary procedures.

Involving parents with your club

There is a variety of methods for getting parents involved—in fact, successful 4-H membership usually includes a great deal of parental support. The “classic” reason for becoming a leader is because a son or daughter wants to join 4-H, and it is logical to encourage other parents to be co-leaders, assistant leaders, resource leaders, or special teachers. Don’t hesitate to ask for help.

Some clubs strongly encourage parents to attend all meetings with their children. Parents may be asked to chaperone club activities, host a meeting, teach a special skill, or share a particular interest. If they are sharing information with the club, it doesn’t necessarily have to be related to the project. It could be regarding citizenship, leadership, community service, or other topics.

Tours, activity days, etc.

Your club members will enjoy a variety of field trips, tours, and special activity days. Sometimes you teach them more in a well-planned field trip than in a regular club meeting. These events should be included in your total number of meetings. An excellent source for ideas on where to take your club on tour is to ask other 4-H leaders.

Your 4-H members will enjoy doing some of the planning for a field trip, and may even want to invite another club to join them for the trip.

A special activity day is another excellent teaching tool. Perhaps you can invite a parent, a resource leader, or a friend with a special skill to teach it at one of your regular meetings.

If you have further questions or concerns, contact your local Extension staff or another volunteer leader. They all want to help you succeed.

Have a good meeting!



Action steps

- With the other 4-H leaders, work with club members to set goals for your club.
- Encourage 4-H members to set personal goals.
- Set some goals for yourself for the coming year.
- With the other 4-H leaders, work with club members to plan a yearly 4-H club calendar.
- Help members select officers.
- If your club decides to have a treasury, contact the local Extension staff for guidelines, policies, and ideas for fundraising activities.
- Decide on the method you want to use to help members learn the 4-H pledge and 4-H motto.
- Meet with club officers to plan the agenda for meetings.
- Decide on the level of support you would like from parents. Determine ways to involve them in various meetings and activities.
- Plan some interesting tours and activity days with the members and other leaders/parents.

Reference materials

Check with your local Extension office for these materials:

- *4-H Club Officer Handbook* (4-H 035)
- *4-H Secretary's Book* (4-H 036)
- *Parliamentary Procedure—Teach Yourself* (4-H 034)
- *4-H Reporter* (4-H 037)
- *Facts About 4-H* (4-H 0244L)
- *4-H Treasurer's Book* (4-H 0361)
- *My 4-H Records* folder (4-H 0381)
- *Exciting Meetings for Great Groups* (4-H 0256L)
- *Welcome to the World of 4-H: Basics for New Leaders* video (PNW 003-VT) or DVD (PNW 003-DVD)
- Oregon 4-H website (<http://oregon.4H.oregonstate.edu>)

Contacting your local Extension office

To locate an address and phone number, look in your local telephone directory. It may be listed in any number of ways in the white pages or in one of the special sections. For example, it might be listed as: 4-H; Oregon State University Extension Service; (county name) Extension Service.

This is part three of a seven-part series. This series is a cooperative project between Oregon State University, Washington State University, and the University of Idaho.

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Revised July 1998. Revised January 2005.